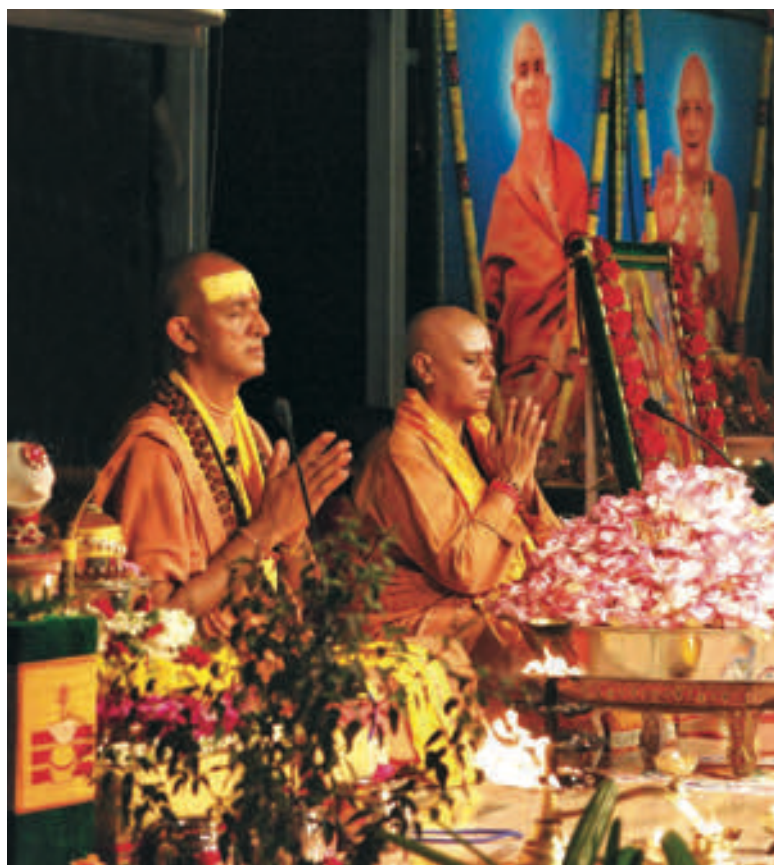


2013 Golden Jubilee edition

BIHAR YOGA®

Glimpses of the Divine

Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Glimpses of the Divine



1963–2013
GOLDEN JUBILEE

WORLD YOGA CONVENTION 2013
GANGA DARSHAN, MUNGER, BIHAR, INDIA
23rd–27th October 2013

Glimpses of the Divine

Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna

*Yajna and satsangs held at
Sannyasa Peeth, Munger, Bihar, India
in 2011 and 2012*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

© Sannyasa Peeth 2013

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from Yoga Publications Trust.

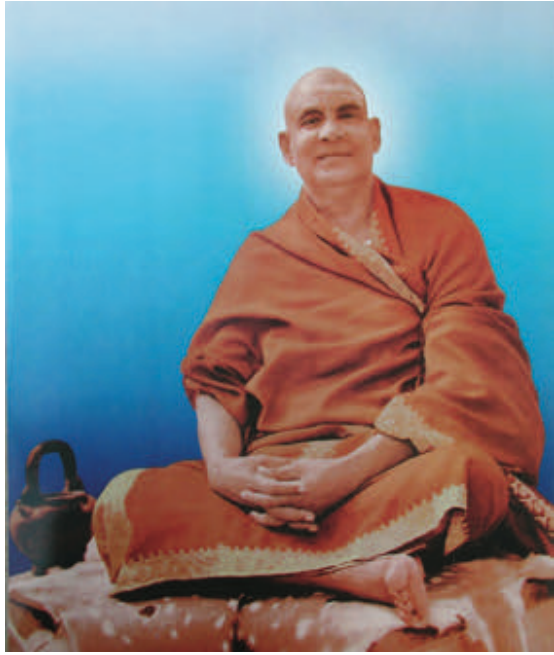
The terms Satyananda Yoga® and Bihar Yoga® are registered trademarks owned by International Yoga Fellowship Movement (IYFM). The use of the same in this book is with permission and should not in any way be taken as affecting the validity of the marks.

Published by Yoga Publications Trust
First edition 2013

ISBN: 978-93-81620-48-9

Publisher and distributor: Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan,
Munger, Bihar, India.

Website: www.biharyoga.net



Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

Contents

Introduction	1
Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna 2011	
The Vision of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna	5
Invoking the Higher Connection	11
Historical Importance of the First Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna	13
The Messages of Nature	21
Manifestation of Divinity	27
Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna 2012	
Satsang 1	35
Satsang 2	38
Satsang 3	43
Satsang 4	48
Satsang 5	51
Satsang 6	55
Satsang 7	59
Satsang 8	61
Satsang 9	67
Satsang 10	72
Satsang 11	75
Satsang 12	81
Satsang 13	84

Introduction

In July 2009, before attaining mahasamadhi, Sri Swami Satyananda gave final instructions to his chief disciple and successor, Swami Niranjanananda. Swami Niranjan was to begin preparations for the next phase of his life, which would require him to gradually step into a life of relative seclusion. He was to now focus on sadhana and aradhana, and on his role as a sannyasin of the paramahansa tradition. In 2013, just as Sri Swamiji had done in 1989, he would walk away from Bihar School of Yoga to establish a new life for himself someplace else. However, Swami Niranjan would not be wandering mysteriously and alone as Sri Swamiji had done. In fact, this plan would not even require him to leave the town of Munger. He would only be going a short distance from Ganga Darshan, to the small, serene plot of land along the western banks of the Ganga called Paduka Darshan. It was at this very place that some fifty years earlier Swami Satyananda had practised higher sadhanas and sown the seeds for what would become a worldwide yoga revolution. Paduka Darshan would become Swami Niranjan's new home, from where he and a group of individuals would carry out Sri Swamiji's final mission: to cultivate the lifestyle of creative expression and bring the tradition of sannyasa to the forefront of modern culture.

Paduka Darshan has always had about it the lasting vibratory energy of Sri Swamiji's saintly presence. Offering an extraordinary darshan of Mother Ganga, it is surrounded for

miles by unfettered, natural landscape. For some years now, it had been left to bask in its quietude, perhaps in preparation for the special role it would play in the future. In 2010, it was clear to Swami Niranjan that in order to properly honour his guru's wishes, Paduka Darshan would have to undergo a major transformation. Thus, in spite of a full schedule which included monthly public satsangs, intense personal sadhana and pilgrimages throughout India, he set to work. By mid-2011 Paduka Darshan was completely transformed. Every aspect of the redesign – from the lush landscaping to the magnificent new yajnashala, to the glistening glass-etched Guru Yantra that rises dramatically above the River Ganga – stood as testimony to the power of a disciple's single-minded devotion to his guru.

The first event the ashram hosted in its new avatara was the Guru Poornima celebration in July 2011. An average person might have been satisfied with this tremendous accomplishment, but Swamiji knew his task was not yet complete. The grounds of Sannyasa Peeth still needed to be officially consecrated, and on this point Sri Swamiji's last words had been very specific: "The presiding deities of Sannyasa Peeth will be Lord Narayana and his consort Ma Lakshmi, and to receive their blessings, an annual yajna will be established at Sannyasa Peeth." Thus, in September 2011, the first Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna was held at Paduka Darshan, heralding an annual worship of the nurturing forces of the cosmos and marking the beginning of a lasting tradition. 2012 was the second year of the event, further strengthening and consolidating its role in the evolution of Sannyasa Peeth.



Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna 2011

Sannyasa Peeth, Munger

The Vision of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

8 September 2011



The plan for the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna had not yet been formed in our minds. When the acharyas and the learned pandits informed that this is the best time to start this yajna at Sannyasa Peeth, in the shortest time possible, less than two months, we prepared for the event. The hard work of BSY sannyasins and the support and cooperation of everyone has been the power behind the yajna.

The yajna is being conducted by the learned acharyas and pandits from Tryambakeshwar, Nasik, and Varanasi.

Tryambakeshwar is the seat of Lord Shiva; it is one of the twelve jyotirlingas. Tryambakeshwar Mahadeva is also the ishta devata of our beloved guru, Sri Swami Satyananda.

In the morning the preparations of the yajna were completed, and now, in the afternoon the havan will begin. The fire for the havan will be lit by rubbing two pieces of wood together as was the practice in the ancient times. The fire produced by this method is considered to be absolutely pure. It is not kindled with a matchstick. To do it is hard work and I have done it for many years in Rikhiya. It takes a lot of effort and skill to light the *arani*, the two pieces of wood with which the sacred fire is lit. Once the fire is lit, the yajna officially commences.

Why Lakshmi and Narayana?

Many people have been asking, “What is the purpose of a Lakshmi-Narayana yajna when as sannyasins, we belong to the Shaiva tradition? Our ishta devata is Lord Shiva and our ishta devi is Mother Shakti. Therefore, as per the visible tradition of sannyasa, we are the followers of Shiva and Shakti. Why then, is Sannyasa Peeth conducting this yajna to invoke the grace of Narayana or Vishnu, and Lakshmi, his shakti?

Remember, sannyasins do not belong to any sect, tradition or religion. Sannyasa is an independent tradition which accepts the belief, faith, culture and tradition of all different groups in society and civilization. In our personal sannyasa life, we are sannyasins, followers of Shiva and Shakti; however, our greeting is always that of Narayana. In Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth we say, “Hari Om” and Hari is one of the names of Vishnu or Narayana. In Rikhiapeeth we say, “Namo Narayana” which is the greeting of Narayana. Throughout India, across the board, whenever sannyasins meet they greet each other not by saying, “Om Namah Shivaya,” but by saying, “Om Namo Narayanaya.” Why is this so?

If you look into the ancient history which has now become mythology, you will find three aspects of divinity or

God. The 'G' of God stands for generation and represents the quality of Brahma the creator, the power which has the ability to create, to manifest, to generate, to begin something new. The 'O' stands for organization and represents the quality of Narayana, as he is the organizer of the created universe. He is the indweller of each and every life form that exists in this created universe. He is the sustainer; he is the supporter of this life, this creation. You are alive because of the power of Narayana within you, not because of the power of Brahma or Shiva. Brahma created you and that was it. Shiva is the 'D' that stands for destruction, and he represents transformation. Shiva comes at the end to give his grace and benediction for you to transcend the body, life and creation, and to liberate you. However, you are nourished and sustained by the power of Narayana.

Narayana for sustenance, Lakshmi for prosperity

In the Vedas, Narayana is the indweller of all hearts. It is due to Narayana that you live. It is due to that force and power that you are able to perceive and experience the nature, the world, the cosmos and the universe, the visible and the invisible. In order to nurture, sustain, protect and develop the shakti of Narayana, there is Lakshmi who brings prosperity and peace. If there is no prosperity in life, there is no peace in the mind, remember that. For peace of mind it is necessary to have the basic prosperity in life.

If you don't have anything to eat for a couple of days, if your pockets are empty, if there is no bank balance, will you have peace of mind? Even to nourish and sustain your body, you are dependent on the grace of Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the giver of prosperity; Lakshmi is the giver of wealth, not only material and external, but also mental, emotional and spiritual. The complete fulfilment you experience in life, the prosperity, the peace and the bliss you experience in life is due to the grace of Lakshmi. These two forces are being invoked in this yajna at Sannyasa Peeth.

Head, heart and hands

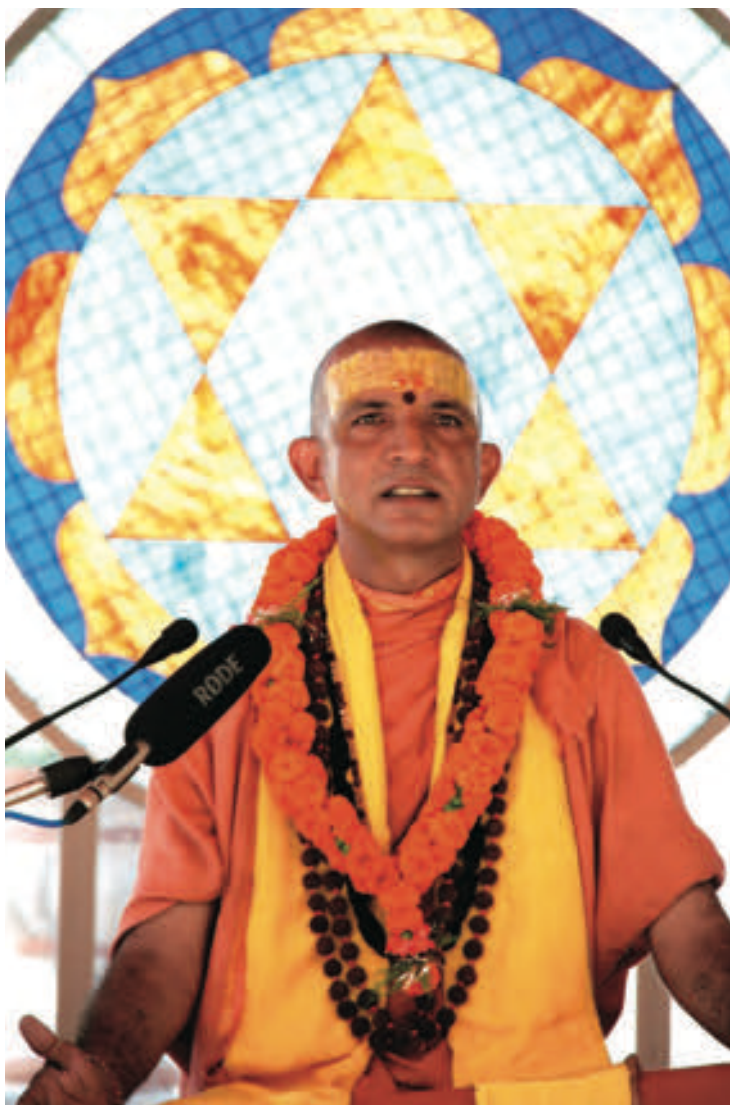
Sannyasa Peeth is the third vision and mission of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda. He thought of the Bihar Yoga system as ‘the yoga of head, heart and hands.’ The symbol of the Satyananda/Bihar Yoga movement is ajna chakra, representing the faculties of head, the external and the subtle force, the manifest and the unmanifest force, the intellectual and the intuitive force, the gross and the transcendental force. This is ajna chakra, the third eye, and the symbol of the yoga mission of Sri Swamiji. It represents the head.

The symbol of Rikhiapeeth is anahata chakra, the heart. In Rikhia, Sri Swamiji has provided us with opportunities to open our natures and our hearts, to learn to connect with other beings, to see them as an extension of ourselves, to move away from the selfish qualities and come out of the shell which disturbs the creative expressions of mind and life. When you become selfless and when selflessness becomes natural and effortless, then anahata chakra opens and you are able to connect with people, the world and divinity.

The third aspect of yoga is the hands, the creative nature. This aspect is the mission and vision that Sri Swamiji gave to me in 2009. He said, “This is your mandate: develop Sannyasa Peeth where proper samskaras can be given, proper instructions and guidelines and education can be given, sadhana can be given to those who want to keep on improving and uplifting the quality of their mind and life.” You have taken initiation no doubt, but you have not lived the life of a sannyasin. Just by wearing guru clothes one does not become a sannyasin; just by receiving initiation one does not become a sannyasin; just by shaving the head one does not become a sannyasin. You have taken initiation no doubt, yet you have never lived the life of a sannyasin. You have lived the life of a yoga teacher.

In the garb of a sannyasin you have been yoga teachers, you have never been sannyasins in the real sense. It is this understanding of sannyasa, the samskara, training and education of sannyasa to bring out the creative nature of

every individual that will be imparted in Sannyasa Peeth in the course of time. Not with the intention of making everybody into a sannyasin, but to give them the right understanding and vision of how to live properly.



Symbols of Sannyasa Peeth

The symbols of Sannyasa Peeth, the *kalash* or the pot, the conch, and the trident, are on the flag beside me and on your angavastra as well. This is the logo of Sannyasa Peeth. As sannyasins we combine the qualities of all three aspects of creation: the kalash represents the qualities of Brahma the creator; the conch represents the quality of Narayana the sustainer, and the trident represents the power of Shiva, the changer. As sannyasins, we adhere to the development of the qualities of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and it is a sadhana in itself. Therefore, this Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is being held to invoke the blessings and grace of Narayana, the indweller of all hearts, and also the blessings and grace of our gurus, Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda.

Today is the birthday of our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda, and we will celebrate it joyously with respect, reverence and hope that he will once again grace this earth with his physical presence. The yajna, which commences today, will continue until the 12th. On the 12th we celebrate the sannyasa day of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, with happiness, joy and splendour.

Far-reaching effects of yajna

Whether you stay at the yajna for the entire duration or only for five minutes, it is up to you. However, if you stay here and participate, just imbibe; that by itself is enough. It is as though air-conditioning is running in a house, its doors are open and you are walking on the road. You pass by the doorway of this house and suddenly you feel the cool breeze of the air-conditioning touching your body. You don't have to be inside the house to feel the coolness; even if you pass the doorway you will feel the gentle, cool breeze. In the same manner, you don't have to be an expert in the chanting of the mantras, the invocations, the pooja or the worship. You have to just sit and imbibe, and that by itself will bestow grace; it will bestow happiness, peace and prosperity.

Invoking the Higher Connection

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

9 September 2011

*I am the river, you are the sea; let your love flow right through me.
I am the river, you are the ocean; come and fill me with devotion.
I am the bird, you are the sky; let your grace flow as I fly.
I am the earth, you are the sun; I am many, you are one.
I am the darkness, you are the light; send your wisdom into
my night.*

The song indicates the aspirations of the individual self, the individual soul, to be one with the cosmic nature, the higher reality. It is an expression of one's love. A river flows to the sea and merges with it completely. There is no distinction between the water of the river and the water of the sea. When the identity is lost in divinity, the only thing that remains is an expression of the transcendental and divine love. There is nothing more than that; there is nothing beyond it because the form of God is only love. The form of guru is only love.

When we speak of God and guru, we are not talking of knowledge. Knowledge is for those individuals who wish to fill up their empty heads with certain ideas and inspiration. The real expression in life is that of love, and true love can only manifest when there is union between the individual self and the Higher Self. This song is an indication of the effort an individual makes to attain that union.

The same sentiment is in the mantras through which the deity is being invoked here:

*Avikaaraaya shuddhaaya nityaaya paramaatmane,
Sadaikarooparoopaaya vishnave sarvajishnave.*

I worship the one who is immaculate, pure, eternal, the Supreme Spirit who is changeless: Narayana, the ever-victorious one.

The mantras the pandits are chanting here are invoking this sustainer principle of God, as God is the Father, He is the Mother, He is everything. As a child of God, for what can you ask? Do you ask for chocolate? Do you ask for toys? No. That which is permanently with you for all times to come is only one, the love connection existing between God and devotee, between child and mother, between guru and disciple.



Historical Importance of the First Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

12 September 2011

This yajna has been most unique. I feel very happy, very fortunate and also very blessed to have come to this yajna. On the first day, when the children greeted me and said they were very privileged that I had come here despite my busy schedule, I was surprised, and I will tell you why.

Munger: the launching pad of yoga

It is I who is privileged to be here, and there is no schedule of mine that can keep me away from a yajna of this dimension, especially one taking place in Munger, as Munger is the place where Sri Swamiji's first mission took off. It is also the place where I first met him. You know how important, how memorable the first events in life are, events like meeting your first love and falling in love for the first time. Don't you remember that moment your whole life long? Or your first salary, the first time you earned money. Don't you value that and remember that moment your whole life long? Or your first child, having a child for the first time. You remember these moments always. You remember because it was the first time, it was unique.

Munger is the place from where Sri Swamiji launched his first mission of yoga. When you want to launch a missile, you need a launching pad. Munger was the launching pad from which he shot the missile of yoga throughout the world. You can easily say it was a missile because his mission has

influenced, metamorphosed and transformed the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

Unique life of Sri Swamiji

There are many memorable events in the life of Swami Satyananda; however, this event taking place here today is going to go down in history. It is going to become a historical event. Therefore, you should also feel privileged to be here today so that later, when you have grandchildren and great grandchildren, you can tell them, “I was there when the first Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna was held for the establishment of Sannyasa Peeth.”

Why is this event historic? It is because this event is not an ordinary yajna. Of course, we all know that there are thousands of yajnas held throughout India, and they also are probably much greater than this. They are held in a much better way, they are more beautiful and well organized, but this is not enough for the efficacy of a yajna.

This yajna is being operated by a higher mind. Do you know what a higher mind is? What are the signs and signals of a higher mind? When a higher mind manifests, how will you know that? You can know a higher mind is operating when you see a system, when you see organization, when you see smooth functioning, when you see all hearts uniting, when you see a focus, when you see a direction and when you see thousands of people working and toiling selflessly. All the swamis and the way they have worked for the preparation of this yajna in this heat, selflessly. All these little children who come here at four in the morning; they are not paid for that. They come out of love; they come out of selflessness, out of a pure motive. This shows that a higher mind is operating, that the strings of the yajna are in the hands of a higher mind. That is why this event will go down in history.

Yoga in the West

There are many facts of Sri Swamiji's life that will go down in history: the yoga, the yoga teaching, the manner in which

he spread yoga throughout the world. Yoga was known to people; however, they did not have any interest in it, they did not have any faith in it, they did not even care for it and they did not believe it was of any use to them in their lives. Even in India, the country of its origin, nobody had any faith in yoga.

The manner in which Sri Swamiji presented yoga ensured that today it is practised worldwide, in every nook and cranny of the world. It is the practices he gave, simple and systematic, and the manner in which he presented them that made it possible for every ordinary person to practise yoga. After all, for whom is yoga intended? Yoga is intended for the person who is under stress, who is imbalanced, who is disturbed. It is not intended for the person who is absolutely equipoised, balanced, happy and without stress.

Prior to Sri Swamiji, yoga had not been made so available and applicable to people worldwide. Sri Swamiji said, "Yoga has to be made available to the people so they can use it to correct the difficulties they face in life." Now, for the first time we see that yoga is being practised by almost each and every one. This is another first in his life which will go down in history.

The practices he gave are the most profound practices. If you read the texts on yoga, you will not find these practices as they are difficult to decipher; they are in coded form and we cannot understand what we are reading. However, Sri Swamiji extracted them and presented them in such a simple way that today you can practise the most profound techniques for self-transformation. For this, he will go down in history.

Sri Swamiji took yoga to the West and presented it to the people who were educated, the elite: the scientists, the teachers, the professionals, the doctors, those who would question the efficacy of these practices. Sri Swamiji presented yoga to these educated people and convinced them. Prior to that, yoga was not known in the West. Of course, Swami Vivekananda had taken yoga to the West, Prabhupada had taken yoga to the West; however, the manner in which Swami Satyananda took yoga to the West will go down in history.

Sannyasa

Another important step taken by Sri Swamiji, which no one else had yet attempted, was to introduce the tradition of sannyasa at large. He initiated thousands into sannyasa which was never before seen except at the time of Dattatreya, a legendary figure in history. Swami Satyananda is the only person after Dattatreya who initiated thousands at large into the tradition of sannyasa, and that was a bold step as well. Even bolder than that was his decision to give sannyasa to women. Forty years ago, women were not allowed to take sannyasa. There was no place for women to go for sannyasa. This too, will go down in history.

Not that Sri Swamiji cared to go down in history, but these are the events of his life which need to be reflected upon. Why was he so unique, why were the things he did so unique? What were these unique things that he did? He always used to say, “I don’t care for temporary fame. If the things I have done are worth it, then history will pull me out of the grave.” This is surely going to happen.

We see another very important step that he took in his life, which we have never seen anyone else do. At the height of his accomplishments, Sri Swamiji left all he had created. I don’t know anyone else who has done that or who could ever consider doing that. When he left Munger in 1988, Munger was already a full-fledged ashram, a reputed ashram known worldwide.

Rikhiapeeth: launching pad of ‘serve, love and give’

You start a journey and you take it to a point of culmination, but Swami Satyananda started a journey, took it to its culmination and then he started another journey. There was no culmination for him; one journey ended and another began. His culmination was in beginning another journey. From there, he started something that became another missile, launched this time from Rikhiapeeth after leaving Munger.

Today, the world over, whether they have known him or not known him, people are thinking about the idea that



Swami Satyananda launched from Rikhiapeeth, the idea of ‘serve, love and give’. Philanthropists all over the world are discussing these things: how to serve, how to live a life of service, how to dedicate your wealth, how to dedicate your assets to the people who don’t have anything? This is a hot topic in the West. You have philanthropists such as Bill Gates who go around the world telling people how to utilize their wealth for the good of the people. In India, it is not a current topic, as Indians right now are on a different wavelength. They have not yet come to that point, the

zenith of affluence. However, in the West they are definitely thinking along these lines.

The idea of 'serve, love and give' that Sri Swamiji launched from Rikhiapeeth is no less of a missile than yoga. We must remember that yoga for Swami Satyananda was not the end, it was the means. For you yoga has become the end; your whole life revolves around yoga and the propagation of yoga, but for him it was not the end, it was the means to establish new ideas. Sri Swamiji was always way ahead of his time. He was already thinking of things which will come to India much later, when Indians come to the point of affluence where the West finds itself now.

The idea 'serve, love and give' can be found in the Vedas, too. It was not Sri Swamiji's idea, but he propagated it, he launched it. In Rikhiapeeth, he started a revolution, though not a revolution with guns and bombs. No. That's the only kind of revolution we know. Sri Swamiji started a silent revolution. He picked up those people who have nothing, not even a bed to sleep on. He picked up those people whom society had forgotten, the government had forgotten, the rejects, the have-nots, the downtrodden. Through the practice of 'serve, love and give', he picked them up and he gave them a reason to live, a reason to hold their head high.

Sri Swamiji told us that this idea is so important for the smooth functioning of society that if we don't put it into practice, society will fall apart. He told us that unless you think about those who don't have anything, society will crumble. We have seen this. We can see it happening all over the world. If society cannot provide for the people who don't have anything, they will themselves then go out and demand what they don't have. That was Sri Swamiji's warning. He said many times that if you don't look after those who have nothing, they will come and get it. When there is a fire burning outside, how long are you going to remain comfortable in your own air-conditioned home? One day, the fire is going to reach you.

‘Serve, love and give’ in practice

‘Serve, love and give’ was the missile Sri Swamiji launched from Rikhiapeeth. Life has to be progressive; you should not stagnate. When you practise yoga, you develop an awareness, you develop and awaken a creative energy. The awareness that develops has to be utilized in something constructive. That is the progression from yoga. He did not deviate from yoga; he did not leave yoga behind. He only said, “Look, all you people who have been practising yoga for so many years, this is how you have to progress. This is where you must take your awareness, to the practice of ‘serve, love and give’.”

Now we have Sannyasa Peeth, where you can train yourself in the values that allow you to live a proper, decent, happy and successful life. How to live a happy life, how to live a successful life, how to live a creative life, how to live a positive life, this is what the ideals of sannyasa can teach you.

These three missions of Sri Swamiji: yoga, ‘serve, love, give’ and sannyasa, are very closely intertwined. They are not separate from each other. There is a definite progression of thought, and that progression of thought is intended to elevate the individual.

Samarpan Diwas

Today is Sri Swamiji’s sannyasa day. On this day sixty-four years ago, he took sannyasa from Swami Sivananda on the banks of the Ganga. Sri Swamiji calls it his *Samarpan Diwas*, the day he surrendered. You all surrender, you all know what surrender is. You surrender to your wife, to your husband, you surrender to the bottle, you surrender to pleasures, you surrender to enjoyment. Everybody knows what surrender is. However, the surrender which he undertook on that day, the Samarpan Diwas, was an unconditional surrender. The surrender you know and practise has many conditions, which if not fulfilled, destroys your surrender. The surrender he took on that day was unconditional.

Sri Swamiji lived in the spirit of surrender throughout his whole life. I have not known Swami Satyananda to do

anything for himself. He only lived for others. Do you know what surrender is? When you give up everything you own, your body, your mind, your thoughts, your feelings, and you can't use them for yourself. You surrender to guru and yet you spend all your time thinking about yourself and your problems and your worries. That is not the surrender he undertook. His was the Samarpan Diwas.

Today, to commemorate this day of samarpan, let us all also decide to surrender something in our lives as a dedication to Swami Satyananda. You can surrender many things, whether it is some type of food, object, thought, idea or perception, or whether it is your illusions, your false perceptions, or your hatred, jealousy or anger. That is a way we can commemorate this day, by surrendering something to guru.

I would now like to thank Swami Niranjan for organizing this event, and share a few reasons why I like to come back to Munger. I told you the first one: this is the place where I first met Sri Swamiji and where I was born. The second reason is the warmth, love and affection of Swami Niranjan. So again, I would like to thank Swami Niranjan for organizing this event. I don't know about you, but I have already booked my dates for the next year. This is an ongoing event and it will be held again next year in the same place. This has been merely a glimpse of how it is going to be in the future. This yajna will develop more and more each year and will become more and more intense and efficacious, and this you will see.

Today, let us take a sankalpa to surrender something that is hindering the growth and progress in our lives, and next year when we meet, we can compare notes. When we meet here again, we will see how far we have gone with our surrender.

The Messages of Nature

Swami Prembhava

It is known to all the traditional cultures of the world that the divine manifests through the *tattwas*, the elements, and through the forces of nature to guide and inspire those on earth. This has been written in the scriptures as well. Since time immemorial, the ancient cultures have had the ability to read and understand these divine signs and know whether an action or flow of events will be auspicious or inauspicious. This ability has been largely lost in modern society. However, the messages and signs are present even today; we only have to open our eyes and be aware of the forces of nature around us.

From the 8th to the 12th September 2011, the first Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna was performed at Paduka Darshan, Munger, to bless and propitiate the foundation of Sannyasa Peeth. Sannyasa Peeth is the next stage in the journey of Swami Niranjanananda according to the mandate given to him by his guru, Sri Swami Satyananda.

The divine signs were extremely favourable from the moment the program was planned. The first day, 8th September, was the birthday of Sri Swami Sivananda and it coincided with Ekadashi, a day known to be conducive to sadhana and spiritual practice. The event culminated on 12th September, the sannyasa birthday of Sri Swami Satyananda, and also the full moon day. For these reasons, the pandits and astrologers advised it to be a highly propitious time for



the inauguration of the yearly sadhana of Sannyasa Peeth: Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna.

The following incidents were witnessed during the yajna, and they exemplify how the divine reveals itself through signs and experiences. Some may call them coincidence; however, when these signs are witnessed they create an experience and a response that all present can perceive. Physiological changes are felt, the thoughts become clear and the heart opens up to the truth of what is being revealed.

Garuda, the vehicle of Narayana

- To commence the yajna, the *murtis*, or statues, of Lakshmi and Narayana were carried by a procession into the yajna area accompanied by the joyous kirtan of ‘*Sriman Narayana Narayana Narayana*’. As the procession was gathering, a huge eagle, with a wing span of approximately six feet, flew around Paduka Darshan and performed a *parikrama*, a circumambulation, before heading northward. He came to rest in a large peepal tree overlooking the yajna. Not only is Garuda the vehicle of

Narayana, but the peepal tree is also believed to be the residence of Lord Vishnu.

- As the first havan of the yajna was commencing in Paduka Darshan, the same giant eagle was seen with wings fully stretched, resting on a flagpole in the Yoga Vidya property of Ganga Darshan. The sight of this eagle replicated the logo of Bihar Yoga Bharati: a giant eagle, wings stretched out wide.
- On the last day of the yajna, as the *poornahuti*, the final oblation, was being offered to the fire in Paduka Darshan, fifteen to twenty eagles circled Satyam Udyan and the Main Building of Ganga Darshan. Once the yajna was complete, the eagles disappeared. It felt as though the eagles had come to witness the pooja in Satyam Udyan, and one could feel the strong connection between Ganga Darshan and Paduka Darshan.
- As Swamiji and Swami Satsangi were preparing to leave Paduka Darshan after the yajna was complete, the same giant eagle who appeared on the first day reappeared to perform his final parikrama of the yajna area. He then flew southward over the river Ganga and disappeared. Narayana was bidding his farewell.

Blessings in the form of rain

- The moment the procession of Lakshmi and Narayana began at the start of the yajna, the gods rained down blessings in the form of a gentle shower that lasted only as long as the procession. Once the Lord and his consort were installed at the yajna, the rain shower ended. The gods approved.
- The blessings continued as the *agni manthana*, churning of the fire, was being performed. The skies began to darken, and the moment the fire was lit and havan started, the heavens opened up to bless the yajna with a spell of torrential rain.
- Simultaneously, in Satyam Udyan of Ganga Darshan, pandits were performing pooja and havan. As the first

havan fire was lit in Paduka Darshan, the first poornahuti was being performed at Satyam Udyan, and this, too, received the blessings of rain.

- When Swami Satsangi arrived from Rikhiapeth on 10th September in the late afternoon, the heavens again opened up to bless her arrival with a gentle shower. As she walked into Satyam Udyan of Ganga Darshan, a beautiful rainbow filled the sky to welcome her.

Shiva's messengers

Shiva is the greatest bhakta of Narayana. Swami Satyananda has said that if we wish to have the darshan of Shiva we should worship Vishnu, and Shiva will definitely come. Indeed, Shiva made his presence at the yajna known daily through his messengers: snakes. Every day, at least one snake was seen passing through the yajna area of Paduka Darshan.

Two mystical deer

One week before the yajna started, the sannyasins of Paduka Darshan witnessed two large deer walking along the banks of the Ganga. Never before had such animals been spotted here. It was as if Lakshmi and Narayana had come to inspect the place of their yajna. They disappeared as quickly as they manifested and the sannyasins who had seen them worried they may have drowned in the Ganga. However, the larger of the two was spotted by the pandits on the final day of the yajna after the poornahuti was complete. Narayana had come again in the form of a deer to give his blessings.

The song of love

Music has great power to express feelings and transmit a specific *bhava* or sentiment. Through the voice of a child, the power of love was transmitted like a wave from one end of the pandal to the other. During the song 'Another You', there was not one person who did not connect with their Beloved, and tears filled the eyes of all as they remembered the person most special to them. For many it felt as if Sri

Swamiji had returned and filled everybody's hearts with the same love and joy as he did every time they met him in his mortal form. The words and tune of the song continued in everybody's minds for days as a reminder of the beauty, joy and love present at the yajna.

Sri Swamiji's bed

As per tradition, on the eve of Sri Swamiji's sannyasa birthday, 11th September, his bed was made in his room at Sri Niwas in Ganga Darshan. On the morning of 12th September, the bed was found used: the pillows had moved, the sheets were ruffled as if somebody had spent the night there, and his slippers by the door had moved as if they had been kicked off. His presence was so strong in the room that day that anybody who entered it felt a chill run down their spine. It was a miracle that showed us that he is here, watching, guiding and blessing all. It was this divine event that inspired the conceptualization of *Satya ka Avahan*, the magazine of Sannyasa Peeth.



Ganga swells with happiness

Within twenty-four hours of the completion of the yajna on 12th September, the waters of the Ganga began to rise and swell miraculously fast with currents flowing in all directions. It seemed she was literally bursting with joy at the grace and divinity of such a yajna being performed on her banks. Over the past few centuries all she had witnessed on her shores was destruction and pollution. Finally, the ancient ritual of yajna was being performed here to bring prosperity, purity, joy and love into the lives of all. After two days, the level of the water dropped back down to normal.

The power of this yajna to attract signs and messages of divinity was revealed from the moment it began to the moment of completion. The arrival of blessings in the form auspicious omens, of Shiva, Lakshmi, Narayana, Vishnu and Sri Swamiji himself, indicated that this yajna was indeed blessed and supported by the divine forces.

The greatest divine sign of all, however, was that for everyone present, each moment was filled with love and joy. The inaugural Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna flowed smoothly and flawlessly. It was an event like no other, and shall be remembered forever.

Manifestation of Divinity

Sannyasi Sivadhara

As the last lingering notes of the Guru Poornima symphony were still swirling in the air, the opening movements of the first and most auspicious Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna filled the environs of Paduka Darshan.

The strong vibrations of havan dedicated to Sri Durga started the day, with the sky gradually changing from dark grey, deep blue, pale blue, light pink turning into golden sunshine.

Strains of joyful kirtan mingled with powerful and divine chants as the pandits from Tryambakeshwar commenced their invocations to Narayana and Lakshmi. It was beautiful and appropriate that these pandits came from the temple at Tryambakeshwar, the seat of Lord Mrityunjaya, the ishta devata of Sri Swami Satyananda. Our beloved Sri Swamiji continues to guide and bless the way as his perfect disciple, Swami Niranjan, carries out his vision and mission. It was Sri Swamiji himself who indicated that this yajna be conducted here at Sannyasa Peeth to invoke the divine and sustaining energies of the indweller of all, Narayana, and his shakti, Lakshmi. It shall now be the hallmark event of this new institution.

The yajna commenced on 8th September, Swami Sivananda's birthday, which also happened to fall on the holy day of Ekadashi. After the different divinities and *navagrahas*, nine planets, were invoked and invited to be



present for the next five days, we witnessed divine magic unfolding: the procession of Sri Narayana and Sri Lakshmi was blessed with a gentle rain as they took their place at the pooja sthal. Once Sri Narayana and Sri Lakshmi were established in their place with exultation, chants and prayers, the sacred flame was kindled in the traditional manner of churning the arani and the havan was lit. For the next five days this sacred havan was maintained. The entire Bhagavad Gita was chanted and added its energy to

the environs which were vibrating with the auspicious and soothing energy of Narayana and Lakshmi.

These gentle, sustaining, subtle yet strong vibrations were experienced by us for the first time at this most special yajna and our hearts rose in grateful thanks for the privilege of being present during this time. The next few days were an amazing blessing with Sri Durga havan, Sri Lakshmi-Narayana havan and sahasrarchana along with stotras, bhajan and kirtan. The *Vishnu Mahimna Stotra* was chanted every day along with many other new stotras dedicated to Narayana and Lakshmi that Swamiji had specially selected.

Swami Niranjan spoke about the significance of Narayana and Lakshmi as being the divine energies that sustain all creation by establishing stability, promoting growth and bestowing prosperity. He stressed the oneness of the Divine saying that, though sannyasins belong to the Shaiva sect, they greet each other by invoking Narayana. The essential entity of *Bhagavan*, God, is composed of the five elements and is present in all things. Bhakti is the only way to connect ourselves with the immortal Divine Self and to develop *shraddha* and *vishwas*, trust in God and faith in ourselves. It makes it possible for us to experience the energy which is the channel through which we receive peace, plenty and prosperity.

This is the sankalpa of the yajna: peace, plenty and prosperity for all, and Narayana and Lakshmi are the twin energies that bestow upon us all that we need.

The third day of the yajna was a Saturday and Mahamrityunjaya havan was performed in the evening. It was a great delight for all to see Swami Satsangi wave to everyone from the stage before the program began and to hear that she would stay until the last day. For the duration of the havan, only the stage was lit up and it was a heavenly sight!

12th September was the last day of the yajna, a very special day indeed! It was on this day in 1947 that Sri Swamiji was initiated into paramahansa sannyasa by his guru, Swami Sivananda. Sri Swamiji referred to it as *Samarpan Diwas*,

Day of Surrender, as it was on this day that he completely surrendered himself to his guru.

The *poornahuti*, final oblation, ceremonies commenced with the chanting of mantras, and the last havan was performed as Swami Niranjana and Swami Satsangi made offerings to the sacred fire to mark the closing of the yajna. As the last aratis were sung by the pandits from Triyambakeshwar we were all moved to tears, for this was a rare treat to experience a style of arati that rings out on the banks of the Godavari here along the Ganga in Munger.

The yajna bore all the signs of the presence of a higher hand guiding everything, some tangible and others subtle. The palpable signs of divinity were found in the drizzle that accompanied the procession at the very beginning, Garuda flying around the pooja area and watching everything from its perch on a peepal tree close by, the showers as the first oblations to the havan were made and the serpent Ananta sending his 'representatives' to have darshan almost every day. The subtle signs of grace were felt in the smooth functioning of all the proceedings, from the poojas to the distribution of prasada and darshan of the pooja area for all the devotees whose numbers increased every day and way beyond expectations, and a song playing by itself on a mobile phone that could only have been Sri Swamiji sending us all a message . . .

We bid Lakshmi and Narayana adieu as they were taken in procession from the stage accompanied by the singing of kirtan to Narayana. Our hearts filled with gratitude to have received their blessings in such abundance and we eagerly look forward to welcoming them back next year with all pomp and glory.

Being the day of *Poornima*, Full Moon, the verses of 'Sundarkanda' from the *Ramacharitamanas* were chanted and Sri Swamiji's Samarpan Diwas was celebrated with havan, stotras and kirtans.

Swami Suryaprakash spoke about the miraculous rain that fell from the heavens at exactly the same time in Satyam

Udyan at Ganga Darshan, the Samadhisthal at Rikhiapeeth and at Sannyasa Peeth as ceremonies were either starting or culminating, showing us that all three places are linked by one great power – Sri Swamiji – and form the three integral parts of his vision of the yoga of ‘head, heart and hands’.

Swami Satsangi said that she has booked these dates, 8th to 12th September, for the yajna next year and surely many hearts echoed the same intention. She also said that as it was Sri Swamiji’s Samarpan Diwas, we could show our love and devotion to him by pledging to surrender one negative aspect in either thought, word or action from our lives from this day forth.

As we made our way out of Paduka Darshan that evening, our hearts were humbled and empowered by the grace of our gurus, through whose love we receive this treasure of divine blessings!

There’s a new world somewhere
We call the Promised Land
. . . We were there that day
And will be back, for sure, again
Because we found You!

Jai Sivam, Jai Satyam, Jai Guru!
Jai Ganga, Jai Lakshmi, Jai Vishnu!



Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna 2012

Sannyasa Peeth, Munger

Satsang 1

7 September 2012, Morning



Prelude to Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna

Swami Niranjana: Today is the rehearsal for the program, which begins tomorrow. This venue is known as Paduka Darshan and in the coming years it will become Sannyasa Peeth. After the World Yoga Convention which will be held in 2013, my obligations to the Bihar School of Yoga and to Ganga Darshan will be complete, and I will come to reside here.

Since you have to walk between Paduka Darshan and Ganga Darshan every morning, afternoon and night, and the weather is sunny and humid, here are two pieces of advice:

First, always carry a bottle of water with you and during the day drink at least four bottles: that's four litres of water. Treat it like medicine and drink four bottles of water every day. Don't say "I'm not thirsty," as it is easy to become dehydrated in this weather due to the sweating and the heat. Make it a rule that as long as you are in Munger you will drink four bottles of water.

Second, Sannyasa Peeth has organized hats for you, so whenever you travel back and forth, always keep your head covered and cool. Remember that while the heart has to be warm, the head has to be cold. We don't want hot-headed people here! Therefore, you will be given a hat and wearing it must be part of your Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna routine. If we see anybody without their hat, they will be asked to walk back, put on their hat and walk back again. So, make sure you have your hat with you at all times.

Regeneration and rebirth

Tomorrow, the second annual Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna will commence here in Munger. Last year was the first yajna and although we had not informed anyone, the house was full. This year again we have not sent out invitations, yet we have a full house. This year, according to the lunar calendar, after thirty-six years, this September has fallen in the lunar month known as Purushottam Masa, the month of God, and it will not so happen again for the next twenty years or so.

This year, we are also celebrating the 125th birthday of our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda. In June 2012, Venus transited the sun and everybody was able to see Venus in front of the sun. This event had also occurred 125 years ago in the month of June, and after that, in September, Swami Sivananda took birth.

Venus represents love, according to western astrological theories. Venus is known as 'Shukra' in India. Shukra was a

sage. His full name was Shukracharya and he was the only one after Shiva who knew how to revive a dead person. According to the stories, during the wars between gods and demons, whenever demons would die, their necks, arms or legs cut with a sword and their bodies lanced, he would bring them back to life. Do not discuss whether he was a good or a bad person. A sage is always a sage; good and bad are our creations. The quality to be understood here is that he was able to bring dead people back to life, which means regeneration, regeneration of life. Hence, the transit of Venus around the sun also represents the regeneration of life.

Many people around the world are panicking, wondering whether the world will end in December, but this will not happen. The world is not going to end. It was the Mayan calendar that said the world would end. When the Mayans were doing their calculations, they ran out of paper as they reached 2012, and they stopped calculating! If they had had more paper they would have continued for another couple of thousand years. Therefore, don't worry, nobody is going to die; rather, this prediction is an indication that a regeneration of life is going to take place.

All the things happening at present, all the symbols and the symptoms being displayed are cosmic in nature. They indicate that a highly evolved spiritual personality is about to take birth again, and the indications are of Shiva. Have you seen the image on the internet of Shiva appearing on a mountain range in the US? Somebody took a picture of mountains in the US, saw something hazy in the sky, zoomed in and found the form of Shiva there. When events like these are observed, one can expect that God's grace is going to descend. Therefore, from tomorrow, do not worry about end-of-the-world predictions. Keep the head cool and the heart warm, and participate in the program with joy and contentment.

Satsang 2

7 September 2012, Afternoon

The month of God

Swami Niranjan: Lakshmi and Narayana are two powers, two forces, whose grace we need in order to prosper in material life as well as spiritual life. If the grace of Lakshmi and Narayana is sought for material life, you can be sure that your spiritual life will not be successful. However, if the grace of Lakshmi and Narayana is sought for spiritual life, then along with your spiritual life, your material life will also be successful.

The Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is a very powerful yajna, and before his mahasamadhi, our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda gave the inspiration and the instruction to conduct it in Munger as an annual activity of Sannyasa Peeth. This is the second year of the yajna. The first yajna was conducted last year without much information being sent to anybody. Even this year, information has travelled only through word of mouth. Invitations were sent out late and people did not have time to respond, yet thousands are coming to participate. We do not even have space for everyone, as the number of rooms is limited. However, we hope that in the course of time proper facilities will develop so all of you can enjoy your stay here.

This year, the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is being conducted during the month known as the month of God, according to the Indian lunar calendar. There is a story about

it. There are twelve months in one year, and one day all these twelve months took human form and went to Lord Narayana and said, “You have created twelve months, but the sins of the people are so heavy that we are all burdened. We need to give relief to our shoulders from the weight of these sins.” Narayana said, “In order to lighten your burden, I will create an extra month.”

Traditionally, this month is known as *Mala Masa*, meaning ‘the bad month’. However, this month became very sad and said, “How can I be bad?” He took human form, went to Sri Krishna, and said, “I have been created as the thirteenth lunar month, but the name I have been given is not a nice name; people think I am bad.” Sri Krishna asked, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Mala Masa, the bad month.” Sri Krishna said, “Don’t worry. You will henceforth be known by my name, *Purushottam Masa*, the month of God, and all the auspicious spiritual activities conducted in this month will become a direct offering to me.” Thus, any spiritual endeavour that one undertakes in this period is offered directly to God.

Significantly, after thirty-six years, Purushottam Masa is falling in the month of September. This is very auspicious, so remember that during this period, anything that you do with good intention, pure intention, benevolent, compassionate or loving intention, is being offered to God. When you come to this event and participate in this program, connect yourself with the invocation of the cosmic power that is taking place here.

Instructions for participation

You have all been given hats today and remember to have your hat on when you are in the sun. It is not a gift for you to carry home; use it and then before you go, leave it behind. People have spent money to bring these hats here for you, so treat them with respect and dignity and leave them behind at the time of departure so that other people can also avail of this facility. Also, in this hot and humid weather you will



sweat a lot and not realize that you are becoming dehydrated. So drink at least four litres of water a day, just like you take medicine, whether you feel like it or not. As a rule, you have to drink four litres of water a day and always have the hat on your head.

2013 and beyond

Tomorrow is a very special day; it is the 125th birthday of our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda. We begin the yajna tomorrow and it will culminate on 12th September, which is the sannyasa day of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda. This five-day period, from 8th to 12th, is the time selected by

Sri Swamiji for the invocation of Lakshmi-Narayana here at Sannyasa Peeth.

You know the statement, “No pain, no gain.” Here, the pain is in the form of heat and humidity, but it is not insurmountable. We can face it with dignity while we focus ourselves on this worship, this *aradhana*. I am sure that by the time you leave you will have experienced the grace of Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda in your life, and that you will return home to your families with their blessings.

Swami Sivamurti: Swamiji, there are different rumours going around about what your plans might be for the coming years, 2013, 2014, 2015, and I was wondering if you could clarify your plans for us, now that we are all gathered here for this auspicious occasion.

Swami Niranjan: God laughs three times. The first time He laughs is when the doctor says to the patient, “I will cure you.” The second time God laughs is when the priest says to the flock, “I will save you.” The third time God laughs is when you say, “I have made this plan.” God says, “Okay, you made the plan, now let me change it.” Therefore, I do not want to be the laughing stock of God by telling you what plans I have. However, you know that next year, 2013, is the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga. It is rare in history that a spiritual organization attains its golden jubilee and looks ahead to the next jubilee.

In preparation for the golden jubilee, the sannyasins of Ganga Darshan will travel throughout India in 2013 from January to June. Then in October we shall host the World Yoga Convention. Many other events and programs are also being organized for next year. We call it the ‘Golden Jubilee Year’, commencing in February on Basant Panchami, the foundation day of the ashram, and culminating in October with the World Yoga Convention.

For the last fifteen years we have conducted a three-day Sri Yantra Aradhana on Basant Panchami. It is a beautiful and powerful invocation. With that we will begin the Golden

Jubilee Year of the Bihar School of Yoga. Then, every month there will be various smaller scale activities with speakers coming to give their inspiration, their satsang, lectures and teachings. The major programs at Munger next year will be Basant Panchami, Guru Poornima, Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna and finally, the World Yoga Convention.

After the World Yoga Convention I will embark on an all-India tour, visiting each and every village, each and every town, seeing this beautiful country and sharing the blessings of the gurus which will manifest at the time of the World Yoga Convention.

Then in 2015, I will recommence my travels outside the country. However, I will not be going for the purpose of a one- or two-day seminar or teaching programs; I will go either to a convention, if one is conducted anywhere in the world, or I will go silently and quietly to those places where people invite me without any program. These are the only travel plans: travelling either for conventions or for personal and private visits without any program.

In terms of programs abroad and within India, right now Swami Satsangi is travelling, and in a few years time the next generation of sannyasins like Swami Suryaprakash will be ready to travel and conduct seminars, lectures, and other activities. You have seen the sport called the relay race? There are four people and a baton; each person runs 250 metres with the baton, passes it on to the next runner waiting, and then that other person runs their part of the race until the next person's turn. I have done my running. I ran with the baton of yoga for forty years, both within India and abroad. I have travelled from the age of ten until the age of fifty: forty years of travelling. Sri Swamiji ran from 1963 to 1983, twenty years, and then he passed the baton over to me. I ran, and now the baton has been passed to somebody else. They will run for whatever time they can, and then the baton will be passed on to somebody else. In this way, the race continues. I have done my leg of the race, and I know I have been successful and excelled in the race.

Satsang 3

8 September 2012, Morning

Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna dedication

Swami Niranjan: Today is the 8th of September and we begin this auspicious Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna with the havan of Sri Durga, dedicated to our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda. On this day, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, he came to this earth, and his presence guided and inspired millions of people to live a divine life, to live a life filled with positive and virtuous qualities. He defined that to be the aim of human life.

Swami Sivananda ignited the flame of inspiration in his disciples, and in the course of time, his disciples became masters in their own right, carrying forward the message that Swami Sivananda had given to all humanity. This Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is dedicated to his teachings and efforts to elevate human consciousness. With respect and reverence in our hearts and minds, we dedicate this event to Sri Swami Sivananda.

Sankalpa of the yajna

As prasad of this yajna, a sankalpa has been taken by the acharyas for the welfare, happiness and fulfilment of each and every individual, to eradicate and overcome distress and suffering. You should receive this sankalpa in your life with an open heart, as you are all searching for how to overcome your distresses, whether they be physical, psychological, social or spiritual.

Along with the other things you will receive as prasad, you will be given a *kalash*, a pot, which contains rice. This *kalash* is known as *akshaya patra*, the ever-full vessel, and the rice contained within it is sanctified rice, filled with the sankalpa of sannyasins and the grace of God. Whenever you cook your meal, just add five or six grains of rice from this pot into your meal, and in that way, derive the benefit of the yajna and the sankalpa of God and guru. Before you finish the pot of rice, add more rice to it so that it becomes a continuous process of mixing, whereby you will always receive the grace of Lakshmi and Narayana.



The power of hope

Once, there were four candles burning. After burning for some time, one candle went out. Before going out, it said, “My name is Love, and nobody knows me.” That is true; for everybody love is physical, carnal, sensual and sensorial. There is no understanding of pure love any more. So the candle burnt out. After some time, the second candle went out. As it was going out, it said, “My name is Compassion, but people don’t understand me. People have become too selfish. Nobody cares for anybody else. There is no compassion on earth any more,” and it died. After some time, the third candle also went out. Before going out, it said, “My name is Peace, and nobody knows me. People desire me, but they do not know me.” Saying that, it died.

A child came by and saw the three burnt out candles, as well as one candle still burning, and wondered what had happened. The burning candle spoke to him, “I am a candle and my name is Hope. With me, you can light all the other candles.” The child took this candle called Hope and with it he relit the other three candles named Love, Compassion and Peace.

Never lose hope in your life. Hope is the strength of human life; it keeps us going. In all the difficult times, it is hope that inspires us to trudge on, to carry on and move on. It is hope that has brought us here today to connect with the energy of Narayana and Lakshmi, to connect with the energy of guru, so that their grace can continue to illuminate our paths and our lives.

The example of our gurus

In the life of our paramguru, Swami Sivananda, we see two main traits. The first is the zeal to serve and the second is the ability to see divinity in each and every person. The zeal to serve is known as *seva*. *Seva* is normally translated simply as ‘service’; however, that is an incorrect definition. *Seva* actually means service in which you transcend your own selfish nature, become selfless and connect with everybody.

Seva is not service with expectation, seva is service without expectation.

What do we need in our lives? When we are distressed, we need somebody to put their hands on our shoulders. When we are alone, we need a stranger to come and give us a nice smile. When we have fallen, we need somebody who can come and help us get back up. A person with such qualities is not a selfish person; he is a selfless person.

Swami Sivananda was the epitome of selfless seva. In his autobiography he says, “I have troubled my body a lot; I have performed many austerities. My body is tired. It aches and at times it is sick. However, when I see a person who needs my service, my body receives the energy; I do not know from where. I am ever ready to serve anybody, twenty-four hours of the day, regardless of my physical or mental state and condition.” Seva is reflected in the life of Sri Swami Sivananda.

Regarding the second characteristic of aradhana, seeing and worshipping the divinity in each and every person or thing, he says, “I have never worshipped formally in a temple, but whenever I see a woman, I see her as manifestation of Shakti. I bow down with respect in front of her and mentally say the mantra of Shakti: *Om Durgayai Namah, Om Saraswatyai Namah, Om Lakshmyai Namah*. With those mantras in my mind, I adore and worship the lady who is in front of me. When I see a man, I think him as the representative of Narayana, Shiva, Brahma, and I bow my head in respect to that man and mentally say the mantra *Om Namo Narayana, Om Namah Shivaya*. That is my aradhana, that is the way I see divinity in each and every one.”

The highest qualities of life have been expressed so simply in the life of paramguru Sri Swami Sivananda. These are the two traits that come alive when we study his autobiography. A person who is arrogant cannot be a saint. A person who is selfish cannot be a saint or even a spiritual luminary. The true spiritual luminary, the true saint, the true sannyasin, is a person who is totally selfless and does not crave anything for his or her own self.

You have seen the life of Sri Swami Satyananda. He had everything, but he chose to live most simply. People were always ready to give him anything that he desired, but he always chose to live in the simplest manner, as a humble person and not one with the arrogant attitude of 'I am a guru'. He was the humblest of the humble, the kindest of the kind, the most compassionate of humans. He was the epitome of the teaching of our paramguru and we know him as the crown jewel of Swami Sivananda's group of disciples. With such a strong tradition, with such luminous examples as Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda, how can we go astray? We just have to keep our inspiration in focus and alive. With that lamp of inspiration, with that lamp of hope, we can illuminate our life once again and make it full of light.



Satsang 4

8 September 2012, Afternoon

Oneness of Spirit

Swami Niranjan: The *ahuti* or offering into the fire will be given during the chanting of *Purusha Suktam* and *Sri Suktam*. *Purusha Suktam* is one of the oldest vedic *richas*, or verses, describing the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of God in the form of Narayana. The *yajna* will be conducted along with *Sri Suktam*, which is a chant devoted to Mother Lakshmi, to bring material and spiritual prosperity. Many of you, especially Indians, will know these two *suktas*, so you can follow along as the chanting is being conducted.

During this *yajna* we are worshipping Narayana. As *sannyasins*, we follow the tradition of Shiva; therefore, people question why we are worshipping and invoking Narayana. The difference between the two is in the mind. It does not exist in the spirit, nor does it exist in the sentiments. The difference only exists in the mind, in the intellect. Remember what Maharishi Aurobindo said: “In the beginning, the intellect was my friend. At the end, the intellect became my worst enemy.” This is an indication that at a certain point you have to leave behind the intellect and connect with sentiments.

The purpose of the intellect is for your survival in the world and in society, and the purpose of emotions and sentiments is for connecting you with your divine,

transcendental nature. If you use your emotions in the world, you will always suffer. You have experienced this. You get emotional with your friends, you get emotional with your family, and due to emotion you become attached, the mind becomes clouded; proper judgment cannot take place, expectations develop, and when expectations are not fulfilled, grief is experienced. All this is due to your *buddhi*, intellectual ability.

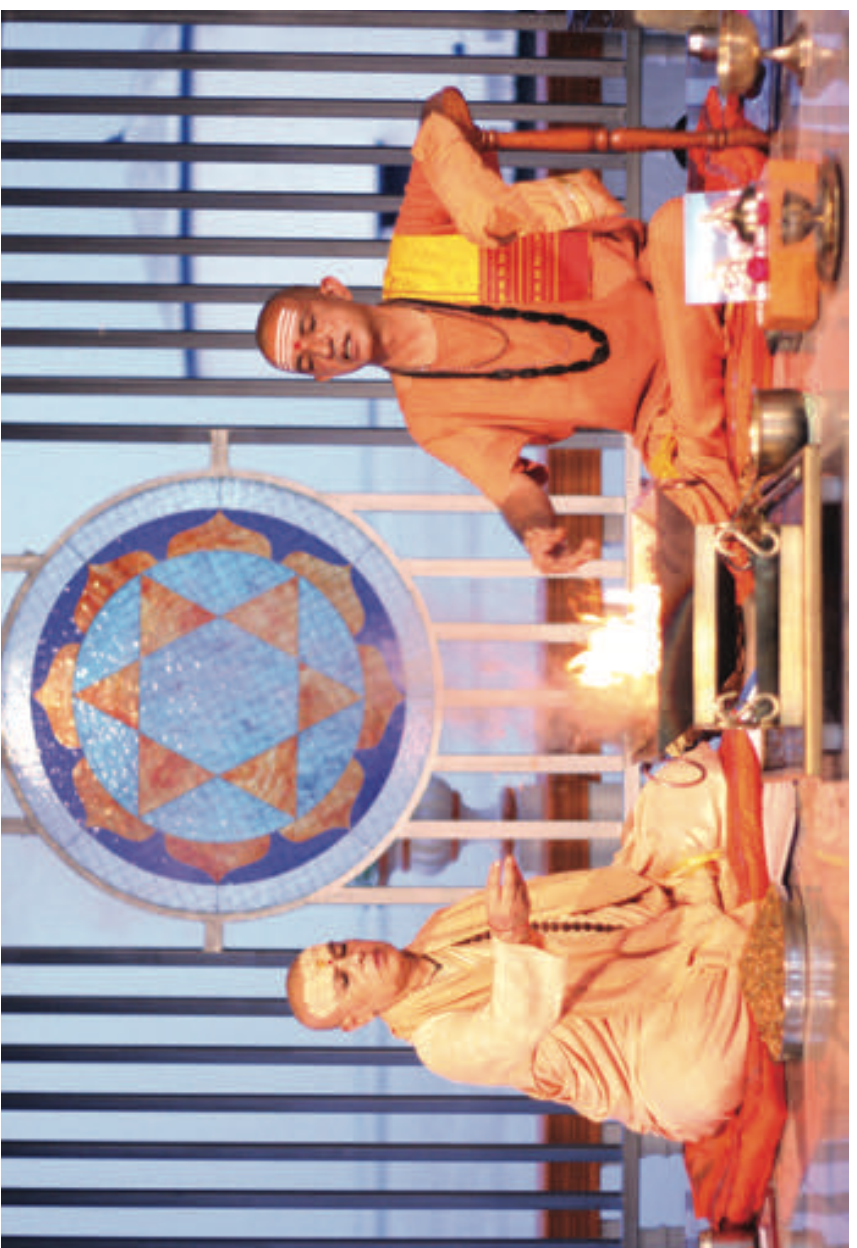
Buddhi allows you to attach; buddhi does not allow you to detach. I know this, as all of you ask me the question, “How to detach?” Nobody asks me the question, “How to attach?” You are attached; however, you are attached to the petty things in life. Husband, wife, children, property, finances; these are petty things in life, they come and go, they crave you and you crave them, you are attached to them and in the course of time, this brings grief. Emotions are also sentiments that can connect you with your transcendental nature, but instead, you use your emotions to connect with the world.



The sutra in spiritual life is, “Use your intellect to survive in the world with dignity and use your emotions and sentiments to connect yourself with your inner spirit.” If you follow this principle, you will always be happy. However, the moment you mix intellect and emotions, you are creating a muddle in your own head. If you fall into the pit, it is your duty to get yourself out of the pit. Use your intellect and emotions properly. They are both aids to survive in this world: intellect in the material world, emotions in the spiritual world.

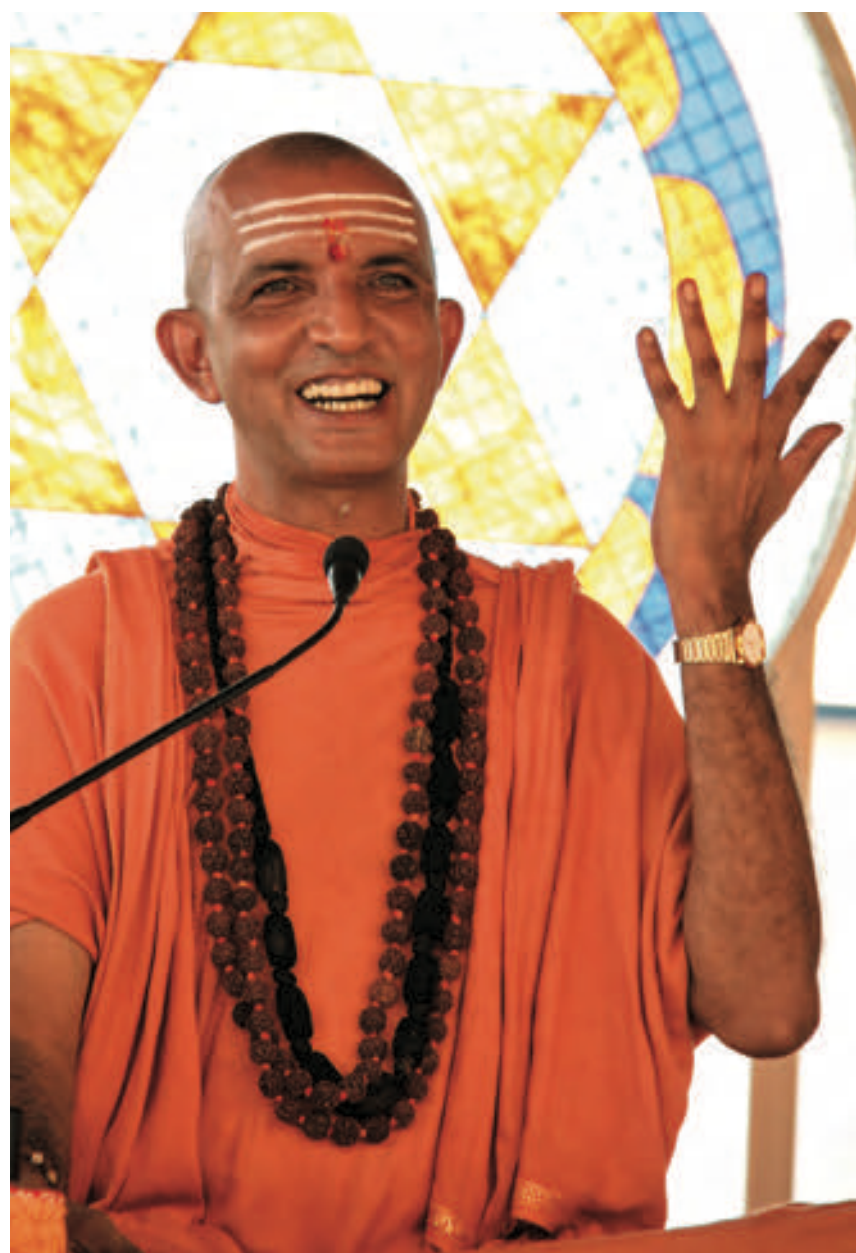
Narayana and Shiva, or any other deity for that matter, are not different. They are expressions of one and the same energy. The person you are when you are born, when you are young, when you are old, and when you die, are they four different people? It is the same person undergoing transformation at each age. In the same manner, Brahma is the boy, the baby, the creator; Vishnu is the youth, the preserver, the sustainer; and Shiva is old, the changer, the death, and the three represent the continuation of the same energy.

Traditions and sects have created differences between manifestations and experiences. However, human experience in all the traditions and sects has always been the same. At one point, when you overcome your own duality in life, which is caused by the intellect and the mind, you realize the oneness of spirit. In that oneness of spirit, the emotions become pure and the sentiments reach out to everyone, and that is the teaching that our paramguru and our guru, Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda, have given to us.

















Satsang 5

8 September 2012, Evening

The divine life of Swami Sivananda

Swami Niranjan: We are celebrating the 125th birthday of our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati. On the horizon one day there appeared a bright sun that gave light and warmth, and illuminated the path for everyone who stood under its light. That sun was our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda.

Swami Sivananda was an incarnation of Shiva. Within his lineage, seven generations ago there was a famous saint of South India called Appaya Dikshitar, a great devotee of Lord Shiva. One day, Shiva appeared to him in a dream and said, “I shall take birth in your family in the seventh generation.” Sure enough, seven generations later the sun arose on the horizon of this world, and this sun was known as Swami Sivananda Saraswati. Shiva had fulfilled the promise that he had made to Appaya Dikshitar.

From his birth, Swami Sivananda showed himself to be endowed with special qualities that very few people in this world possess. His special qualities were faith and belief. His life revolved around *seva*, selfless giving and serving, and *aradhana*, experiencing, seeing, worshipping the divine spark in the heart of each and every living being. These two aspects, *seva* and *aradhana*, became part and parcel of his life, especially while he was practising medicine as a doctor in Malaya. During this time the *samskaras* of faith and belief

ignited within him. He came across a sadhu visiting Malaya from whom he received the prasada of a book called *Brahma Jnanam*, meaning, 'the knowledge divine' or 'the knowledge supreme'. Reading this book was enough to ignite the flame of renunciation of the selfish qualities.

Swami Sivananda did not renounce his family, he did not renounce his friends; he did not renounce his followers and disciples. Similarly, Swami Satyananda never renounced anyone. They simply renounced their attachment, the attachments that bind one to the people around them, to the community and the world. Their minds became universal.

It is not the renouncing of the people outside which is important; rather, it is the renunciation of the attachments that you have inside for each and every one with whom you are connected. These attachments hold you down like the strings of a balloon. Once you are able to release the strings, the balloon will rise.

There are six strings that hold you down, six limitations. The first is *kama*, sensorial and sensual passion, always seeking delight, searching for happiness, avoiding the realities that life can show you. Kama is indulging in the cravings for pleasure which are physical, emotional, sensorial or sensual in nature, and not spiritual. The second is *krodha*, anger, frustration, anxiety or agitation. You are buffeted by *krodha* every moment, every day. The third is *lobha* or greed: 'What do I not have which other people have? I should have that.' That is greed. That is competitiveness. That is comparison.

The fourth is *moha* or delusion, identifying with the pleasures and pains of the body. This insect is crawling on my head, but it will only crawl for a few seconds and then fly off. Why should I be disturbed by insects? They are not going to attach themselves to my skin forever. The appropriate attitude is acceptance, and not fighting against the current. Thinking that you can fight the current is the biggest delusion of life. If you are experiencing grief, release it. If you are experiencing happiness, release that

too. Just experience shanti, just experience oneness, and not attachment.

The fifth is *mada* or arrogance. Everyone is an arrogant fool, as despite your knowledge and understanding you do not live what you believe in. Only a fool lives that kind of life. A fool lives the life that he does not believe to be real, or that he believes to be real, depending on what type of fool he is. Each one is a fool: an intelligent fool, an intellectual fool. There is no simplicity; there is no innocence of heart and mind. Everyone is trying to milk the other person to the maximum; disciples try to milk their guru and the guru also tries to milk the disciples. Each one is manipulating the other, and believing in that manipulation is arrogance. If you believe you can manipulate other people, that is arrogance.

The sixth is *matsarya*, envy and jealousy, two qualities that lead to hatred. These are the enemies that control, govern and conquer your life and your good efforts and attempts. How many people are able to keep their sankalpa shakti and do their mantra japa, one mala or two malas a day? How many people try to find excuses? 'I can't do my japa today due to this reason, that reason, I'm too tired, I've been out to a party', and so on. You can spend three, four, five hours at a party to please others, but you cannot spend ten minutes quietly to please your *antar atma*, the inner self. Hypocrisy leads to envy, jealousy and hatred.

These are the six enemies, the six limitations that you have to confront in your day-to-day life. Swami Sivananda said that you can conquer these six enemies by leading a more balanced, sattwic and virtuous life. If you can live life in that manner, your life will be divine and unfolding at all times, rather than gross and subject to decay. Your mind, your heart, your creative expressions will unfold all the time. That was the teaching given by Swami Sivananda through service and through worship.

We will now conduct this Rudrabhisheka, and it is a special time, as even Yogeshwara is present here today. Yogeshwara

sits at Satyam Udyan in Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth for the whole year and once a year he travels to Paduka Darshan for this event. Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is the aradhana, the invocation, of his ishta devata, his *aradhya*, his beloved, Narayana. Narayana is part of Shiva; Shiva is part of Narayana. Therefore, if we are worshipping Shiva, Narayana comes to see that worship, and if we are worshipping Narayana, Shiva comes to see that worship. Accordingly, Shiva, in the form of Sri Yogeshwara, has come from Ganga Darshan to participate in and to be a witness of this auspicious event and this 125th birthday celebration of Swami Sivananda.

Remember, Sri Swamiji always said, “To think of Swami Sivananda is yoga.” Therefore, in his memory, we are all united today.



Satsang 6

9 September 2012, Morning

Purpose of yajna

Swami Niranjana: We are participating in the second day of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna.

Yajna is a very ancient tradition of this country. Since time immemorial the rishis and the seers have been conducting yajnas. Today people believe that yajna is only a fire ceremony or worship or the invocation of divinity. This is true, yajna is definitely all that, but beyond this there is much more. Our guru, Sri Swamiji, has explained that every action you perform, when offered to the divine, is known as yajna. The sharing of wisdom is known as *jnana yajna*. Auspicious actions performed for the welfare of others are known as *karma yajna*. Invocation of divine power is known as *deva yajna*. In this manner, many different yajnas have been prescribed in our tradition by the sages, rishis and munis of this country. However, the point is that anything and everything, when offered to the divine, becomes yajna.

Sri Swamiji has further explained that the word 'yajna' is composed of three letters: 'ya', 'ja' and 'na' which indicate production, distribution and consumption. The farmer produces the grains at the farm; that is production. The grain then goes to the market and is distributed. People purchase it and take it home; that is distribution. When it reaches the home, people consume it; that is *bhoga* or

consumption. Production, distribution and consumption: these are the three aspects that comprise the meaning of the word 'yajna'.

Whatever you produce in your life, you always distribute it to other people. If you are grieving, you do not you keep your grief to yourself; you tell everybody, "I'm in grief." The grief is your production; however, you are distributing it to everybody. You are distributing grief to everybody, and when other people feel sad, they are consuming your grief and feeling sad. In the same manner, if you are happy, you share your happiness with others and other people become happy due to your happiness. This is yajna. You create something, you share that with others and others also are affected by it. Therefore, yajna has a very broad meaning. It is not just a ritual; there are other components of yajna as well.

Components of yajna

The other components of yajna are: mantra, yantra, satsang, daan and mandala. Through mantra, we are invoking the divine energy, the divine power. After invoking that divine shakti, it is given a seat, a place to sit on, which is the yantra, made specifically for that purpose. Here it is the Sarvato Bhadra Yantra, the *asana* or seat upon which Narayana and Lakshmi are invoked. The third component is satsang, which is happening in between the chanting of mantras. Daan is happening all the time during the event; people are taking the prasad of yajna. Mandala is created by all these processes. These are the components of yajna.

Yajna is one event for which, in this country, nobody needs an invite. Nobody requires any invitation, as it is ingrained in our natures, our minds, our personalities to believe that whenever or wherever a yajna is taking place, auspiciousness and goodness is being shared by everyone. Therefore, without any invitation everyone comes to a yajna simply to have darshan, simply to be in the presence of that auspiciousness.



Relief for the soul

Recall how hot it was yesterday; everybody was sweating. However, when the weather changed, there was relief for the body, there was relief for the mind and the heart, and the environment became pleasant. When the sun comes out it will again get hot, then again the sun will be hidden by the clouds and it will become cool and pleasant. In the same manner, when you participate in a yajna, it is like refreshing the soul, the mind and the senses in the shade.

When you are extroverted, your senses are firing all the time. Your mind is active all the time and it is only firing in the realm of the senses and sense objects. This creates strife, tension, anxiety and stress. However, when you come to this yajna and spend ten minutes, one hour, one day or five days here, there is a total change of energies in the mind and in the heart. You experience bliss, you experience peace and you experience happiness. You receive new inspiration, you receive a new focus and for some time you are able to

detach yourself, your thoughts, your mind, from outer things and connect with your *aradhya*, your ishta, the *aradhana* or worship, the invocation and the mantras. This connection brings relief to the soul. Therefore, yajna is like the cool breeze on a hot, sunny day. Amidst the heat of the world, when you participate in the yajna, the spirit is fanned by a cool breeze and you go back a new person, a new body, a new mind, a new self.



Satsang 7

9 September 2012, Afternoon

Universal invitation to auspiciousness

Swami Niranjan: This is the second day of the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna. In today's afternoon session we will be conducting *sahasrarchana*, the offering of items while chanting the thousand names of Narayana and of Lakshmi, the *Vishnu Sahasranama* and *Lakshmi Sahasranama*.

Tomorrow in the afternoon, a special invocation is going to take place here. The people gathered have come from different cities and regions in India and from different cities and countries around the world, too. From all the people who have come, we have selected a group of one hundred who represent these different cities, states and countries. They will perform tomorrow's *sahasrarchana* with one hundred different items. In the morning, people selected will be guided to a special enclosure. There they will receive further instructions for the program that will take place in the afternoon. Sannyasins, visitors, guests, everyone will be participating in this, so be ready.

As for the gifting, many people received prasad yesterday. In this prasad, people are receiving an *akshaya kalash* filled with *akshat* or blessed, uncooked rice. This *akshat*, this rice, contains a *sankalpa* to bring peace, prosperity and happiness into your life. This is the promise of Narayana. Make sure you are here, as at any time your name may be called out.

Narayana's blessing

Narayana is the sustainer of the world. He is the provider for everyone. One day while he was out travelling around the world providing to people, his consort Lakshmi prepared his meal and was waiting for him to return. However, he did not come for a long time. When he finally came, Lakshmi asked him, "My Lord, why did you delay so much?" Narayana said, "Well, I was providing food for everyone." Lakshmi asked him, "You provide food for everyone?" Narayana said, "Yes, even for the birds, reptiles and insects."

Lakshmi decided to test the powers of Narayana. She picked up an ant and put it in a small container, wrapped it in her sari and kept quiet about it. The next day, Narayana went about providing and distributing for everyone. When he returned, Lakshmi asked him, "My Lord, did you provide for everybody?" Narayana said, "Yes I have given food to everyone; I have provided for everyone." Lakshmi wanted to prove that he was wrong, so she took out the container from her sari and opened it to show Narayana the ant which she had hidden and which had not eaten anything. Wonder of wonders, when she opened the container she saw one grain of rice which the ant was eating happily. The meaning is that God provides for everyone, and God will also provide for you. The only condition is that you have to believe and not demand. Those who demand can be refused, but those who believe are never refused.

Satsang 8

10 September 2012, Morning

Grace of Narayana and Lakshmi

Swami Niranjan: Today, on the third day of Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, we shall conduct a special invocation in the afternoon. During the sahasranamas, the chanting of the thousand names of Narayana and Lakshmi, one hundred representatives selected from different cities and states of India, and from different countries of the world, will gather to participate in this aradhana. This will be an international invocation, an international worship dedicated to Narayana and Mother Lakshmi.

The sustaining power of life is Narayana. The trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva all have specific roles to play in our life. Brahma is the creator, and after the process of creation is done, his work is over. Shiva is the changer, the destroyer; he removes the bondage of the world, of life and karma. He gives liberation, elevates the bound consciousness and merges it with the supreme consciousness. His work is at the end. However, from birth to death, it is the grace of Narayana and Lakshmi that sustains us. Narayana is the sustainer, the provider, not only of food or happiness, but of everything that we seek and desire in life, from shoes, to money, to property, to children, to family, to friends. Without his grace, we would be very lonely in this world. We wouldn't have anybody whom we could call our own.

Narayana has two forms: Vishnu and Narayana. Vishnu means one who pervades the entire universe: *Vyapaktva iti Vishnuh* – “One who is pervading the universe is Vishnu.” The figure of Vishnu is depicted as standing, as you can see here on the altar. He stands on a lotus holding the conch, mace, wheel and lotus in four hands. The other form is that of Narayana. He reclines in the ocean of milk on the body



of the thousand-headed serpent called Ananta. The figure of Hari or Vishnu is standing and the figure of Narayana is reclining. Today we will experience Narayana as a deity with a single face as well as a thousand faces. Narayana with a single face is the impersonal transcendental self, who does not have to manifest in a myriad forms, who is self-contained, self-effulgent and self-aware. When that transcendental Narayana manifests in the world and becomes the indweller of all hearts then he acquires a thousand faces, thousand eyes, thousand limbs. Everything becomes a thousand, manifold, which is symbolic of the fact that Narayana lives within each one of us. The *Purusha Sukta* begins with the statement: *Om sahasrashirsha purushah. Sahasrakshah sahasrapat* – “The Supreme Being has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.” This is his Narayana shakti; this Narayana power manifests within each one of us and sustains us from birth to death, giving us everything in plenty. Only those who are hypnotized by the material objects and senses, despite receiving plenty, feel that they have nothing and crave for more. That is incorrect, as Narayana provides for each and every one equally.

Narayana is ably assisted by his shakti, known as Lakshmi. She is the symbol of prosperity, of not only material wealth, but also of spiritual wealth. Remember this, if you acquire material wealth you may be a pauper in spiritual life, but if you acquire spiritual wealth you will be prosperous in material life as well. Therefore, do not pray to Mother Lakshmi for material prosperity. Then you will only get the material wealth and not the spiritual wealth. If you pray to Mother Lakshmi for spiritual prosperity you are sure to receive the spiritual and the material both. That way you can transform and transcend this material life, and experience and realize the divine nature, which is in each one of you. Our paramguru, Swami Sivananda says that essentially every individual is divine. However, due to the garb that you wear, you forget your real nature and identify only with the garb.

Representation of divinity

Today is Monday, Lord Shiva's day, the day when the Shiva invocation is performed. We will be performing the invocation of Narayana, and Shiva will definitely be present here in order to perform it, witness it and be part of it. Therefore, we will receive the benefit of having Narayana and Shiva both together in our midst; in our hearts, minds, thought and speech.

It's a small world after all.

It's a world of laughter; it's a world of tears

It's a world of joy, and a world of fears.

There is so much that we share

That it's time we become aware

It's a small world after all.

You are all representing that small world, and each part should be represented.

Narayana is here in the form of water and he is gracing this entire land. He is giving new life to the land. He is also giving succour to you from the heat of yesterday and the day before. It is pleasant now; he is giving you this pleasure in the form of rain. You cannot complain, "Oh, it is raining", as through this rain he is making you comfortable.

In the afternoon aradhana, the nine females who have been selected will represent the nine forms of Durga, the highest cosmic power, and participate in the aradhana. Apart from these nine females, everyone is male. However, every male should remember that during this aradhana, in the mind and heart you have to become a female. There is no need to have any kind of operation, but in your heart and mind, leave behind your hardness and stiffness, and become soft, gentle and sensitive like a female.

The men, except the sannyasins, will wear a white dhoti and a white kurta, and all the females will wear saris and nice jewellery. Dress up. After all, you are representing the highest cosmic power, so how can you be simple? She is the giver of everything to everyone; you cannot sit there representing her like a pauper.

Invoking the Narayana within

As part of this Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, the program begins at six o'clock in the morning with the Katyayani havan, and this will continue here at Paduka Darshan until the 12th September. All are welcome to participate in the Katyayani havan. The next program begins immediately afterwards at eight o'clock with the invocation of Sri Lakshmi and Sri Narayana, chanted by the sannyasins and residents of Ganga Darshan Yogashram. This chanting is very complex. Even Indians cannot follow it fluently; however, the sannyasa trainees who have come are able to chant the mantras better than Indians. Indians get tongue-twisted, yet the trainees are chanting flawlessly. They have perfected this chanting in a very short period: maybe a month, perhaps less.

The chanting starts at eight o'clock and lasts for one hour. At nine o'clock the pandits begin the first part of the morning



ritual which is the pooja, the invocation. That is followed by the havan in the afternoon, during which the *Purusha Suktam* and the *Sri Suktam* are chanted. These are the *suktas* or verses dedicated to Narayana and Lakshmi. The *Purusha Suktam* is for Narayana and the *Sri Suktam* is for Lakshmi.

The *Purusha Suktam* states that Narayana is one-headed and also thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-armed, thousand-footed; he has a thousand limbs. Everything is in thousands, meaning that he is part and parcel of us and we have to invoke that power within us. He is singular when there is no duality, and when he encounters duality he multiplies, as everything, every form of life, whether vegetable, mineral, human, animal, insect, reptilian or bird, is permeated by the shakti of Narayana.

If the entire life is permeated by the shakti of Narayana then life itself is Narayana. You are living in the lap of Narayana, yet you do not know that. You are fighting your personal battles, suffering from heart attacks and high blood pressure as you cannot face your own stress and anxiety, and have to resort to pills and other means just to fall asleep. If you are able to awaken the shakti of Narayana within, you will become the source of peace for many, the source of happiness for many, a helping hand for many. That is the ultimate aim of human life as taught to us by our gurus, Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda.

In the afternoon the aradhana will begin at two o' clock with the invocation of Lakshmi and Narayana chanted by the sannyasins. At three o' clock the aradhana of sahasrarchana will begin and it will end by four-thirty. There are hundreds of different items to be offered, including foodstuff, *alankara*, beautification items such as cosmetics and mirrors. After that, the havan will start, and will end by six o'clock, at which time all of you who have done the archana will perform arati from where you are seated. Be sure to raise the arms high, without dropping the deepak. After arati we will conclude today's program.

Satsang 9

10 September 2012, Afternoon



Divine invocation

Swami Niranjan: The *Vishnu Sahasranama*, the thousand names of Vishnu, will be chanted first, during which you will be offering the item that is in front of you into the designated plate or basket one thousand times. Next we will chant the *Lakshmi Sahasranama*, and during that you will again offer the items that are in front of you one thousand times. They are

exact in number, so be very attentive. One thousand should not become one thousand and one. Be attentive to every *namaha*, as with every *namaha* you must place the offering.

Today you are not representing yourself, you are representing the entire world community, and you are praying to Sriman Narayana and Mother Lakshmi for the entire world as well. You are praying, ‘Let there be peace, prosperity and plenty everywhere, all around the globe,’ as you represent people who have come from different parts of the globe and from different states and cities of India. Today you represent humanity which is seated here at the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna in Paduka Darshan, Munger. On behalf of humanity, you are offering your *shraddha* or faith to Sriman Narayana and Sri Lakshmi Ma. With peace in the heart, clarity of mind, purity of intention, make the offering with every *namaha*.

On this auspicious occasion, we also have the presence of the Peethadishwari of Rikhiapeeth, Swami Satsangi. She has just come from a hectic program in Rikhiapeeth, the week-





long celebration of Sivananda Janmotsav, from 2nd to 8th September. When we were celebrating Sivananda Janmotsav here and commencing the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, she was celebrating Sivananda Janmotsav there concluding the *Srimad Bhagavata* aradhana by Sushila Bhaktikiran. After completing the program there on the 8th, Swami Satsangi arrived here on the 9th, to be present for this joy-bestowing Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna.

Sankalpa for humanity

We have completed the first round of chanting, the *Vishnu Sahasranama*. With one hundred people, each offering an item one thousand times, one hundred thousand offerings have been made. The second round begins with the *Lakshmi Sahasranama*. With that another one thousand offerings will be made. This is a beautiful sadhana, invocation and aradhana that you are doing here. You may not realize it, as it is simple and done innocently. However, its impact will be far-reaching. What you have done is not a small thing, remember that. You have become a medium; you have taken a sankalpa for the whole of humanity, representing your

country, your people, your culture, your creed. So many people have come from the different states of India. Even Munger is represented here by the senior supporters and well-wishers of the ashram. All of you have taken a sankalpa for peace, plenty and prosperity, as these are the three main needs and demands of each and every one, from time immemorial until now.

In society, your needs and aspirations can be multifarious; however, all these multifarious desires and needs can be easily classified and categorized into these three compartments. You are seeking peace, you are seeking pleasure and happiness, and you are seeking abundance. You do not want any vacuum in life. You are all seeking abundance. Peace, plenty, and prosperity: this is the sankalpa that everybody is seeking in this world, the dream that everybody in this world shares. Therefore, the impact of this upasana is a very powerful one, a subtle one, and you will feel it later. In the simplicity of the process you may not even notice what is happening or what you are doing; however, the impact is far-reaching.

Completion of sahasrarchana

On the banks of the Mother Ganga, on the hallowed grounds of Paduka Darshan at Sannyasa Peeth, you have just completed a very important aradhana and archana, and for that, congratulations to all of you. It is a moment to congratulate, for as I mentioned earlier, this was the first time in the known history of Munger that during a Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna two hundred thousand offerings were made in one day, and of course, this is just the beginning.

Offerings of a thousand different items have been made. There are many varieties of dried fruit, flowers, jewellery with precious stones, grains, sweets, fruits: there about a hundred different varieties. Each item will be packed and given to you to bring peace, happiness, joy, prosperity, guru's grace and God's grace into your life, into your home, society, state, country, world. Remember, "There is just one moon and one golden sun, and a smile means welcome to everyone. Though

the oceans are wide, and the mountains divide, it's a small world after all."

Prasad of lotus

Those who completed this aradhana are coming forward and placing their offering in front of Lakshmi-Narayana, and are receiving an offered lotus as prasad. You have to keep this lotus, as along with the lotus you may get pieces of silver, gold or other jewels which have been offered to God. Therefore, if you receive this, keep the entire lotus in your place of pooja, look after it carefully, cherish it and be sanctified by it.



Satsang 10

11 September 2012, Morning

Program overview

Swami Niranjan: Today is the fourth day of the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna. The first day started with great dignity, respect and devotion, and along with the yajna we also celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda as well as his rebirth-day. I am informing you now that he was reborn on the night of 8th September, someplace, somewhere, in some part of India, and today he is three days old. The light has descended upon us. It was with that inspiration and hope, respect and devotion that we celebrated his janmotsav, offering our heartfelt love and the flowers of our sentiments.

On 9th September, everyone participated in the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, and then on 10th September one hundred people, representing the different states, countries and cities, participated in a special aradhana during sahasrarchana. Together, these one hundred people made two hundred thousand offerings. Apart from these offerings, all the people in the pandal were also chanting the *Vishnu Sahasranama* and the *Lakshmi Sahasranama*, so up to one crore of mantras were chanted yesterday while the offering was being conducted for the health, wealth and welfare of all the communities of the world. Peace, plenty and prosperity is the sankalpa of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, and it was with that sankalpa that these one hundred people participated

in the aradhana, representing different communities and countries of the world. Tomorrow, being the 12th of September, with respect, devotion, faith and dignity we will perform the celebrations of Sri Swami Satyananda's sannyasa day, as it was on this day that he received sannyasa initiation from his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda.

At 8.30 am, the sannyasins will begin the invocation of Sri Mahanarayana and Mahalakshmi, and by nine o'clock the acharyas will begin the poornahuti program which should end by twelve noon. After twelve o'clock, you will have your lunch and then return here by three o'clock. At three o'clock we shall begin the sannyasa *mahotsav*, celebration, of our beloved guru, Sri Swami Satyananda. Tomorrow evening many of you will depart for your homes, cities, states and countries with the memory of guru in your minds, with the image of Narayana and Lakshmi in your hearts and with prayers on your lips for peace, plenty and prosperity for one and all. This will be the program for tomorrow.

Today, during the *parikrama*, circumambulation, everyone in the pandal will be given the prasad of the offerings that were made yesterday to Devi. In this prasad, the ladies will be receiving *churis*, glass bangles, and *sindoor*, red vermilion, for their peace, plenty and prosperity. All the males will be receiving the other items, such as a mirror, comb, bindis, and so on. After receiving these items, all the males will go home and offer them to their wives, to the female elder of the family, believing, realizing and knowing that they are giving the gift of Narayana to Lakshmi at home. The female elder, or the wife, will receive that prasad from her husband, and if the husbands are humble enough, each of them will touch the feet of their wife tomorrow. And why not? It should happen.

Sri Swami Satyananda's sannyasa day

On 12th September, Sri Swamiji was initiated into the paramahansa order of the Dashnami Sannyasa tradition created by Adi Shankaracharya. This is the day we celebrate as his inspiration day, dedication day, sannyasa day,

commitment day. This is the day he became Swami Satyananda, the one we admire and love, and the one who we hold as our ideal of the highest achievement possible in this human birth in modern life.

The morning program will begin with the Katyayani havan at six o'clock. At 8.30 we shall meet again to invoke, through our prayers, the power of guru and the divine, and by nine o'clock the pandits and the acharyas will commence the concluding ceremonies of this beautiful and auspicious Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, which will reach its culmination around midday. We shall then meet here again at three o'clock in the afternoon to celebrate the sannyasa day of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, with the chanting of mantras, stotras and kirtans, abhisheka of Sri Yantra and Shivalinga.

In this manner, in joy and happiness, we will embark on this celebration tomorrow, and when we depart from here, we will be going with the name of guru and God on our lips, the impression of guru and God in our minds, and with faith and conviction as part of our hearts for all time to come. We will leave knowing that the grace of Sri Narayana and Mahalakshmi and the gurus of our *parampara*, tradition, will always be there to guide us whenever we feel distressed, whenever we fall down, whenever we feel we cannot find our way in the dark night. They will always be there with us, inspiring us, guiding us, goading us to reach new heights with each new step.



Satsang 11

11 September 2012, Afternoon



Three sankalpas of Sri Swamiji

Swami Niranjana: You are seated in the location of Sannyasa Peeth, which represents the third inspiration, the third sankalpa of Sri Swamiji's life. His first gift or *prasad* to humanity was the gift of yoga. From Munger he started a revolution of yoga and today the Munger tradition, the Satyananda Yoga tradition, is recognized and respected the world over as a classical, serious, simple and result-producing yoga system.

Sri Swamiji's second prasad to humanity was the establishment of Rikhiapeeth, where the three aspects of serving, loving and giving are emphasized to enable one to cultivate *atmabhava*, the feeling of unity within all. This quality of *atmabhava* is the teaching of Vedanta as enunciated by our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda. It is the culmination of Vedanta, and it is the culmination and final expression of human life as well. God-realization is an outcome of living a selfless, effective life, a life in which everyone, every being around you, is uplifted and touched. That is the real meaning of life, the life that our paramguru, Swami Sivananda lived and propagated, and the way of life our own guru, Swami Satyananda lived and propagated.

The third sankalpa, the third prasad given to humanity was Sannyasa Peeth, where one can imbibe the spiritual samskaras and cultivate the spiritual qualities in one's life. It is a place where one can become the spinal cord of society, to maintain society, to keep it standing on its two feet. By serving society, by knowing and imbibing the right samskaras and by understanding situations to which you are exposed, you cultivate a different and better you. It is a life of sacrifice, a life of discipline and a life of hardship, yet it is a way of living that brings glory, beauty, fragrance, coolness and shanti into one's life.

In the expression that defines our tradition – 'head, heart and hands' – yoga and Ganga Darshan represent the head, seva and Rikhia represent the heart, commitment and Sannyasa Peeth represent the hands. These are the three aspects that Swami Sivananda said one must cultivate and become better at expressing and performing. One must attain excellence. Sri Swamiji showed us the path of how to do it practically. Those who have eyes will see and those who have ears will hear, and the rest will remain witness to what is happening.

Swami Satsangi: There's nothing left to be said. Swami Niranjan has said it all. However, there is one thing that can be emphasized. In our lives, we often face struggle

and difficulty and no matter how hard we try or however small or large that difficulty may be, it cannot be overcome. We struggle and we struggle, yet we cannot overcome the difficulty. Then there are times when the very same difficulty is overcome easily without any struggle, without any anxiety and without any stress or strain.

There is a time for everything and this is the age for the growth of awareness. You have social awareness, you have intellectual awareness, you have the awareness to run your homes, to do your jobs; you have developed all those forms of awareness. However, I am not talking about the awakening of that awareness, as that is already awakened in you. I am talking about the awakening of a higher awareness, and that is the awakening of bhakti. The experience of universality, that is bhakti. To feel oneness, that is bhakti. To feel unity with creation, with one another, that is bhakti. And the source of bhakti is love.

On 6th June 2012, a planetary event took place. Venus eclipsed the sun. Between the earth and the sun was Venus, all in one line. That was a very significant event which last occurred in 1887, a hundred and twenty-five years ago, the year Swami Sivananda was born. This event represents the prominence of love, bhakti, devotion and surrender, and clearly indicates the areas where the growth of awareness will be facilitated, en masse, at this time.

You try to qualify for so many degrees and you make a rush for it when those courses are available. Well, for those who want to qualify, this one is available, starting now. This is the time for you to transform your baser emotions, the ones which act as a shield in your life, preventing you from experiencing happiness and bliss. They keep you in ignorance, in suffering, in anxiety, in fear. To break away from that negative shield and allow positivity to flow into you is bhakti. This is possible through a process. It is not just at random that you begin to practise bhakti. There is a process, a system. One of those is what you are experiencing now. How do you generate bhakti? Through the process of aradhana.



Aradhana means to call from the heart. To call someone from the heart is called aradhana. You have been calling and calling and calling; all your life you have been calling for something. When you called from your heart, it came to you. It is that feeling, that purity of heart, which has to be awakened for aradhana, as the heart is the medium through which you can experience the purity of bhakti. This process is now becoming easier for those who sincerely want to open this channel in their lives: the path of faith, the path of devotion, the path of surrender, the path of love. This path begins at home. You do not have to go out on the streets; it begins at home.

Tomorrow you have to hand the prasad that you received to your wives with an attitude of worship; that is a quality of the higher mind. Griha Lakshmi can be your wife, daughter, sister, mother or grandmother. This attitude of worship is what you have to inculcate if you want it to develop in your life. That is the purpose of aradhana: to transform the emotions into those of worship, adoration, adulation,

reverence, faith and surrender. Only then will those faculties be available to you which can totally transform you, which can totally transform your lives, your understanding, your responses, your reactions and even your accomplishments.

What has to be emphasized to those who are sincerely looking for that opening is that the time is now. Swami Satyananda has already indicated that. He said that yoga is to prepare the awareness. Through yoga you prepare your awareness. Yoga is not the goal; it is the means. It prepares you for that moment when you can express your emotions in a higher way, as that is the pathway. God is the destination, bhakti is the path, and you are the traveller.

Unfortunately, bhakti is seen in a religious and closed way. Bhakti is not religion; bhakti is transformation of the baser emotions into refined emotions, into energy. That energy is not up in the heavens, floating around in the sky. That energy is here and now, in front of you, behind you, below you, above you, beside you. To the right is Rama, to the left is Rama, above is Rama, below is Rama, everywhere is Rama. However, you have to activate that energy, and that energy is nuclear; it is so refined. You simply cannot manifest it unless you yourself refine that energy.

This collective effort is a step in that direction. You have to refine the energies that control your emotions, that control your actions, that control the head, the heart and the hands, and aradhana is the wonderful way prescribed. In the circle of creation, in the four yugas, now is the time when that is possible. It was not always possible to accomplish the task of shifting from selfishness to selflessness, from hatred to love, from negativity to positivity; it was not so easy. It has become easy to achieve in a simple way, through aradhana, in this time and age. Therefore, great souls have come to guide and grace us, to bless us, and we should not miss this opportunity. That is what I have to emphasize.

So, just to celebrate that, each one of you say, "I love you" to the person on either side of you. Not only do you have to say it, you also have to feel it.

A true sannyasin

Swami Niranjan: We know Swami Satyananda as he has been close to us, he has been a part of our life, he has been a part of our mind, he has been part of our inspiration and without him we would not be here today. His inspiration keeps guiding us and we all remember him as a sannyasin. Sannyasa was what he received from his guru, Swami Sivananda, and he lived that, he committed himself to that, and tomorrow is the day we celebrate his commitment and his birth into the sannyasa life.

Many people have taken sannyasa; however, they are not committed to that path, they are not living that ideal, they do not have that understanding of sannyasa. Your sannyasa is a sannyasa of convenience. The majority of people take the sannyasa of convenience, not the sannyasa of dedication. If you take the sannyasa of dedication then there is no demand, there is no choice; you simply flow with the shakti of guru. There is no today, there is no yesterday, there is no tomorrow; you are just one with that shakti of guru all the time. In the sannyasa of convenience, today you are here, you don't like something, so you decide to leave tomorrow. You do not like some attitude; you decide to disconnect tomorrow. That is the depth of your commitment; external situations can influence you and divert you from your true aspirations and the inspiration that brought you here in the first place.

Tomorrow, at 8.30 am we will begin with the invocation by the sannyasins and by nine o'clock the acharyas will begin the concluding ceremonies of the Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna which will finish by midday. We will meet here again at two o'clock. Tomorrow is Ekadashi, we will chant the entire *Bhagavad Gita* as per our ashram tradition. We will finish the chanting in one and a half hours.

At 3.30 pm we begin our aradhana on the occasion of Sri Swamiji's sannyasa day. The aradhana will consist of Rudrabhisheka and Sri Yantra abhisheka, and then Bhagavan will depart from here; they will go first and we will follow. This is the program for tomorrow.

Satsang 12

12 September 2012, Morning

Accomplishments of Sri Swami Satyananda

Swami Satsangi: The words from *Shiva Mahimna Stotra*, a very important stotra for aradhana, come to my mind. In this stotra it is said that even if all the pens, all the ink, all the words, all the sentences and all the paper in the world were made available, you still could not describe the greatness, the grandeur of Shiva. No words can express that. That is the sentiment that I have for my guru, Swami Satyananda. I feel that no words can ever truly express the person that he was, what his vision was or what his teachings were. Leaving his home at a young age and living at the feet of his guru in surrender, that was his accomplishment. How many people of that age can do that? They cannot. They are running after their desires, their ambitions and what they consider to be their needs. However, at a very young age, Sri Swamiji surrendered at the feet of his guru; that was his accomplishment. He then lived with total awareness of his guru at all times; that was his accomplishment.

We see the external things that he created: the institutions and the monuments. To have established all that in such a short span of time is, of course, an accomplishment. However, they are very ordinary in comparison to the real accomplishment of Swami Satyananda which he achieved in his lifetime and remained committed to throughout his life. No matter what he was doing, when he was speaking to you,

when he was teaching, when he was travelling, wherever he was, he remained committed to the goal of the evolution of self-awareness.

His definition of evolution of self-awareness is very different; correct, but different. He always said that the internal awareness is as important as the external awareness, and both have to grow side by side. Unfortunately, that is not how you live. People give importance to external awareness and they forget the inner life completely; they ignore it. Or they are totally aware of the inner life and they forget the external. That is not the way. There has to be a link between the external and the internal; only then can there be evolution. Even the Upanishads say that. That was his main accomplishment, and that is the goal that he inspires all to reach: the accomplishment of dual awareness.

When he first went to Rikhia there was nothing there; you all know that, you have seen it. There were no roads, no electricity, no telephones. In the midst of the wilderness, he started his sadhana, and at that time the whole construction of Rikhiapeeth began. There were hundreds of people milling around, bricks falling, sand being dropped, people yelling and screaming to get things done, and in the midst of it all he would sit and remain immersed in inner awareness. I had heard and I had thought that one has to go to the Himalayas to achieve inner awareness, peace of mind and tranquillity, but here was my guru, sitting in the middle of all the action yet immersed in inner awareness. Despite his immersion, he still knew when some car had come to the gate, even before the doorman knew it. He knew that the car had come and stopped, he knew how many people had got out by the opening and closing of the doors. That was the intensity of his external awareness and his internal awareness at the same time, and that was his main accomplishment. I asked him, "Do you not get disturbed by all of us when you are trying to concentrate?" He said, "No, not at all." This is the goal that everybody has to reach. This was his accomplishment, and with it Sri

Swamiji gave the very important teaching: that this goal is possible for each and every person to accomplish.

Today, Sri Swamiji is still a living presence, and the reason is that he achieved that goal in his lifetime. He is not extinguished as he awakened that illumined awareness in his lifetime, even while interacting with the world and teaching us that we too can attain that state. In my mind, that is his greatest accomplishment for which we should salute him. It is because of this that he is still able to guide us; it is because of this that he is still able to inspire us with his living presence, even though not in a physical body.

He uplifted each and every person with whom he came into contact. I do not know of anybody who has done that; that is his accomplishment. He sowed the seed of righteousness in millions of lives. He not only sowed, he also ploughed the land, he gave the fertilizer, the water, the irrigation, and he also made it blossom and bear fruit; that is his accomplishment. That fruit is still growing; the seed that he planted is still being nurtured and growing.

He always used to say, “Look Satsangi, does a thief wanting to steal announce it on the microphone and then go and rob?” No, he goes quietly. “I’ve stolen everybody’s heart, but they do not know it,” he said. “They don’t know it. I am sitting there and they do not know it.” Today we are beginning to know it, that he is sitting in the heart, in your heart, in my heart, in everybody’s heart. That is why it is important to become aware of the heart, as when you become aware of the heart, you will become aware of guru. He is sitting inside you, not outside, and that is why you have to emphasize the growth of the heart. As I have been saying for the last three days, this is the time when you can get that support, that assistance, that grace, and without grace it is not possible. It is not possible to open the doors of the heart in its purity, in its sanctity, in its crystalline form as rarefied energy, without grace. This is the time when that grace is available to humankind, so make the most of it.

Satsang 13

12 September 2012, Afternoon



A true disciple, a visionary, an inspiration

Swami Niranjan: The yajna concluded with the poornahuti, and now the celebration of the sannyasa day of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda.

Sri Swami Satyananda is our guru and a very special type of a person. There is a connection between guru and disciple; the true disciple is always connected with the guru; the two

become one. This was the sentiment that Swami Sivananda expressed about Sri Swamiji. Similarly, when Ramakrishna Paramahansa met Swami Vivekananda he said, “I have been waiting for you for a long time.” This connection between guru and disciple is not only of one lifetime, but spans many lifetimes. They are united. They are one soul in two bodies. This was recognized and acknowledged by Sri Swami Sivananda in relation to Sri Swamiji.

Swami Sivananda has written that Sri Swamiji is full of the Nachiketa element. He stated, “Few would have such vairagya at such an early age. Swami Satyananda is full of the Nachiketas element.” He went on to describe the character, the nature and abilities of Sri Swamiji. This is the first time in history that I have heard a guru speak in this manner about his disciple. Generally, it is the reverse; the disciples speak highly about their guru. However, when a guru speaks highly about the disciple, you can imagine the place the disciple has in the heart of the guru; not because they are two different people, not because the guru loves that disciple more than anybody else, but because through eternity that disciple and guru have always been one.

When Swami Sivananda gave the mandate to Sri Swamiji to go and spread the message of yoga ‘from door to door and shore to shore’, Sri Swamiji said to his guru, “You have given me this mandate, but how will I fulfil it? I do not know anything about yoga. I do not know asana or pranayama. I do not know raja yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga; I do not know anything about the subject. How do you expect me to propagate yoga?” Swami Sivananda said, “Come with me.” He took Sri Swamiji to his room and, in his own words, Sri Swamiji says, “Swami Sivananda taught me kriya yoga in ten minutes.” However, the kriya yoga that was taught by Swami Sivananda to Sri Swamiji is not the kriya yoga that you learn in your courses and classes.

There are many meanings of the term ‘kriya yoga’ and in this context between guru and disciple, kriya yoga

is not the practice that you learn in class to awaken your kundalini; rather, it is the transference of data from one computer disk to another computer disk. When you transfer data from one computer disk to another computer disk, the second computer disk becomes the replica of the original one. In the same manner, Swami Sivananda gave shaktipat and transferred all his shakti, all his knowledge, all his attainments to Sri Swamiji. He downloaded everything. From that time, Sri Swamiji was not Swami Satyananda; he had imbibed Swami Sivananda in the form of Swami Satyananda. About his disciple, Satyam, at the time of his initiation, Sri Swami Sivananda was heard saying, “Today I have found a competent and capable disciple as per my choice. He will further my work and be successful at it.” The guru’s successor is not the person who sits on the seat as president of an institution; rather, it is one who carries forward the guru’s ideals, lives them and is infused with the guru’s shakti. This shakti is not knowledge or wisdom, this shakti is not *jnana*; this shakti is transcendental.

Swami Sivananda said about his disciple, Swami Satyananda, “He is my true successor and Rishikesh is not big enough to contain him. The world is his family.” With that inspiration and blessing, Sri Swamiji left to fulfil the mandate of his guru to propagate yoga ‘from door to door and shore to shore’. In accordance with this mandate, he worked for yoga for twenty years. He inspired millions globally to adopt yoga as a way of life, a way of discipline, a way to find physical, psychological and spiritual succour; to use yoga as a means to soften oneself, to soften the heart, to soften the mind, to soften the spirit, to excel in everything that one does, to be an awakened person, to be an enlightened person, not in terms of God-realization, but in terms of realizing the beauty and the potential that life has to offer. If you realize the beauty of life, the bliss in life, the potential of life, then you are close to God-realization.

Sri Swamiji created the revolution of yoga, a global renaissance of yoga, from Munger. He made Munger the



focal point of yoga, and today Ganga Darshan stands tall as the focal point of yoga in the world. It is not a matter of arrogance or pride; it is the truth. There is no other institution that performs the services of yoga like the Vishwa Yoga Peeth of Munger. This is Sri Swamiji's gift to humanity.

When he knew that Swami Sivananda had released him from the mandate to propagate yoga and he had exhausted all his karmas and samskaras, Sri Swamiji left the ashram to live like a sannyasin. He lived in the simplest manner, as a sannyasin, travelling barefoot. A person who used to fly first-class in planes was travelling barefoot, and sitting in the unreserved coaches of the trains in India!

As a sannyasin he left his guru's ashram, as a sannyasin he came to Munger, and as a sannyasin he left Munger, taking nothing with him. He brought to Munger a hundred and eight rupees, given to him by Swami Sivananda, and he left Munger with a hundred and eight rupees given by me at the time of his departure. That was the only property he had, besides the two dhotis on his body. Swami Satsangi

accompanied him and she can tell you other stories of that journey. She can tell you the story of the train, how we had organized a first-class ticket, but Sri Swamiji said he would not travel first-class. As it happened, when the train came, there was no first-class carriage attached! He went in ordinary general-class, as he had wanted to go.

Swami Satyananda created the Bihar School of Yoga as the epicentre of the yogic renaissance and movement, and even today it stands in its own right as the lighthouse of yoga around the world. In the course of time, he established himself in Rikhia and immersed himself in intense sadhanas that only sannyasins of the highest calibre can perform. In Rikhia, he lived the teachings and principles taught to him by his guru. These were ingrained in his nature due to the transference of information and energy, *shaktipat*. 'Serve, love and give' became the mantra and Rikhiapeeth was born of this sankalpa.

In Rikhiapeeth, one finds the inspiration to live a life devoted and dedicated to the upliftment of each and every one. That learning is there and it comes naturally and spontaneously: opening of the heart, connecting with people, living the ideals of sannyasa, living the principles of serving, loving and giving. Rikhiapeeth has developed beyond imagination, and Swami Satsangi is at the helm of that movement. I am using the word 'movement' as it is a movement; it is not an institution. It is the movement that has inspired and encouraged millions to change their outlook, their attitude, their mentality, their viewpoint, their perspective of life.

Through Rikhiapeeth, the blessings of Sri Swami Sivananda and the blessings of Sri Swami Satyananda are being spread all over the world, including India, both materially and spiritually. Today, Rikhiapeeth is able to care for the welfare of eighty thousand families in eight panchayats; it is not a small feat. This is the inspiration, this is the life of a sannyasin that Sri Swamiji lived. This is the inspiration of Sri Swami Sivananda, shared by Sri Swamiji

with all of us, which is now being carried forward by Swami Satsangi. That is the second benediction we have received from Sri Swamiji. The gift of yoga was the first benediction and the gift to connect with one's own heart is the second benediction.

The third benediction we have received is the creation of Sannyasa Peeth. It was his will, his instruction, his guidance and his choice as to what will be done here, how it will be done and how things will be managed. I have told you that he gave a complete blueprint for the next twenty-five years of my life, my work as a sannyasin and as a developer of his sankalpa. He gave me directions to live as a sannyasin and he has given me directions to develop his sankalpa in the manner in which he wants it to grow.

Sri Swamiji was a visionary. He was a sannyasin, a true sannyasin, not just of the mind, but of the heart, spirit and life. Today is his sannyasa birthday. The connection that he had with Sri Swami Sivananda and the connection that he has with each one of us as a sannyasin is what we are honouring and celebrating here.

We are all one family

Swami Satsangi: We are all one big family. I say this as this is the basis of the tradition to which we belong, and on the anniversary of Swami Satyananda's sannyasa it is important to remember that lineage, the foundation of which is: we are all one big family. This concept is the eternal concept which emanates from a very important source of our lives. In fact, we are the children of a very great Father. You may call him by any name; I prefer to call him 'Shiva'. We are all the children of Shiva, which is the lineage of knowledge, from which the tradition of Swami Satyananda emanated. That emphasizes the universality of life, that we are connected, we are part of the unified field, we are not separate from each other. That is the concept which emanates from Shiva. We are all one.

A great many enlightened people, the knowers of the greatest truth, have come down that line, that lineage,



and they have perpetuated this idea that the whole world is a family. This is a vedic concept. The brightest of them, Adiguru Shankaracharya, is part of that lineage, and he gave the principle of Vedanta, *Aham Brahmasmi* – “I am that supreme consciousness.” This is what he said and this is the lineage I am telling you about: that we are one family. How are we one family? It is because each one of us is that consciousness known as Brahman. Brahman is not a god, Brahman is consciousness; ever-expanding, unifying and moving in all directions. That thousand-headed Purusha, with a thousand feet and a thousand eyes, is Brahman, and he said, *Aham Brahmasmi* – “I am Brahman.” *Tat twam asi* – “Thou are That.” *Ayam atma Brahman* – “My *atma*, my self, is that universal Self.” *Prajnanam Brahma* – “That Self is knowledge, awareness, awakened.” These are the four teachings that he gave to the lineage to which we belong.

It was Swami Sivananda who then told us, “Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize, be good, do good, be kind,

be compassionate.” Serve, love and give: he named these as the principles of purification. It is only after purification that you can meditate and realize that you are a part of that great big family, that great unified field, that, in fact we are all connected to each other by unseen, invisible chords. He did not give meditation as the first practice; he gave the instruction, ‘serve, love, give’ as a means of purification. Only when you are purified can you meditate; only then can you ‘be good’ and ‘do good’, be kind and compassionate, as that is an expression of your higher mind, your higher nature.

Only a person with a higher awareness can be good and kind and compassionate in the true sense. Your kindness, your compassion is very limited. What you express is not the true essence of compassion. Very often you are compassionate out of guilt or you are compassionate as someone else is being compassionate and it looks good. You may not be compassionate for the right reasons. It is when you are compassionate for the right reasons that your higher nature is expressed, and that is the culmination of Swami Sivananda’s teachings.

‘Serve, love, give’ is the ABC of his teachings. Everyone has to learn the ABC; you cannot go straight to XYZ, which people often try to do. Everybody has to start with ABC, and ‘serve, love, give’ is the essence that he gave, keeping in line with that same teaching, that we are one family. Serve one another, love one another, give to one another. What does that mean? It means that we are all related to each other, that we are not separate from each other. We are all one family. It is this same teaching that he gave in a simplified form suited to the age in which he lived.

In the tradition of my guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, the most important teaching was that you have to live in the world. You do not have to leave the world; rather, you have to live in the world like a yogi. It is only when you live in the world as a yogi that you can experience this truth that we are all one family, that we are all unified; we are a unified

field. This is experienced only when you live in the world as a yogi, in a detached manner and like the lotus flower. The lotus is born in mud, grows in mud and dies in mud, but it never looks soiled; it remains untouched. That is how a yogi lives in the world. That was Sri Swamiji's teaching, the same line, the same knowledge; for, if you want to experience the universality of life, and you have to, you have no other option.

How long are you going to remain in your limited, confined nature? How long are you going to remain in that shell? You have to break out of that shell. If you do not, nature will compel you to. It is an evolutionary process. The wise people tell us how we can manoeuvre our way through that process and perhaps accelerate it, and that is the teaching that they give for every age. Sri Swamiji said, "Live in the world as a yogi; with detachment." In any condition, in any situation, whether the tide is for you or against you, be happy, experience joy and bliss, not suffering and anxiety. In any situation, be calm, equipoised, balanced; experience inner peace, and that is the basis of that lineage, which is upheld by the values of *tyaga*, renunciation or sacrifice.

Vairagya means detachment and *samarpan* means surrender. Just as you decorate the beautiful Lakshmi with lovely ornaments, in the same way, the decoration of a sannyasin, a true sannyasin of the calibre of Swami Satyananda and the lineage to which he belonged, is *tyaga*, *vairagya*, *viveka* and *samarpan*. That is how they are decorated, that is their fragrance, and that is what you have to cultivate in your lives whether or not you are a sannyasin. For sannyasins this is a must; however, even if you are not a sannyasin, remember what Swami Satyananda said, "You can live in the world as a yogi; you do not have to renounce the world." You have to learn that art, that skill.

The hint that Sri Swamiji gave was that extroverted awareness and introverted awareness must develop side by side, not one at the cost of the other. That is the teaching

of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, the last Upanishad which gives the final verdict on knowledge. It says that the path of knowledge is through *jnana* and *karma*, not just through *jnana* or knowledge and not just through *karma* or action. Both must be combined: knowledge or wisdom, and action. If your actions do not have any shade of wisdom in them, they are worthless. And unless your knowledge is expressed in your actions, it will die, it will wither away, it will stagnate and it will be of no use to you or anyone else. They both have to grow side by side. That is the state of awareness that this teaching upholds: that you experience unity within and without. The inner life and the outer life must grow side by side. That is what Swami Satyananda perfected. That was his accomplishment, his achievement.

Not only did Sri Swamiji achieve this, he had the calibre, the capacity, the qualification and the authority to transmit that experience to others. Not only did he experience this for himself, he could give the experience of *artha*, *kama*, *dharma* and *moksha* to others. He was fully qualified. He was not restricted only to *dharma* or to *moksha*. He could grant anything to anyone; that was the calibre of the tradition to which he belonged and these are the focal points of that tradition. It is a glorious tradition and we are all very privileged to belong to this tradition.

One year of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Yajna is over. I still remember when we all sat together a year ago and pledged to come back again the next year, and I am sure, seeing all the people here, that this will also happen again next year.

It has been an absolutely wonderful, enriching experience, full of the divine grace of Gurudeva. I am sure each person here is filled with his grace, and there is nothing more to say in that regard. We just have to be committed and dedicated to the pursuit of those goals, ideas and visions which were foreseen by the luminaries, Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda, as essential for the growth of awareness for the present age. Without that, it will be difficult for humankind to survive, and it is essential that we make an effort in that

direction. Nothing is achieved without effort, so with the blessings and good tidings of this event, of our gurus who are all present, and the hope that we meet again next year at the same occasion.

Namo Narayana





Before his mahasamadhi in 2009, Sri Swami Satyananda gave a final mandate to his successor, Swami Niranjanananda: “Cultivate the lifestyle of creative expression and bring the tradition of sannyasa to the forefront of modern culture.” This vision took the form of Sannyasa Peeth, an institution dedicated to instilling the spiritual qualities that allow an individual to live a creative and positive life. Swami Satyananda further specified that the presiding deities of Sannyasa Peeth will be Sri Narayana and Sri Lakshmi, the sustaining forces of the cosmos, and an annual yajna must be conducted to propitiate them and receive their blessings. Thus, in September 2011, the first Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna was held at Paduka Darshan, the seat of Sannyasa Peeth in Munger on the banks of the Ganga.

Glimpses of the Divine is a collection of the talks and satsangs given by Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda during the Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajnas held in 2011 and 2012. It also includes impressions of the participants of the yajna. The booklet takes us back into the special moments of the yajnas, allowing us to relive the inspiration and blessings received therein and reconnect with the energy of the gurus.

