

Kalpataru

The Wish-Fulfilling Tree

Sannyasi Manas Shakti



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With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

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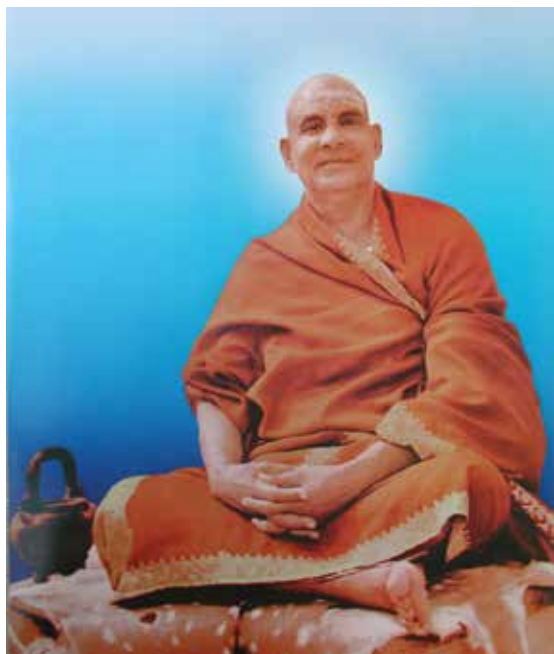
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Dedication

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

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Always be positive, creative and constructive, no matter what you are experiencing. If you want to improve yourself and become creative, happy, satisfied and successful, take everything in life as a form of sadhana.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Sadhana 1

You become a sadhaka

The wish-fulfilling tree knows about the secret of practising real, auspicious and beautiful magic which brings happiness in life.



One beautiful early morning in spring, Swamiji was doing japa as he sat peacefully under his favourite tree which carried magnificent flowers at this time of the year. A group of eight children who had stayed overnight at the ashram snuck out of their buildings while all the sannyasins were still



fast asleep. They enjoyed the fresh morning breeze when they suddenly discovered Swamiji sitting in deep meditation under a tree. The children crept towards him on tiptoes, careful not to disturb his meditation. Almost like daydreaming, lost in their own thoughts, they watched him quietly doing his *japa*.

Unexpectedly, a stunning, blue-feathered budgee singing the sweetest melody they had ever heard, landed on Swamiji's right shoulder. The children listened to the bird with delight. With a smile, Swamiji slowly opened his eyes. Everyone listened to the wonderful melody as if hypnotized. One little girl broke the silence, "Swamiji, why are you sitting here under this tree? What is that wooden thing you are resting your arm on, and why are you continuously counting the beads of this necklace?" The older children rolled their eyes. Was it really necessary that Poornima's younger sister Meghna joined them? She was sweet, but then . . . "And Swamiji," she continued unimpressed by the reaction of her older peers, "Look at this wonderful bird who is singing so sweetly! Where does it come from?"

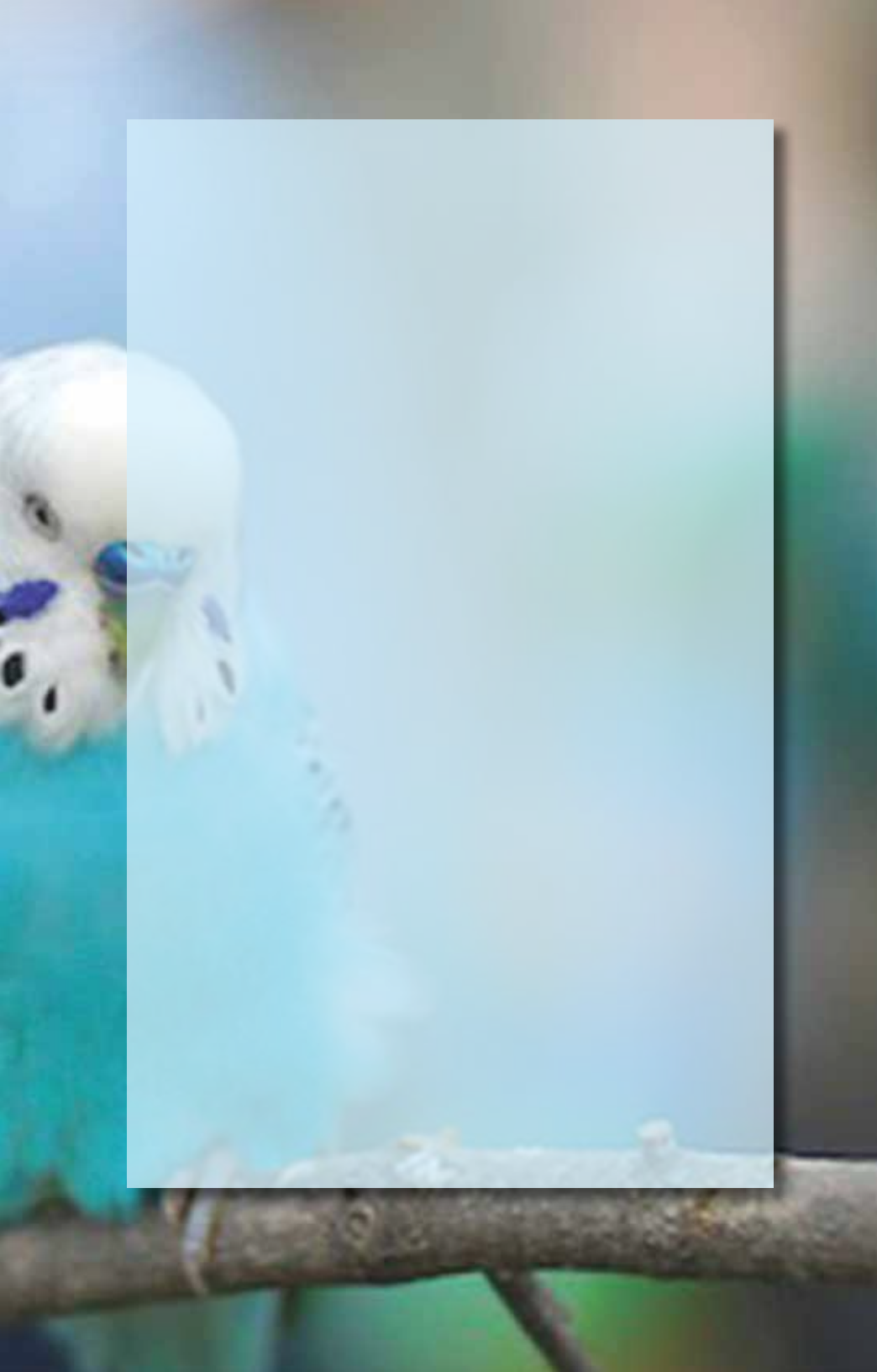
Still smiling, Swamiji said, "So many questions! Let me try to explain. You see, this wooden thing is not any branch, it is my magic wand." Now the eyes of all children



widened in surprise and lit up with curiosity. Impatiently they waited to hear more. Swamiji continued, “My mantra is my charm. When the time is right, every one of you will get your own, personal charm. Don’t tell it to anyone! The charm is absolutely secret. Earlier, when I turned the mala in my hand between my fingers, I repeated my charm and a divine melody emerged from within as I sat here under my favourite tree, which is actually a Kalpataru, a wish-fulfilling tree. Every wish that emerges from the purity of the heart, while using the magic wand and charm, will be fulfilled. So, when I sat here listening to this lovely melody I wished it could be heard by everyone else, and I wanted to share it with you too. My wish came true. The bird is now here to sing the melody for you. Do you like it?” The children started smiling and dancing like the rays of the early morning sun and responded in one voice, “Yes, Swamiji!”

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Sadhana 2

You become a tree

*What is the secret or what is the way to happiness?
The way to be happy is to make someone else happy.*



The children were all excited and in a happy mood. They tried to make Swamiji dance with them, however his eyes were fixed on Srikant who was totally immersed in watching the wish-fulfilling tree. The boy abruptly became aware that he himself was being watched and turned towards Swamiji.

“I want to learn about the wish-fulfilling tree,” he said in a determined voice. “Aha,” Swamiji said, “And what exactly do you want to learn about it?” “What does it like? How can we make it happy? It is working so hard. How can we make the tree happy?” Srikant repeated his questions.

Swamiji put a hand on the boy’s shoulder and they looked at the auspicious tree together. Swamiji said, “You know, the wish-fulfilling tree loves to do seva. It does not have the feeling of having to work hard. It simply loves to serve and do good. Do you want to see it engaged in seva?” he asked after a pause, sensing that Srikant was carrying something heavy on his heart. The boy’s eyes shone, “Yes please, Swamiji!” “So tell me what is in your heart and we shall ask the wish-fulfilling tree for help.”

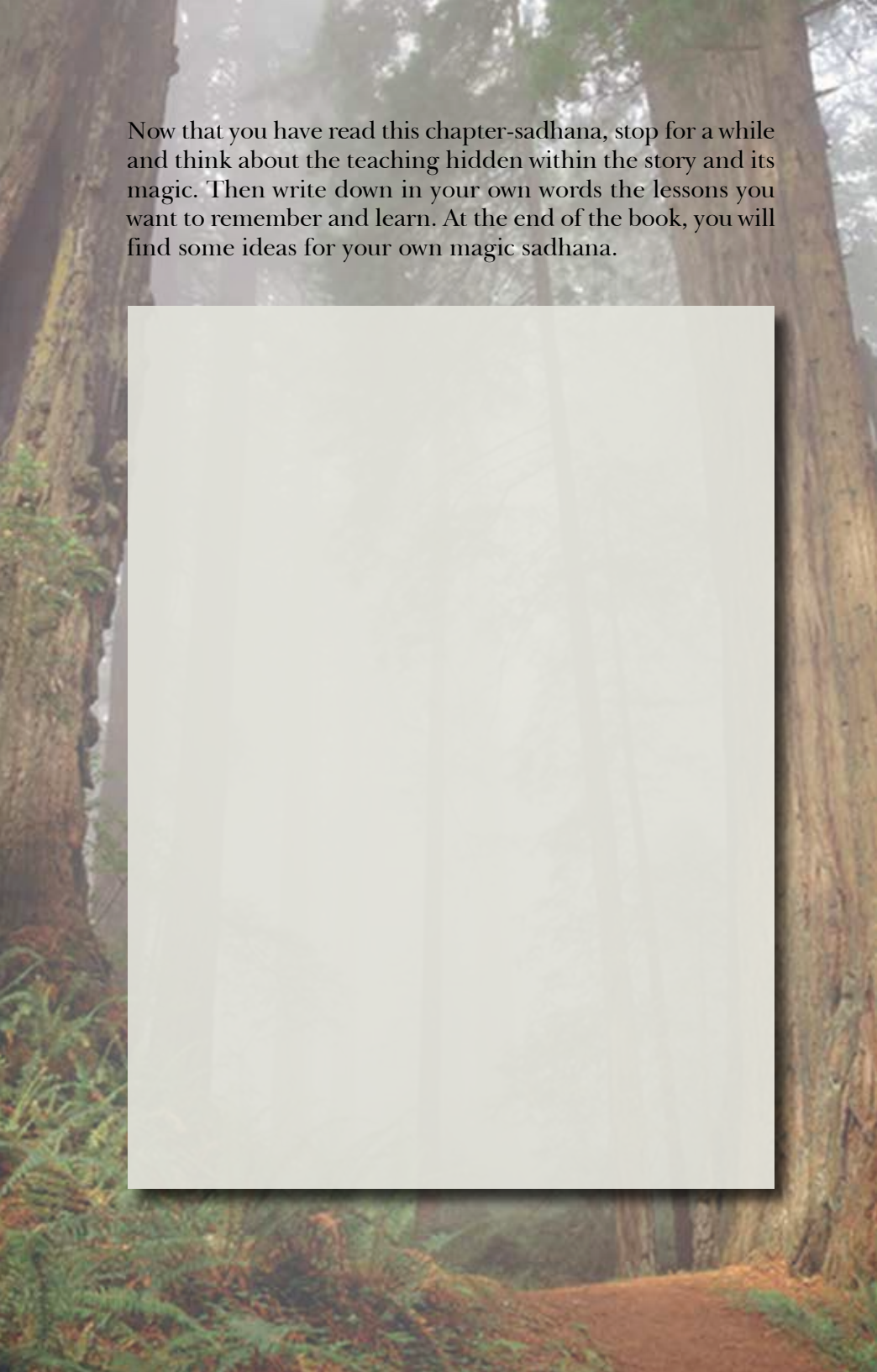
Srikant was quiet for a while before he said with hanging shoulders, “At school, we often have to stand up when answering the teacher’s questions. Many times I want to give an answer and many times the teacher calls me to stand up and speak.” “That’s great,” Swamiji said. “Excellent that you make an effort to participate actively during the class.” Again the boy was quiet for some time. Finally, he spoke, “But Swamiji, as soon as I have given my answer the teacher usually looks at me with a smile, asking whether I was one hundred percent sure about my answer. Every time I can feel my knees wanting to give way, my stomach feels earthy, my lungs stop breathing and my brain becomes unable to think.” “You get insecure, lose your self-confidence,” Swamiji explained.

After another silent moment Swamiji asked, “What is your wish to the wish-fulfilling tree?” Srikant, still watching the tree intently said, “Swamiji, I want to be like this captivating tree, totally unshakable.” “Aha! Dear tree, you heard it: Srikant wants to stand steadfast like you, to be well rooted in the ground. He wants to stand upright and secure like your trunk, with the mind open in all directions like your branches and to move freely like your leaves in the wind. What a wonderful image! Dear tree, can you help



with that?” Swamiji asked directing his attention towards the tree. The wish-fulfilling tree was shaking his branches and leaves in excitement obviously very happy to be in Swamiji’s service. “Okay, he is ready,” Swamiji laughed. “Quick, before he decides otherwise!” he added. Swamiji swung the magic wand in an auspicious circle, placed his right arm on it with a graceful movement and instructed, “Close your eyes and breathe into your heart. Visualize there, in your heart centre, your own wish-fulfilling tree. When you can see clearly its beautiful shape and colours, then feel and believe that you become like it.” It did not take long, and before the children’s astonished eyes Srikant transformed into a big, solid, wonderful tree.

The children didn’t trust their eyes. “Swamiji, how did you do that?” they wanted to know. “See,” Swamiji said calmly, “I’m sitting here under the wish-fulfilling tree, using my magic wand and charm for the evolution of everyone’s consciousness. My wish is that all creation may live a life of peace, plenty, positivity, creativity, harmony and happiness. Your effort and duty is to feel deep into your heart, access your wish-fulfilling tree and send out a prayer with your heartfelt wish to improve and become better. By expressing this goodness, you are the magician in your own life.”



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Sadhana 3

You become a blade of grass

*Tree pooja is the best way to make the wish-fulfilling tree happy.
However, before pooja can start, weeding needs to be done.*

One of the senior girls, Akansha, stepped forward with tears in her eyes. “Swamiji, three days ago my little kitty passed away. It happened just before her fifth birthday. I knew she would die one day, but now that it happened I can’t stop crying.” She hid her face with her hands. Swamiji looked at her compassionately and said, “You are very sad because your kitty left its physical form. I’m very sorry to hear this. I’m sure your heart must feel very heavy at this moment.” He paused.

“Would you like to ask the wish-fulfilling tree to put a smile onto your lips again by showing you a way how to remember your kitty with love and gratitude for the time you spent together?” Akansha, still hiding her face in her hands, just nodded. “Good,” Swamiji continued. “Your situation reminds me of a blade of grass that has to bend because of the weight it experiences. So for some time it lies on the ground. This is good for the blade because the earth offers peace and a place of safety and strength. The blade of grass knows that now it is bent, however, after some time, when it has received enough energy from Mother Earth who gives and takes back into her lap all sentient beings, it will naturally rise again towards the sun. The sun rays will tickle it and will awaken a smile. It will be upright, active and happy again, in loving remembrance of its dear little friend.”



After a little pause Swamiji asked Akansha, “Do you want to become like the blade of grass?” Akansha nodded again, this time looking up at Swamiji. “You know what,” Swamiji asked. “I think the wish-fulfilling tree can’t wait to practise magic together with you.” Now Akansha smiled gently.

“In addition,” Swamiji continued, “I really liked Srikant’s intention of making the wish-fulfilling tree happy. I want to share an idea with you of how we could do that. Do you all want to help to make the wish-fulfilling tree happy?” The children hoorayed. “So then, you will make the start,” Swamiji said, turning back towards Akansha. “There is an ice cold freezing sensation in your heart due to attachment. You need to soften it, and leave the freezing and attachment behind in order to create positive actions. The weeds of the negative state need to be removed and a positive new sankalpa needs to be planted.”

Akansha understood. Immediately she took a small pick which the gardeners must have forgotten almost as if it was left for her to fulfil her task. With devotion she started taking care of the earth around the tree. Soon, the earth was soft and smooth and not a single weed was left behind. Carefully

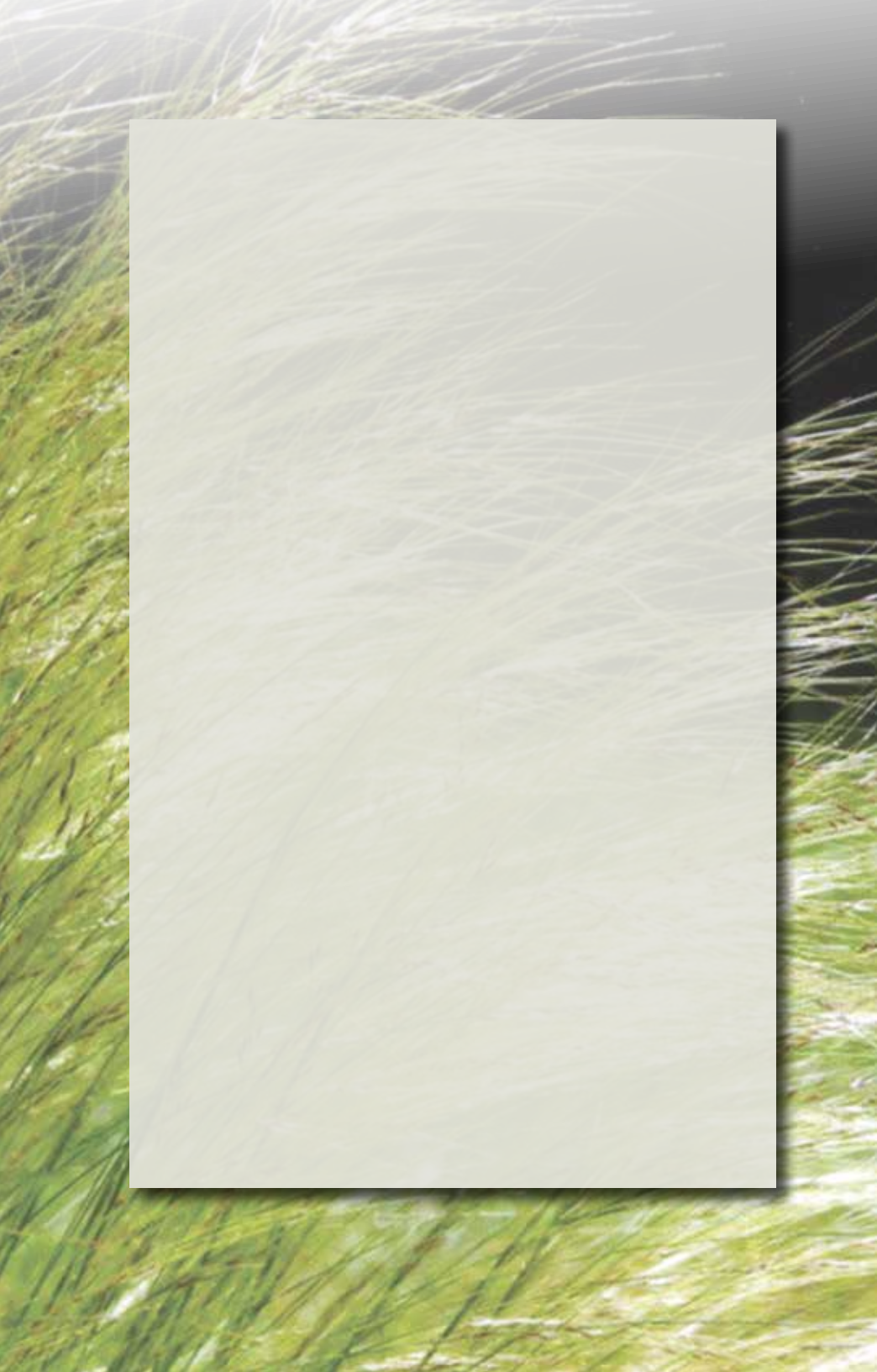
she unearthed a fresh green blade of grass with its roots to plant it right next to the tree. The blade of grass was moving gently in the soft morning breeze.

“I’m ready,” Akansha said. “I want to become the blade of grass that is able to adapt to every situation, even if it is very difficult and heavy. I know the blade is going to bend from time to time, however, it also knows how to move on and dance again in the breeze.” “I’m very proud of you,” Swamiji said. “By doing this weeding and softening of the earth, two wonderful things have happened: firstly, the wish-fulfilling tree has become very happy because finally it can breathe again through the soft earth. Secondly, you have released your state of frozen feeling and started moving and acting, making the effort to become positive again by throwing out all the negative weeds and thoughts. I’m very proud of you! By the way, I’m sure your kitty will be present as the soft breeze making you dance or as the shiny sun ray making you smile. You will know how she shows herself.”

Swamiji, Akansha and the wish-fulfilling tree immersed themselves in practising magic. In no time at all, in the place where there Akansha had been, there was a long, fresh, green blade of grass rising up from the earth reaching to the sky, ready to face and grow through the storms of life.

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Sadhana 4

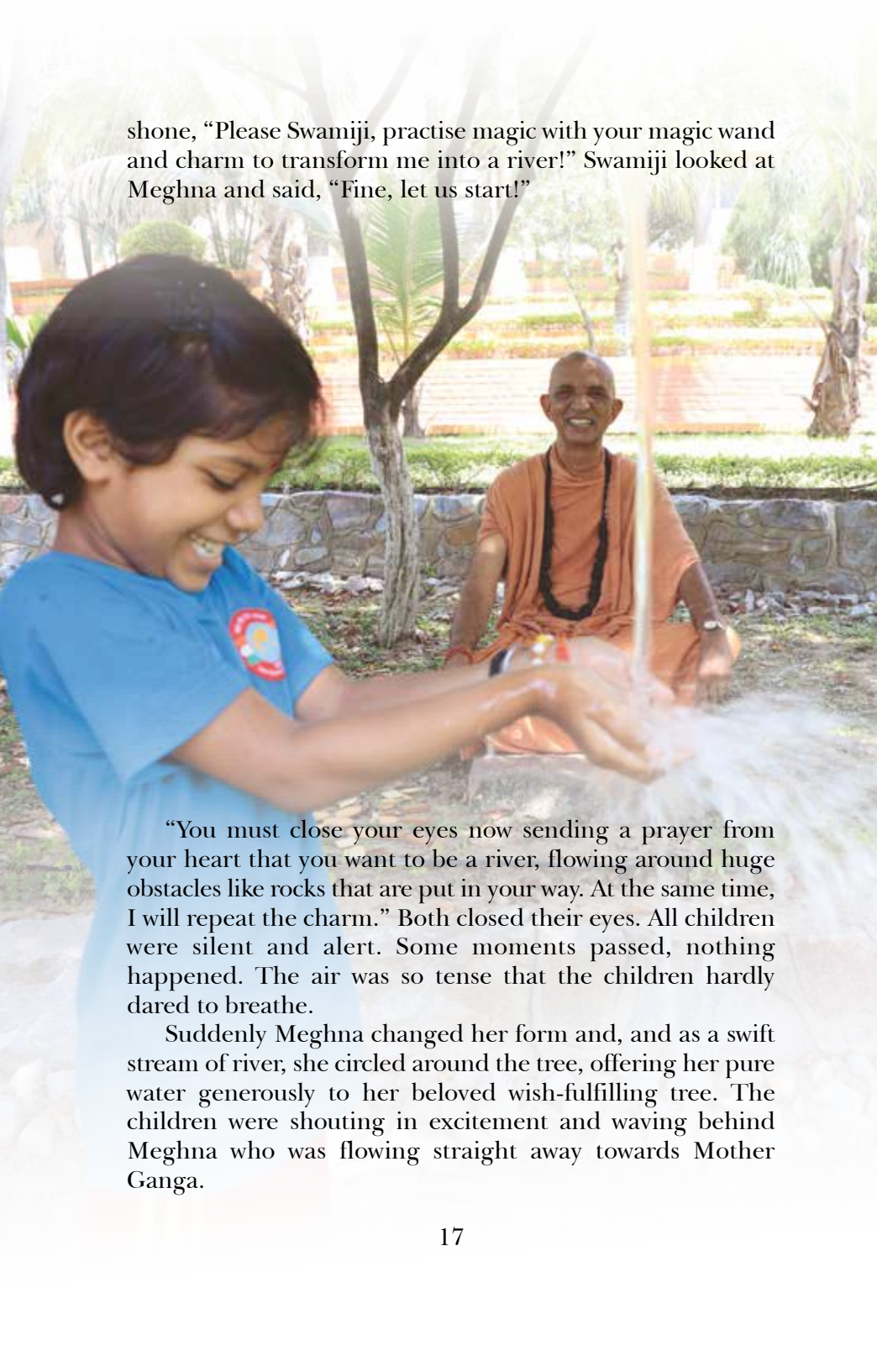
You become a little river

*After preparing the earth around the tree, pooja can begin:
so offer a little bit of water to your wish-fulfilling tree.*

All the children were looking silently and respectfully at their friend. Just little Meghna who had asked so many curious questions at the beginning was looking in a day dreamy way into the sky with her thoughts in the clouds.

“What are you thinking about?” Swamiji asked her. She looked up and said, “Swamiji, on my way to school, there are always some boys who stop me on the way. They laugh at me and call me a baby.” The girl was looking sad and broken. Swamiji said, “They are putting big, heavy rocks in your way. If you keep concentrating on the rocks they will even increase in size and weight. You need to change your view. Why don’t you become a happy baby?” Meghna smiled at the thought of herself being a happy, little baby and said, “I can imagine becoming a happy baby, but I also want to continue on my way and grow,” she said in a determined voice.

Swamiji encouraged her to think of a solution to her challenge, “What could you do to continue your way? Do you have an idea?” Meghna thought for a moment, when suddenly her face lit up, “I shall be the river, flowing softly and easily around the rocks!” Swamiji nodded, “Good choice! The river is flexible. As a river you will make your way, adapt and adjust with ease to the situation; you won’t be affected by the rocks and you will leave them behind.” Meghna’s eyes



shone, “Please Swamiji, practise magic with your magic wand and charm to transform me into a river!” Swamiji looked at Meghna and said, “Fine, let us start!”

“You must close your eyes now sending a prayer from your heart that you want to be a river, flowing around huge obstacles like rocks that are put in your way. At the same time, I will repeat the charm.” Both closed their eyes. All children were silent and alert. Some moments passed, nothing happened. The air was so tense that the children hardly dared to breathe.

Suddenly Meghna changed her form and, and as a swift stream of river, she circled around the tree, offering her pure water generously to her beloved wish-fulfilling tree. The children were shouting in excitement and waving behind Meghna who was flowing straight away towards Mother Ganga.

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Sadhana 5

You become a flower

Now that water, the life source, has been offered, appreciate the beauty of the tree by placing a wonderful flower at its trunk.

Swamiji said, “You know, today is an auspicious day. We will have a special evening sadhana.” Upon hearing this the children got even more excited. All but one girl were dancing around in happy anticipation. Khushi stood frozen.

“Why are you not joining the happy dance?” Swamiji asked. Khushi looked at Swamiji and answered, “When you mentioned the evening program tonight, I became really nervous. Tonight I shall be dancing on stage, in front of so many people with big, dazzling lights pointed on me. I don’t think I can do so. Just by imagining the situation my body is freezing.” “Hmm,” Swamiji was obviously thinking, closing his eyes for a moment. “Do you know the dharma of a flower?” Swamiji asked the girl. She shook her head. He continued, “Look at the flowers in this garden. Aren’t they unique, one more beautiful than the other?” The children nodded in agreement. “See,” Swamiji said, “The flowers are there in their beautiful colours and shapes. Go closer and tell me what else they may give.” The children spread out to inspect the different flowers.

Khushi who was going to dance that evening wanted to examine her flower in detail. She bent down to the flower and looked at it closely. Swiftly she called out happily, “Swamiji, this flower has an extraordinary smell. It smells so good!

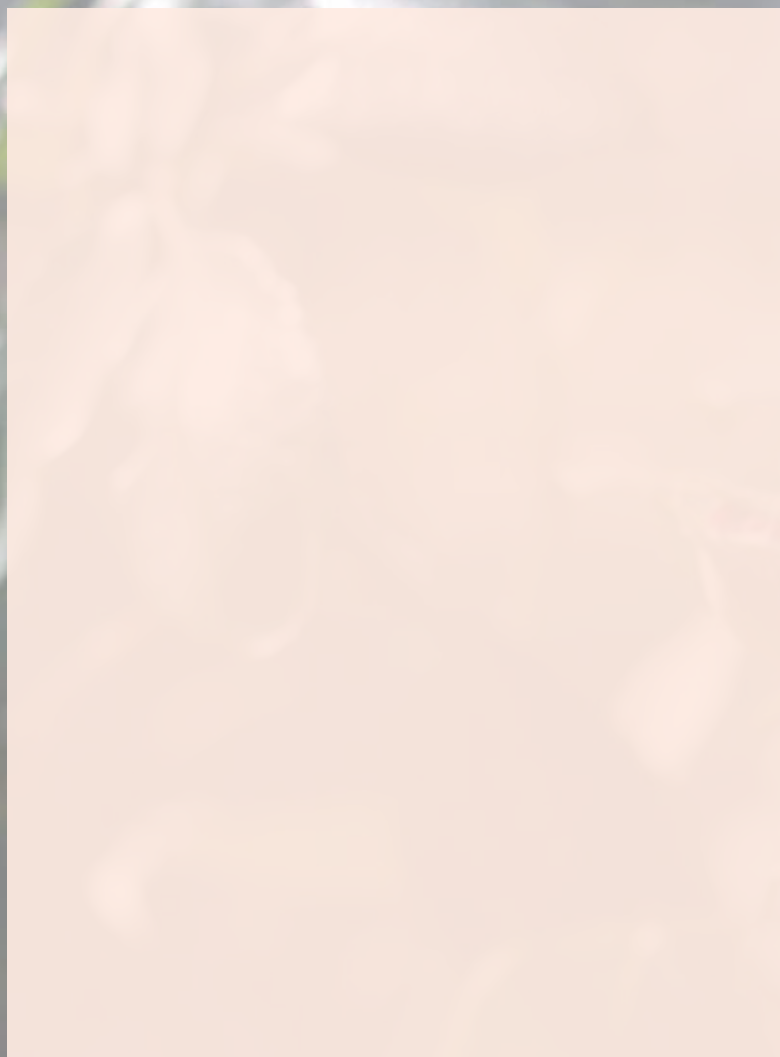
Like the elves' pooja incense in the sky!" She was all excited and exhilarated, jumping and dancing around Swamiji. "Mmm," Swamiji smiled. "So, what do you think, do you want to become like this flower, who offers her beauty and finest fragrance whether there is someone who enjoys it or not?" "Yes, yipee! But before I will become a flower, I want to offer this most gorgeous flower to the wish-fulfilling tree."

With these words she placed the exquisite flower at the tree's trunk, folded her hands in pranam mudra and sent a prayer of gratitude to the wish-fulfilling tree. Then Khushi readily sat down, closed her eyes and happily took a few deep breaths into her heart, still having the flower's delightful odour in her nose.



Shortly afterwards, the remaining children were admiring the fine-looking flower in front of them. The flower moved softly in the breeze carrying away her bewitching scent, while all her rainbow colours glittered in the morning sun. The children stood in a circle looking at the extreme beauty of the flower-girl in their midst. "Look at her, her nature is self-sufficient. She is self-contained and dances in her own unique way for the sake of dancing. Will you dance happily tonight?" Swamiji whispered towards the flower. The flower-girl bent her rainbow-petal head in agreement and with deep gratitude.

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Sadhana 6

You become light

*For the tree pooja, you have offered
water and a flower to your tree.
Now light a deepak to remove darkness,
ignorance and negativity.*



The children took a deep breath in, trying to keep the sweet, soft scent of the lovely flower inside. It was a funny picture seeing the children with their abdomens stretched and filled almost to the point of bursting. The shape of the abdomen of one boy was looking peculiar and much bigger than those of the other children.

Swamiji nudged his index finger against Small Ankit's big belly. "What is that?" Swamiji asked with a big smile. Small Ankit, suddenly became aware that he had forgotten himself while enjoying the wonderful fragrance of the flower, and squatted down quickly to hide his abdomen. "Nothing!" he stuttered. Too late, the other children had become curious and started pulling at Small Ankit's T-shirt. He did not manage to defend himself for long. Many tasty looking biscuits of all sorts and colours were falling out of his shirt and arranged themselves, as if through a magic touch, in the shape of a mandala on the ground. "Oh!" the children said in surprise, "What is that?" Swamiji repeated his question, still smiling.

Small Ankit looked down in shame, feeling the need to explain the situation. "Swamiji, today is not only a special evening program happening. Today is also a very special day for me." He paused. Everybody was silent, waiting curiously for him to continue, "Today is my birthday." Finally, he looked up with a shy smile on his lips. The children tuned in singing 'Happy Birthday' with loud and happy voices, dancing around Small Ankit who was still squatting next to the mandala of biscuits. Now he stood up with some pride.

"But why were you hiding the biscuits under your shirt?" Swamiji asked. "Well, my mum made all my favourite cookies for my birthday which I'm usually not allowed to eat. I knew that I would spend my birthday here in the ashram. I did not want to share all my biscuits with everyone, I wanted to keep them all for myself." Now Small Ankit looked down to the floor again. "Sorry Swamiji, I know I was greedy," he stuttered, not being sure if Swamiji would be scolding him for his behaviour.

Swamiji said, "It would have been nice to keep all the tasty biscuits for yourself, wouldn't it? However, you have recognized very well, that Mr. Greed has been driving you. He offered you a ride under the condition to decide on the destination himself. You agreed and have come until here. Now it is time for you to get up, to stand on your own



two feet, decide which direction you want to take and walk yourself. My suggestion is to take the opposite direction of the one Mr. Greed has chosen.”

Small Ankit understood Swamiji’s hint very well. He had given him the opportunity to practise *pratipaksha bhavana*, to cultivate the opposite positive thought and behaviour. But what was the opposite behaviour of Mr. Greed? His mind was blank. No opposite quality wanted to appear. Small Ankit was still looking down, trying feverishly to follow Swamiji’s advice, when his view caught the biscuits that were still lying nicely aligned on the ground. In surprise the boy recognized that the mandala had the shape of the sun. “Swamiji,” he called out relieved, looking up straight into Swamiji’s shining eyes, “I have discovered the opposite direction in which I want to go: directly to the sun! Mr. Sunshine is constantly giving his light to all and dispels darkness and ignorance, just as you do, Swamiji. The sun is totally selfless in its service, giving without taking any break. While giving, the sun is smiling as you do, Swamiji. Your eyes are shining as happily as the sun itself.” Small Ankit recognized the qualities of the sun.



Without giving Swamiji the chance to reply, he went on, “While giving, Mr. Sunshine is laughing and puts a smile on everyone else with his sunny, cheerful nature. Please, Swamiji, practise magic and turn me into the sun, so that I will be happy to just give, give and give from my heart and share the biscuits with everyone! I know you can do it! Your eyes are shining like a thousand sun rays!” “The direction you have chosen is excellent,” Swamiji said with appreciation. “I’m sure that Surya Deva will acknowledge your choice too.” He was blinking towards the sun that seemed to shine even brighter than before in agreement.

“It’s a long way to the sun. When Swami Sivananda completed that auspicious journey, he was giving, giving, giving and doing good for everyone. I want to support and inspire you to take up this journey. You shall become a sunray, dancing happily from place to place, constantly giving a little of your inner light. Now light a deepak for the wish-fulfilling tree as a symbol of this process. Your journey shall be the aspiration to become like the sun who is constantly giving light to the whole of creation.”

As soon as the deepak was lit, Swamiji looked with a steady gaze straight into Small Ankit’s wide open brown eyes, sending him rays of pure light, bright like the sun itself. The children had to blink to be able to witness the scene. Shortly after, Small Ankit was dancing in the form of a sunray from child to child, tickling them with his light, making them laugh happily.

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Sadhana 7

You become a bee

*The tree has received a little water and a flower.
A deepak has been lit.*

*Now light an incense to bring a fresh breeze,
Incense purifies the air and the whole space around.*



One teenage girl said more to herself than to everyone else,
“I hope Small Ankit will bring some sunlight and laughter
into my home, the air there has been thick with tension

for too long.” “Why, what happened?” Swamiji asked the girl. Startled at hearing herself talking aloud, Purnima murmured, “Oh, well, nothing.”



“Take this incense Purnima and offer it to the tree.” Purnima did as she was asked. “It seems you need to reconnect with light and laughter in your own mind and heart. If you do, then it will spread out naturally into your home and clear the atmosphere. But tell me, what happened?” Swamiji insisted. Purnima sighed, “My mum always wants me to do something: I should help to do the dishes, make my bed, water the vegetables in the garden. I don’t feel like joining in these activities at all,” she said stubbornly, crossing her arms in front of her chest, looking to the side.

Swamiji remained silent for some time. Then he asked, “What’s your favourite drink for breakfast?” Surprised, Purnima looked at him. “Warm milk with honey,” she replied without hesitation. “Mmm, sounds tasty,” Swamiji agreed. “Who spends time and energy to offer us these goodies?” he continued. Purnima answered straight away, “Well, the cow is giving milk and the bees make honey.” “Correct,” said Swamiji.

“Now try to become aware of the animal’s attitude: previously we heard of the sun and its giving nature. Similarly, the cow has a selfless nature and is constantly nurturing us by giving milk. She happily gives without complaining. Now observe the family of the bees. Their strength is to serve. The little bee serves her queen day and night because the act of serving makes her joyous as she simply loves her queen. The queen herself is constantly working. She loves her bees unconditionally and serves them by providing them with tasty honey in abundance, and gives protection and love. Do you have an idea of who I am talking about?” Swamiji asked to close his considerations.

“Of course I do,” Purnima replied. She looked straight at Swamiji and said in a little softer, thoughtful voice, “I love my mum. I know she is working a lot and only wants the best for my brothers and sisters and me.” After a pause and a deep sigh, Purnima decided, “I shall make an effort to change my attitude and my behaviour. Please help me,



Swamiji, and turn me into a little bee that happily serves the queen. While serving I will keep you in mind, too, because my heart becomes joyous whenever I can be in your service. Let us start right now, please!”

Swamiji motioned with a humble bow, and with eyes twinkling at Purnima said, “I am here to serve you.” Only moments later, there was a little bee sitting and humming happily on the beautiful flower, busily collecting pollen in order to bring back home as much as possible. Her family would be delighted!

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Sadhana 8

You become a bear and a bird

*After having offered water, a flower, a deepak
and incense – sing a kirtan or simply hum
a beautiful melody for your tree. This will brighten
the energy which may be experienced as pure love.*

“Oh Swamiji, I wish I could hide between the petals of a flower or fly far away like this little bee.” Big Ankit was pulling at Swamiji’s hand and was shaking it while speaking to get his full attention. Without waiting for Swamiji to say something, he continued, “Swamiji, you are the person who can listen best in this big wide world. Please listen to my situation. For the first time in my life I shall play flute in public all by myself. I am scared to make a mistake. The fear is making my chest narrow, it is hard to breathe deeply and freely. Fear is surrounding me like a cocoon and seems to be sitting inside me!” Big Ankit took a deep breath, feeling already some relief and being glad to finally be able to talk about the challenge he was facing.

“Oh,” Swamiji hummed with appreciation, “You must be talented if you are chosen to play solo.” A smile hushed over the boy’s face, only to become serious again. Swamiji noticed it and went on, “Fear is the base of all difficult life situations. You have well perceived that hiding and flying are necessary in the process of overcoming fear. However, we need to apply them a little bit differently than you described it. Let us see how they can be of use: two animals are helpful in the process of transforming fear into courage. First of all,

you should make yourself into a strong, courageous bear who draws himself back into a warm, cosy cave.”

Big Ankit was so engrossed in Swamiji’s words that, by simply listening attentively, he transformed into a big bear as described by Swamiji. Big Ankit, in the form of the bear, made his way to the big stone pile next to the tree and started pushing the stones aside to create an entrance to his cave. Swamiji followed him slowly and continued to guide him in a gentle voice, “Now take the posture of *shashankasana*, the child pose. Your buttocks resting on the heels, forehead on the ground, arms stretched forward. Become comfortable and secure in your position and space. Then, take the fear into your heart, hug it and comfort it just as the cave offers you comfort and protection.”

For a few moments all remained silent. Only attentive listeners could hear deep, relaxed breathing out of the cave. Then some movement could be heard, and slowly the big bear crept out of his safe cave. “Right,” Swamiji said. “Very good. Come out into the sunlight and see the world in its new light, with different eyes.” Swamiji encouraged him. The bear-boy started shaking his fur, clapping and wiping the remaining fear off his big body. Big Ankit was obviously very happy with his attainment of reconnecting with peace and harmony. Content, the bear-boy licked some honey that the little bee and her friends had readily brought to celebrate Big Ankit’s attainment. Swamiji commented, “Every success should be honoured. Enjoy the honey, Big Ankit. And thank you, little bee.”

Swamiji observed the scene a little while, then he continued guiding the boy. “Now it is time to move on.” He picked up the beautiful bird that was still sitting on his shoulder and placed it on the bear’s big round head. The bear naturally looked up by performing *shambhavi mudra* to see the bird who was now hopping forward to the bear’s eyebrow centre. Big Ankit sat there for a while, gazing at the bird, when suddenly everything became black in front of his eyes. It was as if he had lost consciousness, and the big, heavy

body of the bear dissolved, leaving him feeling extremely light and free.

Astonished, he opened his eyes. First he could only see bright blinking stars. Soon, however, figures and shapes became clear. Big Ankit stretched himself, but – oh! – instead of arms he stretched out two wings, one to each side, with beautiful feathers glittering in the sunlight in infinite shades of blue. He had become the bird that Swamiji had passed to him just moments ago! Big Ankit just realized what had happened when he heard Swamiji's guiding voice, "It is time now to surpass yourself. So use your wings!" he inspired Big Ankit.

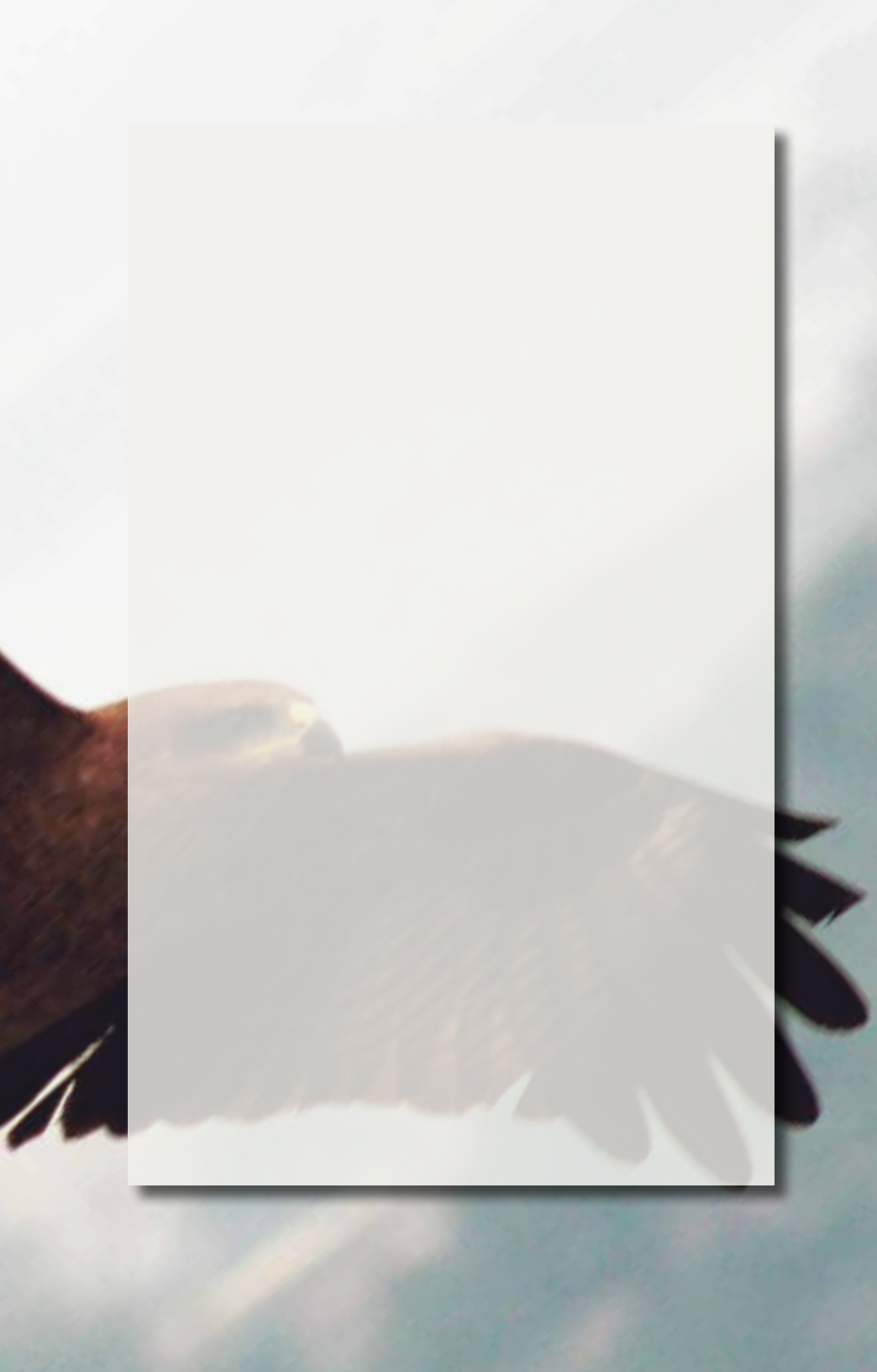
The bird set off flying straight towards the sky, turning graceful pirouettes in the air. He chirped in all timbres like the notes of the flute. Gracefully the bird sat down on a branch of the wish-fulfilling tree and sang for it. Again and again the same melodic lines were heard, from slow to fast, again slow to fast, and again slow to fast. This play went on for as long as the melodic lines resounded, as if by themselves through a magic touch. Many other birds had gathered to listen to the enchanting song of their unique mate.

Swamiji was in their midst, smiling contently. "You see," he said, "By leaving your fear behind, you not only become light and free, you also make many others happy, most of all the wish-fulfilling tree."



Now that you have read this chapter-sadhana, stop for a while and think about the teaching hidden within the story and its magic. Then write down in your own words the lessons you want to remember and learn. At the end of the book, you will find some ideas for your own magic sadhana.





Sadhana 9

You become a swan

The pooja is coming to an end. The tree is already very happy, having received water, a flower, a deepak and incense. You have even been singing for it. Now sit for a little while with your tree and start seeing yourself in your tree. Become aware of your inner beauty and your innermost nature which is pure happiness.

Swamiji turned around to the last child that was standing looking a little bit lost beside him. Om Shivani smiled shyly when Swamiji approached her and asked, “Om Shivani, what is your wish? You have remained quiet all this time.” “You know Swamiji, I’ve been quiet because I’ve been trying to find a solution to my quest myself, without any other input,” she answered.

Swamiji rested his gaze on her as if looking through her, through time and space. Then he said, “What makes your wishes heard and fulfilled is your own heartfelt, pure intention to become better, to transform the negative inner state into a more beautiful, peaceful, positive one. The only input I have given so far is the repetition of the charm. It is there to help you turn the gaze inside, to make the mind concentrated and connect with the positive vibration. That is all it does. At the end, you are the creator of your reality – whether your wish is being fulfilled or not does not depend on my charm but on the purity of your heartfelt wish.”

Om Shivani looked at Swamiji with big eyes. She suddenly felt responsible, confident and inspired to make the effort to

change the unhappy situation she was stuck in. “Swamiji, now I understand that the charm is providing all I need to do – to look inside deeply and connect with positivity.” Readily, Om Shivani began speaking, “At school we have been discussing what all children want to become when they are big: Hari Om wants to become a juggler at the circus, Rajpriya a gardener, Muskan a piano player, Rishika a kindergarten teacher, Rajhans wants to fly into the universe and Girija wants to become an electrician. All my friends know already exactly what they want to become when they are big. It’s just I who has no idea what to become. What to do, Swamiji?”

Swamiji replied, “Your idea is great! I fully agree that you need to take a look deep, deep within yourself without distraction from outside. And you know what? You don’t even need my charm to get there. Instead, I will tell you a trick.” He lowered his voice and whispered as if confiding a secret, “Sit close to the wish-fulfilling tree and practise *koormasana*, the tortoise pose. Become the tortoise who can withdraw all her six limbs and protect them with her shell from all disturbances within the environment. When the mind is connected to the world, there are always worries, however when you turn it inwards . . . ,” he made a mysterious pause, “Discover and experience it yourself.”

Om Shivani was very excited now and immediately took the pose of the tortoise hiding herself under the huge angavastra which her mother had given her to take to the ashram. A friendly darkness covered her now and she relieved some tension with a sigh. Finally, she was alone, with nothing and no one to disturb her. She was sure that this was the right moment to feel directly into her heart and listen carefully to what it was saying.

A few deep breaths later, without her consciously noticing, she transformed into a big tortoise with a strong shell. All her limbs disappeared, her mind turned inwards, into a space which only Swamiji and she herself knew about. Om Shivani was now totally unaware of her surroundings and of what was happening in the outer world. She focused on her heart. Om



Shivani experienced an effulgent, shining, golden light. For a moment she was stunned by its beauty. “This is me,” she thought happily, “I am that I am. We are all that.”

Then she remembered her intention and asked the light, “What is the real achievement, the purpose of my life? What shall I become?” For a moment she was surprised by those words which arose spontaneously. With her gaze fixed on her heart space, the light suddenly took the shape of a splendid golden swan emerging from the centre of her heart. The swan shone brightly as it glided across a lake of crystal clear water. It came directly towards her, its head bent in peace. Then the swan started to glide along beautiful pathways as if dancing to a choreography. Swiftly it dove deep into the water and as it came up to the surface with a graceful movement, water droplets shone like pearls on its golden feathers in the sun. Om Shivani did not dare to breathe, so magical and beautiful was the scene. The golden swan again bent its graceful head and neck as if to pay respect and say goodbye to Om Shivani. Then it turned and glided away towards the horizon where it merged with a brightly shining light. Slowly, the vision faded.

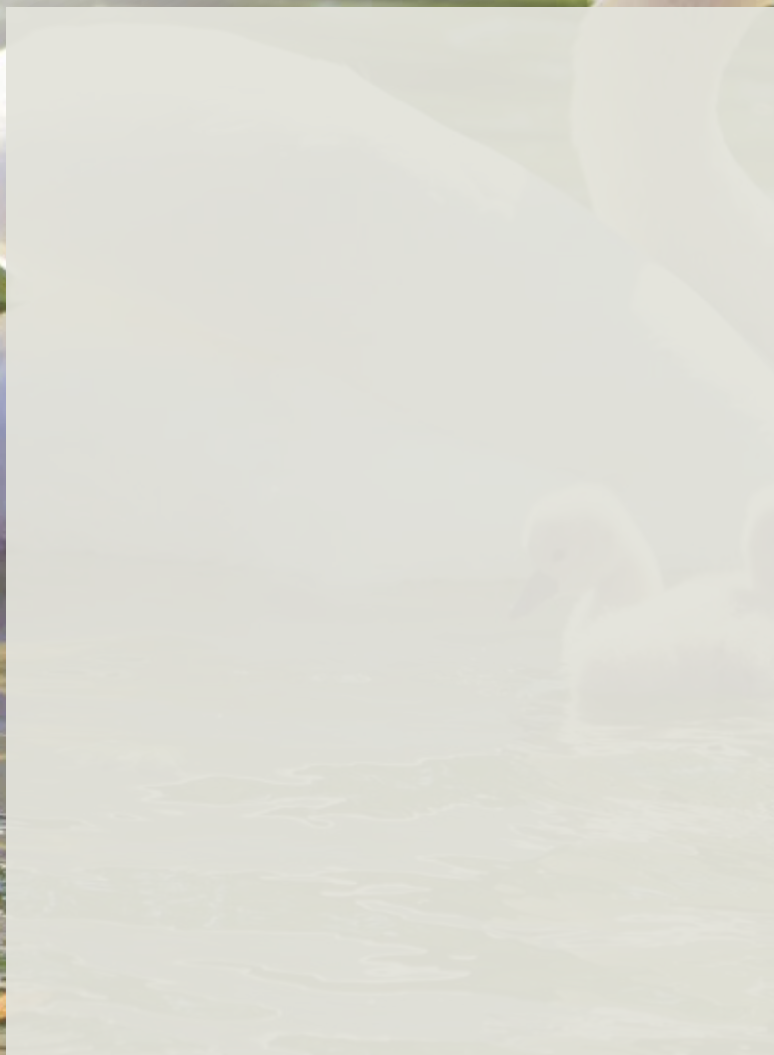
After taking a few deep, conscious breaths to become aware of her surroundings, Om Shivani sank back onto the grass where she blinked in the sun and breathed in the endless blue sky. She remembered that after returning from Mount Kailash, Swamiji told the children about the two golden swans he had seen at Lake Manasarovar. “The golden swan represents the highest consciousness,” she remembered his words clearly. With gratefulness Om Shivani suddenly realized that she had received an answer to her question: she wanted to become as beautiful as the swan, letting her best qualities, her innermost beauty shine forth into the world to inspire others.

She knew that this striking golden swan had once been an ugly, brownish baby swan once upon a time. It had to first turn within in order to transform negative qualities into positive, again and again, like the flute player has to practise the same succession of notes hundreds of times until it became natural. “That is our sadhana,” she thought.

“As a golden swan, I am stunningly beautiful and shine from within. Humbly, upright and free I glide gracefully with agility across the water. Drops of water roll off my feathers naturally. I am not getting affected by negativity or extreme positivity. There is no attachment, only balance, peace and harmony. A gentle, steady happiness.”

Excitedly, Om Shivani jumped up and called, “Swamiji, I know what I want to become! I want to dance through life as freely as the golden swan, being happy in every single moment.” “Well then,” Swamiji was laughing, “You better turn into the swan in this moment, because only by improving and living fully in the present will the future be improved.” Only moments later Om Shivani had transformed into a beautiful golden swan, glowing happily from within.

Now that you have read this chapter-sadhana, stop for a while and think about the teaching hidden within the story and its magic. Then write down in your own words the lessons you want to remember and learn. At the end of the book, you will find some ideas for your own magic sadhana.





Sadhana 10

You continue the magic journey

Tree pooja is the way to make your wish-fulfilling tree happy – and to become happy yourself. It is the way to turn inside to discover your inner natural state of pure happiness. This is the whole secret of practising real, auspicious and beautiful magic.

Swamiji was just about to close his eyes and immerse himself in meditation again, when some of the sannyasins, in obvious distress, approached him and asked breathlessly with great concern, “Swamiji, have you seen the eight children who spent the night at the ashram? They must have left the buildings early this morning without us noticing.” Swamiji said, “Sure, look, they are all here.” The sannyasins looked around with surprise.

Only after some time did they notice a small stream of river beside a solid tree with a splendid little bird sitting in its branches singing and chirping beautifully, as well as an extraordinary flower with a friendly and happy looking bee flying around its petals, a healthy, fresh green blade of grass and a stunning golden swan gazing up towards the sun sending an especially bright ray of sunlight to highlight its captivating golden feathers. They were looked at each other astonished. “Swamiji, what’s going on here? We don’t understand.” Swamiji just smiled at them.

“Look, I just shared some yoga vidya with these children, and their pure and simple nature understood exactly what I said and received the benefit of it. I will try to explain it to you also. It is most important to remember one’s own wish-fulfilling tree which lives in the heart-space and is always happy and ready to attend to our deepest wishes. We may choose a physical tree which appreciates it a lot when we practise tree pooja: offering water, a flower, lighting a deepak and incense will bring a lot of happiness, prosperity and wellbeing to our tree. In return, the practice of tree pooja will help us to see divinity within ourselves, in our tree, and eventually in all of creation. As we approach our tree with our innermost heartfelt wishes to become better, we will remember that everybody has wishes like we do and is trying to improve. We will be able to see their efforts, understand them and excuse misbehaviour more compassionately. After all, we also misbehave sometimes. Basically we will learn to see our own self in others.

After this auspicious pooja, the moment has come to direct our wish to the tree within our heart centre. With purity of intention, the wish will come true. It will not only remain a lofty idea but we will be able to actually apply and express what we have wished for and behave in the most appropriate positive way, according to our wish.

However, first we need to become aware of a negative situation or trait of our nature. Every negativity has its origin in the mind, within ourselves. Before this negative aspect becomes huge in dimension and strong like a rock, we need to become aware of it and then practise magic to transform it into the opposite, positive quality. With the practice of pratipaksha bhavana, replace the negative thought or state of mind with a positive sankalpa, your heartfelt conviction, and become that.”

One sannyasi interrupted Swamiji’s explanation and begged, “Please Swamiji, I have been trying for so many years to concentrate my mind, to make it one-pointed, however, it is still jumping around like a monkey. Please help me. I want

to be the world's almighty monkey king who controls the mind with ease." Swamiji stopped himself from laughing and said, "I can see your difficulty and understand your desire to control the jumpy mind. However, it won't be possible for you to immerse yourself in the practice like the children have managed to." "Please Swamiji, let us try," the sannyasi kept on begging and pleading. "Well then," Swamiji said, "as you wish."

Both closed their eyes and started repeating their charm. Suddenly the sannyasi transformed into a monkey, jumping around, swinging from branch to branch on the huge, solid tree that the sannyasins had been admiring. Swamiji opened his eyes and everybody started laughing at the hilarious image of the sannyasi as a monkey. Soft giggling could also be heard, and one by one, the children reappeared in their human forms. "Now you disturbed the children in their meditation," Swamiji scolded the monkey sannyasi.

The children were laughing and jumping around, trying to catch the lively monkey. Finally, they got hold of his tail and after a short time the sannyasi took on his human form again. With hanging shoulders he mumbled, "Swamiji, it did not work." "Of course not," Swamiji said, shaking his head. "See, the children's hearts are pure and their wishes simple and untainted. Whereas your wish has its origin in the mind and is packed with ego. The way you formulated your wish shows your actual desire. It is not to be the humble master over the mind by befriending it and by practising sanyam and discipline, but you want to be a king who is all-powerful; that is arrogant. Before you can access your wish-fulfilling tree, you need to purify your mind and heart.

Recognize who this tree is; it is not just any wish-fulfilling tree, it is my wish-fulfilling tree, the Shivalingam tree. Do you see its flowers? They carry a Shivalingam in their centre and each one has a flower petal that is lifted up like the hood of Shiva's snake. There is full control over the senses and the ego. It will not fulfill any wish which does not originate from the heart and is not totally pure.



If you are thinking of transforming into some kind of monkey, you should choose Hanumanji, for he has unshakable faith. You need to develop unshakable faith, which will develop into pure love and eventually into unshakable trust. On the strength of your faith, love and trust, grace will come upon you and your pure, heartfelt and simple prayer will definitely be heard and answered. Like this, it is possible to rise to unknown heights, to transcend ourselves and our limited mind, to develop the awareness of life as being real, auspicious and beautiful magic. It is then that we fully live and enjoy life every moment.”

Now that you have read this chapter-sadhana, stop for a while and think about the teaching hidden within the story and its magic. Then write down in your own words the lessons you want to remember and learn. At the end of the book, you will find some ideas for your own magic sadhana.





Start right now . . .

How to lead a real, auspicious and beautiful life? The first step is to cultivate happiness.

By looking inside you can become aware of a negative state of mind. With the pure intention and a heartfelt wish to improve you may approach the wish-fulfilling tree – you can create a positive conditioning of the mind by making the effort to apply the concept of pratipaksha bhavana which leads to positive expression. In addition, direct the awareness inwards by practising japa which will connect you with your inner natural pure state of happiness.

Your wish-fulfilling tree becomes most happy when you practise tree pooja as an act of gratitude. Also, tree pooja helps you to turn the gaze inside. You may see yourself in your tree and eventually in the whole of creation.

Start right now: this is your life and your opportunity to practise real, auspicious and beautiful magic!

Magic sadhana

The effort you make to beautify life is sadhana.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Here are four practices for you to do daily. You can do the sadhana for each chapter for one week, then you move to the next chapter-sadhana. When you finish, just start again. This sadhana will surely help you to bring magic into every day of your life.

1. Identify the obstacle, the feelings and attitudes which stop you from being happy.
2. Practise magic by developing the opposite positive quality, pratipaksha bhavana.
3. Live by an inspiring saying.
4. Make a sankalpa, a resolve, that will take you towards your magic goal.

If you find other magic tricks which may help you, just add them. Maybe you come across a saying you really like, or a resolve that you feel strongly about, or you like the teaching you found yourself in the chapter.

Sadhana 1 – You become a sadhaka

Swamiji Always be positive, creative and constructive, no matter what you are experiencing.

Sankalpa I do my sadhana to be at peace and happy.

Sadhana 2 – You become a tree

Obstacle Sometimes you lose your self-confidence and feel insecure.

<i>Magic</i>	Feel that you have strong roots and are steadfast like a tree.
<i>Swamiji</i>	The sentence 'I cannot do it' does not exist, when you have faith in yourself.
<i>Sankalpa</i>	I have trust in myself and my strengths. I am steady and strong.

Sadhana 3 – You become a blade of grass

<i>Obstacle</i>	Sometimes you are sad.
<i>Magic</i>	Like the blade of grass have the conviction that all is well.
<i>Swamiji</i>	Happiness is the armour against which all the arrows of pain and suffering fail.
<i>Sankalpa</i>	I am happy. I look ahead with joy and optimism.

Sadhana 4 – You become a little river

<i>Obstacle</i>	Sometimes you feel hurt by others.
<i>Magic</i>	Flow around your pain and hurt like a river.
<i>Swamiji</i>	When you flow in humility, the softness of the heart and sentiments manifest.
<i>Sankalpa</i>	I smile and remain happy no matter what. I forgive and forget.

Sadhana 5 – You become a flower

<i>Obstacle</i>	Sometimes you are looking for a reward.
<i>Magic</i>	Do your tasks without expecting any reward, like the flower which simply gives its best.
<i>Swami Satyananda</i>	It is not what we get from work that is important, but what we become from it.
<i>Sankalpa</i>	I do my best and leave the rest.

Sadhana 6 – You become light

<i>Obstacle</i>	Sometimes you want more than you need.
<i>Magic</i>	Find out what you really need, then share what you have with all, like the sunrays and deepaks which give their light to everyone.
<i>Swami Sivananda</i>	Be generous.

Sankalpa Every day I give something good to someone – something they would like; it can be my beautiful smile.

Sadhana 7 – You become a bee

Obstacle Sometimes you are selfish.

Magic Be pure like the fragrance of incense and serve others like the busy bee.

Swamiji The whole process of spiritual life is to be open and friendly with all fellow beings; to help, guide, love, live in harmony with and cherish each other.

Sankalpa I give a helping hand to someone every day.

Sadhana 8 – You become a bear and a bird

Obstacle Sometimes you feel fearful and lonely.

Magic Become courageous and strong like a bear, light and free like a bird.

Swami Sivananda If you conquer fear, you are on the road to success.

Sankalpa I practise shashankasana every day. Every day I sing a kirtan.

Sadhana 9 – You become a swan

Obstacle Sometimes you have doubts.

Magic Have faith that life wants your best and be peaceful like the swan.

Swamiji Looking at each new day as a new beginning develops the aspect of faith.

Sankalpa I look inside to understand what is in my heart and in the hearts of others.

Chapter 10 – You continue the magic journey

Obstacle Sometimes you are as dissipated like a monkey jumping here and there.

Magic Protect your pure intention with regular sadhana.

Swamiji Effort is an expression of being natural and spontaneous.

Sankalpa I do my sadhana every day with all my heart.

Note to parents and teachers

This booklet has been written for children. It addresses their world of fears and doubts, desires and needs. It offers them the magic to manage their 'obstacles' in a playful, yet sincere manner, full of fantasy and discipline.

As parents and teachers you are able to assist the children on their journey. You can help them to:

1. Identify their obstacle by reviewing the day or certain events with them;
2. Choose the appropriate and most relevant magic;
3. Explain the saying or discover new sayings which may pertain to your cultural environment and be easy to relate to;
4. Formulate a sankalpa.

You can accompany the children as a family or in the classroom. By talking about the obstacles you remove the sense of shame and guilt, for everyone is facing obstacles of some kind or other in life, parents and teachers included. With your experience and understanding you are able to guide the children in their sadhana towards positivity and balance.







Sannyasi Manas Shakti

International Yoga Teacher Certificate (Zürich, Switzerland); Bachelor of Child Psychomotor Therapy (Basel, Switzerland); one-year contemporary dance training at LABAN, (London, UK).

She has been living at Ganga Darshan since 2012. During this time, she completed the three-year Sannyasa Training (2012–2014) and the one-year Yoga Propagation Training (2018). She was initiated into karma sannyasa in 2012 by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati.

She has been teaching the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal (BYMM) dance and drama. Her joys in life are music, dance, havan and being in nature. Her inspiration is to connect to beauty and strength within and to share her understanding and experience of yoga and the yoga lifestyle with children.



SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

Kalpataru, The Wish-fulfilling Tree is more than a book of storytelling. It is an extraordinary blend of fairy-tale and magic, flights of fantasy and real-world teaching. When the everyday worries of the young meet with the ancient treasure of yoga vidya, then the Kalpataru unfolds its charms and grace.

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati and a group of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal (BYMM) children tell their story of how innocence and faith are guided by the wisdom of a sage to make the world a better place.

Always be positive, creative and constructive, no matter what you are experiencing. If you want to improve yourself and become creative, happy, satisfied and successful, take everything in life as a form of sadhana.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



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