Manas Putra

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Manas Putra


BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA
50
years
1963–2013
GOLDEN JUBILEE
WORLD YOGA CONVENTION 2013
GANGA DARSHAN, MUNGER, BIHAR, INDIA
23rd–27th October 2013



In humility
we offer this
dedication to
Swami Satyananda Saraswati,
who is
inspiring and guiding
Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
to live as a sannyasin.



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निरंजन पराग,
तुममें जीवन है, सौरभ है,
और सुन्दरता का स्पन्दन है,
अवश्य इसे देते रहना।

पर पराग दूषित न हो जाए,
सतत् सतर्क रहना।

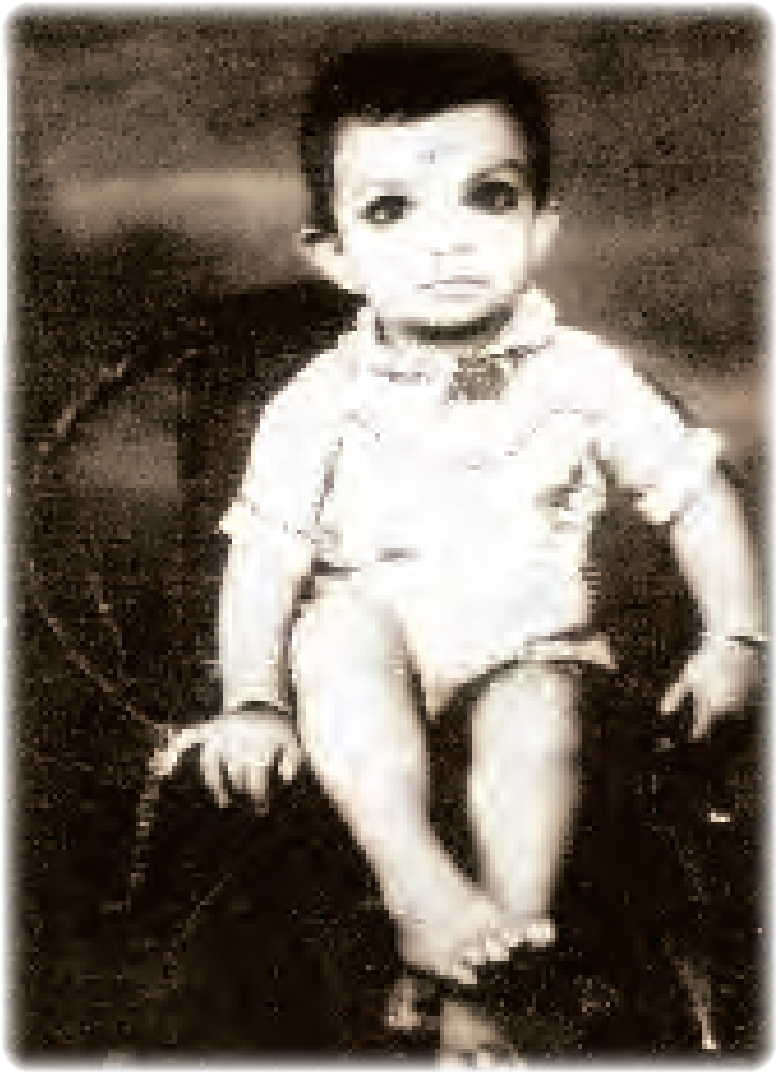
जीवन एक फूल है,
सत्यम्, मंगल, सुंदर,
इसमें सुगन्धि है,
पराग इसी में से बना है।

पशुता के आघात से यह असमय बिखर गया!
मस्ती में डोल रहा था,
कोई फूल के साथ ही इसे मिटाकर चला गया।

जीवन के पराग में नया जीवन है,
इसमें से अनेक जीवन पनपेंगे।
इसे संभाल कर रखना।

संयम, शील, सौजन्य जीवन के पराग हैं,
परहित, करुणा, अनुकम्पा
इसे नवजीवन की बयार पहुँचाती है।
आत्म साधना से पराग की विस्तृति, अमृति होती है।

मानव समाज में ईश्वर को खोजो,
कुष्ठियों, अन्धों, लंगड़ों को समझो,
प्रिय निरंजन पराग,
तुम विश्व को सुन्दर बना सकोगे।



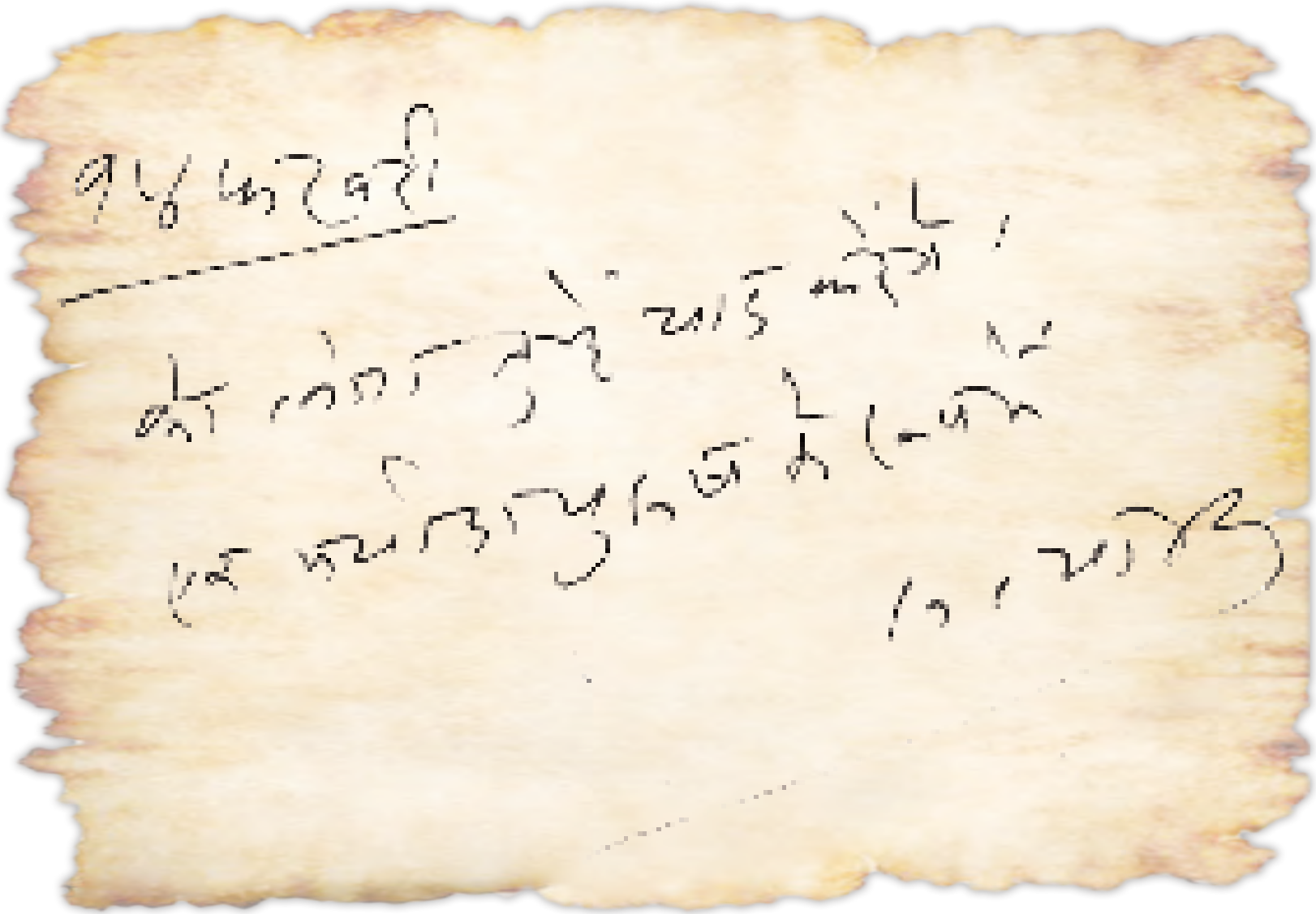
Niranjan,
Just as pollen contains life and beauty
The vibration of beauty is within you.
Be sure to keep radiating this.
Don't let the pollen become tainted,
Always be alert.

Life is a flower
Of truth, auspiciousness, beauty,
Inner fragrance;
From these pollen is made.
A wild shock scatters it before time.
It is vibrant with joy,
Some would destroy it with the flower.

New life is there in the pollen
And from this many lives will flourish.
Maintain it carefully.
Restraint, respect, politeness,
They are the pollens of life.
Altruism, compassion, grace,
From these the new life receives breath.

From the pollen
Atmasadhana grows and endures.
Search for God in the society of humans,
Understand lepers, the blind, the crippled.

Beloved Niranjan,
You are the pollen
Able to make the world beautiful.



From Lap to Lap, a Complete Circle







Manas Putra, the Mind Born

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, Peethadhishwari, Rikhiapeeth

When I first went to Munger I was given the duty to read all the scriptures. Each day, armed with Puranas, Upanishads, Vedas, Yoga Samhitas, *Brahma Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, sitting in the peaceful sanctity of Pujya Gurudev's kutir, I began devouring them all. It was at that time that I discovered the most important practice of tattwa shuddhi in the *Devi Bhagavat Purana*.

Each evening, Sri Swamiji would ask me what I had read and, from a layperson's point of view, I used to tell him what had fired my imagination. One day I came across the term 'manas putra' and I became curious as I had never before even conceived the idea that anyone could be born through the power of the mind.

Yet the Puranas and all scriptural texts refer to this term. In fact, the entire lineage of rishis who we revere as our ancestors are the manas putras of Brahma. The *Bhagvatam* lists them as the jnana rishis, Sanat, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar, known as Sanakadi, and the bhakta rishi, Narada. Then it goes on to list the ten highly evolved maharishis, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Daksha and Narada. The *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* lists more names and goes on to say that Brahma mentally conceived Swayambhu Manu and Sataroopa.

Not being entirely convinced that it was possible to create a being through the mind, that evening I raised the question to Gurudev. What he said gave me faith, conviction and belief in the immense and miraculous powers of the Divine.

He said, "I too have a manas putra. His name is Niranjan. At present he is in America. He is my mind-conceived child. His parents, Dharmashakti and Satyabrat who were childless, and also told by doctors that they could never have a child, asked me to bless them with a child. I infused divine energy in them and a month later, Dharmashakti, who had even crossed the child-bearing age, had conceived."

I asked Sri Swamiji, "How does that make him your manas putra? Many sadhus and saints bless childless couples. Many even go to teerthas and take vows, and they are blessed with a child. So what is the difference between a manas putra and a child born with the blessings of a saint?"

Sri Swamiji said, "The difference is that I not only blessed them to have a child, but I also invoked a special divine soul to enter that new life that was being nurtured. With my mental powers, and the mantras which I had perfected, I invited a divine soul of my choice to take birth through them. Even before he was conceived I had named him Niranjan and declared that he would be my





successor. He is born with a divine mandate for a divine purpose. Niranjan and I are two bodies with one soul!"

In other words, there is a significant difference between a manas putra and one born out of the blessings of a saint. Yes, definitely, the child born with blessings of a saintly person will be more special than others, but a manas putra is not just special, but one who is chosen or selected from the bank of evolved or higher souls.

It is only an evolved soul who can realize at the tender age of four that he is born for a life of renunciation and opt for sannyasa, as Swami Niranjan did. It is only an evolved soul who can offer himself for the service of his guru at an age when other children are playing with toys, as Swami Niranjan did. It is only an evolved soul who can live the life of discipline which sannyasa entails. It is only an evolved soul who, from a very young age, can reject the luxuries and comforts of family life and live in self-imposed austerity, as Swami Niranjan did.

Manas putras, children of mahat, are a shining example of our own higher nature. They are born of the fire of consciousness, *chidagni kund sambhuta*, to fulfil a divine mandate, *deva karya samudhyata*. They are more evolved than us, and through their words, actions and deeds show and inspire us how we ourselves should aspire to be. They come to help mankind and accelerate the evolution of human beings. This they can accomplish by their mere presence which is elevating and uplifting. Just as a tuned musical instrument can cause a similar response in other musical instruments in the same room no matter how untuned they may be, in the same way the vibrations of a manas putra can cause the essence of mahat in us to vibrate or resonate in sympathy.

In fact, rather than mind born, I prefer to interpret the term *manas putra* as 'Child of God'.

After all, when we say that a manas putra is born out of the three powers of God, *iccha shakti* or divine will, *kriya shakti* or divine power, and *jnana shakti* or divine knowledge, we have to accept that this is no ordinary birth. It is the birth of divinity in human form ordained by God to exhibit his immense love and compassion for his creation.

A few years later, on a trip to America with Sri Swamiji, I had the good fortune to meet Swami Niranjan for the first time in Los Angeles. At that time he must have just crossed his teens, but the immense gravity and maturity in his demeanour was that of a person much beyond his years. Although playful and childlike, naughty to the hilt, the seriousness with which he approached his duties and responsibilities was indeed worth emulating.

Later, Sri Swamiji recalled him to Munger to take over the reins of the Bihar School of Yoga, and all of us sannyasins had a new young boss. Many who were used to Swamiji didn't quite know what to expect. But I knew even then, as I know now, that he was the perfect choice that Sri Swamiji had made, for his young shoulders were resolute and strong enough to take on the immense tasks which had been ordained for him.

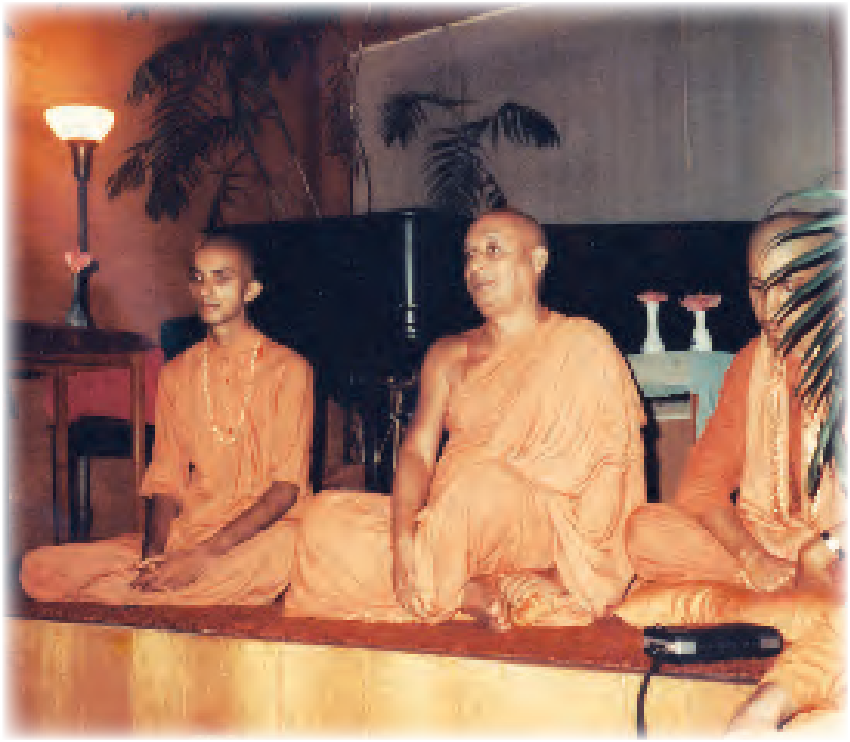
In fact, Sri Swamiji himself once said, "Niranjan epitomizes perfection. He is the exact opposite of me and it would not be wrong to say that all my qualities find their culmination in him. Niranjan stands taller than me." The ease and aplomb with which he took over the burden from his guru and assured him of total dedication, sincerity and selflessness in carrying out his duties, and always remained true to his words, itself showed his high calibre.

The real role of Sri Swamiji's manas putra, Swami Niranjan, however, is now unfolding before us after the sacred event of Gurudev's mahasamadhi. One can easily say that the fifty years spent with his beloved guru were in preparation for this day. The perfect being that Sri Swamiji invoked and infused mental prana into has been chiselled with love and care by Gurudev into one who can easily step into the footsteps of his guru. Today we can see before our very own eyes the vision which Swami Satyananda gave shape to fifty years ago on the banks of the Ganga, at Gangotri.

That vision was for a divine purpose. It was not simply that Sri Swamiji wanted or needed a successor. No, not at all. If he needed a successor he could have groomed one of the many that came to him. It was not at all difficult for him to do that, given his natural ability to bring out the best in everyone.

Rather, we should know that it was a divine mandate that motivated Sri Swamiji to use his siddhis to invoke an elevated soul through the parents of Swami Niranjan. Swami Satyananda's entire life was not the expression of his own wish or will as is the case with most people. He always lived his life according to the divine will and whatever he did in his life, including the invocation of Swami Niranjan's atma, was part and parcel of that divine mandate. This was possible for him because he was selfless to the core, thus becoming the perfect medium for that to happen. In fact, Swami Satyananda has shown that the stories of mind born sons in the scriptures are not a myth. And one realizes that even today this can happen, for we have a living example of such a case.

Swami Satyananda had three siddhis which he received after intense sadhana in the Himalayas during his parivrajaka days. He



has sometimes even spoken about this in his satsangs. The first was *kaya kalpa* or total rejuvenation of the body, to become young again. The second was *avahan* or invoking a soul of his choice. The third was *par kaya pravesh*, to enter another's body, just like Adi Guru Sankaracharya. He did not feel comfortable with the siddhi of entering another's body nor did he have any use for it, so he cremated that siddhi in the Himalayas itself.

He would often say that he had invoked a soul in Bholenath, his constant companion during panchagni, and we were all witness to that. Bholenath's awareness was not that of a dog. In Bholenath was the soul of a close disciple whom Sri Swamiji had called to be with him during this most important sadhana, panchagni. He spoke about it openly and it is recorded in *Bhakti Yoga Sagar*.

For a layman this may seem unimaginable. But that does not mean that it cannot happen. In fact, Sri Swamiji has proved that it is possible to engineer life through a process of nature, known only to those qualified for that knowledge. Life exists in many dimensions. This dimension which we exist and operate in is one, but there are many more. Our dimension of existence is gross, where the vibration of universal energy from which we have originated is at its densest. In other dimensions the same energy which is entrapped in our bodies exists at subtler frequencies, as other forms of life in subtler dimensions known as the *sapta bhumikas* or *lokas*.

To think that what the eyes cannot see does not exist is too limited a concept. Can your eyes see a bacteria or a virus? No, but science has proved that they exist and through all the diseases that attack us, we know and believe they do.

In the same way, forms of life other than what we see do exist as pure energy which we cannot see. They exist everywhere, even in the room where you sleep or watch TV or work. They exist all over in the space around you, travelling between different dimensions adjusting their vibratory rate to suit the subtler dimensions. Of course not everybody, only evolved atmas can do this and it is such enlightened souls who can direct, choose or invoke a soul of their choice. Swami Satyananda was one such person who invoked Swami Niranjan.

After leaving his body, Swami Satyananda too exists in another dimension, planning and preparing for his next incarnation. When he is born he will need a guru, so perhaps Swami Sivananda, who is also existing in some dimension, will come too. Once again guru and disciple will be with each other on this planet just as they are now in some other dimension. History repeats itself. And when they come, we too will unite with them again as we have been doing in previous births. The association with guru is not just of one life.



So what could be the purpose of this divine incarnation that we behold in Swami Niranjan? Well, that will certainly unfold in times to come, but this much is evident that he has a distinct role to play in establishing the spiritual traditions that are so important for the sustenance and evolution of mankind. Only a person with deep understanding, faith, belief, abiding devotion, simplicity and established in selflessness can fruitfully accomplish such a task.

Such souls are rare and we are indeed privileged and certainly most fortunate to have Swami Niranjanji amidst us to guide our lives and shape our destinies. In these times of spiritual poverty, he is the divine and precious gift given to us by Sadguru Swami Satyananda, emerging as a shining glowing light beckoning us towards him, when we are in darkness and despair.

I had the extreme good fortune and rare honour to live and work closely with both Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjan for a very long time and I can truly say that Sri Swamiji loved Swami Niranjan very, very much. Not like a son, no, not at all. In fact, they never lived together, they were always like the North and South Pole, but they had total awareness of each other at all times.

It was amazing to see Swami Niranjan who was never serious, always playing, teasing, laughing and joking with everyone, become a totally different one-pointed focused person as soon as Sri Swamiji entered. Although Niranjanji rarely ever spoke in Sri Swamiji's presence, it was evident that their communication was beyond words. Without speaking there was total understanding and communion. That is true love and the definition of a true disciple.

What impressed me most was the humility and perfection with which he handled his relationship as a disciple of one of the greatest gurus of our times. Swami Satyananda had many shades. Although his care, love and understanding knew no bounds, he could also be a stern taskmaster in order to teach his disciples. Moreover, nothing was concealed from his X-ray vision. Often, he created difficult situations to test his disciples. Many failed those tests, but Swami Niranjan, with his extraordinary and spontaneous spirit of surrender, always surpassed the tests. I think each one of us as disciples, have in this splendid creation of Sri Swamiji's, a shining example before us to emulate.

Those were glorious years! Although Swami Satyananda was my guru, he instilled in me an abiding love, respect and adoration for Swami Niranjan, and through him showed and taught me what it means to be a disciple. In all these years, seeing him closely in every situation, that admiration has only grown, but these words are not being given because I want to praise the person I admire. I truly feel that the awesome facts about Swami Niranjan's birth should be known to each and everyone, so that we can become aware of the spiritual grandeur of his *atma* or soul.





Twenty years ago, Swami Satyananda left Munger and paved the way clear for Swami Niranjan to take up his temporal responsibilities and now, a year ago in 2009, Sri Swamiji left this planet, paving the way for Swami Niranjan to take up his spiritual responsibilities, and give to humanity at large, in every nook and corner of the world, the impetus and inspiration to live the divine life.

The day Pujya Gurudev took samadhi he said to me, "Life is mysterious, one does not know why one has come to this earth, from where and for how long. Mysterious it may be, but it is not without a purpose. That purpose is fulfilled if one can find the right direction. The direction is determined and becomes clear when one gets an expert guide in the form of guru. It is guru who shapes the destiny of the disciple. But such disciples are rare, they are earmarked. You may say they are the chosen ones. Death does not eradicate the bond with guru for such a disciple, as life is eternal. The guru continues to guide and shape the disciple even after he abandons the body."

How true his words are! We can see that clearly in the persona of Swami Niranjan. His total and complete samarpan to guru is not just of this life, but an eternal one. The quality and depth of his surrender suggests and endorses that they have been together before and will continue to be together till eternity, strengthening those bonds through dedication and selfless service. When needed, Swami Satyananda called him down to this earth so that after he has gone, Swami Niranjanji may continue the task of helping those suffering and in need, thus carrying on the uninterrupted tradition of guru-disciple.

The Sat Chandi Mahayajna marks the passing of one year since Swami Satyananda's Antar Dhyana or mahasamadhi. In this one year he has been ever-present because within his apparent absence is hidden so much of his presence. It is also the most befitting time to salute and commemorate the fifty years of Swami Niranjanananda's discipleship. Rikhiapeeth heralds this moment in time by offering the traditional and sacred worship of guru. I am confident that Pujya Gurudev wants it this way and is himself inspiring and guiding us for the fulfilment of this most auspicious ceremony.

Jai Gurudev!



Manas Putra

Swami Suryaprakash Saraswati, President, Bihar School of Yoga, Munger



In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna (2:44:2):

Sthitadhih kim prabhasheta kimasita vrajeta kim.

How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

Sri Krishna replies that such a one moves amid sense-objects, like everyone else, but the difference is that he remains unmoved by them. Such is the sage established in higher wisdom. Such is Swami Niranjanananda.

Swamiji sits with us, eats with us, laughs with us, guides us, instructs us, but his vision spans horizons far beyond the ken of an ordinary human being. To learn from him is to learn, every day, how to perfect an improved situation, how to see beyond the apparent, how to use resources creatively, how to solve the unsolvable, how to understand and how to be.

The ease with which Swamiji can look into the heart of things, follow an inspired course of action and stir us out of our conditioned approaches, is only possible for a being whose genetics defy the ordinary. Indeed, Swami Niranjanananda is a soul who was invoked; he was born of the sankalpa of a param yogi, a vision crafted to fulfil a mission. He is a manas putra, a conception of pure consciousness, the guiding light that Sri Swami Satyananda gave to all of us.

In order to have a beautiful creation, one requires a sculptor with the vision and ability to bring out the beauty, as well as the right material. If the

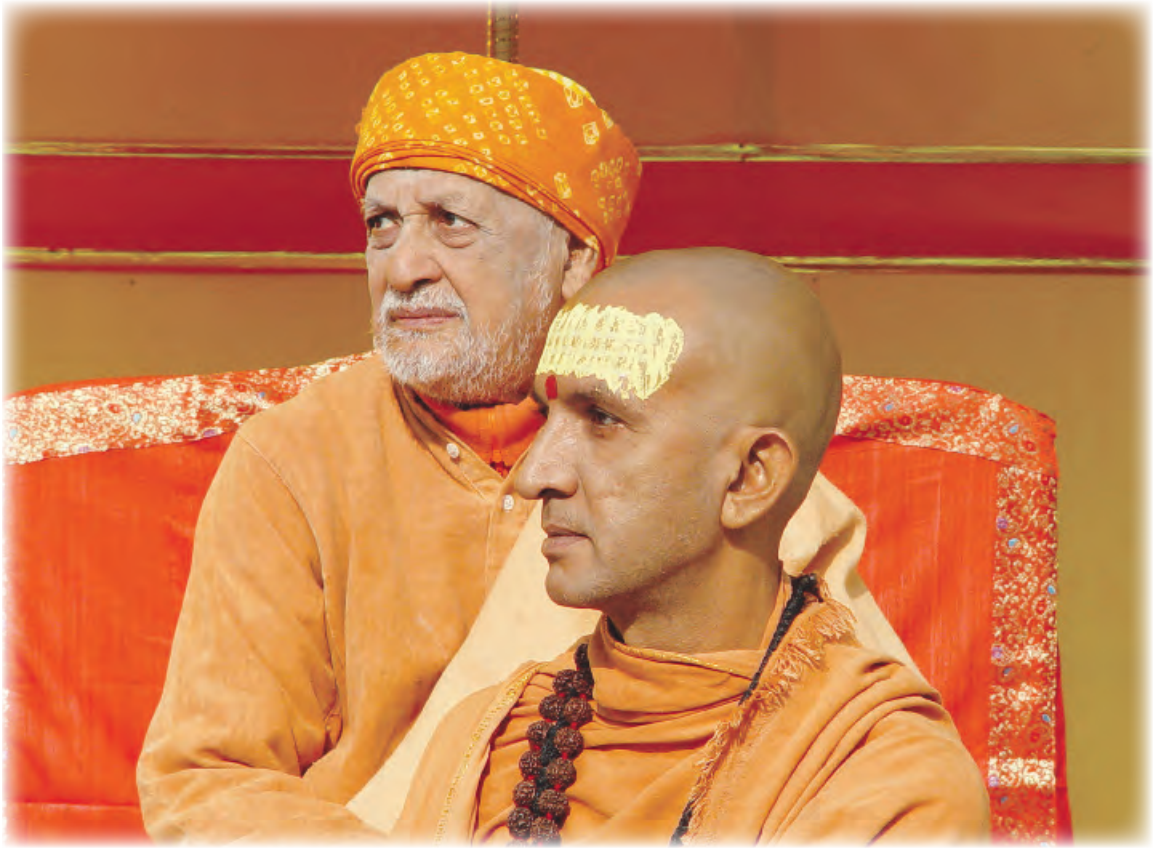
material cracks or complains about the chipping, it cannot be given a shape. The ideal material is that which allows itself to be moulded. If the material surrenders itself to the capable and loving hands of the sculptor, then the creation becomes unique. It is such a creation that we see today as a reality before us, in the lives of Swami Satyananda, the visionary, and Swami Niranjanananda, who became Swami Satyananda's creation.

The story of Swami Niranjan's birth and life is undoubtedly extraordinary. It is the story of an exceptional guru and an exceptional disciple. It is the story of two evolved beings whose spirits are forever performing the dance of synchronicity. This book reveals that story. It tells the events leading to Swamiji's birth, in the voice of Swami Dharmashakti, or Ammaji, as we fondly call her, the fortunate disciple who became the medium to bring to earth her guru's sankalpa.

Indeed, all of us may call ourselves fortunate to have been blessed by the presence of such a perfected being among us. Bihar School of Yoga and its sannyasins humbly offer this publication to Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, on the auspicious occasion of his golden jubilee, his completion of fifty years in 2010. This publication is being released to honour Swamiji's commitment, dedication and contribution in the field of yoga. His relentless effort and resolve, as well as his outstanding achievements in furthering Sri Swamiji's mission are and shall ever remain an inspiration to all of us. We express our heartfelt love and respect to Swamiji and pray that he continues to be our light on the path of spirituality and sannyasa.

Hari Om Tat Sat

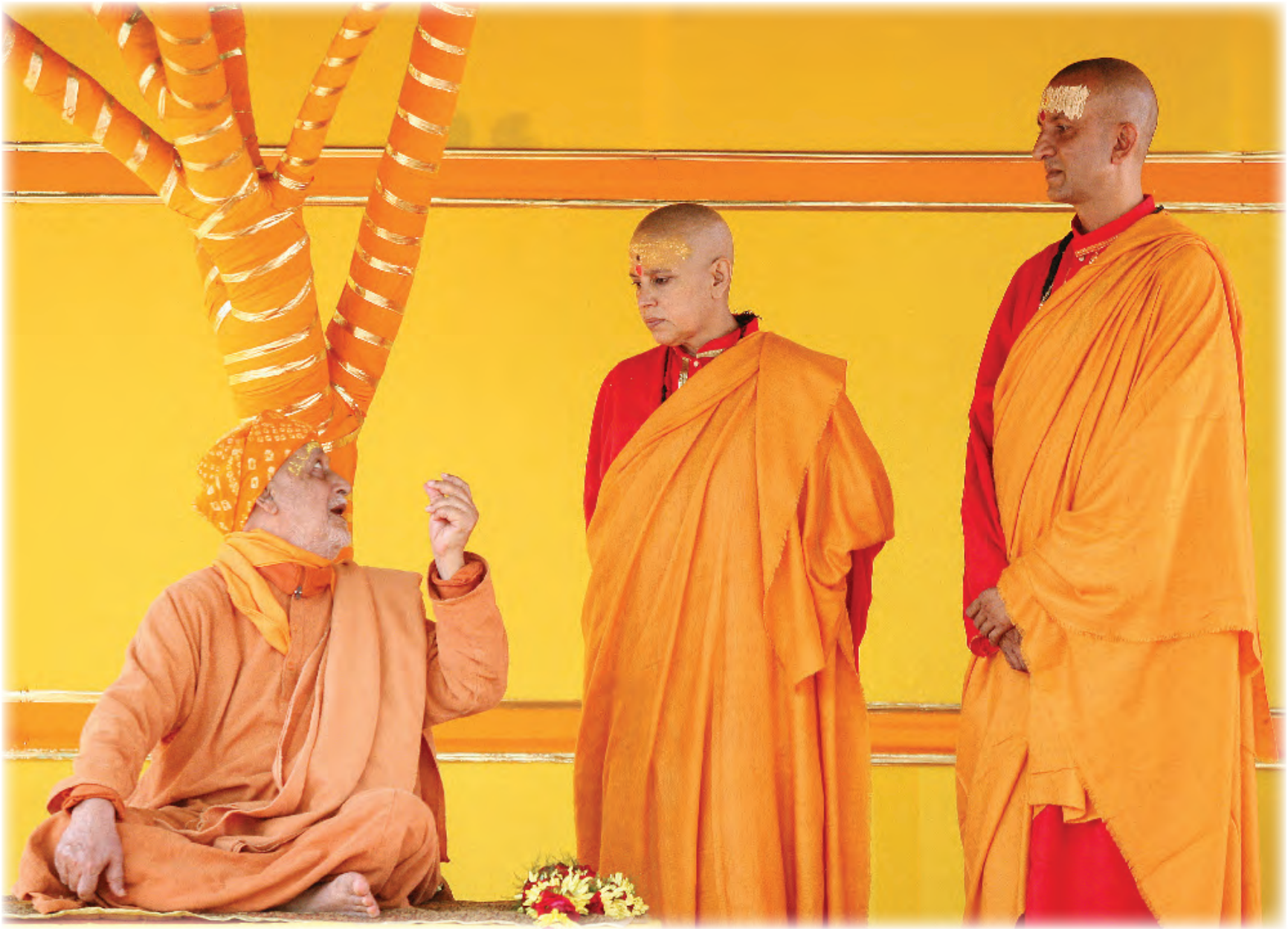




1994 में स्वामी निरंजन से मिलने के लिए मैं गंगादर्शन आया हुआ था। जब मैं उनके पास बैठा था, उसी समय श्री स्वामीजी का फोन आ गया। स्वामी निरंजन ने श्री स्वामीजी से बातें कीं और उन्हें बताया कि मैं उनके पास बैठा हूँ। श्री स्वामीजी ने स्वामी निरंजन को मुझे फोन देने के लिए कहा। अभिवादन के बाद श्री स्वामीजी ने मुझसे कहा - "तुम्हें पता है स्वामी निरंजन कौन हैं? भीष्म के बाद वे दूसरे गंगा-पुत्र हैं, उनका जन्म माँ गंगा के आशीर्वाद से हुआ है। वह मेरा मानस-पुत्र है, जिसका जन्म ईश्वरीय कार्य हेतु मेरे संकल्प से हुआ है। हर प्रकार से उनकी मदद करना।"

In 1994, I went to Ganga Darshan to see Swami Niranjan. While I was there, there was a phone call from Sri Swamiji. Swami Niranjan spoke to Sri Swamiji and mentioned that I was sitting there with him. Sri Swamiji asked him to put me on the phone. After greetings, Sri Swamiji said to me, "Do you know who Swami Niranjan is? After Bhishma he is the second Gangaputra, born with the blessings of Mother Ganga. He is my manas putra, born with a sankalpa for God's work. Help him in all ways possible."

—Prof Dr Ramji Singh, Vice Chancellor, Jain Vishwa Bharti, Ladnu, Rajasthan



समर्पण

आराध्य मेरे,
मेरे गुरुदेव
नये वर्ष के आगमन पर आओ,
मंगलमय स्वर्ण रश्मियाँ बिखेरते आओ,
देव हृदय के दीप, नयनों में जल, फूल हैं,
आशा भरे हृदय में दीपक जगमगा रहा है,
पूजा और पुजापा बनकर
हम दोनों चरणों में अर्पित हैं।
पर प्रभा . . .
दान-दक्षिणा भी स्वीकारनी होगी
एक अनमोल रत्न–
अपने को मिटाकर,
प्राणों को उत्सर्ग कर, पाने को हूँ,
उसे ही
श्री चरणों में भेंट करने की
प्रबल अभिलाषा है

प्रभो!
स्वीकार करोगे,
अपनाओगे जरूर,
फिर एक वायदा भी करना पड़ेगा
उस नन्हे रत्न को
अपने अनुरूप बनाने का,
अपने दिव्य गुणों से भर कर
उसे भी चमकाने का।
तुम सूर्य बनो दिन के
उसे रात्रि का दीपक बनाने को
आना ही होगा–
व्रत-बसन्त को अपनाये जो हैं।

1959 विदा ले रहा है
मचल रहा है आने को 1960
अपनी धरोहर का भविष्य
नये पन्ने में लिख जाओ
ओ भाग्य विधाता!
होठों में हँसी,
नयनों में नीर लिये
धर्मशक्ति प्रतीक्षा करेगी,
जय सत्यम्, श्री सत्यम्
जय जय श्री सत्यम् ओम् ॥

अभिषिक्त
२८-१२-५९

Surrender

O my deity, my Gurudev!
At the advent of the new year, come
Scattering golden rays, come.
The lamp of the heart, the flowers of the eyes
are ever yours.
In my hope-filled heart a new light shines
and becoming the worshipper and the worship
I offer myself at your feet.
But Master . . .
You will have to accept a dakshina.
A priceless jewel
that I am about to beget
from the very essence of my
pranas and soul
is what I wish to offer at your lotus feet.
This is my earnest desire.



My Lord!
I know you will accept him
and make him your own. Then,
a promise you must also make,
to cast the little jewel
in your own mould,
to fill him with your divine qualities
and give him the sheen you radiate.
You are bright as the blazing sun
But you will have to come
to make him into a lamp that lights up the night,
For you have embraced Vrat and Basant.

1959 is bidding adieu
1960 is eager to arrive
Come and write
The future of your protégé
on a fresh page.
O destiny maker!
With a smile on her lips
and tears in her eyes
Dharmashakti will wait for you.
Jaya Satyam, Sri Satyam
Jaya Jaya Sri Gurudev.

Dharmashakti
—27th December 1959

Eternal Memories

Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati, Munger



From time to time great men appear on this planet, who 'completely conquer' the whole world. Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati is one such luminary of this age. In his early youth, he found a guru of the highest calibre and surrendering his life completely at his guru's feet, learnt the art of true living from him. Seeing this radiant tapasvi, one cannot help thinking that the Creator has sent him to fulfil a grand mission.

Sacrificing his own pleasure and happiness, he began toiling for the welfare of the world and encouraged others to do the same as well. His teachings were not mere words, rather they were outer expressions of the inner experiences he himself had on the spiritual path. He will undoubtedly rule over the hearts of men for ages to come.

Just as a small, fast-moving stream meets and merges into a mighty, meandering river, this young tapasvi came and prostrated before Swami Sivananda. Seeing the immense potential latent in his personality, Swami Sivananda knew that he had found the right messenger to spread his message of divine life to all corners of the world. Swami Sivananda placed him upon the highest pedestal amongst his disciples and named him Swami Satyananda Saraswati, but he fondly called him Swami Satyam.

Offering body, mind and soul to his guru, Swami Satyananda served him day and night, implicitly obeying all his commands without the slighest hesitation. But he was destined to accomplish great things in life. How could he remain confined to one place for long?

Swami Satyam would visit Gangotri every year where he would pray to Mother Ganga, "Ma, I have a lot to accomplish. Give me an able successor, otherwise my work will remain unfinished." Once, on the way to Gangotri, he met an old sadhu who gave him three siddha mantras.



Shortly after this incident Swami Sivananda called Swami Satyam and told him, "Satyam, you have worked very hard for the Divine Life Society, but if you continue to live here you will become a bonsai. You must leave this place now, it is proving to be too small for you." Handing 108 rupees to Swami Satyam, he continued, "You only have to add zeroes at the end of this figure, that's all."

"I am ready," replied Swami Satyananda resolutely.

That very day Swami Satyananda had completed twelve years of ashram life. Swami Sivananda took him to his sadhana room and in ten minutes imparted the experience of kriya yoga. The capable guru poured forth all his accumulated powers into the heart of his deserving disciple and said, "Satyam, now you are a *parivrajaka*, a wandering mendicant. Go and conquer the world."

Shortly after Swami Satyam's departure, Swami Sivananda once made the following remark, "Has anyone managed to stop a river from flowing or the sun and the moon from rising, that I could have stopped Satyam? He has a lot to accomplish. He is my real successor. Most disciples are not at all devoted to their guru, and of the remaining few, most are blind in their devotion. After the guru's demise, their boat also capsizes. But Satyam is that luminous flame which will go on spreading the name of Shiva and the light of his teachings throughout the entire world."

After Swami Satyananda had adopted the life of a parivrajaka, we received a letter from Swami Sivananda, saying, "You have always been requesting me to send a swami to your town. Swami Satyam is now leading the life of a mendicant and is presently in Delhi. Write to him and invite him to your place."

At the call of 'Satya' and 'Dharma', on 7th June 1956, Swami Satyananda Saraswati set foot in Rajnandgaon with the first rays of the rising sun. His arrival generated a wave of faith and devotion in the hearts of one and all. "I will keep on travelling," Swami Satyam said, "and your home will be my head-office. My letters will come here. You must reply to those letters and arrange my programs as required. Wherever I go, I shall send you my contact address. If you need to ask something or inform me about upcoming programs,





write to me at that address. You two are like the twin wheels of my chariot. Both of you are extremely capable, which is why I'm handing you this responsibility."

In June 1957, we accompanied Swami Satyananda on a pilgrimage to Gangotri. Satyavratji had already arranged to take mantra diksha from Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh enroute to Gangotri. Everyone told me to take diksha at the same time. On the day of Satyavratji's diksha, Sivanjali said to Swami Sivananda, "Swamiji, please initiate Basanti as well." I always had a certain rebellious streak in me as far as discipleship of a living guru was concerned, but at this juncture my mind began to vacillate. Closing my eyes, I mentally prayed, "O Lord! Point out the one at whose feet I should surrender my life." Suddenly I felt that instead of Swami Sivananda, Swami Satyananda was sitting there! Inwardly I accepted him as my guru. Swami Sivananda noticed my introversion and silence, and he kept looking at me. Then his eyes lit up and he started laughing. "Ohji, she will also get a guru," he exclaimed, "but at the right time. Her guru will come right to her doorstep to initiate her, and she will do a lot of work for his mission."

Although Satyavratji didn't say anything then, he was quite annoyed with me for not having taken diksha from Swami Sivananda, a veritable jagadguru. "Bade Swamiji is venerable and he will always have a place of honour in my heart. Chhote Swamiji, on the other hand, is not only venerable but also very dear to me. I will take my rightful inheritance from my beloved alone." To which Swami Satyananda replied, "I shall never become a guru. Only Swamiji can occupy that position. As for me, I will wander hither and thither for ten-twelve years and then enter into samadhi in some remote Himalayan cave."

At 4 am the next day, we received the blessings of Swami Sivananda and left for Gangotri. There is a sense of joy and bliss immanent everywhere in Gangotri. Leaving us in Gangotri, Swami Satyam began proceeding towards Gomukh. He told us that the route to Gomukh was quite dangerous and so we should stay in Gangotri. But we decided to go with him no matter what, and we kept following him until he was forced to change his mind about going to Gomukh. That evening we walked a long way along the Ganga. Instructing us to sit some distance apart from each other and practise japa and meditation, he kept on walking. I was tempted to follow him but he strictly forbade me and went on ahead. It was getting dark so we all made our way back to our dharmashala.

After a while, I decided to go in search of Sri Swamiji with Satyavratji who had a torch in hand. We had hardly gone any distance when we saw a light coming in our direction from far away. Satyavratji said in a voice filled with awe and wonder, "That is Swamiji coming towards us. The divine energy of this sacred place is accompanying him. We should quietly turn back." And we returned to the dharmashala.

When Sri Swamiji returned, he had a special glow on his face. His eyes were red and if we asked anything, instead of replying,

he would just laugh and the dazzling radiance on his face seemed to scatter all around. I asked him to eat something for dinner, but after having a few mouthfuls, he quietly went to bed. We sat around him for a long time. As we were paying our respects to him before going to bed ourselves, we had a strange experience. We had covered him with six or seven blankets, yet his feet felt ice-cold and when we touched them a tingling current shot through our bodies.

The divine energy of that place had manifested before Swami Satyam and given him a special mandate to fulfil. Ma Ganga also blessed him with her darshan and went on to stay in his body for a day. Everyone witnessed this extraordinary event.

As we were about to take a bath in the Ganga one morning, Satyavratji said to Swami Satyam, "Swamiji, please give Basanti something."

"That 'something' is not in her fate," Swamiji replied, "but it is definitely part of my destiny. I'll give you that 'something', but then you'll have to return it. Promise me that you won't keep it, but will return it to me."

"Yes, we'll return it," said both of us and we made a solemn resolve on the spot. Sri Swamiji took some water from the Ganga in his palms, made a sankalpa, and then sprinkling that water on us, said, "I am giving it to you, and you will return it."

"As you wish," we replied solemnly.

Listening to Swami Satyam's satsangs and discourses, singing bhajans and kirtans, we completed our Gangotri pilgrimage in his inspiring company. On our way back I remarked, "Swamiji, this beautiful chapter of our life will end soon, and we will once again get entangled in the ups and downs, the delights and dejections of the world. How nice it would be to go on travelling like this for ever and ever!"

"Tear off the old pages of your life's book," replied Sri Swamiji, "the spiritual chapter of your life has now begun. You have been reborn in Gangotri. This is yogic life. I have received a compelling command from Ma Ganga, a definite mandate from the divine forces. And to fulfil that, I will give you 'something'. This can



happen right now, but you have to undergo some preliminary training on the spiritual path first. Remove disharmony and discontent, jealousy and lethargy, and all the limiting thoughts of past and future from your mental plane. On the physical plane, go on with your household duties. On the intellectual plane, contemplate the karmas of your life, but beyond that do not allow worldly thoughts and samskaras to enter. Once the flute reaches Kanhaiya's hands, only sweet notes can come out of it. In the same way, once your life is devoted to the service of your ishta, it becomes a storehouse of light, power and wisdom. You are a sincere aspirant, the power is within you. The burdens of pain, suffering and frustration are a thing of the past. The new chapter of your life will contain bliss, joy, happiness, devotion to your ishta and realization of the self."

"Whatever you wish shall come to pass. Therefore, never, even by mistake, think inauspicious thoughts. Never think ill of others or yourself. 'My lord can do everything. He will always do what is good and beneficial for me' – once you develop such an attitude, all the sufferings of life will vanish. Do not let failures frighten you. Learn to become strong and resolute. Throw the pages of past failures into the dark abyss of ignorance. Worldly life is a tiny, cramped cage of hopes and sorrows, success and failure, whereas spiritual life is a wide, open field of joyful mirth and merry-making. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose and sometimes we get hurt, yet we keep laughing. Pain, anger, infatuation and delusion must vanish from life soon. You have to understand this yourself. Let the leaves of old habits and desires fall off quickly, so that new leaves and new flowers may sprout and a new spring may dawn."



I said, "We have been so brave and courageous to have accomplished this journey. We deserve a reward, don't we? Satyavratji has already taken his rightful 'reward' from Swami Sivananda, won't I get my 'reward' from you?" The desire to receive diksha from Sri Swamiji had surfaced once again.

Sri Swamiji shook his head. "Think that you have received your mantra from Swamiji as well," he said, expressing his oft-repeated stand, and then added, "Nonetheless I will also give you 'something'. What that is, only time will tell. You must begin sadhana to acquire wisdom, purity and power. Ma Ganga has given me a clear mandate. I will create such a towering banyan tree, whose expansive shade will offer shelter and comfort to countless suffering souls. You have much sadhana to do and so have I. Understand?"

Some days later we received a letter from Swami Satyam, "Make arrangements for a retreat in a secluded rural area sometime during May. The two of you and myself have a lot of special sadhana to accomplish."

Bhagawati Babu's village was chosen for the sadhana retreat. His family were old landlords of the region and Satyavratji had visited his place many times. Swami Satyam was accompanied by only seven people – Vishwaprem and her uncle, Harsinghani, Satyavratji and his sister Annapoorna, and Basanti, her younger sister Ratna and her friend Bharati.

Sri Swamiji gave each one of us a room of our own and told us to practice our sadhana in solitude. He kept a separate room for himself as well.

The sadhana program included asana, pranayama, bhajan, kirtan, japa and dhyana, and was followed by a question and

answer session. After lunch we would rest. Then at 2 pm, we would read Swami Sivananda's book *Sadhana* and have satsang with Sri Swamiji. Thereafter we would go for a walk. After dinner, there would be a discourse on the *Gita*, *Ramayana* or the *Bhagavatam*. All the villagers would gather for the discourse. They would listen attentively and even ask a few questions at the end. They were quite impressed by the depth and breadth of Swami Satyam's knowledge. Soon they started treating him like their father. They would invite their relatives and acquaintances from nearby villages, saying, "A great, wise saint has come to our village. He is more than a hundred years old but looks like a young man. God Himself appears before him and gives him the knowledge he needs. You must all come for his darshan. Your life will be blessed."

Of the three mantras that Sri Swamiji had received from the old sadhu in Gangotri, he performed japa of the first one and perfected it while staying at Anand Bhavan, Munger. He used the second mantra on me during this sadhana camp in 1959. And the third mantra he cast away into the Ganga during his pilgrimage to Badri-Kedar saying that he he had no use for it anymore.

Everyone's sadhana progressed as per the directions of Swami Satyam. I would practise most of the asanas, including *sirshasana*, the headstand. Swami Satyam took a good look at my headstand and told me to practise it for five minutes. Then he instructed me to perform *purascharana*, mantra sadhana. I had to complete japa of one hundred and fifty malas daily. He gave me detailed instructions for the purascharana – how much time to spend in japa, how much time in rest, and so on. He anointed me with a chandan tilak and, giving me his blessings, told me to begin my purascharana. On the first day, the japa finished by 10 pm.

The next day I felt extreme heat in my body and I had to come out of the room. Sri Swamiji was watching everything. "Why did you come out?" he asked.

"The heat is unbearable, Swamiji," I replied.

"No," he said, "Sit down for your japa again. Put lots of chandan on your body, then you won't feel the heat. Go now." And I again sat down to do my japa.

My sadhana continued. Then one day Sri Swamiji told me about a dream he had that morning: "I saw myself strolling in a garden full of rose shrubs, but there was not a single flower on any of them. 'What a bleak and barren garden! No flowers at all!' I thought to myself. I sat down and began to think why this should be so. Just then a whiff of fragrance caught my attention. I got up and walked to the centre of the garden where I saw a big beautiful rose in full bloom. That was all."

A wave of joyous exhilaration washed over my entire being. This was in the year 1959. Thereafter Sri Swamiji left to do more sadhana on his own.

On the morning of Guru Poornima, we went to Bandha Bazaar for Sri Swamiji's darshan. We had taken the necessary articles for pooja with us. Our house was the favourite haunt of the





neighbourhood children. They had been pestering me since early morning, "Today is Guru Poornima. When will you do the pooja?" "I will come back after performing pooja of Guruji and then give you all lots of sweets," I replied.

Sri Swamiji was living in total seclusion in a jungle. Seth Radha Kishan's mansion was a few kilometres away. Swamiji had commenced a special two month long sadhana. He would do his sadhana in complete solitude from dawn to dusk. He would fast throughout the day, observing complete mouna, and in the evening Sethji would himself come with a tiffin. Swamiji would greet him with a *Hari Om*, break his fast and engage in a little conversation with his visitors. Sethji would say, "Swamiji, please have your meal in peace. We'll sing kirtans in the meantime." He would bring ten to fifteen people with him. After finishing his meal, Swamiji would have satsang with them.

Upon reaching Swamiji's kutir, we learnt that Swamiji had not come out since morning. Hearing our voices, he called out from inside, "Is that you, Satyavratji?" When Satyavratji replied in the affirmative, he opened the door, exclaiming, "I knew the two of you would come today." We prostrated before him and said, "Swamiji, we have come to perform your pooja." I brought out my pooja thali with all the articles of worship.

"Come," said Sri Swamiji, "there is a beautiful hillock a little way off. It is a two minute walk from the back door." There was a small Hanuman temple on top of the hillock. We went to the temple, paid our respects and sat down. There was nothing except boulders and rocks on the barren hillside. Sri Swamiji sat down on the temple steps. We garlanded him with a mala we had brought with us. It seemed as if Sri Swamiji was in a deep state of meditation. We decided not to disturb him. We sat some distance away and closed our eyes in meditation.

After a while I had an extraordinary experience. It felt as if a bright light had emerged from Swami Satyam and spread all over us. The heat from the intense light left me perspiring profusely. I had to cover my eyes with both hands to block the dazzling light. At that moment, Swamiji burst out laughing and the light disappeared.

A little later Sri Swamiji raised his hand in a gesture of benediction and Satyavratji said, "Give prasad to Swamiji now." I had never indulged in elaborate rituals and formalities with Sri Swamiji. I garlanded him, did his arati, put chandan on his forehead and feet and gave him prasad. He took some of the prasad and gave the rest to us. We got ready to leave in the afternoon. As we were leaving, Sri Swamiji asked me, "I hope you are doing your asanas regularly. Continue with sirshasana as well. Be careful with your diet, practice discipline and restraint. Read the *Ramayana* and *Gita* regularly."

In November 1959, Swamiji came to Rajnandgaon for a convention which was attended by hundreds of people. Representatives of different religions spoke about their respective faiths. I myself wanted to attend, but there was a certain hesitation. Swami Satyam would ask Satyavratji, "Why did Dharmashakti not

come?" And Satyavratji would reply, "I had asked her to come but . . ." Satyavratji's sister, Annapoorna, had also come to attend the program. She understood the situation and told Swamiji about my condition. Swamiji had a hearty laugh . . .

"Are you still doing your asanas? Sirshasana as well?" he teased me. Then he instructed me, "All right, from now on only do pawanmuktasana and sukh poorvak pranayama. Go for long walks in the mornings and evenings. Read good and inspiring literature. Think about Kaushalya's Rama and Yashoda's Krishna, and live a restrained and disciplined life." Turning to Annapoorna he said, "You will have to stay with Dharmashakti from January."

Endowed with the blessings of Ma Ganga and his Poojya Gurudev, Swami Satyam had showered his grace upon a disciple who had been yearning for a son, and himself performed rigorous sadhana for invoking an extraordinary soul who would shoulder the responsibility of his mission and carry it forward by leaps and bounds. With the blessings of the Divine and the grace of a great guru, the sankalpa manifested . . .

In the early morning of 14th February 1960, a beautiful baby announced his arrival in this world. Swami Satyam was in Bombay at the time. That day he told Vishwaprem, "The one I have been waiting for has finally arrived. Today we will receive a telegram of his birth." Sri Swamiji wrote to us that he had been held up in Bombay for some programs, and would not be able to come to Rajnandgaon right away.

On 20th March, Sri Swamiji came to Rajnandgaon. His eyes lit up as soon as he held the thirty-five day old baby in his arms. It seemed as if guru and disciple exchanged secret glances . . . Taking the little baby in his lap and blessing him, he said, "The light of God has descended in the form of this child to illuminate the darkest corners of this earth. He has been born through a pure, divine sankalpa. He hasn't come merely to be your cuddly son. He has come to fulfil a grand purpose and mission. All of us owe him a debt of duty and responsibility. He will not like any fawning or over-attachment. We have to prepare him for the great task he has come to undertake, a task that will involve countless other souls."

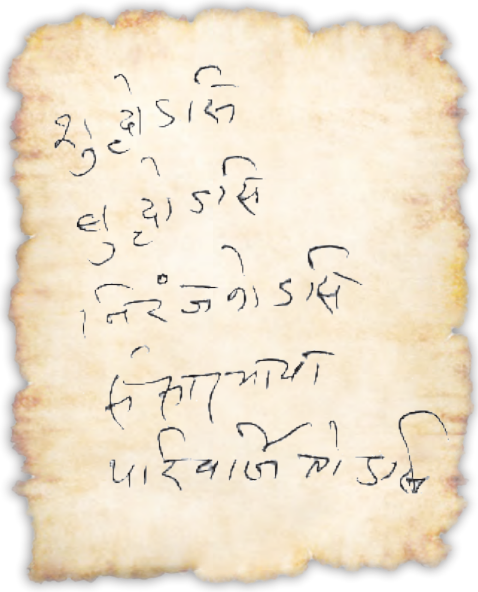


"He is an embodiment of divine light and he has come with the requisite ingredients. Water this young seedling with the holy name of Rama and, in the course of time, this precious flower will spread its divine fragrance throughout the world. Dharmashakti, you had asked for a suitable name for the child, and so I say, he is *Niranjan*, the pure and immaculate. Call him by this name only. Let your mahamantra be:

Mantra satyam, pooja satyam, satyam devo niranjanam
Gurorvaakyam sadaa satyam, satyameva param padam."

Sri Swamiji further advised us, "Avoid all pedestrian talk in the presence of this little child. Discuss only sublime things. In his present state he will imbibe every impression. And don't harbour any sentimental attachment to him."

Everyone had gathered at our house at the news of Sri Swamiji's arrival. Among the visitors was one, Bindeshwari Jha. He used to





Bindeshwari Jha chanted the *Gita* to the little baby every day for four months.

We started visiting Munger after the birth of Swami Niranjan. Whenever Sri Swamiji visited our home and gave discourses we would lay the sleeping baby by his side. Upon waking he would often start crying and we would rush to carry him away lest he disturb Swamiji's satsang, but Swamiji always forbade us from doing so. "Let him cry," he would quip, "and the louder, the better. He will deliver many discourses when he grows up. Wailing and crying will prepare his throat for the task ahead . . ."

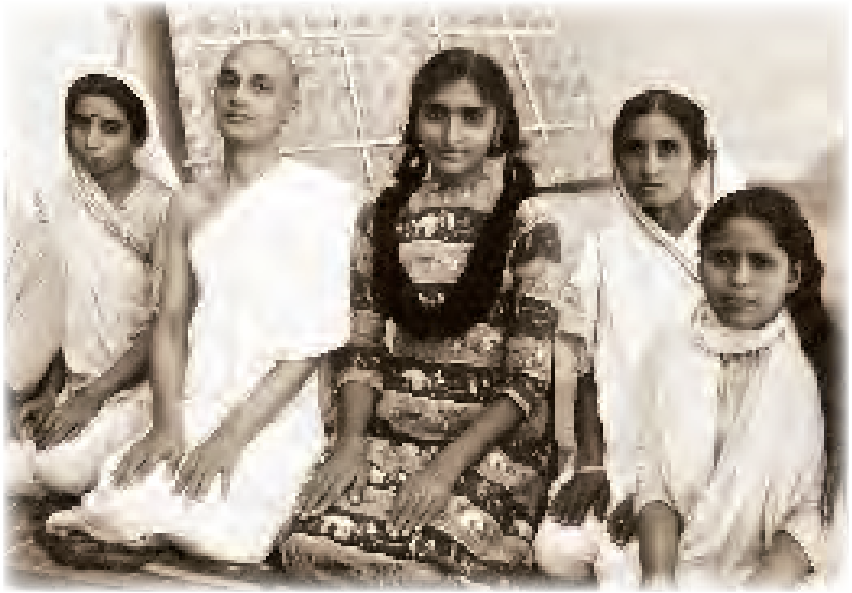
When Swami Niranjan was a little older, he started accompanying us to the station to see off Sri Swamiji. He must have been a year and a half at the time. After Sri Swamiji boarded the train, Niranjan would cry out, "Will go . . . will go."

"Yes, yes," I would say, "Swamiji will go."

"And Baba?"

do a lot of pooja-path and chanting of the *Gita* and *Ramayana*. He would often ask Sri Swamiji if he could help his mission in any way. That day Sri Swamiji turned to him and said, "You have always asked me if you could be of any help. There is something that I would like you to do. Please take this little baby in your lap everyday and read a chapter of the *Gita* to him.' He was overjoyed to be given this duty, but the others sitting around were sceptical. "Swamiji, Niranjan is but a baby right now," they said, "Will he understand anything?"

"His soul will imbibe everything at this stage," replied Sri Swamiji solemnly, "because it is not attached to anything right now. In a few months, he will begin to recognize people and identify colours and sounds. He will continue to receive impressions then, but his attention will be constantly diverted and distracted. But when he listens to the chanting now, he will feel as if the sound is coming from somewhere deep inside. It is very important to give children such samskaras in the present-day world." And



"Baba won't go today. He will go tomorrow." The train would slowly begin to move and he would start wailing, "With Swamiji . . ." He didn't know many words, "With Swamiji" was all he could manage.

One day a sadhu was begging for alms near our house. He was wearing a loin cloth and his entire body was smeared with ash. Niranjan was hardly two years old at the time. He was playing outside when he chanced to see the sadhu. He ran inside and grabbing my sister Ratna, brought her outside. "Icchi, who is he?" he asked.

"Sadhu baba," she replied.

"Make me a dadu as well . . ." he started repeating over and over again in his childish lisp, and wasn't pacified until Ratna smeared his entire body with ash and made him look exactly like the sadhu baba.

Swami Niranjan was very fond of Sri Swamiji's geru clothes. Whenever Sri Swamiji stayed at our home, Niranjan would quietly crawl up behind him and hide inside his geru dhoti or kurta. If he saw Sri Swamiji's dhoti drying on the clothesline, he would exclaim in delight, "Ah! how beautiful!" and if by chance the corner of the dhoti lay within the reach of his little hands, he would pull it down and wrapping it around, prance around in sheer joy.

Ratna liked to get fancy clothes for Swami Niranjan and see him in the new clothes, but in the night Niranjan would take a pair of scissors and tear the new clothes to shreds. In the morning, we would ask, "Niranjan, what happened to your new clothes?" and he would innocently reply, "A mouse came in last night and he chewed up my new clothes."

In 1964, we took Swami Niranjan to Munger for the inauguration ceremony of the Munger ashram. Once there, he said with an air of finality, "I will stay here. I won't go back". Sri Swamiji somehow managed to convince him to return. "Go now," he said, "but come back in a month's time. 1, 2, 3 . . . count the days in this manner and when you reach the thirtieth day, your parents will definitely bring you back here." Only then did he relent and agree to return with us. From then on, we visited Munger quite frequently.





Little children from the neighbourhood would often come to our house to play with Swami Niranjan. “Look Niranjan,” I would say, “your friends have come to play with you.”

“Huh, these are not my friends,” he would remark dismissively.

“Who are your friends then?” I would ask.

He would reel out the names of college-going boys and girls of our neighbourhood and say, “Those are my friends.” Never did he play with children of his age.

Whenever Sri Swamiji visited our place, Swami Niranjan would run around town informing everyone of his arrival and telling them to come and listen to his satsangs. He would invite even the water-bearers and coolies he met on the road.

Whenever I prepared nice eatables in the house, I would pack a portion for Swami Niranjan in a little container and keep the rest in a big container high up on the kitchen shelf. If some guests dropped by at that time and I was busy entertaining them, he would call some tall boy and, climbing on his shoulders, take the container off the shelf, and then go out and distribute the goodies to all and sundry. He would then return the empty container to its rightful place. Seeing this my mother-in-law would often comment, “Niranjan’s antics remind me of the butter-stealing pranks of Kanhaiya.”

Whenever I took Swami Niranjan along on an errand, I had to stop every now and then on the way. Every passer-by would either smile at him or stop to exhange a few pleasantries with him. He was the apple of everyone’s eye indeed. From childhood, he had a special magnetic quality about him that attracted young and old alike. He could approach a total stranger and become his best buddy in a matter of minutes. I’m reminded of an incident that higlights both the gregarious and mischievous aspects of his personality.

Once, we accompanied Sri Swamiji to Muzaffarpur on one of his programs. We were lodged in a spacious dharmashala in the premises of Sati Rani ka Mandir, and the program venue was the racecourse grounds where a big marquee had been put up. Swami Niranjan saw some race horses there and immediately went over to see them. Soon he was chatting with their trainer as if they were old friends.

Later in the day, the program was inaugurated and Sri Swamiji began his opening discourse. Swami Niranjan was on stage beside him. Suddenly he got up and whispering, "I'll be back in a minute," he jumped off the stage and disappeared from sight. Presently he returned and reassumed his place on stage.

The audience had been seated in two separate sections, one for ladies and the other for gents, with a wide aisle in the middle. In a few minutes, their jaws dropped down in amazement. As they looked on wide-eyed with surprise, a line of horses trooped in majestically down the aisle. As the first horse neared the stage, it stopped, raised one leg in salute to Sri Swamiji, turned around and trotted back the way it had come. The remaining six or seven horses in line repeated the act.

The audience was in splits by now. Sri Swamiji was looking on in amusement, first at the horses and then at Swami Niranjan. He understood everything in a jiffy. He called out to the horse trainer standing at the venue entrance, "Ohji, send the horses again, but with the laddie on top this time." And soon we saw the horses march in again with Swami Niranjan astride the lead horse, grinning from ear to ear . . .

Niranjan was at ease with everyone, be it people on the street or the high and mighty. Once, in Colombia, he asked his hosts to arrange a meeting with the country's president. His hosts were taken aback by this rather uncommon request. A boy not even in his teens expecting to meet the head of state! Nonetheless they passed his request along. And to their great surprise, the president agreed to meet an unknown, young boy from India!

In his meeting with the president, Swami Niranjan told him that he was interested in exploring evidence of ancient yogic cultures in this part of the world. Quoting extensively from the Indian scriptures, he explained that modernday Latin America was the pataal loka spoken of in the Indian tradition, that's the place Arjuna had visited during his travels, that some remnants of that era must have survived till now . . . and he went on and on in this vein. The president may or may not have believed him, but he was certainly impressed by his pluck and self-confidence, so much





so that he wrote a letter asking the local authorities to extend all possible help to the young boy. Swami Niranjan went on to visit several ancient archaeological sites and museums in Colombia, from where he gathered many photographs and other evidence of a pre-Columbian yogic culture in Latin America . . .

Whenever Swami Niranjan asked me to narrate stories, I would tell him anecdotes from Sri Swamiji's life. Immediately all his naughtiness would disappear, and he would keep repeating the things he had heard. Satyavratji would say on such occasions, "Niranjan, you are like a tape-recorder for these stories."

Swami Niranjan learnt to read and write at the age of four. He would take out all my diaries and notes, Sri Swamiji's letters and any other material he could lay his hands upon, and read aloud each and every word. Whenever I sat down to write, he would sit down beside me and begin to write himself. It didn't matter if the letters came out big or small, straight or crooked, he would go on scribbling. I would gather all his jottings and keep them safely, saying, "Niranjan, when you grow up, construct a nice building. Name it 'Satyadham', and decorate its rooms like a museum, filling them with pictures, books, and articles of Swamiji. Somewhere in that museum keep all my writings as well. These writings are portraits of Swamiji's life in words. For you they are a veritable Guru-Gita."

I am reminded of an incident that occurred in October 1963. The construction of Munger ashram had started. Swamiji had finalised and publicized his plans to light the akhanda jyoti there on 19th January 1964 and, entering into the holy order of Paramahamsa, stay put in the ashram for the next three years. This was the last year of his life as a parivrajaka, and all his devotees and disciples had organized programs in their respective towns and cities. A five-day program had been organized in Rajnandgaon as well. Swami Niranjan was a little under four at the time. Swamiji told him, "Niranjan, I won't be coming here anymore. You must come to Munger now. And once you come to stay there, I will take samadhi."

From early morning to late night, our house would remain crowded with people wanting to meet Swamiji. From early morning they would queue up to take mantra diksha, thinking this to be their last chance. Throughout the day prasad would be distributed to everyone who came.

A satsang for ladies had been organized one afternoon. Sri Swamiji went to the satsang venue at 10 am and after lunch proceeded to Taraben's place for an hour. From there he was supposed to visit two other places and return for the ladies satsang by 2 pm.

At 1 pm, Ratna decided to return home with her friend Bharati. Niranjan also tagged along. We had a spacious house with a

veranda in the front and rooms on both sides. Ratna unlocked the main entrance (all the three doors were locked from outside) and Niranjan ran inside to fetch his books. To his great surprise, he saw Swamiji resting in the big room. "Icchi," he shouted, "Look! Swamiji is here!" Ratna and Bharati were shell-shocked to see Swamiji. "If the door was locked from outside, how did Swamiji get inside?" they wondered.

Swamiji just laughed and said, "Don't tell anyone I'm here. Most of the people who come to meet me end up discussing worthless things. They have their own axe to grind. I decided to take a break from it all and lie down somewhere in peace."

From then on Niranjan would pester Sri Swamiji time and again, "Teach me this magic trick to get past locked doors." And Sri Swamiji would laugh aloud. Niranjan would then plead, "Oh! Please do teach me. And secretly, lest Ammaji and Dadaji get wind of it." And Swamiji would laugh even more. Then he would say, "Niranjan, this trick is not taught. One day you will come to know yourself."

Swami Niranjan had accompanied me to Munger in July 1965. 14th July was the anniversary of Swami Sivananda's mahasamadhi and 17th July was the sacred day of Guru Poornima. Back in those days, fifteen-day yoga training courses were conducted at the ashram, and children below the age of fourteen were not permitted to stay in the ashram. If a lady participant brought a small child along, she would have to stay in the adjoining dharmashala.

When we reached the ashram, the swami at the gate went to ask Sri Swamiji, "Niranjan has also come with Dharmashakti. Should I let them in or not?"

"Niranjan will stay in the ashram, not in the dharmashala," Sri Swamiji ordered, "Open the gates." As the gates were being opened, Sri Swamiji himself arrived on the scene and said, "Niranjan, you will stay in my room. Pay your respects to the akhanda jyoti, shower quickly and then we will have lunch together."

It so happened that two more three-year old kids arrived at about the same time – Satish with Savitri Gupta from Rajnandgaon



and Sharad with Gita Gupta from Raigarh. The three children made quite a ruckus in the ashram. The locals who came to the ashram for the evening satsangs would wonder, "How come these kids gained entrance into the ashram?" and Swamiji would say, "Niranjan has to come here sooner or later. The gates of the ashram will forever be open for him. And because of him, the other kids also got in."

Niranjan had permission to attend the yoga classes as well. He would sit on his little asana and imitate the other participants. During the likhit japa class, he would write *Rama-Rama* and proudly show it to Sri Swamiji. In the nada yoga class, he would bundle up his asana like a stuffed horse and proudly sit on top, and in the yoga nidra class he would merrily go off to sleep.

Once, someone remarked to Sri Swamiji, "The ashram has become so much livelier with Niranjan around," to which he replied, "God told me once, 'I won't be giving you a son, but I'll give you something far better – a worthy disciple.'"

Fifteen days flew by in a trice. We started preparing for our return journey. Sri Swamiji told me everything I needed to know about the journey. He came to the ashram gates to see us off. Niranjan asked him, "Won't you accompany us to the station, Swamiji?"

"No, my boy," replied Swamiji, "I have taken a sankalpa not to leave the ashram for three years. It's been a year and a half since I stepped out of the ashram gates, and I don't even want to go anywhere now, but today I want to accompany you to the station and my self-imposed injunction is annoying me."

Then he said, "One should leave the father's house with a smile on the face. You have heard and learnt a lot from my satsangs. Always remember that duty is much higher than sentiments and feelings. Never swerve from your path of duty, never bring disrepute to your father and never forget your father's home. Come here whenever you like, the doors are always open for you. My blessings and protection will always be with you."







He bade us farewell and we proceeded to the station. As the train pulled out of the station, we looked in the direction of the ashram. We felt sure of catching a glimpse of Sri Swamiji. And sure enough, there he was, standing by the window waving at us.

The second International Yoga Convention was being conducted in the beginning of November 1965. We decided not to take Niranjan along. The ashram had a restriction about children below the age of fourteen, and whenever Sri Swamiji made an exception for Niranjan, people said all sorts of things. But Swamiji wrote a letter specifically instructing us to bring Niranjan along. Throughout the convention Swamiji always had him by his side.

One day Swamiji told Niranjan, "You should attend a school for some time and learn the three basic 'R's. Besides, when you go abroad, they will ask your age. To verify your age, they will ask for your school certificate, not your horoscope."

Swami Niranjan returned to Rajnandgaon in November for his formal schooling. It was the end of the year and Satyavratji was busy with customers. He couldn't find time to arrange Niranjan's school admission. "You have brought me here for schooling," Niranjan would complain practically everyday, "but you have not even admitted me to a school yet. Please do so right away, that I may quickly finish my studies and go back to Swamiji."

Finally, one day I took him to a nearby school myself. The teachers there were sceptical. "Son, you will definitely study, but not now. You haven't even turned five yet."

"How old do I have to be to begin my schooling?" asked Swami Niranjan somewhat impatiently, "I can't return to Munger until I have completed my studies."

There were placards with slokas of the *Gita* written in big bold letters, hanging on the doors and windows of the school office. Niranjan began to read them aloud and memorize them. The teachers were quite impressed.

"We haven't taught him anything really," I remarked, "He just strolls over to our printing-press, picks up a letter from the type and askes the composer, 'Which letter is this?' Then he asks the composer which letter he needs next for his composing, and





CABLE : YOGASHAKTI

PHONE :

International Yoga-Fellowship

(Dedicated to the gospel of Sri Swami Satyanand)

Central Office- BAJNANDGAON, M. P. INDIA.

Founder :
MA YOGASHAKTI.

President :
BABA HANARASI DAS.

General Secretary
SATYABRAT CHAITANYA.

OBJECTS :

1. Dissemination of the ideology and utility of Yoga;
2. Establish Yogic Centres;
3. Publication of Free Yogic literature
4. Propagation of the Yogik Order of life;
5. Conducting researches in Yoga and
6. Imparting free tuition in Yoga

Our Gift Publications :

Lessons on Yoga-Part I
योग-साधना-प्रथम भाग
योग-साधना—द्वितीय भाग
कुरुक्षेत्र की लड़ाई
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पवनमुक्तासन और सुखी जीवन के रहस्य.
सूर्य-नमस्कार और चित्त को एकाग्र करने के साधन
Satyam Speaks
Yogasans, Pranayam and Surya Namaskar
Yogashakti Speaks
योगनिद्रा और प्राणायाम-विज्ञान
योगासन, मुद्रा और बन्ध.
समाधि-विद्या

hands him the right letter. This is how he has learnt the alphabet."

While Niranjan was reading aloud the *Gita* slokas, one teacher commented, "Son, you clearly know how to read."

"Of course I do," he replied and, picking a fourth grade textbook lying nearby, he started reading aloud from it as well. The teachers were amazed.

"I will come to your house and discuss this boy's case," said the head-teacher, and in the evening he visited us and we talked about Niranjan's schooling. "The boy obviously likes to read," he remarked, which was quite an understatement. Swami Niranjan took him to his almirah and opened it for him. It was full of children's books, magazines and old issues of *Kalyan*. We never got to read any *Kalyan* issue that had the tiniest picture of Rama or Krishna in their childhood. It went straight into Niranjan's almirah.

"If you can teach him some basic arithmetic and have him memorize the multiplication table, then we can give him an examination and decide which grade he should attend," the teacher finally declared.

"Look sir," said Satyavratji frankly, "teaching is your job, not ours. If I were to sit down with him and tell him '4+4=8', he will retort '8+8=16'. Sorry, but I can't teach such a precocious child."

"All right," he replied, "We will send an older student to teach him." And from the next day a young man began coming to our place.

"Have you come to teach me?" asked Swami Niranjan the first day.

"No," he said, "the teacher said that you have lots of books, and I came to see what you have."

Swami Niranjan displayed the entire contents of his almirah to him.

"Wow! You can read all this!"

"No, I get others to read aloud for me."

The almirah contained marbles, tops, a Meccano set and many other kinds of toys as well. "Do you know how to play with these?" Swami Niranjan asked him. "No," he replied, "I have never seen such things before."

Swami Niranjan showed him how to spin a top and after they had played a while, he said, "Before you go, teach me something. Otherwise the school teacher will scold you for not having taught me."

In this manner, joking and laughing, Swami Niranjan learnt his multiplication tables and arithmetic. He was examined in January. The teachers first gave him an exam for second grade. He aced the exam. The teachers took him to another school where he was given the exam for third grade. He breezed through that as well. The teachers then decided to put him straight into fourth grade.

I got him the necessary textbooks and notebooks. One day he returned from school with an empty school bag. "Where are the books I bought for you the other day?" I asked. "The teacher was scolding one of my classmates this morning because he didn't have the presecribed textbooks," he offered by way of explanation, "His mother is poor, she can't afford to buy the books. So I gave him my books." Another day he returned without his shirt. "What happened?" I asked. He said, "I gave it to a classmate of mine, he doesn't have a good shirt to wear." I laughed and told him, "It seems one day you will give away everything and come back with no clothes on."

While Swami Niranjan was studying in fourth grade, we received a letter from Sri Swamiji. He was proceeding to Gondia from Munger, carrying an akhanda jyoti for the newly built ashram there. He instructed Satyavratji, "Dharmashakti will accompany me, and if you are able to find time, come with me for the Nagpur



and Bombay programs. You can come to Munger later and return with Dharmashakti."

A separate letter was addressed to Swami Niranjan, "Niranjan, I had sent you to get some formal schooling and a school certificate. Now you have learnt to read and write. You even write very nice letters now. Everyone here loves to read your letters. The time has now come for you to decide where you want to live."

As soon as he read that letter, Swami Niranjan ran straight to his school. "Sir," he told his teacher, "please strike my name off the rolls. I won't be coming from tomorrow."

"Why not?"

"I am going to Munger."

"Stay on for a few more days. The exams are right around the corner."

But Niranjan had made up his mind.

The school teachers even came to our house to cajole and convince him. It was January. Niranjan would turn six in February and the fourth grade exams were also due then. If Niranjan secured top marks in these exams, it would bring credit and repute to the school as well – a six-year old standing first in the fourth grade exams!



Swami Niranjan was unshakeable in his resolve. "No, I won't study a day longer," he said, "in fact, I won't even stay here any more."

The teachers kept pleading, but to no avail. Then turning to us, they said, "Please stop him. He can't possibly leave now."

"We can't stop him. If you want to try your luck, go ahead. We have nothing to say in this matter. Whether he stays here or in Munger, it is the same for us," we said.

"All right," said the teachers, finally accepting defeat, "Don't sit for the exams if you don't want to, but at least come for a group photo with your teachers and classmates." Niranjan agreed and a group photo was duly taken. He also got a certificate from the school stating that he was graduating with distinction. That was the end of his brief stint at school and, once he left for the ashram, he never came back.

The young Niranjan had the blessings of his divine guru upon him, and he amazed everyone with his talents and deeds. At an age where other children hide their faces in their mother's laps and walk holding their father's hand, bal-yogi Niranjan irrevocably cast aside the trappings of the world, and expressed his intention to live in his guru's ashram and take up sannyasa, which he eventually did at the age of ten, on 10th February 1970, the auspicious day of Basant Panchami.

When Swami Niranjan came to Rajnandgaon as an adult to deliver discourses, people would comment, "It is because of the sacrifices made by sincere, selfless parents that such towering personalities are created."

After celebrating the Guru Poornima of 1987, as Swami Sivananda's birth centenary, with great joy and enthusiasm, Sri Swamiji had starting dropping hints about his impending departure and pilgrimage. During the Guru Poornima of 1988, Sri Swamiji conducted the entire three-day satsang program himself.

Ten days after Guru Poornima, on Sunday 8.8.88, mentally handing over everything to Swami Niranjan, Sri Swamiji departed from Ganga Darshan and headed towards his new destination. The great tapasvi of Ganga Darshan, remaining true to his nickname of

yore, 'Nirmohi', left behind everything that he had created and set off on a pilgrimage to various tirthas to pay his respects to the various devi-devatas, fulfilling a promise he had made years ago. First of all he went to Kashi Vishwanath, and thereafter he visited Vindhya-vasini, Dwarkadheesh, Vaishnava Devi, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedar-nath, Badrinath, Haridwar and Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh. In October he went to Deoghar for the darshan of Baba Baidyanath. As soon as he heard the news, Swami Niranjan travelled to Deoghar to meet Sri Swamiji.

There, Swami Niranjan requested him to come to Ganga Darshan for some time, but he stated firmly, "I have no obligation or attachment with the gurudom of Bihar School of Yoga. My parivrajaka life has started again. I had roamed throughout the country like a mendicant for eight years after leaving my guru's ashram. Now I will go to each and every doorstep of the Lord as a royal mendicant. If I ever visit Ganga Darshan, it will be in the capacity of a sadhaka, not a guru."

He further said, "Niranjan, my blessings are always with you. I am fully confident that you have the ability to bear the various responsibilities I have placed upon your shoulders. Whether someone stays or goes, do not bother; just go on doing your duty with honesty and sincerity amidst this selfish world. Trials reveal the true colours of everyone. I had taken the sankalpa of making you my successor at Gangotri after having received a vision and the blessings of Ma Ganga, four years before your birth. After successfully fulfilling that sankalpa, I have just come back from Gangotri where I paid my respects to Ma Ganga. Next year I shall take you there as well for Ma Ganga's darshan and blessings."

Following Sri Swamiji's directive, Swami Niranjan reached Delhi on 28th May. From there he accompanied Sri Swamiji to Gangotri by car. In 1957, Satyavratji and I had accompanied Sri Swamiji to Gangotri. The trip had involved a seventy-five mile trek from Dharasu to Gangotri. Now roads have been built on which cars and buses ply regularly. On the way to Gangotri Sri Swamiji told Swami Niranjan anecdotes from the trip of 1957. He showed him the places





where they had halted and stayed for the night, the places where they had encountered difficulties and so on. Sri Swamiji fondly remembered Satyavratji, his dear friend and associate, and narrated many anecdotes about him.

Sri Swamiji took Swami Niranjan to the place where he had received the darshan and mandate of Ma Ganga. He prayed at that spot and asked for the blessings of Ma Ganga for his successor. Then he said, "Niranjan, this is your real birthplace." (Maybe the thought currents of Sri Swamiji and some yogi sitting in deep meditation in one of the Himalayan caves collided here. The two souls met in unspoken communion, and Swami Niranjan's birth took place in due course.) Sri Swamiji took him around the streams, mountains and jungles of the place and introducing him to the mahatmas dwelling in that region, he finished the task of seeking divine blessings for his successor.

I want to relate another incident here that keeps surfacing on my mental screen:

In 1966, Sri Swamiji told Satyavratji and me, "I have decided to take bhu-samadhi in Bihar School of Yoga itself after conducting the third international yoga convention from 1st to 7th November. Print a bulletin in Yogavidya to this effect." Both of us reasoned and pleaded with him that he had a lot to accomplish, but he remained firm in his resolve.

On the last day of the convention, Sri Swamiji handed over the acharyaship of the school to his disciple Swami Atmananda. "What will happen next?" This was the question uppermost in everyone's mind.

Thousands upon thousands of Sri Swamiji's dedicated followers and well-wishers had already expressed their unflinching support and dedication to his mission. The only thing that remained was the instruction of Gurudev Swami Sivananda. Sri Swamiji was waiting for an indication of his future course of action from him. He kept praying for guidance, kept waiting for his instructions.

And then the blessings of the great guru came pouring down upon the worthy disciple. Besides the blessings, Sri Swamiji received a special command from his guru as well: "Forget samadhi for now. You have much work to accomplish. You are the Bhagiratha of the Yoga-Ganga, you have to bring this life-giving science from the snowy caves of the Himalayas into the strife-ridden lives of common men and women all over the globe. Go on spreading the message of yoga from door to door and shore to shore. You will keep receiving my instructions and guidance."

In the days prior to this event, people had been actively discussing Sri Swamiji's impending samadhi. Some of them asked Swami Niranjan, "Niranjan, you keep coming to Munger to live with Swamiji. You say you like it here, but when Swamiji takes samadhi, what will happen?"

"Umm, nothing much," replied Niranjan unassumingly, "Swamiji will become Niranjan and I will become Swami Satyananda . . ."

On one occasion, Sri Swamiji had himself laughingly remarked, "I have called Niranjan. Later on Niranjan is going to call me."

Watching destiny unfold, I can clearly see these words of the visionary seer coming true . . .





BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA

THE FIRST SCHOOL CONDUCTING 'SHORT TERM YOGA COURSES' 3 MONTHS' INT. YOGA ASPIRANTS' COURSE
FOUNDED BY MA YOGASHAKTI WITH THE PATRONAGE OF MAGNERAM BAIJNATH GOENKA
CHARITABLE TRUST

MONGHYR (BIHAR) INDIA

Dated 6·3·1968

Niranjan,

Hari om.

Learn everything.

you must know everything.

you have to do a

great task.

you are not a baby.

you are a Swami



BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA

THE FIRST SCHOOL CONDUCTING A DEGREE COURSE IN YOGA COURSES FOR ASPIRANTS AND TRAINING COURSES FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS, FOUNDED BY SWAMI SIVANANDA IN THE PATRONAGE OF SHRI RAM KRISHNA CHARITABLE TRUST

MUNGER (BIHAR) INDIA

Dated 7 6 19 74

SS,

DS/Niranjan can wait. But Niranjan has to join me for ever and undergo a different training for a few years. I wanted to give/prepare him for Sannyasa.

Reg. Niranjan's following me for ever on this Maha-Prasthan ask him, whether he will like to come with me immediately. If he okays, then he comes alone direct to MDK for some time in March only.

But that is not at the cost of YV Dress. But Niranjan has to come, now or later. If he wants to skip over exams and follow me, then put him with me.





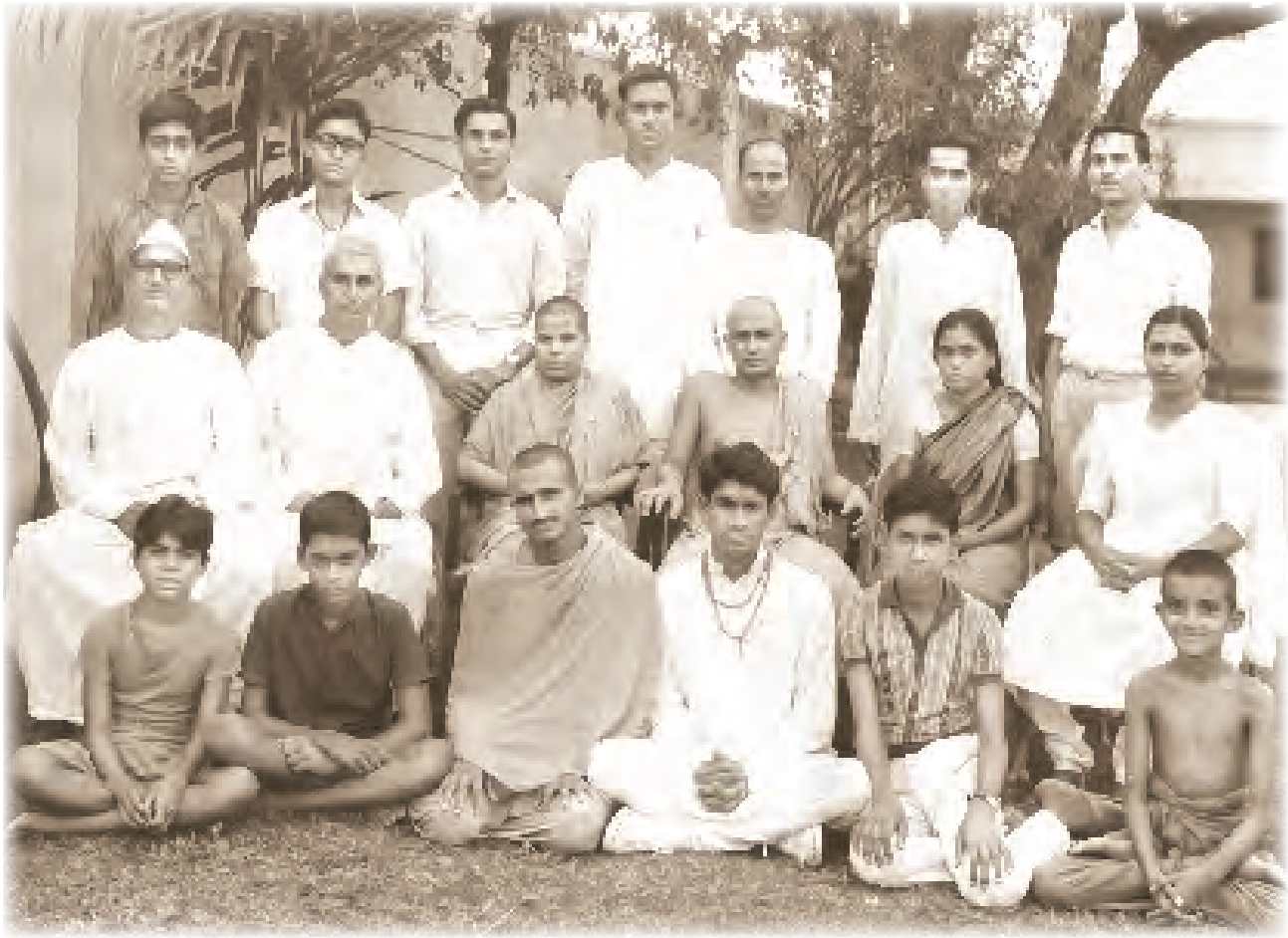














ॐ

Yoga is going to
emerge as a
mighty world-culture.
It will change the
course of world
events.

Swami Satyananda

ॐ

मेरा परमात्मा में शान्ति
निरंतर निवृत्ति के साथ
प्रकट होता है। मेरी निरंतर
की घटनाओं को
निर्देश देता।

Lakshmi Narayan







RIN
7/1/72

Nirmjan.

W.O

Nirmalji

from RIN, where I
have come to appoint
Dharmamakti as
General Secretary,
in place of Swami
Satya Chaitananda,
who left his mortal
body on 31st DEC 71
caused by mats
accident near RSY
when a state Bus
missed the steering
and dashed against
his cycle, which he was
holding in his hands
waiting the Bus to pass.

To me, as for
few most, it is an
irreparable loss,
which perhaps, would
will not hear from
my lips.

Now this time this
time that all Sannyasis
should work hard to
fulfil this wish, which
he left behind him

Satya murti is
with me here, and
with me day and here,
all the way.

If you feel
with a free heart to
do so But it is upto you
you are free to choose

Thanks







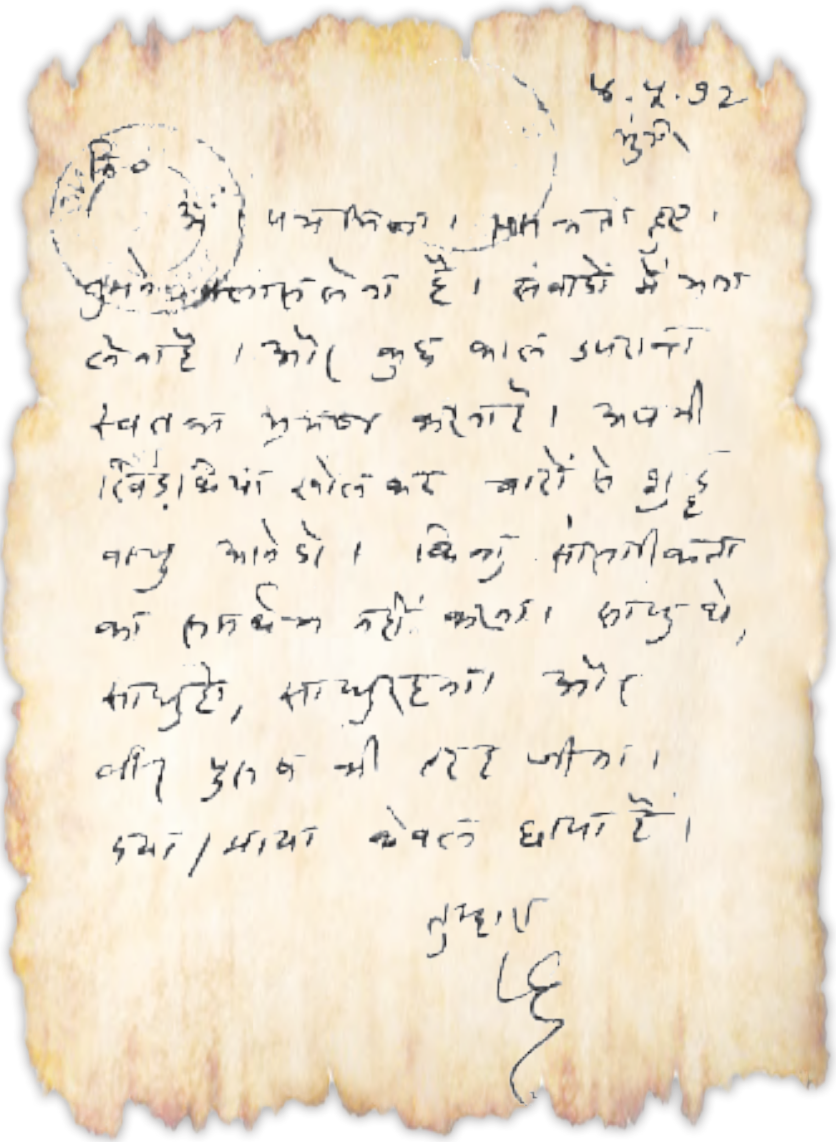








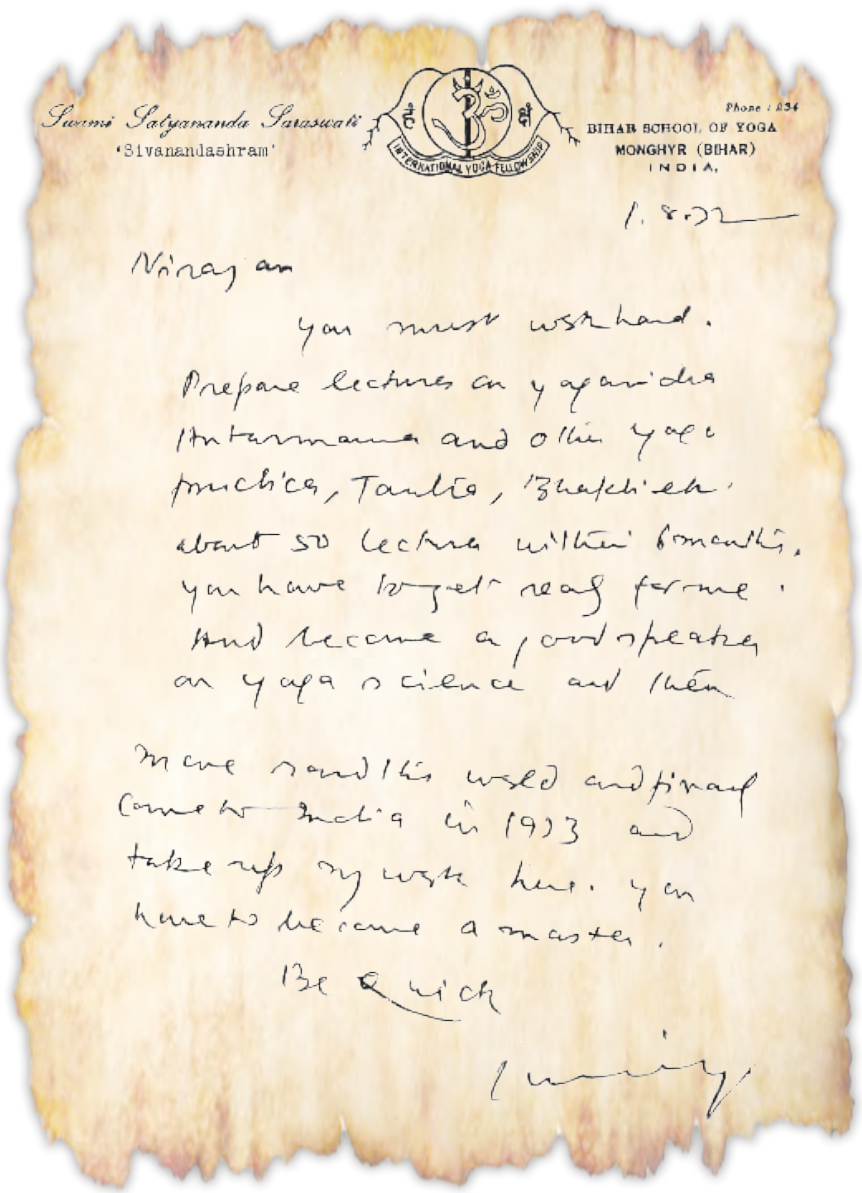




6.4.92
मुंबई

ओ पत्रिका। प्राप्त कर हर्ष।
पुस्तक प्रकाशित करेगा है। संभावना में अगर
देखना है। और कुछ काल प्रतीक्षा
स्वतः को प्रस्तुत करना है। अपनी
दिशा दिशा खोज कर आगे ले हुई
पत्र आने दो। विषय सांसारिकता
का तर्क-सम्मत नहीं करना। कष्ट दो,
साधुता, साधुवाद और
नीति कुछ भी सह जाना।
क्षमा / माया केवल धर्म है।

शुभाशीष



Swami Satyananda Saraswati
'Sivanandashram'

INTERNATIONAL YOGA FELLOWSHIP

Phone : 234
BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA
MONGHYR (BIHAR)
INDIA.

1.8.72

Niranjan

You must work hard.
Prepare lectures on yoganidra
Antarmauna and other yogic
practices, Tantra, Bhakti etc.
about 50 lectures written properly,
you have to get ready for me.
And become a good speaker
on yoga science and then

Mine sannyas work and finally
come to India in 1973 and
take up my work here. You
have to become a master.

Be Quick

Love





☎ 234

SWAMI SATYANANDA GOLDEN JUBILEE CONVENTION

(Organised by institutional and individual members of I. Y. F. M. to commemorate 50 years of Swami Sivananda's renunciation and 50 years of Swami Satyananda's span of life).

SIVANANDASHRAM
MONGHYR
BIHAR (INDIA)

No..... Date....2.5.78.....

Niranjan,

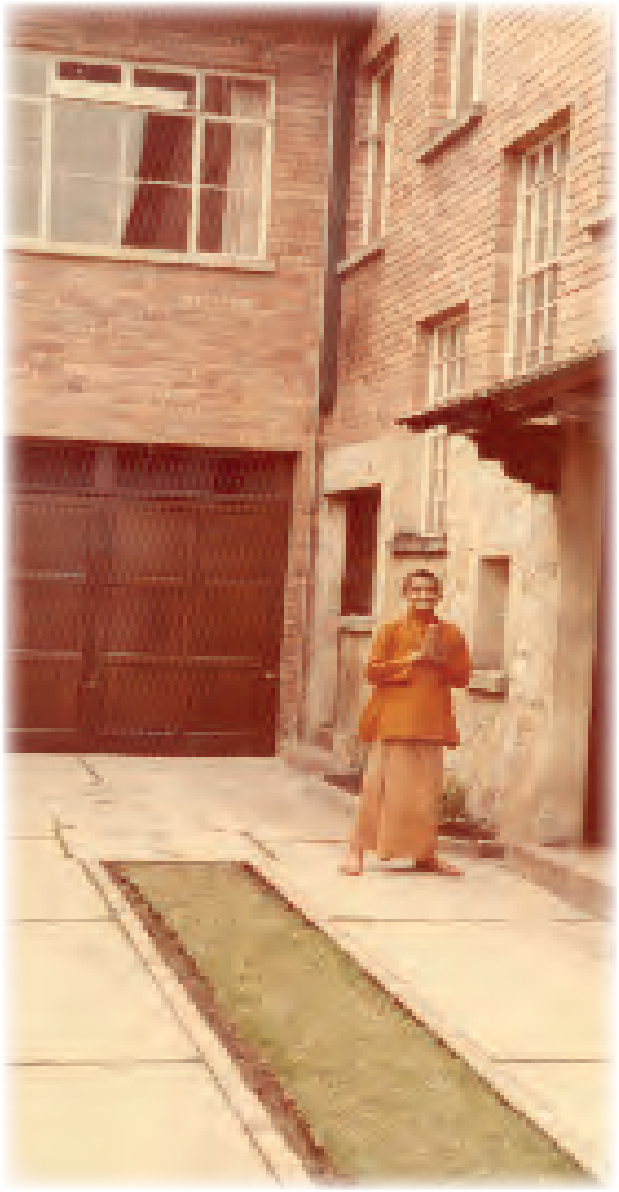
If everything is okay, go to Vasishtavan and by 1973, you should be able to deliver lecture on yogic topics, hold discussions, sing Kirtan, correct books, and take classes independently. You have now very little time left for preparation. Prepare about 50 lectures of 30 mts each on various subjects of practical yoga, Karma, Bhakti, Raja, Jnana, Hatha, Mantra, Tantra, etc, and get them in your mind.

From every centre news of Jubilee should go around people and tourist centres, embassies. Please see it done everywhere.

Please think over this seriously

Love





बालकेंद्रांसाठी
खाऊ तिथेच
कोलाबेरी आम्ही
बे हंसाला बोलिए
गाऊ





Ashram Graphics

THE VOICE
OF YOGA

Sivanandashram
Monghyr, Bihar

Narayan

Now, is the time for you to study ONLY yoga and prepare speeches for G.J. 20th Oct. I can declare you 'Shankaracharya'. Get rid of all bad habits of Europe.

Study, Gita, Upanishad, Vivekachudamani, Sivananda, daily and get Slokas & Mantras by heart and prepare good lectures on yoga, Ashtanga, Kriya etc. and write to me when you have gone ahead with this.

I want Leela to come to S.A. this time. You will be here in September so. Amrit is your real friend. Because she is true to me. Work hard, the time of strike is gone.

Show me your ability.

Love to you





SWAMI SATYANANDA GOLDEN JUBILEE CONVENTION 1973

(Organised by institutional and individual members of I. Y. E. M. to commemorate 50 years of Swami Sivananda's renunciation and 50 years of Swami Satyananda's span of life).

SIVANANDASHRAM,
MONGHYR, Bihar (INDIA).

Dated 25/5/73

Hari om.
your letters & compositions.
It is heartening to note you are working
hard to make Amrit's tour success.
Come here with nice
speeches on practical yoga.
like Antarmauna, Ajapa, Trataka,
etc. 40 mts each English &
Hindi both.
I am always eager to
serve all of you, because you
are working for yoga.

Sri Swamiji



Balyogi Niranjanananda Saraswati

The chief disciple and successor of Paramahamsa Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga is the oldest culture of the sacred land of India. It is a science which stands on the firm foundation of logic and reason, which is why it has been widely accepted and adopted in the present scientific age.

In the olden days, a few people would don the garb of hermits and ascetics, and live in the jungles in order to practice yoga. They would perfect traditional esoteric practices and develop new ones. They would teach these techniques to other aspirants as well and, after transmitting their knowledge and siddhi to their main disciple, they would shed their mortal frame. Such a disciple would become his guru's successor and it is because of this unbroken guru-disciple tradition that the ancient science of yoga has remained alive till today.

Paramahamsa Swami Satyananda Saraswati is a great yogi of the present age who has given a new direction and impetus to yoga. He is the chief disciple of Mahamandaleshwar Swami Sivananda Saraswati. It is because of his untiring efforts that the music of yoga can now be heard from each and every household of the land. He has declared yoga to be the basis of world peace and universal brotherhood. The foundation of yoga is discipline; discipline rests on discrimination, and the basis of discrimination is dispassion and equanimity. It is possible to develop these qualities through the practices of yoga, but certain divine souls are endowed with these qualities from birth itself. In

the present age of Kali yuga, such a great soul incarnated on 14th February 1960 in the town of Rajnandgaon (Dist. Durg, Madhya Pradesh). From birth itself, he exhibited brilliant qualities that come from perfection in yoga. He was never attached to family or friends, home or hearth. His sannyasa life began in his fourth year itself. From 'baby Niranjan' he turned into 'Balyogi Niranjanananda Saraswati'. He started living in his guru's ashram from that tender age, imbibing knowledge and wisdom at the feet of his guru. At an age when other children don't want to leave their mothers' laps and expectantly wait for their father's affection, this boy left his parents and took sannyasa! What an extraordinary thing! He spent four years in the ashram, serving his guru with devotion and zeal. Through his yogic vision, the guru saw all the qualities of a worthy successor in Balyogi Niranjan. He first made a formal announcement to the press and public in Patna, and a news item to this effect was published on 10th May 1970 in the 'Dainik Aryavarta'.

'Balyogi Niranjananda Saraswati', the chief disciple and successor of Paramahamsa Swami Satyananda Saraswati is not an elderly, ripened individual, but an innocent child, simple at heart. His nature is totally spiritual, there is no vestige of worldiness or materialism in him. He is a true and sincere devotee of his guru. After leaving home and hearth, he never looked back even once. To him, the past is like a dream, and the present, the foundation for the future. In the near future he will acquire mastery over the scriptures and shine like an akhanda brahmachari. He will stay miles away from political and legal imbroglios. Maintaining his equipoise and even-mindedness, he will have nothing to do with courts or corridors of power. A sannyasin is only interested in executing positive and creative works. Political activity is a hindrance on his path.

As soon as he stepped into his eleventh year, Balyogi Nirajan was sent as a messenger of peace to the strife-torn land of Northern Ireland. He toured many violence-ridden towns and villages, spreading the message of peace through the medium of yoga. The local population was much impressed and enamoured by him. He has transformed the lives of countless people. "Propagation of yoga and establishment of peace" – this is the only thought that courses through his mind. He lets nothing else distract him. What the guru does is none of his business. His only concern is, "What must I do?" And this he knows very well. He also knows that whatever his guru does is for the benefit of his disciples and all humanity. At the present moment, he is spreading the message of yoga through the length and breadth of Europe.

Balyogi Niranjan, along with many of his guru bhais, will be attending the upcoming Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Swami Satyananda Saraswati in October 1973.

The year 1973 will go down as a watershed year in the history of the International Yoga Fellowship, Munger. This is not only the golden jubilee of the sannyasa of Swamiji's gurudev, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, but also marks the completion of fifty years of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the founder and moving spirit behind the fellowship. All of you are cordially invited to attend this historical celebration.

'Yoga will be the culture of tomorrow' – Balyogi Niranjanananda Saraswati is ceaselessly engaged in materializing this grand dream of his gurudev. What boundless energies will be poured into the divine soul of this balyogi in the times to come, is something we cannot even begin to imagine . . .

Hari Om Tat Sat















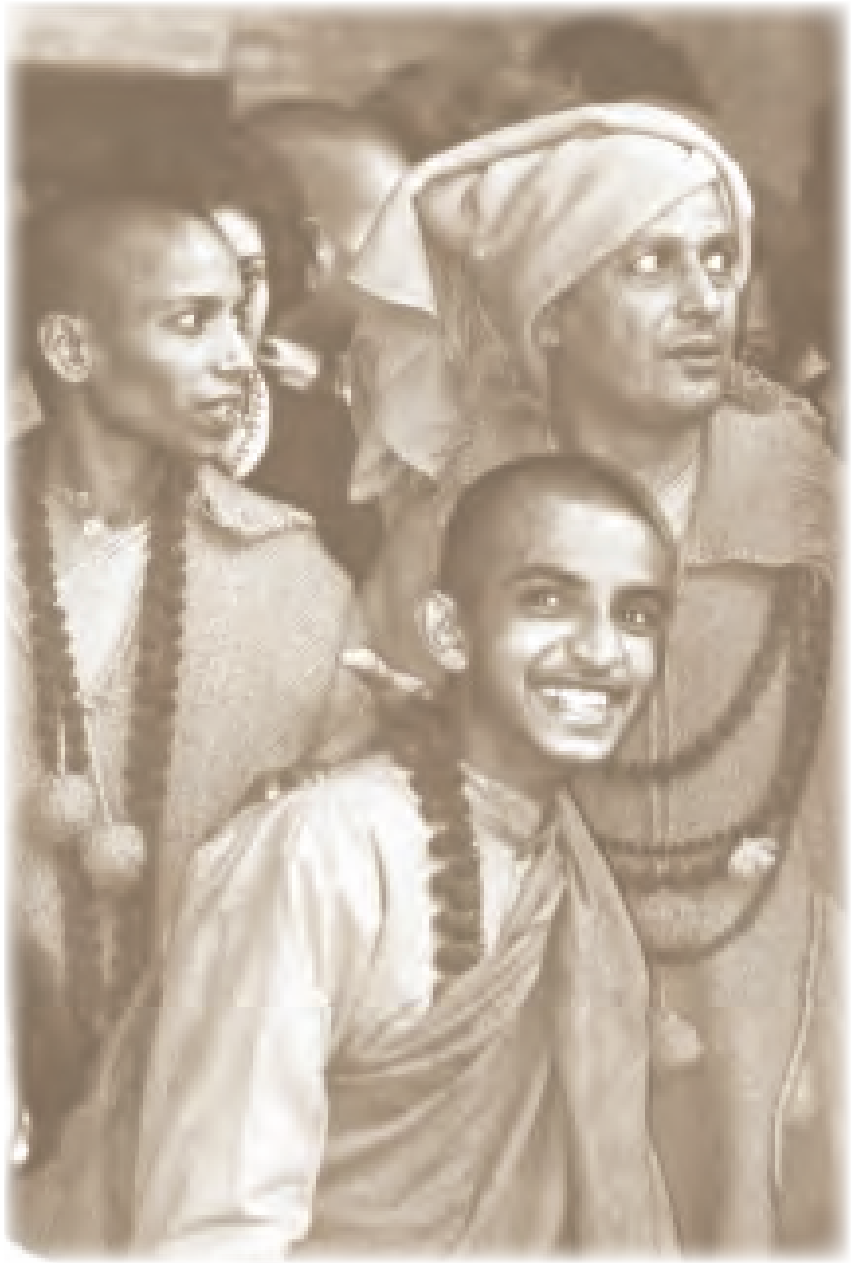









Del Jubileo De Plata. De Swami
Oct. 9 al 15 Bogota Col. /75



YOGA

Official monthly magazine of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement and Bihar School of Yoga

Founder : Satyananda Paramhamsa
Editor : Swami Nischalananda

Cable : YOGA, MONGHYR

Phone : 2334/2430

Bihar School of Yoga
Sivanand Ashram
Near Goenka Dharmashala
Monghyr, Bihar, India

16th June, 1971

Important

Dear Niranjan,

Hari Om.

You know that we shall be publishing Yoga and Yoga Vigya from Monghyr from 1972 onwards, so have you to write for them.

You should write research articles such as yoga in pre-Colombian era and send the article with the appropriate photographs. If the article is long enough we shall publish the same serially.

If you can write an article in Hindi and English both, it will be of great help to us here.

Please do it and send the same to me as early as possible.

Om Tat sat,

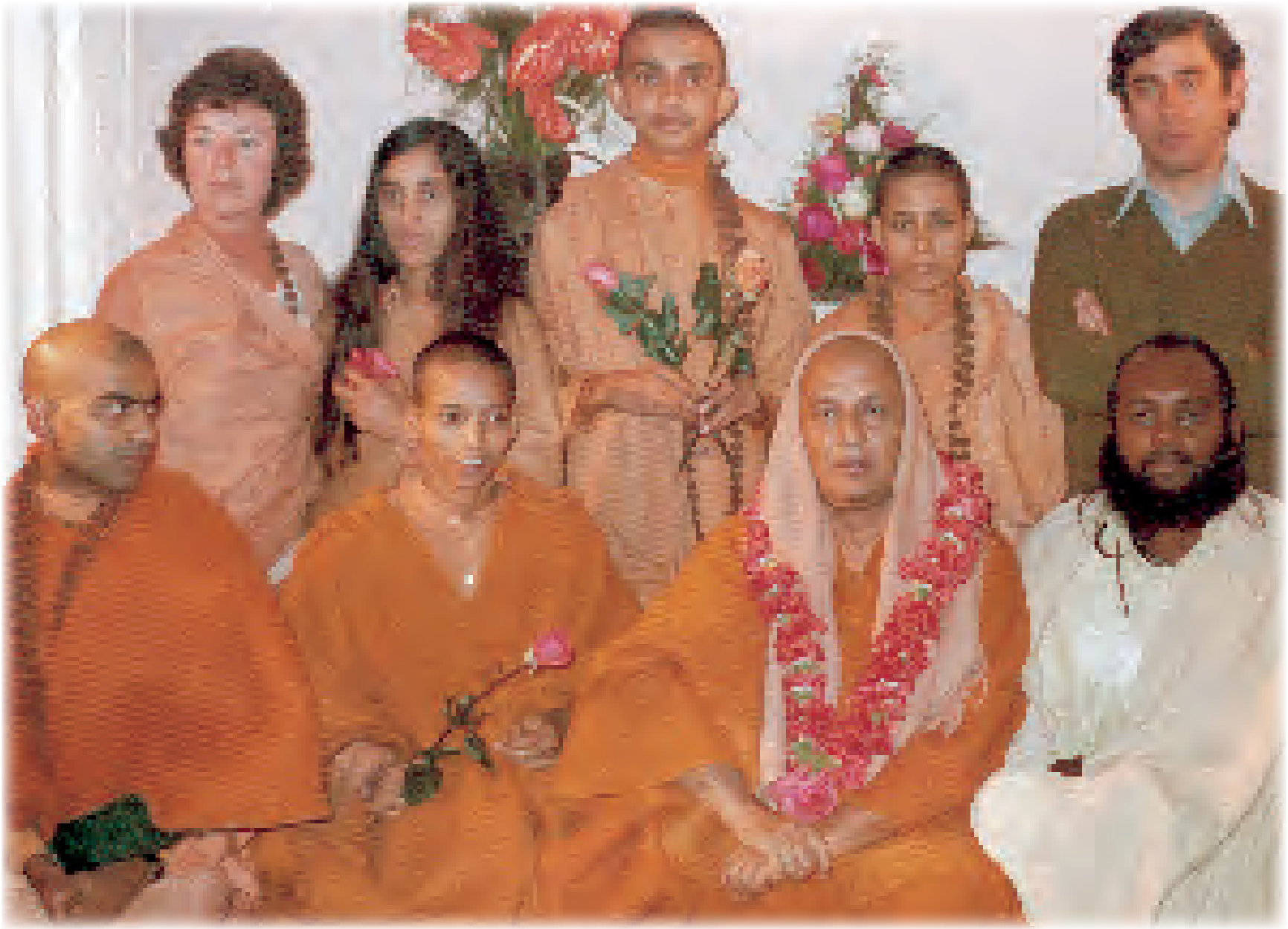
Swami

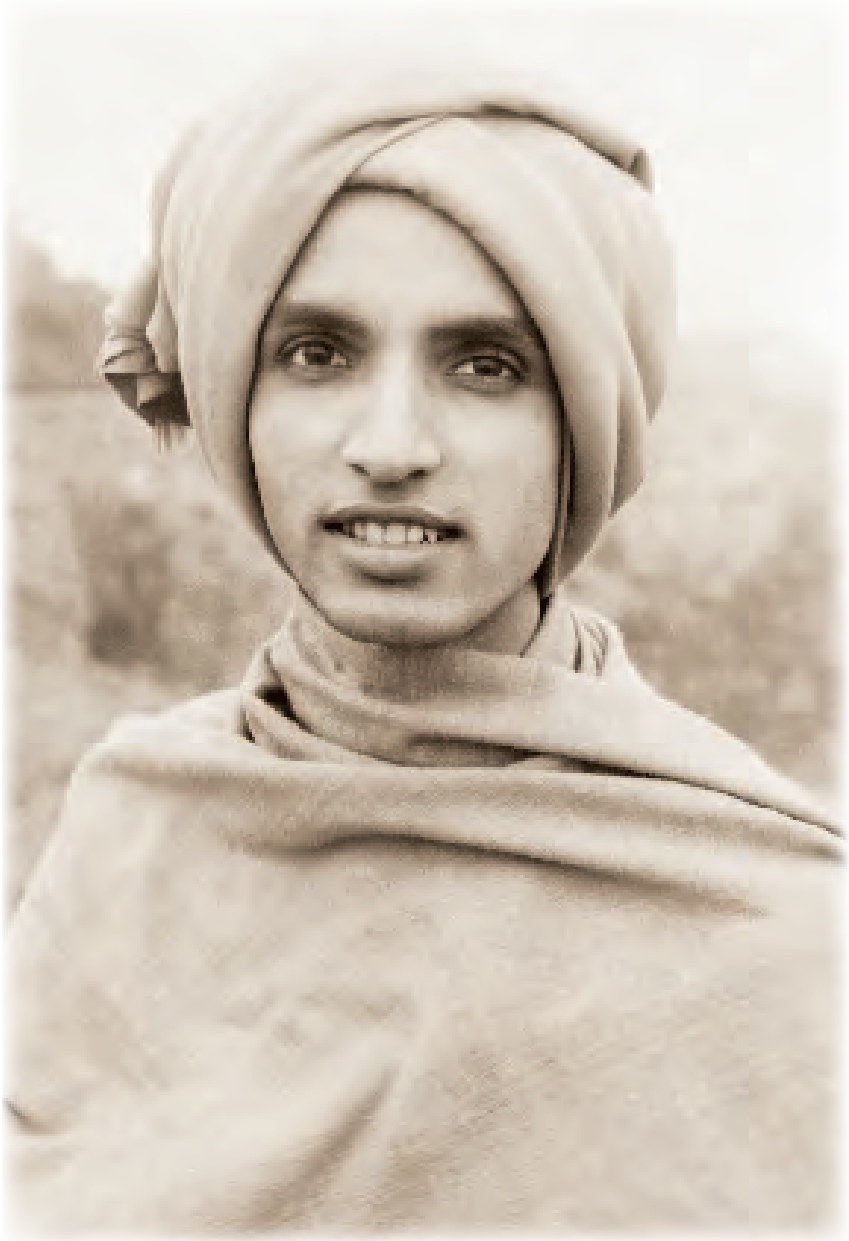
PS: Send Black & white photos of yourself & Agni separately

Bl. inspire others to write for yoga



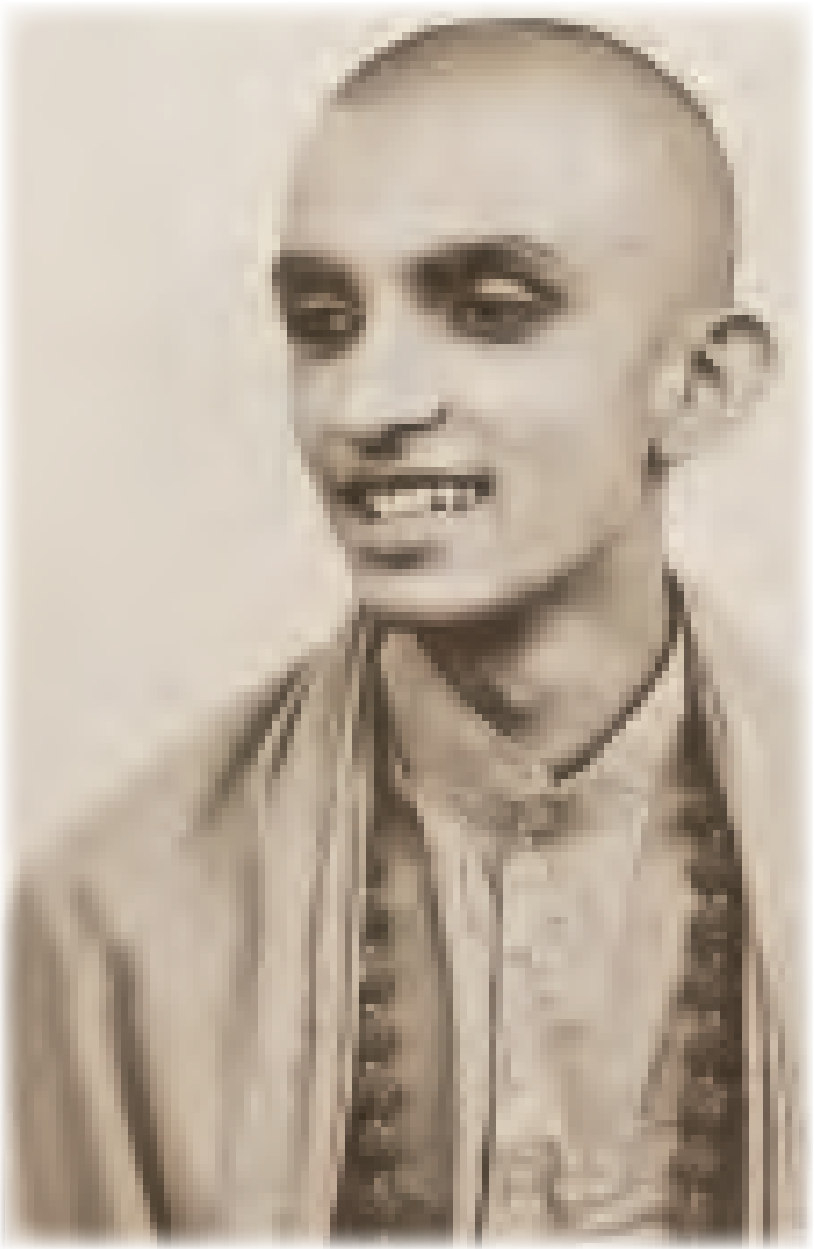






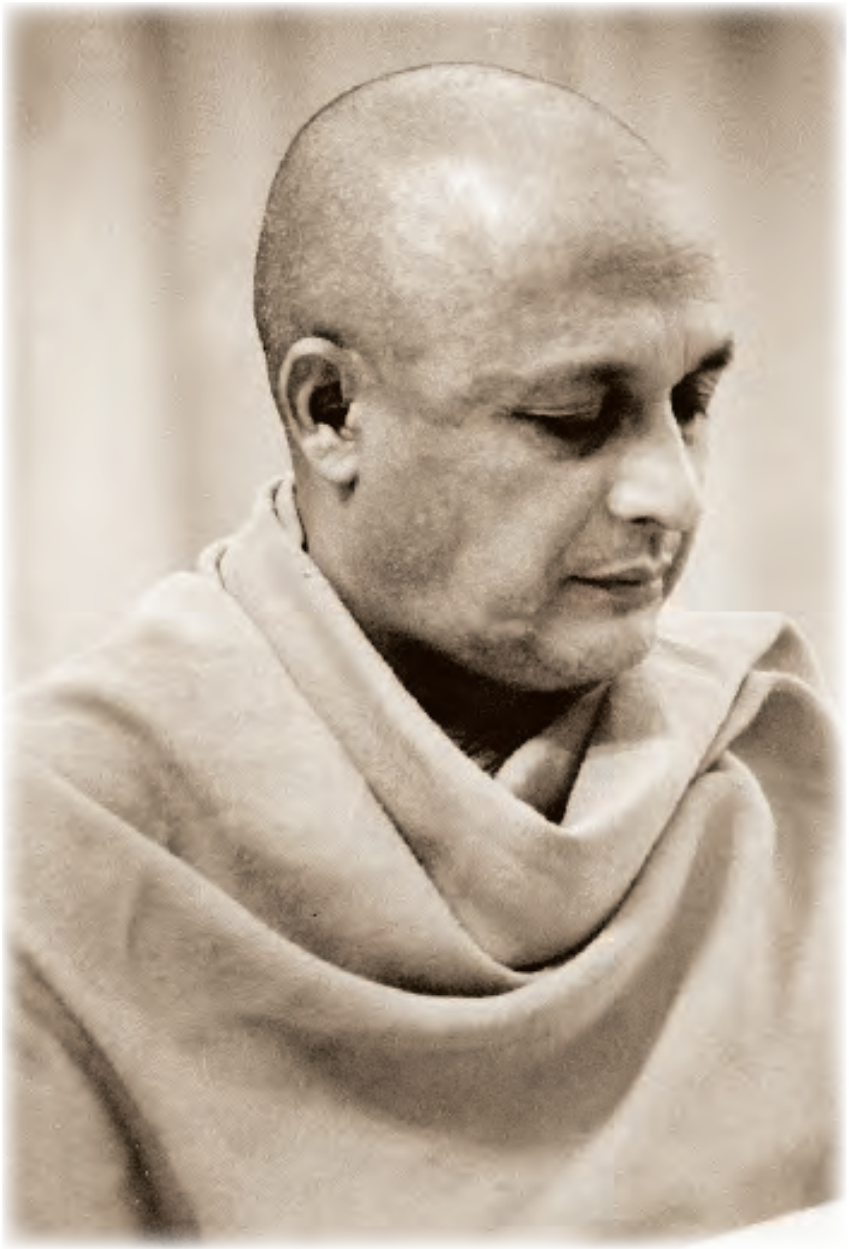




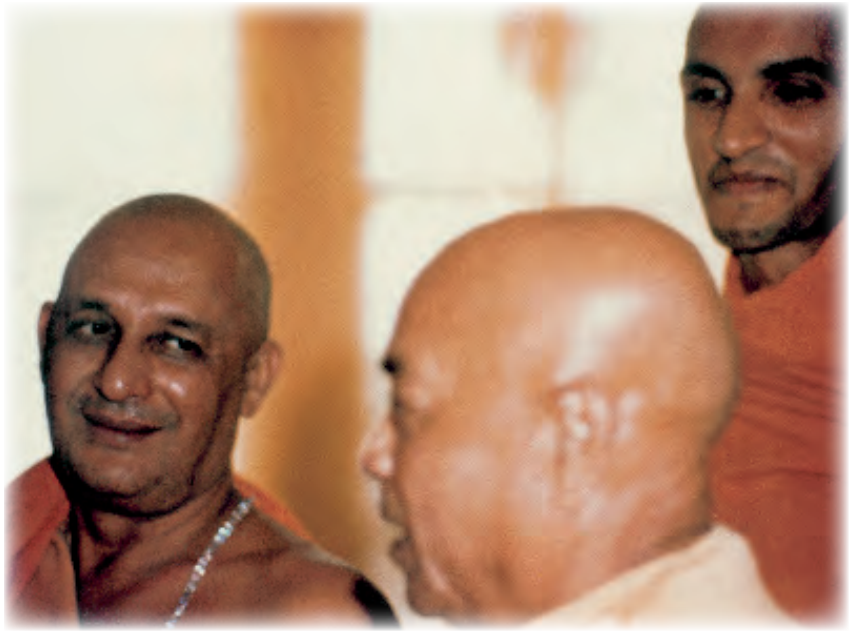




























Return to India by 15th January positively.
(stop)

Assure Presidentship.
(stop)

Swift action necessary.

Swamiji.

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



1960–64: Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati was born in Rajnandgaon (CG) on 14th February 1960 into a lower middle class family home. His father was later known as Swami Satyabratananda Saraswati and his mother as Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati.

1964–70: Swami Niranjan came to his guru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, at Munger (Bihar) and joined the Bihar School of Yoga on 26th July 1964. Under the tutelage of Sri Swamiji, he received intense gurukul education and training. Swami Niranjan was educated in languages, scriptures, sciences and contemporary subjects through the system of yoga nidra developed by Sri Swamiji.







1971–72: Initiated into the Dashnami tradition of sannyasa on 11th January 1971 by his guru, Swami Satyananda. On 1st March 1971 he accompanied Sri Swamiji to London (England) and Belfast (N. Ireland), where he remained with Swami Atmananda Saraswati to assist in the development of the Satyananda Yoga Centre in Belfast. He also lived at Satyananda Yoga Ashrams in Newcastle-on-Tyne with Rishis Arundhati and Vasishtha Saraswati, furthering his cultural education, and in London with Swami Pragyamurti Saraswati.

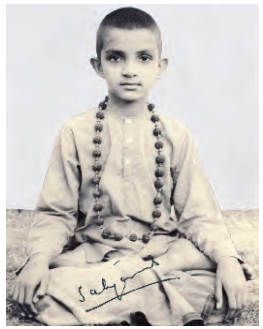
During this time, he travelled throughout Scotland, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Austria, conducting yoga classes and yoga training courses.

1973–74: From England, on 11th January Swami Niranjan travelled to Bogota in Colombia, South America, and extensively toured Colombia and Ecuador. Then he returned to India with a delegation of South American yoga aspirants to participate in the Golden Jubilee Celebrations and the World Yoga Convention being held in Munger.

1974–75: He then travelled with Sri Swamiji to participate in yoga conventions and programs in India at Ambikapur, Korba, Janjgir, Bilaspur, Raipur, Bhilai, Durg, Mahasamund, Dhamtari, Jagdalpur, Rajnandgaon, Gondia, Balaghat, Panhmore, Jabalpur, Sagar and Satna in Madhya Pradesh.

In July, he returned to Colombia and travelled extensively through El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador and









Chile, conducting yoga training programs and establishing yoga teaching centres.

During this period, he also researched the existence of yoga systems, practices and theories in the pre-Colombian culture of South America, and gathered pictorial, sculpted and documented evidence of yoga practices, postures and theories in the Aztec, Chibchan, Inca and Mayan civilizations.

1976–77: En route to Australia, Swami Niranjan conducted yoga programs in Chile and French Polynesia. He then participated in the World Yoga Convention in Sydney with Sri Swamiji. He remained in Australia and carried out research on pranayama and Kirlian photography with Dr Graydon Rixon in Sydney and other research on music and mantra at Toowoomba University, Queensland, with Dr June Jackson.



Along with research he also assisted in the formation of ashrams at Manly, Avalon, Brisbane, Newcastle, Surfers Paradise, the Blue Mountains, Gold Coast, Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Hobart and Queenstown.

Then Swami Niranjan travelled to New Zealand to guide yoga programs in Waitakere and Auckland, before returning to Australia to join Sri Swamiji for Guru Poornima at Satyananda Yoga Ashram, Mangrove Mountain.

1977–78: Returning to India with Sri Swamiji on 7.7.77, he became the editor of the monthly magazine *Yoga Vidya* and worked as Sri Swamiji's secretary.

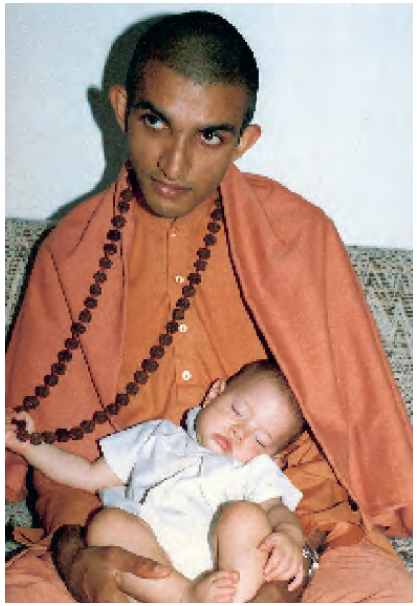
He also lived at and worked to develop the Satyananda Yoga Ashram in Kolkata and conducted extensive yoga programs in Kharagpur, Haldia, Rishra, Asansol, Burnpur and Dhanbad, as well as participating in the Thane Yoga Convention with Sri Swamiji.



Swami Niranjan also took part in a successful diabetes research project conducted by BSY, Munger, with the cooperation of Burla Medical College, Sambalpur, and Dr N.C. Panda, Director, Health Services, Govt. of Orissa.

Swami Niranjan then went on a padayatra of Orissa state, travelling through Bolangir, Bhawanipatna, Kantapalli, Keonjhar and Sonabeda to promote the Yoga Convention at Sambalpur.

1979: Swami Niranjan travelled to Europe where he conducted yoga programs in Greece (Athens, Kalamata) with Swami Sivamurti Saraswati and training programs for the European Union of







National Federations of Yoga in Switzerland (Zinal).

He then guided programs in London and Belfast, before joining Sri Swamiji for the Irish International Yoga Convention held at Dublin University. Then he accompanied Sri Swamiji to Zinal for the yearly congregation of European yoga teachers.

As an emissary of Sri Swamiji, Swami Niranjan guided the yoga training course for the Italian Federation of Yoga in Rome and toured various locations in Italy.

He then went to Spain and assisted in establishing Satyananda Yoga centres in Barcelona, Manresa, Zaragoza, Valencia, Madrid and Malaga.

1980–82: Travelling to USA on 1st March 1980, Swami Niranjan conducted two whirlwind tours of the United States, visiting, teaching, training, guiding and lecturing yoga aspirants in all the major cities of New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington DC, Michigan, Illinois, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and California. As a result of this tour, Satyananda Yoga Ashram USA was formed in October 1980.

Residential ashram and teaching centres were established in San Jose, New Berry Springs, Charlottesville, Baton Rouge, Ann Arbor, Elizabeth, New York City, Salt Lake City, Deming and Berkeley.

During this period, Swami Niranjan met, interacted, worked and lived with eminent scientists, spiritual masters, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian groups, and with heads of different organizations, such as Swami Satchidananda Saraswati, Swami Vishnudevananda Saraswati, Dr Ramamurti Mishra, Swami Nadabrahmananda Saraswati, Rabbi Gelberman, Swami Rama, Swami Bua and others.

Swami Niranjan conducted research on drug addiction and relaxation response with Dr Todd Mikuriya at Gladman Memorial Centre; and on meditation with Dr Joe Kamiya, Nobel Laureate in alpha research.

It was at this time that Swami Niranjan acquired skills in audio-visual technologies and in flying a Cessna plane. In August, Swami Niranjan organized a tour for Sri Swamiji throughout the USA in which Sri Swamiji was accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati.

In October, Swami Niranjan travelled to San Juan, Puerto Rico, to participate in the International Yoga Teachers Associations program, which was guided by Sri Swamiji. There he received the mandate of his guru, to return to India by 16th January 1983.



The Harmonious Flow

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati in YOGA, *March 1983*

1983 heralds in new dimensions and horizons for Bihar School of Yoga. Building an institution is itself a mammoth task, but to find suitable successors to maintain the high ideals and standards is no less important. Right from its inception, Swami Satyananda has played the dual role of guru and administrator, two roles diametrically opposed and contradictory to each other, which led him into many difficulties from time to time, and which he survived with unsurpassable skill. Let me explain this further.

We are all familiar with the role of a guru. He inspires, instructs and is the guiding light to many lives. For those of you who have a guru, it is unthinkable to live this life without nurturing that relationship. It would be tantamount to having no eyes to see or ears to hear, but have you ever stopped to wonder how a guru meets the demands of his disciples? How is it that not just one or two or three, but thousands and millions of people all over the world are able to draw energy from that one source? It is obvious that he is able to delve into deeper and higher states of consciousness where no duality exists, where he is able to sift the true from the untrue, the mundane and the gross experience from pure experience. It is this ability which enables him to deal with the problems of the people with accurate precision.

However, if at the same time he has to also play the role of administrator, it is necessary that from time to time he must return or come down to the practical, day-to-day affairs of life. So, on the one hand he must go deep within, and on the other he must externalize that same consciousness. Of course this constant fluctuation from higher to lower states of mind is not a trifling matter and not easily attainable, for one state of mind is not complementary to the other. Only a *jivanmukta*, one enlightened in this life, can do it with utmost ease. Swami Satyananda has been the epitome of such a person. His decisions as an administrator have been flawless and his guidance to people illuminating.



For how much longer must these demands press on him? Sri Swamiji often jokingly says, "My life has been divided into twenty-year cycles. I was born in 1923, I joined my guru's ashram in 1943, I opened my ashram in 1963, and now, 1983, is the last turning point, I retire." When he sees the disappointed and disconsolate



look on our faces, he always hastens to add, "When I say retire, I mean as an administrator. I shall continue to guide and inspire the people as long as I live."

Another very relevant point which Sri Swamiji often mentions is that it is always necessary for the founder of an institution to step down and install his successor during his lifetime, so that the succeeding person can master the work thoroughly. This is especially relevant to a sannyasa institution where nothing really belongs to any particular person.

The inability of many spiritual leaders to effect this change has been instrumental in the downfall of many institutions. We have seen many jivanmuktas who function dynamically during their lifetime, but have been unable to leave behind pillars of strength. Obviously, at some time, they must give their responsibility to others and for the fulfilment of that responsibility the decision must be taken at the correct time. After all, a flower only blossoms when the soil and the season are right. Sri Swamiji, who has always maintained accurate timing in making his decisions, has chosen 1983 to nominate his successor. This decision will bring a host of questions to people's minds. Possibly you are among those who wonder about the future of BSY after Sri Swamiji retires from the administration.

As you will see, Sri Swamiji, with his meticulous eye for detail, has been thinking not only of the present but also years into the future. After all, the disciples and devotees all over the world must have the assurance that the institution which they have worked so hard for will not dissolve. At present BSY has many ashrams, innumerable centres and a vast number of inspired schools, thousands of teachers and a host of sannyasins of different nationalities and religions spread out over the world, with the headquarters at Munger. To support them it is necessary to have adequate teachers, an efficient administration, a proper internal management and inspiring guidance.

The sannyasins who have been trained by Sri Swamiji as teachers are of a very high calibre and have been producing excellent results and responses wherever they go. These sannyasins, whose number is always on the increase, will continue to spread the teachings far and wide. For the administration, Swami Niranjanananda, heading the Board of Directors, will handle all affairs directly. For a disciple it is of paramount importance that he should be able to follow every command of his guru, verbal or otherwise. He should be able to anticipate and remain constantly alert to every



need of the guru; only then can the guru transmit his knowledge and guidance to the disciple and continue his mission through the disciple.

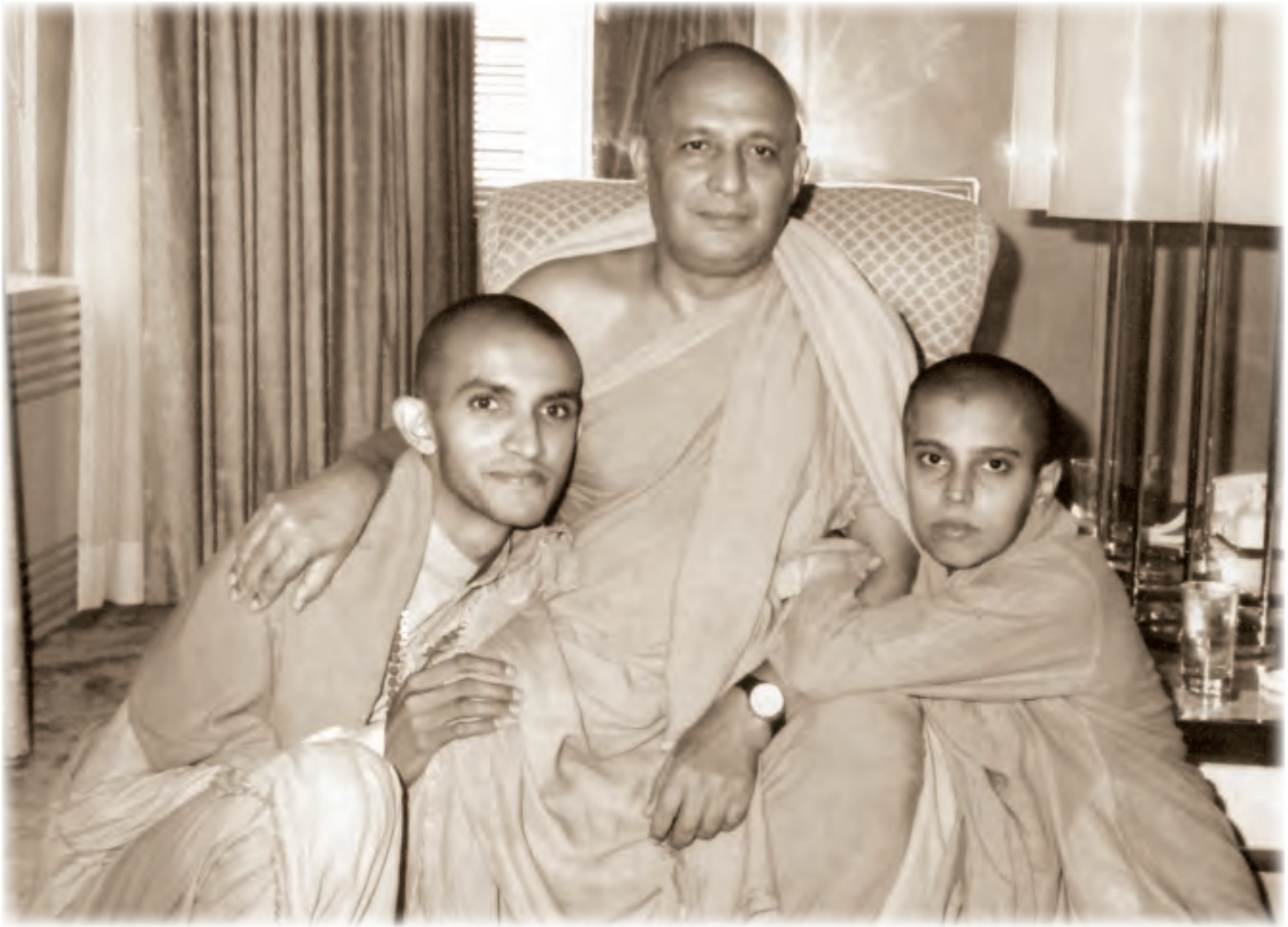
Swami Niranjanananda has always maintained the ideals and standards of such a disciple. Although only twenty-three years of age, his experience, maturity and astute judgement can be compared to a person twice his age. He has travelled widely from the age of eleven, perhaps little knowing the immense responsibilities that would befall him later. However, judging from his past record, one feels that the responsibility rests on very young, but capable shoulders.

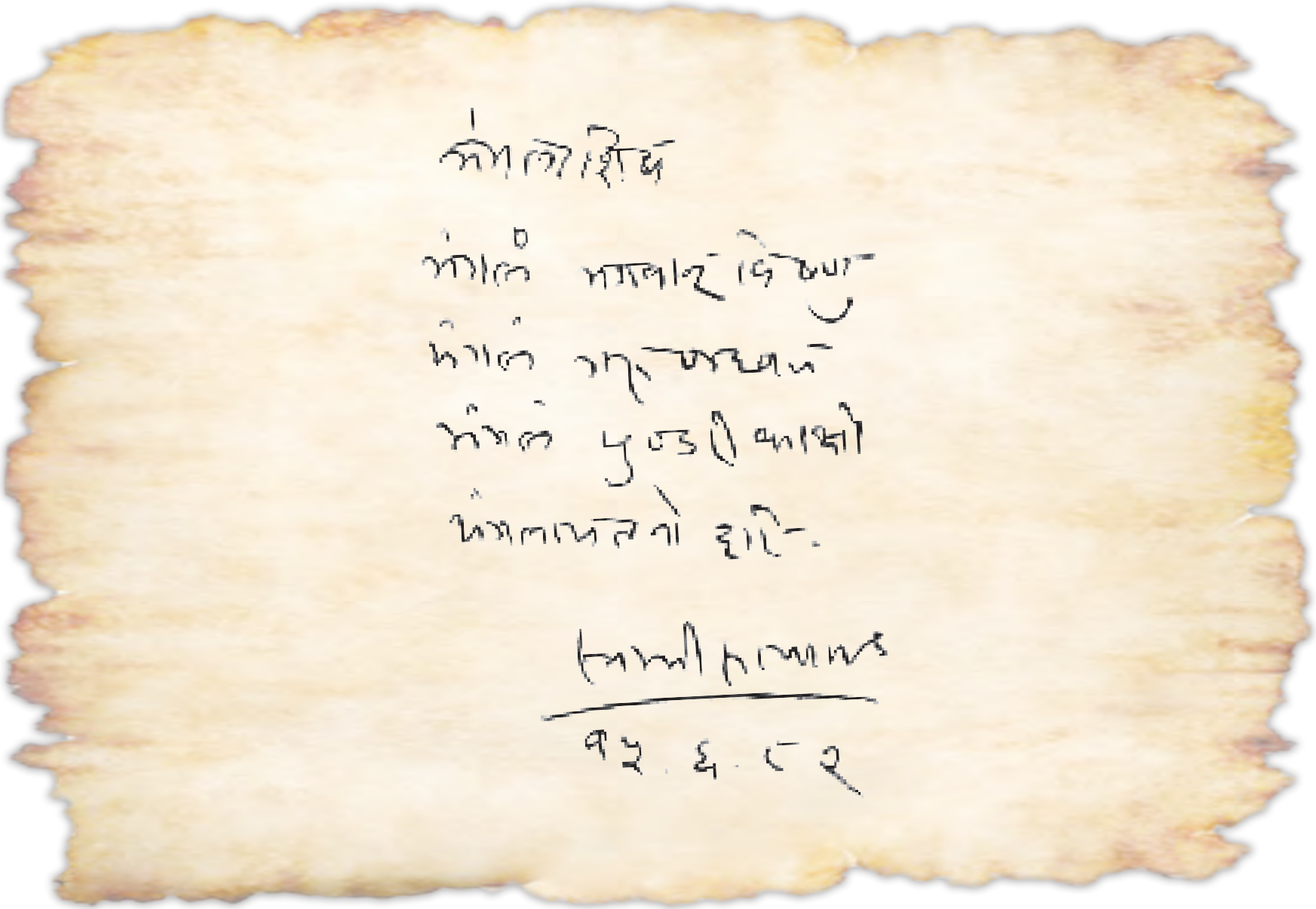
In the sannyasa *parampara*, or tradition, according to the guidelines set down by Adi Shankaracharya, it is the responsibility of the guru to impart his knowledge to worthy disciples so they may continue the work even after the guru relinquishes his duties. The work, after all, is being done with a definite purpose in mind and is not the whim of an individual. It has a far greater and wider vision, the benefits and far-reaching effects of which should be felt not only in this decade but in decades to come. This culture, way of life and philosophy, must not become extinct with the ravages of time, and neither should it be restricted only to a few people. Rather, we must diversify, we must spread the systems of yoga to all corners of the world. We must preserve this fund of knowledge which can help us in every sphere of our lives so that not only our children, but our grandchildren and great grandchildren, may know and be able to judge for themselves the best way of life.

For the continuation and harmonious flow of these resolves, it is not only necessary to set up a strong foundation for the institution, but also to externalize our support. In this respect we look forward to the enthusiastic support of people from every corner of the world. The history of BSY shows that the vast number of well-wishers, devotees and disciples have always extended their help in whatever way possible. Obviously the future depends on the continuation of support provided thus far.

Now that Sri Swamiji is no longer at the helm of administration, the range and scope which he will be able to cover will increase considerably. In this respect we can look forward to seminars and conventions in different countries, cities, towns and villages, which may be arranged for him to preside over, so that, in the words of his guru, he may continue taking yoga from door to door and from shore to shore.











































HOTEL MICHELANGELO

Guru Purnima

May all Swamis
of the ashram be happy, healthy
and wise, and reassert their
dedication to yoga, and
sing together, and eat together,
and toil together, and undergo
hardships together.

Swamiji

30173 VENEZIA MESTRE - Via Forte Marghera, 69 - Telefono (041) 989800 (5 linee) - Telex 431371 MICHEL
S.E.A. S.r.l. - Port. IVA e Cod. Fisc. 00707040272 - Cap. Soc. L. 80.000.000 i.v. - Trib. Venezia 14418/20568 - C.C.I.A.A. Venezia 143868



14th Feb '84

















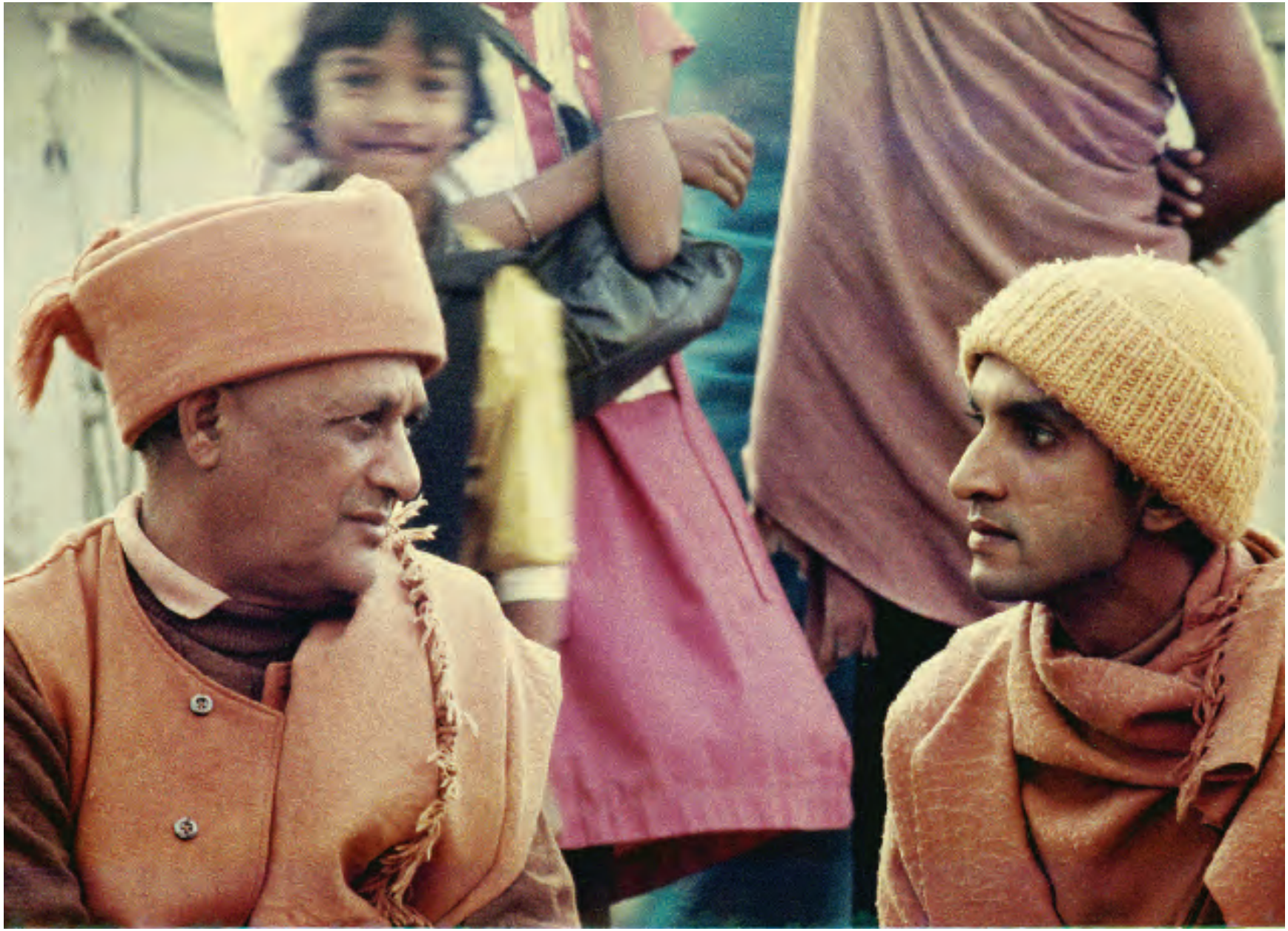







Hiskeri






NATIONAL SEMINAR CONVENTION
YOGA FOR TENSION FREE LIFE
ORGANISED BY:- BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA
JAN. 6 to 8, 1990
PENMAN AUDITORIUM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF MINES, DHANBAD









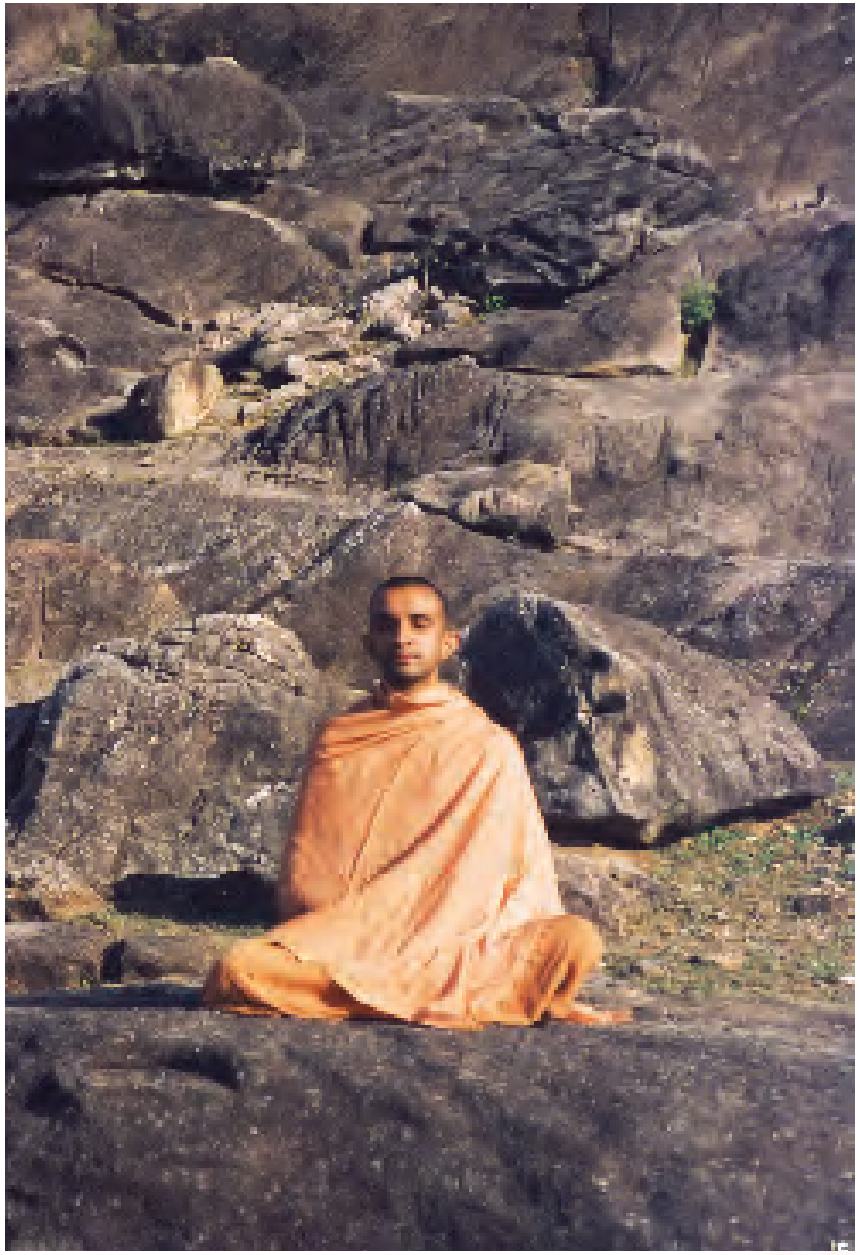










































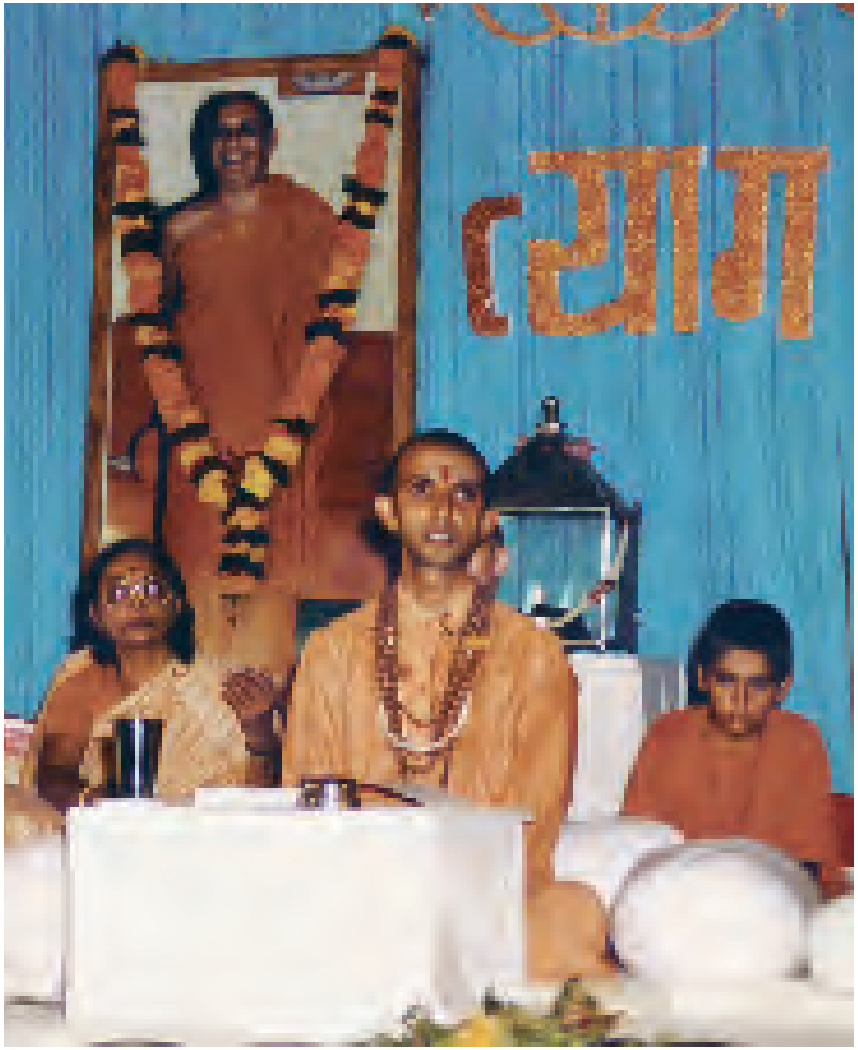




Rikhia aug 29th '93

Niranjan, Namo Narayan.
I send my good wishes for the convention. you call it 'Tyag Jayanti'.
I call it दीक्षित दिन, the name of dedication. It was that fine and auspicious moment in my life, which I experienced 50 years ago in the divine presence of my Guru - Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj To this day, I have always remember it as a great moment of dedication you will be able to help the movement of yoga and dedicate yourself to the great Cause of human evolution.

Namo
Satyanand







श्री पंच दशनाम परमहंस अखाड़ा

(प्रणेता— परमहंस स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती)

मुख्यालय—
ग्राम - पनिया पवार
पोस्ट - रिखिया
जिला - देवघर (बिहार)

[illegible]

आश्रम [illegible] मुस्कराते थे, हंसते थे, बिहँसि रघुराई।
बाचपन में, गुरुकुल में, राजाभिषेक की घोषणा पर,
वनवास की आज्ञा होने पर, गंगा तट पर, यमुना तट पर,
तपोवनों में, ऋषियों के पास, खड़ा-सर्वदा, एकरस
राम हमारे इष्ट बने रहें। यही जीवन के परमसंगल
का सूत्र है — सबके लिए।













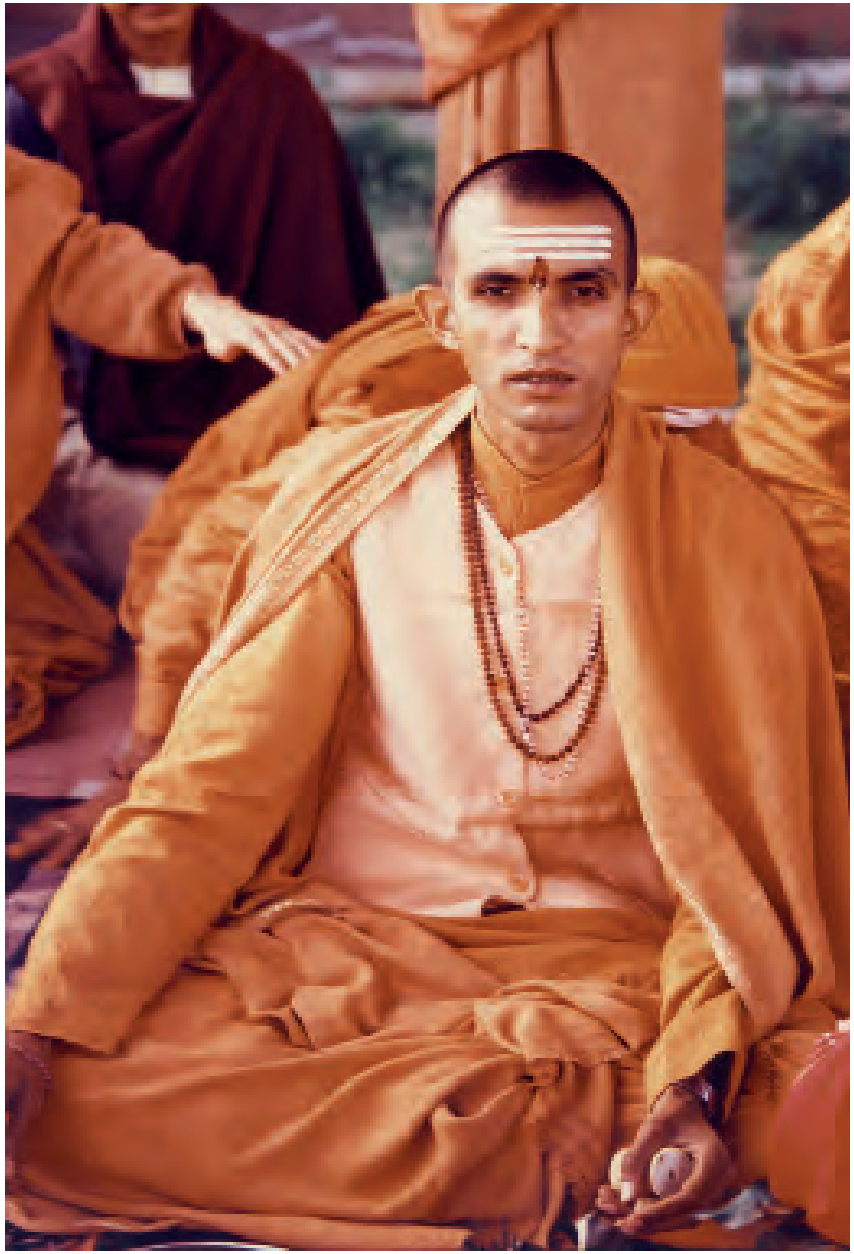










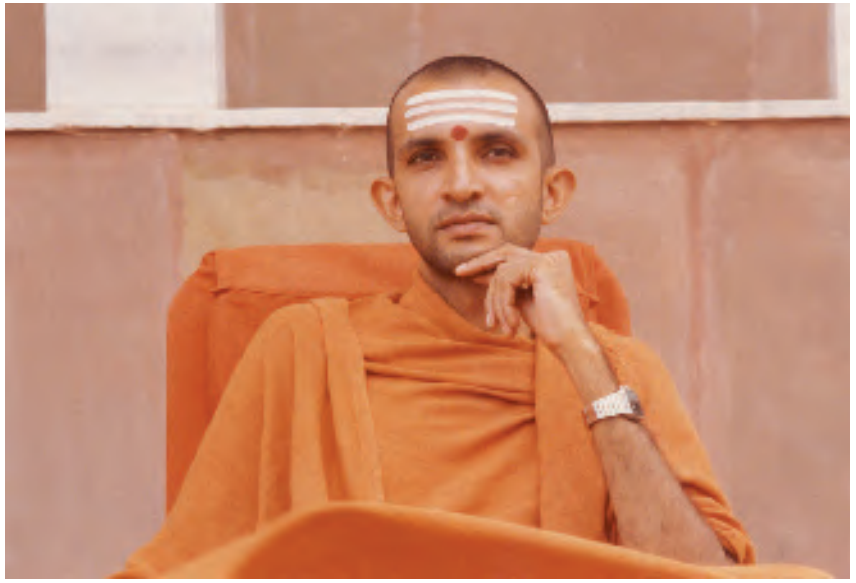

























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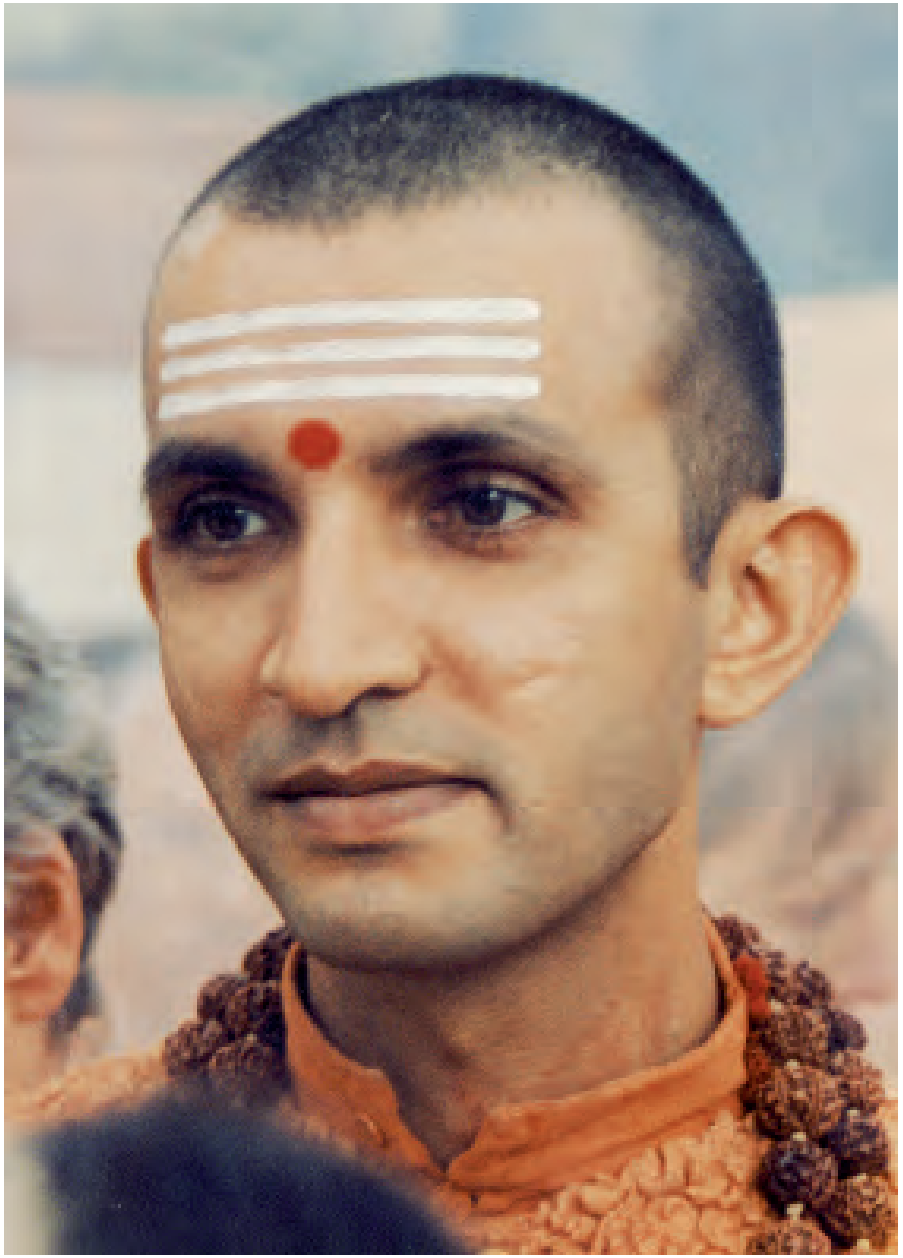






















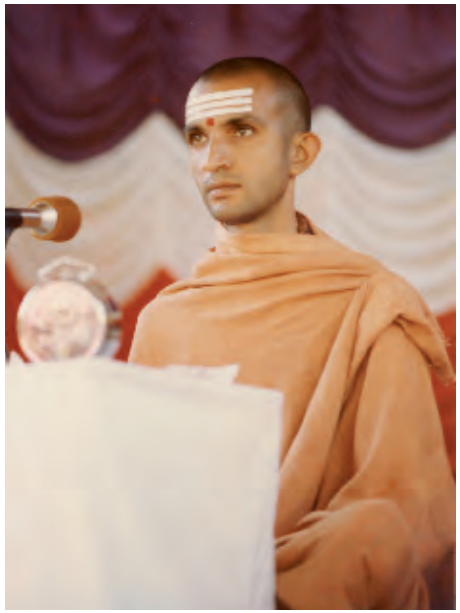












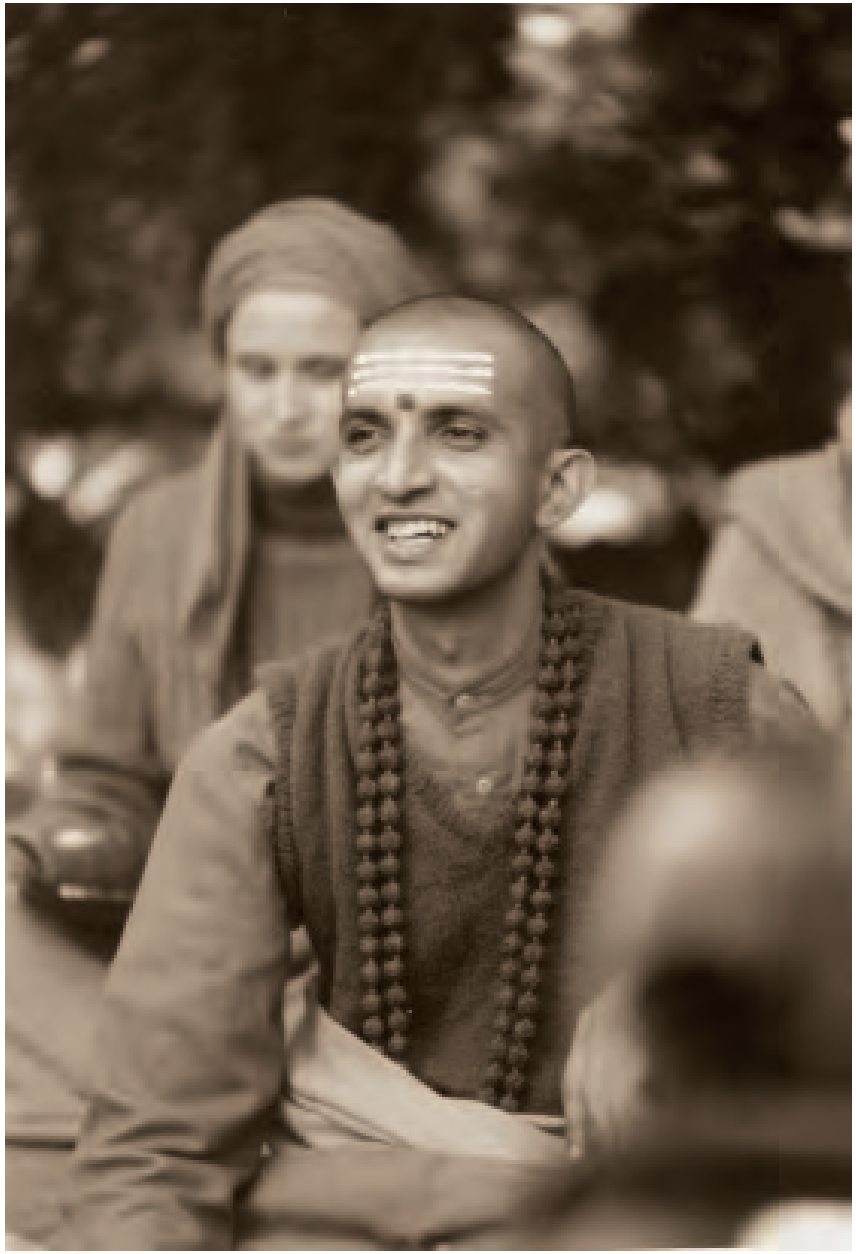












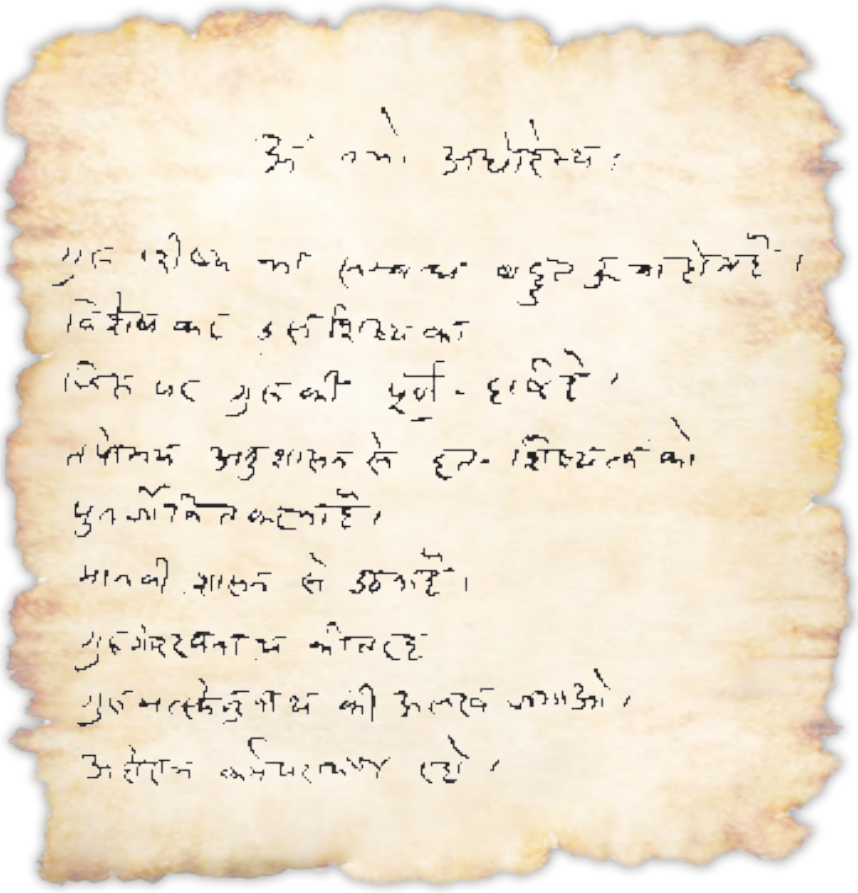

YOGA











ॐ नमो आचार्येभ्यः

गुरु शिष्य का संबंध बहुत कुछ कहता है।
विश्वास का दृढ़ निश्चय का
जिस पर गुरु की पूर्ण दृष्टि है,
तथोक्त अनुशासन से दूर शिष्यत्व को
पुनर्जीवित करता है,
मानवी शासन से ऊपर है।
गुरुगौरव का बोध है
गुरुसत्केन्द्रों की आत्मा जगाता है,
आदर्श कर्मचारी रखे।






























शिवम्





















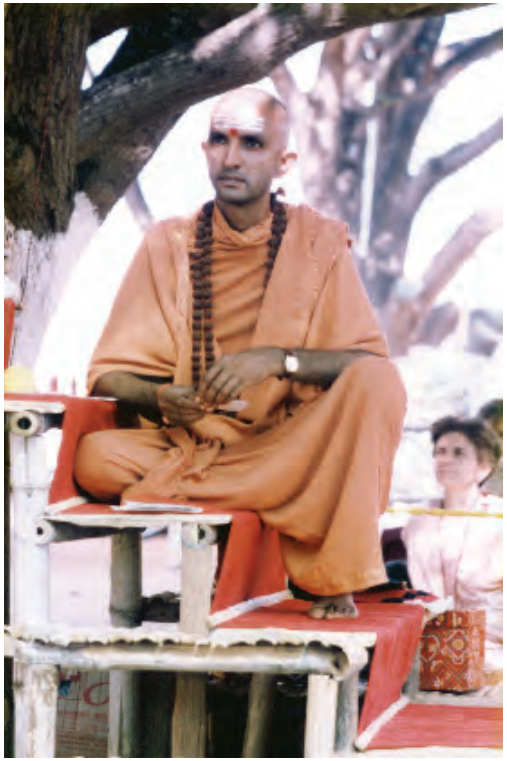




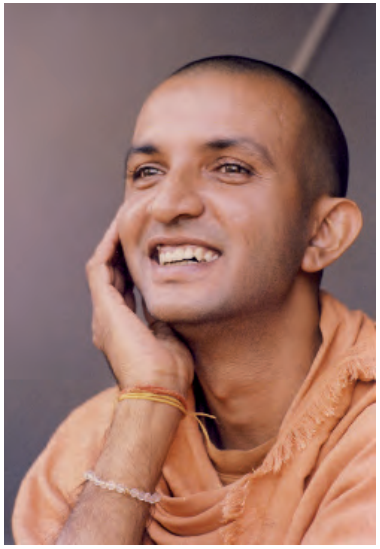
















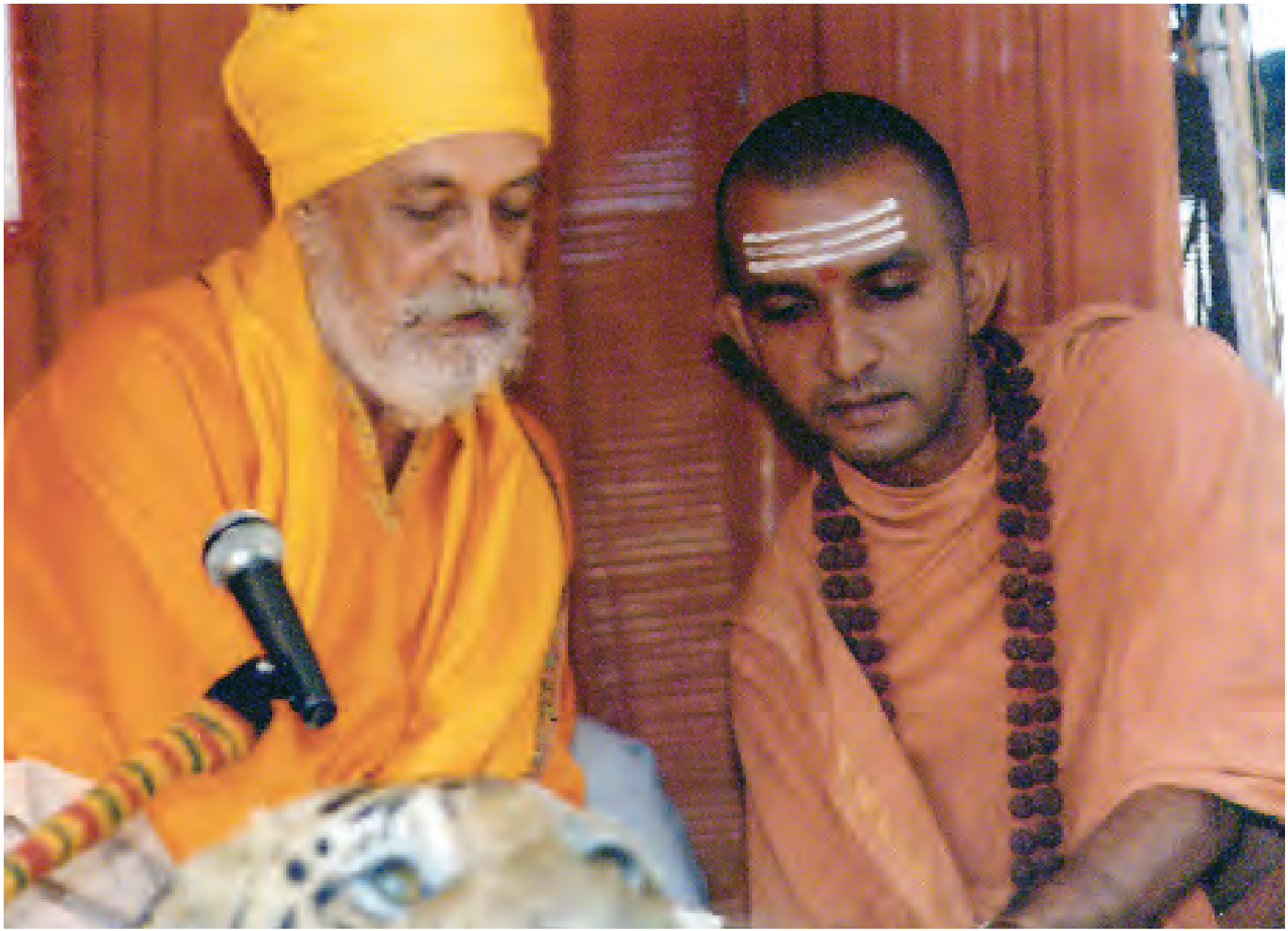
















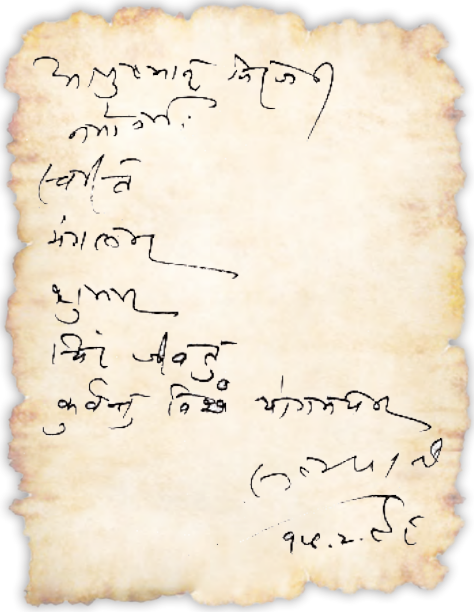












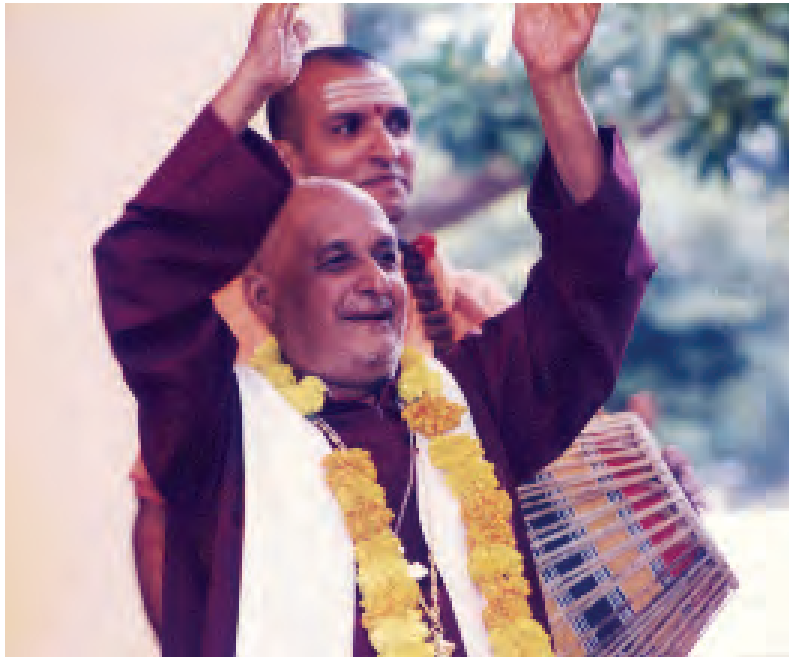






















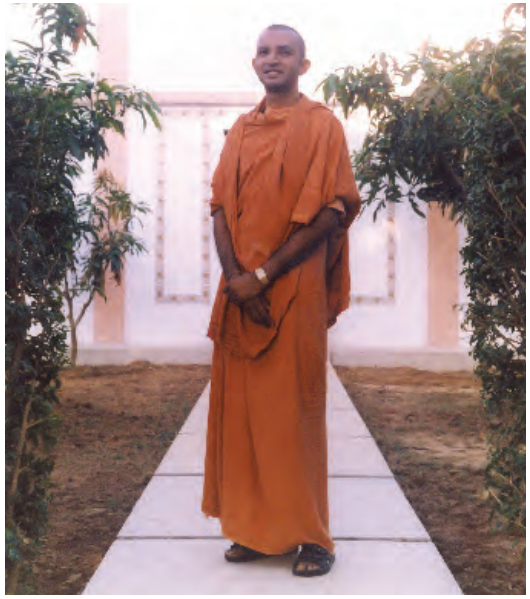













THE BIHAR REGIMENTAL CENTRE





















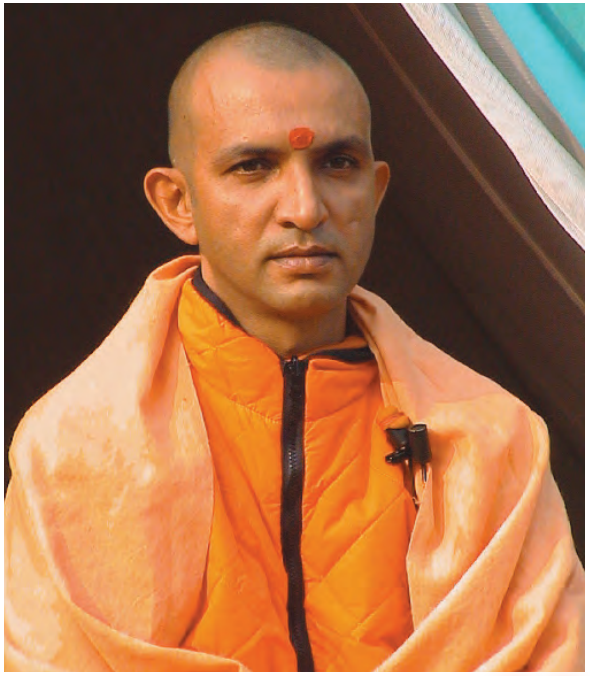



Om and prem
Swami Niranjan
Mangalam -
Swami Satyanand













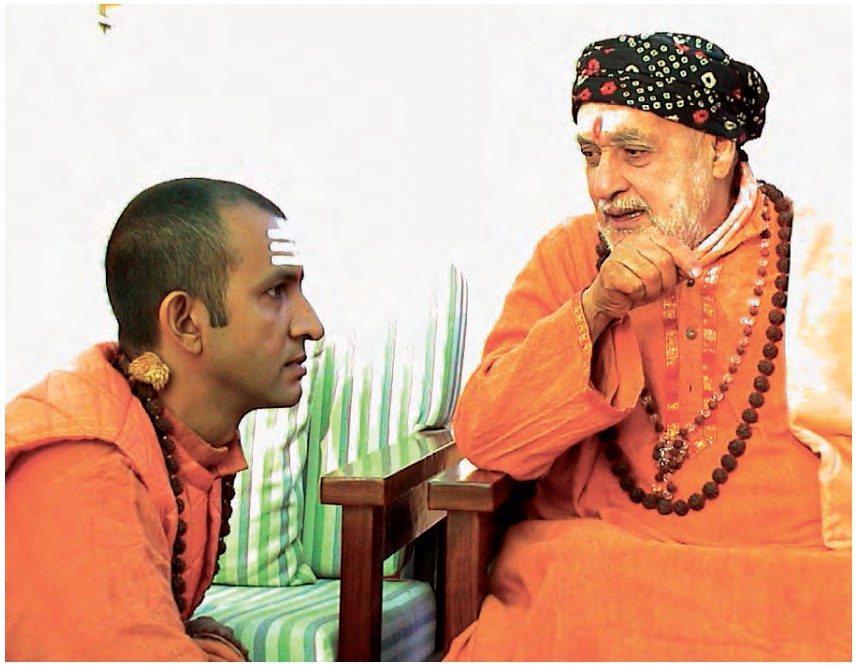






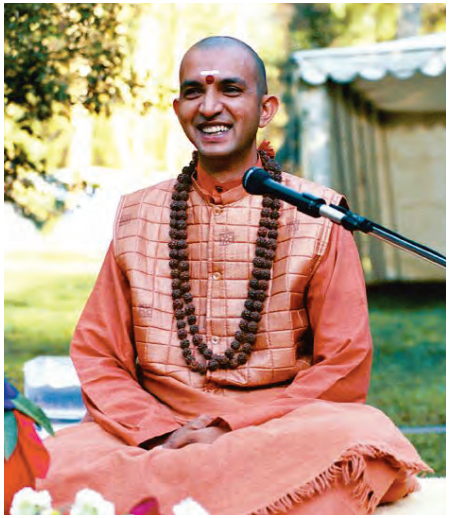
























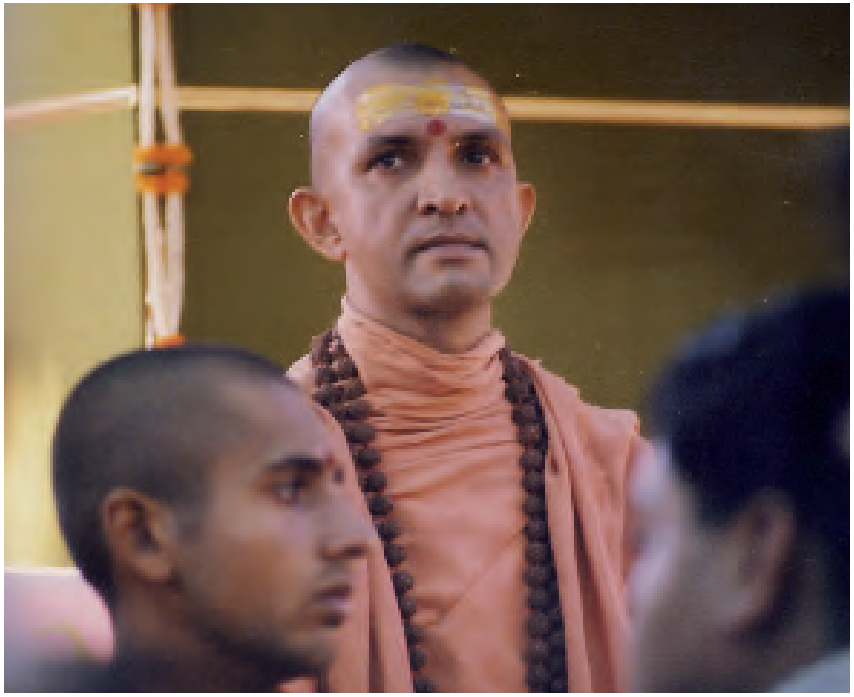






























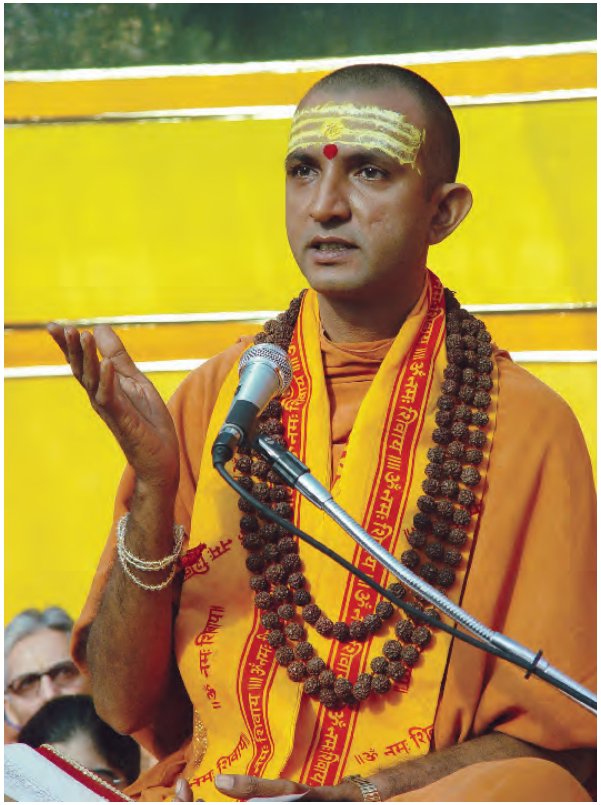








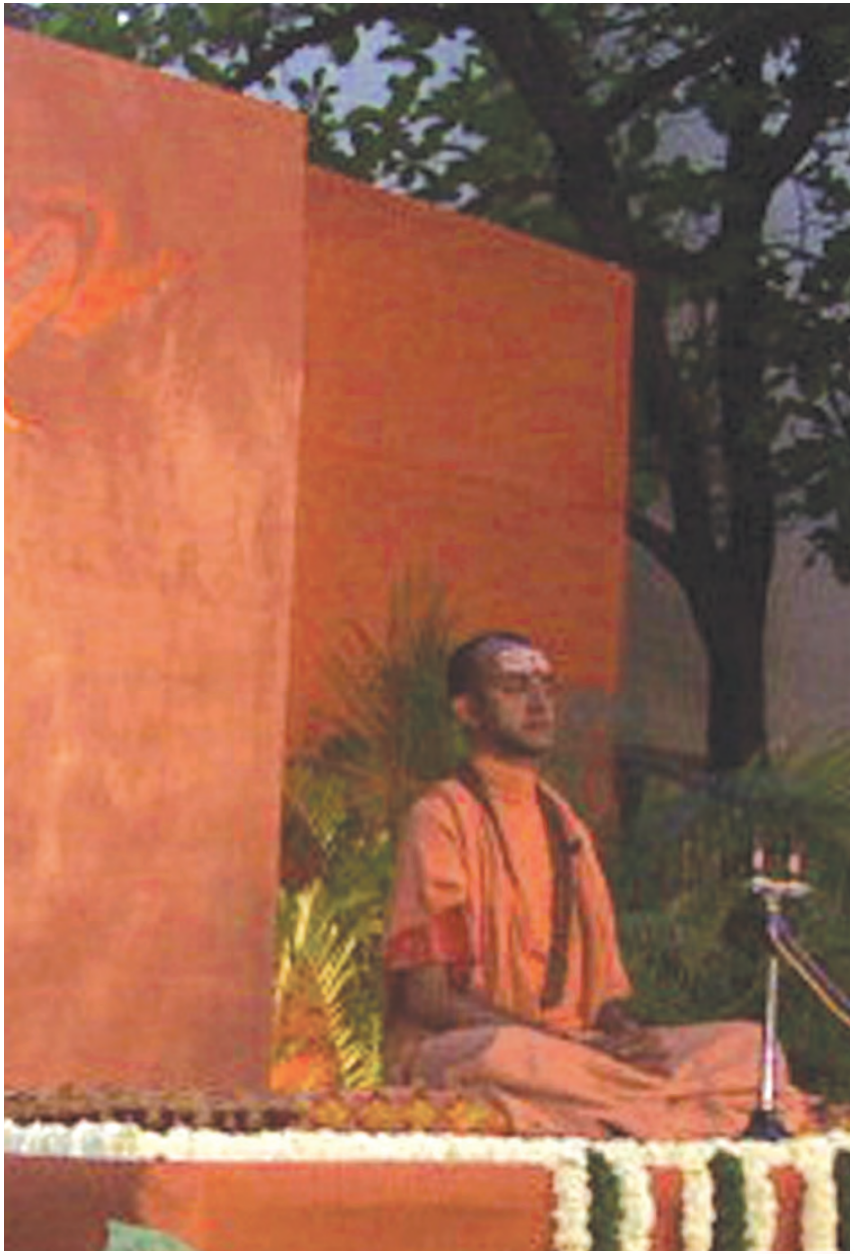





॥ॐ नमः शिवाय॥

















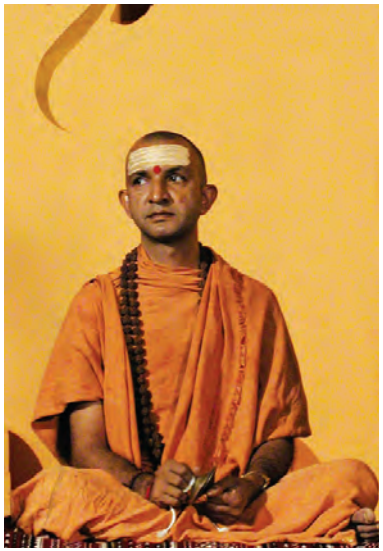




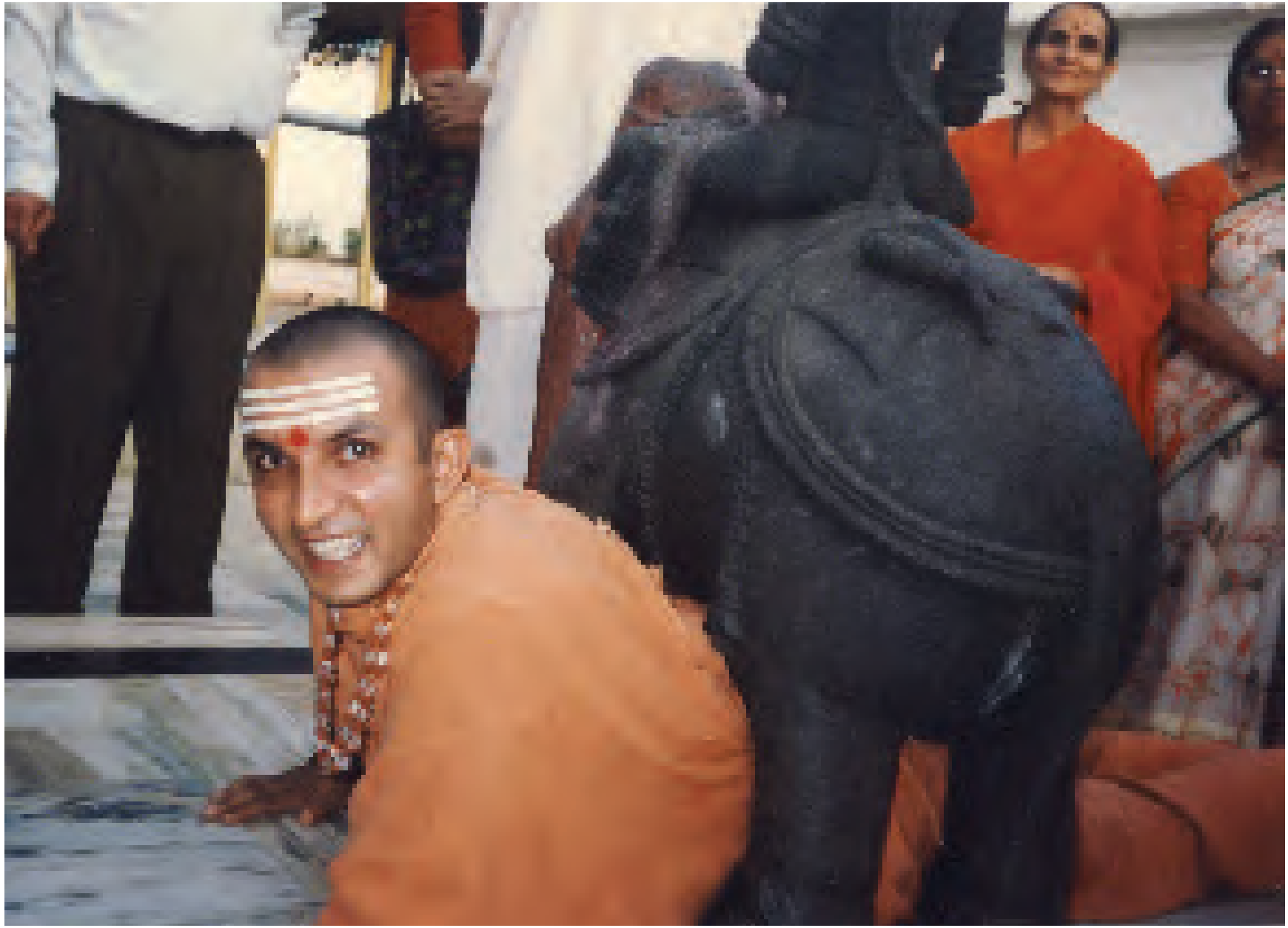






































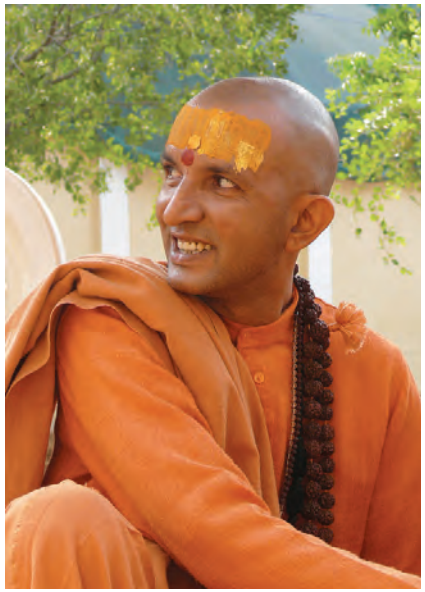
















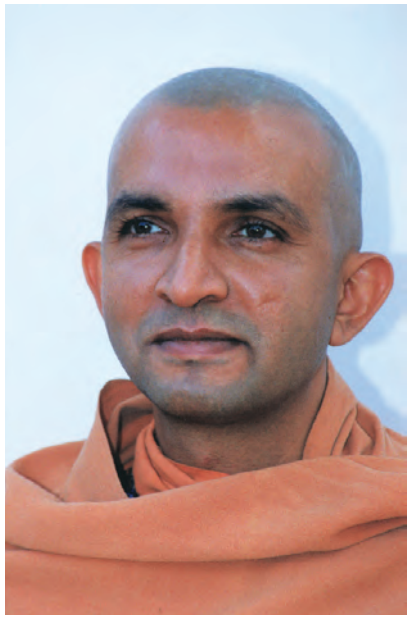


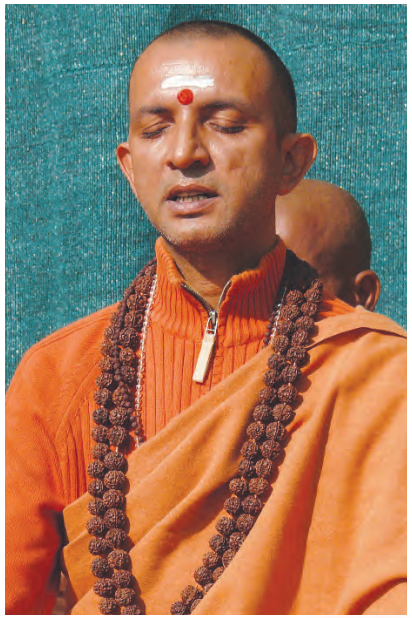
















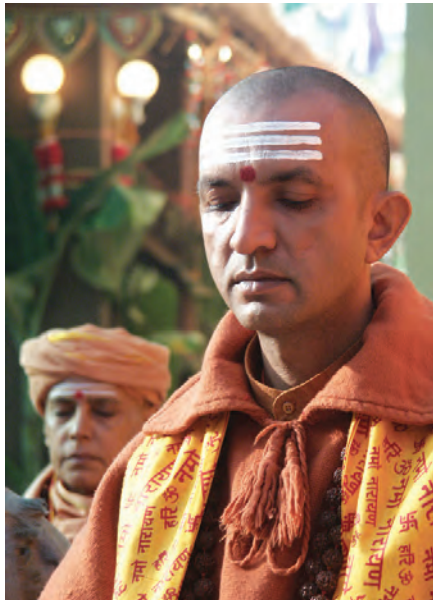






















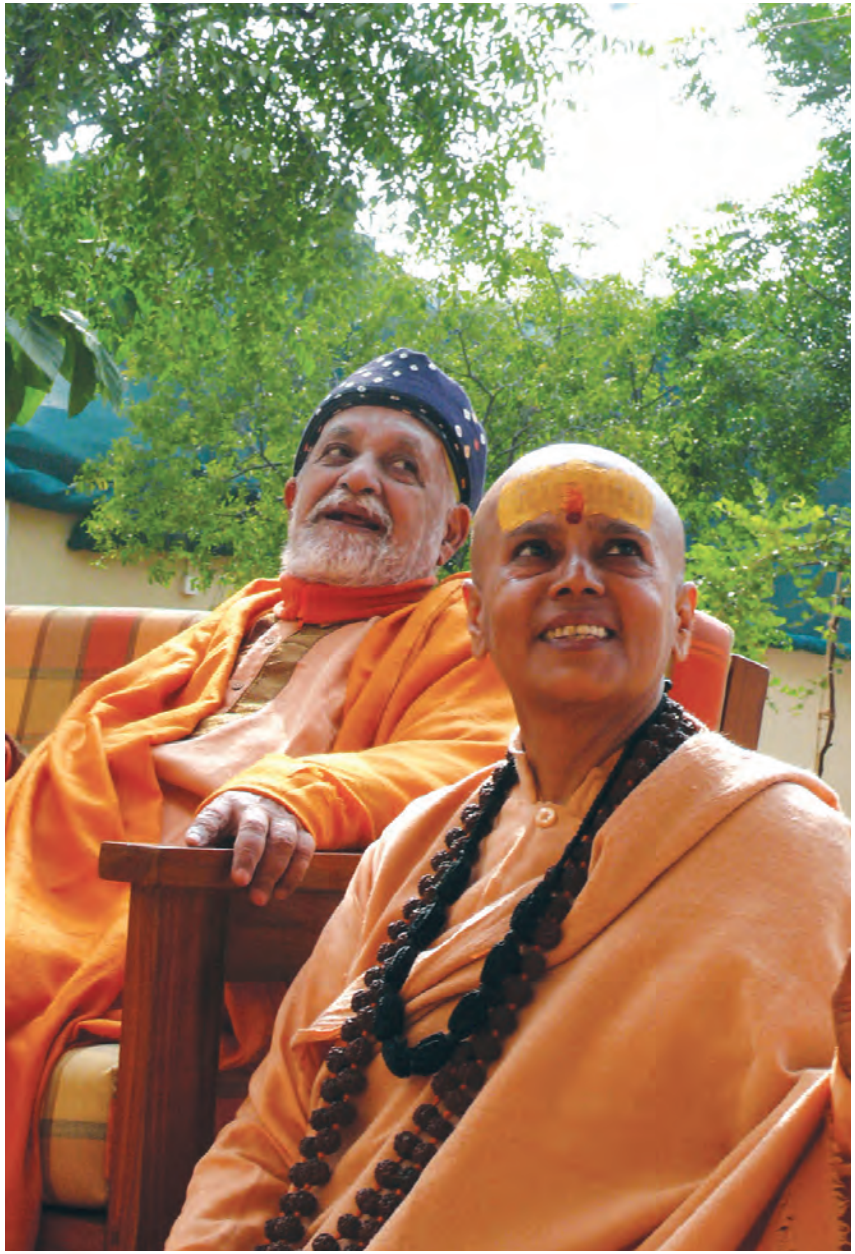


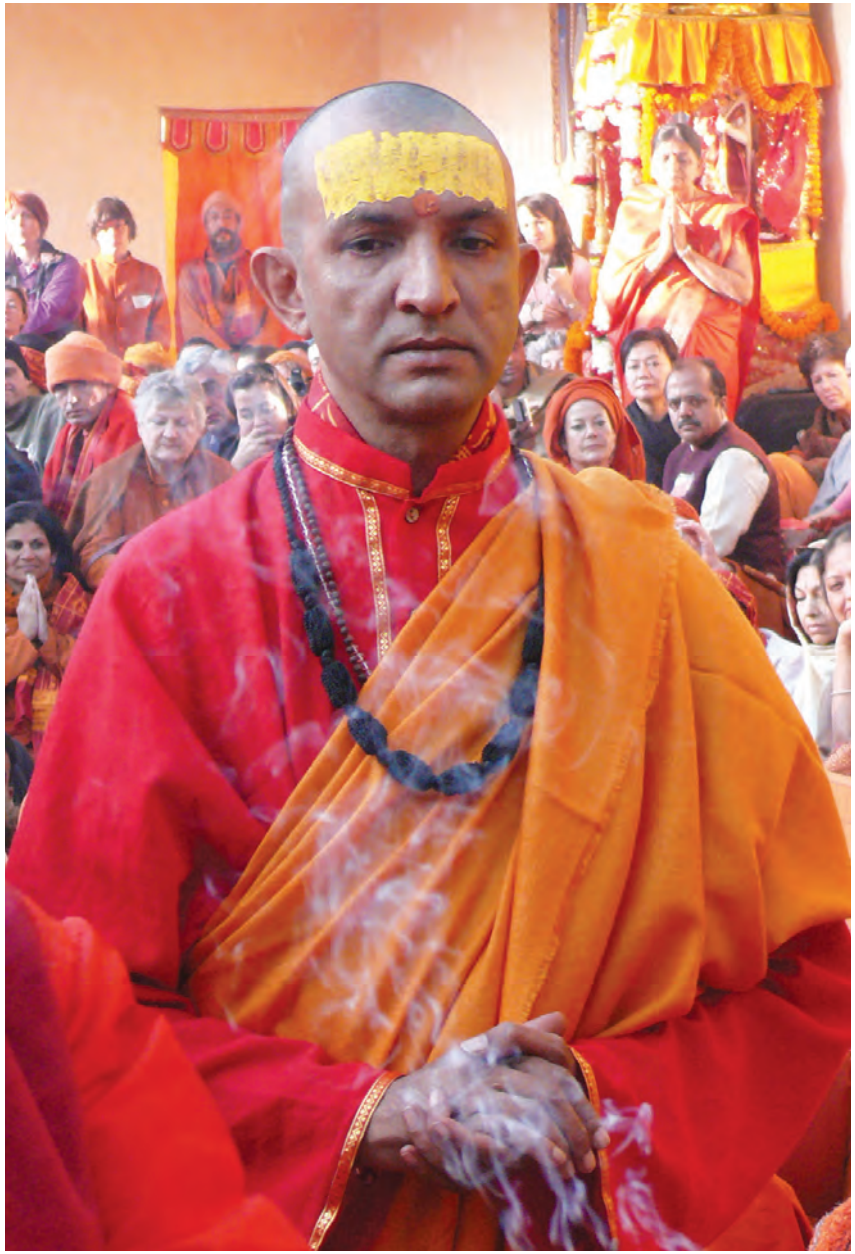






































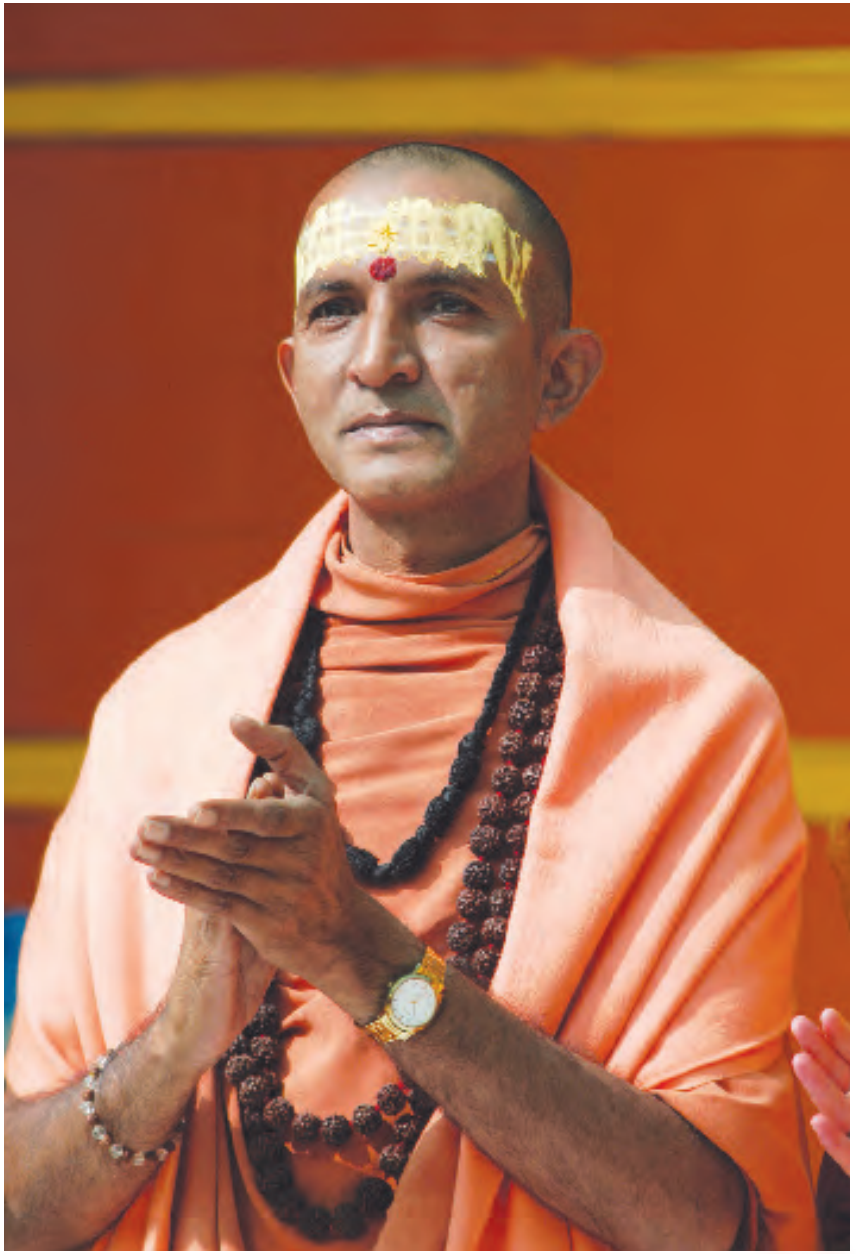






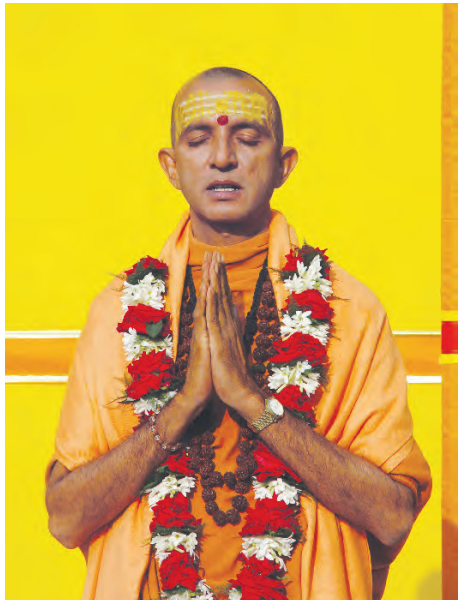




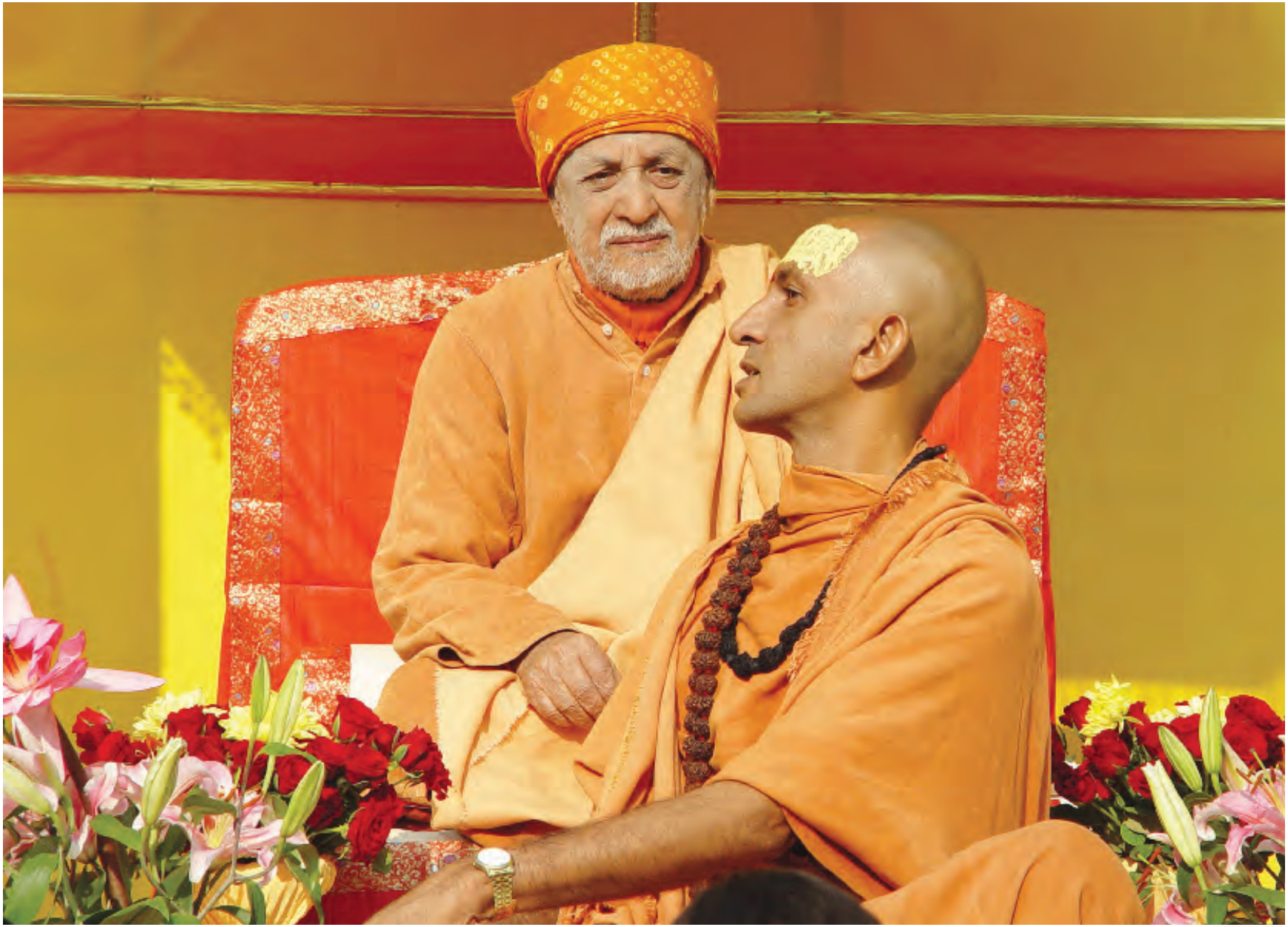


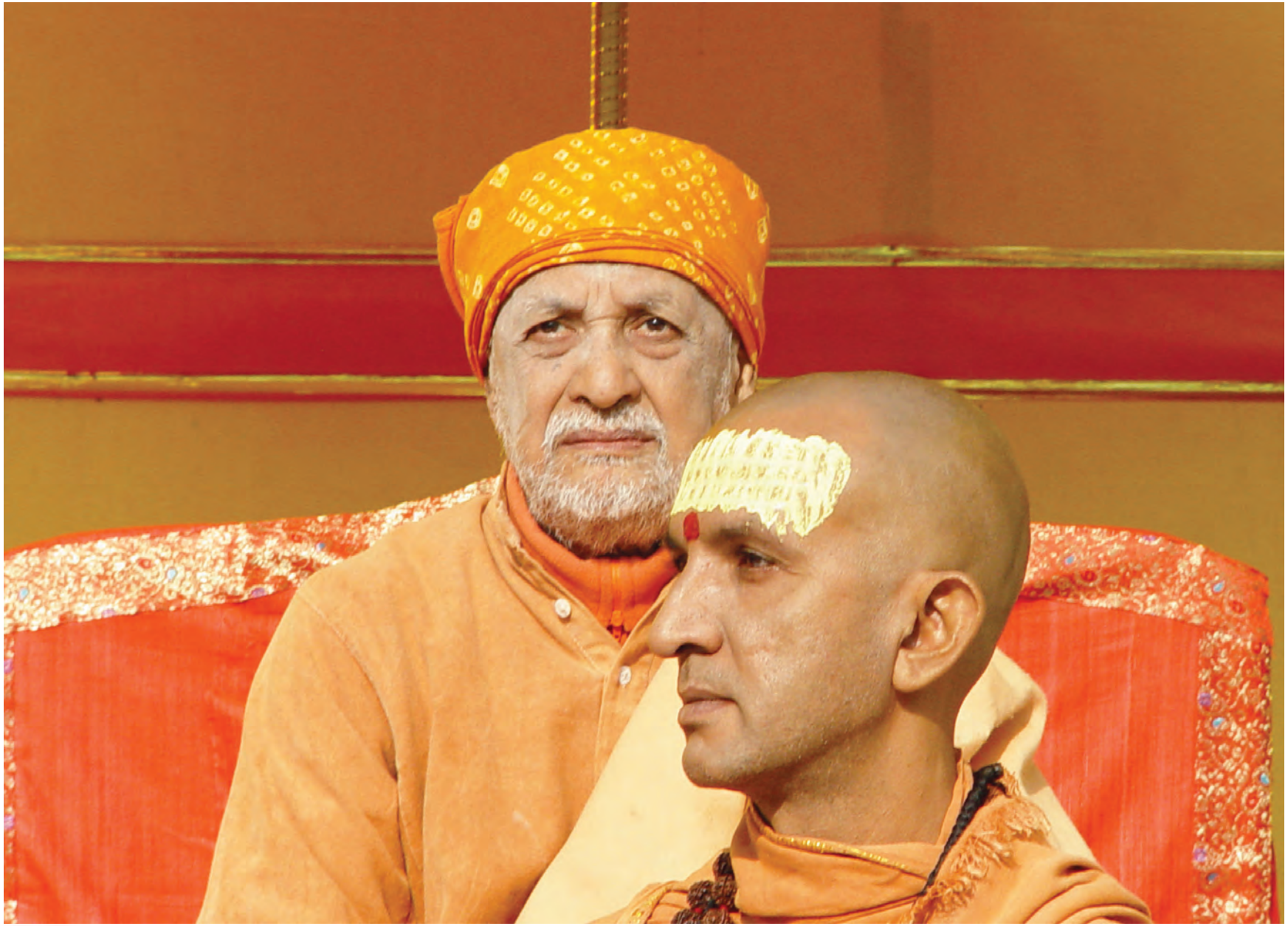


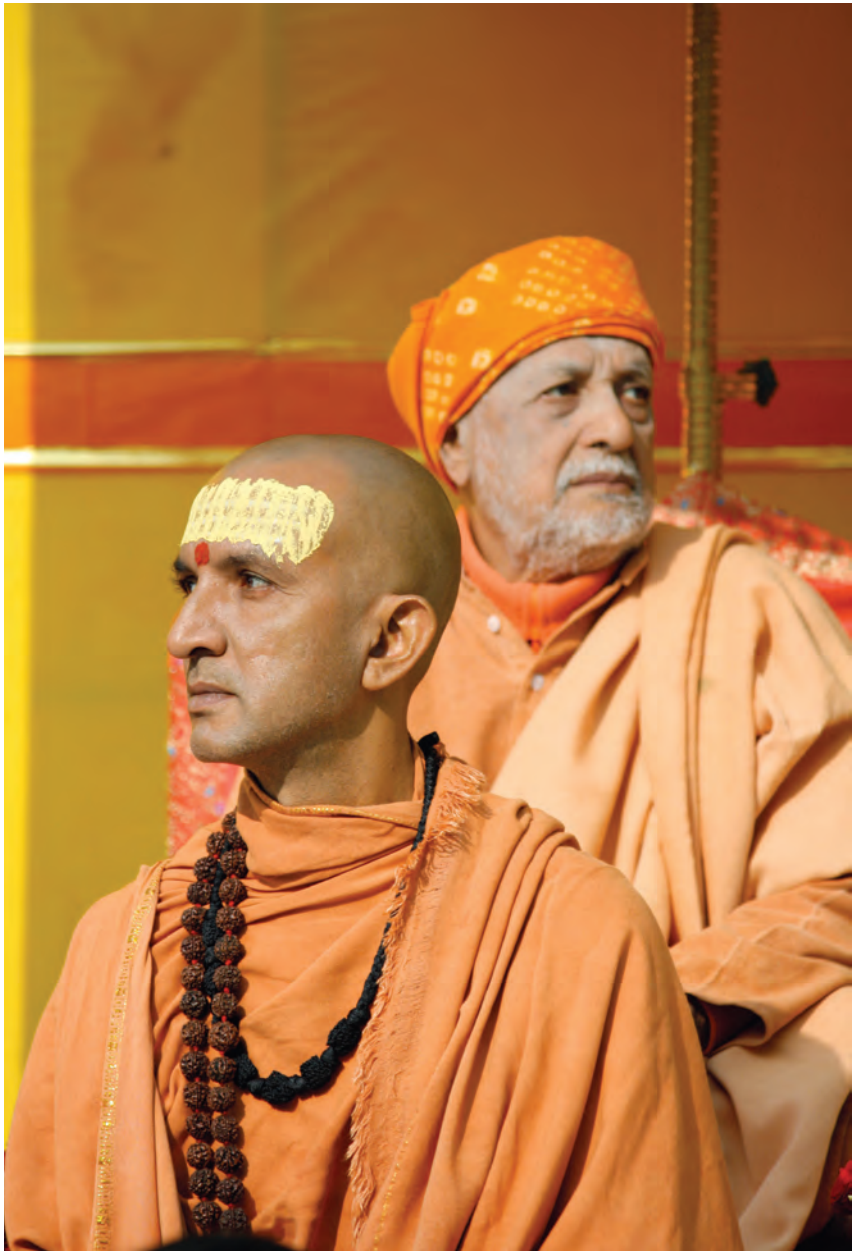


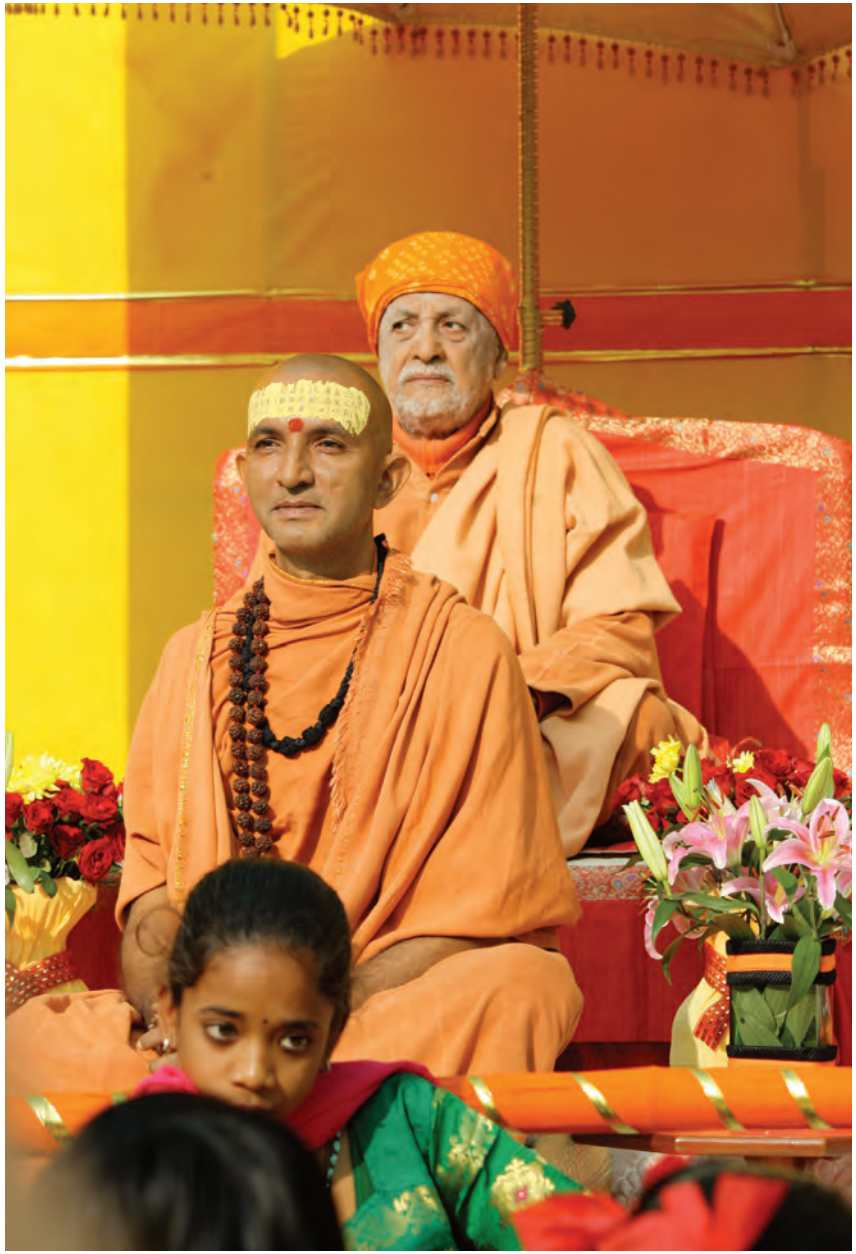












Moving on . . .

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati for Bihar School of Yoga

One day a guru set out from his ashram with a few of his disciples. As they reached the marketplace, the guru went into the local bar where wine and liquor was served and ordered a drink for himself. The disciples nodded to each other and happily ordered drinks for themselves, expressing the logic that if Guruji is drinking then, as true disciples, they too must follow him. After that, Guruji stopped at a prostitute's den and the disciples were happy to follow in their beloved guru's footsteps. After all, to follow the guru in thought, word and deed was the dharma of a disciple, they reasoned. Guru said nothing and allowed them to do as they pleased. Then, coming out from the brothel, Guruji stopped at a factory where they were melting glass in acid. Picking up a glass and pouring some of that deadly concoction into it, the guru simply drank it down with the same ease as he had drunk the wine. The disciples stood aghast, looking at one another in horror. All except one desisted from drinking the melted glass saying, "Guruji is a siddha, he can easily digest it. We are ordinary, we will die." All except one, who asked for a glass of that poisonous liquid and drank it, not at all worried about the consequences. That disciple alone, out of the group of disciples, was fit to be called a disciple worthy of receiving the guru's grace in full measure.

A true disciple

We always dream and aspire for guru's grace, but there has to be *paatrata*, or qualification, in order to receive it. Only an empty vessel can receive the rain which drops down from the heavens. A full vessel or one with holes will spill over. The first qualification of the disciple is that he has to become empty. This does not mean that he becomes a vegetable, a dunce or a dullard. On the contrary, to empty oneself, to unlearn everything, one requires tremendous courage, conviction, determination, unswerving faith, belief, trust and an elevated awareness. A true disciple is one in whom these



qualities are inborn; he does not have to cultivate these qualities or try to be like that, he just is like that.

Extremely rare to find is a true guru and just as rare to find, if not more so, is a true disciple. In spiritual life it is discipleship that is important, not gurudom. A true disciple is one in whom the spirit of surrender has blossomed. He breathes and lives in communion with his guru to whom he has surrendered. They are then like two bodies with one *atman* or soul. To encounter such a duo in one's lifetime is a precious opportunity, for such a guru and disciple are destined for each other. They epitomize the sacred and ancient *guru-shishya sambandh*, or guru-disciple relationship.

It is easy to become anything in this world: a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, a businessman, a politician, an engineer, a teacher. These are accomplishments and achievements that are applauded by society. But there is an accomplishment that is not just applauded, but also revered by society, and that is to become a *shishya*, or

disciple, in the true sense of the word. This is truly the most difficult attainment that any human can aspire for.

Discipleship requires self-discipline, surrender, dedication, sincerity, humility, egolessness and, most difficult of all, to be in total communion with the spiritual frequencies of guru. In other words, to be a disciple you have to live with higher awareness. You have to raise your awareness to that of guru's so that you can follow the guru in thought, word and deed. Whether awake or asleep, near guru or millions of miles away, the thought frequencies of guru should reach you.

Such a disciple becomes an effective medium of the guru's knowledge and can transmit the guru's energy to all. This is not easy because, for that, the disciple has no individuality of his own, he ceases to exist; he becomes an instrument and the guru operates through him.

Of course there have been many great people in this world, geniuses of every kind who have excelled in science, music, art, dance, education. There have been many intellectual giants and heroes in sports, games and entertainment. Each of them has had special episodes in their life which perhaps make good storytelling. However, that is not the purpose of this essay, nor is this essay to glorify the life of anyone.

The purpose of these words is just one, and that is to convey the essence of *shishyatwa*, or discipleship, which Swami Niranjan embodies, which is the most important quality for self-evolution. If one can become a shishya in the true sense of the word, then one does not need any other ingredient for evolution. Even if you do not practise yoga it does not matter; the evolution will gain momentum and move at a very fast pace and you can accomplish anything, even self-realization here and now.

Fusion with guru

The famous story of Milarepa is a touching narrative about such a disciple. His surrender to guru was not intellectual, it was natural and spontaneous. The story is too long to retell here, but suffice it to say that due to this innate surrender, a fusion took place between guru and disciple, and the guru's grace automatically flowed to him, giving him the transcendental experience of enlightenment.

Milarepa was an ordinary uneducated boy, but he had the special ability to live in total awareness of guru. Mind you, Milarepa's guru was not loving and kind as we imagine the guru should be in dealing with us. Milarepa's guru used to abuse, scold, kick and beat him day and night for each and every little thing. But when the guru realized that the disciple's surrender had become complete, he gave Milarepa a kick off the top of the cliff, where he was day and night toiling to build a new home for his guru as per the guru's command, carrying heavy stones from down below. As the guru kicked Milarepa and he began to fall down into the crevice below, which meant certain death, he became light like the clouds and began to float; he was totally transformed into a realized being.



Swami Niranjan lived with Swami Satyananda for just four years, from 1967 to 1971, after which he left Munger for Europe. After that, although they met several times at different destinations, including Munger, they never really lived together. Yet their contact has been total, as his life has been shaped entirely by his guru. This itself points to the fact that although he lived and moved thousands of miles away, his heart

and soul remained with his guru at all times and he never bartered them to anyone else.

One cannot give one's heart, soul and mind to guru and then begin to use them for oneself. No, that is not surrender. That is a sham and hypocrisy. Many people become disciples and express undying faith in guru, but it hardly takes them a minute to abandon guru in the face of difficulty. Swami Niranjan must have faced difficulties of every kind, just like anyone else, but he did not compromise himself in the face of them and remained undaunted in his discipleship.

Swami Niranjan has never been to school, college or university. In modern jargon you would say that he is uneducated and illiterate. He is no intellectual giant, but he too, like Milarepa, has



blossomed because the fusion has taken place between him and his guru. It is this quality which sets him apart from others, and which will take him to great heights of success. It is this ability which endears him to others and attracts others to him – the magnetism of guru shines through him, as he has emptied himself.

Surrender of ego

To be a disciple you have to become empty and transparent, not remain full and opaque. Fullness and opacity do not allow the light of guru to glisten and glow through you to others. The biggest obstacle and barrier in this is the ego.

It is the hardness of ego that does not allow the disciple to become soft and supple. Very often disciples think that they are truly egoless. However, the tentacles of ego are very subtle, and even the most discerning disciple may not be aware of the presence of ego in himself. It is the guru who, through his expert skill and deftness, makes the disciple aware of the presence of ego and it is only a rare disciple who is able to effortlessly surrender that ego to guru without any difficulty. In most cases disciples try to manipulate their relationship with guru and although pretending to surrender, they have a hard time within and begin to crack.

Surrender has to be effortless and natural through the abiding bond of love between guru and disciple. It is not something which the guru imposes; it is the disciple's own awareness that compels him. People with such awareness are rare indeed and fortunate too. When the disciple becomes hollow like a flute, then guru plays sweet music through the disciple.

Communion

One such person is Swami Satyananda, who had this type of relationship with his guru Swami Sivananda, and who says of his guru, "To think of Swami Sivananda is yoga." Such was their communion that he could always know in advance, or foretell, what Swami Sivananda was going to do, or what he was thinking, because he lived and breathed the wavelength of his guru; he was totally in tune. Then it did not matter if he lived with him or

far away; he could carry the knowledge of his guru everywhere. Today, we can see the results of this.

His awareness of guru was so deep that the moment Swami Sivananda left his body, Swami Satyananda had his darshan and saw him on a boat, steering the wheel towards him. He heard conches blowing and even the water of the Ganga splashed on to him. It was such a living experience that when he came out of that experience of darshan, he found that his clothes were wet. At once Swami Satyananda, who was at Ananda Bhavan in Munger at the time, knew that Swami Sivananda had entered mahasamadhi and immediately left for Rishikesh to pay his respects.

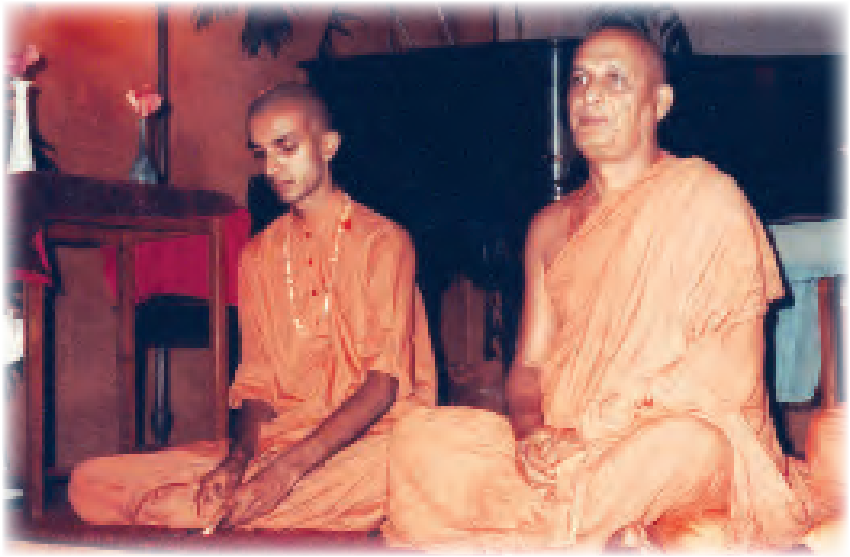


I was not so fortunate to see them together and witness the intensity of their communion, but I have seen very closely that same intensity in the relationship of Swami Niranjan with his guru, Swami Satyananda.

Destiny

From the moment I met Swami Niranjan, way back when he was still in America, I noticed this special quality in him. He is the epitome of a disciple. Each and every disciple should try to emulate him if they want to succeed in discipleship. That is the purpose of his birth: to show to the world how a disciple should live, act, think and perform. That is the lesson he will teach to the world: how to be a disciple.

It is hard to explain this very special relationship between two people that, although enacted at many levels, is essentially spiritual. Destiny brings the guru and disciple together. The guru enters the disciple's life to uplift him and, in some cases, the guru actually searches for the disciple towards whom destiny is beckoning. Destiny has her favourites and one of them is Swami Niranjan. For she placed him right in the lap of his guru. Let me tell you about him.



Manas putra

Before he was born he was a beautiful sparkling star in the sky awaiting the call of his guru. Then one day the blessed parents of Swami Niranjan, Satyabrat and Dharmashakti, who were childless and also had been told by medical doctors that they should give up hope of ever having a child, were inspired to ask Swami Satyananda for a child; he was their guru and they were his closest disciples. So they accompanied Swami Satyananda to Gangotri and as he was taking a dip in the icy waters of the sacred Ganga, they approached him and asked to be blessed with a child. Swami Satyananda took a handful of Ganga water and splashed it on them, blessing them with divine and powerful vibrations. He said,



"I give you a son, but you will have to return him to me." They were overjoyed and took the vow to do so.

Gangotri, the divine abode of rishis, munis, devis and devatas, abounding in refined and pure vibrations, is the place where his parents conceived a child. That was Swami Niranjanananda, the manas putra of Swami Satyananda. His guru had called the beautiful star from the sky that had long awaited his call. Even before conception, Swami Satyananda had appointed Swami Niranjan as his successor. The year was 1959 and the place where they lived was Rajnandgaon in Madhya Pradesh.

In Swami Satyananda's own words, "In 1959, when I went to Gangotri, Satyabrat and Dharmashakti, Niranjan's father and mother, were with me. We were taking a bath in Gangaji when Satyabrat made a request, "Swamiji, the doctors have said she would never be able to conceive, please give something to Dharmashakti." I replied, "There is no child in her destiny, but there is one in mine. Yes, I will give something to you, but you must return it." Dharmashakti agreed saying, "Yes, I will return it." We had the type of relationship where they always followed my instructions and it was done. So I said, "Okay, make a resolve that you will give that child to me and not keep it for yourself." So the resolve was made. If they had taken Niranjan, then he would not have survived, because Niranjan is my manas putra, mind born son.

"Niranjan was born and Satyabrat returned him to me. Now, tell me, was it a loss for him? Yes, there was a loss – he did not get a daughter-in-law! But, in this world there is a flood of sons and daughters-in-law. It is very difficult nowadays to even feed them. So, the fewer sons and daughters-in-law the better. Therefore, perhaps others should also take a vow just as Satyabrat and Dharmashakti did!"

'Niranjan'

Swami Niranjan was born at 4.10 am on 14th February 1960 in Rajnandgaon. Swami Satyananda came to bless the new-born boy, for the bonds between guru and disciple are strong, which was

evident even at that time. Holding him close in his lap, Sri Swamiji whispered into the newborn Niranjan's tender ears:

Shuddhosi, buddhosi, niranjanosi,
samsaar-maya-parivarjitosi.

Pure, enlightened, untainted, remain unaffected by maya,
which is the cause of change in this ocean of samsara.

He gave him the name *Niranjan*, the spotless, untainted one. An apt name, for to this day, although living in the world of maya, Swami Niranjan is not tainted by it. The beautiful photographs in memory of that moment tell the entire story.

The entire family was rejoicing and bursting with happiness. A baby boy is the greatest joy any parent could hope for. Moreover, the birth of this child was surprising and unexpected, one can say nothing short of a miracle, as his mother was beyond the child-bearing age. So, right from his birth, when he first entered the world, he was a hero! His early years were spent in the joy of his mother's lap, eating, drinking and playing, just as Krishna must have played in the lap of Yashoda. Whenever his parents came to the ashram at Munger to pay respects to their guru, he came with them and stayed at the dharmashala, as the ashram was very small then.

Resolve

By the age of three he had made up his mind. Imagine that! At the age of three, when other children cannot think of anything other than playing with dolls and toys, Swami Niranjan had decided that he wanted to be a sannyasin, in service of his guru.

Although his parents knew that this was the divine purpose of his birth and supported him, all his aunts and uncles who doted on him would forcibly take him back. Little Niranjan would then go on *dharna*, or strike, refusing to eat or drink anything. Even the beautiful garments they specially made for him were ripped apart at night when everyone was sleeping and he would put on the geru robe. In the morning on waking, when they would ask about the ripped clothes, he would tell them that a rat had come and torn the clothes.

Sri Swamiji tells us that Swami Niranjan came to Munger when he was four years old to take sannyasa, and was given permission to stay, but his aunt, his mother's sister, came and took him back. She wanted Niranjan to live at home, wear trousers, a shirt, tie, coat, and study the ABC from an English reader like other children, so she dressed him in good clothes. But, the next morning Niranjan had torn his good clothes all to shreds. When he was asked what had happened, he replied,

"A mouse inside me has torn the clothes. The name of the mouse is sannyasa." Swami Niranjan refused to eat. Eventually his aunt brought him back and said, "Swamiji, he is the only child of his parents." Sri Swamiji said, "Then take him back. Who is stopping you? I'm not." But Swami Niranjan refused to go with her.





Guinea pig

Eventually Niranjan won and he was brought to the ashram at the age of six. Swami Satyananda told Swami Niranjan that he did the right thing by not going to school. "I always told him that I wasted many years on useless schooling, whereas he could save those years." This decision gave Swami Niranjan a natural advantage over others as he started early and could accomplish everything at a young age.

To hear the stories about him at that early age in the ashram from Sri Swamiji is sheer joy. Being the youngest inmate of the ashram, naturally he got his way in everything. If you ask the swamis who were there at the ashram at that time, they each have a story to tell.

Sri Swamiji says, "I think his guru bhais would be better able to tell you about him in those early years. I only know that as a child, when Niranjan slept, you could remove his chowki and take him anywhere and he would not know it. He slept like a log! When he was asleep, the swamis used to take him off his chowki and carry him from one side of the ashram to the other. They were very mischievous, but not in front of me. I knew all about it, but I never considered this childish mischief to be something negative.

"To manage a child well, you must not be too attached. Think that this is a guinea pig on which to experiment, not your dear child. I experimented on Swami Niranjan. I have never displayed much emotion for him. I do not even love Niranjan, but people think that I love him. I do not know what love is; I do not understand it. Why should I love him? He was a guinea pig for my experiment. I taped the *Gita* and all the Upanishads, and I used to play them to him when he was asleep. The tape would rewind automatically and play throughout the night.

"Swami Niranjan had a problem. He used to sleep so deeply that he could be physically transported from the ashram below to the one above along with his bed, and he would not wake up. His sleep was deep and unconscious, and there he found everything that I wanted to teach him. Swami Niranjan has never been to school. The first time he went to a school was to demonstrate asanas



in Northern Ireland. However, if you speak to him on any topic he will talk to you like a teacher, as if he has read it. This is because his unconscious mind, which the shastras call *hiranyagarbha,* contains that seed."

Awakening the seed of knowledge

As a child Swami Niranjan was definitely a scientist. Later he became a swami as we all know. But right there and then he was a scientist of all sorts. He used to pull apart machines and gadgets just to get into their system and learn how they worked. He used to gaze at the stars with such earnestness that Swami Satyananda would tell him about the galaxy and the planets, which as a child would perhaps be his most memorable experience because there is something awfully inspiring in being taught or told something by one's guru.

When he first came to the ashram as a child, for many years he used to stay in the same room as Swami Satyananda. Lucky child that he was, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he slept in the same bed as him and, as every child does in his sleep, often he used to kick and punch a lot as well. At that time while he was sleeping, Sri Swamiji gave him sessions of yoga nidra and taught him all that he now knows and is. You can say that the grooming of Swami Niranjan by his guru took place in his sleep. Upon waking up the next morning, he would give Niranjan a book to read of what he had transmitted to him in his sleep and, while reading the book, little Niranjan would say, "Swamiji, I know all these things. I don't know from where I know them or have read them, but everything I read in this book is familiar and known to me."





Swami Satyananda has often spoken about the use of yoga nidra to awaken the seed of knowledge in an individual. Swami Niranjan is ample proof of the immense possibility of this method to educate and mould a person's character and personality. He is a shining example for all children, for he has never been to school or college, yet his command over every topic, whether it is science, philosophy, art, culture, ethics and morality, is astounding. His fluency in several languages, which he has never formally learnt or studied, also gives proof of the opening of those centres of the brain that stimulate knowledge. Of course every child does not get the opportunity which Swami Niranjan got, but his example should set our minds thinking on how to utilize yoga to awaken the creative potential in our children. Just a degree in school and college is not the answer to our progress in life. The awakening of the dormant centres of the brain has to take place if we are to accomplish all that we set out to do in our lives.

Swami Satyananda has said, "I used to teach yoga nidra to Swami Niranjan because I was doing research, not because I wanted to make him something. Gold is gold, a diamond is a diamond and iron is iron by birth. It is no use polishing iron in the hope of converting it into gold. Swami Niranjan is Swami Niranjan by birth. I did not make him Swami Niranjan. I taught him yoga nidra because I was trying to observe its effects on the subconscious mind. I was doing an experiment and it proved successful."



Ashram playground

From 1964 until 1970, during the age from four to ten, Swami Niranjan lived in the original ashram at Munger which was built by one of Swami Satyananda's staunchest devotees and well-wishers, Mr Kedarnath Goenka. That small ashram from where Sri Swamiji launched his yoga movement was soon to become an epicentre for spiritual aspirants from the world over, but right then it was the playground of Swami Niranjan who came there to live with his guru.

In Swami Satyananda's own words, that time is described as very special because then the ashram had very few inmates, who were all under the direct tutelage of Sri Swamiji. They used to work hard to master all that they were receiving from him. The intimacy with guru, his constant presence, was so inspiring that those childhood years of Swami Niranjan and all who were there at the time cannot ever be forgotten or erased. They are permanently etched as precious moments that now can only be relived as memories.

In the early days after his arrival at the small, simple, austere and primitive ashram at Munger, he joined the band of swamis who, although young, were nevertheless all older than him. At that time Swami Satyananda himself used to do all the teaching and the immensely fortunate Niranjan, along with the other children, learnt how to chant the *Bhagavad Gita* from Sri Swamiji. They used to have competitions as to who could memorize the chapters and verses of the *Gita*, and although they had not yet gained proficiency, they began to feel very proud of their achievements.

One day, to show off before their guru, with immense pride they went to Sri Swamiji and said they were ready to demonstrate their prowess in chanting the *Bhagavad Gita*. The first chapter went off well, but when they got to the second chapter they made a mistake. Of course, making a mistake for these novices was not an issue, but the pride they had developed even without gaining proficiency had to be emphasized. So, in order to teach them a lesson in humility which they would never forget, Sri Swamiji told them to stand on one leg and chant the entire *Gita*. So they stood on one leg chanting the *Bhagavad Gita* and quite naturally the entire system, including



their bladders, was bursting by the time the chanting was complete and Sri Swamiji released them. Little Niranjan ran to the bathroom and stood there for about half an hour. When he came out, Sri Swamiji was smiling and said, "That's how many litres of toxins have come out of the body." That beaming smile of Sri Swamiji was enough to take away all the agony that he had borne and to make him value the lesson – pride and conceit diminish the impact of your accomplishments.

Live like a beggar

In February 1971, Swami Satyananda was in Kolkata preparing to go to London for a program and then on to Belfast. Swami Niranjan was in Munger at the time, and after organizing his passport and ticket, Sri Swamiji called the in-charge of the ashram, and said, "Send Niranjan along with somebody to Kolkata tonight so he can catch the flight with me to Delhi and onwards." So the ticket was purchased by the in-charge of the ashram and Swami Niranjan left Munger by the night train to go to Kolkata, along with another sannyasi. They were given fifty rupees for their expenses, which was a lot in those days, and as they sat in the train little Niranjan had a desire to eat peanuts. When asked to buy some, the swami accompanying him purchased ten rupees worth of peanuts. That is not a lot by today's standards, but ten rupees in those days for a swami was like a fortune. And so the two travelled to Kolkata, enjoying their peanuts and sleeping.



When they arrived at the station in the morning, they saw Sri Swamiji waiting for them on the platform. After they did their pranams, Sri Swamiji asked them about their journey and told them that first of all they must hand over their account, which is the rule of the ashram even to this day. On returning from a tour every sannyasin has to first give their account to the office and then he is free to go to his room, bathe and rest. The accompanying swami handed Swami Satyananda forty rupees. Sri Swamiji asked, "What happened to the remaining money?" The other swami explained that they had eaten ten rupees worth of peanuts along the way because it was Niranjan's desire. Sri Swamiji looked at little Niranjan and said, "Niranjan, even if a sannyasin has money, he should always live like a beggar, because the money of a sannyasin is not his to spend. It is given for another purpose. He is not the owner of the money, he is the trustee of the money and therefore cannot spend it on himself. Therefore, even if you have money, always live like a beggar." That teaching made a strong impact on Swami Niranjan and this valuable lesson contributed to the blossoming of sannyasa *samskaras*, or qualities, within him which are responsible for what he is today.

A sannyasin does not own or possess anything. He lives life without a feeling of ownership or doership. *Na aham karta, guru karta, guru karta hi kevalam* is his motto. Renunciation, or *tyaga*, and detachment, or *vairagya*, are the pillars of sannyasa. Wealth, loved ones, status, name and fame are the basis of his outer renunciation, but more significant is the renunciation of one's physical and mental strengths. In other words, a true sannyasin lives with the feeling that all that he possesses, his physical strength, his mind, intellect and emotions are not for personal gain or fulfilment. They are to be used by the Divine Will for a higher purpose.

Gurutwa

At the age of eleven, Swami Niranjan accompanied Swami Satyananda on his tour of Europe. Never having set foot out of the ashram, as he stepped into the five-star Hotel Ashoka in New Delhi, he could not stop staring at himself as he looked into a six-foot mirror in the room, and examined himself from every angle.

As they transited in the Middle East, Swami Niranjan almost locked horns with a co-traveller on the existence of God. Sri Swamiji, who had left him seated there, on his return had to bail him out by easing the situation. At that early age too, Swami Niranjan had definite views and beliefs which carried an innate wisdom beyond his years. Although mischievous and playful, that did not in any way lessen the gravity and gurutwa that was manifesting in him through the power of his guru.

Gurutwa is the quality of gravity. Ironically, as the disciple makes himself hollow like a flute, transparent like crystal, light as a floating cloud and empty, instead of disintegrating and dissipating, and having no character or personality, the disciple begins to acquire a gravity that makes him a heavy-weight in the eyes of others. Gurutwa is a state of evolution. One does not merely attain it by getting a certificate or degree, or by proclaiming that one has attained it. One has to evolve to that level, and the person who attains it is one who is destined for it.

Childhood in London

It was night when they landed in London and when they arrived at the home of the host, Niranjan was so tired from the long journey that he went straight to sleep. In those days, air travel was by propeller planes and he was flying from Delhi to London for the first time in his life. They travelled with the sun and the day was fourteen hours long – naturally he was exhausted.

When he woke up the next morning, it had snowed and he did not know what snow was. Everything was covered in white. The houses, trees, roads, flowers, and fruits in the garden were all white. Niranjan ran to Sri Swamiji and said, "Swamiji, what kind of a peculiar place is this? Everything is white when I look out of the window. The houses are all white, the roads are all white, the trees are all white, the leaves, flowers, fruits are all white and even people here are white. What kind of a country is this? There is no colour."

Swami Niranjan spent his joyous childhood in London at the home of Swami Pragyamurti at 70 Thurleigh Road. There were lots of children around at that time and they used to play and play, and their observation was that Swami Niranjan exuded joy all the time and anyone in his company always felt uplifted and experienced inner joy. Even though there were fights, as children always get into squabbles, Swami Niranjan never got entangled in them. On the other hand, he always smoothed out the ragged ends and had everyone smiling and laughing again. In Swami Pragyamurti's words, who to this day calls him her Prince Charming, "He was a chit chor like Krishna, naughty and mischievous to the hilt, but an adept at winning the hearts of all."

A little known fact is that during this period, when he was in London, he used to sing and dance like any other child his





age would. People noticed that he exhibited an inborn sense of rhythm, as he had no formal training in music and dance, and he, along with some other mates of his, were chosen to dance at the BBC centre with the Jackson Five kids, who we all know were the band from which Michael Jackson began his stupendous career at the age of five. They were more or less the same age, and in retrospect, when we see the different ways their lives evolved, each a genius in his own field: Michael Jackson, one of the cultural DNAs of this century and Swami Niranjan, one of the spiritual DNAs of this century. That dance must have been a show stopper!

Restraint

Even at a young age, when children usually go wild fulfilling all their desires, Swami Niranjan always showed wisdom and self-restraint in his actions. In 1976, at the age of sixteen he travelled from Bogotá in South America to Australia to participate in the World Yoga Convention in Sydney, over which Swami Satyananda was presiding. As he was leaving Bogotá, people gave him donations to deliver to Sri Swamiji, which he packed away, then got on the plane and began his journey.

The route of the flight was from Bogotá to Chile, Chile to French Polynesia and finally from French Polynesia to Australia. As the plane landed in Papiti, French Polynesia, a huge storm broke out. In those days propeller planes were used, so take-off was delayed by three days. Everyone who had the means went to a hotel and the airline provided them with coupons. But since he was on a cheap ticket, the airline would not provide Swami Niranjan with any accommodation. So, for three days and two nights he stayed in the transit lounge of Papiti airport, drinking only water and tea.

When he arrived in Australia and handed the Colombian donations to Swami Satyananda, and told him the story of his



travels, Sri Swamiji said to him, "You had the money, so why didn't you use it?" He answered, "The money was given to me by the devotees of Colombia to give to you. I was only the postman and therefore I had no right to use even a single cent of that money." You cannot find this kind of restraint in many children. In fact, kids think that it is their birthright to spend the money which their fathers have earned, and when denied that right, they quarrel with their parents and even run away from home. The father's hard-earned money is squandered away, without the least inhibition or remorse.

The light of wisdom

At the ever so young age of eleven, when most children are busy with toys and enjoyable pastimes, Swami Niranjan was giving discourses and teaching the highly evolved techniques of yoga such as hatha yoga, raja yoga and sadhanas such as prana vidya. It did make a sight straight out of the Upanishads, which describe a young renunciate showing the light of knowledge to seekers more than thrice his age.

In Ireland he was a hot favourite of the Catholics as well as the Protestants. Although they hated each other, both groups loved Swami Niranjan. When he went to the Protestant side of the town to teach yoga, the Catholics used to boo him, and when he went to the Catholics to teach yoga, the Protestants used to boo him. In the morning when he woke up he would see written on the glass of his windows, 'YOGI BEAR HAS NO HAIR LIVES IN HERE'.

In that strife-torn Ireland, Swami Niranjan became an icon of neutrality between two warring sides. With deftness and skill he managed to befriend both sides with love, care and affection. Wisdom has to reflect in our speech, behaviour, thoughts and action, which even as a child he naturally possessed. Only saints and sages have this unique ability through which they can make each and everyone their friend. It is tolerance that gives them that power, as tolerance leads to endurance and they are able to endure each and everything with perfect ease and comfort.

Tolerance

When Swami Satyananda endured the five fires, he accomplished this most difficult feat with such an ease that any person would believe that it was the most easy sadhana to perform. Never was there discomfort, complaint or irritation. It seemed that his guru bestowed on him this unique quality, for tolerance was behind his effortless behaviour.

We try to be tolerant, and do so with great effort and struggle when we are in difficult situations. But effortless tolerance is possible only for those with immense courage and equanimity. It is not weak to be tolerant, as is often surmised. A tolerant person is a principled person, as we see in the case of Mahatma Gandhi who displayed the height of tolerance.





Tolerance is also the secret of survival, and at that young age, in a completely alien culture and environment of the western world which was highly articulate, intellectual and progressive with a scientific bent of mind, Swami Niranjan was able to survive very well. He impressed all who he came in touch with through the maturity of his knowledge and insight into their needs and problems.

Inherent knowledge

In 1972, at the age of twelve, he had his first confrontation with the medical fraternity in London. The day before the lecture he found himself wondering what he would say. That night in a dream he saw himself giving the lecture. On waking, he noted down all the points that he had spoken of in the dream. After the lecture, the doctors asked him if he had ever studied medicine or science. They were surprised to hear that this young boy had never sat in a classroom or been to school, so the question of studying medicine did not arise. Yet he spoke to the doctors of biofeedback, a subject which was at that time still in its fledgling state, and which most did not even know of. They were taken aback at his in-depth knowledge of highly technical systems such as ECG, EEG, GSR, EMG and related topics. He said, "Yes, I have spoken about the subjects and thoughts that my guru speaks of and conveys. I had no prior knowledge of these subjects nor had I studied them. I attribute that knowledge to the information given to my subconscious mind in yoga nidra by my guru. When the time was right, the information surfaced."

Whether it was yoga nidra or the expert hand of guru in educating him, in the real sense of the word Swami Niranjan is a true example of the fact that knowledge is inherent in us. We have only to unfold it from within. We do not have to borrow anything from outside. The knowledge of the entire universe already exists in us and, instead of uncovering it, we do not allow it to unfold.

Sannyasa

Swami Niranjan's succession was a decision which Swami Satyananda had resolved even before he was born. In fact, it can be said that he was born for this purpose. It was no wonder then that, right from the tender age of four, he was adamant about becoming a sannyasin. Although Swami Satyananda never imposed the idea of sannyasa, ashram and service to guru on Niranjan, this little boy could think of nothing else.

At the age of eleven, on 11th January 1971, he was initiated into sannyasa by Swami Satyananda in Munger. Soon after that he was sent abroad, where he lived and learnt without any support from the ashram or Sri Swamiji. Just as in Sparta, where a newborn child is left outside the whole night to test his strength and only if he survives the night is he taken in the next morning, in true spartan spirit Swami Niranjan was left amidst strangers to develop the instincts of survival in a land and culture that was totally alien to him. His tall figure which we see now is living proof of his survival.

In the seventies, communication and travel was not as it is now. Then, going abroad meant a total cut-off from your home and loved ones. Letters took so long to reach, and phone calls were so expensive and rare. One could not even think of the frequency of travel as it is done now, where people trot all over the globe, spend a few days here and there, and then return. Swami Satyananda's letters to him were few rather than frequent, mostly to communicate to him about happenings related to his family, as little Niranjan had left his hearth and home, and bravely set out on his guru's mission, without ever looking back.

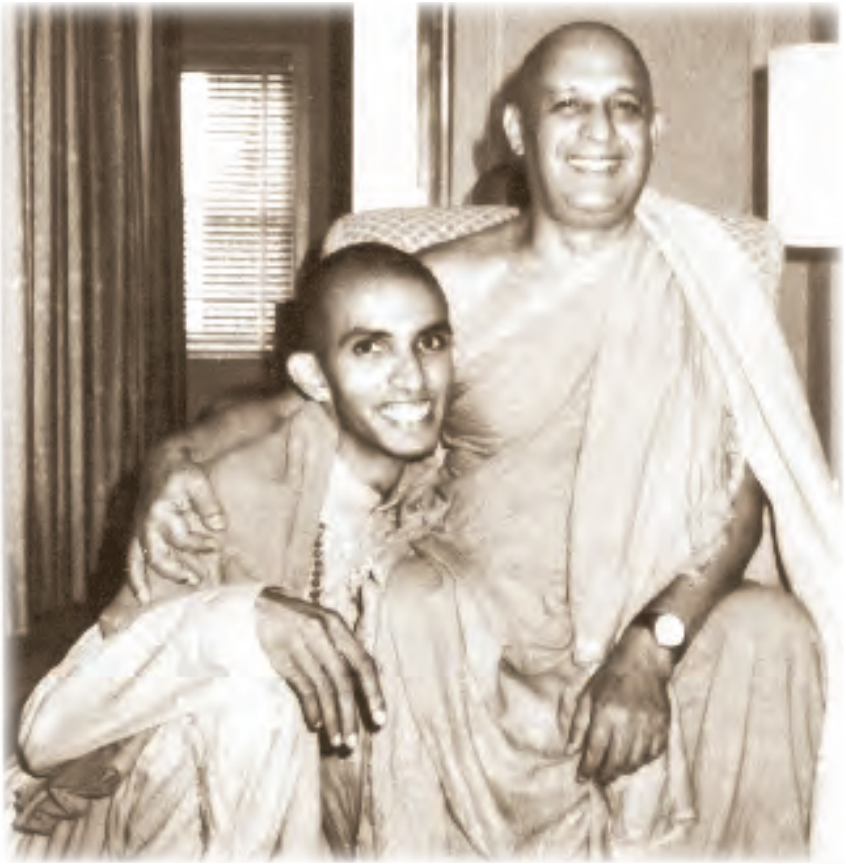
In 1972, Swami Satyananda made a call to him in Belfast to inform him that his father had passed away in a road accident, and later wrote of his own feelings about this untimely happening which came as a bolt from the blue.

> "For me, the demise of Swami Satyabratananda is an irreparable loss, which perhaps the world will not hear from my lips. You are for a higher purpose."

Spreading the message of yoga

Swami Niranjan's father was Swami Satyananda's closest friend, well-wisher and admirer, and it was a personal loss for him. When Niranjan heard the news and was asked by Sri Swamiji if he would like to return to be with his mother at this time, he refused, saying, "What will I do by coming back, I know that he is happy up there because he will open a yoga school and further the yoga movement there as well."

So, Swami Niranjan was cut off from the protective support of guru which had nurtured him. In that foreign land, he grew up





learning the way to influence others and impress them with his wisdom, knowledge and maturity. We are all used to seeing aged teachers and young students, but here was the opposite, a rare sight indeed, which defied the age-old concept that wisdom is the birthright of the elderly. When he started teaching, it was an amusing sight to see aged students learning from a teacher who was a child. That is the respect he commanded even at that young age.

That stint, which lasted eleven years, took him all over Europe, South and Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, during which he taught and spread the message of yoga to people from all walks of life. Just before his return to India, on 16th January 1983, he was successful in spearheading the yoga movement in the USA. During this period the little contact he had with his roots gave him an opportunity to explore other cultures and ways of life. He was able to live freely with no restrictions on what he should do, how he should live, what he should eat, or even which direction he should pursue in life.

He was left free in the midst of a free, progressive and liberal society to make his own choice. Any other young man would definitely have been swayed by the glitter and glamour that confronted him in the heart of the USA, the dream-world of every youth. But Swami Niranjan had a different bent of mind.

It was at that time, in the midst of material affluence and temptations of every kind, that he made up his mind to further strengthen his resolve to live the life of dedication, commitment and responsibility as a sannyasin. Swami Niranjan himself has said, "The more I interacted with people and learnt their problems, despite the fact that they had every material comfort and all that they could desire, the more my vairagya grew and I felt a strong desire to live a life of renunciation and service to a higher cause."

Presidency

By 1982, the yoga movement started by Swami Satyananda was flourishing and the small ashram from where Sri Swamiji commenced his work had moved to the hillock overlooking the Ganga, which Sri Swamiji called Ganga Darshan. Spiritual

seekers were flocking to the remote and not so easily accessible town of Munger. The mandate given to him by his guru, Swami Sivananda, to spread yoga 'from door to door and shore to shore' was accomplished, as in the short span of twenty years there was no village, town, city, kasbah or island where Swami Satyananda had not visited and hoisted the flag of yoga.

Then, at the peak of his accomplishment, Swami Satyananda decided that it was now time for him to move on with his mission and live life with a more universal vision, rather than one that restricted him to institutions, sects and disciples. So he decided to renounce all that he had created, and at the end of 1982, in Puerto Rico, Sri Swamiji called Swami Niranjan and told him, "I'm leaving Munger. You have to come back and take charge of the institution." Although Swami Niranjan must have known it, he said, "Well, if that is your decision, I will come, but if you ask my choice, I would rather stay here." That was his answer. Sri Swamiji says, "Swami Niranjan came to Munger, not because of his choice, but because of mine. Who would leave America, a country of opportunities? But anyway, he had to come. Although personally he did not want to return, he had to come back."

In accordance with the wishes of his guru and also the beckoning of destiny, Swami Niranjan returned to Munger on 16th January 1983 and a few days later, on 19th January, the day of Basant Panchami and the foundation day of Bihar School of Yoga, Swami Satyananda inducted him into the Presidency of Bihar School of Yoga, and handed over full charge and responsibility to him. The young and lean shoulders of Swami Niranjan took on the mantle which his guru had ordained for him. Thus began his inroad to the temporal duties of administering an international ashram as well as guiding, teaching and preaching to the followers, spiritual aspirants and devotees of Swami Satyananda.

As Swami Niranjan had been away from Munger and India for about eleven years and had been out of touch with the set-up of Munger, at his request Swami Satyananda continued to stay in Munger for five more years until 1988 while Swami Niranjan





learnt the ropes. Running an institution is no easy task; it requires, skill, deftness, agility, humility, spirit of service and leadership qualities. Although Swami Niranjan had a maturity much beyond his years and was well equipped for the task of heading the yoga movement, still the presence of guru is something every disciple yearns for. So, Swami Satyananda granted him this request. Little did anyone know then that once Sri Swamiji left Munger, he would never turn back and set foot there again. At that time this was an inconceivable idea for each and every one of us, including Swami Niranjan.

Shepherd to the flock

It must have been the biggest challenge of his life to see his guru leave Munger and know that he may never come back. It must have been heart-breaking too, but he faced it with equanimity, courage and, most of all, the humility of a true disciple who cannot ever question, even in dream, what the guru says or does. These are the true qualities of greatness. At that time, I was reminded of a line from Rudyard Kipling's famous poem *If*: "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs then you are a man, my son."

Swami Satyananda's departure was a big loss to all in Munger in every sense of the word. People who were there then felt as if they had entered a big vacuum, that everything that they had lived and hoped for had gone from their lives, that the joy of life had disappeared. To fill that vacuum in those people's lives was the biggest challenge that Swami Niranjan faced, because everyone was in despair and he had to become the shepherd of this flock. Many years later, in retrospect, we can see how skilfully he achieved that task. Today, people have great respect for Swami Niranjan and great faith in him. Without any fanfare, very quietly, in a simple manner, he has won the hearts of each and everyone.

Nowadays, there is a very misguided perception of what we consider as 'greatness' and who society venerates as role models. Today's society reveres and worships those with lots of money, many luxurious possessions, fame and fortune. If we really want to discover greatness amongst us, then we must look deeper than merely skin level and assess the totality of the person, their attributes, their nature, their qualities and ultimately, what they do rather than what they have. Swami Niranjan is one such person who, if assessed from every angle, would be considered a shining example of greatness living amongst us today. He is an astounding example of surrender, personal sacrifice, leadership, service to guru and humanity, and is truly an inspiring role model for youth.

The numerous incidents and stories throughout his life demonstrate that each and every moment has been a step on the path to fulfil his duty, destiny and dharma. His one-pointed focus, awareness and perseverance to fulfil the immense responsibilities

placed upon his shoulders from a very young age is an exemplary example for all of us that we too can achieve our goals and destiny if we apply the same enthusiasm and determination throughout our lives, in whatever tasks may be at hand.

Fulfilment of the mission

Swami Satyananda fulfilled the mission given to him by his guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, to take yoga 'from door to door and shore to shore'. Swami Niranjan has been instrumental in seeing this mandate flourish into the worldwide yoga culture that we see today. Swami Niranjan has continued the extensive efforts





of Swami Satyananda to take yoga to every corner of the world and has not only made 'yoga' a household word, but has taken it through the doors into their homes, making yogic lifestyle a way of life for millions of people around the world.

Swami Niranjan has toured extensively throughout the world. Wherever he goes he is received with open arms by one and all, no matter what country, religion, caste or creed, as people realize and experience that the teachings he imparts are universal truths that go beyond religion or fad. He brings the ancient teachings of yoga, Vedanta and tantra into a modern context and makes them applicable to help people cope with the trials of modern life. The





practical application of this ancient wisdom brings people health of body and mind, and gives them not only a few yoga poses, but a whole way of life, a new approach to the timeless problems of humanity.

Due to his extensive travels at a tender age and his innate humanity, Swami Niranjan has a natural ease with people of all types, races, religions and nations. He is able to adapt to each and every situation with versatility and honesty. Swami Niranjan travels to many different countries and cultures, but in each and every place he seems at home with the customs and traditions. He never compromises on the essence of the teachings, or on the topic of the seminar or program, but somehow manages to make the message accessible and applicable no matter what the culture, religion or customs of the audience.

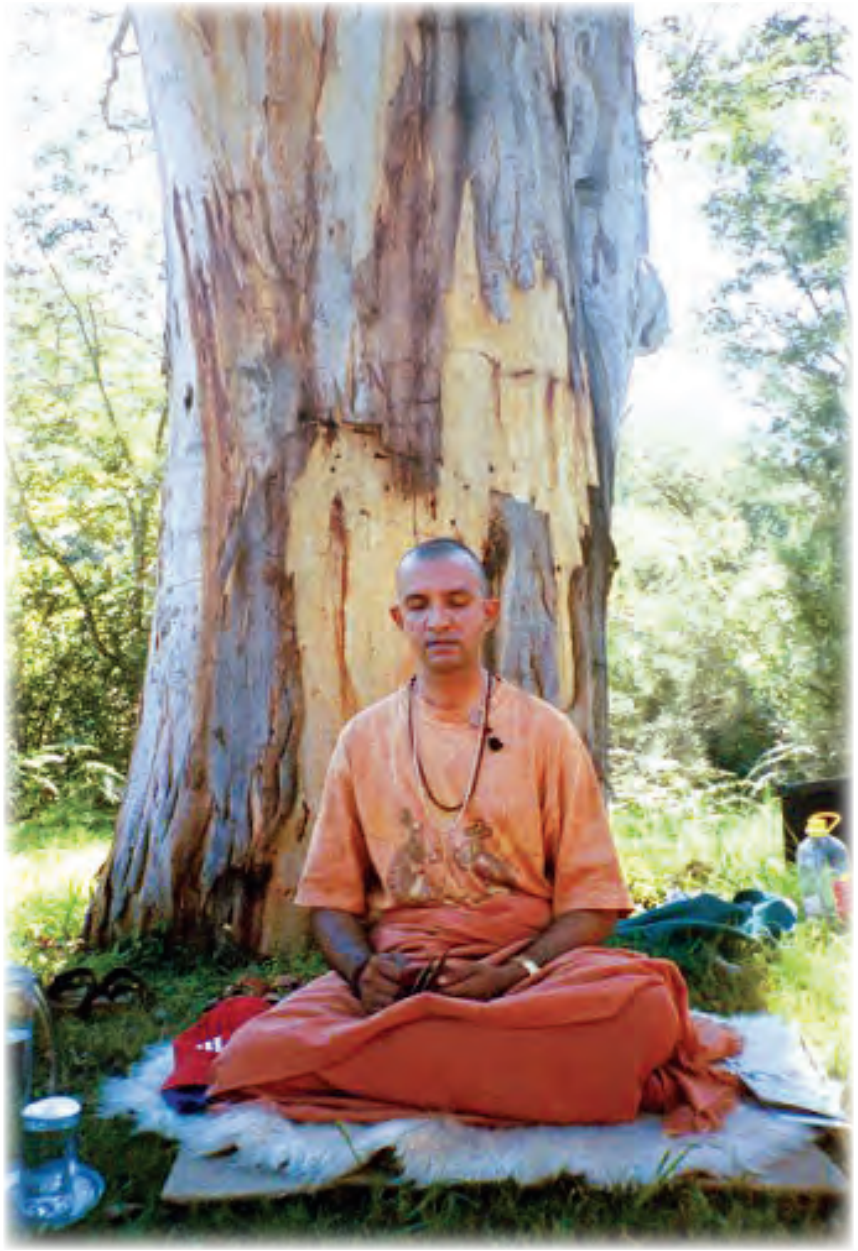
In Australia, he could often be seen having a picnic of sandwiches on the grass under the gum trees with devotees, or playing with the boisterous children. In Greece, he appreciated a Greek drama performed by the devotees and in Bulgaria, joined in with traditional Bulgarian songs. He has been on safari in South Africa and dined in the most expensive restaurants in Spain and Italy. The enormous spectrum of his experiences demonstrates his versatility and skill to 'adapt, adjust and accommodate', a central teaching of Swami Satyananda. At each and every moment he always remained focused on his mission and purpose, and was able to win over the hearts and minds of people, and bring them the teachings of yogic culture in a way that they would accept and understand.

Spiritual guide

His profound compassion, empathy and wisdom instinctively draw people towards him, both young and old, rich and poor. He is the spiritual guru and guide for millions of devotees and disciples around the world. He addresses and guides in matters not only of the spiritual realm, but also those related to life, helping people to deal with their day-to-day emotional, mental, personal and family problems.

Often he is asked by aspirants and spiritual seekers, "What should I do Swamiji?" To this question he rarely gives a direct answer. However, by talking to the person he is able to evoke the individual's innate personal wisdom, so that they can take the most appropriate and informed decision by themselves! By his expert guidance and support most people end up answering their own questions, which in the long run is the best for the individual, as they take responsibility for their own decisions and learn to stand on their own two feet. He skilfully solves people's problems



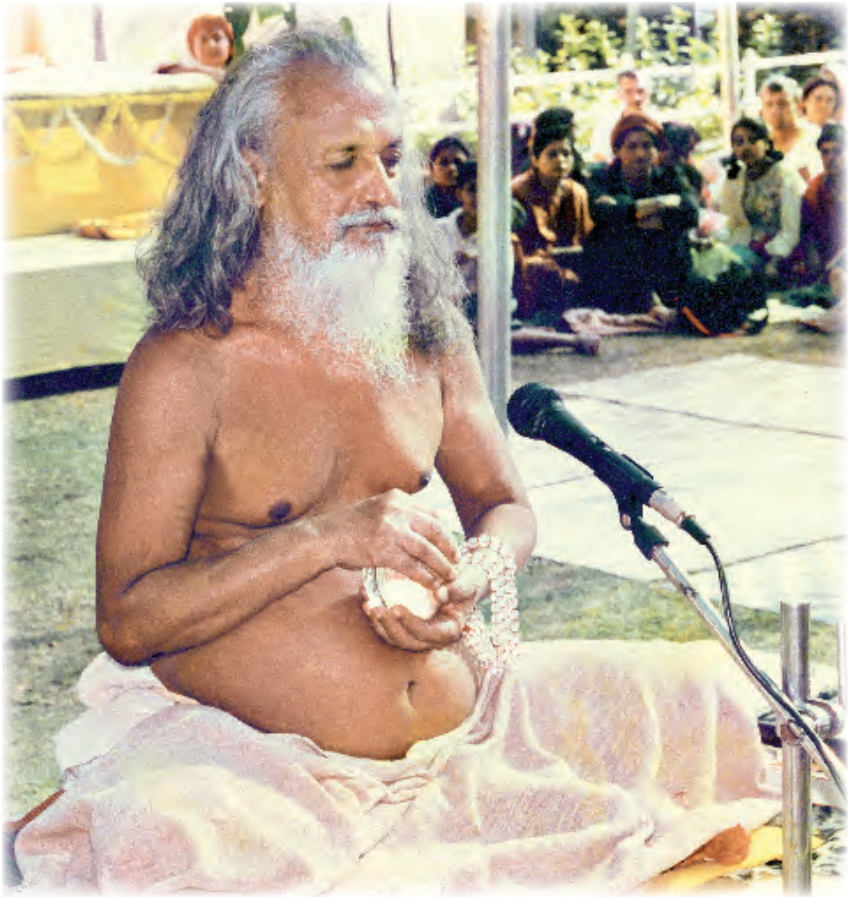


not by telling them the answer, but by awakening within them the wisdom to solve the question themselves and giving them the self-confidence to face the challenges of life.

Swami Niranjan has always upheld the sannyasa tradition to its highest degree. He lives in the world, but remains free from the shackles of attachments. He lives in the world, but is not of the world, just as a lotus is born in water and lives in water, but is always dry. He has managed to change the perception that spiritual wisdom, peace and bliss are reserved for those recluses in caves who renounce the world. Rather, he is an excellent example of dynamic and active seva to guru and humanity within society. The best leaders lead by example, and Swami Niranjan is an impeccable example of a true sannyasin.

Divine light

During the historic Sat Chandi Mahayajna at Rikhia in 1995, Swami Satyananda formally acknowledged the exemplary life of Swami Niranjan when, in front of all the participants, he said:





So, today Swami Niranjan has received his initiation. That initiation is now over. The Mother will be the witness and so will all of you. I am handing over to Swami Niranjan the two greatest assets of my tantric life: the sphatik mala and sphatik lingam. I feel assured that he will lead you all amidst the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in your life and you forget the way, he is the one who can tell you where to go and what to do. Swami Niranjan began his twelve years in 1983 and now he has completed them. He has been with me since his birth, but in 1983 I handed over my succession to him, and now it is 1995. Twelve years have passed and he has proved himself. For those twelve years he has lived a hard and strict life.

Most of the new Munger sannyasins don't know me. I am as fierce as Bholenath. I am not and never have been a sweet guru. Many disciples have failed because they thought, 'What kind of a guru is he? Guru should not get angry, guru should not do this.' But Swami Niranjan accepted me as I am. Unless a disciple accepts the guru as he is, there is no salvation and no way for him. You should not want the guru to adjust to your image. So, Swami Niranjan has come through with flying colours. It is not after guiding him that I nominated him. Before he was born, before his mother conceived him, I told his father and mother, 'My successor will be born through you.' Swami Dharmashakti gave birth to him and she is here today.

Today the Mother Goddess is the witness and all of you are the witnesses that I have handed over the two priceless treasures of my spiritual life to Swami Niranjan. One is a crystal mala and the other is the crystal lingam. Swami Niranjan has worked very hard. Generally disciples want to see the guru in their self-created image. If this is the case, then the disciple becomes the guru and the guru becomes the disciple. But he never tried to see me in his image. He has always had the feeling, 'Whatever you want me to do, I will do.' I have always been a tough guru, but Swami Niranjan accepted me as I was. If you really want to find your guru, you have to accept him in his true form. Once you have decided, 'This person is my guru,' then you must accept him as he is. Try and mould yourself in his form, and do not mould him in your form.

It is very difficult to be a disciple. Nobody becomes a disciple simply by getting initiated or by smoking the pipe of the guru. When a carpenter wants to make something from a piece of wood, he envisions what he will shape and fashions it in his own way. The wood is cut, chiselled and filed, but it does not question the carpenter. Similarly, a piece of cloth does not question the tailor. Leather does not question the shoemaker. I appointed Swami Niranjan as my successor in 1983. Now his twelve years have been completed and I have handed over the sphatik mala and lingam to him. I have full faith that he will come as a divine light into your spiritual lives and that you will receive everything from him.

Smoothing out the rough edges

Right from an early age, Swami Niranjan has demonstrated the skill and agility of a true leader as he manages to smooth all the rough edges with utmost ease while attending to the smallest details. At times of high pressure, when there are mammoth events, it is not uncommon for him to go for several days without any sleep and still exude grace, poise and composure. Ordinarily, a person of his status who is a guru of millions would just live in comfort, leaving the work load to others. But Swami Niranjan is quite the opposite, he is always there to help out and lend support wherever and whenever needed.

To give just one example of the management feat he achieves daily: at one moment Swami Niranjan is on the phone giving directions in Spanish about a shipment of expected prasad, a moment later he is speaking in Hindi to a devotee in Delhi who needs his guidance, next he is speaking to the Greek ashram which needs his advice on management, and next he is giving directions on the amount of salt to be ordered for the feeding of 20,000 people for the five days of Sat Chandi Mahayajna! After all this, which is only a glimpse of five minutes of his day, he steps into the yajna area of Tapowan to greet a mammoth audience and guides all aspects of the event with clock-work precision and mastery.

The hectic activity and immense pressure Swami Niranjan faces on a day-to-day basis does not in any way override his innate compassion. Once, during the yajna at Rikhia, at the peak of activity, one morning just as the gates in Tapowan were opened, a very distressed woman from the neighbouring village brought her young son to the ashram gate and was pleading for help as her son had broken his arm. Her husband was away and she didn't know what to do. Her first and only thought was to come to the ashram.

Swami Niranjan personally enquired about the woman's distress and told a sannyasin to talk to her, give her directions and contacts as to where to seek appropriate help, as the ashram was not equipped to deal with broken bones! The relief of the woman and her son was profound and they happily walked away as if the son's arm was healed. Sometimes, the greatest help we can give is just to point out the right direction and sometimes the greatest medicine is just to know that someone cares. Swami Niranjanananda never ceases to care; it's like he has a radar and knows when someone just needs a kind word, a reassuring smile or a push in the right direction.

Despite being the spiritual head of a huge international organization, he repeatedly demonstrates a profound ability to manage vast events and juggle immense responsibility with vigilant attention to the minutest details. His attention to detail is an example that we can follow and implement in our lives. It's okay to see the big picture, but we should never lose sight that the big picture depends on each and every detail, and the attention to the details brings about the success of the overall picture!

Swan

On 31st December 1989, Swami Niranjan was initiated into the paramahamsa tradition by Swami Satyananda. The symbol of paramahamsas is the graceful swan. It is no wonder then that people could already see the qualities of grace, poise, elegance and inner beauty which a paramahamsa represents, for long before this initiation people the world over started to call him 'Swan'. His simple and quiet nature, his tremendous viveka and vairagya, his ability to discern the real from the unreal, and his humaneness and empathy with people all justify his initiation into this sacred line of paramahamsas.

When asked to speak about Swami Niranjan, what Swami Satyananda says sums it up very nicely:

"What is there to say about Swami Niranjan? He is God's gift to me. God put him in my bag. He is just the reverse of me. He is not my carbon copy; he is my fulfilment, my completeness.

"Swami Niranjan has been with me since birth. He has given me everything, his youth, his future, his entire life. He has no wife, no child, no bank balance, no property, no ambition and

no desire, except service. He always had the feeling, 'Whatever you want me to do, I will do.' I have always been a tough guru, but Swami Niranjan accepted me as I was. I feel assured that he will lead you all amidst the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in your life and you forget the way, he is the one who can guide you. I have full faith that he will come as a divine light into your spiritual lives."

Guru and spiritual guide

So many years have passed since Swami Satyananda left the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, in the full charge and responsibility of Swami Niranjan. In that time he has taken the yoga movement and the establishment at Ganga Darshan, Munger, to new heights. Today, as never before, the yoga teaching as well as the sannyasa parampara established by Swami Satyananda is flourishing with knowledge and spiritual precepts.

During this period Swami Niranjan was actively involved in preaching, teaching, travelling and administering the establishment at Munger and the ever-increasing centres throughout the world. His acumen in this area is undoubtedly recognized, acknowledged and accepted by each and everyone. Now, having handed over the reins to his successor, Swami Suryaprakash, in the year 2008, Swami Niranjan will move on to the role of guru and spiritual preceptor, so that people the world over may utilize his spiritual prowess for their upliftment.

The flowing river has one day to fuse into the vast and endless ocean. If it refuses to do so in order to retain its own identity, then one day it will dry up and cease to exist. To attain immortality, the disciple has to fuse with guru and move on. That is the secret as well as the eternal law of evolution.



Mahasamadhi



Birth: Almora, 24th December 1923, midnight
Mahasamadhi: Rikhiapeeth, 5th December 2009, midnight



Sri Swamiji in mahasamadhi



The journey from Tulsi Kutir to Ganesh Kutir



Guru poojan



Darshan of Sri Swamiji in Ganesh Kutir



Pooja of Sri Swamiji after poorna abhisheka





Culmination of pooja: Hara Hara Mahadev



One with the eternal conciousness



Samadhi Sthal at Parna Kutir



Inside Samadhi Sthal





Swami Satsangi and Swami Niranjan at Samadhi Sthal, Parna Kutir

Swami Niranjan's address delivered on the occasion of Swami Satyananda's mahasamadhi



At midnight on 5th December, Sri Swamiji entered into mahasamadhi. At the time of his mahasamadhi, it had been twenty years since Sri Swamiji had come to Rikhia. You must know from him that his life is divided into twenty-year cycles. For the first twenty years of his life, he lived at home. For the next twenty years, he lived at his guru's ashram in Rishikesh and immersed himself in seva. In the third cycle of twenty years he came to Munger and, following his guru's direct mandate to him, established yoga as a worldwide movement. He created a monument of yoga in Munger and then offered it as tribute at the feet of his guru, Swami Sivananda. He said, "This was your mandate which I completed. Now I offer it to you." In this way, after being here for twenty years, he walked away from it.

The last chapter of his life, Rikhia, was also a twenty-year period. It started in 1989 when he came to Rikhia and culminated in 2009. In Rikhia, he dedicated his life to live the sannyasa life and the teachings of his guru. Therefore, Rikhiapeeth is another monument created by him and dedicated to his guru. Sri Swamiji always said that when I have to leave my body, it will not be in a hospital, surrounded by disciples and with tubes in my nose and mouth, but in a state of meditation. In a poem he says,

With nothing on the body,
And with nothing in my hands,
Let me roam on the bank of the Ganga
With the name of Shiva on my lips
And the thought of Devi and Durga in my mind.
Let me not even know that I exist,
And when I die,
I will not know that I am dying.

That is exactly what he achieved. A *siddha*, perfected being, works according to *sankalpas*, resolves, in his life and not

according to personal wish or desire. In Sri Swamiji's life we see the force of his sankalpa shakti and what he achieved through his sankalpa shakti – he hoisted the flag of yoga and the Bihar Yoga tradition in the world from Munger, and brought honour to Bihar. Thereafter, Rikhia became his tapobhoomi. He performed arduous higher vedic sadhanas there, which have been prescribed for paramahamsa sannyasins. He practised panchagni sadhana, along with other sadhanas. You have all been witness to that also. He lived a simple life and the lifestyle of a sannyasin. Sannyasa is a medium to realize and surrender to the guru and God residing within. In Rikhia, Sri Swamiji moulded and lived his life as per the teachings of his guru, and also inspired others to live these teachings of 'serve, love, give'. Sri Swamiji converted Rikhia village into Rikhiapeeth with the mandate to propagate these fundamental messages of spiritual life.

The fundamental message of spiritual life is: improve the quality of life. The quality of life improves when we are able to come out of our shells and connect with other people through service, through love and through sharing. These are the inspirations that Sri Swamiji himself gave in Rikhia.

The two eternal monuments created by him, Munger and Rikhia – one dedicated to the mandate of the guru and the other to his teachings – today offer their tribute to the great visionary, Sri Swami Satyananda, who was the crown jewel disciple of our Sadguru, Sri Swami Sivananda.

On Shodashi Anushthana and Shraddhanjali Saptah

After his mahasamadhi, Sri Swamiji gave his last darshan to everyone on 6th December. Thousands of villagers, visitors, delegates and disciples gathered at Rikhiapeeth on that day to have the last glimpse of their guru, of a siddha and a saint. At the *godhuli bela*, the hour of dusk, a poorna abhisheka was performed on Sri Swamiji at the Panchagni Vedi, and then he was given the *bhu samadhi*, burial in earth, at Parna Kutir.

Thereafter, from the 7th to the 22nd, as per the tradition of sannyasins, a sixteen-day Shodashi Anushthan was conducted at Rikhiapeeth. Every day there were different havans and Rudrabhisheka, chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramacharitamanas*, chanting of stotras and the singing of kirtans at the pace set by the exemplary kanyas and batuks of Rikhia.

Every day the villagers of Rikhia panchayat were invited for *bhandara*, mass feeding, and over five hundred families were given prasad daily with Sri Swamiji's blessings. A special pooja to instal the guru tattwa in the mandala of Sri Yantra was performed by yoginis from South India, and a special Rudrabhisheka was conducted by pandits from Varanasi. A sannyasin bhoj was also held for representatives of different *sampradayas* and *paramparas*, spiritual traditions and sannyasa orders.

Throughout these sixteen days, thousands flocked from all over the world to Rikhiapeeth. Many came in tears, but as they basked in the radiance of peace and silence pervading Sri Swamiji's samadhi sthal, you could see that they were experiencing a deep sense of contentment and fulfilment, and that they felt the presence of Sri Swamiji in their hearts.

From the 24th to the 30th, a Shraddhanjali Saptah was organized at Ganga Darshan, Munger, where again thousands came to pay homage amidst the singing and chanting of bhajans, kirtans, stotras and mantras, the performance of havans and poojas, and a daily bhandara.

Trayambakeshwar and Rishikesh, January 2010

On 2nd January, Swami Satsangi and myself travelled to Trayambakeshwar. Trayambakeshwar is the place where Shiva is represented by three faces, that of creator, preserver and destroyer. Thus he is called *Trayambakeshwar*, the three-faced Shiva. This Trayambakeshwar Shiva, who represents Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, was the ishta deva of Sri Swamiji.

We conducted two powerful poojas at the temple – they were very calming, uplifting and peaceful. The feeling was one of benevolence and grace descending in a beautiful environment. The first pooja was conducted in the outer enclosure of the temple

and the second pooja inside the sanctum sanctorum where the lingam is. One could feel the peace, happiness and contentment emanating from the place.

Then we went to the *goshala*, cowshed, at Neel Parvat, Juna Akhara, where in 1989 Sri Swamiji had lived during Chaturmas and practised his sadhanas. That was the place where Rikhia was revealed to him. In the cowshed, a sannyasin had lit a deepak and placed a beautiful picture of Sri Swamiji. The whole place was kept as if Sri Swamiji was living there.

On 5th January, we arrived in Rishikesh and went to Sivananda Ashram. We spent the evening in Swami Sivanandaji's kutir. It was a beautifully intense experience. As if Swami Sivananda was looking after everything, there was nothing to worry about, nothing to be concerned about. Swami Sivananda was watching over all of us.

At 5.30 in the morning of the 6th, a special pooja was conducted at Vishwanath Temple in Sivananda Ashram. A Shivalingam was installed by Swami Sivananda in this temple and he himself would perform the abhisheka there. Even Sri Swamiji had performed abhisheka there for six months as his duty. There, Swami Satsangi and I performed Rudrabhisheka. At 9.30, we went to the samadhi place of Swami Sivanandaji and performed *guru paduka poojan*, abhisheka of Swami Sivananda's *khadau*, wooden shoes. Then there was a *bhoj*, mass feeding, in Rishikesh ashram for all the brahmacharis, swamis, residents, students and inmates. Everybody was given prasad on behalf of Sri Swamiji.

On the 6th, a bhoj was also given in Trayambakeshwar to about a thousand sannyasins from thirteen akharas represented in Nasik and the Panda Committee of the temple along with devotees from Mumbai, Nasik, Aurangabad, Pune and other places.

Rishikesh and Trayambakeshwar are deeply connected with Sri Swamiji's life: Rishikesh being the place of his guru where he had taken rebirth in the form of a sannyasin and Trayambakeshwar has the Shiva who guided Sri Swamiji at every step of his life, and who revealed to him the future.

Two eternal monuments: Ganga Darshan and Rikhiapeeth

People have been asking what will happen after Sri Swamiji's mahasamadhi. They ask, now that Sri Swamiji is not present, what will be the future of the institution, of yoga, of Munger and of Rikhia? To these questions I have one answer – Sri Swamiji left Munger and the yoga work in 1988, and all these years I took on the mandate to carry on the work of yoga and develop Ganga Darshan. Then, in 2008, I handed over the charge of Ganga Darshan and yoga propagation to Swami Suryaprakash. For twenty-five years of my time and for two years of Swami Suryaprakash's time the ashram has continued to grow, thrive and propagate the vision and mission for which Sri Swami Satyananda had established this monument of yoga, Ganga Darshan.

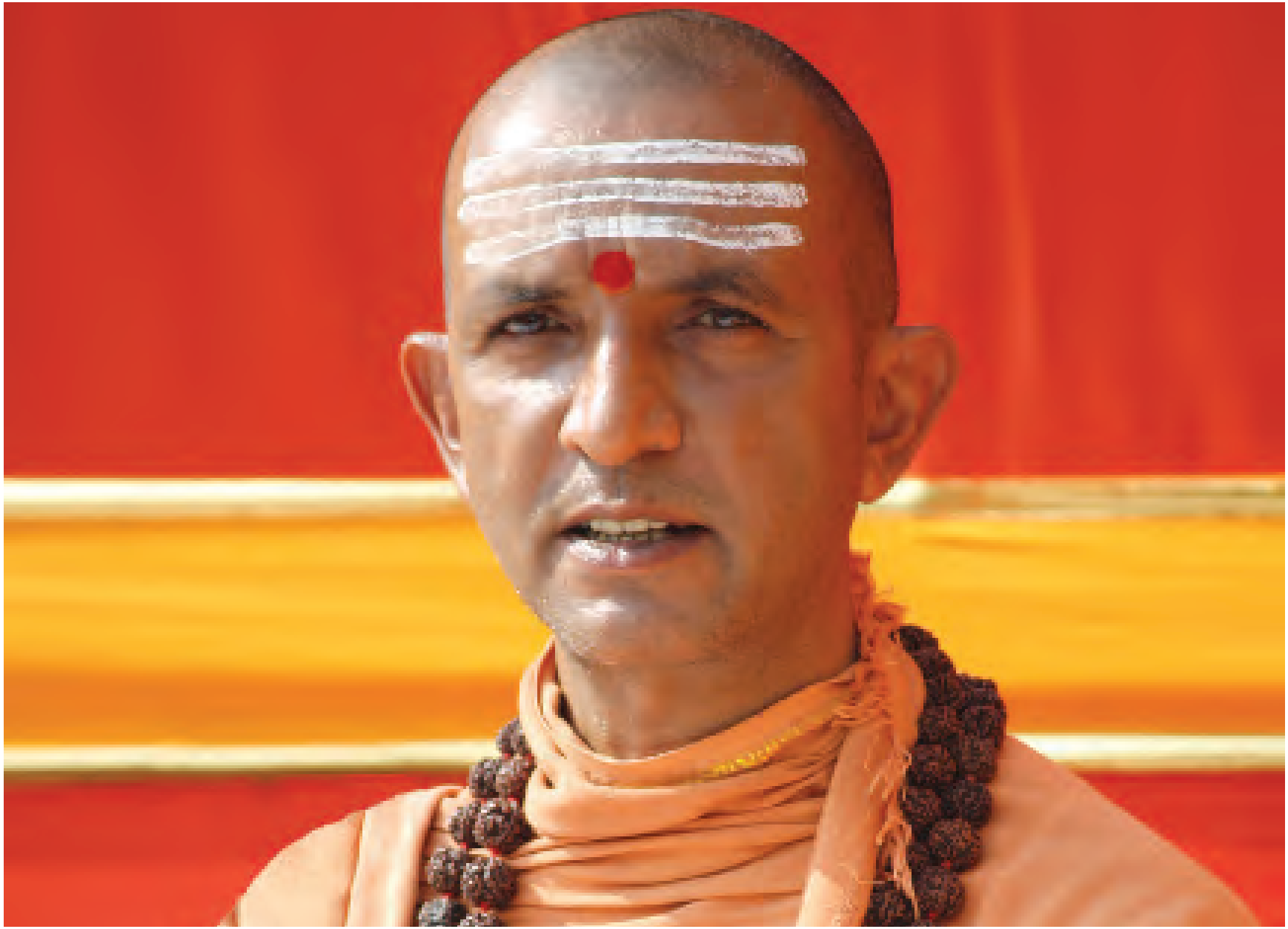
He created Ganga Darshan because that was the instruction, the mandate, received by him from his guru: "Spread the message of yoga from door to door and shore to shore." In Munger he said, "You have given the instruction to propagate yoga. I shall work for yoga, I shall create a monument of yoga and I shall dedicate that monument to you, as it is the accomplishment of your mandate. I am following your mandate. I am following your order."

The modern world has not seen a visionary like Swami Satyananda. Sri Swamiji left the responsibilities of Munger and Ganga Darshan twenty-seven years ago. He became free. However, the further developments and accomplishments in yoga that have taken place through Ganga Darshan in the last twenty-five years have definitely been unique and unparalleled, and this trend and pace will continue.

Rikhiapeeth

Rikhiapeeth has been under the care of Swami Satyasangananda for the last twenty years and she has been managing it very effectively and efficiently at all levels. Sri Swamiji's physical presence and inspiration were there, but the entire management and development of Rikhia has been done by Swami Satyasangananda.

After establishing and dedicating Rikhiapeeth to Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swamiji appointed Swami Satsangi as



the Peethadishwari or acharya of this place. He saw in her the potential to carry forward to greater heights the work that he had started. After seeing her commitment, dedication and devotion, he gave her the initiation of paramahamsa, and today, Swami Satyasangananda, is sitting before you as Paramahamsa Satyasangananda.

She will be carrying forward the vision given to her by our guru, Sri Swami Satyanandaji, to maintain, propagate and live the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda: to serve, love and give. Therefore, the people of Rikhia panchayat should never think "What will happen to us". Sri Swamiji has made complete arrangements here, not only so the people are looked after, but also to instal a person who can fulfil his wishes and his vision. Therefore, Rikhiapeeth has not been orphaned, but has been strengthened with Swami Satsangi.

Swami Satsangi will now be travelling to different parts of the country and the globe to give the message of spiritual life to aspirants and seekers.

As far as Munger and Rikhia are concerned, the work is not going to stop. With Sri Swamiji's blessings and grace, this work will move forward every day and cover more ground. For this was the blessing that our guru had, and today we also experience this blessing in the form of God's grace. The mission of both ashrams will continue to thrive and they will continue to propagate the yogic and spiritual vision of Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda.

The future . . . a mystery

There is also a question in people's minds, what will Swami Niranjan do now? Sri Swamiji had made it very clear to me that during this year, 2009, one chapter of my life is to close and a new one is to begin.

In March 2009, he instructed me to end my parivrajaka life. He gave clear direction for the next phase of my life. He said to me, terminate your wandering peripatetic life. For forty years you have been travelling, you have lived the life of a parivrajaka. You have travelled through the country and the world. You have travelled every month, every year. You have carried the message of yoga and showered the blessings of our parampara. Now that chapter which was open for forty years in your life should close and a new chapter has to start. He said, now sit still in one place and work for development of yoga, for swadhyaya, for sadhana, for samarpan, for the sannyasa tradition and for the welfare of people. He cleared my path, he strengthened my will, and guided me towards the direction in which I have to walk now onwards.

People say that I am Swami Satyananda's successor. This is true. I am his successor, but not of an institution. In an institution, administrators change and they can be anyone. When Sri Swamiji appointed me as his successor it was not to direct an institution, it was not for the post, power or position in the yoga world, it was not to receive the garlands and accolades that come with name and fame.

The succession that I have received from my guru is that of sannyasa. His commitment to sannyasa is what I have received as my inheritance. His sannyasa life was completely infused with renunciation, faith, surrender and austerity. When he nominated me as his successor, his intention was that I would succeed him in his sannyasa, his sankalpa, his dedication, his belief, his faith. In order to cultivate that, he has made me free from my social and institutional obligations.

I am not a sannyasin of Munger or of Rikhia; I am Swami Satyananda's sannyasin. I do not belong to Munger, neither do I belong to Rikhia. They came much later after I had dedicated my life to my guru. When I was born he held me in his arms. When I was three years old, he declared that I was the successor of his sannyasa, spiritual sadhanas and attainments. I have a sankalpa – to realize in my life the inheritance that my guru gave to me.

Today, I sit before you not as an acharya or teacher, member or post holder of an institution, but as a sannyasin, asking for your prayers so that I can be the worthy successor of the sannyasa of my guru.

I pray to Sri Swamiji for wisdom, understanding and strength to live the life and tread the path that he has walked as a sannyasin.

With your good wishes, I am sure I shall be able to cover the distance that Sri Swamiji has told me to cover. And the goodwill that you have towards this ashram, towards Sri Swami Satyananda, towards his work, should be upheld and protected. Continue to develop your faith, belief, dedication and surrender.

Sri Swamiji's spiritual strength and inspiration is the foundation of our life, and today we invoke that very force and inspiration to descend in us. Let us welcome Sri Swamiji to become the in-dweller of our lives, and offer him the throne on which he can sit within us as the emperor of hearts so that we can always be one with his presence and grace.



Completing the First Chapter of My Life

Hari Om Tat Sat

This is my fiftieth year. At this juncture I complete the first chapter of my life, which began in 1960 and lasted until 2009, and begin to write the second chapter, which starts in 2010 after the mahasamadhi of Sri Swamiji. As I write the concluding lines of the first chapter and the prologue of the second, I am filled with heartfelt gratefulness to Sri Swamiji. It was he who gave me my life and is my eternal inspiration. His presence overpoweringly fills my life and makes me what I am today.

Although I was born to parents who were disciples and supporters of Sri Swamiji, I did not identify myself with them, either then or now. I respect them for what they are, my father and mother, but I longed to be with Sri Swamiji, who embodied both the clarity and firmness of my father, and also the sensitivity and love of my mother.

It was due to Sri Swamiji's grace and call that on 14th February 1960, I was born to Sri Satyavrat and Basanti, who later on became Swami Satyabratananda Saraswati and Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati, the first disciples of Sri Swamiji and founding pillars of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement.

When I was a month old, Sri Swamiji gathered me in his arms and whispered the sacred and eternal mantras, *Shuddhosi, buddhosi, niranjanosi; sansara maya parivarjitosi*, in my ears and planted the seed of my destiny.

It was Sri Swamiji who allowed me to crawl inside his dhotis and kurtas, to hug him and tickle him when he was meditating, lecturing or taking classes; and in 1966 granted my wish to be with him and make Munger my home.

It was he who effortlessly taught and trained me in yoga nidra, into the ways of the world and life, and subjects like art, sciences, languages, scriptures and all that I know today.

Sri Swamiji blessed and gave me the opportunity to travel the wide world for forty years, teaching yoga, observing different societies, researching the ancient and modern global spiritual traditions, assisting in the development of Satyananda Yoga, establishing and managing institutions, and guiding people in their spiritual journey.

Purely by his grace, people of all races, nationalities and cultures the world over accepted and loved me, and supported and assisted me in my endeavours.

It was Sri Swamiji, who in July 2009 guided me to conclude the first chapter of my life, and gave a clear indication and blueprint of my future destined direction.

Throughout this fifty-year journey of my life I met many people who assisted, supported and were catalysts for my growth and development. To Rishi Vashishtananda and Rishi Arundhati in Canada, Swami Pragyamurti in England, Rodrigo and Gloria Nino, Ignacio and Maria Theresa Copete in Colombia, Rishi Vivekananda and Rishi Hridayananda in Australia, Siru and Savitri Nainani in Spain, I convey my gratitude and respect for their caring and educative role in my early life.

To all the dedicated wellwishers, supporters, friends, sannyasins, karma sannyasins and disciples of Western and Eastern Europe, South, Central and North America, Australia, Asia and Africa, I convey my heartfelt love and gratitude for your help, contribution and support in propagating the message of our yoga tradition, and I send my warm wishes with prayers for your peace and prosperity in life.

The people with whom I have interacted over the fifty-year period are too innumerable to name here, but to each person, I wish to acknowledge your contribution to the cause of yoga, and your friendly, loving and supportive role in my life. Every one of you has a special place in my memory and is recalled with fondness in my prayers.

I have always felt, and even today I feel, the radiance of Sri Swamiji's continuous inspiration, which has enveloped my life since the day I was born. His illumined presence in my mind and heart fills me with the strength to now begin the second chapter and next leg of the long journey.

In the first stage of the journey, while working to propagate yoga, I walked with thousands of people; today I express my grateful feelings to each and everyone, and look forward to your companionship, whenever our paths cross again.



Prologue to the Second Chapter

My inheritance from Sri Swamiji is not one of post, position and power of any institution or establishment, but that of sannyasa. Now I walk alone on the path to realize the inheritance and the succession of sannyasa as given by Sri Swamiji to me. On the auspicious day of Guru Poornima 2010, I realign myself with the direction given to me by my guru, Sri Swamiji, by expressing the sentiments:

Satyam is the mantra
Satyam is the deity
Satyam is worship
Satyam is inspiration
Satyam is the vision
Satyam is the immaculate Lord.

Sri Swamiji had told me a story when I was about nine years old. In this story a traveller called Jiva Ram is travelling from a far off place to his home in Brahmapuri, the Cosmic City. After having travelled for many ages and long distances, he comes upon a five-star hotel called the Grand Universal or Samsara. There, he rests, eats good food, entertains himself and becomes friendly with the manager of the hotel, Mr Money Ram and an abundance of lovely assistants. He was given the royal suite 066 on the 6th floor from where he can view the jewel decked malls, swimming pool and lovely bare-bodied swimmers, restaurants, bars and casinos of this Grand Universal Hotel. The intoxicated traveller soon forgets himself in the company of beautiful damsels called Miss Desire, Miss Infatuation, Miss Understanding and Miss Takes. The damsels entertain the traveller daily with music and dance, wine and women, accompanied by their other friends, Mr Greed, Mr Anger, Mr Jealousy and Mr Ego. Time passes. The traveller is delighting in the company of the hotel staff. His home, his place, the destination of his journey has become a vague and remote memory.

One day another strange traveller booked himself into the no frills 1st floor in room 08 at the hotel. He is a peculiar chap with a shaved head, ochre robes and wooden beads around the neck as ornaments. His



body, enveloped by a majestic mystical aura, glows with ethereal light. He spends most of his time alone in his room, eating alone in a corner table and avoiding unnecessary talk with other guests or staff of the hotel. Jiva Ram is attracted and intrigued. After much cajoling, Money Ram declares one evening to Jiva Ram that the newcomer to the hotel is an eccentric who comes to the hotel from time to time and always chooses the same room to stay in. Jiva Ram wonders who this silent, lone and eccentric traveller is and one evening, after mustering up his courage, he knocks at the door of the 1st floor room 08.

The door opens slowly and Jiva Ram feels the penetrating gaze. He was frightened, as if his soul was laid bare, but only for an instant. He realised that in the penetrating gaze, there was no threat of any kind but compassion and kindness.

"Come in, come in," are the words that emanate from the mouth of the stranger. As if hypnotized, Jiva Ram takes the lead and marches into the room. The strange traveller smiles silently, closes the door and follows Jiva Ram into the room.

"I want to be your friend," blurts Jiva Ram. "My name is Jiva Ram. What is yours?" The stranger smiles "People know me as 'the Guide'." "Who do you guide and where do you take them?" asks Jiva Ram. "I guide lost travellers such as yourself and accompany them to Brahmapuri," answers the Guide.

"Really? I was also a traveller to Brahmapuri. I came here to rest and have been here for many years. This hotel, the visitors and staff have now become my home and family. Here everyone loves me, needs and respects me," says Jiva Ram.

"Do you not remember your home? Do you not wish to continue your journey?" asks the Guide with a smile. "Some nights I dream of a place, a home, and see vague, remotely familiar faces, but they are only dreams," says Jiva Ram. "I know the way and can safely take you there," the Guide tells him. "When shall we go?" says an exited Jiva Ram. "Why not tonight in the cool weather. Pack your bags, check out and we shall go," says the Guide serenely with an all-knowing look.

Jiva Ram runs to his room, packs his bags and goes to the reception to clear his bills. "Have you lost your senses? Has the eccentric traveler brain washed you into leaving?" yells Money Ram from behind the counter.

"Leaving at night for a city that no one has seen, walking in the dark along narrow pathways and without protection in the jungle infested with wild animals." Then in a sad voice, "You will also break the hearts of Miss Desire and Miss Infatuation who love you so much. With whom will I laugh at jokes? With whom will I drink and play poker? If you go away, I will be lonely and friendless." Then, grabbing the arms of Jiva Ram, he says, "Come my friend, let's drink. Don't think much of the Guide for he always misleads people, robs and kills them in the jungle. Here you have everything, comfort, wine, women and entertainment to help you forget your crazy idea of going with the Guide. He will only make you suffer and deprive you of your possessions. Look, Miss Desire and Miss Infatuation are waiting to please you in every way possible."

Enticed by Money Ram's statement, Jiva Ram drops his idea of leaving and spends his night in the company of his friends and damsels, partying, drinking and dancing. Morning comes, Jiva Ram staggers to his room and falls into a deep slumber in the arms of Miss Desire. The Guide is forgotten.

Late in the afternoon, a bleary-eyed and exhausted Jiva Ram walks down to the restaurant for a cup of coffee. In the corner table sits the Guide watching Jiva Ram. Jiva Ram avoids eye contact and sits at a distant table with his coffee. After some time the Guide gets up and walks to Jiva Ram's table and says, "I waited for you, you did not come, what happened?" Jiva Ram says, "I changed my mind, I am not going anywhere leaving behind my heart broken friends. They love me and need me. They will surely die if I leave them. I am now planning to marry the beautiful and glamorous Miss Desire who cannot live without me."

"You are sadly mistaken if you think that the people of this hotel are your friends and that they love you and need you. In this hotel, no one cares for anyone. All are selfish and manipulative." says the Guide. "What you are saying is wrong," says Jiva Ram. "They all love me and have warned me that you mislead people. Prove to me what you say is correct then I will think about coming with you." "Okay," says the Guide. "Come to my room tonight and you will know the truth." Jiva Ram is taken aback by the force of the Guide's words. Dazed, he walks up to his room in a pensive mood.

Night comes. Ignoring the call from Money Ram to come down to the bar, Jiva Ram feigns tiredness and chooses to remain in his room resting. After midnight, when the hotel has closed and everyone has retired to their rooms, Jiva Ram tiptoes downstairs and knocks on the door of the Guide. The door is opened instantly and the Guide motions Jiva Ram to follow him quietly and silently. The Guide takes Jiva Ram through the dark and silent corridors to another part of the hotel and stops in front of a room. Silently he motions Jiva Ram to listen to the conversation inside the room.

Jiva Ram listens and hears the sweet cooing voice of Miss Desire saying to the guest in the room, "You are the best, my everything. I belong to you and no one else. Love me." Jiva Ram can hardly believe his ears. He looks in through the key-hole and sees Miss Desire and Miss Infatuation in an amorous embrace with the guest whispering sweet pleasantries in his ears.

Jiva Ram cannot look anymore. With tears in his eyes he tells the Guide, "Take me away now, I cannot stay here for a moment longer. My eyes have opened." The Guide tells Jiva Ram to pack his bags, but Jiva Ram says nothing is needed and if anything is then it can be acquired on the way.

The Guide brings a teary and dejected Jiva Ram to his room. Jiva Ram breaks down and says, "I want to forget all that has happened here and leave this hotel with my mind fixed in Brahmapuri." The Guide then asks Jiva Ram to remove all his clothes and ornaments which he had acquired at the hotel, shaves his head and gives him a set of ochre robes to wear. When Jiva Ram is ready, the Guide leaves the Grand Universal Hotel and walks out into the dark night with Jiva Ram following him for Brahmapuri, the Cosmic City.

I have lived in and seen all that there is to know in this Grand Universal Hotel. The time has now come to restart the journey for Brahmapuri.

Under the sunlight of our guru's grace and with the wind force of your prayers at my back, I will complete the journey.

Hari Om Tat Sat.



The Offering

By the sannyasins of Ganga Darshan

One is of fire
Joy dances in his eyes
Who laughs like a child
Yet loves like a King.

Of tempered mind
Forged in fearsome discipline
Tenacious as steel
He will never give in.

The other of air
His mind aloft in the heights
Soars free to reveal
His extraordinary insight.

Detached he can seem
As if in some distant place
Yet his smile melts hearts
That a hammer can't break.



A siddha is He
Of visionary mind
In whom three powers descend
To uplift mankind.

Eternal is He
Of perfected will
Who invoked the ideal of
Surrendered love.

Destined is He
Who emptied himself
To reflect the vision
Of his guiding light.

Blessed is He
Who came when called
The sacred offering
poured into his guru's world.

Born of mother Ganga's grace
Untainted and immaculate
A sign of luminosity and love
On the day of Valentine.

As a baby he slept
In Satyams arms
Into his ears the mantras sung
Legacy given by father to son.

As a child he would play
In Gita's holy lap
The song of yoga in his heart
Light of Krishna in his eyes.

The singer and
The song he sings
The dreamer and
The dream he dreams.

The Master and
The son he made
Are two eternal sides
Of one reality.



The love they share
Cannot be told
This power a secret
Only the heart can hold.

Already composed
His journey awaits
Divined by the visionary
A new dawn arises in destiny.

Forsaking Maya's glitter and gold
His heart honours a single aim.
To walk alone as he was told
Upon the path his Lord has made.

Will you not pray for his success
And offer all that you possess?
Or will you turn your head and cry
Forgetting who he is and why?



स्वामी निरंजन के बारे में क्या कहा जाय। वह तो मेरे लिए ईश्वर का उपहार है। ईश्वर ने उसको मेरी झोली में डाल दिया। वह मेरे से एकदम उल्टा है। वह मेरी कॉर्बन-कापी नहीं है। वह मेरी प्राप्ति है, मेरी पूर्णता है।

स्वामी निरंजन जन्म से ही मेरे साथ है। उसने मुझे सब कुछ दिया, अपनी जवानी, अपना भविष्य, अपना सारा जीवन। उसकी कोई पत्नी नहीं है, बच्चा नहीं है, बैंक-बैलेन्स नहीं है, कोई सम्पत्ति, कोई आकांक्षा नहीं है। अगर कुछ है तो सिर्फ सेवा की भावना। उसके भीतर हमेशा से यही भावना रही, 'आप मुझे जो कुछ करने को कहेंगे, मैं वही करूँगा।' मैं सदा एक कठोर गुरु रहा हूँ, पर स्वामी निरंजन ने मुझे वैसा ही स्वीकारा जैसा मैं हूँ। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि वह तुम्हें अंधकार से मुक्ति दिलाने का पथ बतलायेगा। जब भी तुम्हारे जीवन में अँधेरा हो और तुम रास्ता भूल रहे हो, तब वही तुम्हें दिशा-निर्देश देगा। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि वह तुम्हारे आध्यात्मिक जीवन में नैसर्गिक आलोक बनकर आयेगा।

What is there to say about Swami Niranjan? He is God's gift to me. God put him in my bag. He is just the reverse of me. He is not my carbon copy; he is my fulfilment, my completeness.

Swami Niranjan has been with me since birth. He has given me everything, his youth, his future, his entire life. He has no wife, no child, no bank balance, no property, no ambition and no desire, except service. He always had the feeling, "Whatever you want me to do, I will do." I have always been a tough guru, but Swami Niranjan accepted me as I was. I feel assured that he will lead you all amidst the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in your life and you forget the way, he is the one who can guide you. I have full faith that he will come as a divine light into your spiritual lives.



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