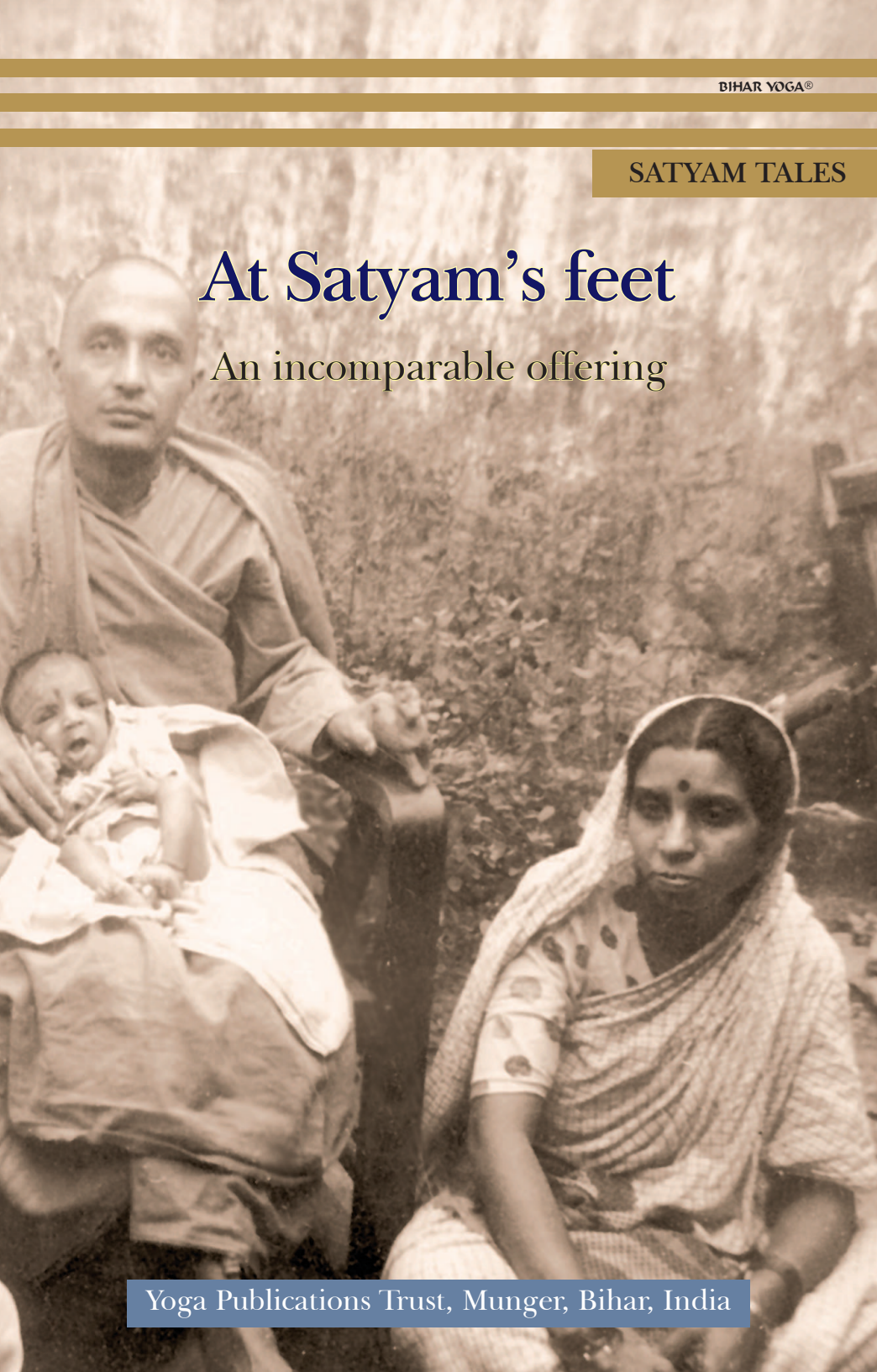


SATYAM TALES

At Satyam's feet

An incomparable offering



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Satyam Tales

Commenced on the occasion of World Yoga Convention & BSY Golden Jubilee, 2013

At Satyam's feet is the twenty-second in the series of *Satyam Tales* depicting the life and teachings of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Through the medium of these simple narratives, we hear the voice of Sri Swamiji inspiring all, irrespective of age.

If the disciple has total faith in and complete surrender towards the guru, then the disciple is able to accomplish the most difficult of tasks and face the most trying situations of life courageously. The guru also showers his love and grace on such faithful and dedicated disciples, whose lives become imbued with divine bliss. The lives of such disciples are totally dedicated to the service of the guru.

This story is a delightful read for children, adults and old alike. It is an invaluable message for those engaged in the world and for those seeking the spirit. This journey is your journey, these challenges are your challenges, and this victory is your victory. It is a story that will touch your heart, give you joy, hope, conviction and, above all, faith. Yes, you too can gain indomitable strength and courage by surrendering to the guru tattwa.

—Editor

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Please note:

- This collection of *Satyam Tales* is dedicated to our masters, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, and is the vehicle to bring their spiritual and yogic teachings in an understandable and applicable form into the lives of individuals throughout the world.
- *Satyam Tales* will be exclusively published by Yoga Publications Trust to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the teachings and the context in which they are being presented.
- *Satyam Tales* is a loving offering to all the children and the future generations of the world to remind them of their true nature and inspire them to explore and enhance their own potential.
- We invite all aspirants to share these tales with your group and if you have some tales of your own, we request you to contribute as well. You can also publish these tales in your own language, fulfilling the conditions of YPT, for which you may contact:

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At Satyam's feet

Chuikhadan – a small village in the Durg district of Chhattisgarh. Paddy fields with brown paths crisscrossing through them, greenery stretching into the horizon. It is in this village that Govardhanji lived with his family. A government lawyer in the courts, his legal prowess was held in high esteem by renowned lawyers from all over India.

Govardhanji had two daughters and four sons; the eldest child was his daughter Basanti. The accumulated virtues of past lives and divine grace bestowed upon him the good fortune of being the father of such an extraordinary child as





Basanti. There have been some gifted children who have been blessed with spiritual strength from birth and she was one such special child. Endowed with a peaceful nature, Basanti was a beautiful child with lotus eyes set in an enchanting face.

It was 1930, a time when girls did not have the privilege of a school education. Seeing Basanti's thirst for knowledge, her father engaged a private tutor and she received lessons in Hindi, Sanskrit, grammar and arithmetic at home. Her keen intellect allowed her to read and grasp the *Ramayana*, which would leave her spellbound and enraptured with devotion.

There was no dearth of good literature in the household and soon she had a good grasp over Hindi literature as well as spiritual and religious matters. She even picked up the skill of imparting legal advice from her father and listened with keen interest when he consulted with petitioners. In the rich spiritual environment of her home, with regular worship and recitation of sacred texts, Basanti began to have visions of the Divine even in her dreams.

She was married to Satyabrat at an early age. His nature was similar to hers – kind, straightforward and hardworking. He was blessed with a sunny, cheerful disposition and his aura of positivity made everyone around him happy as well. Every moment was spent in uplifting thoughts and fruitful actions. There was no place for worthless talk or behaviour in his life. He had just one credo – *bahujan hitaaya, bahujan sukhaaya*, for the welfare and happiness of many.



Satyabrat's job was in Rajnandgaon and there they began their life together as ideal householders. Whatever amount Satyabrat brought home as salary, Basanti received happily, and he did not interfere in the way she managed the household. Both of them accepted each other completely.

Basanti often saw a charming saint in her dreams, she even received some signs and omens, but she was unable to make much sense of them. She thought that these experiences were perhaps a result of her fascination with the stories of sages and saints, especially Jagadguru Shankaracharya and Jnaneshwara.

On 2nd April 1953, the couple arrived in Rishikesh to attend the Convention of World Religions hosted by Swami Sivananda. It was there along the banks of the Ganges that Basanti saw a radiant young sannyasin standing beside Swami Sivananda and instantly felt that this was the very same Shankaracharya who had long inhabited her dreams. Later she found out that he was Swami Satyananda Saraswati, fondly called 'Satyam' by Swami Sivananda.

Satyam was the editor of the Yoga Vedanta magazine and the Hindi books published by the Divine Life Society. He was totally dedicated to the mission of his guru – the revival of yogic culture. He assisted in bringing ancient knowledge to light and re-establishing the lost glory of yoga in today's age.

Satyam wished to present yoga in a scientific manner and prove that it was not just a forgotten ancient culture, but was as relevant and useful in the modern scientific age as it was in the times of the rishis of yore. Satyam would challenge people to practise yoga and experience it for themselves before speaking about it or being in a hurry to denounce it.

Both Satyabrat and Basanti were very impressed with and irresistibly drawn to Satyam. They felt as if they had known each other for many lifetimes. Their age-old bond had been interrupted for a brief period and now they were re-united.

Swami Satyananda said, "My name is Satyam, yours is Satyabrat. You are the embodiment of my vow." These words rising from the innermost core of a saint's heart sought to transform an ordinary person and inspire him to reach the zenith of success. Now that Satyabrat had



accepted Satyam's vow, he had to fulfil it. Satyabrat always saw himself as a simple ordinary person, but in reality he was way beyond ordinary. In all humility he would attribute all his accomplishments to the grace of sages and saints. On their return to Rajnandgaon, Satyabrat and Basanti stayed in touch with Satyam, keeping him informed of the problems as well as the progress in their sadhana.

Satyam would write back – "Life is a rose, but in order to find its beauty you have to battle with thorns. Life is like sandalwood, but to get the fragrant wood, one has to carefully cut the branches without arousing the poisonous snakes that lie coiled around them. It is towards this goal that both of you must strive. In this age, householders will be better suited in helping people discover the spiritual within the mundane than a sannyasin."

It was during Satyam's life as a mendicant that he began the yoga movement on 7th June 1956 from Rajnandgaon. On reaching there, Satyam said, "Mother! Look, I have come to your home at last!" Basanti immediately felt, "He is indeed my Shankaracharya." After all, hadn't Shakaracharya also said to his mother, "Amma, I had promised you that I would come when you were breathing your last, so here I am!" Basanti had been eagerly awaiting his arrival. She felt blessed to have chosen Swami Satyananda as her ishta devata.

"Now that we have set out on this journey with you," Satyabrat said, "we are like the blind man walking without his staff. We are at your mercy now, Swamiji; whether you save us or snub us, it is up to you, but we will not leave you." "We are co-travellers on this path," replied Satyam, "I will support and guide you on this path, but you have to do the walking."

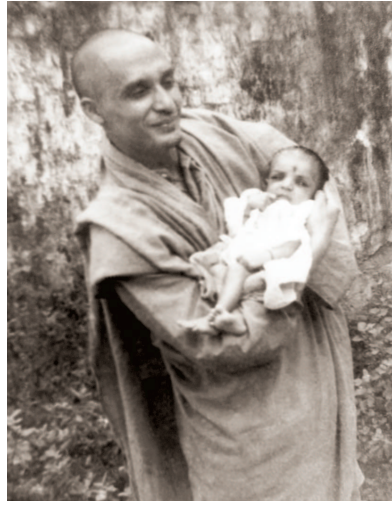
With Satyam's grace and in the fullness of time, at dawn on 14th February 1960, a beautiful baby boy was born to Basanti and Satyabrat. They were richly blessed indeed! Judging by the signs indicated by his eyes, forehead and face, the family priest predicted that he would be a yogi.

Drawing the baby into his lap, Satyam blessed him and 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 mission. All of us owe him a debt of duty."

"He has come with all the necessary qualities and virtues. 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', one who is above the fetters of maya and without a taint."

The parents began to rear this special child as per their guru's guidance. Having such virtuous parents, Niranjan was immersed in a spiritual environment from childhood. His mother ceaselessly chanted the mantra *shuddhosi buddhosi niranjanosi sansar maya parivarjitosi* in her mind.



She was a wise and enlightened mother whose strength of resolve was unparalleled, who wanted total welfare of her child. This is the true meaning of love.

She who sheds attachment for the sake of her son,
Know her to be a true mother, such indeed is the ideal mother.
King Gopichand's mother told him, 'O son, adopt the path of yoga'
And the fame of the obedient son has lasted unblemished until today.
The resolute Madalasa vowed, 'Whoever enters my womb
will gain liberation and never have to be born again.'

There is a story about the saintly Madalasa who chanted this very mantra while breastfeeding her children. The result was that as soon as her children learnt to crawl, they headed to the forest to search for the truth. She was a mother nonetheless and when her third child was born, she did not chant the mantra, but wrote it down and tied it around the child's neck in an amulet. She told the child to open the amulet only after her death. Days, months, years went by. When Madalasa grew old and passed away, her son followed her instructions and opened the amulet. Upon reading the mantra he also left home and engrossed himself in sadhana.

Once Niranjana's foot got entangled in his cradle. Only after persistent effort did he manage to get it free, to which his grandmother remarked, "Surely this boy will grow up to be very talented." When he grew a little older, he listened to stories of Rama and Krishna from his grandmother, and slowly his spiritual samskaras awakened.

His father brought him a tricycle which he would pedal speedily. Even if he fell or hurt himself, he never



cried. Like his mother, he would say that there was nothing powerful enough in this world to cause him pain or sorrow.

Niranjan was a gifted child from very early on, yet he was naughty and playful as well. He not only stole the heart of his parents but of everyone, young and old alike. Everyone wondered what was so special about this child that one immediately got attracted to him!

Whenever he sat with his mother, she would tell him about her guru: “Satyam tells us to be self-confident. All the strength and power is within you. It is wrong to belittle yourself. Always think that you are capable of doing everything. This is the key to success. Never be disheartened – this is true bravery. Self-confidence is man’s divine wealth. It is through this quality that wonders have been achieved. Leaders must have this quality in abundance.” Niranjan listened to his mother with rapt attention. Later he repeated the teachings so often that his father called him a tape-recorder of Satyam’s teachings!

His extraordinary intellect dazzled one and all. Like his father he was bold and fearless. The deep faith which his parents had in their guru influenced him deeply. Whatever the guru said was implicitly accepted by them, as if the words had been indelibly imprinted on their heart and mind. Niranjan was also filled to the brim with these virtues. He listened to others, but acted only according to his guru’s instructions.

When he was four, Niranjan received an instruction from his guru that he should now attend school: “One day you will travel overseas to spread the message of yoga. You will need a school certificate then.” From then on, Niranjan would pester his father every day, “Please arrange for my admission to school just like the other children.”

But where did Satyabrat have time to spare? His every waking second was spent working for his guru. The International Yoga Fellowship had been established in 1961, then in 1963 the printing of *Yoga* and *Yoga Vidya* magazines began. The publishing of several books had also started. Satyabrat’s workload was tremendous – managing the entire

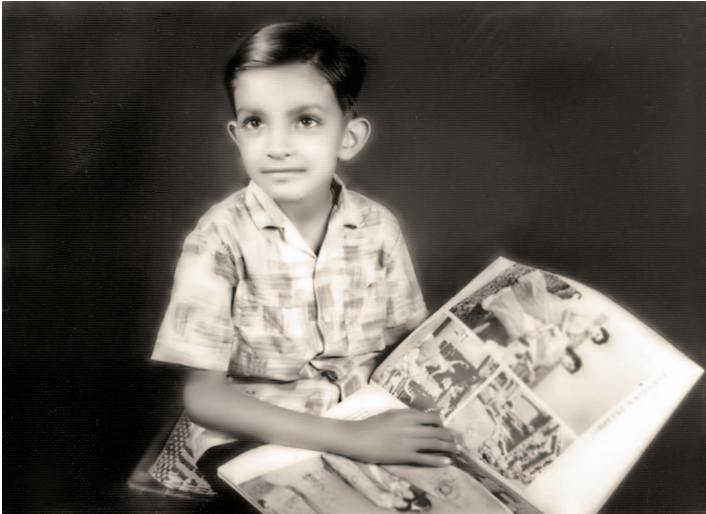
organization, looking after Satyam's correspondence and yoga programs, maintaining records of the lectures, not to mention his job and household responsibilities. Unshakeable faith in guru meant that Satyabrata always remained calm. Even Niranjana's pestering would be parried off with a smile.

When appeals to his father proved unsuccessful, Niranjana turned to his mother, but she was also busy with her commitments – teaching yoga, managing the press, meeting people. The work was endless.

Finally Niranjana got tired of pleading with them and told them in clear terms, "I am wasting my time just sitting at home. If both of you are so busy, I will go to the school alone and arrange for my admission myself. Gururaj has asked me to go to school and if I cannot do it here, I will go to Munger."

Hearing this, Basanti relented and the two set off towards the school. At the school office, they saw some verses from the *Gita* above the door. Niranjana promptly began to read them aloud. The principal was astonished. He exclaimed, "Oh, you are such a little boy! How can you read these Sanskrit verses?"

Niranjana replied, "Yes, I can read. My parents have taught me. When I was a few months old, a pandit would come to





our house and recite verses from the *Gita* while I lay in his lap. I remember all of that.” When the principal asked who had told the parents to do this, Niranjana said, “My parents’ guru. These were his instructions.”

The principal next wanted to know how he had learnt the alphabet. Niranjana said, “We have our own Yogavidya

printing press. I help the workers there in the composing and hand them letters one by one. That’s how I learnt.” The principal was fascinated and asked question after question.

Watching this exchange between her son and the school principal, Basanti smiled to herself. There was a Class IV textbook on the principal’s desk and he asked Niranjana if he could read it. “Of course!” said Niranjana and began to read through it effortlessly. The principal’s wonder knew no bounds. He was very happy and said that Niranjana’s admission to the school was confirmed. Having such a brilliant child on the school rolls would be a feather in his cap! Little did he know that this small boy was seeking admission in the school only to obey his guru’s instructions . . .

He displayed his keen intellect and razor-sharp mind at school as well and soon became the favourite of not only his classmates but his teachers also. In 1965 when his guru said, “Enough of school now,” Niranjana immediately asked the principal to strike his name off the rolls since he would not be attending school anymore. No matter how hard everyone tried to change his mind, there was no turning back for Niranjana. His guru’s words were all that mattered to him.

The principal finally came to appeal to Basanti and ask her to intervene. The final exams were just two months away, having such a young child appear for the Class IV exams would be a great achievement and honour for the school.

Basanti was a dedicated disciple herself and the principal's pleas had no effect upon her. Instead she astonished him by her reply, "This is something between Niranjana and his guru. I have left the decision to Niranjana, whether to continue with school or to work for his guru's mission. I am sorry, there is nothing I can do to help you in this matter."

When all efforts to dissuade Niranjana failed, the principal said, "Your unshakeable resolve is the outcome of your guru's teachings. I often tell my pupils about the *Mahabharata* episode where Dronacharya asked Arjuna what he saw on the tree and Arjuna replied that all he could see was the eye of the bird. Today I see a child whose aim is as clear as Arjuna."

"You have my best wishes in your endeavour to work for your guru. May you take his work and mission to its farthest horizon. Like Rama and Krishna followed their guru's commands, may you also do the same. I will gladly give you a certificate from the school. But we have a small request. We are taking a group photograph with all the children tomorrow, you must come and be a part of it."

Niranjana smiled and said, "Is that all? Of course I shall be there. But you will give me the certificate, won't you?"

Despite his disappointment at losing his star pupil, the principal nodded and said that it would be his honour to do so.



Both parents were happy as well. They considered themselves fortunate that Niranjan was setting off to work for his guru's mission. His mother's eyes brimmed over with tears of joy. Blessing him she said, "Sacrifice and devotion are the essence of dharma. You must sacrifice everything – parents, loved ones, and even your own pride. It is only then that you will be able to see the divine in all beings." Then she added:

You are the light of my eyes, and I feel you ever nearby
Inexpressible feelings of maternal pride are floating in my eyes.
My son! My essence is in you, I am in each nerve and vein of yours.
You are a ray of light to dispel the blinding darkness of this world
I've only one desire, my son –
May you become the vermilion, adorning your Guru's forehead.

Satyabrat had the gift of peace. He discharged all his duties in a peaceful way. He lived and worked in the world, yet stayed untouched like a lotus leaf. His peace was unshaken even while offering a son like Niranjan at the feet of his guru. Neither did Niranjan's travel to lands afar disturb his calm.



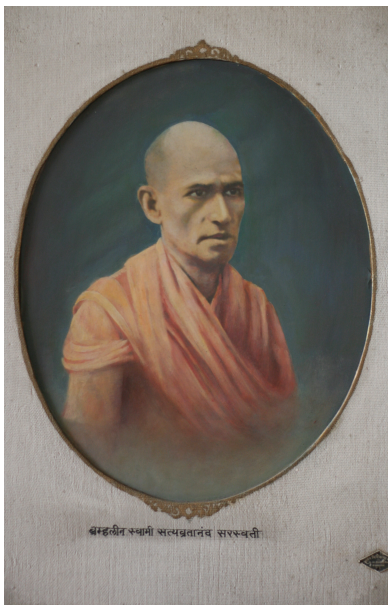
The father spoke these words of advice to his son, "Dear son, man's main duty is to serve mankind. May your life be spent in selfless service. Do not expect anything in return from anyone. Never think that you are doing someone a favour. Service is your responsibility, this is what purifies your heart. Every human being is an embodiment of the divine. To serve mankind is to serve God Himself."

Niranjan expressed his heartfelt sentiments in the following words:

Let me perform deeds of service, which will uplift every human being.
Let me do only those actions, which will ease the world's suffering.
Let me become the manifest image of service, non-violence and truth.
Snatching heaven from Indra himself, I would bring it down to earth.
Let my life be filled with virtue, not worrying about what shall transpire.
Let me be of some service to the world, this is my one and only desire.

It was with such sentiments and blessings that Niranjana set off on his long sojourn overseas in order to work for his guru's mission, leaving behind his parents and loved ones. Occasionally Basanti would sit quietly with a faraway look in her eyes and at such times Satyabrata would understand what she was feeling and remind her of Satyam's words: "Do not get attached to Niranjana. You have received the blessings to be like Mother Kaushalya. Kaushalya could have prevented Rama's exile if she so wished. She could have fought Kaikeyi's demands and even brought Rama back when Bharata went to meet him in the forest. But she did nothing like this because she was the mother of Rama, the Maryada Purushottama. You are Niranjana's mother and Satyam's disciple. He bestowed upon you this rare gem with complete trust. We have to live up to this responsibility, even if it means giving up everything we have."

Time was flying past. Nature follows its own course. The advent and demise of man is also subject to Nature's laws, just like day and night. The march of time cannot be stopped and a destined event occurs at its ordained time. The last day of 1971 brought a great loss to Basanti and drowned her in a sea of misfortune. Satyabrata passed away and



Basanti was left alone. Even the hand that drew this dark line of fate must have trembled, yet Satyam wrote, "Human life is nothing but bearing the unexpected blows of fate with fortitude." These words of her guru gave Basanti the strength and courage to carry on.

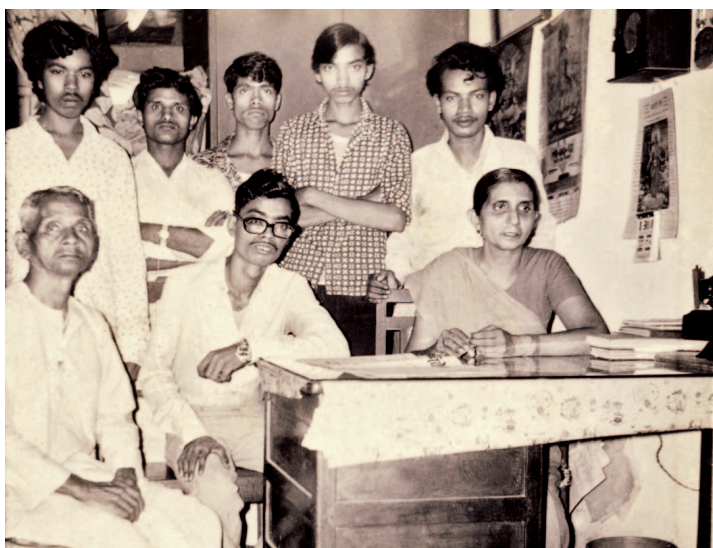
Blessed indeed was Satyabrat to have worked for his guru's mission and the welfare of mankind until his last breath. He accomplished so much in his lifetime that an ordinary person would have found practically impossible to achieve. He had come to earth to fulfil a great purpose. The selfless ease with which he fulfilled this mammoth task would be hard to understand in today's self-oriented world.

Niranjan wrote to his mother, "I was very sad to hear about father's demise. I even cried, but they were tears of tribute, not of sorrow. Please do not worry. You have me and Swamiji beside you. You should not grieve, for this coming and going is endless. Tell me what you wish and I will fulfil whatever you say. I will come whenever you call me . . ."

But the one who gave birth to Niranjan was not like any ordinary mother who would call him back for her own needs. Her role models were mothers of such extraordinary calibre as Yashodhara, Kaushalya, Yashoda and Madalasa. She said, "Keep working for your guru's mission. Following his commands is your only dharma, your only responsibility." Basanti truly understood the depth of his commitment.

Perhaps Satyabrat had a premonition about the future. He often used to say to Basanti: "I observe Niranjan's each and every activity through the eyes of my soul and will forever keep on doing so. Only you will have the good fortune of seeing it all with your own eyes." Basanti is convinced that even now Satyabrat continues to watch over Niranjan.

Basanti was now managing the entire work of the printing press, organizing the activities of the ashram and running the yoga classes all by herself. She was also the president of the International Yoga Fellowship. She took care of matters related to the bank and post office as well. Her guru continued to guide her from time to time.



Basanti believed that even after Satyabrat's passing, the vast work was being managed by his invisible energy. Difficult problems resolved themselves effortlessly and became easy to manage. Working for Satyam's mission was the only motive of her life and she would work for it until the end of her life.

Satyam used to say, "Wherever yoga is and wherever yoga will be, Satyabrat will always be there. I take complete care of those who work for my cause." This hidden blessing of the guru is always fulfilled, and when the disciple strives to work hard, immeasurable strength is created of its own accord.

In a few years time, the work of the mission was thriving. The Yogavidya printing press had become a well reputed organization where many books, magazines and examination papers were printed. There were so many orders that the work carried on day and night. In a similar manner, Niranjan's work in America grew by leaps and bounds. Seminars, lectures, yoga classes, establishment of ashrams and yoga centres in many places – he was fully engaged in many areas.

Then one day Satyam told Basanti, "Niranjan is returning to Munger to take over the entire work. I have

instructed him to wind up his work in America. No matter what the instruction, he instantly complies with it. You should also wrap up your press and other commitments, and come to Munger.” Both mother and son obeyed the guru’s command and came to live under his shelter in Munger.

This is what ideal parents are like. Children imbibe and follow whatever they see in their homes. Satyam had told Niranjana’s parents, “Never tell him to do this or not to do that. Do it yourself and show him.” This was the biggest lesson for the couple which they imbibed fully and the result is the ‘Niranjana’ we see in front of us today.

Parents have to change themselves. If they wish to have children like Rama or Krishna, they have to live like Dasharatha-Kaushalya and Nanda-Yashoda.

Glory to Satyam’s wisdom, and glory to such disciples who lived his teachings!





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