

SATYAM TALES

Save Ganga

A wakeup call for all





Satyam Tales

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

Save Ganga is the thirty-fifth 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.

Swami Niranjan invites Ma Ganga to attend and bless the Munger Yoga Symposium 2018. She readily agrees and witnesses a spell-binding song, dance and drama presentation by the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal on Ganga and the state of water and the environment on the planet in general. Their message rings loud and clear: We need to respect and honour Mother Earth and lead a yogic lifestyle if we want to survive on this planet.

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. Perhaps, you may also be inspired to conserve and protect nature and the environment around you . . .

— 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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Save Ganga

Here I am in the carpark of Ganga Darshan, flowing everywhere and so happy to be here at the Munger Yoga Symposium. You must have read about my three beloved sons (see Satyam Tale 27, *Ma Ganga* – Ed), Swami Sivananda, Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjan. This youngest of my sons has sent me an irresistible invitation, saying, “Ma Ganga, you have to come and bless the Munger Yoga Symposium. It is the launching pad of the Second Chapter of yoga, the *udaya*, dawn of a new era of yoga. Please come.”



I could not refuse of course. However, I made a small request, which he immediately granted, understanding fully well its value and necessity. I only said, “Niranjan, I’ll come, but incognito. Other than you nobody should know that I am present.” He agreed with a cheeky smile.

So, here I am on the grand night of the show, when the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal present their song, dance and drama on me and the state of water on the planet in general. It is evening, the carpark is packed, the moon is just about to rise over the horizon, not willing to miss out on the event. Pindrop silence among hundreds of Symposium participants waiting for the show to begin.



Suddenly the lights go on and in the backdrop of a hot, parched desert, two boys, one small and the other a teenager, enter the stage. As the saying goes, ‘May the play begin’. The two boys walk towards a house, beautifully fashioned out of cardboard, and approach the lady of the house.



Younger brother: Bhai, can I please have some water? I am feeling so thirsty!

Boy: There is no water left. Be patient. The opportunity will come. Oh look, there is a house!

Boy (at the house): Can I please get a glass of water. My brother is very thirsty.



Lady: No, sorry, I can't give you water. I can give you money but not water.



Boy (*sad and disheartened*): There is a pump, let's get water from there . . .
Oh no, it is dry!

Help, the little boy is fainting. He needs water. Help!! I feel like jumping up and running to the stage to help those two boys who are so thirsty. The older brother carries the little boy in his arms. Surely they will find water soon.



Boy: Thank God, a shop! But such a long line! I need water for my brother, please! Is there any water left that I can buy? How much for that bottle?

Shopkeeper: That makes 300 rupees.

Boy: What! 300 rupees for a bottle of water! But I only have one hundred and fifty rupees, that's all.



I am holding my breath as the wicked shopkeeper snatches the bottle out of the hand of the big brother. Three hundred rupees for a bottle of water!! I can't believe it. I feel like shouting out over the carpark: 'My water is free. All water is free; it is a gift to life', but I remain quiet eager to know if the shopkeeper will change his mind and give the little boy some water.



Shopkeeper: Go find the money first, then come asking for a bottle of water.

Boy: This is my entire day's earning. Where do I get more from? My brother has fainted from thirst. Please give me the bottle.

Shopkeeper: I just told you, I need the full amount. Don't you understand? Water is precious these days. Go away now!





I cannot believe it – the shopkeeper does not give the boys a single drop of water, but drinks half a bottle himself. I feel so sorry and wish they would come to me. Shall I go up to the stage and help them? They are so sad looking for Ganga. Ah! the boy has found water and drinks some. But he spits it out and cries and cries. What’s happening?

Boy: Dear God! What do I do now? Mother Ganga was my last resort. Even her water has become polluted and undrinkable.

Wait, what is this? A very charming young girl in a beautiful blue dress is appearing on stage . . . she is me, Ganga. With grace and poise she takes her place atop a cute crocodile the children have themselves drawn, cut out and painted. They have designed not only the crocodile but all the other props and costumes as well. Their talent and creativity is certainly something I am proud of.





Ganga Ma: Rise, my child. I am your mother Ganga. Have some heavenly water and give some to your brother.

Boy: Thank you Ganga; look my brother is well again Oh, Ganga Ma! you are truly divine! 'Devi, it is better to live in your waters as a turtle or fish, or to live on your banks in poverty, rather than to live away from you, even as a wealthy king.'

The world is not all that bad, and there is a happy end which is celebrated with a dance to my hymn, the *Ganga Stotram*. The girls are superb and their dance leaves us spellbound.

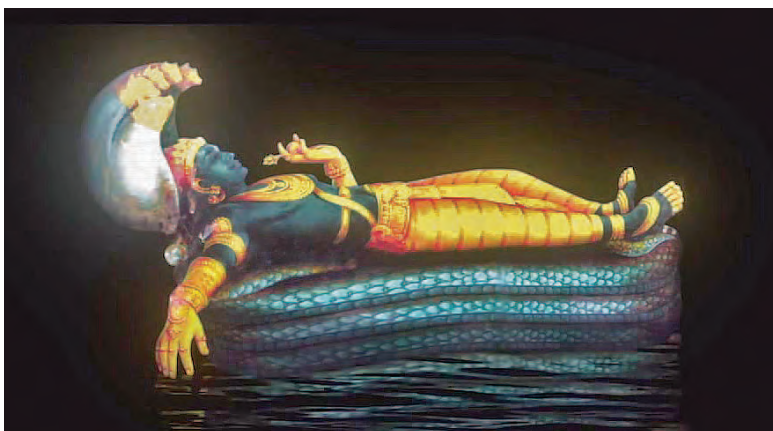


Boy: Ganga Ma, where do you come from? Who are you? Please tell us your story!

Ganga Ma: If you really want to know, then listen . . .

In the beginning, during the state of nothingness before creation, Narayana who is the epitome of peace, was lying on the thousand-headed serpent called Ananta on a bed of water in the peaceful state of Yoga Nidra.

Shakti's power woke Narayana and initiated creation. Our universe with time and space and all forms of matter and energy came into existence. Everything – galaxies, solar systems, stars, planets, our earth, water, oceans, rivers, stones, plants, forests,



animals, humans and civilization evolved over thousands of years. It is due to the force and power of Narayana that you are able to perceive and experience nature, the world, the cosmos and the universe, the visible and the non-visible. Anything that is perceivable is Narayana, anything that is growing is Narayana, anything that is content is Narayana, anything that is developing is Narayana, the whole life is Narayana, the whole world is Narayana. The entire creation is Narayana.

Water is the basis of creation and water is life itself. Water is the abode of Narayana. In order to nurture, sustain, protect and develop the Shakti of Narayana there is Lakshmi who brings prosperity and peace.

As there has not been peace on earth for a long time, one day, I was called to earth from heaven to heal the sins of humankind. Through the strength of Siva my waters flowed into seven rivers. I am Ganga and I have been flowing on earth for thousands of years, providing, nurturing and supporting life with my waters.

Mother Earth is called the 'blue planet' due to the abundance of water. We know of no other planet that is so rich of water. Its bounty of life and its beauty is exceptional. The future of the blue planet, the future of water, the future of your life on Mother Earth lies in your hands . . .



Ganga Ma on stage spoke so beautifully, full of wisdom. I didn't know children had such deep understanding and now it is the boys who demonstrate in their dance why Mother Earth is called the 'blue planet'.





Ganga Ma: I came to nurture life on the blue planet earth with my pure waters. Swami Sivananda says, “Ganga is the form of Vishnu. All glory be unto Mother Ganga, the river of life, light and love. The water of Ganga is extremely pure and sanctifying. No germs can flourish in it. Rich in minerals, this water cures almost all kinds of diseases. The Ganga is saturated with antiseptic minerals. Ganga is not merely a river. It is a sacred *tirtha*, a crossing point between heaven and earth. It is possessed of mysterious powers, which are not found in any other river of the world.”

Yes, he was my first beloved son; we loved each other dearly. I am so proud of him how after so many years he inspires these young children when he talks about me.



Ganga Ma: In vedic times my waters were highly respected. People understood the qualities of prakriti as divine law and truth. This understanding was expressed in daily worship. Water was highly protected, as it was considered the nectar of life and giver of good health. The waters were pure and flowed freely in natural pathways. All waters were charged with the positive vibrations of mantras, aradhana and havans.

O how beautiful! These children dressed as rishis look so real and perform the havan so perfectly, chanting the Mahamrityunjaya mantra to help me regain my health and vitality, my clean waters of life.



Ganga Ma: Swami Sivananda says, “Mother Ganga pours out all that she has in a continuous flow to humanity. She loves all. She has equal vision and is quite indiscriminate. A peasant or a king, a sinner or a saint, all are equal in her eyes.”

I was able to give my pure water in abundance to one and all because people lived in tune with nature. They protected my purity by treating me with great care. Also, I was protected by my eight sons and the ninth one whom I nurtured called Kartikeya. Kartikeya is extremely strong. My nine sons took care of me and they protected me, because I am their mother.

The powerful mantras of *Apas Suktam* protect and purify the waters, within and without.





These are sweet but truly tough karate kids. With serious, concentrated faces they perform their moves, legs high in the air, fists flying around. Nobody would dare harm Ganga Ma with this group of bodyguards.

Boy: Ganga Ma, the mighty Lord Varuna is the God of water and represents nature's law. Varuna rules in the oceans and rivers, influencing all aspects of the cycles of water. He is looking upset. Why is he in such a rage?

Ganga Ma: For the last few hundred years you have ignored Varuna's law of nature, resulting in dry rivers, acid rain, polluted oceans and skies, and changes to the global climate. It is these consequences that upset Varuna.

Varuna looks not just upset, he seems to be spitting fury!



Ganga Ma: When I came on earth, I made a vow: I would help and purify the earth for some time but if no respect and care were shown to me, I would return to heaven and leave the earth forever.

Varuna is in rage because you have stopped taking care of me. Your sins on earth, your arrogance and greed for material goods have become too great. Your negativity has even weakened my dear sons, my protectors, to a point that they are exhausted. Today, I'm also about to return to the Himalayas . . .



Oh my God! The girl playing my part is collapsing on stage! Thank God! Kartikeya and Varuna are helping her get back up. What are the kids up to now? Ah, they have created a typical scene by my banks.



Ganga Ma: Once upon a time I was divine and pure. I was the most sacred, precious river in India, full of healing powers. Time has passed, look at me today: I have become a dumping ground. My waters are polluted with waste products of all sorts, causing dangerous diseases to anyone who drinks or bathes in it.

Long ago, I and all rivers on earth were healthy and happy, flowing with fresh water. Today, I am sick and all the waters of Mother Earth are sick, too. Fresh water is essential in your life. If no water is available, life is in danger.

Be aware that whatever you do to water, you do to every cell of your bodies, to every animal, plant, fish and ecosystem on the earth, for we are all linked as one living, breathing entity called life.

Boy: Oh! So people's negativity has weakened your protectors and polluted your waters?

Six children holding six different boards have come up on stage now. I think they are trying to convey a deep symbolic message to everyone.



Ganga Ma: Exactly. The six associates have taken control of everyone's mind: *kama* – passion, *krodha* – anger, *lobha* – greed, *moha* – delusion, *mada* – arrogance and *matsarya* – jealousy are directing everybody's thoughts, speech, actions and behaviour. There is only ignorance, selfishness and no awareness.

Yogis say that the state of the macrocosm reflects the state of the microcosm and vice versa. If we care for the water element on earth and keep it clean and healthy, then naturally the water *tattwa* within us will also be clean and healthy.

In human beings, *swadhisthana chakra* is the control centre of the *apas tattwa*, the water element. *Swadhisthana* is the level through which you try to satisfy your desires. As your effort of

staying connected with positivity and purity has become weak over time, the drive to fulfil your never-ending cravings has become overwhelming. This results in consumerism and overconsumption which are rapidly depleting the planet's resources and creating enormous waste and pollution.

Unless there is immediate change to people's mentality and awareness, my life is in serious danger. You can no longer ignore me, you must change now.



As if to drive home this point, a group of smiling, talented girls shows up on stage and proceeds to give us the message of water conservation through a superbly choreographed dance. Their spinning umbrellas in the end convince everyone that Water is Life.



Boy: How can we pacify our desires, how can we purify ourselves?

Ganga Ma: In order to purify all the waters on Mother Earth you need to restore balance in your swadhisthana chakra. The way to do this is through YOGA. By living yoga you can overcome your greedy nature and live simply with less. When you know that you can never fulfil your never-ending desires, you can begin to manage the mind's responses and live with less. Then you will receive pleasure and joy through the simple things in life.

Boy: How to find out more about leading a yogic lifestyle?

Ganga Ma: I will tell you a story. At Gangotri, the source of the Ganga in the Himalayas, Sri Swami Satyananda had performed tapas and aradhana to invoke the soul who would one day be his successor. His prayer to Ganga Ma was heard. Nine months later Swami Niranjanananda was born as Ganga putra, the son of Ganga!



I am smiling silently and only Swami Niranjan turns around to see if I am all right, for he needs no words to hear me. The children are telling my favourite tale, the birth of Swami Niranjan. Sri Swamiji, Ammaji and Swami Satyabrat have come to my sacred source, Gangotri, invoking this great soul into their lives.

Ganga Ma: Today, following the mandate of his guru, Swami Niranjan inspires us to live yoga as a lifestyle. Go to the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger and find out how a yogic lifestyle helps to solve

the water problem. If you live accordingly, then I will remain on earth forever and never return to heaven.

Boy: Thank You! We will go there immediately!

These children can do anything. Their asanas dedicated to swadhisthana chakra and water are perfect, and the images on the screen stunning!



Now we are at Ganga Darshan and the two brothers have come to meet Swami Niranjan. What a lovely idea!

Boy: Hari Om Swamiji. I have just come from the Ganga. Her water is filthy, absolutely undrinkable. Not only the Ganga, there is hardly any water available anywhere, and even if it is, it is very polluted. I have heard that leading a yogic lifestyle may help improve the situation.





Swamiji: Leading a yogic lifestyle offers the perfect platform to purify ourselves: In order to deal with water in a constructive way, we need to look inside ourselves first. Our aim needs to be to learn how to manage our six enemies within.

It is our responsibility to lead a yogic lifestyle. Start now to use your head, heart and hands actively and creatively to lead a lifestyle of discipline and sanyam which will reconnect you to your positivity and purity within. Your positive attitude can then be expressed in a creative way that purifies the environment. It is through living a simple yogic lifestyle with complete awareness that you learn to respect and care for water.

Boy: Swamiji, how can we take care of the environment in a yogic way?

Swamiji: See divinity in one and all, in everything around you. Let this become your attitude and with this attitude do the following:





- Conduct havan at your home. The smoke from the havan fire purifies the environment and rises up as vapour which then falls as rain from the clouds.
- Also, chant the *Mahamrityunjaya* mantra 108 times with the sankalpa for the good health of water.
- Express your gratitude to water and build a relationship with water by sending positive vibrations to either a river, a lake, the oceans of the world or even your own body. Our body is 70% water and this water comes from the rivers, lakes and oceans of the world. The oceans flow through our veins. Your positive mental vibrations will combine with the atmosphere and purify the waters on earth.

Listen carefully: It is our responsibility to strive for health and positivity and to nurture, protect and care for our environment. That is the ultimate responsibility given to us, if not, we will destroy ourselves. Start today to live a yogic lifestyle with seriousness, sincerity and commitment and secure a future of peace, plenty and prosperity together.



What a simple yet sublime statement! Oh! look at those tiny children coming on the stage and beginning to dance merrily. They are the members of Blue Brigade, the youngest wing of BYMM children, and it is very apt that through their dance they are giving the message of saving

this blue planet. Their dance is pretty and touching, but not only that, they have also understood that 'life is water and water is life, without water there is no life'. The lesson has become a samskara in their life, and as they grow up they will remember their dance, their song and the message they gave to the world. The memory will remind them to be my ambassadors, my support and saviours.



Now an older girl comes on stage and with poise, grace and unmistakable firmness reads the children's message to the world. All the other performers also come on the stage.



BYMM girl: We the children of BYMM did not perform this for entertainment, we performed it as an offering to our Mother Earth, for Ma Ganga and for all generations of children to come, because Ganga cannot tell you of her suffering, nor can the future generations, but we can and we hope our message was clear.

Wasn't that a sweet thing to say! Hearing this sentiment from the children really touched my heart. Oh wait! Isn't that Swami Niranjan getting on to the stage? Yes, and he has seated himself right in the middle of the BYMM children, and is listening intently to their message. Why not, he is after all the first bal yogi of this city of yoga.



BYMM girl: To most people, we seem like small innocent children incapable of understanding the world around us and ignorant to the destruction of our home, our Mother Earth. But we do know, because we see and we feel and we suffer the consequences of all of your actions.

In our grandparents' time, within the last 50 years, the river Ganga was clean and healthy, dolphins, fish and turtles swam freely and happily. Her waters were purifying, healing and sacred. Now we cannot taste her healing waters, we cannot splash and play in her water, instead we have to wade through piles of plastic to reach her water's edge, and there we sink in filthy stinking mud, contaminated with human and industrial waste. We now feel Ganga will make us sick, but it is not her fault, our river Ganga is dying

and the miracle of the earth is leaving. This makes us cry ourselves to sleep at night.

Our parents and grandparents tell us that Ganga Ma is sacred and she is the Mother to be worshipped and adored, but who would



treat their mother like that? We all have something in common; we are all some mother's son, and some mother's daughter. For a moment reflect on your own mother – would you throw your toilet waste, pollution and negativity into your mother's food and water? No! So why do you do it to Ma Ganga? And why do you allow others to do it?

Without water we would die within a few days and the earth would become a hot desert, a planet incapable of maintaining life. We fear this may happen in our lifetime if we don't change our ways.

We, the children of BYMM, are worried about our future and our children's future. Did you worry about these things when you were our age?

We, the children of BYMM, are very lucky as we have yoga and the ashram in our lives. Yoga has taught us the importance of

clean air, water and food for a healthy and happy life. The ashram has taught us to perform seva as our effort to improve ourselves and the environment around us.

We children feel very grateful as we have Swamiji who always tells us to be happy and live with awareness. He tells us hope, faith and *purushartha*, self-effort can transform our nature. Swamiji guides us in every way to improve our lives and be good, as Swami Sivananda always said, “Be good, do good.”

With this strength of hope we pray that through our young hearts and actions we can transform the world around us, and we know if we don’t do it then our children and grandchildren will not have the opportunity to see Gangetic dolphins as they swim and play, they will not see Ganga in monsoon when she spreads as far as the eye can see, with eagles soaring, blue kingfishers hunting and green parrots flying high. They will not hear the stories of the miracles of Ganga. If we don’t change our ways, all of this will be gone.

We the children of BYMM pledge that we will stop using plastic which is now strangling the rivers and oceans of our planet, we will conserve and protect our precious natural resources of water, forests, air and soil. These resources are our life and without them we have nothing. We are not separate from the earth, we are the earth, every cell of our young growing bodies are sustained by Her – She is our Divine Mother and inspiration, She is our life.



Many of you have travelled long distances from far away countries, but whether you come from England, China, India, Australia or South America, we all breathe the same air and drink the same water – eventually. In whatever way you pollute the air and water in your country, it will eventually rain on us and vice versa. After all, it is the elements of creation that link us all.

We are here tonight with a request: we plead with you all to change your ways because our lives depend upon that.

To the people of Munger, please do not throw your rubbish in Ganga, please do not use Ganga as your toilet, please do not support the industries that throw their waste into Ganga. Help us to fight for Ganga, help us to make Munger a clean green town.

To those of you who have come from other towns and places please protect the life-giving waters of Mother Earth. Live simple yogic lives and reduce what you buy and throw away. The more simple, natural lives you live, the less will be the pollution and degradation of our planet and her waters. When good people join forces together, anything and everything is possible.

We pray we have inspired in everyone the need to change our lives and work to protect the waters and to live in a green and beautiful world. Then for years to come we will proudly sing and dance with you all on the banks of Ganga Ma. Jai Ho!

I wish the whole world could listen what these BYMM children have to say, for they say it to the whole world. Swamiji looks at me again, for he saw my invisible tears. There is hope for me and all the waters of the world for these children will make a difference. This is the happiest moment in my life. I send my affection and gratitude to Swamiji. There, standing tall on the stage, surrounded by his children, he gives me a big smile in return, and then starts dancing with everyone else. It is time for me to take my leave of this most extraordinary evening. My heart filled with joy and hope, I gently flow away . . .





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