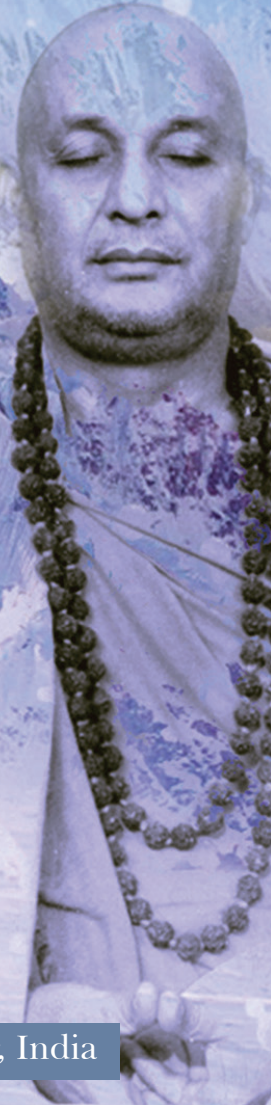


SATYAM TALES

Adapt Adjust Accommodate

Sutras from Shiva's household
for the whole world



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Satyam Tales

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

Adapt Adjust Accommodate is the thirty-sixth 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.

This tale takes you to the Himalayan heights giving a glimpse into the slightly unusual household of Shiva and Parvati. Even with the experience of eternal meditation and samadhi, Shiva needs help to manage his family affairs. His solution is the triple-A sutra of 'adjust, adapt, accommodate' and he chooses Swami Sivananda as his perfect messenger to inspire humankind, whose beloved disciple, Swami Satyananda, continues to give the key to success in these three words.

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 live the triple-A sutra and follow the shining examples of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda . . .

— Editor

© Bihar School of Yoga 2020

Published by Yoga Publications Trust

First edition 2020

Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd., Faridabad

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:

Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar, India 811201

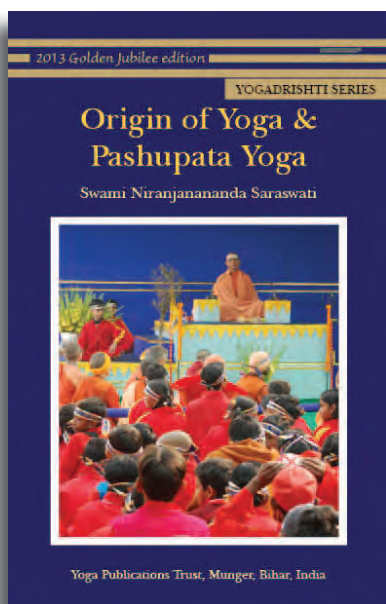
Tel: +91-6344 222430, Fax: +91-6344 220169

Adapt Adjust Accommodate

“Atha – now, therefore . . .” that is how the great yogis begin their teaching, their discoveries or the tales of their experiences. I do not pretend to present some fantastic new system of thought or discipline of conduct, but then again, one never knows, maybe one day . . .

It all began a few millennia ago, when my consort and I were living high up in the Himalayas, enjoying each other's company and the magnificent environment. One day, roaming aimlessly and blissfully on land known only to us, we sat down on a scenic spot by a river and commenced an absorbing game of dice. Out of nowhere or perhaps from the depth of my heart a pressing question burst forth, and I immediately asked Shiva, “Why is there so much sorrow on earth? Why do human beings have to suffer so much?” Shiva seemed inspired by the question for he took the trouble and time to answer at great length. His answer is known the world over as





Pashupata Yoga, which is the origin and foundation of many branches of yoga developed much later by sages and yogis. The roots of their systems, methods and philosophies are my husband's teaching. That is also where the "atha – now, therefore . . ." comes in, for they all acknowledge his original teaching as their source and inspiration.

That moment on the banks of the Himalayan river therefore had its far-reaching consequences for people on earth. Through a long chain

of teachers and masters they were given the gift of yoga to help them deal with their suffering. Tools, practices, a whole do-it-yourself kit for management of suffering were spreading over the planet, onto every continent and into every civilization. The two of us watched what was happening, occasionally amused at the madness of those human beings, more often concerned and even alarmed at their strange behaviour and total lack of common sense.

Millennia passed, and one day seeing a scene of extraordinary idiotic human behaviour and the inevitable outcome of more suffering for all involved, I made a casual remark, "My dear Shiva, do you remember how you gave me the beautiful and practical teaching of the Pashupat Yoga. We were witness to its conquest over the whole world. Your yoga was accepted by all people, but look at them now. Do you understand why they still behave with such stupidity and blindness? They still suffer the same way they did when I asked you my question on the banks of the river. What is wrong with your yoga and the other yogas that followed?"

Maybe it was more than just a casual remark, for Shiva just snapped, “What do I know? If people don’t get it, it doesn’t mean that there is anything wrong with my yoga or any yoga. They simply don’t follow the instructions.” That was the end of it for he marched off, not to be seen for the next three days.

I had noticed of late that he was a bit short-tempered and on edge. Our life too had taken its course, and was not the same anymore. The honeymoon was over and the luxury of being alone with each other had come to an end. Our home on Mount Kailash was filled with laughter and tears, shouting and singing. Yes, we were a lively family. Our two sons, Ganesha, the elder, and Kartikeya, the younger one, made life a real challenge. Gone were the days of roaming aimlessly and blissfully. Boys being boys, there was a lot of fighting and quarrelling. You could not imagine brothers more different than those two: the older one, clever and sharp, but always hanging around the kitchen looking out for sweets, fun and finery; the younger, a born ascetic, courageous and loyal, but so hot-tempered and stubborn.

This not being enough, we had our pets, whom we loved dearly. Here I need to clarify an important point: Shiva was not only a renunciate, a yogi, a sadhu, covered in ashes and spending centuries and more in deep meditation. No, Shiva was a householder, a family man, a father and husband, a real grihastha. This side of his life is less known, however, it was his greatest challenge, much greater than the meditation. So no wonder, once in a while he would snap and disappear for a few



days, then come back and again try to keep us happy or at least alive.

For, to be honest, 'lively family' is a bit of an understatement. In reality, we were living most of the time in a high-alert-war-zone situation. My constant companion and protector was a ferocious lion, tender and playful like a kitten with me, but dangerously swift and menacing towards anyone who came near me. Of course, when hungry he would be ready for a kill. Since we arrived in Kailash, he had his eyes on the juicy meat of Nandi, Shiva's beloved guard, a black



bull, steady, dull and quite full of himself. Shiva's other pets were a gang of snakes living around his neck and adorning his arms. He loved them immensely and knew of their poison which could kill or heal, according to intention and application. They had perfected the art of hissing whenever they felt threatened which was most of the time.

That is because Kartikeya, the super ascetic sannyasi-to-be insisted on having a peacock as a pet. He was the most proudly strutting creature in the whole of the Himalayas, with only two interests: one was to show off his undeniable beauty by shaking and swinging those long feathers; the other was to catch, at least, one of Shiva's snakes. Being around Shiva's neck, they had the best view over every situation occurring in the immediate vicinity of their master. So they kept one eye on the peacock along with a lot of hissing, and the other eye on the cute little mouse, which was Ganesha's pet, ready to attack at the slightest opportunity. Why the chubby overweight boy had to pair up with this tiny grey mouse, no one could understand. Ganesha said that the mouse was his only option. Being the expert explorer of the mind, he needed a friend who could go with him into every nook and corner of the twisted mind to discover its hidden wealth and potential. Only his dear mouse could be such a companion. Master and mouse really had a lot in common and always got what they wanted, overcoming every obstacle along the way.

Shiva, as head of the household, carried most of the burden. He excelled in survival and peace-making



strategies, however, sometimes it was too much even for him: children screaming, wife too clever, animals throwing their weight around: physical in the case of the massive Nandi, hissing from the snakes, beak and feathers here, claws and teeth there, nagging and nibbling of the almost invisible mouse. Irritation and snapping were the first signs and then Shiva needed a break, time-out to recover and recharge, like any grihastha.

After the last break, he came back home, beaming from head to toe. Luminous, radiant, divine, my dear Shiva was at his best. “My dear Parvati,” Shiva began, “you were absolutely right the other day. People still suffer in spite of all the guidance they have received. There is no shortage of teaching, no shortage of masters who lived as examples; there is no shortage of inspiration, and yet as you so pertinently observed, people still suffer. It is beyond my comprehension, why they don’t get it. I only know and agree with you that they don’t.

“When I was alone these three days, I was thinking of how I live and survive, struggle and flow, remain sane, content and balanced at least most of the time. You must agree, we are not the easiest of families. You see, Parvati, people are basically simple and so the answer to their suffering must be simple. As I was looking at my life with all of you, it just hit me: the answer, the solution. Three words are my lifeline, the magic spell which takes me through the sea of lurking conflict, stress and tension: adapt, adjust, accommodate. That’s what I do and it works.”



I immediately sensed the tremendous profundity of these words and suggested, “Let’s make it an ‘atha’ – ‘Atha adapt, adjust, accommodate.’ People will love it. They must be able to handle three words and end their suffering. Shivaji, you are the greatest.” Shiva was already thinking ahead, “Now we have to think of a way to spread these three words among the people on earth.” “Brilliant,” I replied. “We will see the dawn of a new world where everyone lives the triple-A sutra.”

I was excited beyond imagination: only three words to accomplish where everything else had failed. I was lost in images of peace and harmony, when suddenly I wondered, “Shivaji, just one second, before you take your sutra down to the earthlings, what is the meaning of these three words? They sound lovely but a bit similar.”

Shiva patiently explained the subtle nuances of the magic words. “People have to learn to flow with life and let us do the job. The sooner they give up the idea that they are running the show, the happier they will be, and their suffering will come to an end. The purpose of ‘adapt, adjust, accommodate’ is to help them flow.

“You see, first comes ‘adapt’. It means you accept new conditions, situations, a new environment. You must make the effort to blend the old with the new, the known with the unknown. Next comes ‘adjust’ which requires change. You have to alter and regulate your expectations and perspective. You are out of your comfort zone and have to make the most of it. With the third step ‘accommodate’ you have to be willing to create harmony for the welfare and ease of all concerned. My dear Parvati, do you understand now the difference? Do you think the people on earth will get it?” I simply nodded, silenced and awed by the unparalleled wisdom of Shiva, my husband.

He continued, “We need someone who can tell people of the power of these three words. That person has to live them, be an example and thus inspire others to follow suit. Do you know anyone?” Right there and then on top of the mountain, I didn’t, and time passed.

Then one Sivaratri night, celebrating our wedding anniversary, Shiva suddenly announced, “He will be born in a few months time and bring the light of the triple-A sutra to millions of seekers around the world. Where all yogas have failed, this sutra will bring hope and new opportunities to end suffering on earth.”

The messenger

The long-awaited messenger was born at sunrise on a beautiful September day, the eighth to be precise. The little boy grew up in a loving and pious family in the South of India. His name was Kuppuswamy. He was physically sturdy, a real athlete, and mentally strong, a true genius. Once he finished his schooling, he opted for the medical profession. Not only did he come first in his examinations, he also ran a medical journal, which he called *Ambrosia*. He had to learn life’s lessons quickly. When he decided to be a doctor in Malaysia, there was no other way than to adapt, adjust, accommodate. The journey by sea was already a test which almost cost him his life. He describes the adventure into the unknown with these words:



“I left Madras by SS Tara. I was unaccustomed to such long travels. I had no idea of the food I was to take on the way, of what preparations I was to make to begin my career in Malaya, and how much money was needed. I packed my things and did not forget to take a good consignment of sweets which my mother lovingly prepared for me. I belonged to an orthodox family and was frightened to take the non-vegetarian food on board the ship and so I

carried a good quantity of sweets. In my youth I loved sweet preparations. Throughout the voyage, I managed to live with the sweets and drank plenty of water. Being unaccustomed to this diet, I reached Singapore almost half dead.”

In Malaysia he adapted, adjusted and accommodated extremely well, learnt the language and was friends to all: the rich and the poor; Indian, Malaysians, Chinese and Englishmen; bankers, shopkeepers, labourers and fellow doctors. He says that he was ‘happy, cheerful and contented’ and that is why he was allowed to enter the hearts of the people he met. However, he wanted more than what he called ‘a life of ease and money-making’. So, one day after ten years of living in Malaysia, he returned to India in search of truth.

For over a year he travelled across India and this is how he remembered the period of wandering: “The life of a mendicant during pilgrimage helped me to develop in a great measure *titiksha*, forbearance, equal vision and a balanced state of mind in pleasure and pain. On some days I had to go without food and walk mile after mile. With a smile, I faced all hardships.” Then for the first time, the magic words are spoken: “During my incessant travels, I learnt how to adjust and adapt myself to various types of people.” Experience allowed the seed to sprout and develop into the beautiful flower of Shiva’s sutra, the message the young man had come to spread.

In Rishikesh, he met his guru, Swami Vishwananda, who gave him the name Swami Sivananda, of course. Seva, study and sadhana filled the next years while slowly an ashram grew around him. There was a clinic to run,





books to write, a printing press to manage, people and monkeys and more people to feed, satsang and kirtan to conduct, lecture tours to undertake, seekers to guide, and above all sannyasins to train. With all these activities, Swami Sivananda, the guru, the disciple and inspirer felt a deep kinship with Shiva, the householder, and truly understood, imbibed and lived the teaching of 'adapt, adjust, accommodate'. He did so with his usual good humour and smile, yet with the knowledge that it was the best means to walk life's journey peacefully and joyfully.

He had tamed the hissing, strutting, roaring and niggling animals of his mind long ago. He became nothing but light and love as he discovered not the vicious

but the virtuous circle: the more he lived 'adapt, adjust, accommodate', the more he could love, and the more he loved, the more he could adapt, adjust, accommodate. People instinctively felt that he gave them something truly special, practical and simple. They watched him practise the triple-A sutra every moment of the day.



After a two-month whirlwind tour through India, one of his disciples wrote: "We witnessed during the whole tour that wherever he went, Siva made it his home, whomever he met he made his own kith and kin, and whichever the organization he visited, he made his own and offered himself in their service. It was this supreme identification, or the realization of his own self in all that enabled Siva to attract everybody towards himself and to conquer the hearts of all."

Swami Sivananda was a child among children, a musician among musicians, a sadhu baba among babas and a wrestler





among wrestlers. He knew no limitations and no boundaries. The world was his home and he had become a master of 'adapt, adjust, accommodate', an inspiring example to those who met him. To his sannyasins he was more than just an example. He guided and goaded them ceaselessly into the truth, beauty and treasure of Shiva's message. He would play with them and their egos, their little ideas of themselves, their petty obsessions and useless opinions, until they too became masters of the triple-A sutra.

Satyam was such a young disciple whose life and mind was turned inside out and upside down the moment he entered Swami Sivananda's ashram. He was the son of a wealthy landowner and used to ordering servants; now he had to toil and slog day and night in the spirit of service. He had to receive orders not only from his beloved guru, which he could easily accept, but from people he thought were not entitled to bully him in any way. At home he had never washed his own plate or cup; now in the ashram he had to manage the kitchen, clean huge pots which were so big that



he had to climb inside to scrub them. In his house he had never fetched a glass of water for himself or anyone else, as servants were there to do it; now he filled the water tanks of the whole ashram, walking down the steep hill to the Ganga and carrying heavy buckets back up. In his family he grew up with a rifle and knew how to use it, yet in his guru's family he learnt to practise ahimsa towards all living creatures. What a feat of adapting, adjusting and accommodating!

Many years later, he described this experience with his legendary frankness: "There was ego – the pride of belonging to a high-placed family, the pride of belonging to an upper caste, the pride of being educated, the pride of being the disciple of a well-known guru and the pride of being an intellectual. There were many kinds of pride and ego." For twelve years, Swami Sivananda trained Satyam in the art of flowing effortlessly with life. Like Shivaji on Mount Kailash, Satyam learnt to manage the quarrelling animals and family members of his mind and to stay calm and serene at all times.

At this point in the leela, I asked, “If you have a guru like Swami Sivananda, of course you would follow his example. I am not saying that it is always easy, yet the guru makes sure you get his message and live it. What happens once the disciple is on his own may be another story.”

“My dear Parvati, let me tell you the story of how Satyam became Swami Satyananda. He is the perfect embodiment of Swami Sivananda’s teaching.” As we walked to one of our favourite scenic spots, Shiva told me how his sutra became alive again on earth.

Message manifesting

Satyam left Rishikesh and wandered as a mendicant through India like his guru had done. He used to say that he was ‘a lone traveller’, and that his parivrajaka life had two purposes. One was to strengthen his sadhana and the second was to spread the wisdom gained from the sadhana. Anyway, Swami Sivananda had given Satyam a mandate to spread ‘yoga from door to door and shore to shore’. Can





you imagine what that meant, all the shores of the world and so many doors! Every door was new and behind every door there was the unexpected. Every door was a challenge to adapt, adjust and accommodate, every shore was a new language, a new culture and a new world.

Satyam encountered leaders of many types and sorts, religious and political alike. He entered the world behind the Iron Curtain, where no one had dared to venture and he told the people about yoga. They loved it and even made their astronauts, or rather cosmonauts, do yoga in outer space. This was really far out in the truest sense of the word! He also did a lot of yoga research in those countries, where scientists immediately grasped the truth that yoga was a science and not a religion.

He was invited to the world of Islam, when no one knew much about it. Can you imagine a small geru-clad bald sadhu among the Arabian people? They loved him for he not only understood their worries and woes, he also had the medicine and cure: yoga. I am not saying that his success was due to my sutra, yet it certainly played a big part in it. Wherever he went the doors opened for him for he was able to go beyond differences and become one with the people.



When he went to Japan he practised my sutra too much. The Japanese bend forwards when they greet each other, and Satyam greeted so many people and did it so well that he ended up with a backache! Being in the land of the rising sun he could honestly and truly say, like only a few great emperors before him, that in his empire of yoga the sun never set.

Swami Dharmashakti, Satyam's first disciple, had this to say about the tremendous skill to adapt, adjust, accommodate she witnessed: "Swami Satyananda is like a child amongst children, grave amidst adults, a selfless karma yogi amongst the poor illiterate villagers, simple and down-to-earth amidst commoners and a thinker and orator among scholars. Amongst devotees he is a bhajan-kirtan adept, and for sadhakas he is an accomplished yogacharya. He has moulded his life in such a manner that he easily and effortlessly wins everyone's heart. For him children and aged, men and women – all are embodiments of that Absolute God. He sees the same spirit in everyone, and doesn't discriminate between people."

What was said about him had also been said about his guru. Satyam had become one with Swami Sivananda. Physical distance or proximity was totally irrelevant.

With the Christian community he totally excelled with my sutra. In the early years of his travels, he met the Pope in the Vatican and told him that yoga was as oriental as Jesus was. In the same way that Jesus was able to conquer the West, yoga would win the hearts of the whole world. The Pope was so impressed that he told his bishops in Colombia, Satyam's next destination, to listen carefully to this yogi from India.

When Satyam arrived in Colombia, he had to practise as usual my sutra: new country, new climate, new food, new people, new language, new almost everything. However, this time something extraordinary new happened. He was welcomed by the bishops of the country who invited him to meet priests and nuns and teach them yoga. Here Satyam could pass on the triple-A's to his students, he could prove that yoga was not a religion but helped to live one's faith with more understanding, depth and surrender. He was the master of 'adapt, adjust, accommodate' and had found worthy, eager and talented students in the Christian community. They embraced his yoga with open arms and hearts and made it part of their daily life.

His experience with Christians in Ireland was a lot less peaceful. Catholics and Protestants were fighting bitterly yet Satyam brought yoga to both communities. He adapted to the warring parties, adjusted to the violent environment and accommodated those who came for shelter and solace with an atmosphere of peace and harmony – a truly Herculean achievement. Where no one wanted to be, among strife and bomb shells, he established an ashram, and left his worthy successor, Swami Niranjan, a mere boy of eleven to take care.

Swami Satyananda was at home on every continent, amongst all religions and sects, on television and



radio, in front of hundreds of people or in private homes, in churches and halls, wherever he went he adapted, adjusted and accommodated to the rich and the poor, the smart and the simple, the sceptics and the yoga-fans. Undeterred by obstacles, he lived his mission and conquered all.

Many years after his global travels, he settled in a tiny village in India and lived there in solitude engaged in rigorous austerities and sadhanas, until one day he opened the doors of his place and invited everyone to join him. There he took my sutra even a step further. He held yajnas and asked representatives of many faiths to share their teaching and message with his guests who kept coming from far and wide. Jain nuns, tantric yoginis, sannyasins of many traditions, Sikh ragis, Muslim maulanas, Christian priests of varied denomination gathered at his feet. What did he do? He became one of them, participated in their worship and even dressed according to each faith. It was a sight to behold, a message no one would ever forget: God is one, beyond and within each form and shape, colour and name.





Once during the celebration of Rasa Lila, Swami Satyananda became a gopi, more real and enamoured than all the other gopis put together. That incident reminded us of the time both of us had sneaked into Krishna's Rasa Lila during Dwapara Yuga! And Shiva remarked, "I never thought that my sutra would become the means of such humility, depth and joy."

Besides re-establishing the tradition of yajnas, Swami Satyananda looked after his neighbours the way we all looked after him. In Rikhia, the small place where he settled, an environment of abject poverty, he used his skill of adapting, adjusting and accommodating to bring relief and hope. Every family received bundles of clothes which were individually packed. His assistance was totally adapted to the situation of the family: a cow here, a well there, employment for another family, a shop for a widow, a rickshaw for a destitute man. Nothing was random or haphazard. He had learnt and experienced the truth of my sutra and used it in every situation. The people felt cared for, understood and accepted, and they loved him.

The children were the most fortunate of all. They were given his love, support, encouragement and above all the



opportunity to learn: Sanskrit and English, chanting and computers, acting and dancing, and to stand on their own two feet with self-confidence. He passed on the teaching of the triple-A sutra in a natural, unobtrusive way, without lecturing the children. He just created opportunities for them to learn, the way opportunities had been created by Swami Sivananda these many years ago.

Shiva was lost in fond memories of his dear Satyam. I knew they had a close relationship and still have. “You know Parvati,” he continued, “Satyam even used my sutra for the future, or what earthlings call the 21st century. He knew what the people, yet unborn, would need and gave the tools to manage the troubled times that lay ahead of them. His message was bhakti yoga, atmabhav, the love of one another, unconditioned and pure. He truly was a visionary and his vision not only embraced every shore and every door, it also reached far into the times to come. Future generations will use my sutra and paint it with the many faces of love.”

As we slowly walked back to the reality of our household on Mount Kailash, I admitted to myself that it was a small challenge indeed, compared to the challenges Swamis Sivananda and Satyananda had to face in their lives. There and then, I made a resolve to live more peacefully, to be in tune and flow, or to simply – adapt, adjust, accommodate.

Available *Satyam Tales* Titles

1. Diggaja
From elephant to super-elephant

2. Mystics from Moon
A journey through space

3. The Daredevil Dolphin
Making a leap of faith

4. Lessons for Life
A disciple's ongoing journey

5. Great Escapes
Memoirs of a guardian angel

6. Humans and Superhumans
The touch of grace

7. The Ancient Astra
An invocation and a resurrection

8. Grandpa's Memories
About the man who never slept

9. Divine Play
A loving connection with the celestials

10. The Gift of Peace
A precious bequest

11. The Yogi and the Maya
Renewing an ancient bond

12. Om Niranjan
Realizing godhead in guru

13. Dhoom-Dhaam
Program, download and print

14. Sodium and Potassium
The play of Kamala and Kali

15. Spike the Hedgehog
And his open-heart surgery

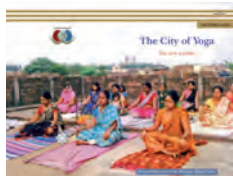
16. The Crew
For the welfare and happiness of many

17. An aim, an ity, a ness
and a ment
Watchwords that spell success

18. Destiny's Child
When guru becomes the guide

19. My Friend Namrata
Not just a blade of grass

20. A Ray of Joy
That lit up the earth and sky



21. The City of Yoga
Not just a name

22. At Satyam's feet
An incomparable offering

23. The Amazing Dog Trick
Living the teachings

24. Glory to a Rishi
The saga of Padma Bhushan



25. Diggaja Returns
To relearn the a-b-c of discipleship

26. Yoga Everywhere
World culture indeed

27. Ma Ganga
And her beloved sons

28. Holidays in Munger
A true homecoming



29. A Village Transformed
A sanniyasin's sankalpa for the welfare and happiness of many

30. Descent of the Divine
A disciple's loving offering to his guru

31. Homage to a Rishi
A little disciple's poetic tribute to her guru

32. A Star in Heaven, A Flower on Earth
A balyogi's first floral tribute to his guru



33. Yoga Nidra
Gold for this age



34. I am a Sanniyasin
A life of service and dedication



35. Save Ganga
A wake-up call for all

SATYAM TALES 36

