

SATYAM TALES

Life is Worship

Laugh, Love, Live



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Satyam Tales

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

Life is Worship is the thirty-seventh 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.

A young, sensitive girl gets exposed to the beautiful vista of Satyananda Yoga through chance encounters with Yoga magazines and a supportive receptionist at her dental visits. She begins to realize the vast scope and depth of yoga and its relevance to leading a positive, happy and productive life. Not only does her own life change for the better, but her infectious zeal and enthusiasm inspires many others, even the principal at her school.

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 laugh daily, love daily and live properly . . .

— 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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Life is Worship

Malti jumped off the school bus, bounded up the stairs of her apartment building two by two, ran through the open door of her home and into her room. There she let her schoolbag slip out of her arms onto her bed and hastily got out of her uniform into more comfortable clothing for the rest of her day. As she was turning the doorknob to exit from her room, her mother called out to her and she walked to the dining table where poha, her favourite afternoon snack awaited her. Between mouthfuls she excitedly related her day's events to her mother who dutifully listened to the woes of the English class, the sheer magic of numbers and



how much she hated Jyoti (her best friend, by the way) who today had angered her for spending her mid-morning break with Simran. The last morsel well tucked away into her now satisfied stomach, Malti got up to put her plate into the kitchen sink and then onwards to complete her homework. This was mother and daughter's daily routine.

Malti's room was furnished with an old mahogany desk and high back chair that was a family heirloom, and that her father had sat at as a child to do his studies. Malti very rarely used this wonderful arrangement. She preferred the balcony. With a mat on the floor and a makeshift cardboard box as table it afforded her the luxury of feeling the gentle breeze on her face and looking out onto green pastures as cows grazed, to the river Ganga beyond and to the men and women who worked tirelessly building the new and upcoming bridge.



Today as she sat down, book open and pen in hand she could not concentrate. Her mind kept wandering to the opening lines of a new poem they had been introduced to in Literature class.

What is this world so full of care
I have no time to stand and stare.

‘What do those lines mean?’ she thought. ‘What kind of life is that?’ she pondered. ‘What precipitates such thoughts?’ she questioned. She had fashioned her life much more on the prayer that she had learnt in primary school, which went something like this:

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.

The new poem had a rather unsettling effect on Malti. Being diligent though she managed to push it aside for the time being and complete her homework. Yet, the poem lurked in the shadows and popped right back up into the forefront when she was finished.

She looked over the railing at the labourers as they passed cement, bricks and stones and she saw them chatting and laughing as they toiled. Surely that is the time to stand and stare, she thought. She ran into her mother’s room and saw her curled up cozily in her favourite rocking chair reading a novel. Time to stand and stare no doubt, she murmured to herself. Then she thought about her father who dropped her off to school on the way to work in the morning and only returned at 6 o’clock in the evening. Ah! Maybe it was written by a man like him, she thought. Does he have the time to stand and stare? So she decided she would look more closely at her father tonight. And of course she found many ways in which she thought her father had the time to stand and stare. When she went downstairs to the courtyard to play with her friends, she asked the guard



at the gate about his day and she found he too had the time to stand and stare. At night as she dreamed, her mind kept looking for ways in which this world was so full of care, but the images that flashed before her were of kindness, laughter, joy, hardship too, yet not the type that bogs one down but of the human spirit that perseveres and triumphs.

So the next day as she entered the school gates her mind was preoccupied and she felt a bit out of sorts. Then BOOM! in her history class came a message that was even more dreary. Some Russian statesman by the name of Leon Trotsky had once said, "Life is not an easy matter . . . You cannot live through it without falling into frustration and cynicism . . ."

Harrumph! Aargh! Hunh! She was now positively annoyed. Not that either of the messages ended in despair. Just the idea that people could hold such a despondent view of the world distressed her and at the cusp of teenagehood it threw her into a quest for the meaning of life. She was determined. The answer to the question 'what is life?' had to be sought and found. However, not quite thirteen yet, the complexities of the question boggled her mind and she found much greater pleasure in the simplicity of the actual living of and experiencing life.

It is not that the question was forgotten. To the contrary, it popped up every time Malti was idle and she would mull over it. While rather mature for her age, the beauty of human development did not allow her to hold the thought for long enough to arrive at any conclusive answers. Her musings would lead her to an interesting thought. Content, she would move onto her next adventure.

As all young girls do, Malti had a special liking for chocolates, cakes, pastries, rasgulla, kheer, malpua and rabdi. Her teeth unfortunately objected to her penchant for sweet things. Therefore, Malti was a regular visitor at the dentist. This Saturday morning, she entered the office, registered herself at the reception and took a seat on the sofa. She scoured the coffee table for something appropriate to read as she waited for her mother who would park the car, buy the weekly groceries and then join her.

As Malti scanned the table her eyes fell upon a magazine that she had not seen before. In deep yellow on the top left hand side of the cover was the word YOGA. She opened it randomly and found Swami Niranjan quoting a poem by William Blake:



To see the world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour

She could not quite understand what it meant, yet she sensed an uplifting quality in the words and the poem

filled her with a sense of positivity. An instant later she was reminded of the poem they had learnt in English class earlier that week and she thought of the stark contrast between the two. She quietly penned down the words in her notebook and made a mental note to ask her teacher for an explanation when school opened on Monday.

Yoga had recently become mandatory at her school and a lithe young man would come once a week and teach them surya namaskar. She knew that yoga made her body healthy and her mind work better. But what did this poem have to do with yoga? she wondered. So she scanned the magazine for an answer. Unfortunately, most of what she read was more than she could comprehend. Yet, not one to give up easily, undaunted, she picked up another issue. Once again, she opened it blindly, this time the article was a satsang that Swami Niranjan had with children during his Bharat Yoga Yatra in Delhi. One child had asked the question, “Do you have any message for the children?” Swamiji’s answer was “Laugh daily, love daily and live properly.” ‘Yes,’ she thought





‘this is what life should be. But, what does this have to do with yoga?’ Just then the receptionist called her name and brought her search to an abrupt stop.

On Monday Malti could not wait for English class. The first opportunity she got she presented the poem and requested her teacher for an explanation. Ignoring her enthusiasm, the teacher dismissed the request telling her that it was not part of the syllabus and not to bother her little head with it currently. ‘How typical,’ thought Malti. Later that week she tried asking her yoga instructor how yoga helped us laugh and love daily and live properly, and was met with as little success as she had had with her English teacher. He quietened her with some comment on irrelevant questions as teachers are wont to do when they do not know the answers to the questions posed. At dinner that night she brought up the topic with her parents, but they did not know enough about yoga to forward the discussion. Malti resigned herself to the fact that she would have to wait until her next dental appointment to quell her thirst.

And so it was. Almost two weeks later at her next dental appointment she picked up yet another YOGA magazine. This time she scanned the content page for an appropriate article, and after thumbing through four or five magazines, found a title “Swamiji, we have some questions . . .” She had some questions too, so she decided to peruse the article containing questions posed by local school children to Swamiji. There on page 16 of the August 2017 issue was the question: ‘Swamiji, what does yoga mean?’

Swamiji had taken a lot of care to answer that question in detail. What Malti grasped of it was these words: “Yoga in Sanskrit means ‘to come together’, ‘to join’, ‘to unite’. The word science indicates a process of investigation and of knowing the fact and separating the fact from fiction through analysis, through investigation . . . Same is the meaning of the word ‘yoga’, investigation but of oneself . . . One of the meanings of yoga is bringing together the best qualities of life to become a better human being; and that is the union, bringing together all the best that you have in



life. Join them together and be the best human being: happy, successful, useful, creative, knowledgeable. At all levels excel in everything that you do. Yoga is bringing together all the good qualities of life, uniting them together.”

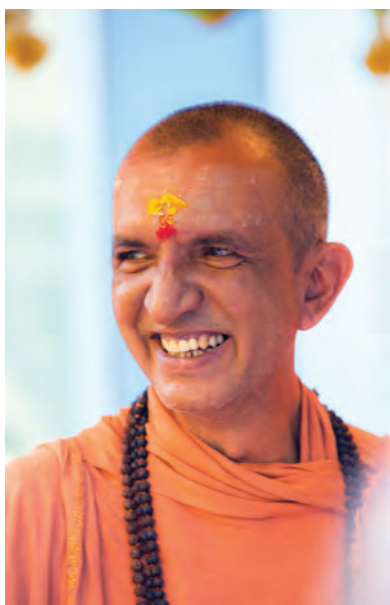
As she read on she found Swamiji saying, “Physical exercise is just a fraction of yoga, asana is a very tiny part of hatha yoga. Yoga is a lifestyle so that physically you remain healthy and energetic, mentally you remain peaceful, relaxed

and creative, socially you remain connected with everybody, and spiritually you remain aware of the goodness in everyone.”

Malti was very excited. This matched her idea of life reflected in the prayer ‘All things bright and beautiful’ and she thought, ‘now this is a life worth living’. Then a next question emerged, ‘What is the meaning of life according to yoga?’

The receptionist who had known Malti for some years now and was exceptionally fond of this bright, bubbly child noticed Malti’s interest in yoga. It was she who had put these magazines published by the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, on the coffee table. Committed to living yoga she was a member of the Satyananda Yoga family for over half a decade. She saw the wheels in Malti’s head turning and she got off her perch behind her desk to join Malti on the sofa. “Do you have a question?” she inquired. Malti took her nose out of the latest issue of the YOGA magazine she was leafing through, looked up at the receptionist and asked, “Do you know anything about yoga?” The receptionist nodded.

‘Well, well’ thought Malti, ‘Here’s my chance’. She picked up the August 2017 issue of the YOGA magazine, looked the receptionist directly in the eyes, pointed to the paragraph on yoga lifestyle and said, “See this here. How can one live like this? What is life in yoga?” This time the receptionist cranked the wheels of memory until she recalled a satsang she had heard by Swami Niranjana and she replied, “In yoga life is worship. In life there is everything; the good and the





bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the proper and the improper. Yoga says know this but choose to connect with the good, beautiful and proper. Ignore the bad, ugly and improper. Identify with all that is positive, with the beauty of life.

“To worship life, you have to see everything in the world as special and important – from the little ant to the mighty tiger, from the pebble on the beach to the majestic Himalayas, from your toy doll to living, talking human beings. Everything and everybody matters.

“When we worship someone we adore them, we care for them very well, we give and do our best, isn’t it? Just in the same way, when we worship life we adore it, we care for ourselves and others very well and whatever we do, we do it to our best. There are three things that make up life: the way we think, the way we feel, the words we use when we speak and our behaviour. Worshipping life is being good, doing good, seeing good and staying good.”

This was a lot for Malti’s little head to hold. Today as she sat down for her dental work, she did not feel the dentist’s hand in her mouth. The water jet did not make her gag. Nor did she feel the scaler, scraper or plaque remover as they did their job. Her mind was whirring with all the ideas that had just been presented to her and she was trying to make sense

of all the information, fitting each little piece of the jigsaw puzzle to create a full picture. Every time the dentist said 'rinse' it was as if she had been woken from a dream, but it did not interrupt her thought process and the pieces kept trying to fit into each other almost unconsciously. Then as the doctor was removing his gloves and telling her that their session was over, the bulbs in her head lit up and she sprang up with a hoot of joy. The doctor and the nurse looked at her with surprise. Most oblivious to her surroundings, Malti strode out of the office, happy as a kitten. She had found her answer.

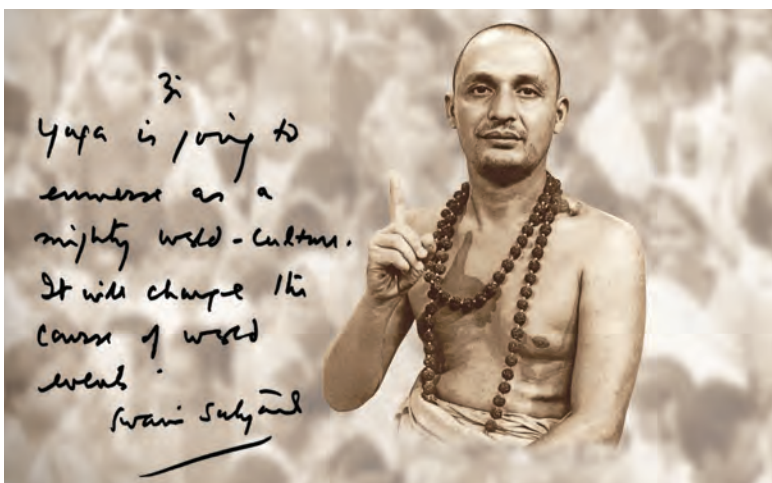
'There are people and things in life. People and things are one part good and one part bad. I am also one part good and one part bad. Life is how I think, I feel and I act with people and things. That is why Swami Niranjan says laugh daily because laughter brings happiness. If we are happy we will only see the good part, not the bad part and that is to love daily. Loving daily shows people and things they are important. If we love everybody and everything then we act in the right manner and live properly.





‘The meaning of life is to worship life which happens when we only see the good part. The way to see the good part is to think the best, feel the best, speak the best and do the best towards others, oneself and everything. And that’s the theme of the poem by William Blake. We must not just look at the outside of things and people. We must try to look at the inside. For those who live this way life is joyful and becomes easy to live. If people see the bad, then the world is full of care and life is not an easy matter.’ Malti realized there is no common answer to ‘what is life?’ Each one chooses their own meaning of life. You can choose to look at it positively by always focusing on the good and feel happy or you can choose the bad and feel unhappy.

The dental appointments had always been a source of angst for Malti. In an odd way she now looked forward to them. She would even arrive early so that she had extra time to discuss yogic living with the receptionist. Sometimes when her mother had to be in the vicinity she would drop by for these chats. The receptionist on her part was amazed to see someone so young show such deep interest in yogic lifestyle. She was enthused too, as Swami Niranjan always says that adults have missed the boat. It is the youth and children



who will make yoga a world culture. This was a prophecy that Swami Satyananda made many years ago and that Swami Niranjan is working indefatigably to achieve.

Through her conversations with the receptionist Malti learnt a lot. She learnt that to excel in life the first step is to become aware, and to become aware of oneself Swami Niranjan has developed a very simple technique called SWAN, an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Ambitions and Needs. The first thing to do is list all those things you are good at, not so good at, what you want and what you need to excel. Each time you look at the list you can add to it or subtract from it and slowly it teaches you to know what makes you, you. To excel Swami Niranjan describes another type of awareness too. Swamiji says always do all your jobs as if you were doing them for the first and last time in your life. In this way whatever you do, you will do it to the best of your ability and your best will keep improving leading you to excellence.

Malti also learnt that yoga is a very ancient tradition and that from the very beginning of Indian civilization, its people always looked for the best in everything, they looked for the truth in life, they acted justly and they lived accepting

life and adjusting to those bits they did not like, just like a river flowing calmly, passing over the small stones and going around the big rocks.

The receptionist told Malti that in modern times the Bihar School of Yoga was engaged in the task of promoting and propagating this ancient culture. She proudly declared that in 2017 Swami Niranjan had received the Padma Bhushan award for outstanding work in the field of yoga,





and in 2019 on the occasion of International Day of Yoga Bihar School of Yoga had received the Prime Minister's award for outstanding contribution towards promotion and development of yoga.

She explained that the Bihar Yoga tradition belongs to the lineage of Swami Sivananda, one of the greatest saints of modern India whose sole mission was to beckon humanity to lead a divine life. Swami Satyananda was the disciple of Swami Sivananda, and guru to Swami Niranjana. Today, schools teach us skills to be successful professionally and gurus teach us how to be a successful person. In the olden days there were no schools. Children went to live with gurus in gurukuls, and the guru taught them both academic skills and skills to live life successfully and contentedly. When Swami Satyananda or Satyam as his guru called him fondly, was ready Swami Sivananda had sent him out with the mandate to spread the original message of yoga among the masses by unravelling it from its mystic trappings. It

was to fulfil this mandate that the Bihar School of Yoga was born. Steeped in the philosophy of leading a divine life, it is possibly the only existing institution that teaches integral yoga, integration of the three faculties that make up the human personality – intellect, emotions and actions or head, heart and hands. She ended by saying that the Bihar School of Yoga is a veritable gurukul in this modern age.

Malti began to apply her learning in her day-to-day living. Every time she started a task she would try to do it as if for the first and last time in life. She started to complain less and look for the good in all things and people. Before she acted she would stop and make sure it was the best choice. When things did not go her way she allowed herself to let go and follow, yet not to compromise on what she believed in.

At school she shared this new knowledge with her friends. When she returned home her noon conversations with her mother remained focused on the school day, yet at night time when mother, father and daughter sat together for dinner, the discussion most often centred around yoga and ancient Indian civilization. Her parents supported this new passion of hers enthusiastically and found books that would help expand Malti's concept of life as worship in the ancient culture.



Malti always wanted to bring up the topic with her teachers but she never did, because she knew they would not understand. School she knew taught many good things, but what she could not fathom was why the focus was so much on the strife in life. In the last quarter of the seventh grade they had just started the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Earlier they had studied *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare. In their poetry book was a cleverly written, funny poem called *The Enchanted Shirt* about a king who complained of sickness and was told to sleep for one night in the shirt of a happy man. Alas the only happy man the king's ministers could find did not possess a shirt to his name. This poem was decidedly not in their syllabus, what they learnt instead was 'The Ballad of East and West' by Rudyard Kipling. The Social Sciences followed a somewhat similar trend. The yoga class needless to say was completely based on physical postures.

Malti's interactions with the receptionist in recent times had become more frequent and lasted longer. The dichotomy between her new-found world of ancient India and the hard realities of the modern world in her school subjects had created such a deep chasm in her mind that one day she had had enough. Totally exasperated she marched into the school principal's office, plonked down a set of YOGA magazines on his desk and said, "Sir, I urge you to read these. We are Indian. We have an ancient culture, one of the oldest in the world, that teaches us to see the beauty in life, that teaches us to appreciate the bounty in life, that tells us that everybody and everything in life is worth something, and that shows us the way to be good, do good and stay good. Why do we ignore this treasure, which is our legacy, in our syllabus? Everybody says children are the future. If India is to shine again, then it is the schools' job to reconnect us children with our glorious culture and rich heritage."

The school principal was unused to seventh graders taking up cudgels with the syllabus. Moreover, he was completely taken aback that of all the seventh graders it was

Malti who was standing in front of him. He knew her to be a strong but self-effacing child. This behaviour was rather uncharacteristic. At one level he was rather peeved at her insolence. Yet, the blaze in her eyes and the conviction in her voice forced him to pay attention and nodding to her, he promised himself he would give her proposition serious consideration.

One month later Malti found the latest issue of the YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines in her school library. A few weeks later books published by Bihar School of Yoga appeared on the bookshelves. Over time a small section on ancient Indian culture was created. At the end of the school term, the school principal called Malti to his office. He sat her down and said: “Malti, as you know we are a school that follows the ICSE board. There are also the CBSE and SSE boards, and recently some schools have started offering the IB program. Syllabi are conceptualized and compiled by the individual boards and is common to all schools that follow that system. It is not possible for me to change the syllabus just for our school. For the board to change the syllabus is an even lengthier and more complicated process.”

Picking up the magazines that Malti had dropped so unceremoniously on his table three months ago, and handing them back to her he continued, “I have read each one of these issues and it has opened my eyes to a whole new world of yoga. For you to have stormed into my office and so boldly expressed your opinion shows that you feel strongly about the message of yoga. These magazines are also testament that you have studied the subject well. I like your idea, and I have a proposal for you. In the afterschool activities next term, I am thinking of introducing a module called ‘Laugh, Love and Live properly’.” Malti was wondering what all this had to do with her when the school principal dropped the bombshell, “and I want you to teach the class.”

‘Me teach! But I am only a little girl,’ thought Malti. The principal continued, “Your passion, your enthusiasm, it is

infectious. Children teaching children, it is the best way. This is what seems to be the secret of success for Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal, the Children's Yoga Fellowship created by Swami Niranjan that I got to read about in these magazines. What excites you will definitely excite other children too. You only have to share what you know and what you understand."

"But Sir, how do I begin?" interjected Malti haltingly.

Softening his tone, the principal replied, "Make a list of all the things you want to include Malti, and I will help you create the syllabus while Mrs Sanghvi will help you create class plans."

Malti felt proud of herself. She had stood up for what she believed in and now it had paid fruits. And what fruits they were! Beyond her imagination. The school was giving her the opportunity to teach, to share her passion officially with other students. Over the mid-term break Malti made a detailed plan of what she knew, what she could teach and how she would do it. Her parents sat for hours through mock sessions. The receptionist from the dentist's office also kindly obliged.

When the term began Malti's outdoor class began small, but it rapidly grew in popularity and soon became a roaring success. Parents found that their children who normally



never discussed school came home bubbling with stories to tell about this latest afterschool activity. Laughter and love caught on so quickly that the parents started showing interest in yoga too. Malti helped find a Bihar School of Yoga teacher for the parents group. For her part, Malti involved herself in the activities of the local Satyananda Yoga Centre to enhance her understanding. On popular demand, in the first half of the summer holidays Malti and the Bihar School of Yoga teacher held a Yoga Lifestyle camp for children and parents together. Some students were so enthused that a small group along with Malti decided to visit Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, for an intensive training program in the second half of their school holidays. Finally, in the new year the students convinced the principal to integrate Malti's module into the Yoga class that was already part of the syllabus. By adding fifteen minutes to the daily schedule and an extra period once a week, the task was easily accomplished.

Malti's hard work had finally paid off. Her dream had come true. From one tiny spark a mini children's movement had been spearheaded. Such is the reward for being sincere, serious and committed to an idea, a thought, a passion, a way of life.



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13. Dhoom-Dhaam
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15. Spike the Hedgehog
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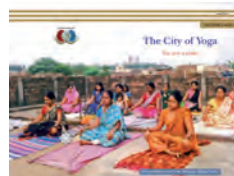
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For the welfare and happiness of many

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



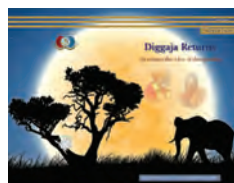
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A sannyasin's sankalpa for the welfare and happiness of many



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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 Sannyasin
A life of service and dedication



35. Save Ganga
A wake-up call for all



36. Adapt Adjust Accommodate
Sutras from Shiva's household for the whole world

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