

SATYAM TALES

Satyam and Hanuman

Siddhis with a difference

Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Satyam Tales

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

Satyam and Hanuman is the thirty-eighth 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 group of young squirrels listens to the tales of their wise elder and learn that siddhis can take many shapes and colours. The mighty Hanuman is their hero with all his astonishing powers, yet the life of Sri Swami Satyananda is a most amazing example of how an extraordinary man uses all his strengths and qualities to help, guide and inspire others to tread the path of yoga and live a yogic lifestyle.

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 discover your strengths and use them to make your world more beautiful . . .

— 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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Satyam and Hanuman

“Once upon a time . . .” the sound of these four magic words made us sit even closer together, for no one wanted to miss a single syllable of the story we squirrels had listened to many times, yet which would surely come with a tiny novel touch or an unexpected twist. Huddled together, sheltered by the rich foliage of our most beloved mango tree, we forgot the





pouring rain, and the noisy, dirty construction site which had taken over our play and adventure ground.

Yes it was true, we were longing for the tall and small trees, the shrubs, the gigantic jamun tree with its most luscious fruits, and of course the grass which was so high it



almost touched the sky. We are not really big-picture creatures, yet in the depth of our little hearts we knew that all this building was for the best. We were the most fortunate creatures in the whole wide world, for here at Paduka Darshan, Swamiji sat, ate, read, wrote, talked and dreamt in the shade of his dear mango tree which had become our home now, and which was no doubt the best place to be.

“I will continue only if you all stop chatting and fidgeting.” Absolute silence and total stillness was the instant answer. Someone even brought a microphone for him. “All right then. Once upon a time . . .” Gyanswarup was our teacher, our Guruji. He was the oldest and wisest of the whole tribe and had not only told his stories many times, but to many generations of little ones eager to listen.



It seemed that Guruji was in a good mood and ready to spend the afternoon with us. The other elders were either dozing or on security duty, skipping up and down the many branches, always alert and vigilant.

“This is the story of two extraordinary beings. One is Hanuman, who is our model and inspiration and with whom we are united in our love for Sri Rama. The other is . . .”

“Sri Swamiji,” we all exclaimed in one voice for we guessed the tale he had chosen.

“Yes, Sri Swamiji who, a long time ago, planted the seed of this magnificent adventure here, maybe even the seed of the tree that has become our home. It is his land we live on.

“Do you know how blessed we are? We just had two exceptional months listening every day to the worship of Hanuman, the chanting of the *Ramacharitamanas* and to Swamiji’s satsang and to . . .”

“Yes, we know!” There were only twelve of us but if we wanted to, our squeaking could be quite loud. He was right, two extraordinary months of Swamiji’s Chaturmas had just transformed life at Paduka Darshan, which would never be the same again.

“All right then. Sri Swamiji had also spent his Chaturmas here, many years ago before any of us was born. He knew of Hanuman’s extraordinary character and qualities and told his disciples, ‘I chant the *Hanuman Chalisa* every day when I bathe. When I complete one hundred rounds of japa, I offer my prayers to Hanuman to free any innocent person who may be in distress.’ Sri Swamiji had tremendous faith in the worship of this divine power, and like Hanuman, he lived for others, offered the fruits of his sadhana to others and remained forever a servant. You also chant the *Hanuman Chalisa* every day, but where are your thoughts when you chant? Do you think of Hanuman, his qualities, his exemplary character and his achievements, or do you chant automatically? Maybe tomorrow when you chant, you make a resolve to become a little bit more caring, selfless, eager to learn and wise like Hanuman.

“Hanuman is called the ‘ocean of wisdom’. Sri Swamiji explained that ‘Hanuman was a crest jewel, the best of intelligent people. As Rama’s personal assistant he had to be clever. If Rama is super intelligent, his peers should





also be highly intelligent, otherwise they cannot get along.' Sri Swamiji would know because he himself was so knowledgeable. Do you know what Swami Sivananda called his dear Satyam?"

"Versatile genius!" We shouted with one voice, for we knew our heroes well.

"Do you know what that means?"

"Yes, yes, it means he knew everything in the whole world, and he wrote poems, and he knew Hindi, English and Sanskrit, and . . . , but can we do the siddhis now?"

"All right, why not." Guruji was really in a wonderful mood, it must have been the effect of the two months of aradhana at Paduka Darshan. "So let us look at *siddhis*, the miraculous powers. Hanuman is known for his *ashtasiddhis*, his eight special powers . . ."

"I want to be the reporter, please," said one of us.

"And I want to be the 'no, no, no'," chimed in another.

"All right then, go ahead, but do it nicely."

The two climbed onto a smaller branch and using a leaf as a make-believe microphone, they started their favourite



interview. It was less of an interview, more like an archer shooting one arrow after another towards his target.

“So you are Swami Satyananda Saraswati?”

“Yes, I am.”

“People say you are a yogi.”

“Yes, they do.”

“So do you sleep on a bed of nails?”

“No.”

“Can you fly through the air?”

“No.”

“Can you levitate?”

“No.”

“Not even a little bit?”

“No.”

“So can you make yourself invisible?”

“No.”

“Can you live buried underground?”

“No.”

“Can you walk on fire?”

“No.”

“Can you walk on water?”

“No.”

“Can you stand on your head?”

“No.”

We all held our breath in total suspense, even though we knew the next two lines as well as all the others.

“So then what can you do?”

“I can stand on my own two feet.”

We gave a big round of applause for they had really done the interview superbly. The art was to match the impatience and exasperation of the reporter with Sri Swamiji’s patient mock-serious monosyllables.

“Now children, that is what Sri Swamiji thought of siddhis and when he spoke of Hanuman he said, ‘Hanuman’s duties, accomplishments and achievements were all feats of yoga, whether he was leaping across the ocean, lifting a mountain





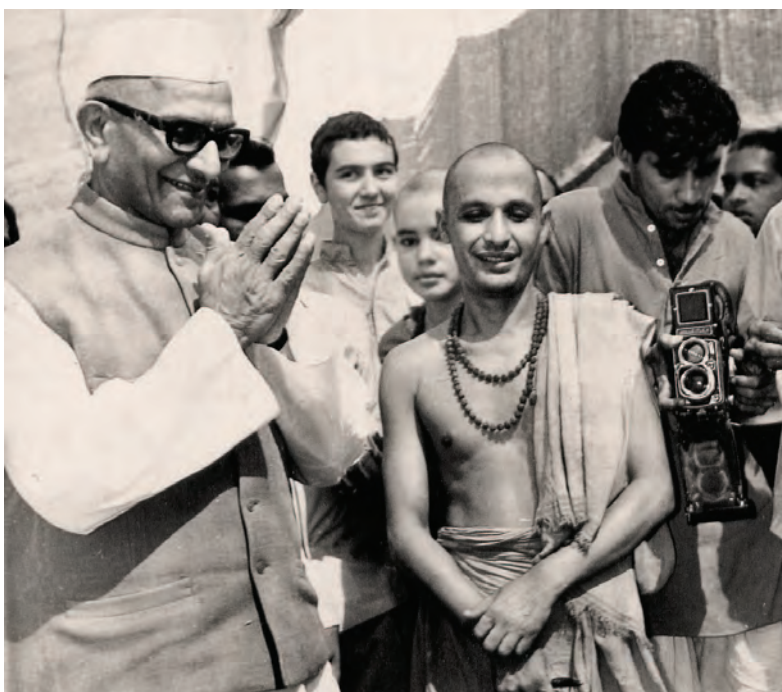
or burning the city of Lanka. All his actions and miracles were not the deeds of a wrestler or a muscleman. They were manifestations of yogic power. No muscleman can fly, cross the ocean in one leap, lift a mountain, or burn a city. Only a person who has perfected yoga could do all this. Hanuman was a great yogi.'

"Sri Swamiji could not fly or burn cities, but he had his own set of siddhis, for he too was a great yogi and had many forms of yogic power. It may take years and years, maybe lifetimes of effort, sadhana and tapas, to have a touch and a glimpse of a siddhi. Faith and grace are also necessary, and even then, fate may decide otherwise.

“Sri Swamiji claimed that he did nothing, everything was done through him, and he thus fully lived the truism of ‘*Naham karta, Hari karta, Hari karta hi kevalam*’. This belief was a force which guided him through many times of challenge, and that is why he never boasted about anything.

“Hanuman could become big, small, heavy, light and invisible at will. He could master all the elements and obtain whatever he wanted. He is famous for his divine and supernatural powers. Sri Swamiji also had powers, only they were of a superhuman nature. He could become really small through his simplicity. He remained forever a simple guide, no matter if he spoke to ten devotees in a private home or at a gathering of many thousands of people unknown to him.

“As he met presidents, head of states, creeds and religions, prisoners, housewives and scientists, drunkards and eager aspirants, he always remained the same: without





pretence, show or pomp, just simple and himself. His friends knew of his immense abilities, yet he never fell into the trap of believing that he was great. To remain simple in the face of huge success, fame and recognition is a siddhi indeed.

“He also had greatness although throughout his life, Sri Swamiji did not grow an inch. His greatness was humility. Forever at the service of people’s needs and aspirations, he responded with gentleness, accepting and satisfying their insatiable thirst. He answered the question ‘What is mantra?’ maybe a thousand times. He explained the ‘guru-disciple relationship’ in so many ways, that it is impossible to count. Fifty years of humble dedication is true greatness.

“You see, my dear children, there are innumerable ways to express one’s strength and powers. Miracles are not always spectacular and dramatic events. Miracles can be tiny moments in the life of someone, like a word of encouragement that may push a person in the right direction. To help others day in and day out without any self-interest, to make one’s joy the joy of others, to . . .” We were getting a little restless and not keen on deviating into a classroom-type lecture. Guruji picked up on our thoughts and continued with a smile.

“I know you want the story of Hanuman and how he could make himself small and big at will, and how this even saved his life. All right then. So, one day when Hanuman was on his way to Lanka to find Sita he encountered Surasa, the gigantic sea-monster. She had been sent by the gods to test Hanuman’s prowess. When she opened her huge mouth to swallow Hanuman, he became bigger and bigger, so that she also had to open her mouth more and more. The more he grew the more she had to grow. Then suddenly, he made himself as small as a fly, and whoosh, flew straight through her gaping wide mouth. Of course, this is a siddhi, for none of us can do anything like it. However, Hanuman did not do it for name and fame or might and money. He did it to help Sri Rama rescue Sita. Actually, his selflessness is the real siddhi.



“As far as we are concerned, we remain small creatures from birth to death, but Sri Swamiji showed us that there is more to smallness and greatness than just body size. There is greatness everywhere and for everyone, also for us; we just need to discover it. In his life, heavy like a rock and light like a feather also took another meaning and had nothing to do with weight.

“Heaviness was expressed in his teaching. No one is able to fathom the weight of his teaching. Only Swamiji of course, he knows and understands everything and his task is to bring to light the weight of the yogavidya. Thanks to Sri Swamiji, yoga practices obscurely described in ancient scriptures became accessible and clear. Therefore, his heavy weight is the creation of an unshakeable fortress of teaching, a treasure as immovable as the Himalayas, a solid rock for every aspirant.

“He spread this teaching of yoga with the ability to become lighter than the lightest, but as you have gathered from the interview, levitation and flying through the air held no attraction for him. No lightness of body was



required to help spread the teaching but lightness of spirit. He used the best of all means – jokes and laughter. Simply irresistible! Instead of a lecture on worry, Sri Swami would come out with something like, ‘If you worry you are an idiot.’ And of course, everyone remembered.

“Many years of laughter which he carried and spread around the world were recorded on audio and visual devices. Do you remember those young

sannyasa trainees, who came to Paduka Darshan day after day to update these recordings to more modern or what they called ‘digital devices’?”

We nodded for we remembered well this group of young computer savvy men who brought fun, games and hi-tech technology into our world. They were working really hard with computers. They only left their offices to go for their meals, play badminton, have a water fight or do their laundry. Later these boys wrote about their time at Paduka Darshan: “As we watched the old films and listened to the old tapes, we downloaded all the knowledge we needed to reach enlightenment; however, the only impression we could retrieve from our brains was Sri Swamiji laughing. We would watch his laughter over and over again.”

“So, no sermons and Sunday faces, but laughter and joy! To convey the weight of yoga to aspirants of all walks of life with such ease, lightness and humour is an art. It touched something in his listeners, who would always remember the twinkle in his eyes, his roaring laughter and the teaching he hinted at. For Sri Swamiji knew of the bigger picture, the plan and vision behind, for he said, ‘My mission is a divinely ordained path, whose final destination is the transformation of human society and civilization into a divine one. This is my sadhana which I shall keep on practising until the end of my life.’ This is how Sri Swamiji described the purpose of his life.”

There was a moment of silence, for we wanted to truly understand about greatness and smallness, lightness and weight. It seemed there was a lot to it which may help us to live a better life. We too had a mission to fulfil, not as gigantic as Sri Swamiji’s; still, to help Sri Rama whenever possible and in whatever way possible is not a tiny mission, to say the least.

“May we do the locks, please?” Girls of course, they always want to do the locks. Guruji nodded consent and the three girls climbed up a branch which they made their stage and started chanting: “O Hanuman, your physique is beautiful, golden coloured and you have long curly hair.”



Then they shook, puffed and flustered their tails, stood on their hind legs and with their little paws pretended to comb long curly hair. We are fine creatures no doubt, but we don't have, and never had, curly hair, instead we have the most precious gift given to us by Sri Rama himself, all these thousand years ago, when he so gently stroked us along our little backs with so much love and gratitude, for our tiny, humble contributions to the construction of his bridge. Yes, we truly are the most blessed ones and for nothing in the world would we trade our stripes, not for the most gorgeous lion's mane, or the longest giraffe's neck or the most stunning peacock's wheel. Nothing will ever come close to the stripes along our backs.

The girls were just playing and we had a good laugh at their long imaginary curly hair. Guruji finally said, “Hanuman never cared about his looks. Looks are not important at all and you should not be obsessed with appearance. Be clean, neat and tidy, but refrain from tinkle and glitter. That is Swami Sivananda’s instruction. As far as curly hair is concerned, Sri Swamiji had a shaven head most of his life, but when he lived as an unknown wandering sadhu, he did indeed have beautiful black curly hair. Then many years later, fully immersed in the panchagni sadhana, his long curly hair and beard, a touch grey by now, gave him the look of a saint, wild and wise. The radiance on his face and whole body was brightly golden coloured, as if a light was burning inside making him glow – just like Hanuman.



“Besides glow and curly hair, both our heroes have something else in common.”

“They were perfect sevaks,” we exclaimed.

“Yes, their life was seva. Whatever Sri Rama asked for, Hanuman immediately set out to accomplish. No questions asked, no time wasted. The moment they met, he became his devoted servant, even if it meant to fly with a whole mountain in his hands from the Himalayas to Lanka. You know why? Lakshman was fatally wounded and his brother

distraught with sorrow. Only one herb could help and heal; only he could go and bring it. However, no one thought of the demons who did everything to make the task impossible while he was searching for *sanjivani*, the magic herb. There was also the time-pressure factor which left Hanuman no other choice, but take the entire mountain to save Lakshman. This is just one example of why his strength, his ability and willingness to serve is praised and acclaimed by one and all.

“Sri Swamiji also had to move not only one mountain but many. His strength was not muscle strength, but the immeasurable strength of faith, which as you know, is able to part the seas, achieve the outrageously impossible and move mountains. The biggest and highest mountain he had to move were the hearts of people. He called himself an open-heart surgeon, and dedicated his life to making the hard and stony hearts he encountered a bit softer, gentler, more caring and loving.

“Surely not an easy task, but he never lost faith, always keeping his conviction alive that the possibility of change is inherent in everyone, in the most hardened criminal, the most indifferent cynic, the most arrogant snob. Where the individual gave up, he continued to help, inspire and encourage. With his teaching and his life, he showed the way.

“His aim and sankalpa was to inspire people to live a better life, a life of wellbeing, peace and harmony. Whatever he did was to inspire people to follow in his footsteps. He said about himself, ‘I have come to inspire you, and my inspiration is love.’

“I have been telling you about these siddhis so that you understand that greatness and smallness can take many shapes and colours, they are different in the lives of different people. You have to listen carefully to words. There is no use comparing; it is more helpful to recognize the common link. Hanuman and Sri Swamiji had a common bond, something that united them truly and deeply beyond powers. This bond was the love they felt for Sri Rama. For them Swami Sivananda’s *Song of Immanence of Rama* was not just words or

a song, but a reality alive and vibrant. They never stopped serving everyone and everything as Rama.

In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Rama,
In the heart, mind, prana and senses is Rama,
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Rama,
In sentiment, thought, word and action is Rama.
Within is Rama, without is Rama,
In front is Rama, above is Rama,
Below is Rama, behind is Rama ,
To the right is Rama, to the left is Rama,
Everywhere is Rama.

This was their Rama, their ishta, and do you remember when Swamiji told the story of the bhusamadhi in Rikhia?”



We nodded, for it was something we surely would never ever forget. It had been a pleasant evening when Swamiji was sitting with some friends right here under the mango tree. We had all come back to settle for the night. Swamiji told his friends what had happened that day, on 6th December 2009, 'After performing abhishek on Sri Swamiji, we placed him in the lap of Mother Earth, in Parna Kutir where he had spent time during his panchagni sadhana. He was still sitting upright in the lotus posture. We put some of his personal items with him: his malas, dhotis, danda and paduka. Then we placed the murti of Sita and Sri Rama in front of him. At that moment the head of Sri Swamiji moved forward, bowing in humble, loving pranam to his ishta. It felt that he had been waiting for this final farewell. Only then did we fill the samadhi, leaving him to be with his aradhya forever and ever.'

Even now, years after that evening, we felt the awe and the goose bumps. Would we ever be able to fathom the depth of that love? We could only repeat again and again Sri Swamiji's own description of his love for Sri Rama. We could only hope that his words would keep inspiring us:

When I stand in the darkness, with my feet frozen, my limbs failing, my eyes blinded and my heart sunk in fear, it is your blessings that are poured on me in all your love. The greater your love, the greater my awe. When you enfold me in your intimate grace, I get a shock, I cannot stand, I cannot think, I cannot see. Everything around me appears to be diminishing; the ground under my feet is shifting.

I lost sight of friends and wealth when you pulled me towards your bosom. I lost sight of name and fame when you blessed me with the nectar drops from your lips. I lost the very ground on which I stood the moment your footsteps sounded in my ears and shocked my pained and ever-awaiting heart. I lost all my earthly ambitions, my parents, my passions and my belongings when you entered suddenly into my chamber and poured your love on me.

We are tied together for eternity. Let us not separate again. I don't want anything from you, only keep me with you. Look at me and let me look at you for all time to come, for eternity.

Sri Swamiji's deepest wish has been fulfilled and in Rikhiapeeth he remains united with his beloved Rama for all eternity. Yes, Sri Swamiji was our inspiration. His greatness, smallness, lightness, heaviness and above all his love for Sri Rama will always secure a place in our hearts, right next to Hanuman. We were a little bit lost in the silent reverie of our two heroes, when the gentle voice of Guruji brought us back to the branch of our mango tree.

"Now dear children, you were participating in a groundbreaking event, Swamiji's Chaturmas. For two months we have been witness to one marvel and wonder after the other: sadhana, tapas, *Ramayana* path, pooja and aradhana, satsang, katha, chanting, singing and dancing for two months – where else could you find anything like it? Nowhere."

"Will you teach us to sing and dance like the Bauls?"

"No, I want to dance like Shiva."

"We can all do the dance of the ten avatars, that was so lovely. Will you teach us?" It seemed all of us had been greatly inspired by the wonderful Chaturmas events.

"All right, but perfection does not come by itself. Do you remember the day of the special Rama aradhana . . ."

"I saw Hanumanji!" – "So did I!" – "I was thaaaaat close to him." – "He looked at me with a biiiiig smile, honestly."

It was true, that day we had seen Hanuman come over the wall, majesty, strength and grace in every movement. He had slowly walked the whole length of the stage and disappeared into thin air or nothingness. He had looked at Swamiji who had worshiped Sri Rama that day with utter perfection: each gesture, each mantra, each offering was filled with the purity of Swamiji's love.



“Hanuman is never far from his dear Rama. He came to pay his respects and to tell Swamiji that his Chaturmas had the blessings of all the heavens and their inhabitants. A long-lost tradition, a treasure buried in oblivion was revived with simple splendour. He did it for humankind which is in such dire need for guidance and inspiration.” Guruji had to stop, carried away by his own eloquence and emotion. We knew how much it meant to him to have been part of this Chaturmas.

“You see, my dear children, sadhu, master, servant, Sri Swamiji, Swamiji, Sri Rama and Hanuman – it is one in spirit, the spirit of utter selfless dedication to the welfare and evolution of humankind. That is the message of Chaturmas, for you know what sums it all up, these two months?”

We were thinking with all our might. What could possibly sum up two months?

“You were there on the last day, when Swamiji’s friend, Swami Muktananda, said: *Ham sab ke liye* – all for us. He did not only mean these two months of challenge and hard work which Swamiji had to face and mastered. No he meant a whole life lived for and dedicated to us.”

“I heard it!” – “So did I!” – “So did I!”

It was true. We had gathered on the branches facing Swamiji and the pooja. We had heard those four magic words. They had brought tears of gratitude into our eyes, for we knew that the lives of our three masters were lived for us and everyone. We felt humbled and in the depth of our little hearts we promised to try really hard every day to follow the path shown to us by those who live their lives *ham sab ke liye*. We embraced the beauty and magnitude of our promise and resolve: Like our ancestors we shall keep adding whatever we can carry to maintain the bridge they had built so long ago.

The rain had stopped. The door opened and Swamiji came out to enjoy the fresh, crisp evening air and watch the sun set. With not a moment to waste we ran down the tree trunk and danced around his feet, for he embodied for us the trinity of Sri Swamiji, Hanuman and Rama . . .

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