

SATYAM TALES

The Ancient Astra

An invocation and a resurrection



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Swami Niranjanananda discharging the Pashupata astra

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

The Ancient Astra

*First day of the month of Pausha, 3138 BCE,
29°59'N 76°51'E (Kurukshetra, North India)*

As I rose above the horizon and gazed towards the battlefield of Kurukshetra, I couldn't help noticing the silvery-white silhouette of the full moon setting in the western horizon. It was quite ironic, I thought, for the moon to have waxed over the last fortnight – a period in which two illustrious Chandravanshi clans, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, had fought a relentless, gory battle, bringing the entire lunar lineage almost to the brink of extinction.

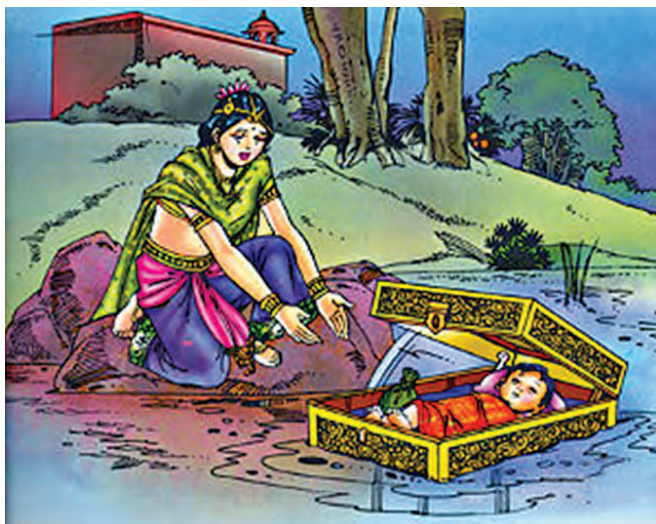


‘Wonder what Chandradeva is thinking as he casts one final glance upon the battlefield. He can’t be very pleased to see his distinguished descendants slaughtering each other so viciously,’ I mused.

I can’t say I was much pleased either with the wholesale carnage that I had witnessed over the last fifteen days. If you add in the wily ways by which the Pandavas got rid of the foremost Kaurava warriors, Bhishma and Drona, it was quite depressing really. Today was the sixteenth day of the Great War, and I had seen enough death and destruction to last me a lifetime. And yet my gaze lingered in that direction, hoping for a redeeming silver lining in an otherwise bleak landscape.

It was perhaps an expression of filial fidelity, otherwise I couldn’t care less about the fates of the ill-fated warriors. After Drona’s death yesterday, Duryodhana had decided to appoint my beloved son, Karna, as the commander-in-chief of his army. In a little while, Karna was about to lead his army out to battle and I was drawn to witness this spectacle even against my natural neutral instinct.





To be honest, I must confess this was something I had keenly anticipated all these years – the final showdown between Karna and the Pandavas, especially Arjuna. You may call it paternal pride or partiality or whatever, but I truly believe that Karna is the greatest warrior of this era. The overrated Arjuna is no match for him. What is he but a prince born with a silver spoon in his mouth, whereas Karna had to struggle at every stage, every step of his life. His mother cast him off as a babe and despite his half-celestial, half-royal descent, he grew up in a lowly clan of charioteers. Drona even refused to teach him archery on account of his humble origins. Yet such was his determination and perseverance that Drona's own guru, the mighty Parashurama took him under his tutelage and transformed him into the world's finest archer. I think the time has now come for Karna to prove this fact to the whole world.

*25 December 1923 CE,
29°36'N 79°40'E (Almora, North India)*

A birth is always a matter of joy and pride for the patriarch of a lineage, but this morning I was especially elated to see

a special Suryavanshi baby boy. Wonder why the moon is so happy though. Fancy him showing a full, smiling face to a newborn Suryavanshi boy! Perhaps he is smiling for he has an inkling that the prophecy of Krishna, the crest-jewel of Chandravanshis, is finally about to come true . . .

*Second day of the month of Pausha, 3138 BCE,
29°59'N 76°51'E (Kurukshetra, North India)*

Today was perhaps the darkest day of my life. No father can bear to see his son killed before his very eyes. And when the son is someone as gallant and illustrious as Karna, and his killing as unfair as the one perpetrated by Arjuna, the grief can be overwhelming. Yet I cannot let the grief overcome me, for great responsibilities weigh on my shoulders. We celestials cannot allow the affairs of mere mortals to distract us from our duties of cosmic governance.

As I rode upon my seven-steed chariot drawing in the dawn in my wake, I noticed Karna pensively pacing inside his tent. His sense of frustration and despair was understandable. Yesterday, as the generalissimo of the Kaurava army, he had fought his heart out. His display of martial prowess in the battlefield was truly worthy of applause, yet the Pandavas had prevailed. The Kaurava army was distraught and demoralized. Karna knew that this was his day of reckoning. Bound by his oath to Kunti, his mother, that he wouldn't kill any of the Pandavas except Arjuna, he knew that he had to draw Arjuna into a do-or-die duel. He asked Duryodhana to make Shalya, the king of Madra, his charioteer that day.

It was a good move. When it came to prowess as a warrior, horse-rider and charioteer, Shalya was of the same calibre as Krishna, but Karna didn't realize that blood was thicker than water. Shalya happened to be the maternal uncle of the Pandavas, and that's where his loyalty lay. As the day progressed, instead of spurring Karna with encouraging exhortations, Shalya kept throwing taunting barbs at him, sapping away his grit, energy and resolve.

Yet Karna fought like a lion that day. He fought duels with Bhima and Yudhishtira, and defeated them both. Remembering his promise to Kunti, he spared their lives though. When he finally came face-to-face with Arjuna atop his magnificent chariot, everyone stopped in their tracks to witness the final showdown.



The greatest archers of their era showered astras of greater and greater power upon each other. The sky was thick with arrows flying in both directions. At one point in the battle, Arjuna hit Karna's chariot with a potent astra that hurled his chariot more than a hundred feet away. Karna responded with an astra that threw back Arjuna's chariot, albeit a few feet. When Krishna applauded Karna for his skills, Arjuna was stung to the quick and he asked Krishna to explain. Krishna simply told Arjuna to compare Karna's chariot with his own, which consisted of the entire universe in the form of Lord Krishna, Arjuna himself and the mighty Hanuman on top!



This awe-inspiring duel seemed to go on and on, with neither side showing any signs of relenting, despite being badly injured and fatigued. It was then that cruel fate struck another blow to my hapless son. One of the wheels of his chariot got stuck in the quagmire of the battlefield and the chariot refused to budge. It became increasingly difficult for Karna to counter Arjuna's arrows as a result of his immobile chariot. Finally Karna called out to Arjuna and asked him to desist for the sake of dharma, until he could free his chariot from the soil.

Arjuna lowered his bow, but Krishna intervened at that crucial juncture. He reminded Karna of the many misdeeds he had been a party to – the poisoning of Bhima, the burning of the Pandava palace at Varnavrat, the unfair game of dice at Hastinapur, the humiliation of Draupadi, the slaying of a defenceless Abhimanyu – and asked Karna whether all that was also done for the sake of dharma! He then exhorted Arjuna to continue the duel even though Karna was without a manoeuvrable chariot.

Karna replied with a furious volley of arrows that struck Arjuna, injuring him badly. Availing the opportunity, Karna quickly jumped down from his chariot and began hoisting the stuck wheel from the mud. Arjuna regained his composure shortly, but seeing Karna defenceless, he hesitated while lifting his bow. Krishna then reminded Arjuna how Karna had attacked Abhimanyu from behind and cut his bowstring, leaving him utterly defenceless. If ever there was an opportunity to kill Karna, it was here and now. Reluctantly, Arjuna raised his bow and placed the unfailing anjalika arrow upon it.

When Karna saw Arjuna raising his weapon against him, he paused for a second from his labours, and decided to pursue the only available course of action to save his life: invoking the mighty *Brahmastra*, the weapon of Brahma against Arjuna. He had learnt the art of invoking and discharging this astra from his great guru, Parashurama, but now, try as he might, he could not remember the invocation mantras. His guru's warning from days yore flashed through his mind: "Son! The day you forget the vidya I have taught you, know that your end is near."



Karna knew that it was all over now. As Arjuna drew his bowstring, Karna payed final obeisance to his guru, Parashurama, and to me, his divine father. As he stood remembering me, the anjalika arrow whizzed through the air and piercing his armour, slammed into his chest. Like a mighty oak tree uprooted by a fearsome hurricane, Karna crashed upon the blood-soaked battlefield.

“The likes of large-hearted lions like Karna will not be seen again,” said Krishna wistfully as he saw Karna collapse.

“Wait a second,” Arjuna responded with a puzzled expression, “Just a minute ago you were telling me how Karna was our most dangerous enemy who had to be killed without delay or mercy, and now you are praising him to the high heavens. May I know why?”

“He was your enemy indeed, but only because he ended up on the other side of the battlefield. That doesn’t diminish the beauty and grandeur of his magnanimous character. He had vowed never to refuse a supplicant, whatever he or she may ask for. In his kingdom, he used to donate mounds of gold every day. Arre, don’t you remember the incident years ago when I had called Karna the greatest *daanaveer*, excelling even King Yudhishtira in generosity, and you had expressed similar misgivings?”

That memorable incident when Karna had made me really proud flashed before my inner eye. In order to prove his point, Krishna had disguised himself and Arjuna as brahmins and approached King Yudhishtira at his court in Indraprastha. “O Great King! We brahmins are conducting a special sacrifice for which we need a large quantity of sandalwood. Please bear in mind that the wood should be totally dry, otherwise it would be of no use to us.”

It was the monsoon season and it had been raining quite heavily over the past few weeks. No matter how hard they tried, Yudhishtira’s attendants could not locate enough dry sandalwood in the entire city. With great disappointment and regret, Yudhishtira had to send the brahmins away empty-handed.



The brahmins in disguise then reached Karna's court at Champapuri, the capital of Anga. The same request was put before the king, with similar results. There was hardly any dry sandalwood left in the entire kingdom owing to the rains.

Karna was greatly dejected at the prospect of disappointing his guests. His gaze swept across his grand court, hoping to find someone with a solution, but all his courtiers sat silently with downcast eyes. His gaze eventually rested upon the giant, beautifully-sculpted set of doors at



the entrance of the court. Suddenly his face lit up, “Aha! I’ve found my dry sandalwood.”

He asked one of his attendants to fetch his bow and arrows, and to the consternation of all present, was soon discharging fiery arrows all over his own court. He was cutting, chipping and chopping every door, sculpture and piece-of-art in the court made of sandalwood!

While Karna was destroying the splendour of his own court, Krishna had turned to Arjuna and whispered, “Do you now understand why I deem Karna as the greatest *daanaveer* on earth? King Yudhishthira could have done the same thing, but the thought never struck him. Such a thought would only come to someone in whom the spirit of *daan* has become totally ingrained and come alive.”

As my awareness returned to the present, I heard



Krishna continue, “Just before the beginning of the war, when Indra cunningly asked Karna for the *kavacha* and *kundala*, the divine armour and earrings he had been born with, he didn’t hesitate to tear them off his body either, knowing fully well that he was signing his own death warrant. Do you still want further proof of his generosity? Just wait and watch.”

Lo and behold! Krishna instantly assumed the form of a brahmin again and approached the dying Karna. “O King Karna, I’ve heard great stories about your generosity. Can you give some alms to this poor brahmin in his hour of need?” he asked plaintively.

‘What can my son possibly give as he counts his last breaths, shattered and empty-handed!’ I wondered. I saw the pained expression on his face. The thought of disappointing the brahmin was tearing his heart apart. Suddenly a smile

appeared on his weary face and he spoke up, "Dear sir! I just remembered something. I have a gold tooth which I can surely give you." Saying so, he picked up a nearby rock and opening his mouth, smashed it against one of his teeth. As the tooth broke loose, he pried it out and gingerly handed it over to the brahmin.

"Surely you do not expect me to accept a blood-stained gift, O King?" asked the brahmin indignantly.

A shadow of pain hovered again over Karna's face. Then he reached out for his mighty Vijaya bow that lay beside him. This bow, which he had received from Parashurama himself, was about to serve him one last time. Placing an arrow upon the bow and mustering the last vestiges of strength left in his dying body, he shot an arrow straight into the earth. A stream of crystal clear water gushed forth. Karna gently washed the golden tooth clean and offered it respectfully to the brahmin.

But the brahmin was no longer there! In his place stood Krishna again, a gentle smile playing upon his face. "Glory to you O Karna! Your magnanimity and generosity will inspire people for generations to come. You have pleased me no end. Long life, limitless wealth or lordship over the three dominions: ask for any boon and it shall be yours."

"I do not desire anything for myself, Krishna," replied Karna. "By the grace of my guru, I knew that my last hour was nigh, and I've cleared all my pending accounts. I am at peace with myself, and ready to cross over to the other world.

"There is one thing though that gnaws at my heart," he added with a deep sigh, "What will become of my beloved motherland, the glorious Angabhumi and my beloved subjects, whom I've treated like my own children? Who will look after their material wellbeing and spiritual welfare? Who will . . ." Overcome by emotion and exhaustion, he could speak no further.

"This great war heralds the passing away of the Dwapara age," replied Krishna in an ominous tone, "Thirty-six years from now the age of Kali will dawn upon this earth. Dharma

will decline and adharma will gain ascendancy. There will be wars, strife, unrest and all-round decay of morality and spirituality. The Angabhumi you are so devoted to will not be spared the ravages of Kali either. Petty kings, princes and chieftains will wage constant battles upon this land, with utter disregard for the welfare of their subjects. The rich and powerful will trouble the poor and the weak no end."

The anguished expression on Karna's face betrayed his inner turmoil. "Is there no one who could redeem the glory of my dear Angabhumi?"

Krishna closed his eyes and remained silent for a few moments. When he opened his eyes again, Karna saw a ray of hope. "The dark forces of Kali Yuga will run their course no doubt, but there is something I can do for



your beloved Angabhumi.”

Looking towards the deeply remorseful and anguished Arjuna, he continued, “During his period of exile, Arjuna had propitiated Lord Shiva and received the mighty Pashupata astra from him. With the mighty astra, he received a strict injunction as well. The astra was never to be used in a petty war or battle. The astra has immense potency and its real application lies in the spiritual realm. If it must



destroy anything, it must be the three *granthis*, the three psychic knots of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, which veil and confine the light of the soul within.

“After the war is over, King Yudhishtira will conduct a grand ashwamedha yajna. Arjuna will follow the yajna horse through the length and breadth of Bharatvarsha, bringing all big and small kingdoms under Yudhishtira’s sovereignty.”

Turning towards Arjuna, he commanded, “Arjuna! When you reach the kingdom of Anga and bring it under your dominion, pay a visit to two ancient temples in that region. The first one is dedicated to Chandi, Karna’s tutelary deity and the other to Sita, the eternal symbol of purity. There the imprints of her holy feet have been enshrined since the times of Treta Yuga. These temples are situated in a *jagrat sthan*, an awakened place where the Ganga flows a northbound course. Between these awakened Shakti centres, upon a little hillock, the very last bastion of the sacred Vindhya mountains, is the place where Karna donated lavishly from. To that very spot you must go and bury your Pashupata astra.”

Casting a benevolent gaze upon Karna, Krishna continued, “The power of that astra, together with the merit of your sadhana, will keep the flame of spirituality

alive in Angabhumi even in the darkest days of Kali Yuga. Five thousand years from now, the fortunes of the land and its people will revive. A great chakravarti, of the calibre of Yudhishtira himself, will establish his seat upon the very same hillock. Instead of wielding the *raja danda*, the sceptre of royal authority, he will wield the *yoga danda*, the symbol of spiritual authority, for that will be the need of the hour. I have revived the ancient science of yoga through my discourse to Arjuna, but it will get diluted, perverted and lost again over time. This chakravarti will re-establish the science of yoga in its pristine purity and donate its fruits freely from the very same hill you bequeathed gold from.

“The spiritual successor of this chakravarti will be another Gangaputra. We all know the Gangaputra of Dwapara Yuga, our very own grandsire Bhishma, who now lies on a bed of arrows, patiently braving the ordeal so that he may depart in the holy period of uttarayana. The Gangaputra of Kali Yuga shall be as valiant, patient and potent, if not more. He will inspire thousands to wage war; not on physical battlefields but on the spiritual ones, against the sixfold army of *kama*, passion; *krodha*, anger; *lobha*, greed; *moha*, infatuation; *mada*, arrogance; and *matsarya*, envy. And following my footsteps, one day he will conduct a Pashupata Astra Yajna to propitiate Lord Pashupati and redeem the ancient Pashupata astra for the good of many.”

Krishna’s prophecy ended the little worry that had been tormenting Karna. He was finally at peace. With a humble bow to Krishna, he breathed his last. A life dogged by ill luck and tragedy had finally drawn to a close.

8 September 1954 CE,
30°07’N 78°16’E (Rishikesh, North India)

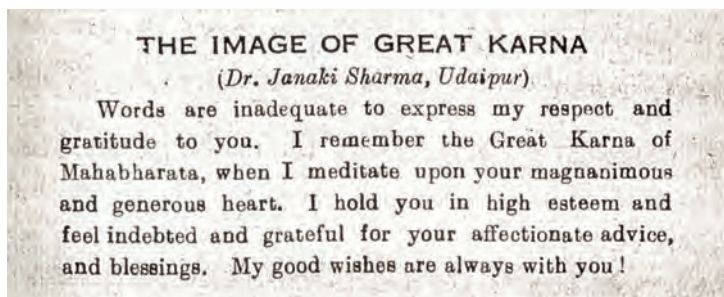
I had kept a keen eye on Dharmendra, the lad born on that fateful full moon night in Almora. The occasional report I gleaned from Amartyaa, his guardian angel (see the Satyam Tale, *Great Escapes* – Ed), only strengthened my conviction that this was the chakravarti Krishna had prophesied about.

Satyam, as he had now been named by his guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, possessed all the qualities worthy of a spiritual hero.

Yesterday his guru had organized a special program to commemorate his thirty-first birthday. Speaker after speaker lavished praise upon the young man, who received it with utmost humility as guru's grace. A special souvenir titled *Swami Satyananda – His Life*



and Work was also released on the occasion. It was a telling testimonial to the love, affection, regard and respect he received from people from all walks of life. As I was scanning through the souvenir, a short tribute caught my attention. I stood transfixed as I read and reread its contents.



With a smile, I closed the book. The prophecy was indeed being fulfilled.

*18 November 1957 CE,
25°24'N 86°29'E (Munger, East India)*

After leaving his guru's ashram in 1956 and starting his period of mendicancy, Satyam had been travelling all over the Indian subcontinent. There were two places he



returned to time and again. One was Rajnandgaon, which he used to call the Sarnath of his mission. There his chief associates, Satyabrat and Basanti carried out the necessary groundwork for his future mission. The other was Munger, a place he was drawn to again and again, in spite of himself.

Within the fortified area of the town was a little hillock which the locals called Karna Chaura. It had a dilapidated building on top and thick vegetation all around. It had become a meeting place and hideout for all kinds of antisocial elements, and no self-respecting person would ever venture there. This suited Satyam just fine for he could go there whenever he wanted and spend his time in solitary, undisturbed meditation.

Soon he began to have extraordinary experiences upon this hill. Once he felt as if his whole body was rapidly flying upwards. By the time he 'returned' to terra firma, his whole body was wet with perspiration and his heart was pounding wildly. On another occasion, the ground underneath him trembled and cracked open. From the crack emerged a figure in white who looked at him and said, "Yoga will be the culture of tomorrow and this will be its centre of resurgence. Stay here."

All these experiences definitely seem to be leading Satyam towards the fulfilment of his destiny . . .

*30 May 1958 CE,
30°56'N 79°02'E (Gangotri, North India)*

Satyam had brought his close associates, Satyabrat and Basanti on a pilgrimage to Gangotri, where divine forces

led him into communion with his future successor. This morning, when the childless couple requested him for a child, he decided to invoke his successor through them. Holding Ganga water in his palm, he took a solemn sankalpa and having infused it into the sacred water, he passed it on to Basanti and told her that she would have to take a sankalpa as well – to hand over the son that would be born to her. What a difficult vow for a mother, but she undertook it without the least hesitation. Thus was the Gangaputra of this age invoked . . .

*11 March 1978 CE,
25°24'N 86°29'E (Munger, East India)*

Satyam had built a small ashram in Munger in 1963 and called it the Bihar School of Yoga. The yoga movement that he initiated from these humble beginnings soon spread worldwide. Hundreds of yoga courses, seminars, programs, retreats and conventions were organized all over the globe under Satyam's inspiring guidance and leadership. The little ashram just outside the fort in Munger proved too small for the deluge of guests and students pouring in. Satyam had always been attracted to the hill yonder. Finally in 1978 the necessary arrangements were made and the property was acquired on behalf of the Bihar School of Yoga.

Today Satyam took everyone to Karna Chaura for a session of intensive karma yoga. After a few hours of strenuous clearing and cleaning, he told everyone to rest awhile. He sat down on a raised platform, gazing at the majestic Ganga flowing in the distance. "Do you see how Mother Ganga has turned in a sweeping arc at this place, with the town of Munger perched in the middle like a child sitting in his mother's lap?" he remarked in an introspective mood. "The beautiful morning and evening riverside vistas with the wide, expansive fields all around are worth seeing. Mother Ganga symbolizes yoga. Her journey from Gangotri down to the ocean represents the journey of the soul from gross to subtle," saying so he was overcome by a deep, unspoken emotion.



He then added, “If Karna’s age demanded gold, this age demands peace; *shanti* inside, *shanti* outside, *shanti* everywhere. The one who can distribute *shanti*, the way of peace, is the Karna of today, and I should not be modest but say openly that I now sit on this throne and that to offer peace has been my innermost desire.” The whole atmosphere resounded with the force of his conviction.

With a faraway look in his eyes he continued, “We will construct a press building there and after that will come the main building. This will be seven storeys high and will house a research centre, which will have computerized machines for carrying out research into diseases, and the application of medicines and yogic therapy for their treatment. An institution known as Sivananda Math will give scholarships to deserving students, books and stationery to poor children, open schools in rural areas, dig hand-pumps and wells, and distribute clothes and medicines to poor villagers. It will render all possible help to the needy and destitute . . .” Everyone was struck with wonder at the scope of Satyam’s

vision. A devotee got up and, with a voice brimming with emotion, sang a poem he had penned in Satyam's praise:

*On the blessed hill of King Karna
stands the majestic figure of Swami Satyananda.
O Ma Ganga! Gently whisper who is the greater of the two,
the wealthy king or the penniless sannyasin?*

*O ancient fort of Mir Qasim's times!
how long will you remain silent?
Tell me the truth! Is the Karna of yesteryear
indeed the Satyananda of the present?*

*The former doled out gold every single day,
the latter gifts the fruits of yoga in every possible way.
One gifted wealth and prosperity to paupers,
the other takes away the pain of sufferers.*

*One was the pupil of Parashurama,
the other is a disciple of Sivananda.
One had a vast army of chariots and soldiers,
the other has millions of students and disciples.*

*Karna searched for Arjuna on the battlefield,
Swami Satyam is searching for the infinite.
The former desired to fight and win,
the latter is fighting the desires within.*

*If Karna was a raja of Dwapara Yuga
Swami Satyam is a rajarishi of Kali Yuga,
Teaching the karma yoga of Sri Krishna
to all the modern-day Arjunas.*

*Karna Chaura has now become Ganga Darshan,
poised to revive the ancient yoga tradition.
Its doors are open to one and all,
no one, young or old, is debarred.*

*O Ma Ganga! I can hear your whisper now,
Karna Chaura is happy beyond measure
For the Karna of yore has returned hither
and Ma Chandi is beaming with pleasure.*



30 November 1995 CE,
24°31'N 86°42'E (Rikhia, East India)

After fulfilling his guru's mandate of propagating yoga from door to door and shore to shore, Satyam left his karmabhumi, Munger, and settled in his tapobhumi, Rikhia, where he began performing higher vedic and tantric sadhanas. A few days ago he commenced a powerful Satchandi Yajna as a medium for conferring *shaktipat*, the transference of spiritual power to his successor, Niranjan. This yajna will also become the nucleus for a grand twelve-year Rajasooya Yajna. A Rajasooya Yajna can only be performed by a chakravarti and if anyone deserves that title in this day and age, it is Satyam alone. I happened to catch a few remarks that he made to the assembled devotees on the concluding day of the yajna.

“... most interpretations of the *Gita* are philosophical, but at the end of the *Gita*, Krishna says, ‘O Arjuna, so have I explained to you the knowledge that is the secret of all secrets.’ Why did he use the words ‘secret of secrets’? What is that top secret in the *Gita*? By explaining the *Gita* philosophically as Shankara, Ramanuja, Radhakrishna,

Swami Sivananda and other teachers have done in hundreds of commentaries, you will find nothing secret. Everything is open. This means the *Gita* has an underground meaning.

“Besides the philosophical interpretations there is an underground, secret meaning, a hidden interpretation, and that is tantric. If you understand and accept that the *Gita* is a tantric text revealed to Arjuna in the middle of the battlefield, then what is that tantric process? The *Gita* will then have to be reinterpreted in the light of tantra, not merely dvaita, advaita or vishishtadvaita. So far, no one has interpreted the *Gita* along the lines of tantra.

“... there are many strange terms in the tantric tradition. One is ‘shaktipat’ and the synonym for that is *anugraha*. It means that the guru touches the disciple with his shakti.

“... this consciousness of ours is enveloped in darkness. Everywhere the curtains of ignorance are drawn. The people who try to go beyond these curtains fail most of the time. Occasionally, one finds a guru like Krishna, who tells Arjuna, ‘I give you the divine eye; look at my divine form.’ So that experience was induced by Krishna, which means he gave shaktipat to Arjuna. This experience is described in



the eleventh chapter of the *Gita*. The cosmic form of Lord Krishna is described with thousands of faces and all the events of the universe happening within them. This is a very big incidence of anugraha, grace . . .”

As I heard these words, my awareness travelled back in time to that moment more than five thousand years ago when I had seen this intense tantric experience actually manifest on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It had indeed been a thorough, awe-inspiring process of tantric transmission, and Satyam seems to understand it inside out.

*13 March 2014 CE,
25°24'N 86°29'E (Munger, East India)*

When I saw Satyam’s successor, Niranjan, revive the long-lost Pashupata Astra Yajna as part of the poornahuti proceedings of his daunting panchagni sadhana, I thought about the events of the past few years and how they had all led up to the fulfilment of Krishna’s prophecy.

Shortly after the samadhi of his guru, Niranjan started an intensive Durga anushthana to invoke the blessings of the



Cosmic Mother for the success of his guru's sankalpa. He followed that with the Katyayani anushthana, dedicated to the worship of the Mother in her benign kumari form. One day, as I was observing the proceedings of the anushthana from above, I saw Krishna and Radha swinging merrily from one of the branches of the big Kadamba tree that stood in the Akhara, the venue for the aforesaid anushthana. They looked quite delighted with the atmosphere of the place. After a while, Krishna whispered to Radha, "Things have been put into motion now. Everything is proceeding as planned. It is now time to leave this tree that has been our pleasant abode for quite a while now. Over there the place for Niranjana's panchagni will come up, and right here the vedi for the conduct of the sacred Pashupata Astra Yajna." I saw the two of them suddenly leap off their swing and the very next day, I saw the tree being chopped down.

The relentless chant of the powerful mantras brought me out of my reverie. It was the final day of the yajna. The grace of Lord Shiva was palpable in the electric atmosphere. A host of celestials had gathered to witness this rarest of rare spectacles. Amongst the multitude of devis, devatas, yakshas, gandharvas, kinnaras, nagas, apsaras and rishis, I spotted Krishna with his consort, Radha. 'How could he not be present today', I thought, recalling the last Pashupata Astra Yajna conducted upon this planet. Krishna himself had performed that yajna under the guidance of his guru, Upamanyu, and now, more than five thousand years later, those long-lost mantras and rituals were being revived under Niranjana's patronage. No wonder Krishna seemed so pleased with the proceedings – an extinct vidya that had been so dear to him had finally been restored to life.

Standing next to Krishna was Satyam himself, showering choicest blessings upon his dearest disciple. Next to him was Amartyaa and some way off was Aniketaa, Niranjana's guardian angel. I haven't really had much contact with her, but as Niranjana's fate begins to unroll ever so swiftly along its destined path, I hope to interact with her more often.



Soon the yajna concluded and the potent power of Shiva unleashed by the yajna was made manifest in a symbolic bow and arrow. The sacred bow shone as if it were another Pinaka, Shiva's own bow. Niranjana solemnly prayed for the blessings of his guru and then, placing the consecrated arrow upon the bow, let it fly across the open sky. At that moment I knew that Arjuna's ancient astra had been well and truly resurrected. It was now in the hands of a most capable general, who would soon begin to wield it for *bahujan hitaya, bahujan sukhaya*, for the good and welfare of many . . .

As part of the Conversations project, our editing team at BSY has been carrying out extensive, meticulous research using the latest technologies on extant yogic and spiritual works, both ancient and modern. Recently one of the technical experts (by accident or by design) stumbled upon some pages from the akashic records, the mother of all databases. After painstaking analysis and translation, they turned out to be a few entries from the personal journal of Surya, the Sun-god himself. They have been reproduced here verbatim in the sequence in which they were discovered. The only alterations pertain to the temporal and spatial coordinates mentioned in the entries, which have been converted from a heliocentric frame of reference to the more familiar geocentric latitudes-longitudes and dates as per the Gregorian calendar.

—Editor

SATYAM TALKS 7





Satyam Tales

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

The Ancient Astra is the 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.

During the ending days of the Mahabharata war, Karna is mortally wounded by Arjuna and before giving up the ghost, he requests Lord Krishna to arrange for the wellbeing of Angabhumi, his motherland. Krishna agrees and through events unfolding in the life of Sri Swamiji, we see the fulfilment of Krishna's ancient promise.

This story is a delightful read for children, adults and old alike. It is an invaluable message for those engaged in the world and for those seeking the spirit. This journey is your journey, these challenges are your challenges, and this victory is your victory. It is a story that will touch your heart, give you joy, hope, conviction and, above all, faith. Yes, you too can invoke divine grace in your life.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

© Bihar School of Yoga 2014

Published by Yoga Publications Trust

First edition 2014

Printed at Aegean Offset Printers, Greater Noida

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