

ARADHANA

Yoga of the heart ♥

Year 1 Issue 4
Jul/Aug 2012



Rikhiapeeth, Rikhia, Deoghar, Jharkhand, India



Namo Narayan

ARADHANA Yoga of the heart ♥ is an offering to Paramguru Swami Sivananda and our beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda. It is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples, devotees and well-wishers of Paramahansa Satyananda.

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Swami Sivananda with Swami
Satyananda

Back Cover:

Swami Satyananda's charan paduka
Inside plates:

1. Darshan of Swami Sivananda
2. Swami Sivananda
3. Swami Satyananda
4. Swami Satyananda



Rikhiapeeth, the tapobhumi of Swami Satyananda has developed into a vibrant spiritual epicentre abundant in peace, plenty and prosperity. Aspirants, seekers, devotees, householders and sannyasins, come from all parts of the world to live and work together for the benefit of others by following the high ideals of seva, selfless service, sadhana, spiritual practice, swadhaya, self study, and satsang, association with truth, as taught by Swami Sivananda and established by Swami Satyananda. It is a place of inspiration and joy for the thousands of natives who live in the hundreds of villages that surround Rikhiapeeth, as well as for millions of spiritual aspirants and devotees who come to imbibe the spiritual vibrations that abound in this sacred place.

ARADHANA Yoga of the heart ♥ is intended to share the profound teachings and lifestyle that are being practiced and lived in this sacred place for the benefit of all.

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Aradhana Invocation

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः । परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ Bhagavad Gita 3:11
Yajnas nourish, strengthen and empower the Devas, they in turn empower us.
Strengthening and nourishing each other in this way, both attain shreya (prosperity).

—Guru and Disciple—



Where do Guru and disciple unite?
Not on the physical and emotional plane.
They unite in darkness,
When everything is finished,
In the innermost chamber
Where everything is dead.
There you do not hear a sound
Or see any form or vision.
You are aware of nothing but the Guru,
Shining like a lofty light.
That is how Guru and disciple
Must commune with each other.

Satyanaand

—Sure Steps to Spiritual Life—



Meditate

If the mind is not kept clean by regular practice of meditation, it becomes unbalanced or impure. Meditation removes the dross of the mind, kills all the pain and suffering and destroys all the causes of sorrow. Learn to exercise supreme control over the nerve currents, muscles, and calm the bubbling emotions, sentiments, instincts and impulses gradually through regular, silent meditation. By gradual and systematic practice,

a new orientation can be given to the feelings. The worldly mind can be entirely transmuted into a divine mind, serene and balanced. In this way, meditation allows an aspirant access to the realms of everlasting peace. To purify, to concentrate, to meditate and to realise one's divine essence is the foremost duty of everyone.

Meditation on the preceptor gives spiritual strength and peace. It develops strong and pure thoughts, and removes all obstacles on the spiritual path. Meditation on Guru is the master key for opening realms of eternal bliss. It is the grand truck road which takes the disciple direct to the destination of divine consciousness. Regular meditation on Guru opens the avenues of intuitional knowledge, makes the mind calm and awakens the inner consciousness. Nothing can disturb the disciple's mind when he is under the protection of his Guru, all doubts clear by themselves. The Guru's feet are channels of divine grace. When the disciple meditates on the lotus feet of Guru, he abides in ananda.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

The True Disciple

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda in Rishikesh

A true disciple is one who follows the instructions of the Guru to the very letter and spirit, and who propagates the teachings of the Guru to less evolved souls on the path till the end of his life. A true disciple is concerned only with the divine nature of the Guru. The Guru's actions as a man are not his concern. To him the Guru is Guru, even if he acts unconventionally. Always remember that the nature of a saint is unfathomable. Do not judge him. Do not measure his divine nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. Do not criticise your Guru's actions which are based on a universal vision.

The Guru teaches through personal example. His day to day conduct is a living ideal for the observant disciple. His life is a living sermon to the sincere disciple. By constant contact, the disciple imbibes the virtues of the Guru. He is moulded gradually. The disciple becomes like his Guru after some time by following his instructions to the very letter.

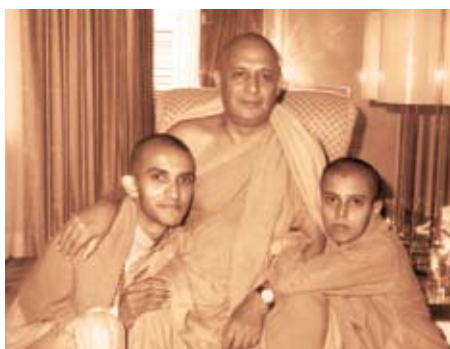
The best way to express your adoration of the Guru is to follow his noble example. Live according to the lines indicated by him. Have him as your ideal. Struggle to build yourselves upon that model. This will be the most effective puja of your Gurudev and the most pleasing Guru dakshina.

The Guru will impart spiritual instructions only to the aspirant who thirsts for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the Shastras, who has subdued his senses and passions, who has a calm mind and who possesses virtuous qualities like mercy, cosmic love, patience, humility, endurance, forbearance and honesty. Initiation into the mysteries of Brahman will fructify only when the disciple's mind becomes pure and desireless.

Gurukripa begins to work only when you surrender fully to Guru. Intense devotion to one's Guru and faithful adherence to his teachings are the most essential qualifications of a true disciple. Guru's grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him. The disciple who has faith in the Guru argues not, thinks not and reasons not. He simply obeys, obeys and obeys.

The lower nature must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor: "I want to practise yoga. I want to enter into nirvikalpa samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behaviour and conduct. One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas, prejudices and selfish interests should be given up. All these stand in the way of carrying out the teachings and instructions of one's Guru.

Lay bare to your Guru the secrets of your heart. The more you do so, the greater the Guru's sympathy, which means you will have more



Swami Satyananda, Swami Niranjan, and Swami Satsangi at Hotel Lexington in Manhattan, New York 1982

strength in the struggle against temptation. Divine grace comes only when there is a real thirst in the aspirant, when he is fit to receive it. The best disciple is like petrol. Even from a distance he will instantly react to the spark of the Guru's spiritual advice.

The disciple's self-surrender to the Guru and the Guru's grace are interrelated. Surrender draws down the Guru's grace, and the grace of the Guru makes the surrender complete. Guru's grace works in the form of sadhana in the aspirant. If an aspirant sticks to the path tenaciously, this is the grace of Guru. If he resists when temptation assails him, this is the grace of Guru. If people receive him with love and reverence, this is the grace of Guru. If he gets encouragement and strength when he is in despair and despondency, this is the grace of Guru. If he overcomes body-consciousness and rests in his own blissful self, this is the grace of Guru. Feel his grace at every step, and be sincere and truthful to him.

True discipleship opens the vision and kindles the spiritual fire. It awakens the dormant faculties. It is most necessary on one's journey along the spiritual path, at the end of which the Guru and disciple become one. The Guru blesses, guides and inspires the disciple. He transmits his spiritual power to him. He transforms and spiritualises him.



Swami Satyananda with Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi, Munger
1983

If the disciple survives after the Guru leaves his mortal body, he should lead the remaining portion of his life strictly in accordance with his Guru's instructions and live to preach them to others by practising them himself. One who, with self-control and spiritual vision, serves his Guru with atmabhava is a true disciple. A true disciple is one who serves his Guru till the end of his life.

Sivananda's disciple

Shiva's disciple has divine qualities. He is noble, gentle and soft. He has abundant mercy. He never begs. He gives and gives. He has a large heart. He mixes with all, serves all and loves all. He sings the Lord's names. He does kirtan. He does japa and meditation. He practises asana and pranayama. He is very efficient in doing seva. He practises the yoga of synthesis. He knows thought control. He is a practical Vedantin. He does cooking, proof reading, typing, nursing, and lecturing. He disseminates spiritual knowledge. He is simple and humble. He serves the poor with love. He has perfect tolerance for all faiths. He talks little. He is silent but dynamic. Work is worship for him. The spirit of service is ingrained in him. He is a bhakta, a yogi and a jnani.

A real Guru

Here are the characteristics of a real Guru. If you find these qualities in anyone, accept him at once as your Guru.

A real Guru has full knowledge of the Self and the Vedas. He has equal vision and a balanced mind. He is free from attraction, repulsion, egoism, anger, lust, greed, attachment and pride. He is an ocean of mercy and an embodiment of



Guru Purnima at Rikhiapeeth, 2011

love. He is absolutely fearless. He does not expect anything from anybody. He has an exemplary character.

Guru is Brahman. Guru is Ishwara. Guru is God. A word from him is a word from God. His tender smile radiates light, bliss, joy, knowledge and peace. He is in search of real aspirants. Living in his company is spiritual education. His mere presence is elevating, inspiring and stirring. His very company is a means of self-illumination. A real Guru is a blessing to suffering humanity.

Salutations to the lotus feet of the Guru. I fully believe in a real Guru. I have great adoration for a Guru. My heart longs to serve his lotus feet forever. I believe there is no purifier more powerful than service of a Guru in removing the impurities of the mind. I fully believe that the only safe boat that can take us to the other shore of immortality is the constant company of a Guru.



Kanya bhoj at Sat Chandi Mahayajna, Rikhiapeeth 2011

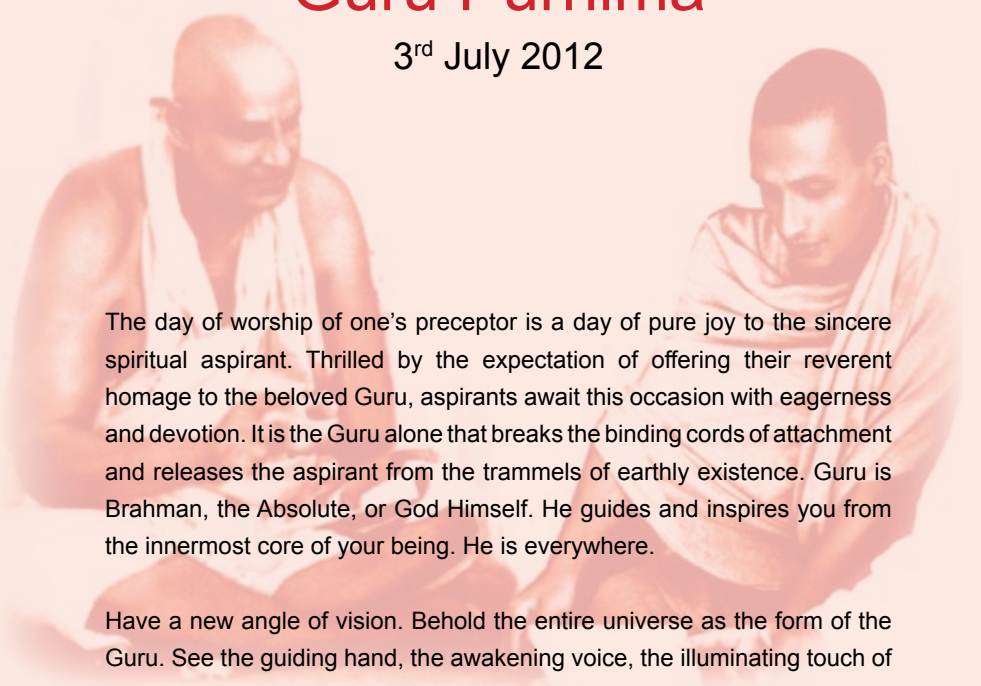
We must remember that when we surrender to the Guru, it's not because we want to become a slave, but because we want to become a master.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Aradhana during Ashadh – July

Guru Purnima

3rd July 2012



The day of worship of one's preceptor is a day of pure joy to the sincere spiritual aspirant. Thrilled by the expectation of offering their reverent homage to the beloved Guru, aspirants await this occasion with eagerness and devotion. It is the Guru alone that breaks the binding cords of attachment and releases the aspirant from the trammels of earthly existence. Guru is Brahman, the Absolute, or God Himself. He guides and inspires you from the innermost core of your being. He is everywhere.

Have a new angle of vision. Behold the entire universe as the form of the Guru. See the guiding hand, the awakening voice, the illuminating touch of the Guru in every object in this creation. The whole world will now stand transformed before your changed vision. The world as Guru will reveal all the precious secrets of life to you and bestow wisdom upon you. The supreme Guru, as manifested in visible nature, will teach you the most valuable lessons of life.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Guru Purnima Aradhana

Make a fresh resolve on this day to tread the spiritual path in accordance with the precepts of your Guru. Do Japa of your Guru Mantra. Meditate on all Gurus of the universe who inspire our lives. Sing bhajans and kirtans in worship of Guru. Also you can chant:

- Guru Gayatri Mantra x 108
- Sivananda Gayatri Mantra x 108
- Satyananda Gayatri Mantra x 108

Linking with the Spirit of Guru

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Swami Satyananda propagating the teachings of his Guru

We all have some understanding of physical, mental and emotional contact because we have been experiencing this for so many years. But it is more difficult to grasp the implications of the spiritual link between two individuals unless it is clearly defined. The spiritual link is not a religious link, it is not even welded closer by faith. The spiritual awareness or the spiritual being within us is still in dormancy. It is not yet born. I don't think it is even in the embryo stage. We can unite physically, and of course, we can unite mentally at any time by developing our extrasensory perception. Emotionally, we can also be one by having love and devotion for each other. But it is oneness on the spiritual plane that is the real purpose of communion, union or linking with the Guru.

The first prerequisite

Spiritual union will never occur unless we have awakened our atman. Atman is a word which is not properly understood. Some

call it self or spirit, but I understand it to be a type of awareness which knows no limitations. It has no barriers and is beyond the confines of time, space and matter. Physical awareness has many barriers. Mental awareness has fewer barriers while emotional awareness has still less and is the most efficient. A mother can feel her little child and commune with it at any moment, no matter how far apart they are. But spiritual or atmic awareness surpasses even emotional awareness.

When atmic awareness, or atman anubhuti as it is called in Vedanta, is awakened, then not only do we feel unity with the Guru, we feel it with all beings, even with those belonging to the animal and vegetable kingdom. Atman anubhuti is a difficult thing to explain, but if we want to establish some sort of link with our Guru, this is the first thing we have to develop.

A life of dedication and service

The relationship between a Guru and disciple is very difficult to practise and even harder to understand because it is non-intellectual and non-emotional. Therefore, we frequently fail to establish this particular relationship, not because we do not fulfil the religious or ethical conditions, but because we do not know exactly what attitude we should have towards our Guru. Should we have the attitude of a servant, a son or a daughter, a sister or a brother, a husband or a wife, a friend or a devotee? As far as I understand, it is none of these, although the relationship between Guru and disciple is definitely a complete relationship.

When I was living in the ashram of my Guru, doing seva, selfless service, and working very hard physically and mentally, I never thought about the physical form of my Guru's spiritual grace. It was not my nature to think about the

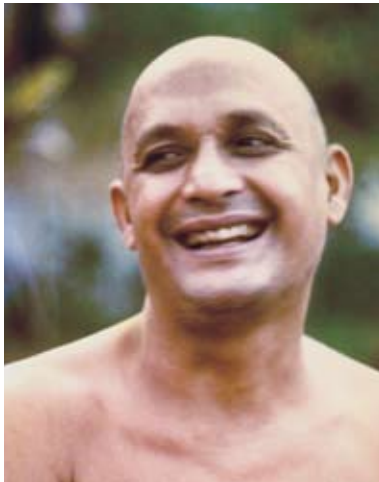


Worship at Samadhi Sthal, 2009

person I loved. I found it far better to work for him and to dedicate all my physical, mental and emotional energy to him. Even now, in dedicating every action to him I feel I have done much more than just meditating on him. I feel I have almost accomplished the act of union with him. This has always been my practical approach to Guru and to spiritual life.

During those years in the ashram when I worked for my Guru in various capacities, it was not important for me to be with him either. Of course, I saw him when I needed guidance concerning the work. And when I typed his manuscripts, I used to go every day to get them from him. But when I was administrator of the ashram, it was not even necessary for me to meet him once in a month because I had my own area of operation which did not really concern him. That was how I lived in the ashram for all those years, hardly ever thinking about my Guru, but constantly working for him.

Now I think I must have been working much more for my own inner peace and awakening than for seva. Because at the time I was very young, highly energetic and extremely turbulent, and it was necessary for me to channel my energies in the right direction. Otherwise my mind would have gone astray. Even with all the work that I did, I still found enough time to get into all types of mischief.



Swami Satyananda, 1977

In fact, even though I was totally engrossed in service, I was still one of the chief terrorists of the ashram.

I had so much energy that I used to swim across the Ganga four times every morning before starting work. When I finished work at night, I used to read for a while, then sit on the bank of the Ganga for my purascharana or mantra sadhana. For this I used a mantra which I had formulated myself, it was not given by my Guru. The mantra

was as long as Gayatri, and I had resolved to repeat it 2.4 million times. So it took me many, many years to complete the sadhana. After I finished my purascharana, every night I assumed my duties as night watchman and checked the whole ashram, which was spread over a vast area. First thing in the morning, I was ready to start work again in the kitchen.

The result of all this hard work and sadhana was that gradually I came to meet with the atman anubhuti; the

spiritual awareness took birth in me. Then quite naturally, I was able to forge a greater, deeper and more truthful link with my Guru.



Akshay Tritiya, Rikhiapeeth 2012

A living experience

In 1963, when I was staying at Ananda Bhawan in Munger, I had a living experience of my Guru, as real as this experience of me talking to you and you listening to me. I think I only had that experience because the atman anubhuti in me had already matured and was able to forge a link on the spiritual plane with my Guru. So, on the 13th July in the middle of the night, I got the first order, the unspoken command as you call it. And when the experience came to an end, it was very difficult for me to determine which was the reality, the internal space or the external place. After an hour or so, I came to know that I was in Ananda Bhawan and that I had just had an inner experience.

Establishing the inner link

So, if you are able to sharpen the inner tool of consciousness, then you can raise your awareness to the level of the atman or the self.

After that, the communication or the link between Guru and disciple is established. Then the duty of a disciple is to carry out the behests of his Guru. I received one direction from my Guru and that was, "Yoga is the light, and you should help spread it to everyone." That is all. That is the link between myself and my Guru.

Now, those of you who wish to be linked with the Guru must bear one thing in mind. Just by devotion or emotion you will not come close, as it is very difficult for the Guru to respond emotionally to anyone. I don't understand that language at all. But there is one way for us to be linked. If you work for yoga amongst your family and friends, and if you are able to pass on this science to at least half a dozen people and give them a direction in life, you can come very close to me. Conveying the message of yoga is the one thing I have in my mind all the time.

You will find that when you are offering the light of yoga to others, you feel very close to me, because I am not a Guru, I am a disciple. And as a disciple I need co-disciples to help me fulfil the command of my Guru.



Daily Guru Puja at Swami Satyananda's Samadhi Sthal, Rikhiapeth

Satsang with Swami Satyananda



Swami Satyananda at Sivananda Sarovar, Rikhiapeth 2009

How can we develop the inner link with Guru?

We should not concern ourselves with anything transitory. Body, mind and emotions are temporary, the spirit is eternal and our relationship with the Guru should be based on spirit. If there is anything between you and him, it is between your spirit and his spirit, not between your body and his body, or between your mind and his mind. It is not a physical, mental or emotional relationship. Of course, sometimes you do take the help of this emotional relationship, but you have to step out of it. Otherwise, the sobriety, tranquility, stability and homogeneity of the mind are lost.

In order to understand the deeper link with Guru, you must read about the attitude the gopis had towards Krishna. Although many people consider the gopis as mere girls who played with Krishna, this was not so. The gopis' relationship with Krishna was transcendental. It wasn't his physical frame that they loved, but his cosmic body. Whenever the gopis were with Krishna, they did not feel they were with a human being. They always felt that they were in the company of divinity. When you feel you are in the company of divinity, you are very much in touch with your Guru.

Free Your Mind

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Swami Satyananda with his disciples at Dharmashala in Rikhiapeth

When the relationship between Guru and disciple is established, the only thing that is expected of the disciple is that he frees his mind. Making the mind free is difficult to explain. The mind is always engaged on either the sensory, mental, emotional or deeper planes, and often we don't even know what holds our mind. Every thought of the past, present or future, every association with pleasant and unpleasant, with a person or an object, should be separated from the mind. None of these things should hold our awareness. When the mind becomes free from these involvements, then it expresses itself as a very powerful force in the form of an experience, vision, light or revelation. This is precisely what I expect from my disciples.

Two thousand years ago, when the disciples of Christ carried his teachings from continent to continent, who were they? They were the people with a free mind, and that is why they could illumine the minds of men and distribute healing energy to the sick. And this is what I expect from you.

You may be able to work in the ashram or outside as a very good yoga teacher, but this is a very gross and simple quality of a disciple. There will always be better teachers than you, just as many people have grown to be better teachers than me. They have better power of expression, and they can speak and sing better than I can.

If you are not learned I don't care. If you have not read spiritual books, I don't mind. Even if you do not have a good power of expression it doesn't matter. You have a mind, and you have a body and senses, and you have knowledge of the objects of pleasure and pain. And from time to time you will be drawn to pleasant things and you will withdraw from unpleasant things. This does not matter, it is the natural and habitual behaviour of the mind, body and senses. However, it should not arrest the free expression of the mind.

The mind should remain free whether you live amidst pleasure or pain, wealth or poverty, young people or old. The mind must not identify itself with the external circumstances and think, 'I am poor', 'I am rich', 'I am in pain' or 'I am very unfortunate'. As sannyasins, we live a life of poverty by choice. Why? Because our minds must be free. Wealth, name, fame, passion, all these things hold down this great energy of man.

The disciples, particularly the younger sannyasins, should understand that they have not undertaken this particular way of life just to represent a particular sect or order. We are trying to simplify our lives on the physical, mental and emotional planes so the mind will remain free. If we can keep the mind free, awakening will take place automatically, even without any sadhana. This is a simple and scientific principle.

You know what happens in physics? You take matter and you disintegrate it. In the beginning it is



Satsang in Ganesh Kutir

a composition of many elements, but when you separate those elements from the matter, what remains is energy. Nowadays, they call this nuclear energy. Energy is always present in matter, but it is dormant and invisible. If you take a handful of uranium or plutonium, you can't see anything but a handful of sand. You cannot see or perceive it, but there is energy hidden in the gross matter. Just as a scientist removes those elements, one by one, and finally liberates energy, in the same way, when you free the mind from the tattwas or elements, then it becomes a power.

Every disciple must awaken this energy, and then move amongst the people, giving them whatever help they need, whether it is healing, peace of mind or spiritual illumination. Now this energy is untapped in man. It is in everybody and at any time it can come out. In sannyasa, the discipleship in which you are ordained is to facilitate this process. When this energy is at your disposal, you must be very careful not to misuse it, either consciously or unconsciously. If you have a revolver it can kill a friend or a villain both. It depends on what is in the mind. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the mind is purified. That is the second thing I expect from my disciples.



Waves of bliss at Sat Chandi Mahayajna, 2006

With an impure mind which is withdrawn or filled with anger, prejudices, passions, hatred, jealousy, greed and likes and dislikes, if this energy wakes up, then one will do more harm than good. Whatever the situation may be, the disciple should be very calm and quiet within himself. Even if he is being choked or punished he should still have peace of mind, equal vision, total humility, no hatred and no sense of revenge or defence. A calm, quiet and serene disciple, filled with understanding and compassion for all, is ready to use his awakened power for the good of humanity.



Hi-tech Abhishek of sphaatik shivalingam with light, sound & water

Now of course you are very few, because we only started our work a few years ago, but I am certain that in a short time, my disciples are going to be the guiding stars of the whole humanity. The signs are very clear. Therefore I expect two things from my disciples: a free mind and a mind that is purified.

Life is mysterious, one does not know why one has come to this earth, from where and for how long. Mysterious it may be, but it is not without a purpose. That purpose is fulfilled if one can find the right direction. The direction is determined and becomes clear when one gets an expert guide in the form of Guru. It is Guru who shapes the destiny of the disciple. But such disciples are rare, they are earmarked. You may say they are the chosen ones. Death does not eradicate the bond with Guru for such a disciple, as life is eternal. The Guru continues to guide and shape the disciple even after he abandons the body.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Dharma of a Disciple

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Rungs of Guru-disciple relationship

To fully understand the dharma of a disciple one must understand the basis of the relationship between Guru and disciple. When the Guru is there in physical form, then the physical connection creates a relationship. It can be an emotional connection, an intellectual connection or a spiritual connection. People usually begin by developing an intellectual connection first.

They go to a Guru, listen to his talks, they like what the Guru says and something clicks in their mind. An intellectual connection takes place with the thought, "Oh this person knows a lot, he can speak on any subject, he can define things very clearly, he can answer questions clearly." Such clarity of communication is what stimulates you intellectually and brings you to the Guru in the first place.

Thereafter, some people develop an emotional connection and dependency. The Guru becomes part of their life. However, they don't know how to manage their emotions or where to classify the Guru in their life. So there is confusion. Some treat the Guru as their

father, some as their brother, and some even treat the Guru as their husband. Nevertheless, it is a sambandh, a relationship which they develop. It is an emotional relationship and there is dependency in it. "You told me, but it did not happen" – that kind of a communication takes place when an emotional attachment forms with the Guru.

There are a few who develop a spiritual connection with the Guru. Their relationship with the Guru is different. There is obedience in their relationship. People with emotional dependencies don't obey. They talk. That is their need and release. However, people with spiritual intentions obey. And obedience to Guru is a primary qualification of a disciple.

A lesson in obedience

I remember an incident from our early days with Sri Swamiji in the old ashram. One day he came out of his room with chocolate in his hand. In those days, chocolate was super special. I am talking of the sixties, we did not have chocolates in India then. When people used to come from overseas they would bring chocolate and being the youngest, I was the prime recipient.

Sri Swamiji asked me, "Meetha khana hai? Do you want to eat sweets?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Okay, only on one condition, ki tum karva bhi kha sako. You should be able to eat the sour as well." I was stunned. I began to wonder what he meant by sour, what was he going to give me. However, I made a daring move and said, "Yes, I am ready." That was a mistake! He came out with two huge green chillies and said, "If you want chocolate, then you should be able to tolerate even the sharpness of chilli. You should be able to enjoy the



Swami Niranjanananda, 2011



Swami Satyananda showering grace on all at Sat Chandi Mahayajna

sharpness of the chilli just as you enjoy the sweetness of chocolate."

I took the chillies from him and started eating and crying, eating and crying. The whole mouth was like fire. After that he gave me the chocolate. In a very simple way he taught me a big lesson. Therefore, even today, whenever I have chocolate in front of me I also see those two chillies. I learnt in that manner and it was possible because of obedience. If there was no obedience, then I would have definitely said, "No, I don't want the chillies, I only want chocolate."

Obedience is a necessary quality in a disciple. Sometimes, when the Guru is performing 'egodectomy', an operation on the ego, there is a very harsh reaction from the individual. The ego does not want to be operated on. If somebody comes to you and says, "I am going to chop off your head" and takes out a knife, will you allow that person to do so? No. In the same manner, when even the Guru takes out the knife and says, "I am going to cut your ego", you don't allow that to happen. You cannot be a disciple if you don't allow the Guru to perform the ego surgery on you. That is where the virtue of obedience becomes useful. The Guru says, "Put your head down." You reply, "Okay, it is down." He says, "I am going to cut it." You say, "It is yours, do as you wish." A simple statement, a simple feeling

can change the entire intention. Or you may say, "No, you can't" and it changes the entire intention too. So, this intention is seen in the form of obedience.

In the past we used to have a person called the postman. Now, with e-mails, there are very few postmen left. However, once upon a time we all used to wait for the postman to bring our mail. The postman would carry thousands of rupees, money orders, cheques and drafts in his bag. But his duty was to deliver them dispassionately to the addressees. He did not use the money, the cheques or drafts, he did not take them for personal use. The postman was the richest, but also the poorest.

In the same manner, one has to be poor internally even if one possesses many things externally. One has to be simple and pure in intention while externally one is active and fulfilling every guidance and direction that is received from the Guru for personal and community development.

Swami Sivananda used to say that obedience to Guru is superior to worship of Guru. He used to say, "Do not worship the Guru with garlands and by washing his feet, but by following his orders. That is the highest worship."

Obedience to instructions must be immediate. A disciple should not sit idle waiting for the Guru to tell him something. You know



the saying, "An idle mind is a devil's workshop." Once the mind becomes the devil's workshop, no instructions of the Guru have any effect on it. Therefore, the disciple must always be in total readiness for following the orders of the Guru. In fact, he should be able to anticipate what the Guru wants. He should be alert and prepared. The two qualities, obedience and readiness, are necessary to create an intimate connection with the Guru.

Akshay Tiritiya

Sri Vidya Puja at Rikhiapeeth



Sacred Sri Vidya Puja during Akshay Tiritiya, 2012

Akshay Tiritiya was an important day in Paramahansa Satyananda's sadhana at Rikhiapeeth. Each year he performed special ceremonies and anusthans to commemorate this day.

A grand scale Sri Vidya Puja conducted at Rikhiapeeth from 22nd to 24th April continued and exalted the tradition and knowledge which he perfected. The three day anusthan was presided over by Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda. The expert Yoginis of Lalita Mahila Samajam ashram, Tamil Nadu, worshipped the sacred Sri Yantra according to authentic Tantric rites and rituals with mantras, abhishek and havan.

Devi prasad was distributed on a grand scale. Recipients included over 2000 families



Offering of a cow to local farmer during Akshay Tiritiya



Junior kanyas of Rikhiapeeth worshipping
Devi during Akshay Tritiya, 2012

from Rikhia and surrounding panchayats, thousands of devotees and guests from around India and the world, and the 1500 kanyas and batuks who were also invited daily for bhoj. Deserving kanyas were also presented

with new bicycles. Two cows and their beautiful calves were presented to local farmers on behalf of Sivananda Math.

On the 24th April, 175 aspirants received diksha from Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda at Ganesh Kutir.

A special feature of the anusthan was the high-tech abhishek in Sivananda Sarovar which was not like one anyone had ever seen before, this was with lights, sound, video and water! Watching satsangs of Swami Satyananda on a water screen under a sky full of stars lifted all to new heights of remembrance and devotion.

The Sri Vidya anusthan was full of bliss, joy, and happiness and served as a powerful and efficient channel to connect with Swami Satyananda and to receive his eternal blessings.

The blessings of the Cosmic Mother and Sadguru that were invoked will remain with us all for many lives to come, as Akshay Tritiya is a symbol of the abiding and eternal tattwa present in the manifest and unmanifest universe.

Sannyasa Training at Rikhiapeeth

51 of the sannyasa training participants, from the three year sannyasa training at Sannyasa Peeth in Munger, were sent to further their sannyasa training at Rikhiapeeth for one month in April, to imbibe the precepts of 'Serve, Love, and Give', which are the fundamental teachings of Swami Sivananda for sannyasins.

Aradhana during Shravan – August

Radha Krishna Jhoolan Raksha Bandhan

29th July–2nd August 2012

This annual worship of Radha, Krishna and Bal Gopal is a celebration of pure bhakti and has been celebrated annually in Rikhiapeth since 1998. It combines havan, naam sankirtan, dance and aarti. During this period devotees forget their daily worries and become intoxicated with remembrance of Lord Krishna. This joyous worship culminates on Raksha Bandhan.

“Raksha Bandhan is celebrated throughout India on the full moon day of Shravan. This festival is unique because throughout life it reminds us of the perennial ties which bind us to our benefactors and protectors. Blessed are they who understand the importance of this. Traditionally this festival is known as Upakarnam and on this day sisters tie a knot on the wrist of their brothers amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras. For ultimately it is the Vedas that protect one and all. According to the Puranas, on this day Sachi the consort of Indra, tied a holy thread around his wrist when he was defeated by the demons, and by the power of that protection he ultimately gained victory over them.”

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Radha Krishna Jhoolan Aradhana

Love for Krishna is the Supreme Yoga. For these five days focus your awareness on Sri Krishna. See and experience Lord Krishna in everything. Each morning rise early and after bathing chant the Bhagavad Gita. Each evening worship Lord Krishna with prayers, kirtan and aarti. You can chant: Vande Gopalam, Sri Krishnastakam, and perform havan with Krishna Gayatri mantra 108 times:

*Om devakinandanaaya vidmahe vaasudevaaya dhimahi
tanno krishnah prachodayaat*

The Grace of Guru

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



Swami Satyananda giving darshan on the final day of Sat Chandi Mahayajna, 2006

Guru's grace is a most difficult thing to comprehend, and even more difficult to explain. It is tangible only to those who are receptive to it. In India, there is a phrase which is commonly used to emphasise the importance of Guru's grace in the life of a disciple: 'Guru kripa hi kevalam'. This means that the Guru's grace alone can liberate a disciple.

A disciple, aspirant or sadhaka should be fully aware that once he is initiated into any practice of yoga – karma yoga, jnana yoga, hatha yoga or bhakti yoga – the most important and perhaps the most difficult thing he has to achieve is control of the mind. This is the greatest obstacle most disciples will face. They may succeed in combating the turbulences of the mind temporarily, but sooner or later they will encounter them again, perhaps with greater force. When this happens, even the most aware and cautious disciple may become unbalanced and lose control, and the aspirant who is still uncertain may be completely shattered.

It is almost impossible to control the patterns of the mind, especially the negative aspects such as anger, jealousy, greed and passion. They invade the mind from all sides. It is our misfortune that we are not able to recognise them for what they are, and succumb to them. This is a great obstacle and we must find a way to overcome it before we can make spiritual progress. No one is immune; at some time or other, all of us are caught. Even the sincerest and most devoted disciple is subject to the storms and tempests which stir and shake the mind.

Sometimes we are temporarily able to waive the onslaughts of the mind. But if we carefully analyse the situation, we will find that we have only managed to suppress our traumas. In actual fact they remain lurking somewhere at the back of the mind, and it only takes a tiny spark for them to flare up again. If we suppress these onslaughts time and time again, they may erupt as illness, affecting our physical bodies.

So how are we to combat the mind? It is the Guru's grace alone that can liberate us from this bondage of the mind. It is he alone who can give us the strength and equanimity to survive the invasions of our mental patterns. It is his grace that helps us through the severest trials. Without it, we can be crushed and torn in pieces. It is with his help that we can hold our heads high and walk along the path once again.



Swami Satyananda with kanyas in Ganesh Kutir



Kanyas invoking Devi Ma with Mangal Nritya during Akshay Tritiya, 2012

But Guru's grace is not achieved so easily. To receive it, we must be sincere and totally his. We must belong to him, body, mind and soul. Then when we encounter difficulties in our internal and external lives, he will come to our side and assist us. But not otherwise. Why should the Guru shower his grace on us if we are not fully qualified to receive it? To receive the true grace of the Guru, the disciple should have no mind of his own in relation to the Guru. The Guru thinks and the disciple acts. The disciple does not judge the Guru's thoughts. He accepts them as if they were his own. Only such a disciple can receive the true grace of the Guru.

However, sometimes even if we are not yet ready to receive Guru's grace, he may still help us through some of our difficulties, to alleviate them in a small measure. This too is his grace, but it is not the full force of the grace. The full grace is that which liberates us from the bondage that curbs our growth as individuals. It is that grace which we should aspire for and prepare ourselves to receive. But that grace is available only to one who has no expectations.

We often tend to approach the Guru full of desires and expectations. Some of these expectations are more obvious, and others are latent. But nevertheless they exist. They may be gross, rajasic desires, such as acquisition of wealth, name and fame,

good health and happiness, or they may be more subtle or sattwic, such as enlightenment, progress in sadhana, mental powers and siddhis. No matter what these desires are, we must strive towards eliminating them. Then and only then will the Guru pick us up and carry us along.

Very often the Guru showers grace on the disciple, but the disciple does not have the eyes to see. Guru's grace can manifest in many ways – it may be pleasant and sweet, or severe and unpleasant. Most disciples believe that when the Guru speaks with kind and soft words, he is bestowing a blessing and the more pleasant and charming he is, the more grace is being bestowed. But this need not be true.

Guru's grace can be very unpleasant at times. The Guru is like a carpenter who chops and cuts a piece of wood down to size, not showing the least mercy until he has made something from it. Before he started, the carpenter had a clear vision of what he wanted to create. In the same way, the Guru chops, saws and cuts the disciple's ego with a clear vision of what he is trying to achieve, and shows no mercy until he has the finished product. As the carpenter transforms the wood into an object of utility, purpose and beauty, the Guru



Guru Bhakti anusthan at Sivananda Sarovar on 5th January 2012



transforms the disciple into a liberated being, to be the guiding light of many. But this can only take place if the disciple, like the piece of wood, remains calm, quiet and egoless, allowing the Guru to transform him totally.

To understand the Guru is not an easy matter. Guru is able to penetrate deep into our personality and judge us for what we really are. He is able to weigh our strengths and weaknesses, even the ones we did not realise we had. He will use the severest methods in order to make us aware of our limitations. This too is his grace. In fact, if a disciple has not experienced this, he has not really known the Guru. In order to receive and understand this grace of Guru, one has to approach the Guru with sincerity and dedication, expecting nothing, receiving whatever one gets with humility and always striving to maintain unity with Guru.

When you surrender at the sacred feet of your Guru, beg him not for worldly needs, but for his grace, ask that you have true devotion and lasting faith in him. Blessed is the disciple who has the grace of the Guru on him permanently.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Yoga Seminars at Madrid and Bogota

In May 2012 Swami Satyasangananda left Rikhia for Europe and South America. Her first halt was at Madrid where her programs were organised by Satyananda Yoga Association of Spain. On 9th May and 10th May, she gave public lectures on 'Management of Stress through Yoga' and on 'Integral Yoga'. This was



followed by a three day seminar on 'The relation between Karma, Bhakti and Gyana Yoga' from 11th to 13th May, which was attended by participants from all over Europe, UK, Canada and USA. Many aspirants were initiated by her into mantra, jignasu, karma and poorna sannyas. The visit of Swami Satyasangananda was the first seminar ever to be held at Madrid and an important event for the yoga aspirants of Spain who were blessed with her insight, wisdom and presence. Swamiji received a warm welcome from the long standing devotees of Swami Satyananda, Kamal Mukhi from Barcelona, Ajit and Manu Nebhwani of Madrid and Lal and Ajanta Nebhwani of Barcelona, as they went out of their way to make her

stay most memorable.



From Madrid, Swami Satyasangananda crossed the Atlantic ocean on to Bogota, in Colombia, for a two week stay at the invitation of the Satyananda Yoga Academy of South and Latin America headed by

Ignacio and Maria Teresa Copete and Gloria Nino, devotees of Swami Satyananda from the 1970's. The trip was a nostalgic one for Swamiji as she had last visited Bogota with Sri Swamiji almost 30 years before.



Upon arrival she was interviewed by two leading newspapers in which she received full page coverage as well as TV channels who highlighted her visit and programs in Bogota. On 17th May she addressed a public lecture at the Bogota university in a hall packed to capacity. This was followed by a seminar from 18th to 20th May on 'Yoga a practical science of life', during which she gave discourses, meditation, as well as havan and initiation to aspirants into mantra, jignasu and karma sannyas.

On 21st May Swami Satyasangananda conducted a havan at the residence of Olga Martinez, for the peace of the departed soul of her husband Roberto Martinez who was a dear disciple of Sri Swamiji.

On May 24th she traveled to the beautiful retreat of Casa De Paz in Subachoque, to conduct a seminar from 25th to 27th May on the 'Relevance of Meditation for Modern Life'. Apart from the discourses and lively satsangs, the highlight was the meditation techniques of Vigyan Bhairava Tantra which she revealed for the first time.

On her return to Bogota, before departing for India on 29th May, she visited old devotees of Swami Satyananda who invited her to their homes to bless them and their families. She also visited the ancient church of St Francis of Assisi from the 16th century where



Swami Satyananda had entered into a trance. Her visit to this church was full of divine grace and blessings and a wonderful culmination to her tour as it strengthened her sankalpa to fulfill the mandate of her Guru.

Aradhana during Bhadrapad – August/September

Krishna Janmashtami

9th August 2012

Krishna Janmashtami is the birthday of Lord Krishna. It falls on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapad. The eighth avatar, Krishna, who has become the beloved of India and the world at large, had a threefold objective: to destroy the wicked demons, to play the leading role in the great war fought on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, where he delivered His wonderful message of the Bhagavad Gita, and to become the centre of a marvellous development of the bhakti schools of India.

There is no true science except devotion to Lord Krishna. That man is wealthy indeed who loves Radha and Krishna. There is no sorrow other than the lack of devotion to Krishna. He is the foremost of the emancipated who loves Krishna.

Devotion is the only means of attaining Lord Krishna. When love is directed towards Krishna, man is freed from the bondage of the world.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

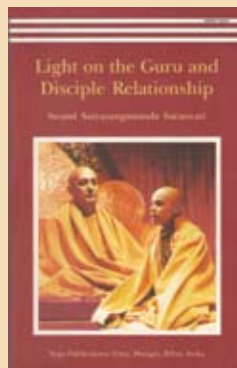
Krishna Janmashtami Aradhana

Rise early and after taking bath offer prayers to Lord Krishna. Sing prarthanas and chant Madhurastakam, Meri Prarthana and Narayan Suktam. In the evening perform havan by chanting the Gopala Gayatri mantra 108 times. Sing and dance joyous kirtans dedicated to Krishna.

Light on the Guru and Disciple Relationship

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

This practical and inspiring guide is an essential text for all sincere aspirants, as realising and establishing a relationship with Guru is the first and most crucial step on the spiritual journey. This book sheds light on the role and importance of Guru for spiritual progress and reveals many aspects of the Guru-disciple relationship that were previously shrouded in mystery.



Rikhiapeeth blog: www.rikhiapeeth.net

The Rikhiapeeth blog is a sanctuary for all spiritual seekers. Inspiring satsangs of Paramahansa Satyananda are posted daily which address universal questions relating to the entire gamut of birth, life, death, reincarnation and karma. These satsangs uplift spiritual seekers from around the globe, known and unknown, in their pursuit to live a divine life.

Blogger's comment: "This blog is truly appreciated. It can be an excellent way to begin a day, becoming a daily dose of wisdom and clarity."



Events at Rikhiapeeth Jul/Aug

Guru Purnima: 1st–3rd July

Traditional worship of Guru is performed at Rikhiapeeth along with havan, mantra chanting, and spiritual discourses. Diksha on 3rd July.

Sri Radha Krishna Jhoolan: 29th July–2nd Aug

The annual worship of Radha, Krishna and Bal Gopal is a celebration of pure bhakti and devotion. Diksha on 2nd August.

Krishna Janmashtami: 9th Aug

The birth of Sri Krishna is celebrated with kirtans, prayers and aarti.

Courses at Rikhiapeeth Jul/Aug

Antar Mouna Course: 6th–8th July

This unique course systematically guides practitioners of all levels through the powerful meditation practice of antar mouna, 'inner silence'.

Yoga Teacher Training Course (Hindi): 15th Aug–4th Sept

This comprehensive course brings an overview of integral yoga as propagated by Paramahansa Satyananda through the Bihar School of Yoga.



Rikhiapeeth Events 2012

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|----------------------|--|
| July 1st–3rd | Guru Purnima |
| July 29th–Aug 2nd | Sri Radha Krishna Jhoolan |
| Aug 9th | Krishna Janmashtami |
| Sept 1st–8th | Srimad Bhagavat Katha & Sivananda Janmotsav |
| Sept 12th | Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Day |
| Oct 16th–23rd | Ashwin Navaratri Sadhana |
| Nov 13th | Diwali |
| Dec 14th–17th | Sat Chandi Mahayajna / Sita Kalyanam |
| Dec 24th–28th | Yoga Purnima |
| Dec 31st–Jan 1st | New Year |
| 5th & 6th each month | Guru Bhakti Yoga |

Rikhiapeeth Courses 2012

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| July 6th–8th | Antar Mouna Course |
| Aug 15th–Sept 4th | Yoga Teacher Training Course (Hindi) |
| Sept 14th–16th | Ajapa Japa and Yoga Nidra Course |
| Oct 26th–Nov 4th | Chakra Sadhana Course |
| Nov 7th–13th | Prana Vidya Course |
| Jan 2nd–8th 2013 | Kriya Yoga & Tattwa Shuddhi Course (English) |
| Jan to Oct | Introduction to Ashram Life |

Those planning to attend any of the specified events and courses should contact Rikhiapeeth by phone, email or post in advance (for reply within India, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope).

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