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The translated books maintain that an almost literal translation of the Bengali words of the original author best serves both seekers and Kriyavans. No attempt has been made for the translations to be poetic or interpretive for the above mentioned reason. If the reader notices irregular English grammar (including non-traditional sentence structure, punctuation, etc) please understand that it is intentional. The translator has tried as best as he could to keep the work as close to the Bengali phrasing in the original without it being unreadable or incomprehensible.

Pranam, The Translator: Yoga Niketan Team

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A Biography by Swami Satyananda Giri

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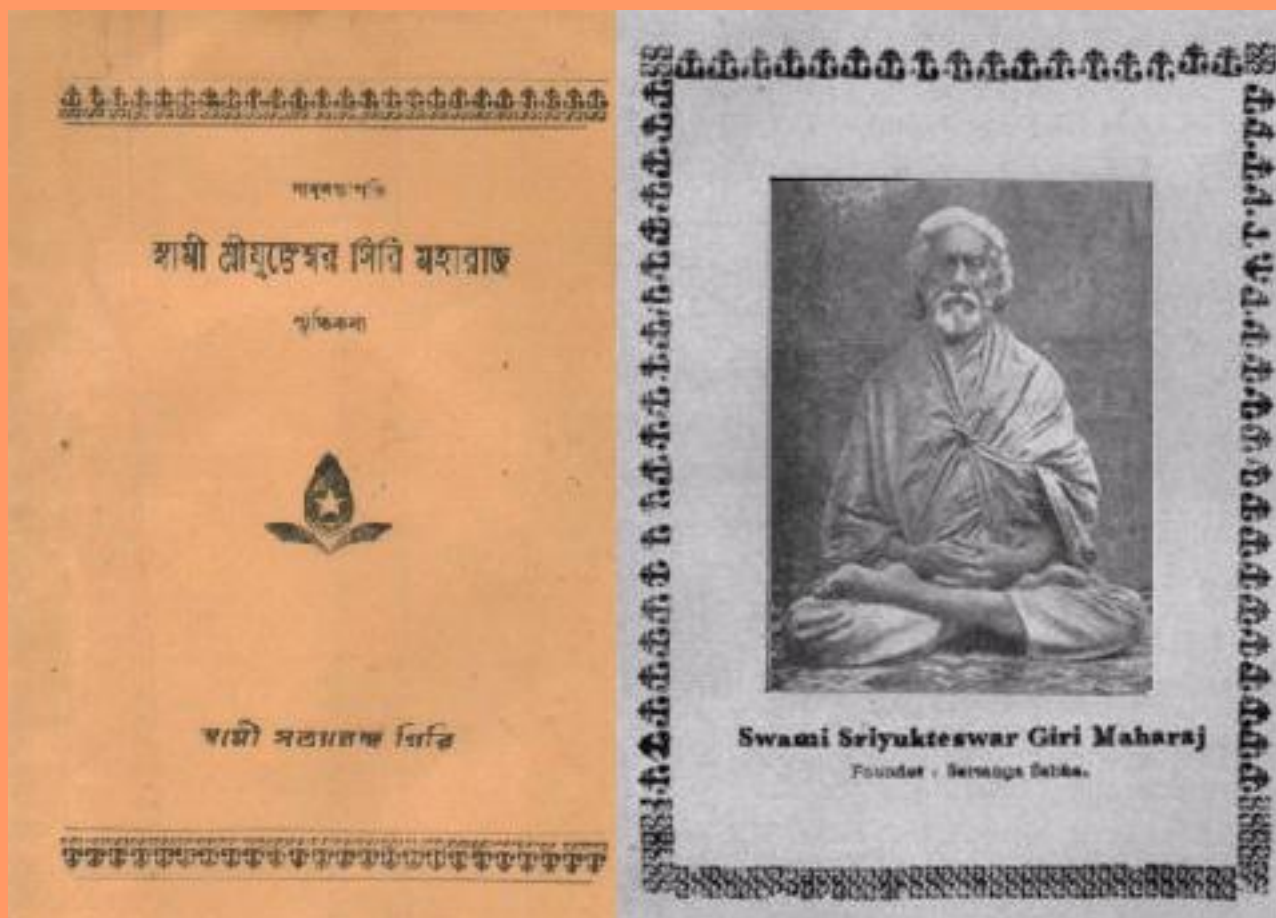
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Pranam,

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Yoga Niketan

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## Dedication

One Saturday at dusk, in the Bengali year 1318 [Editor's note -- 1912 of the Christian calendar], in the company of the most revered Swami Yoganandaji at the Simla neighborhood in Calcutta, I received darshan of the one that Yoganandaji had called beforehand his "Jnanagurudev": Srimat Swami Sriyukteshvar Giri Maharaj. On that very day that tall, athletically built man with a regal stance, long arms that came down to his knees - a man amongst men - completely captivated my heart. After that, day after day, in different organizational work, in the Satsanga Sabha and other places, I was fortunate to have his company and gained the wisdom to resolve so many types of issues in my life. In our discussions, because of his indulging me with his attention, and due to my limited intellect and carelessness, I argued with him about so many things and, consequently, I was reprimanded by him. Still I would count every fortunate day in which I would have his presence, his divine company, hear a couple of words from his mouth, listen to his humorous stories and be able to enjoy his joking and kidding around. Sometimes I was guilty of being critical and spoke unfavorably about the direction of his work, yet upon receiving a momentary touch of this great man's inner light, I became enchanted and collapsed at his feet. The sinner's sin vanished in that Holy Touch. Even if I, as the perpetrator, came to him with trepidation, so many times I would be relieved of any fear in his affectionate welcoming. Supposedly, I am known as being an emotional person and the holy Maharajji's reputation in society was as an emotionless, logical man. Yet it is from sitting at this yoga-united man's feet and listening to his seemingly dry yet deeply knowledgeable, scientific and mind-gripping talks that so many times I

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would become overcome with divine emotion. Penetrating the veil of logical analysis, I tasted the delightful nectar of bliss. Sometimes, away from him, for some reason or another, maybe I would become annoyed, afraid or confused. I would come to him and argue with him too, but in a moment of his company those feelings would disappear somewhere. It was from his affection that my vanity was annihilated at the feet of this Divine Incarnation of Knowledge.

In Puri, being there as the ashramswami of Sadhu Sabha's Karar Ashram, he gave an insignificant person like me his respect and love and graced me by allowing me to live near him for some time. Although sometimes I failed under his rule, the memory of this, the most precious time of my life, is permanently and radiantly etched in my mind. In the battlefield of life, whether in the running of the ashram, teaching people, and later, with the teaching system and management of the Ranchi Brahmacharya University, who knows in how many ways and how much wisdom he gave this little being, building me into a new person. Almost every day during ashram life, he would bless this weak, skeptical man, showing me with the greatest care the power and equipoise of Kriyayoga sadhana, endowing me with the strength of sadhana and a disciplined life, for which I was bound to him in deep gratitude. A sick man misbehaving in his sickness and then begging for safety, this Satyananda received mild reproof, and later was affectionately blessed by this venerable and great teacher by his visitations, timely and untimely, and his amazing cures for these behavioral ailments. Mental courage, hope, and a steady and full reliance on Providence were some of the endowments of wisdom, and these sacred memories are forever alive in this servant's mind.

In one moment of his company, I found the boat to cross the ocean of this world and then spent my days intoxicated in bliss and joy. At that time, I could not even imagine writing about the life of this great, enlightened Acharya of the Age. A couple of friends hinted at this but I did not pay any attention. Whatever I learned from conversations in his holy company and whatever I learned of his immense nature through being his initiate, that is what is floating in front of my mind even in the absence of his physical body. Seemingly unconnected, every incident is presenting itself in front of me as having had great significance. This writer is not capable of properly capturing those things on paper. The one from whose blessed presence hundreds of ordinary sadhakas were able to easily and magnificently progress on the path of Kriya yoga and were lifted by him to lofty levels, the one

in whose holy company ordinary, barely educated people became writers and poets of Essential Knowledge, the one through whose beautiful words of logic, irreverent and negligent villagers became respectful, thoughtful and effective members of community, the one with whose slightest reproach the most touted and proud person would instantly cower - how can I paint a picture of his colossal character? One reassuring fact is that he lived with us as if he was our own kind. In all his teaching and in his behavior he taught us to know human beings in a simple way rather than trying to see beyond them.

While doing the supreme, higher than the highest, His Holiness Guru Sadhusabhapati Maharajji's work through the Sadhu Sabha and Satsanga Sabha and the spreading of Kriyayoga sadhana initiation, and also when, under the direction of the revered Swami Paramhansa Yoganandaji Maharaj, I traveled to many places and became close to different Kriya yoga sadhakas and devotees, I found many of them also greatly desired that a biography of Maharajji be written. After the two short biographies I wrote of Adiguru Yogiraj Lord Sri Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya and Yogacharya Sri Shastri Mahasaya (Hansaswami Kebalanandaji Maharaj)\* were published, it seemed that these requests increased a hundredfold. But when I would think about this superman's huge personality and his fathomless ocean of knowledge, I would become overwhelmed. Waves upon waves would come and take me over and I could not capture anything properly, and I did not have the courage to write anything down. I did not have the fortune of seeing the Incarnation of the Age, Yogeshwar Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya. Whatever I heard through the lineage, whatever little I could understand, is what I digested, and only with that was I able to make a simple and small offering at the feet of the Lord, based on the words of the successors about Him. It is not out of place to say that that book is not a real biography or even an abbreviated one. But in this case, I have been directly in the company of Greatness! Whatever I would think about - I would begin to wonder if any of that is exactly right. The huge fireball of Cosmic Light totally flooded my limited vision. I received True Holy Company; I was thinking: who knows what I will end up saying trying to say something else - I felt fear and trepidation in my mind about this. So, even though I wanted to from time to time, I could not summon up the courage to pick up the pen. Then, through the good wishes of noble devotees, a little light seemed to appear in the darkness. With their holy encouragement I became enthusiastic and sat down to write. Whether the sequence and order of events and the instructive words etc. are properly organized, I cannot say. I have written whatever came up, with whatever feelings

came up, in my mind at the time I was writing. Whatever little I tasted is what I have presented to the devotees and seekers. If they are able to overlook the mistakes and imperfections in the few lines of reading here, and if they like the material in this book even a little bit, and if some reverence is awakened from the wisdom of this great teacher, then the writer will have received their silent blessings and felt that this little effort was a success.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

Everyone is aware of the troubles involved in publishing even such a small book. The same fate had also befallen this insignificant book-writer. But I was able to traverse this problem because of the efforts of many friends and dear ones, and I am indebted to all of them. I pray that they receive the beneficence of this Great Being's blessings. I offer my praise and thankfulness to my beloved student, the founder of the Jhargram Sevayatan Ashram and its trustees for taking the responsibility for the proper management of this book. The one by whose spiritual help and encouragement we are gratefully able to have this small biography of the enlightened and awakened life of the Divine Visionary Paribrajacharya His Holiness Jnanagurudev, completely beloved in my heart, Paramhansa Yoganandaji is, of course, always there.

We are certainly tremendously fortunate to have brushed with such holiness. But still I think about all the times and opportunities that I wasted. I did not understand very much at that time. If I had the Beloved One for another few days near me - how much more I would have benefited. I was unfortunate to not have been present during the last moments of his being in a body, but I was fortunate that in his last days in the world he remembered this petitioner of grace and graced me with his Divine Blessing. What he revealed of the direction to go in life and the wisdom that he gave on everything in many different ways - I have been neither able to do any of that, nor have I been able to absorb in my heart the deep meanings of all that he taught. Thus, in this auspicious and holy day, in purest sincerity I offer my reverence-filled heart to the Supremely Beloved Lord of Acharyas, and praying for his eternal blessings from beyond, I say:

Karpanyadoshohapahataswabhava  
 Pricchami tvam dharmasammudhrchetah  
 Yacchreya syannishchitam bruhi tanme  
 Shishyastehaham shadhi mam tvam prapannam

"My being is overcome by the flaw of faint-heartedness  
and my mind is bewildered concerning what is duty.  
Hence I beseech Thee: reveal unto me what is  
proper. I am Thy disciple. Teach me who have taken  
refuge in Thee."

Signed,

Satyananda Giri

Mahalaya, 1354 [Editor's note -- 1948 of the Christian calendar]  
Sevayatan-Yogamandir  
Jhargram (Medinipur)



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## Birth - Education - Life in the World

By the will of the Supreme, who is the Cause of Everything, in whose nineteenth century India - the second half of which beheld a scenario of societal, political and spiritual transition and transformation - the Acharya of the Age, Srimat Swami Sriyukteshvar Giri Maharaj was born in the form of a son to the middle class family of Kshetranath Karar - father, and Kadambini - mother, on the 10th of May in the Christian year of 1855 - the last Friday of the month of Baishakh - in the city of Srirampur of the Hoogly District, on the banks of the holy river Bhagirathi.

The only child of his parents, in due time and according to edicts, he was given and known by the name Priyanath, and began to be reared in tender care and affection. His father, Kshetranath Mahasaya was a minor land owner and he also earned money from another business which he owned. The environment of western civilization in the city of Srirampur influenced him as well. Mother Kadambini ran her household as a proper wife and ideal mother, firmly observant of the rules and norms of Hindu family life. At the suitable time, Priyanath was given the "literary initiation" and enrolled in school.

Priyanath's sharp intellect and intelligence caught the attention of his teachers and he became a favorite pupil. Besides other subjects, he was naturally adept at mathematics. He used to say that he could not remember a time when he did not receive full marks [100% correct] in mathematics tests during his days at school. From his very childhood, he had the inclination to study his schoolwork and everything else in depth. He could not accept with satisfaction any unscientific

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conclusion. The tendency to cultivate and study as well as enquire into the Essential Matters seemed to emanate as an inborn characteristic of the child Priyanath.

Being the child of a well-to-do family and an intelligent student, from his young days he became close to certain important and noble families of Srirampur, especially the Goswami family. The elders of the Goswami family doted on him. They were very happy to see him participating in discussions in events where the children and youth were expressing their intelligence and knowledge, and these elders would strongly encourage him at the appropriate times. From a young age, Priyanath used to enjoy listening to scriptural discourses and would thereafter be inspired to analyze the matters with his own intellect and flow of thought. In his childhood days in school, he could not take anything to heart that was not scientifically sound or meaningful, whether pertaining to normal subject matters, scriptural issues, or even music and drama. He became annoyed and perturbed when he would analyze some high philosophical perspective by some eminent scholar or elder and find that there was no logic behind it. When Priyanath was a student in the second grade (at present in ninth grade),\* a scriptural scholar came to the Goswami house and was lecturing to everyone about many subjects related to the shastras. At that time, Priyanath went there and listened to the deliberations with full attention. Different people asked the scholar various questions on numerous subjects, to all of which he answered by giving scriptural examples. Without giving much explanation to make it understandable, with every precept he would say, "It's in the shastras; therefore this precept should be followed." He carried on this way for quite a while. The smart youth Priyanath was able to easily get the pundit's attention. Along with everyone else's questions, he put in a couple of his own. But instead of elucidating, the scholar would give his scriptural quotations over and over again, which finally annoyed Priyanath to the point when he turned to some friends and said in such a way that the pundit could hear: "Mahasaya, the other day, about.... subject, I discovered a special quote from the shastras. It was an amazing proof! The sloka was '....labhet pathi ghurna prasrabane.'\*\*" Saying this, he quickly left the place and laughed hysterically with his friends, and then said, "He doesn't make any effort to help us understand anything; even when ask him, he won't answer with any logic. Just a bunch of incomprehensible mumbo jumbo from the shastras and then yelling at us, trying to make us feel stupid - I couldn't tolerate it any more. So, I composed a sloka of my own and said it. It means, 'You will attain that thing when you go around

urinating on the road." His companions were rolling over with laughter. Over in the gathering, the scholar was quiet for a moment and then suddenly said, "What did you say? What sloka did you spout? Trying to make a mockery out of me! Why you little rascal... I'll show you....!" By that time, Priyanath was out of reach. Later, when some people in the Goswami house would scold him about that, he would say, "Just a bunch of stupid scriptural exhortations - I was annoyed. Whatever it may be, shouldn't he try to explain at least? The Sanskrit sloka that I composed is also a scriptural precept. What's the point in explaining it? I said something from the shastras. That's all, nothing more to be said!!" Although the elders gently rebuked Priyanath a little bit in the beginning, they gradually became attracted to his analytic ability and later, when there would be discussions on complex matters with distinguished people, they would consult him also.

\*The parentheses and text within are in the original.

\*\*The ellipses (...) are in the original quotation.

Priyanath lost his father when he was a child. Although his mother was the legal custodian of everything, his father's household, the land ownership and management, and the business - all were attended to by him. He did not have much of a mind for business and consequently, the his father's small business went defunct. But because of his sharp intelligence, he became adept at other things. People such as those dealing with law in the houses and courts of provincial kings and landlords would consult him from time to time for his analysis and insight on problematic issues. Once, he caught the attention of the Maharaja of Susanga, who offered him a high-paying position in his land ownership. We have seen that in some situations people would consult him on some complicated matter, write down his easy resolution, and leave, to which eventually the lawyers would say, "This was the view of a prominent barrister in Calcutta." When Swamiji Maharaj would hear of this, he would explode in his patented belly laugh, entralling us with this and so many other stories. Through these discussions he used to try to make us understand that for a human being to attain his humanity, meaning in every kind of thing - even the spiritual world - to become great, one has to be attentive to whatever situation one may be in. Only in this way can human beings' behavior become excellent, easily and freely, the kind of intelligent behavior that can especially help even knowledgeable people. Thus he would say, "If there is some work that must be done, then one should not be disrespectful and careless towards that work,

because that disrespectful attitude can plant a seed of disrespect in the mind. The religious path or path to truth is not just meditation and concentration. Without regulating the entire life properly, it is not possible for a normal person to realize the highest ideals." That is why he instructed to pay attention to [such things as] cleanliness, orderliness, maintenance of the body, lawfulness, civility, simple behavior, self-sufficiency etc.

In due time, Priyanath successfully passed the entrance examination and enrolled in the Srirampur Christian Missionary College. During his studies, he became deeply interested in the Christian Bible, and besides the usual life story of Jesus Christ, he would explore the book of Revelation (the experience of Spiritual Knowledge and the revelation of the Supreme) and other such subjects, which captivated him and became a deeply significant part of his spiritual life, sadhana and realization, where he would become able to reveal the connection between the beautiful inner spirituality of the Christian religion and the mysteries of yoga. Later, this experience would express itself in his spiritual work in a special way.

In college, he became even more driven to investigate these things. He had a natural affection for scientific matters and along with studying ordinary science, he also began to feel attracted to the sciences of anatomy and physiology, as well as medicine. One day, he was listening to some scientific lecture from a professor. The subject of anatomy and physiology somehow crept in, although the lecture was about a another science. Priyanath took this opportunity and began to ask detailed questions in order to learn more about anatomy and physiology. The professor sahib was not that versed in that field and thus was having trouble giving complete answers to the student's questions. Finally, the teacher became irritated and said, "First go to the Medical College; then come to my class."\* This reproof became a blessing instead of a curse for Priyanath. He stopped going to that college and enrolled in the Calcutta Medical College instead. After wholeheartedly studying the science and essence of anatomy and physiology, he left the medical college before the end of the second year. He did not go back to study in the Srirampur college either. This was the end of his ordinary student life, but he was overcome by his thirst for knowledge on many different things. His mother tried to reengage him in the field of his father's business. But that only yielded some money; her son's mind was not in it at all. In the course of time, Priyanath married, and for a little while he became employed in an office as an accountant. He used to say, "At that time, I saw that those

who were doing that work were laboring almost all of the time, but that job was so easy for me that I would finish the needed work in a short time and then I would just chit chat." Even though he was well paid, the job did not satisfy him. He left his job and felt relieved.

\*The words in quotes are written in English in the original.

The thirst for knowledge remained as a constant companion. He became interested in studying homeopathic curative methods and after learning about the fine and fundamental points, he was solidly convinced of the supremacy of this science. At this time, he was introduced to the naturopathic experiments of the German luminary Dr. Konn, and establishing himself in the truth that natural medicine was the solution for all types of illnesses, he became immersed in cultivating these methods. It is from these insights that he was able to postulate about physiological matters such as the structure of the body and mind and other such things, and through experimentation and scientific analysis, his conclusions agreed with the prominent naturopathic physicians that eating meat and fish was unnatural and harmful. But he admitted that sometimes, especially under the consultation of a physician, it might be necessary for some ill persons to eat non-vegetarian food in order to regain strength. He also used to give advice that one should be simple and natural in respect to clothing and hair. Through extensive experimentation and penetrative observation, in order to formulate curative processes, along with spiritual practices - such as those in the field of Kriya, he eventually would demonstrate and enlighten people on the beauty and effectiveness of natural medicine, which would become of great service to the sick and diseased, making it possible to obtain simple and easy methods of cure.

Besides pursuing the knowledge of many different subjects, he was also interested in physical culture. With his naturally athletic body, he was able to excel in sports such as horseback riding, hunting, weapons' sports etc.

His closeness with the Goswami family brought him in contact with numerous accomplished, respected and wealthy persons, through whom he gained the experience of the many different aspects of human character. He would look back in his own life and freely admit that the company of these people profited him in the proper building of his mind and temperament. The late Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar Mahasaya's work in progressive reforms while maintaining the Indian

ethos had an influence on him. He was able to have the company of the Emperor of Literature, Bankimchandra, whose books and writings would bring light to his views on nationalism, freedom of thought, logical and analytical methods, religion, morality, society and other such things. Instead of the imaginary mindsets of scriptural and religious thought, the priceless philosophy of "the truth of Man is higher than all else" gave him a new perspective which seemed to give him a feeling of freedom to be his natural self. I have heard him say in conversations, "Bankimbabu is the one who is our guru."

I have heard from Swamiji Maharaj that the publisher of the periodical Bangadarshan requested the newly composed profound song "Bande Mataram"; Bankimchandra replied, "What good will it do to print this now? There are still twenty-five years to go before this mantra-song's meaning will be understood." Bankim's foresight and prophetic words would be realized in due time by the children of Bengal.

He used to be enraptured by the art of music, particularly instrumental music. It is not that he was very knowledgeable in music theory, nor was he skilled at many different types of music or adept at different instruments. With the aid of his natural ability to learn, whatever he learned was precise and somehow that itself made him excellent in the musical domain. He learned a few compositions on sitar from his master [of music], which was enough to distinguish him. When people would come, his master would ask him to play, and the audience would become enchanted. He used to encourage everyone to study and cultivate the art of music. He would emphasize that music should have its own place in the systems of education. He became perturbed whenever anyone would sing without paying attention to pitch, melody or rhythm, regardless of how or whom, whether they were children, youth or elderly, and he cautioned that to not pay attention like that could allow the possibility of becoming inattentive in character. He was in favor of proper education in music, dance and theater for students in school, and he would give amazing advice on very subtle elements regarding what may or may not be improper or unsuitable for the children.

The usual entanglements of worldly life were not able to bind him for very long. In just a few years, he became a widower. Later, his only daughter left her body after a battle with illness. Only his granddaughter remained as the sole blood connection to the world. As if to give Swamiji freedom from the ties of ordinary societal life, she married and went off to her husband's house. No one saw him

unnerved by any of these changes. The feeling that he had fulfilled and been freed from prarabdha [results from past lives] became firmly established in his mind. He used to say, "God made me a sannyasi through an easy way." Before his daughter's illness, he made preparations to travel the world to gain knowledge about many things, but the obstacles of life did not allow that desire to be fulfilled. In this first stage of life, the virtues of subtle insight, clear analysis, deep research, steadiness of character and non-attachment began to reveal themselves as what would comprise the immense personality and radiant life in the future for the Acharya of the Ages, His Holiness Swamiji Maharaj. Whoever may have been touched by the rays of the dawning of this life are blessed. UNFOLDING OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

sadrisham ceshtate svasyaah prakriteh jnaanavaan api

Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature.



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### **Indication of Path - Finding Guru - Investigation of Truth - Self Surrender**

The types of moods or behavior, a madness for spirituality - the outward signs that we would normally imagine - were not evident in Swamiji Maharaj's early life as far as we know. However, he used to participate in the usual occasions such as the Holi festival and Durga festival, and would be involved in going to pilgrimages with his mother along with doing other beneficent works; if he would meet any sadhus, sannyasis or some significant sadhaka, he would become keen on being in their company. Penetrating the immense mysteries of God's creation, Soul enquiry, and the application of astrology in spiritual work - it seems that these were the types of matters that were naturally endearing to him. If he would hear of an eminent sadhaka, he would be attracted to that person, but if he found evidence of a sadhaka having supernatural abilities, he would actually go to them to satisfy his curiosity. He believed that most of those supernatural stories were nonsense and insubstantial advertisement. Later, he used to say that experience showed that the extreme zeal and emotionalism of the devotees of realized sadhakas - rather, emotional transgressions - spreading a bunch of ridiculous stories about them, brought their gurus down to a lower level instead of glorifying them. He said that it is true that beyond human understanding the impossible can be possible through yogic miracles, but even if those things happen, it is better not to reveal them out of emotionalism and without any understanding. Lacking the comprehension of those types of events, exclamations with restless zeal take place, destroying seriousness and creating disrepute. Because of this, he would caution over and over about it and forbid paying too much attention in these directions. He

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used to say, "In earlier times in my life, even though I enjoyed hearing about sadhus, sannyasis, sadhakas etc., when I would hear extremely unusual stories about them, it was as if rascally ideas would come to my head, and however I could, I would employ many different methods to prove those stories as false." He told us a humorous story about some well-known yogi sadhaka of that of that time: "I used to often hear from this yogipurush's devotees and disciples that every night, their gurudev would sit still in yogasana in mid-air. After arguing back and forth, when those devotees began to spread the word of that event even more, one evening, being extremely careful, I silently lay down under the bed of the yogi sadhaka mahasaya. From time to time I thought that, it could be -- maybe his supernatural work was true. But since it was not possible to prove it in the normal way, let me satisfy my curiosity in hiding. At the proper time, the yogibara entered the room, closed the door, and lay down. Time passed on. Staying completely quiet under the bed, eventually I became restless. Finally, I lost my patience and said, 'What? You didn't float up in the air?' The yogibara hurriedly got up and said, 'Oh! You are under the bed, you punk! No wonder my samadhi wasn't good tonight!' After that, laughter exploded inside and outside." The devotees do not pay attention to what the sadhakas say, and how much excessive bragging and boasting they do with those words! When we would ask about the supernatural abilities of certain realized sadhakas of that time, about which we heard through public hearsay, he would tell us of his experience and many times would deny the validity of those things. But he would accept the truth of sadhakas' evidence of exceptional strength, amazing dedication, extraordinary temperament etc., while forbidding us to believe exaggerated and illogical stories, following blindly like sheep.

At this time, in the Goswami household and in houses of other noble families, the influence of Yogiraj Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya was becoming evident. Priyanath saw that they would regularly do some kind of sadhana behind closed doors. Eventually he heard that they were disciples of a renowned yogipurush from Benares and practiced yoga. He had knowledge of numerous sadhus, sannyasis, sadhakas etc. - many such gurus; some he even saw. But the word about this guru, about whom he had not been previously aware, attracted him in some unknown way. Leaving aside other sadhus and mahatmas, he became eager to meet this realized being. No reason, no relation to any events, what kind of a strange attraction is this?! How can the mind of such an analytical man like Priyanath become overcome with such longing? Who is this Mahapurush from Benares whose

wondrous touch came through some everyday people in Srirampur and inspired him so? In any case, he began to make great efforts at finding more information about this Yogiraj as well as trying to get his address, but no one would agree to let him know anything. His eagerness ripened; he became restless. Then, in the middle of some conversation, he caught a whiff of information about the address and without wasting a moment, he headed for Benares, saying, "I'm coming back after an excursion." Although after he arrived in Benares he became a little exasperated by difficulties, he was eventually able to locate Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya's house, finding which he was able to dispel some of his suspense. When the devotees departed, he felt as if the longing of many lifetimes had found the chance to be fulfilled in the presence of this Man, and prayed to the God of his Heart to receive initiation in Kriya yoga. On the day prescribed by the Lord\*, after bathing in the Ganges and dressing himself in pure garments, he arrived at his Guru's house and on the Suklapanchami of Ashar 1290 [Bengali holy day, month and year] [Editor's note -- 1884 of the Christian calendar], received initiation in Kriya yoga for which he had prayed. The fortunate disciple took his Guru's blessings and came back to his house in Srirampur. Returning home, with great devotion he became deeply immersed in sadhana, and practicing day after day, began to attain blissful ecstasy from the work. As he progressed on his path of sadhana, captivated by the beauty of ever-new divine experiences, his naturally analytical foundation became illuminated by the Light of Self-Awareness. When complexities would arise on the path, he would get his answers through letters to Sriguru. From time to time, he would also travel to Benares and resolve many issues in person.

\*[Translator's note: As also explained in the translation of Swami Satyananda Maharaj's biography of Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, in the original text, the Bengali word "Thakur" is used throughout to often address Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya. The closest meaning is "Lord" in the divine and deistic sense of the word. God is addressed as "Thakur" in Bengali culture, as well as God-humans. Sometimes "Thakur" is also a family name, but that does not have the same connotation.]

Priyanath's truth-seeking, forever enquiring mind became ever more inquisitive about knowing the vast mysteries of the universe.

"Wherever you see ashes, throw it up, you might just get the priceless gem" -- with this motto in his mind, he traveled around to many places. If he would find the whereabouts of luminary philosophers,, scientists, sadhakas, scholars, astrologers and other practitioners of

such fields, he would go to them and candidly ask to learn from them. Through the close company of persons such as Benrares' eminent Trailangaswamiji, Jnani Vaskarananda Swamiji, the guru of Agra's Radhaswami sect and many other sadhakas from other communities, he even practiced many of their methods of sadhana which he received from them. He went to Dakshineswar to have the divine darshan of Sri Ramakrishna, but the Lord\* was not there that day for some reason, and Swamiji was not able to see him.

\*In this case, "Lord" refers to Sri Ramakrishna.

His desire to gain knowledge through different means became so acute that upon hearing the words of a Santal\* sadhaka, he traveled deep inside a mountain jungle to the sadhaka's hut and expressed his desire to become his student. As far as we know, he was able to progress well in almost all of these paths of sadhana and became dear to the gurus of these teachings. Because of his reverence and discipline, even the Theosophical Society enthusiastically made him an honorary member.

\*Santals are an aboriginal people in Bengal.

He received instructions in sadhana from the aforementioned Santal guru, and was given permission to be present at the wondrous devotional and mystical dances to Krishna by his disciples in full moon nights, which were usually done in extreme secrecy. Swamiji Maharaj used to say, "In the deep jungle, with a serene full moon, in a frightening yet enchanting atmosphere, children, women and men in small groups would dance ecstatically. It seemed to conjure up the scenario of the supernatural dance of bliss on the rasamandali.\* I saw evidence of the amazing power of their sadhana in the extraordinary restraint, focus and discipline with joy in that wild state. The strength of their guru's sadhana, spiritual supremacy and stern adherence to rules were at the root of this disciplined ecstasy."

\*[Translator's note: This refers to the dance of the gopis and Krishna during His incarnation. "Rasamandali" is the stage where the "Rasalila" (play of Krishna and the gopis) took place.]

Discussing the fundamental elements of sadhana methods with tantrics, vaishnavas, bauls etc., he was able to discover the inner similarities of all paths. If we try to respectfully understand that the sadhakas and high beings of all sects teach spiritual elevation by

turning the attention inward, then the commonality all paths becomes revealed and the sectarian differences disappear. We received glimpses of this truth in his teachings. By going to the feet of the different mahapurushas and teacher-gurus, he was able to know the mysteries of sadhana and excelled at the practice of spiritual knowledge. However, he had to remember and be cautious, knowing that even while staying true to the ideals of Soul Knowledge, disciplined in Truth and respectful, only loitering in the ordinary company of sadhakas of different sects one could lose the way as well. When it was pertinent, he would say, "Sit with everyone, listen to everyone with respect, remember that a gem could be hidden even in ashes, but your own seat - meaning, your own particular spiritual foundation - be very aware of that. Losing your own post and being five different ways from following the words five different people won't get you anything - meaning, one must believe in and be firmly established in the guru-given sadhana. Only then can one taste the nectar from different flowers and create a chakra-garland of nectar."

In the multifarious, divine play of the world, the knowledge-enquiring sadhaka Priyanath, through obedience to sadhaka mahapurushas of many holy places, dispelled all doubts in this way about the unity of the root substance of the appropriately various settings of different paths. But he remained unmoved from his seat of the sadhana given by his Guru. The steady discipline and practice of Kriyayoga sadhana filled his inner being with Effulgence. Day after day, his consciousness became more and more pure and radiant. Attaining the beatitude of the Bliss of Brahman in the land of samadhi, the river of his life united with the Absolute Ocean of Satchitananda-substance. The blessings of the Guru now became evident in the natural and divine transformation of the intellect and intelligence of the reverent sadhaka. Being absorbed in this Grace, the disciple - with illuminated consciousness and filled with gratitude - surrendered everything to the feet of the Incarnation of All - Sriguru, and thus became sanctified. Seeing the Light of the Knowledge of Brahman in the divinity of His disciple, the Truth-Seeing Sage Guru joyfully and proudly gave him Shelter. The One who brought back the lost Yoga-science for this age, Yogavatar Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya seemed to now be building this dear disciple as an Incarnation of Knowledge, adorning him with the Knowledge of Brahman for the good of so many. In the Court of the Lord of the Universe, in Benares - the land of knowledge, the Supremely Divine Yogiraj Maheshwar's blessings in the Light of Knowledge became manifest.

Pashabaddho bhavet jivah pashamuktah sadashivah

The individual soul is bound by fetters; freed from them is the eternal Siva.



Swami Sri Yukteshvar Giri Maharaj  
A Biography by Swami Satyananda Giri

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### Company of Sadguru and Scriptural Cultivation

Having ended all conflicts in his mind and full of Sriguru's Grace, sadhaka yogi Priyanath returned to Srirampur and became absorbed in deep sadhana, and day after day, while ascending through and attaining knowledge of different levels of yoga-samadhi, throughout this part of sadhana he would exchange letters with Sriguru, in which he would present many questions about his experiences, seeking their resolution. Sometimes his mind would pull him to go to Benares and he would show up at his Guru's feet. Immersed in his Guru, in the course of discussions on spiritual sadhana and such matters, he also prayed for answers and other help on the many problems, dangers and pitfalls, sorrows of dear ones, obstacles etc. of ordinary householder life, and was blessed to witness the breadth of the supernatural powers of the Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya in all things.

When he would come to his Guru, he would usually not mingle with anyone, nor would he say very much. If there were people present, he would sit quietly on the side of the room, focused on his Guru. When everyone would leave, he would ask a few questions or show Yogiraj some writings. He used to say, "In the Presence of Gurudev, many problems would be resolved in ordinary small talk. Sometimes there was so much chit chat and even jokes and laughter, it seemed like - wait, we didn't really talk about anything important! But, when I would return and think a little bit after having settled down, I would realize that it was almost as if I had received Divine Knowledge in those conversations." Gurudev Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya would at times speak with seriousness, or in an ordinary manner, or sometimes with signs and gestures; this was at times difficult to comprehend for those

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present. But quieting oneself a little bit and thinking about that which had transpired before, the meaning would clearly reveal itself. Fortunate with the Grace of Guru, the disciple was now living the "Soul incursion" ideal.

The Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya would from time to time discuss philosophical literature and the Gita scripture with His disciples. He was particularly attentive to the deliberation and understanding of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the supreme shastra. Drawing out and explaining the hidden mysteries of the esoteric books in light of the glorious experiences and wisdom of sadhana was the specialty of his discourses on scriptures. The perfect student - the scientifically enquiring, samadhi-attained, great sadhaka Priyanath would drink the nectarous words from Sriguru's mouth to his heart's content. The Light of Divine Knowledge flooded him within. He became genuinely studious of the scriptural works.

Sri Priyanath's knowledge of Sanskrit was ordinary, if judged by the standards set up for comprehension of the shastras. Of course, his English was college-level proficient, and previously he had learned French. He also knew ordinary Hindi. According to custom of the time, he read the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas etc. and also attended extensive lectures by pundits on Puranic subjects. He enjoyed the inner, sadhana oriented commentary of the Vaishnava scripture, Sri Chaitanyacharitamrita. He examined books from numerous different sects, and even had some discussions on Islamic matters. He studied the Christian Bible with the deepest respect.

With his analytical and logical mind, he was particularly attracted to philosophical treatises. Detailed discussions of Samkhya philosophy, the cultivation and practice of the Patanjali Yogashastra, and understanding the Mimamsa Vedanta's essential subject matter via pure logic were things that seemed to be easy for him - meaning, he was effortlessly able to always come to the non-dual conclusion, "all is Brahman". With this philosophical cultivation and the divine experiences of sadhana, he began to explore the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He saw that revealed in the Gita's eternal truths was the fundamental commonality of philosophic theory, the knowledge of the Upanishads, the significance of the Puranas and the conclusions of science. The book that expressed the incredible experiences in the Kutastha of sadhakas on the path of sadhana, that Paramrishi Vyasdeva presented as a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, that Gita became his highest scripture. For the regular study and discussion of the Gita, he established a "Gita Sabha" [Gita fellowship]

with some Kriyavans and devoted people. He kept a written record of the regular recitation, commentary and interactive talk on the wisdom of the Gita that took place in this sabha. When a complex question would arise, he would resolve the issue via letters to his Gurudev. Sometimes he would actually go to his Guru's abode. Even though he deeply studied the commentaries on the root meaning of the Gita by the His Holiness Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, he took the timely and appropriate scientific perspective of the eastern and western luminaries, and extracting the inner meaning of the mysteries of the Gita in this way, began to print his own commentaries part by part. As each part would be printed, he would take it to his Guru every time, and would receive his Guru's support of this essential writing, and taking his Guru's blessings upon his head, would return with new enthusiasm. In this way, he was able to publish up to the ninth chapter.

He had a special keenness for astrology. To learn to be an astrologer, he used pay the traveling expenses of scholars from many places and bring them to his house to discuss the subject with them. If he heard of an renown pundit, he would sometimes even travel to places far away to go to him.

According to Maharajji's calculation, in the month of Magh, 194 Dwapara Yuga (1894 Christian Era),\* sadhaka Priyanath went to the Prayag Kumbhamela to see the great gathering of sadhus and high beings as well as to be in their company. Arriving at the Prayag pilgrimage, he began to spend time with sadhak-purushas from different paths. During the festival, one day on the other side of Allahabad's road to Jhusi, while walking by the sadhus' camps he suddenly heard someone with a familiar voice calling him: "Swamiji, Swamiji!!" He was not a sannyasi at the time; and who would be calling him like this - especially in this place where he was an unknown person? Suspicious of this, he ignored the call and continued to walk. But, out of the unfamiliar residence of a sadhu, a devotee came out, called him and took him to the sadhu's place. Arriving there, Priyanath saw a divinely radiant Man looking at him and gently laughing. He was awed, stunned and stupefied by the Sadhuji's holy presence. His mind bowed itself in reverence. The Sadhuji told him in Hindi, "Swamiji, rest here. We have to talk." Priyanath answered, "Maharaj, why are you calling me 'Swamiji'? I am not a sannyasi!" The Sadhuji then said, "Swamiji, why are you denying My words? No one denies Our words. The land from where the people come, they speak the language of that land; so I also called you in that type of language. Why be so displeased?" (Some time before this event,

because of the deaths of his wife and daughter, Priyanath was freed from the ties of worldly life.)\* He began to delight in conversing with this unusual Sadhu, and, in the noble attitude of His speaking, His excellent logic and beautiful manner, he was amazed to find an amazing similarity with his own Guru. When the subject came up and Swamiji came to know that the Sadhuji was Guru Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya's Gurudev, Sri Sri Mahamuni Babaji Maharaj, he became completely overcome, and with a grateful heart prostrated at the Feet of his Paramgurudev. Satisfied with his humility, thorough enquiry and service, the Wise, Knower of All Things Mahavatar Paramgurudev blessed him and said laughingly, "So, you wrote the Gita because of your Guru; now write a little something because of Me." Astonished, and wondering how it was possible that He would know about the fact of the Gita publication, Swamiji asked what it is that he would have to do. Babaji Maharaj said, "Write something about the unity of eastern and western philosophy, so that especially the people living in the West can become aware of that matter through that book." Hearing this directive, Priyanath seemed to become a little daunted and said, "Maharaj, I didn't study all that much and I don't know very much. How can it be possible for me to do this heroic work?" Immediately upon hearing his words, the Blissful Babaji Maharaj loudly laughed and said, "Hey, who can do what? Why this feeling of being so responsible, or why so self-concerned? The feeling came to my mind - it expressed through my mouth - you heard - the work will also happen - Whose work it is, He does." His Holiness Paramgurudev's beautiful explanation filled Swamiji's mind with wonder, belief and enthusiasm. With a reverent heart and head bowed, he received Guru's directive with his whole being. Then he asked, "I have to see You after I finish the book. Where will I find You then?" With affection towards His devotee, Babaji Maharaj said with His usual gentle laugh, "We will meet." When the discussion on the matter was finished and as Priyanath prepared to leave, Babaji Maharaj hinted at something particular - in a kind of riddle - about His disciple, our Supremely Holy Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya. Although Priyanath could not take the meaning of that to heart, he put it in memory, and taking the blessings of Paramguru upon his head, came to Sriguru's house in Benares, his consciousness overflowing with ecstatic bliss.

\*The parentheses and the text within are from the original.

\*\*The parentheses and the text within are from the original.

Paying homage to Sriguru's Feet, Priyanath related to Yogiraj his story

in joy and enthusiasm about his experiences at the Kumbhamela, including his meeting and talks with His Holiness Sri Sri Babaji Maharaj. He expressed the hint-statement that Babaji Maharaj had made (the gist of which was: "this life is finished..."),\* as the subject came up. Immediately after hearing this, the ever-blissful form and beautiful body of the Lord instantly became a stern and stone-like figure. The entire body became pale-gray; there was a terrible silence. The current of bliss among the devotees present stopped. All were gaping with tremendous suspense. The Guru-surrendered Priyanath, afraid, anxious and at a loss for what to do, began to blame himself. Those who had not for one moment ever seen the Lord out of His blissful demeanor, seemed to have a horrible desperation well up within them. And there was no one to give peace or courage. After three long hours passed in this way, His Holiness the Lord returned to His normal Self. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. The devotees present once again became enraptured by the Beloved Lord's easy and beautiful manner, conversation and teaching, as if nothing had happened. It was known later that with the help of that hint, the Lord understood the directive for His imminent departure from the body. The pull of physical existence can, if only for a moment, temporarily arrest the attention of even jivamukta (fully liberated while in the body) beings. That is strange indeed! Swarasvahi bidushohapi tatharudhohavinabeshah. In any case, the unwavering Yogibara Munibara Lord was once again in samadhic absorption in the Ocean of Bliss, and returned to His natural, death-vanquishing state of Grace.

With the blessing of Paramgurudev and having possessed the title of Swami, Srimat Priyanath Kararswami returned to Srirampur and, as per Babaji Maharaj's instructions, began to think about composing the new spiritual treatise. He previously had a desire to go to Paris for an exhibition. He began to study French for that and acquired skill in the language in only six months. Thinking about the glory of India and feeling himself to be an ordinary representative of India, he wrote a book in French based on his study of the essence of the Christian religion. In order to learn French, he used to often mingle with the Christian missionaries of Chandannagar. One day, he took the manuscript of the book and showed it to a missionary. That Christian missionary looked through the book and saw that in it there was a new understanding and perspective of their religious scripture, the Bible, as it pertained to the arrival of Lord Jesus, His sadhana, education, the wondrous experiences of His companions etc. and in the fundamental, spiritual elements. The missionary sahib felt that these conclusions would cause harm to the ordinary, sectarian belief of the Christians.

The sahib said that he wanted to look at the manuscript in more detail and kept it. And he said, "This will cause an upheaval in the Christian world." Because of circumstances, Swamiji Maharaj could not go to the foreign country; he also did not try to get that manuscript back for a long time. Later, when he went to get the manuscript, the sahib said in circuitous ways, "I've lost it somewhere. I can't find it." It is our misfortune and a loss for the world that we had to be deprived of such a magnificent discovery of truth. Some time later, we tried but could not find any of the papers on that matter.

One night at an auspicious time, he meditated upon the blessings of the spiritual lineage, especially the beneficent wish, directive and encouragement of Paramgurudev, and while going through the process of analyzing the essence of the spiritual treatises of the east and west, he arrived at a framework of the substantial elements for the composition of the new book. He began to create Sanskrit sutras based on the unifying conclusions of eastern philosophy and sadhana, and alongside those sutras, he wrote down the corresponding western spiritual material that expressed the same understanding, using quotations from the Bible and explaining their underlying meaning in English. Swamiji Maharaj's disciples, Howrah's prominent barristers Sri Narayan Chandra Ganguly and Sri Nilananda Chattopadhyay Mahasaya especially helped in the writing of the English part of this book. The name of the book became "Holy Science" or "Kaivalya Darshanam." From having had discussions with His Holiness Swamiji Maharaj, I came to know that some of the gist of the previous book in French was in this "Kaivalya Darshanam." The publisher of "Kaivalya Darshanam," who was a disciple of Maharajji and an executive of Sadhu Sabha, as well as a landlord of Bhandarhati and a native of Khidirpur, Roy Atul Chandra Choudhury Mahasaya wrote in the dedication section: "This Book is the true Philosophy of Religion. It was compiled...to establish the truth that there is an essential unity in the basis of all religion,...the teachings of the Bible itself...are perfectly non-sectarian. To show that the Holy Bible wholly teaches pure Sanatan Dharma, the Eternal Religion of the Indian Sadhus, I have collected these parts and published it in book form so that the religious public may not be misguided by the mistaken ideas of sectarianism which we think is the curse of Religion in its true sense.

"The Sanskrit sutras of the book, having reconciled all the different schools of Indian philosophy, will be also a great help in the study of Bhagabat Gita, the highest book in philosophy and theology in the present world."\*

\*The quoted material is written in English in the original book of Swami Satyananda (probably copied from the "Holy Science" manually), followed by a Bengali translation. Only some spelling mistakes of English words (the Sanskrit untouched ) have been corrected and some commas have been added. The ellipses were indicated in the original by asterisks. Otherwise, the text is literally the same as what is in the original, including the capitalization of words etc.

The author Swamiji Maharaj wrote in the beginning of the book:

Chatur nabatyuttarashatabarshe gate dwaparasya prayagkshetre  
Sadarshanavijnanam anvanvayartham paramgururajasyajnantuprapta  
Kararbamshya Priyanathswami Kadambini Kshetranathatmajena  
Hitaya vishwasya vidagdhatrishnaih pranitam darshakaivalyametat

In the 194 year of the Dvapara-Yuga, in the Prayag, in order to analyse the teaching of the six systems of philosophy, having obtained the permission of the Lord Parama-Guru, Priyanatha Svami of the family of Karar, son of Kadambini and Kshetranath, presents this 'Darsha-Kaivalya' for the welfare of the world.

One morning when the writing of the book was completed, upon coming out of the water after bathing in the Ganges at Raighat, he was amazed and greatly delighted to see Paramaradhya Babaji Maharaj by the trunk of a tree next to the riverbank. After paying homage to His Feet, he humbly invited Paramgururajji to grace his home nearby with the dust of His Feet, to which Babaji Maharaj replied, "We are under-the-tree people. We like to sit under trees." When all forms of petition were to no avail and Paramgurumaharaj did not comply with Swamiji's request to leave His seat by the tree-trunk, Swamiji hurried home, changed his clothes and obtained some milk and sweets with which he came back to the bank of the Ganges. But not seeing the Sadhuji by the tree trunk or anywhere nearby, he was surprised and hurt. He tried to enquire and search numerous times by the riverbank and in places beside it, but all attempts were fruitless. Those who were at the bank before said that they had not seen anyone who fit that description whether by the tree trunk or anywhere nearby. In a short while, Swamiji remembered Paramgurudev's words of assurance. His Holy Appearance occurred on the very day of the completion of the book that was done under His direction. Momentarily overcome with disappointment, discouragement and sorrow, after a while it dawned on Swamiji that this was the Knowledge-bestowing, devotee-loving

Paramgururaj's supernatural method of teaching His yogic wealth, and immediately upon realizing this, the grateful devotee, speechless in his understanding, reverently received the full power of Guru's blessing.

Guroh kripahi kevalam

The Guru's Grace alone is (sufficient).



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## Organization and Propagation

When Munibara Sri Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya was no longer present, His significant disciples began to attend to the spreading of the priceless method of Kriyayoga sadhana in ways that would be according to His wishes. Our His Holiness Sri Guru Maharaj was also thinking about the proper way to propagate the Guru-given method of sadhana. At first, he gave Kriyayoga knowledge to his close friends in a friendly manner. It has been heard that Srirampur's eminent barrister, the late Akhshay Kumar Bhattacharya was his first friend-disciple. While doing Gita recitations and commentary, in order to propagate the Guru-given words of Truth he began to think about forming a Gita sabha (Gita fellowship). In those days, even some important and respected orthodox Brahmins of Srirampur were interested listening to his commentaries on the Gita, having heard in various situations about his credibility. But because of the narrow-minded, suffocating, snake-like entanglements of the prevalent societal attitude, they were not courageous enough to break the rules of the set ideas of that time, including the impropriety of attending discussions on sacred subjects at the house of and by a man - although knowledgeable - from a non-Brahmin lineage. At a time of untruth in a society devoid of sadhana - in this pure and sagacious land of Truth seeking sadhakas and divinely visionary sages - what lameness this was from such subjugated mentality! It is when repentant Indians want atonement according to God's will and become practitioners of Truth and discipline can this sin be dispelled and beneficence manifested. Later, we saw that in that same Srirampur, the Brahmin community in the Sanskrit school called him "Dwijabara" [Brahmin] and cordially invited him for the cultivation of their learning. Only

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through atonement and education can man eradicate illiberality in the mind and become virtuous. In any case, regardless of the inconvenience of the "frog in the well" attitude of society at the time, he began to do his work regularly at an appropriate place. Those who appreciated virtue would come to the fellowship and joyfully discuss the subjects. After a while, the sabha continued on at his house with no obstructions.

With the help of the scriptural discussions, Kriyayoga sadhana also began to spread lowly and gradually. Fascinated by its merits, Brahmins and non-Brahmins - seekers from all levels of society were now receiving initiation from him. Eventually, with the increasing membership of executive and ordinary members, he began to feel that there was a need to form a non-sectarian spiritual institution. At this time, nearby in Chatra was an enthusiastic Brahmin-born seeker named Sri Motilal Mukhopadhyay, who was overcome with spiritual longing and whose search for a guru, upon hearing his words, ultimately brought him to Swamiji Maharaj. The Truth-seeking Brahmin youth was captivated by the scientific discussion and analysis of scriptures. He surmised that the Satchitananda filled Brahman-substance for which he had desperately yearned could be found in this realized being. Respect, determination and aspiration filled his heart. He forgot about the divisions of caste, as well as the narrow-mindedness and boundaries of society, and having directly experienced the touch of the Guru's divinity within this mahapurush, he took shelter in the master. Sri Motilal was initiated in Kriya yoga. From an ordinary viewpoint, this deed of Motilal's was considered courageous. How much degradation he had to withstand from society, country and relatives because of this. Disciplined in Truth and steadfast in consciousness, the sadhaka Motilal boldly said up until the last days of his life, "Knowledge of the Brahman-substance is priceless. Where is caste in this? I received Knowledge of Brahman from one who was established in Brahman and in doing so maintained the honor of the virtue of magnanimous sages; I received God's blessings; after the touch of the divine Light of Brahman Consciousness, I understood the eternal relationship of guru and disciple."

The appearance of Sri Motilal assumed a significant place in the life of the propagator and great Acharya Swamiji Maharaj. Through the intermediary role of the disciple Motilal, many enquiring people received initiation from him. At this time, the establishment of a powerful spiritual group by some passionate youth and middle aged

people from Calcutta and Khidirpur who were acquaintances and followers of the sadhaka Motilal greatly enhanced Swamiji Maharaj's desired propagation work. Enthralled by the sadhana-discipline and the dutifulness of the groups of sadhakas - Amulya - Charu - Shyam etc. - from Khidirpur, he would say from time to time, "Khidirpur is my right hand." The people of Khidirpur are forever fortunate in having received Guru's grace.

Srirampur's Gita Sabha took on a special appearance upon the arrival of Sri Motilal. Due to the influence of the enthusiastic Motilal's organizational capabilities, all areas became orderly. Appropriate workers were found. A press was obtained for the propagation of philosophical and astrological explanations of scriptures, the methodology of the almanac and the mission, work and ideology of the fellowship. Swamiji transformed his large, two-story building in Srirampur into an ashram, naming it "Priyadham." Work management, propagation, gathering people etc. - the responsibility of all matters were put upon Motilal. Through the skilled Motilal's care, Priyadham matured into a vital work and spiritual center. We heard Swamiji Maharaj say, "At the root of these fellowships and congregations is Motibabu. If it weren't for him, none of these organizations would happen." With the intention of having a non-sectarian designation, the sabha was named "Satsanga Samaj." It was written in the mission statement: "The Universe-Brahmanda-pervading Source of All, the Brahman-substance Reality has been named by luminary sages as Truth. The goal of attaining the company of that Universal Truth-substance along with providing an environment for sadhana matters comprises the mission of this institution, etc. Those who are involved in the sadhana functions are executive members and those involved in the discussions of holy books, gathering in discussions of Truth, and helping in the many different works of this fellowship are normal members."

A while after the sabha was up and running, invitations on paper were sent out to call everyday people for a great conference on behalf of the Satsanga Samaj. The leading members of society had consulted and agreed in meetings of the fellowship that they would participate at the conference, but upon receiving the letter, many of them refused to come. The executive members of the sabha were unprepared for this sudden change of mind. Later, investigating the cause brought out the reason that they did not accept the invitations because of the usage of the word "Samaj," believing that this would be another segregating organization along the lines of "Brahmo Samaj" or "Arya Samaj."

Immediately after this was known, the word "Samaj" was removed and replaced with "Sabha." Now, the name of the fellowship became "Satsanga Sabha"; therefore no one had any objections any longer about joining it. Using the name "Priyanath Kararswami," he began to preside over the fellowship in the form of Acharya.

Even after his Gurudev's departure from the body, Swamiji regularly visited Benares. Why should devotees renounce opportunities to have the divine experience of the ever-alive Presence and Grace of Guru-Shakti in Guru's house in the spiritual arena of Benares, the land of knowledge? Swamiji stayed at his aged mother's house, who had been living there. For scriptural study, especially detailed discussions on astrological treatises, he would go back and forth to certain significant scholars of Benares.

One day, he was sitting with the principal mahasaya of Benares' Sanskrit College when two German scholars arrived there. They introduced themselves to the principal mahasaya and said that even while in Germany, they became attracted to India's immense culture and civilization and proceeded to study philosophical books written in Sanskrit, the root Aryan language. Finding out about the holy sages' conclusive discoveries on essential matters, they came as seekers of Truth with the utmost respect and humility in their hearts to the guru of the world, India, and particularly to the principal of the highest educational institution in Benares, India's greatest center of knowledge, in the hope of receiving some illuminating knowledge. The principal mahasaya cordially received the German gentlemen and informed them of a time when they could meet for discussions. For the further benefit of the foreign scholars, the principal mahasaya also invited Swamiji to be present at that time.

At the appointed time, the German gentlemen arrived at the Sanskrit College for the meeting with the principal mahasaya. As previously arranged, Swamiji Maharaj was also present to greet them, after which everyone sat down and the scriptural discussion commenced. The German scholars presented numerous questions and the principal mahasaya, knowledgeable in many shastras, recited examples with quotes from all kinds of scriptures with all sorts of footnotes, commentaries, statements etc., and kept trying to solve their enquiries in this way. Listening with deep attention to the principal mahasaya's deliberation, the German students from time to time would say, "We have studied these words and footnotes but we have come here especially seeking the experience of the heart, or the essence, of these

things. Please help us to understand the true, inner meaning of these priceless sayings and realizations of these great beings." No matter how much the respected and scholarly principal lectured on the many scriptures, the foreign student-scholars, questioning and energetically enthusiastic, could not be satisfied in their hearts and again said, "We are fascinated by the illustrious scriptural statements but the deep significance of the shastras that we seek to absorb in our hearts - we don't seem to be achieving that." After the lengthy discussion that day, the principal mahasaya set an appointment for another day. The curious Swamiji Maharaj this time came to the appointed place on his own volition on this second day and greeted the foreign truth-seeking gentlemen. After appropriate salutations to the principal mahasaya, the discussions began. On this day, it seemed that the scope of scriptural talk from the principal took on oceanic breadth and depth. He stupefied the listeners by his explanations using the statements and deductions of indigenous and foreign sages. The discourse was filled with gravity. The German scholar-students were also stunned. But the entire shastra-ocean ultimately did not satisfy them. They wanted the hidden nectar flowing in the ocean, the ambrosia from the ocean's churning, the arising of direct experience of the Light of Knowledge - or at least the shedding of some light with scientific analysis, with the aid of which they could possibly taste a little of the immortal elixir of Brahman-experience that the Truth-seeing sages had. Reverent of India - the guru of the world - her sages and her luminescence, the foreign scientist-students broken-heartedly gave their salutations and quietly prepared to leave. Swamiji, quietly observing and saddened by all of this, followed to help them board their vehicle. Upon their departure, the sullen German scholars asked him, "Is there no sadhaka or scholar in this sacred land of sages that can grant us a little illumination through direct experience, and have us comprehend the essence of these incredible treatises?" Regardless of being embarrassed at witnessing the tarnished pride of his country in the present day, India's child Swamiji Maharaj remembered India's eternal and luminous glory and succinctly answered, "Of course there are, but they somewhat live in secrecy." There was no more opportunity to speak. After saying their farewells, everyone returned to their own places.

This event left a significant mark in Swamiji Maharaj. Envisioning the rescue of India's lost glory, he began to think of ways to that the organization might be of use. How the shastras, particularly the spiritual and philosophical treatises could be a part of discussions in life through education, how the essential matters could manifest in

usual intellectual talk, and how the knowledge of the scriptures could cause the sadhaka to proceed toward direct experience - he began to conceptualize processes relating to these issues. He determined in his mind that the logical, experiential and scientific perspective must be established at the root of the Satsanga Sabha's education programs, sadhana, discussions, propagation etc. in order to bring to life the knowledge of the shastras for the sanctity of the Soul and the benevolence of the world.

While cultivating the science of astrology, Swamiji saw that it was in a decrepit state. He was fascinated by the astrological calculations and consequences thereof as concluded upon by the shastras, but could not find an existing treatise that helped to realize the application of those conclusions in an easy or vital manner. Whether philosophical, astrological, or some other kind of significant shastra, all of these only spoke of the amazing resolutions of the sages attained by sadhana, investigation and cultivation, but a simple way or method of practicing the techniques, the processes of sadhana, or scientific analysis were lost somewhere. Because of this, the deliberations on shastras and the understanding of them - not having any living application in the present day - were being expressed only through memory and recitation. Swamiji believed and agreed with the opinions of historical scholars that because of political changes, abuse and pillaging, many priceless and essential books of knowledge had disappeared. It is necessary for Indians to do intense sadhana so that those fragmented memories may be restored.

Examining the calculations and the consequential results from them, he saw that changes had taken place in the lunar days and constellations since the time the ancient astrologers had written down their conclusions thousands of years ago, but the present-day astrological books continued on without accounting for these changes, and it seemed to indicate that reference books like almanacs etc. were written with formulations riddled with these errors. He used to say, "How can the astrologically based rites in the scriptures to be performed during certain lunar days and certain positions of constellations bear fruit in relation to the progress of time? To form an iron into shape one must strike it while it looks like blood, but if the appropriate time passes, then even thousands of strikes will not yield that result. That is the state of our rituals. The occasions are set according to the almanac, but the root of the almanac is wrong." He felt that a working knowledge of astrology was a necessary part of human life. Thus, he decided on having discussions on the practical

applications of astrology as part of the work of the Satsanga Sabha. Because of the perspective and desire of the learned, and following scriptural injunctions to do benevolent work at auspicious times, he calculated with the corrected formulae: two equinoxes (approximately the 9th of Ashwin and the 9th of Chaitra at present)\* and two solstices (approximately the 9th of Ashar and the 9th of Poush at present)\*\* during which times he would inaugurate prescripts of the Satsanga Sabha. Therefore, with pure calculation, with the accepted beginning of the year [Bengali] on the 1st of Baishakh after the great equinox - at present 9/10 of Chaitra is possible.\*\*\* He said, "In a little while, through free thinking and logic, the learned will find the significance of this correction in the astrological culture, but then my earthly body will not be here. We also saw that employed under the government of free India, the astrological scholars adopted Swamiji Maharaj's ascertainment of equinoxes and solstices along with the year's beginning.

\* The parentheses and the text are in the original.

\*\*The parentheses and the text are in the original.

\*\*\*The sentence could not be stated differently without it becoming interpretive.

He returned from Benares and continued to direct the affairs of the Satsanga Sabha. He became especially involved in the cultivation of the studies of the almanac and the ephemeris. Even after the consultations on astrological culture with scholars in Benares and successfully proving his own understanding, because of the prevalent blind beliefs and lack of first hand experience among people, he could not find any significant opportunities to correct the errors in the astrological calculations in practice. At this time, upon hearing about the great renown of the astrologer from Orissa, the late Pandit Chandrakanta Shiromani Mahasaya, he left for Puri. Because the scholar was not in Puri at that time, Swamiji presented his findings to the group of scholars that were present there. Even though they found his conclusions flawless, the learned group still said, "Without the approval of our country's greatest pundit, Sriyukta Shiromani Mahasaya, we cannot accept any conclusions fully." A few months later, it was decided that a fellowship of study would be founded under the direction of Shiromani Mahasaya. Swamiji Maharaj arrived in Puri at the appointed time and found, to his grave sorrow, that suddenly the great Pandit Shiromani Mahasaya, the jewel of Orissa, had left his body. All of Orissa's almanacs were composed under the calculations established by Shiromani Mahasaya. Swamiji used to

say, "Although there are many more changes and corrections that need to be made, it seems that the calculations of the almanacs in use in Orissa are more accurate than the present calculations from other lands. About the distant villager Shiromani Mahasaya's eminence, he once said, as the subject came up, that while practicing common astrology, the astrologer Pandit Mahasaya came to feel that deep research was necessary for the discovery of many things at the present time. Following through, he took some ordinary pieces of glass and some pieces of wood with which he created an unremarkable instrument, which helped him to calculate and establish the locations of the zodiac and constellations in the cosmos and left us amazed. At the eve of his life, upon hearing about his accomplishments, the eminent professor and astrologer in the Katak College, Yogeshchandra Vidyanidhi Mahasaya, had him explore the cosmos, looking through the college's telescope. The astonished and captivated Brahmin scholar of little financial means was taken aback for a moment at the revelation of this glory so far hidden from him, and then like a child, he ecstatically said, "Oh my! If I had such close access to an instrument as this at the morning or midday of my life, then how many mysteries I could have solved! But now it's the day's end." The progenitress of gems - how many of Mother India's jewel-like children, unknown and unrecognized, soiled by the dust of life, are disappearing in the bowels of time.

Although Swamiji Maharaj did not find success with his desired goal in Puri, the form of the huge ocean in the land of Jagannath [Puri] enraptured his mind. He obtained a piece of land in the Swargadwar village by the sea from the local municipality's board, stating that he wished to establish an educational center specializing in astrology and philosophical-spiritual studies. In the month of Chaitra of the year 1310 [Editor's note -- 1904 of the Christian calendar] at the time of the holy great equinox, a small ashram-house was founded at this place. Swamiji Maharaj named the ashram: "Kararashram," in keeping with the identity by which he was known amongst people. Keeping in mind that the meaning of "Karar" was "servant," and in memory of his lineage - the ashram's name would be referred to in both ways. After he adopted the life of sannyas, he used to instruct the usage of the "servant" definition.

While he was disseminating the Kriyayoga sadhana method as authorized by lineage and the wisdom of the scriptures, he met the president of the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, Srimat Swami Jnananandaji Maharaj. Surmising Swamiji Maharaj's sharp intellect

and brilliance, Jnanananda Swamiji Maharaj gave him advice during a conversation that it was good to be initiated according to prescribed edicts as a sannyasi in order to propagate this kind of spiritual work properly. Doing this would bring the good wishes of everyone, beneficence would come to one's own life through one's own experience, as well as allowing the work of Acharya to be directed according to scriptures and in an orderly fashion. This advice seemed valuable to the traveling Acharya, Srimat Kararswami Mahodaya. He made haste and arrived at Buddha-Gaya to meet with its Mahanta, the Venerable Srimat Swami Krishnadayal Giri Maharaj. While describing his work, Swamiji mentioned that there was one special prescript in the fellowship which he founded: no one would be addressed as "Babu" or "Mister"; instead, whether the name was Bengali or English or any language, the prename "Sriyukta" would be used. Hearing this, the Mahanta Maharaj happily said, "This is a novel thing today, because when a gentleman's name is written, especially in English, it doesn't even arise in anyone's mind to use the Indian "Sri" or "Sriyukta." For this reason, I am now declaring this sacred statement as a sadhu: Let it be that your name in the Shelter of Sannyas is 'Sriyukteshvar Giri'." Receiving the Knowledge of Non-dualism from his sannyas-guru and experiencing the blessings of the supreme renunciate Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharyadeva, the vessel of knowledge Swamiji was now firmly established in Knowledge by this blessed societal ritual. Acharya of the Era, Swamiji Maharaj gave salutations to Sriguru and returned to his ordained place of work. We have seen that many follow the usual procedure [for writing or saying someone's name informally] and drop the "Sri" and say only "Yukteshvar," but this is not correct. If one wants to put a "Sri" at the beginning as in the prevalent fashion, then his name would look as: "Sri Sriyukteshvar Giri."

To rise above the small-mindedness of sectarianism and unify spirituality was his life's resolve. Dedicated to this cause, he personally met acharyas from different sects and for the same stated purpose, he formed a fellowship of sadhus from all of India and appointed the head of Puri's Gobardhan Peeth, Jagadguru Srimat Madhusudan Tirthaswami Shankaracharya Maharaj, to govern over the fellowship. As directed by the sadhus, in order to spread the universal religion [Sanatan Dharma] free of sectarianism and narrow-thinking, a fellowship that would carry out this work was created named "Sadhu Sabha." Swamiji Maharaj began to be known as "Sadhusabhapati", having taken the position as president of the fellowship. The main place of work was established in Srirampur's

Priyadham. The work was to be carried out by the president, assistant-president, Sadhu Sabha's executives, consultant, editor of the paper etc.; with all this, the Sadhu Sabha was formed. Arrangements were made to publish "Sadhu Samvad," a periodical that would carry articles in Bengali and English on astrology, almanac study and numerous spiritual matters. With the goal of propagation work, the Calcutta Satsanga Sabha was established on Calcutta's Jeletola Street in the house of the publisher of the "Indian Mirror" periodical, the disciple Narendranath Basu Mahasaya, along with Rai Bahadur Radhacharan Pal and other such distinguished devotees and disciples. Thereafter, according to the new rules, the Satsanga Sabhas in Srirampur, Khidirpur, Calcutta, Benares, Jamalpur, Kanpur, Puri etc., in Bengal and other provinces, adopted the format of the Sadhu Sabha and went on to function well.

It was proposed that in order to excel in the ordained work of sadhus, three ashrams should be established to accommodate the different ages and levels of the sadhakas from Sadhu Sabha. Those who were in the first stages of sadhana, meaning beginners who would live as celibates [Brahmacharis], they were to be in Puri's Kararashram. The students would stay there up to about the age of twenty-five. For those that wanted to continue after finishing here onto the second level, or would accept the ways of a sadhaka, a house was rented in Benares and founded as "Pranabashram." It was decided that here there would be a proper printing press, as well as an environment for interactive gatherings and facilitation of advanced instruction, education and practice of the spiritual path. At this time, meaning the second stage of the sadhaka's life, the sadhakas, living as sadhakas, would serve the public according to the fellowship's rules, for the benefit of body, mind and soul. For this work in Benares, he received the company and help of his Guru-brother-disciple, the disciple of Sri Sri His Holiness Yogiraj and author of the "Pranab Gita", the eminent Swami Pranabananda Giri Maharaj. For those who were advanced on the path of sadhana and attained some permanence in it, meaning the initial stages of being a siddha, and when usually one would have passed the age of fifty, a "siddha" ashram was proposed to be founded in Hrishikesh by the seven rivers in the Himalayan foothills, the land of meditation, for living the ideal of a self-surrendered spiritual life filled with the Paramatman-substance. But it was also instructed that the sadhakas of all stages would be attentive to education and service with the ideal of purity of consciousness. The aim of work for the fellowships carrying the identity, or the branches of and with the Satsanga Sabha, became: to provide proper education for boys and

girls, avail satsanga for youth to discuss high matters and read sacred books, and give older people an opportunity for spiritual cultivation. That the propagation of Kriyayoga sadhana was a primary issue, need not be said.

Usually, just sitting in asana and doing japa with mantra or practicing yoga alone does not build a proper life of righteousness and it is also not possible. He frequently said that if the entire human being, body and mind, is not dedicated and directed towards elevation, then the ascension of the soul cannot happen. For this, it is necessary to discard the rubbish in all areas of human life and to adopt a new and transformed perspective founded upon scientific principles. In ordinary, simple words, he used to say from time to time, “Living life easily, playing and laughing is success of course. But underneath all of it, one must remember to not cheat oneself - above all be true to thyself - \* meaning, always remain authentic.”

\*The phrase within the dashes is written in English in the original.

Without the aid of political power, even making excellent and proper arrangements of every kind for sadhana is not enough to do work successfully for the benefit of society . Understanding this, he used to speak of the wretchedness of subservience. We heard him say many times that it was not possible to attain humaneness unless the glory of nation and people were maintained. He saw the servants of the nation with eyes of respect. But if talk would come up about political stirrings, even though he would admit to necessity of such things, he would not think himself to be expert enough to come to any conclusions on those matters. He used to say that correct education in order to build man's character properly was the actual and ennobling work of societal, political and religious institutions. A wholehearted, nation-loving attitude -meaning, being interested in the work of constructing was a direction that attracted him. India's depth, culture, civilization, organized intellectual capacity, distribution of work, relationship with neighbors and abiding the lawful edict of the four stages of life (not only by birth)\* - building a people through facilitating appropriate education based on these things are what he advised teachers over and over. While understanding the significance of lineage and the usage of rules, he would never accept proofs of ideas based on birthright and caste. His philosophy was that it was through the company of appropriate acharyas in an ashram-like educational environment that the beneficent societal work could happen, by which the divisions of caste could be brought into harmony.

\*\* He wanted to structure the ashram in Puri in this manner. He gave this very same advice when the Brahmacharya Vidyalay, led by Swamiji Maharaj's eminent disciple Swami Yoganandaji, and patronized by the late lord of Kashimbazar, Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi Bahadur, was founded. When the subject of sadhakas and others spreading righteous philosophy would arise, we would hear him laud the Yugacharya Swami Vivekananda's attitude towards nationality and service. With this kind of respect, he used to mingle with his contemporaneous friends Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and Swami Shivananda Maharajjis. Before forming the Sadhu Sabha, he approached Swami Brahmananda for the possibility of making the Satsanga Sabha a part of the Ramakrishna Mission, but with his mission and methodology. Of course, this work did not find a means to go forward.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

\*\*The sentence had to be more loosely translated than the rest of the book in order to make sense. The translator apologizes for this, but maintains that the original intention in Bengali is preserved.

For educational institutions, he established a syllabus for scientific knowledge, particularly: physics, physiology, physical geography, astronomy and astrology.\* He was very attracted to the many things we need to learn from western residential educational facilities and their psychologically based ideas and structure. Keeping in mind the educationally related issues of civility, truthfulness, servitude and self-sufficiency, he taught us that vocations such as farming and cowherding, knowledge of spinning wheels, looms, sewing etc. and simple arts and crafts, nursing, physical exercise and, according to age, martial arts were necessary and worthy of being a part of formal education. The dissemination of knowledge through the mother tongue [Bengali], the Indian national language Hindi and the prevalent ruler's language, as well as the language that would maintain the link with the knowledge and wisdom of other countries - English - programs to teach these languages were also a part of his written syllabus. Eventually added to the curriculum were programs to study Gita, philosophical treatises, high-level astrology etc. The reader must remember that these syllabuses were presented in the Christian year 1900. One has to be amazed when contemplating the farsighted vision and profound knowledge of the Acharya of the Era Swamiji Maharaj. According to age, capacity and ordinary knowledge, he organized the teaching of yogic asanas, mudras and pranayam, as well as recitation of hymns and salutary verses for the physical and mental

improvement of students. He set up a procedure where the student, upon passing the test for completion of the first part of Swamiji's prescribed curriculum and completing research and experimental studies in general subjects, would be given the title "Vidyatirtha," and later, upon finishing the studies in specific subjects, would be given the title "Shastri" (such as: Vijnanshastri [scholar of science], Darshanshastri [scholar of philosophy], etc.).\*\* He also expressed the wish that, at the end of institutional education, students would travel to many countries by water, land and sky, and having gained numerous experiences from such exploration would complete the educational goal of this organization. The general public could not even conceive of traveling by airplane at that time. But through astrological calculations and sensing the evolution of man after the change of Yugas in the development of subtle electrical and etheric sciences, he envisioned and firmly believed that, because of the power of the progressive new age, very soon airplane travel would become a regular affair.

\*The educational subjects are written in the original in English and Bengali, except "astronomy," which is written only in Bengali.

\*\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original, except for the brackets and bracketed text which are the translator's.

He used to say that for the collective and individual prosperity of human beings, it was necessary to have the self-sufficiency of the Vaishyas [commerce caste], the valor of the Kshatriyas [military and administration caste] and, in that same type of environment, the Brahmin [priest and scholar caste] establishment of religion. Without having personal experience of the company of high and virtuous beings, it was not possible in life to have the elevated injunction of the service oriented mind of the Sudras [service caste]. Having lost the root meaning of the practice of the four stages of life, the superficial, vanity-filled children of this sacred land have become unworthy of even being Sudras. Instead of being prosperous servants, the culture has become one of boot-licking, incompetent and vile slaves.

There could not be the proper practice of education, nation building, or even the Knowledge of Brahman, he said over and over, without the realization of the Kshatriya-power. Of course, his statement about Kshatriya-power did not infer only to training for war. He would say that without having a feeling of self-respect, humanness could not take birth, and in order to maintain self-worth and to strengthen and better the national spine, it was very necessary to have regular martial

education. How can a spine-broken, weak and shy, slave-minded "good person" conceive the immense revelations of the sages? In relating to this subject, we remember the great Acharya Swami Vivekananda's renown statement: "In trying to follow the Sattvic [pure] way, Indians have become drowsy with Tamasic [inertia] stupor." Is it not so that the invaluable and appropriate unified insights for the age, by the great Acharyas of the Age were not, by themselves, able to make us properly aware? It is for this reason that he used to instruct that before initiation into the pranayam-based yoga of Kriya, the student should test himself to ascertain whether his physical and mental conditioning was in an optimum state; and he was usually not a proponent of initiation into Kriyayoga sadhana before the age of 16/17 years and if there was a lack of physical fitness. Before that, he would advise that one should pay attention to the study and respectful practice of yogic asanas and mudras. Relating to this subject, the illuminated words of insight from the world-conquering Acharya Vivekananda come to mind: "If you want to understand the Gita, first go and play football."

When teaching social servants and counselors about education, he would ask them to arrange for the general cultivation of medicine, herbology, astrology and philosophy. Meditation, study and the treasure-house of Brahman - these three things are at the root of all teaching and education. In all educational programs, he would prescribe that the study of music should have a special place. He used to say from time to time that among all that captured the senses, the melody of music was that which could help us realize the Brahman-melody in the inner world.

Day after day, many men and women continued to receive initiation from him. Through their invitations, he traveled to many different villages of India, especially in Bengal, and established Satsanga Sabhas. The Sabhas' work was carried out with the ideals and intentions described previously. At least once a week, he would regularly have a meeting with the members and, after having discussed the sacred scriptures, sadhana, worship and such subjects, he would advise that each person be a helper or servant to each other. He also gave instructions for a program to be held at least once a year for extended discussion and analysis by a group of learned people about holy matters, involving the general people of each Sabha's township in a large yearly conference. He used to say that just discussing or practicing among ourselves could make us "frogs-in-the-well" also; we could each be a mad person in our own circle. This is why it is

necessary to form holy groups among ourselves - for the health of our ideals and sadhana. For the correction of delusions arising from negligence in our own groups, for the expansion and magnanimity of mind, and to introduce everyday people to the path of Truth that we found, it was important to organize general conferences or large and inclusive gatherings.

A few years later, a certain change took place in the flow of work of Swamiji Maharaj's main disciple, Sriyukta Motilal Mukhopadhyay. One day, while on his way to his place of work in Khidirpur, at the time of boarding a train at the Srirampur station, suddenly in a bush he saw a person on the verge of death, and the inherently compassionate-servant mind in him cried out. Forgetting about the office and taking the person in his lap, he began to nurse him. It was as if he received an incredible command from within: "This service of God-in-man is a special duty for you." Motilal forgot his job, his household, his small desires. With this understanding, it was as if he became a new person, and he prepared himself for the service of the downtrodden. He remained as a householder with wife, son and daughter, but it seemed that he surrendered the responsibility of managing the family to Sriguru-God. He established an institution of service that was set up for the aid of the distressed by the banks of the Ganges near Srirampur in the village of Chatra, called "Bhaktashram." The servant of God-in-man, Motilal's household needs were also being met regularly and properly. The flow of his sadhana became intense along with this work. The Light of Brahman from the advanced stages of Kriyayoga sadhana made him luminous. Although the work of Motilal's newly established ashram was not very connected to him, His Holiness Guru Swamiji Maharaj took Motilal near him and seeing the blossoming of the bliss of Divine Knowledge in his disciple, joyfully and proudly bestowed upon this advanced and deserving disciple the power of Acharya and the responsibility of giving Kriya yoga initiation. Eventually, many men and women would be attracted to Motilal Thakur's eminence and take discipleship under him. His renown was especially widespread around Ghatal Mahakuma in the district of Medinipur. Due to the zeal of the sadhakas and having received blessings of the lineage of Sriguru, he founded an ashram named "Gurudham" for sadhana and worship right next to his own house. He used to represent himself as a servant of Satchitananda at this time. Devotees would address him reverently as "Satchitananda Swami."

Through Acharya Motilal Thakur, the reputation of Gurudev Sadhusabhapati Swamiji Maharaj was growing, and upon the

desperate call of the men and women seekers from the Medinipur district, His Holiness Swamiji Maharaj established different Satsanga Sabhas and continued the propagation of teaching in a simple way the easier aspects of the manifestation of the new age and the practice of sadhana. Formerly disregarded, distant villagers became freed of their dogma by having received initiation and education from him, and with the attainment of spiritual light, they found the opportunity to have a proper, humane life and prosper. Fellowships, book presses, medical clinics and schools were established in village after village. Even His Holiness Guru Maharaj would attend their yearly festival-conferences, enlightening the eager seekers on the meanings of the scriptures and resolving many issues, as well as giving them initiation and inspiration.

Swamiji Maharaj had remembered His Holiness Sri Sri Babaji Maharaj's indication for propagation of spiritual matters in the Western world. He believed that Babaji Maharaj's directive would actualize in working form at the appropriate time. In 1910 of the Christian Era, Swami Yoganandaji (then Mukundalal),\* after having advanced in Kriyayoga sadhana which he received from his father, a disciple of the Lord Lahiri Mahasaya, and later from his tutor who was also the Lord's disciple, Yogacharya Shastri Mahasaya (Hansaswami Kebalanandaji),\*\* the dormant renunciate in him awoke and following this longing to take the path of a renunciate monk, he left his college studies and became a resident of Benares. One day in the holy pilgrimage of Benares, in a strange way Mukundalal met a sannyasi unknown to him. Immediately at the meeting of their eyes, the stranger sannyasi touched his heart. Mukundalal felt that he had found the company of the lord of his life in the momentary touch of divine sight. Even at the sadhuji's first call, he surrendered himself at the sannyasi's feet, feeling him to be his own. In the throne of the kingdom of profound love, Swami Sriyukteshvar Giri Maharaj became established as the helmsman in the form of Guru in Mukundalal's life. His consciousness was illuminated like lightning; divine initiation was complete. The formal initiation into sannyas took place at a later time.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

\*\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

Mukundalal forgot about his desires, forgot about his responsibilities at his Benares residence Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, forgot about his petty self-interest. He poured himself in the directed path at the eternally longed-for Feet of Sriguru. Immediately after receiving Gurudev's suggestion, he returned to Calcutta and reenlisted in

college. The Acharya of the Age Swamiji Maharaj saw the possibility of the desired fulfillment of Mahamuni Babaji Maharaj's previous directive in Mukundalal. Through Gurudev's direction, Mukundalal became as if being operated like a machine and continued to experience supernatural evidence in many ways of Guru-power in sadhana, study and everyday life, and thereafter received his B.A. degree with Gurudev's full blessings. Although he had done the "fire-witnessing" on his own and initiated himself and some of his companion-friends who followed him in the past into the vows of sannyas, in 1915 of the Christian Era at the pilgrimage of Sriguru in Srirampur, he was formally initiated in the Shelter of Sannyas by Sadhusabhapati Swamiji Maharaj and became known as Swami Yogananda Giri. At Yoganandaji's leadership a group of spiritually minded youth had formed. Swamiji Maharaj thought these youth to be able to appropriately carry out the service of the Satsanga Sabha and bestowed upon Yoganandaji's hands the responsibility of the Calcutta Satsanga Sabha. Following Gurudev's wishes, Yoganandaji studied in the M.A. program for philosophical studies at Calcutta University for a while. There were a couple of professors who were also attracted to his Guru-graced dissertations on philosophical matters.

In 1916, Swami Yoganandaji found a sudden opportunity and traveled to Japan, but not staying there for very long, he quickly returned home. On the ocean liner, the sadhana-immersed Yoganandaji felt Sriguru's blessings and met a fellow traveler from a certain Western land, and upon discussions on some subjects, Yoganandaji presented to him the first, abbreviated manuscript of his well-known book, "Science of Religion." Returning home, he established the "Brahmacharya Vidyalay" with complete patronization by the lord of Kashimbazar, Rajarsikalpa Maharaja Manindrachandra Nandi Bahadur, and under the direction of Gurudev on the holy great equinox in Chaitra of 1313 (22 March, 1917).\*

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

Shortly thereafter, Mahamuni Babaji Maharaj's instructions began to be realized under the direction of Guru Maharaj. Swami Yoganandaji attended a stellar gathering - a great conference of spirituality and religion - in 1920 in the American city of Boston. By the Grace of Guru, the powerful Swami Yogananda crossed all boundaries of narrowness and mounted the flag of India's glory in this international fellowship. Group after group of American residents received initiation in Kriya yoga from him. The Satsanga Sabha was founded

in America. Mahamuni Babaji Maharaj's incredible indication, Yograj Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya's prediction and Sadhusabhapati Srimat Swamiji Maharaj's direction and work were now being manifested. Eventually, in the West, the Satsanga Sabha came to be known as "Yogoda Satsanga" and "Self-Realization Fellowship." In 1936, Swami Yoganandaji Maharaj returned to India and founded Yogoda Satsanga and "Sri Shyamacharan Mission." The establishment and management as well as organizational responsibilities for many regions were given to this servant-me. It should also be mentioned, when discussing propagation, the efforts at founding of sadhana-ashrams, schools and medical clinics etc. in different villages of the Medinipur district by Swamiji Maharaj's industrious disciples, Swami Bhavananda Giriji and Swami Paramananda Giriji.

Swamiji Maharaj used to usually refer to his sannyas life as the life of a servant and told his sannyasi disciples to adopt that same attitude. He would reprimand any negligence in the field of work, and at the same time give special warning to the disregarding of spiritual practice and deviating from the area of Self-Knowledge and becoming obsessed with work. He used to point out this perspective: "Serve for the purity of consciousness, but if you lose yourself then all is lost. All of the work of the world is secondary. Let the attainment of Satchitananda, the root of which is surrender to God through meditation, be the first priority. Only then can one walk on the right path."

He believed that the essential wisdom of the four stages of life as prescribed by the sages of India was the highest method for the process of ascension for human life and society. His opinion was that after the completion of learning at an ashram of brahmacharya, adopting the life of a responsible householder was the normal way to live. If anyone wanted to adopt the ideals of renunciation or became a disciplined brahmachari or sannyasi, he would advise the person to be completely committed, according to one's natural inclination, to the service of the general public until at least the age of fifty. When giving instructions for work to be done, he would say that one should devote oneself to the service of the world beginning at sunrise - upon the completion of Soul-work at Brahmamuhurta, and that immediately at the time of sunset, one should return to one's own work, meaning that one should become immersed in spiritual sadhana and worship.

Following the directive of His Holiness the Lord [Sri Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya], he advised the householders to remain afar from the field of worldly duties for a few days at least once a year, and it is with this purpose that he arranged for a three-day festival in Puri's Kararashram.

It is true that if he saw skillfulness in the work of the ashram, propagation and other organizational work, he would give encouragement, praise and express joy, but it seemed to us that, if we observed beyond the perspective of ordinary people, the disciples who advanced in sadhana were able to make him much more joyful and honored. Supremely dear, his deep, affectionate blessings would naturally shower upon them. Who knows how many unknown and unrecognized sadhakas have received such blessings and become sanctified in Self-Knowledge and Bliss in the experience of the manifestation of the form of Self-Understanding in Sriguru's Grace.

I have mentioned before that the sadhakas and congregation of devotees from Khidirpur were especially able to attract him. That is why we were acquainted there with the secretive, great sadhaka (now gone to the after-world)\* Sri Amulya Charan Santra Mahasaya's spiritual rise. He is not a so-called highly educated man and many times one cannot find evidence of ordinary skillfulness in speech or flowing linguistic orderliness, but, surrendering his life to Guru, this mystic sadhaka's wealth is in Guru-wisdom and sacred scriptural knowledge. We have seen vain authorities on scripture become amazed by listening to his explanation of the meanings of certain sections of the shastras from his realization through sadhana. We have understood through these events that even if we are to become knowledgeable in the wisdom of the scriptures through the usual intellectual means, it is necessary to connect that intellectual understanding with the illuminated experience of yoga-united consciousness. When in the company of this solitary, ordinary householder and silent sadhaka Santra Mahasaya, it seems that we are receiving the holy touch of Guru's blessing in the presence of this yogi-purusha's sadhana-attained Light of Consciousness. That the supreme yogi His Holiness Sri Guru Maharaj has with great care placed the priceless gem in the body-vessel of a socially disregarded "Amulya" [priceless] - how many of our vain selves have found that? Perhaps we can excel a little in our work of fellowship, congregation, ashram and other organizational work if we, deserving of very little, can take care of Guru's spiritual touch that we receive from Santra Mahasaya's presence; and this does not cause any interruption or

cause us to leave the field of Sriguru's instructed work.\*\*

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

\*\*The account of Sri Amulya Charan Santra Mahasaya, even though indicated as having passed on in the parenthetical in concordance with the previous footnote, is written in present tense in the original.

Who knows how many sadhakas from solitary villages have become realized through Sri Guru Maharajji's holy blessings. I do not think that we have truly come to know all of them. How nectarous has the flow of sadhana made the heart of the wholly dedicated sadhaka, Dr. Sri Bipin Bihari Bhuiyan (now gone to the after-world)\* of Khukurdaha in the Medinipur district. And how many new sadhakas are progressing toward elevation because of having received his company. We do not know in which or how many places this precious stone of the Lord is being secretly preserved. Eager, enquiring, one-pointedly determined, the jewel-seeking sadhakas going round and round can find the universal flow of Light from the power of Sriguru and the lineage in this way. This, of course, is the root of the essential philosophical ideal of India's ancient and holy wisdom.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

Dharmasyattvam nihitam guhayam

The truth of Dharma lies hidden in the heart.



Swami Sri Yukteshvar Giri Maharaj  
A Biography by Swami Satyananda Giri

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## Acharya's Presence and the Teaching of a Multi-Faceted Vision

It seems that the timing of Acharya Swamiji Maharaj's appearance at this transitional period of a Great Era was truly appropriate. It is not an easy task to measure his immense storehouse of knowledge, but, in our understanding, we can find quite enough statement of the realized sages' subtle and farsighted visionary qualities in him. The scientific and open-hearted mentality of the newly manifested age was revealed in his words. The appropriate path of progress and the proper steps for advancement were the specialties of his skillful work and teaching. This is why he would become elated at seeing the enthusiasm and drive of the youth, and while advising to keep the young ones rightly disciplined, he would let them be as they are in their natural exuberance. He devised many types of teaching methods for children. To make the difficult Sanskrit grammar simple and easy, he composed and published a book of understandable grammar in simple poetic form. At the same time, he wrote an unprecedented book for learning primary English and Hindi called "First Book"\* and created an easily understandable booklet of astrology. In his spare time, we have seen him teach the mysteries of science in story form to children in such a way that it was also beneficial to us. Some complex things in science that were not clear even after reading books were easy to understand upon hearing those stories of his. We found that in order to make education more applicable he designed a modern practice of basic education.\*\* He was especially attentive to Indian civilization and culture (nationality)\*\*\* in education and in other affairs. One day in the midst of a conversation, I asked him, "What's the necessity in learning this cursory Sanskrit if you've taught everyone through the

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mother tongue [Bengali]?" He replied, "In current India, meaning the time that we are about to forget our depth and culture, from this time to at least fifty years from now it will be proper to have the facility to learn Sanskrit in even ordinary schools." Later, he became interested in education for women. He deeply felt that the realization of humanness of future human beings in this country was dependent on women, and for this reason, if he could find the right people, he wanted to make his ashram in Puri a center for women's education.

\*The words "First Book" are written in English in the original.

\*\*The words "basic education" are written in English in the original.

\*\*\*The word "nationality" is written in English and is within parentheses in the original.

He would chastise any fault he would see of anyone who was somewhat close to him. Sometimes his reproof was deprecating. There is no point in not admitting that from time to time, even if his reprimand was not physically hard, the meaning of it would become unbearable to us. Because he used to grant us freedom as a matter of course, sometimes we would get agitated and -- who knows how many times we argued with him. He did not ever have any contempt for us because of that. Although his words may have been harsh and incisive, most of the time I was able to withstand them and benefited from them. Regardless of how stern he sometimes might have been in the roles of Acharya and guardian, it is absolutely true that although he observed the respective hierarchical responsibilities of Acharya, teacher, worker etc., as far as the management of the ashram was concerned, he preferred the process where work was carried out according to the rule of the by-laws of the fellowship.

Everyone would become fascinated upon hearing instruction and advice on every subject related to organizations by this Acharya of the Age, the great being who was the Incarnation of Knowledge. Who knows how many missionaries, educators, ashrams of service, assemblies, congregations etc. have gained renown in their organizational endeavors after having received even a grain of his advice on these matters. But the strange thing is that he was not successful in actualizing the manifestation of his ideals by his own hand. Referring to his relation to householder life, forming ashrams and along with those things, his writing of books, he said, "My virtuosity in studies and education is quite known, yet I composed grammarian books! So many have become famous in organizational work from having received my counsel and I wasn't able to acquire

even the tactics\* of building an ashram. I see that I am the beloved son of Mother Saraswati, but Mother Durga's disowned son." In any case, by God's will, the magnificent education and initiation that His Holiness Acharyadeva bestowed upon us, dispelling our inertia - for this we are blessed and fortunate. There is not a scintilla of doubt that if we try to respectfully make use of our understanding of even a speck of his essential wisdom on organizational work, that we would be blessed and that there would be an abundance of beneficence for the world.

\*The word "tactics" is written in English in the original.

He was a Guru who knew Brahman. Feeling our insignificant situation, we were hesitant to come to speak to this great man about anything or even just go near him. But, he did not like to take undue advantage of the opportunity as was the usual practice of guru-business. Regardless of being disciples, he showed appropriate courtesy toward human beings and would elevate their stature by offering them his seat. I do not think that I have ever experienced even a spot of the vanity of guru-ism from him. He deplored the medireview practice of covering oneself with the filigree of guru-talk and expressing excessive superiority through the blind belief that was prevalent. This is why he would give advice and help to even so-called uneducated villagers, inciting their powers of discrimination on pertinent spiritual concerns in their pursuit of attaining success. "Prapte tu shodashe barshe putramitradacharet" -- it was as if he used to follow this statement from the Aphorisms of Chanakya in totality. In many matters, he would engage himself in argumentative analysis with capable disciples even after having stated his own opinion. He would take pride in the excellence of a disciple. If he saw that some work instructed by him was being done well by a disciple, he would give him more encouragement. But, if it became necessary to reprimand mistakes, he would not hesitate to do that either. There is no way to not admit that weak-minded disciples would sometimes become aggravated and try to hide from him. That one would again receive his affectionate invitation after one had moved far away - this was also a particular aspect of Acharyadev's behavior.

The proper guru is knowledgeable and a man of Truth. He taught the significance of this sacred saying. In order to make us understand practical methods, if the subject of guru was brought up, this immense, magnanimous and ego-less man would say in a simple and ordinary way, "What is the point in being taken aback by the word 'guru'? Guru

means weighty, meaning one who is more weighty or knowledgeable than you, from whom you can learn. If it is necessary, then after completing your learning from him, you can take Shelter in an even higher guru -- like going to a professor of an institution of higher learning after grade school. But one must remember to have proper respect and humility towards everyone." He tried to make us clearly understand that even if one were firmly established in the spiritual knowledge of the Causeless, Infinite Brahman, a physically embodied man cannot attain Total Brahman-ness (Full Perfection).\* Still, the Eternal Light of Brahman within Gurudev becomes illuminated in the life of the disciple and seeing Guru as Supreme Consciousness beyond the body, one receives the divine touch of Guru-Brahman-Shakti, and that realization establishes in one's mind the truth: "Sriguru Bhagavan Swayam" [Sriguru is God Itself]. Having steadfast reverence and belief towards Guru, through the method of sadhana given by him one gains a firm understanding that the one whose lord is mind is also the Lord God, the one whose guru is wine is also the Guru of the World, and the drunkard's soul is the Soul of All. "The Soul is the Soul's friend and the Soul is the Soul's enemy. It is by the Soul that the Soul will be saved and [the Soul] will not allow the Soul to tire." To understand this scriptural statement one needs the direct blessing and Grace of Guru. He used to say, "It is because of Swami Vivekananda's self-assurance and extraordinary reverential radiance that Sri Ramakrishnadev was known to the world as an incarnation of God." When talk of the Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya would come up, even if he would sometimes speak of the Lord's truly amazing teaching and lilas [miraculous play], he would usually explain: "It is possible that profound reverence can come upon you about Him from what you have heard through people, but what can you understand about His true importance without having had the company of my Gurudev?" "Sraddhavan labhate jnanam" -- it is in making this scriptural statement steadfast in one's life and progressing in Guru-given sadhana that one tastes Divine Bliss. It is in this way that Srigurudev's priceless gift of Divine Knowledge erodes away the sins of the initiated sadhaka. I have heard this scientific, great Acharya of the Age say at the time of giving initiation: "Look, there is no point in blindly believing that after I touch you, you will be saved, or that a chariot from heaven will be waiting for you. Because of the guru's attainment, the sanctifying touch becomes a helper in the blossoming of Knowledge, and being respectful towards having acquired this blessing, you must yourself become a sage and proceed on the path to elevate your Soul by applying the techniques of sadhana given by the guru. It is in the path of meditation, truthfulness and surrendering to

God that the Guru-graced sadhaka becomes successful in gaining revelation and understanding of new methods of learning." It is with this perspective that Guru Maharaj used to say, "Real wisdom is one that beats the guru's -- now that's a disciple."

\*The parentheses and the text within are written in the original in English.

The feeling of self-confidence was present in Maharajji in a special way. It is wrong to think that feelings of self-respect or self-assurance are a kind of egoism and a right to the proud elevation of one's status. It is in the simple, fearless, responsible, guileless, open-hearted and high-minded person that this special characteristic of self-reverent awareness manifests. It is with the aid of this that human beings become capable and successful at gaining true humanness, and then, without hesitation, become immersed in the spiritual sadhana of attaining the Brahman-substance. Perhaps it was to explain the significance of self-respect on the ladder of spiritual ascension that he said, "Uddhabetatmanatmanam natmanamvasadayet." Fear (meaning the feeling of awe)\* and feelings of deep respect would arise in us in the face of his profoundly serious and gigantic personality. Sometimes upon looking at him we could not find the courage to open our mouths. But from time to time, he chit-chatted, joked and kidded around with everyone in such a way - as if we friends of the same age - that we would forget about his extreme solemnity. Mixing openly with us as equals did not ever diminish his personality. This is evidence of true self-respect and its significance.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

In matters of education in schools or in the household environment, he would say to be especially attentive to the feelings of self-respect in children. Even though it might be necessary to administer punishment or reprimand, he would tell us to be careful that the self-worth of the child is not harmed, because if man loses self-respect, then he has nothing. Using animalistic strength to mete out punishment can make the child's natural mentality and temperament base and lowly. This does not remove the root problem. He used to say that negative statements of warning, like "do not lie" or "do not steal," often had the effect of opening up the wicked side of the child's simple mind. Instead, it was better to make the child understand the ideals and inner meaning of the path of truth and honesty, and then the young mind could walk on righteous way with self-respect. From time to time, he

said that man is omniscient in the fundamental state; therefore it was erroneous and wrong to try cheat anyone; and it was not really possible to cheat children either. Man's learning and his relationship to the world around him manifests unknowingly in his innate behavior. To help walk on the path that cultivated good habits and self-reliance, he would from time to time ask children about food and bathing, or discuss with them their general preferences and tastes. He said that if one were to be observant and attentive even towards life's very ordinary and small things, one could attain much excellence. Learning the scriptures at his feet, we have seen that instead of imposing his commentary on us right at the start, he would help us to awaken our own analytical intelligence and would encourage our freedom to acquire our own understanding and meaning. In this way, taking the thread of our insignificant efforts to look within and become free thinkers, most of the time he was able to make us internalize the core meanings of the shastras. The observation of the wisdom of the two injunctions "Sraddhavan labhate jnanam" and "yuktuyuktamupadeyam vachanam balakadapi" was a particular characteristic of his teaching.

Although he encouraged travel to foreign countries to acquire knowledge, from time to time he would say in sadness, "The youth of other progressive countries in the world travel to many lands and they fortify their own culture with the gathering of new experiences, which then enhances their own and their culture's glory. But it is shameful that, because of India's present educational systems which are full of faults, the children of this land of sages return from foreign countries having learned only to follow other people's ways by which they besmirch the cultural pride, even the reputation of their families." It is because of this that until the last moments of his life that he spoke about modern educational systems of sagacious wisdom for the benefit and improvement of India. He would clearly point out the need for political support on this matter and the necessity for cultures to come forward. He did not like hesitancy in any field. He used to say that there is no sin in work. Doubt and weakness are the real sins.

Even though he was proud of the glory of India's sages, India's civilization, India's spiritual knowledge, the Vedas, philosophy, astrology, science, literature, arts and crafts etc., and would in solemn tones declare the profound foundation of the culture of saints in our education, politics, society, religion etc. as demonstrated by truth-seeing sages, still he would become irritated if one only spoke vacuously about the grand events of the past without being attentive to

one's own sadhana or one's competence in work. His philosophy was that by taking the seed mantra of the enlightened sages along with the beneficial elements of the modern and international communities' multifaceted knowledge, science, education and culture - one must know these things and move life forward. This is how the culture would be properly represented and how humanness could be exhibited. In every step was the word of caution: "Don't become a foreigner." He revered the multi-directional abilities of human beings. We understood from his sayings that the influence of the works of knowledge and science dispels the narrowness of mind and makes man open-minded and noble. I am remembering when he was shown the Acharya of Science, Jagadish Chandra Bose's house and laboratory, seeing which he said, "This of course is a place of pilgrimage." That sages and wise beings only existed in the past, or that saints and sages can only be from India and not take birth in other places -- this sentiment had no place in his mind. Although he proudly believed in India's special contribution toward spirituality and its esteemed profundity, he could not perceive the different cultures of the world as some low-level human beings in regards to this.

"Sraddhavan labhate jnanam" - This root mantra for excellence in the path of life - he very much wanted to write this in our minds and instructed us to realize the truth "Tadbiddhi pranipaten pariprasnen sevaya." He did not understand the meaning of reverence to be only the usual bowing and prostration. Instead, he became very disturbed when he saw the performance at every step of pranam, prostration, glorification, head-bowing or a terribly cowering and milquetoast demeanor. At the demonstration of this type of overblown adulation he would say from time to time: "Be careful of too much devotion." But, using the excuse of passing out so-called judgment, he would ask us to be alert and not neglect the usual proprieties of greeting, bowing and other such courtesies. He used to teach us by following civil manners himself, as part of his own behavior. Even in the area of the Guru-given authority to bestow initiation -- as long as Guru's son was present in Guru's house, Swamiji would not give initiation to any aspirant in Guru's land, Benares. Once it happened that a certain devotee of his in Benares became extremely desperate to receive initiation from him and because of respect for the authority of initiation in Benares belonging to Guru's son who was present there at the time, he went outside of Benares for a while to give initiation to that aspirant. Intellectual understanding, sentiment,\* or purifying reverence are ideals which are in agreement with each other. He used to say that the real form of reverence was the innate inclination of love

in human beings towards the Infinite, towards Truth, towards the highest. The natural practice of that within one is what could allow man to walk on the path of his real being and remain true to the ideals. By the simple application of that, behavioral civility is compelled to manifest. Of course, it is important to tend particularly to the behavioral side of the unformed mind of a child also. This why he was a situational proponent of scriptural recitation, rituals of offering, worship, homage to elders, salutations and such formal procedures, but in all things, he disliked any excessive external showmanship. He would simply say, “That much good isn’t good.”

\*The word “sentiment” is written in English in the original.

Many times, he became harshly critical if he saw the predominance of outer apparel in a religious sadhaka trying to show his sectarian spirituality. It is possible that some mala- and tilak- clad renunciates have become upset upon hearing his criticism. We also became intolerant of this, and trying to comprehend him according to our intelligence, from time to time ended up asking him, “Why do you make these types of baseless comments?” But after settling down, we understood from his explanations that he disliked excess and pomp, but if different sadhakas - during meetings with their sectarian congregations or at times of holy gatherings - put on the special clothing of their sects simply and respectfully, then he was very much a proponent of that. While living in his ashram, we have also experienced that when he saw a certain simple and dedicated devotee of the Vaishnava sect going to a gathering of their sect dressed beautifully in their typical sectarian clothing with mala, tilak etc., he praised the devotee’s discipline. Many people have misunderstood him on this issue, but who is going to judge truthfully? How far can our miniscule intelligence take us?

His teaching was that the Eternal Truth-Brahman-substance is universally present equally everywhere. Because of place, time, prospective recipients and cultural differences, the internal and divine Guru-Shakti has flown through many different sadhakas and great beings, and, for the beneficence of human beings, has created various sects appropriate for the situation only; the root substance, meaning dharma, is one and universal [sanatan]. He accepted the appropriateness of the existence of different sects. But he did not at all support any sectarian illiberality. He used to say that realized acharyas have given and are giving teachings fitting to different circumstances. We, not being able to discern or comprehend the whole of it, judge

and view them in contempt from our encircling dogma. On this subject, it is sad and shameful that in the present time, honorable, educated and intelligent personages versed in scriptures have not only settled at defiling the viewpoints of India's respectable and venerable acharyas, but they have continued to employ baseless and ignorant statements about the character of those universally hallowed realized beings. I do not believe that these extremely prejudiced people of renown will be able to rightly use their exceptional capabilities in proper service for the benefit of the world. With the blessings of the Lord of this world's destiny, the banishment of this smallness would make it possible to apply the teachings and wisdom of these sages for the abundant benefit of the country. The country whose truth-seeing and open-hearted sages, upon sensing the desire for realization of Truth from people of different nationalities who were seeking the guarded wisdom of spirituality with their various perspectives, said: "Vedah bibhinnah smatayah; bibhinnah nasou muniryasya matam na bhinnah"; the country whose divinely incarnated Great Sadhaka told us of the essence of the beautiful and experientially egalitarian statement, "As many views, that many paths" -- to hear the character of divine teachers be ridiculed from the mouths of sadhakas of the same country is without doubt a saad affair. It is one thing to dissect the opinion of another by direct experience or logical analysis in the interests of truth, but it is quite another thing, after having destroyed the proposition, to attack the personal character of that person. This is what is called narrow-mindedness. The great yogi Swamiji Maharaj's experiential perspective was established in non-dualism [advaita], but whether it was advaita, bishishtadvaita, dvaitadvaita or dvaita - even though there may have been the desire to ridicule or destroy the perspectives of certain speakers and acharyas, I do not think that I have ever seen any feelings of disrespect from him towards these universally holy great beings. Instead, we would hear him say with his egalitarian perspective that everyone's destined path is one, and travelers from different lands need to adopt particular methods for their particular paths. For example: a stick for the hilly and mountainous roads (hill stick),\* a boat for the waterways, etc. After arriving at the royal gate of God, there is no more need for the use of those things. If one wants to be inspired by ideals of one's own experiences, then one has to walk that spiritually appropriate path with one-pointed discipline, and once those ideals manifest, one has to endeavor to investigate the wisdom-jewel through numerous opinions, otherwise restlessness can arise and make one aggravated. He used to cryptically say, "Ram's Guru is Shiva and Shiva's Guru is Ram, but the conflict is in Shiva's ghosts and Ram's monkeys."

\*The parentheses and the text are written in English in the original.

If the subjects of sense-enjoyment or renunciation was brought up then he would make us understand through the wisdom of the Gita about the demonstration of restraint from sensual coercions for a Karmayogi. He used to say that the embodying of a physical form itself naturally consumed sense-pleasures, and that the Soul-established sadhaka, with the help of the consummation of the culmination of sensual gratification from prarabdha [predestined events], could then complete the enjoyment of physical pleasures and subsequently turn inward to the service of the lord of the senses, Hrishikesh. That is when a human being became a real renunciate. But the scattered and restless human being, running after pleasure, loses his authority over the senses and becomes enslaved, and being immersed in the senses, is swept away in the ocean of sorrow.

It has previously been mentioned that he used to consider the Srimad Bhagavad Gita as the greatest spiritual book. During discussions of Sadguru Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya's beautiful and yogically experiential commentaries on every character's essential purpose and His yogic explanations in the Gita pertaining to the spiritual path of sadhana, Swamiji Maharaj made us understand that in the form of those such as Duryodhana, the hundred demonic pravritti [externally and inductively oriented] tendencies caused turmoil in the sadhaka's path of sadhana and were ready to draw him towards the path of pravritti oriented sense-pleasures. When unobstructed by and renouncing the pravritti-allied demonic forces of sensual enjoyment produced by the five elements (the five Pandavas),\* one could walk the path of nivritti [internally and deductively oriented] in the spiritual life. It is for the presentation of this that the Gita begins in the Mahabharata. Besides this type of yogic commentary, he also taught us that the Gita's directives, advice and philosophical substance were necessary and applicable to every level of human life. It for this reason that the Gita is the all encompassing spiritual treatise. He believed the truth of the battle of Kurukshetra at the transitional period of the Yugas and in the historical truth of the Ultimate Man, Sri Krishna's ultra-incredible ideal, character and deeds, and agreed with the views of the philosopher and Emperor of Literature, Bankim Chandra's opinion that the character of Sri Krishna was the highest and ideal character ever written about in the world. But he did not think, according to the prevalent belief, that Sri Krishna Himself recited the Gita in that way, full of yogic substance, at the onset of war as the charioteer of Arjuna

on the historic battlefield of Kurukshetra. We have understood from his words that the divine-sighted Maharshi Vyas experienced the manifestation of the Divine Guru in his life as a sadhaka, the One who descended into human consciousness and was the eternally incarnate God in the heart of all matter, and it is with that experience and employing the immaculate characters of Sri Krishna and Arjuna that he composed the Highest Upanishad, the nectarous Gita in the guise of a story-poem. This is why the substance spoken in the Gita is eternal and why the Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the universal spiritual scripture. The dutiful and righteous sadhaka, obtaining the Grace of Guru, from continuous spiritual study is able to receive the true meaning of the Gita, and applying the nectarous wisdom of the yoga-shastra Gita and becoming able to excel in every field of life, is gratified by it. When discussing the unique discourse on Purushottama in the Gita he pointed out: "In Hindu philosophy the manifested Brahman is present in three forms: 1) One imperishable, eternal, unchanging, infinite and undivided Universal Consciousness; 2) the Presence of this infinite Consciousness which reflects all, being reflected in division after division of molecular, atomic, subatomic and the subtlest levels of the substance of the Universe, bringing into being this consciousness-filled physical world; 3) this visible physical world. Although there is no difference between Presence Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness, but it is with the aid of this that Nature creates bacteria to man to gods etc. and the search for the true Self and place of Bliss, gradually leads to the Land of Bliss. The indivisible and infinite Universal Consciousness is represented as Sri Krishna in the Gita. This Purushottama Sri Krishna is the goal and attainment of the sadhaka. In many slokas of many chapters of the Gita is this manifestation of Sri Krishna evident for us to read and understand. The Sri Krishna of the Gita is not an ordinary butter-thief and neither is He a diplomatic politician. He is the very Purushottama Ishwara.

\*The parentheses and the text within are in the original.

Through His Holiness Sri Guru Maharaj's experiential exposition of spiritual matters we became acquainted with the proper and harmonious perspectives of Samkhya yoga and Vedanta Darshan. He said:

"Nityam purnamanadyanantam Brahmaparamam  
tadevaikamevadvaitam sat  
Tatra sarvajna premabijshchit sarvashaktibijamanandashcha."

"Eternal, perfect, beginningless and endless is the supreme Brahman; it is the Truth, one without a second. It is the seed of all-knowing Love, it is Consciousness, the seed of all Power, and It is Bliss."

Not understanding the natural and spiritual attraction<sup>[fn 1]</sup> to the Infinite, the Self-ignorant, embedded to the three gunas, multi-appareled, deluded individual soul goes toward the side of repulsion<sup>[fn 2]</sup> and turns round and round, caught in the spiral of Maya's measured divisions, believing in the intelligence of his ego-self, drowning in his self-dug, watery grave. The means to become free from such spiral or sorrow is the attainment of the True Self through Soul-Knowledge. The root of that sadhana or spirituality is Karma, or in the path of Kriya yoga, self-surrender to the endearment of Vishnu through the guileless, free of all attachments, blossoming of devotion by the great attraction of Love towards the Paramatman within. In the knowing of that Oneness - fear, the forms of fear and the other great obstacles are dispelled, and realization arises: "Swalpamapasye dharmasya trayate mahatobhayat." Being attached to the three gunas, we have moved from the Great Substance and come to take the form of a physical body. To go back to the True Self, we have to again take the path upward, meaning that we have to progress from the physical through the different levels of the subtle existence and arrive at the Brahman-Shakti or Guru-Shakti within, meaning, that with infinite Divine Grace, become settled in Brahman. In the discussions of the subject of Kriyayoga sadhana, he showed us the practical<sup>[fn 3]</sup> and experiential path for this theoretical<sup>[fn 4]</sup> quest. We understood from these discourses that by yama, niyama or following the prevalent prohibitive directives and taking up the practice of a still, comfortable posture, the restlessness of the body goes away. Practicing attention on the manifested path of Shakti, the sushumna - or its physical representation in the passage through the spinal column, the nervous system<sup>[fn 5]</sup> becomes peaceful, which results in the mind turning inward in this harmonious body and becoming stabilized in the path of the Brahmanadi, and subsequently the life-force is gradually concentrated and eventually pours into the expanse of the Great Truth.<sup>[fn 6]</sup> Slowly, in the state of inward bound pratyahara one begins to see the luminous presence of the All-Wisdom Eye in the subtle-body; the consciousness becomes stilled in the manifestation of that Light.<sup>[fn 7]</sup> And in the tranquil mind of the meditator, meaning when mind, intellect, consciousness and ego are at equilibrium, the Pranava Shabda or Nada or the Primordial Resonance spoken by the Great, All-pervading Divine can be experienced naturally and unscattered.<sup>[fn 8]</sup>

When in the Guru-graced path of Pranava Shabda, the state of the inward bound, Brahma-Yonimudra manifested, illuminated by Divine Light[fn 9], Soham-filled sense is experienced, by concentration on which the self-surrendered and meditation-immersed sadhaka attains the profound wisdom of Samadhi, it is then that the veil is removed and the vast Consciousness-Bliss of the Truth of the True Form of the Soul is gained, meaning, the total dissolution of the threefold suffering, or the attainment of the eternally longed-for Satchitanandness. "Yam labdha chaparam labham manyate nadhikam tatah." Reverence, service and worship help to purify consciousness in the path of the sadhaka. The many types of worship and prayer were created to help in the practice of reverence for different levels of the human mind in the worldly field. "Apsu deva manushyanam divi devo manishinam kashthaloshtreshu murkhanam yuktasyatmani devata."

fn 1 - 5: The words

[1]"attraction," [2]"repulsion," [3]"practical," [4]"theoretical" and [5]"nervous system" are written in English in the original.

fn 6 - 9 are Sanskrit slokas provided by Swami Satyananda to elucidate particular aspects of the text. They are as follows:

praano hi bhagavaan iishah praano vishnuh pitaamahah  
praanena dhaaryate lokah sarvam praanamayam jagat

The Prana is indeed Lord Iisha (= Siva), the Praana is Vishnu and the Father (Brahma). By Prana the entire world is supported. The entire world is full of Prana.

fn 7 -

Neehar dhumarkanilanlanam  
khadyotvidyut sphatik shashinam  
etani rupani purahsarani  
Brahmanyabhivyaktikarani yoge

--from Svetasvatar

In Yoga, the forms which come first, which manifest the Brahman, are those of misty smoke, sun, fire, wind, fire-flies, lightnings, and a crystal moon.

taila-dhaaraam ivaacchinnam deergha-ghantaa-vinaadavat  
yas tu veda... sa vedavit

One who knows That without any break like the flow of oil and like the long sound of a bell... he indeed is a knower of the Vedas.

fn 8 -

sarve vedaa yat padam aamananti  
tapaamsi sarvaani ca yad vadanti  
yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti  
tat te padam sangrahe na braviimi - om ity etat

-- from Katha

That Word which all the Vedas proclaim,  
Which all penances aim at,  
Desiring which the wise practise Brahmacharya,  
That Word I shall tell you in brief: It is Om.

fn 9 -

mantraartham mantra-caitanya yoni-mudraam vinaa tathaa  
shatakoti-japenaapi naiva siddhih prajaayate

-- from Tantra

Without knowing the meaning of the Mantra, without possessing the consciousness of the Mantra and without practising Yonimudra, Siddhi shall not occur even by a hundred million repetitions.

During the nineteenth century, and even after that, the usual belief was that there was no relationship between science and religion, and that the scientifically minded could not be religious. Swamiji Maharaj said that it was the scientist who could be the truly religious person. The unearthing of scientific knowledge and mysteries make it easy to understand the secrets of the Universe and Nature and help in the progress of life, mind, intellect etc., and it is by that that the human mind can naturally take up the true path of religion. Controlling the multi-directional, scattered energies, applying the Brahman-method, the Brahmachari sadhaka becomes inwardly attracted to the Great Satchitananda-Self and surrendering all in the natural way, gains salvation. "Dharanat [unreadable due to print]"

In discussing astrological knowledge, he believed in scientific reasons for the appearance of different conditions and situations in the solar system in the various ages of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali, which

affected the general movements, upward or downward, in the consciousness of human beings. Depending on whether the solar system is closer or farther from the Vishnunabhi (Grand Centre),\* consciousness manifests in conditions according to that Age. In Satya the natural state is all four parts of Consciousness-Bliss; in Treta it is three parts out of four, meaning general magnetic attraction causing Consciousness-Knowledge; in Dwapara it is two parts Truth, meaning the attraction of subtle electrical power causing Consciousness-mind; and in Kali it is one part, meaning the stupor of the tamasic physical world manifesting the state of Consciousness-life-force. The natural movement of the normal solar-system and of all solar systems is to move toward and away from the Vishnunabhi and by scientific law, the positioning of the solar system through the various modes of attraction, causes the different and particular levels of physical, mental and spiritual atmosphere to be prevalent to the specific eras. It is for this reason that in this created world, with the natural inclination to express different qualities, we see the appearance of the four yugas, Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali, fully and partially demonstrating Truth in their naturally changing eras. According to the process of evolution, these ages go in succession from Satya to Kali and again from Kali ascend, passing through Dwapara and Treta, arriving at Satya. Swamiji Maharaj's calculations show that at present, having passed two hundred years in the transition of Kali and Dwapara, we are almost a half-century into Dwapara yuga, and proving it is the evidence of the evolution of the perception of subtle things throughout the world. The presence of finer understanding is becoming apparent in historical events, society, politics, culture, science and even in spiritual knowledge and insight. Electricity is a regular companion to daily life in the world today. The turmoil and violent revolutions we are seeing are transitional pains from the changing of the yugas. With these calculations, in the Christian year 1900, he predicted that soon there will be a cataclysmic event, like in Lanka or Kurukshetra, signifying the transformation into the new age, after which there will be a new vision into the subtler realms of politics, society and even in the field of spiritual sadhana, and peace will reign, appropriate for the age.

\*The parentheses and the text within are written in English in the original.

The straightforward explanation of the duration of the yugas by Maharshi Manu, meaning, his instructions as to the calculations of the number of years pertaining to the specific yugas - instead of taking it

in its simplicity, with the absence of the king of righteousness, Yudhisthira and other such enlightened beings at the end of the previous Dwapara, other meanings were attributed to the daiva-years and erroneous calculations came to practice at the beginning of the Kali era. He used to say that just as days, lunar fortnights and months etc. were calculated with the help of constellations during a year, in that same way were they used for the aid in the measurement of yugas and time periods -- as in: 7th Ashwin, 247 Dwapara Era. For pride in remembering kings of later years was the suffix "era of so and so" created. Calculating astrologically significant times in this way, he demonstrated with examples that the present times of solstices and equinoxes indicated in the prevalent almanacs were of a different date than should be, meaning, these dates were from a time in the solar system thousands of years ago. Thus, although the Great Equinox takes place in the modern 8/9th Chaitra, resulting in the equal division of day and night, one can still see the usage of the equinoctial dates in Chaitra for the Great Equinox from back in the Puranic times in the almanacs.

It is said, "That which is in the Brahmanda [macrocosm] is in the Bhandha [microcosm]." Which means that the structure and laws of the great Brahmanda and the small Brahmanda, meaning, the structure and laws of the body owned by the individual soul, are entirely the same. Modern science tells us that the construction, and the laws to which it abides, of an atom are exactly the same as the laws and construction of the solar world. It is amazing to think that the divinely sighted sages, through their research and experience, long ago expressed the same things that are being known throughout via the truth of science.

The Hindu visionaries agreed on certain essential things that caused the manifestation of this observable world. The evolution of these things is the evolution of Nature. The world moves according to the present manifestation of these substances. The body of a human being is symbolic of this Universe. This human body is a tiny universe. This is why, the more a sadhaka progresses in the path of sadhana, the more - through the power of yoga - he experiences the elements of Universe-Nature in his body. The intention of the Universe-Nature is the evolution of the spiritual life following the line of the evolution theory\* of the Universe. Nature itself has worked toward this goal age after age. Applying yogasadhana and progressing in spiritual life, a human being can help this great work of Nature along and can elevate itself much higher. We find the resounding shout of this wisdom in the deeply spiritual and experiential words from Rishi Aurobindo on

the hope of the ideal of the superman, with which we can understand that, because of the exact law of evolution, the incomplete and partially realized human race of the present is absolutely destined to attain a level of divine consciousness. To attain the longed-for "liberation,"\*\* studying the enlightened and Guru-revealed wisdom and adopting the practice of sadhana, a human being can move through the spiritual levels of Kali, Dwapara, Treta and Satya as they appear one by one, and ascending, leave behind the anxiety of concern for the afterworld, and in a short time, realize liberation within himself in this very life.\*\*\* Moving in the work of Brahman, or in Brahman, or walking in the laws of the Infinite Brahman, meaning, becoming aware of Supreme Nature, if one lives life according to this experience, meaning, being able to completely surrender oneself, it is possible to obtain the attraction of the Lord in the Form of Divine Grace and thereby become sanctified.

\*The words "evolution theory" are written in English in the original.  
 \*\*The word "mukti" [liberation] is enclosed by quotes in the original.  
 \*\*\*Swami Satyanandaji's elucidation of the text by a footnoted Sanskrit sloka:

Ihaiva tairjitah sargo yemam samye sthitam manah  
 nirdosham hi samam Brahma tasmadbrahmani te sthitah

Here birth is conquered by those whose mind is established in equanimity.

Guiltless and impartial is God; therefore they are established in God.



Swami Sri Yuktेशvar Giri Maharaj  
A Biography by Swami Satyananda Giri

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## Conclusion

The work of the various Satsanga Sabhas continued on under the direction of Sadhusabhapati Sri Guru Maharajji. In foreign lands, the propagation work of his dear disciple, Swami Yoganandaji, was spreading more and more. The western devotees were enraptured, having been introduced to the Kriyayoga sadhana of the founder of the spiritual way of the Age, the Lord Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, from the mouth of the one carrying Guru's Word, the Indian sannyasi Yoganandaji. Applying sadhana to the words of wisdom from the Acharya of the Ages, Sadhusabhapati Maharaj, they listened with reverence to the explanation of realizing humanness in this very realm, and bowed lovingly, paying homage to the spiritual power of the guru of the world, the Rishi India. Swamiji Maharaj was especially attentive to his spiritual son Yoganandaji's continuous work and if he sensed any mistakes in his son's method of work in the distant land of America, he would warn him even from so far away. He kept on giving situational instructions in order to properly organize the spreading out of work. He instructed that the Yogananda-introduced name "Yogoda" be adopted and the Sabhas' names be changed to "Yogoda Satsanga Sabha," and began to become quite eager to have his beloved disciple near him. From time to time, he expressed sadness at seeing the then-established Sadhu Sabha's ideals and methods of work for propagation not being done in the properly disciplined way for which he had hoped. He used to try to make us understand, "The mission of this body is coming to an end. Now you all get ready. You all must take the responsibility. No matter how much work Yogananda has, even if it is with a return ticket, he must come." Even though he was up in his years, when he would see us

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from time to time looking with captivated eyes at his powerful, upright and brilliant form and his royal and gloriously radiant face, understanding what we were thinking, he would say, "You are seeing it as beautiful from the outside, but all of the mechanisms on the inside are weakening." I clearly remember that in a conversation one day around the Christian year 1925/26, he said, "The hitch that will come in another ten years - it's not likely that this body will be saved from that." After those ten years had passed, not even in the early times of the now foretold period could we imagine, seeing always his yoga-attained excellent form, that he would leave his body. He continued to tell us, "The new insights that were revealed from the experiential truth of astrology, philosophy and other such sciences - these things may not be accepted while this body is still here. But whether you propagate this or not, because of the influence of the times, maybe immediately after this body goes, you will definitely hear this wisdom of truth resounding loudly from the sages of the world. At this beginning of betterment for the world, according to the maturing process as part of this transitional period of the ages, even though intense conflict and war goes on throughout the world, very soon - no, suddenly - India will become freed from her governmental subservience; freedom will come to the inhabitants of Asia; and after a huge upheaval, the turmoil of the world will come to an end, after which the environment for peace in the Universe will continue to grow." We listened dumbfoundedly to the farsighted words of the Acharya of the Ages, and, through the passage of time, became amazed at the gradual manifesting of his vision.

It was as if the very busy Yoganandaji felt the pull of Sriguru in the distant land of America. That his father, who had helped and blessed him in spiritual propagation and all types of works of benevolence, was now at old age - this also distressed his mind. The Yoganandaji who, even after fifteen long years of living outside his home country, did not take particular care even when he had free time to return to India, that Yoganandaji stunned his devotees at the end of the summer of the Christian year 1935, and although there were all kinds of problems, in a short time left for India. When someone tried to present to him the sensibility of staying in order to take care of the problems at hand, he said, "Even if the earth turns upside down, the eternal attraction of my aged father and my Guruji are calling me to absolutely go to India now; delay is impossible."

The victorious child of India, Swami Yoganandaji arrived at his motherland in August of the Christian year 1935 with his American

disciples; the inhabitants of his homeland welcomed him resoundingly. Guru and disciple reunited at the Guru-pilgrimage-place of Srirampur. Seeing the pride of India manifested sagaciously in him, Swamiji Maharaj joyfully and proudly embraced his spiritual son in affection, and introducing him and spreading the word to everyone as the deserving successor in his work and as the future Sadhusabhapati, Swamiji was then satisfied.

The great gathering of Kumbhamela was taking place in the month of Magh this year at the pilgrimage place of Prayag. Returning to the land of India after having been out of the country for so long, Yoganandaji wanted to see the congregation of sadhus in Kumbhamela. His friends, devotees and disciples also became engaged in wanting to take him to Prayag. Giving in to the eagerness of everyone, he did not delay any further and headed towards the gathering of pilgrims. Unfortunately, because of this one erroneous rush, he was not able to meet and see his Gurudev. Meanwhile, after waiting a few days in Srirampur for his beloved disciple, when His Holiness Swamiji Maharaj came to know one day that Yoganandaji had gone to Kumbhamela, he suddenly let out a deep sigh and lay down. The long-time companions of Swamiji Maharaj who were there at the time say, "In our whole lives we had never seen Maharajji become so suddenly despondent. When that steadfast, ensconced in wisdom, lion of a man and great sannyasi became so distressed at the flash of a moment, we became frightened at the possibility of some future trouble and were stupefied. Who knew that, in that strange and unusual state, the impossibility of another physical meeting of Guru and disciple in this world was now set. That the experience of the pain of farewell would manifest in this way in Guru Maharaj's mind - we could not in any way imagine this." Here was an incredible demonstration of the very human affection and love in the mind of a "superman,"\* touching his innermost heart! After a few minutes passed, the Gurudev of Knowledge returned to his normal self and again began to converse open-heartedly with everyone.

\*The word "atimanav"[superman] is in quotes in the original.

Taking up the ideal of "Atmano mokshartham jagaddhitayacha," the dutiful Swamiji Maharaj, upon receiving their invitation, headed for the yearly festival-gathering by the village fellowships of the Medinipur district. He arrived at the festival of the Yogoda Satsanga Sabhas of Ghatal, Mahakumar and Kukurdaha on the full moon of Magh. It was this Khukurdaha village that twenty years ago, because

of the heartfelt call of the villagers, and the leadership of the late Dr. Parameshwar Maji Mahasaya as well as the efforts of other devotees, was blessed by the touch of his feet. Keeping that initial memory at heart, the Kriyavan devotees of Khukurdaha had been paying homage year after year to the Feet of the Holiest of Holies and Beloved Sriguru, the Lord of the Heart. Alas, little did they know that this was their last physical play with their heart-lover, and that this was the final time they would have his affectionate company! He seemed this time to overwhelmingly bestow his love on Vipin, Vinod, Neerad and other such disciplined Kriyavans. A photo was also taken with everyone. In the midst of chit-chatting and fun-filled festivities, Guru Maharaj said, "This is the last time that I will join you in this fellowship." The children were suddenly taken aback for a moment by their father saying such a thing, but, not paying much attention to this, nevertheless remained absorbed in the company of Guru and in the joy of the festival. Finishing the work of the Sabha, Gururji went then to Puri as usual.

Swami Yoganandaji was around Kumbhamela at that time with his group, and I was in ill health in Calcutta. The trip for everyone to Puri for the yearly Satsanga-festival on the Great Equinox in the month of Chaitra was set, but Maharajji unexpectedly wrote me a letter a few days before the Holi festival and insisted that we, along with Yoganandaji, come to Puri before the Holi festival. My health was ill, this is true, and therefore I, the unfortunate one, did not make the effort to arrive at his Holy Feet immediately after that call of his. I thought that the yearly festival will happen soon anyway, and that it would be better to go after I was a little bit healthier. Who knew at that time that this was the last pull and call of his loving embrace and blessing in this world! Swami Yoganandaji arrived in Calcutta just before Holi. Finding him again in their own house after his long stay in America, his friends in Calcutta, disciples and devotees took him and lost themselves in the enjoyment of the Holi festivities. That very day, Yoganandaji received sudden news that Sri Guru Maharaj was very in very ill health in Puri. He became very upset by this news, but because of circumstances, he could not leave that day. The anxious and distressed disciple journeyed to his Guru-pilgrimage the next day.

The horrific prophecy that he had made ten years ago, the heart-rendering indication that he had given us at the Khukurdaha festival, the hint that he had given to us of the coming of the final days via that letter from Puri, calling our unaware selves to come before the Holi festival, all had now come together to meet each other. The earthly

work now ended. The beautiful, strong, tranquil and majestic body suddenly became somehow unable to function. Within a couple of days, the two or three devotees and close friends from Puri that were present became anxious to send word to the disciples in Calcutta. Hearing this, Maharajji explained, "Let God's will operate as it is doing. There is no need to interrupt anyone's work or duty to bring them here." As some more time elapsed and Guru Maharajji's physical condition became further desperate, those present became alarmed and restless, and when they were ready to immediately send news by telegram to Calcutta, he asked them add this little bit to what was being written: "This is a malady that never happened before." Several of his beloved disciples from Khidirpur along with Atulbabu arrived at his side. Sheltered at Guru's Feet, the tireless servants such as Sri Narayan Giri and others were giving all of their energies to help and all were especially waiting in suspense for the arrival of Yoganandaji. But what God had willed is what happened. At the prescribed time of the Falguni Krishnavitiya Tithi, the greatest of men, Yogibara Jnanagurudev, in profound peace and stillness, united in yoga, drew all Shakti up and became immersed in Mahasamadhi. Struck by lightning, the helpless devotees cried out in overwhelming grief. The world became dark. Who else will now show the way of Light on this road filled with the stupor of ignorance? Where did the helmsman to the shore go? On the road, Swami Yoganandaji's sight suddenly became stilled at seeing a light in the sky. In the silence of his heart he realized that it was all over. The Life-Lover had left. Eventually, after arriving at the ashram, filled with sorrow, this sannyasi and main disciple performed Sri Guru Maharaj's last rites. Befitting the proper custom for yogis, the ever-dear and the eternally worshippable form of Sriguru was buried in the courtyard of the ashram.

The news of grief spread like lightning through the thousands of devotees and disciples nationwide. Even though they tried to remember the injunction that one should mourn over a sannyasi's attainment of Mahasamadhi, everyone's distressed minds became stricken and overcome with emotion. The stunned and saddened men and women's steersman-less boat of life began to lose control. The Guru-surrendered, forlorn devotees attended to meditating on the form of Sriguru for consolation. Gradually, the Guru-Shakti seemed to manifest in the devotees' hearts and resolved this intricate quandary on the path of sadhana. Aggrieved sadhakas became gratified in seeing the ever-beautiful and regal dream-form. Travelers on the difficult and long road dedicated their souls and, receiving the company of the

loving and Luminous Form of Guru came to recognize the ever-known path. It was as if the worshipful, ever-humble servant, who was the object of love, was suddenly being lovingly fanned in front of everyone. The Consciousness-attained, aware and able sadhaka, remembering the Eternal-Truth-bearing Jnanagurudev's manifested steadfast tranquility, experienced in amazement the perpetual flow of power in Guru's lineage, and in the commanding presence of that man, realized the exquisite revelation of character, as it flowed from the mouth of God and stated in the Sanatan Shastra:

"Eva brahmisthitih partha nainam prapya vimuhajhyati  
Sthitvasyamantakalehapi brahmanirvanamricchati"



**“Dadu”**

Acharya Sri Sailendra Bejoy Dasgupta  
(1910-1984)

Exalted direct disciple of Swami Sriyukteshvar Giriji Maharaj

Dadu,  
We are your children surrendered at your feet. Thank you for guiding us with your light.  
Please accept our quiet offering.