

Satya ka Avahan

Invoking the Divine

सत्य का
आवाहन

Year 1 Issue 3 May-June 2012



Sannyasa Peeth, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

Avahan is a bilingual and bi-monthly magazine compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.

Editor: Swami Yogamaya Saraswati

Assistant Editor: Swami Sivadhyanam Saraswati

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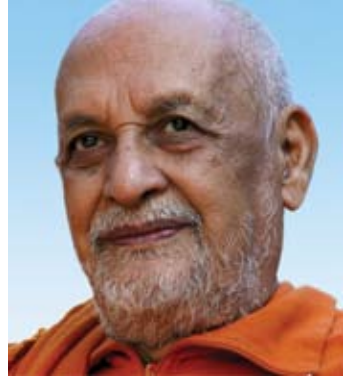
Sannyasa Peeth

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Front cover: Paduka Darshan, Munger

Plates: 1: Swami Niranjanananda, Srisailam 2011; 2: Sri Swami Sivananda; 3 & 6: Sri Swami Satyananda, Trayambakeshwar 1998; 4 & 7: Swami Niranjanananda, Trayambakeshwar 2011; 5: Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda, Trayambakeshwar 2010; 8: Srirudra Abhishek, Satyam Udyan, Munger 2012



SATYAM SPEAKS – सत्यम् वाणी

Sannyasins are the barometers of an age. They travel everywhere, so they are able to perform this role naturally. Sannyasa is a very powerful tradition. The most important quality in sannyasa is alakh niranjan: “I am a solitary traveller. I came alone and I go alone. No one can move me from my path.” That is the vision a sannyasin comes with. He knows the script he has to follow and follows it. He does not care if he has to die tomorrow. He knows that whatever has to happen will happen.

—Swami Satyananda

संन्यासी संस्कृति के संरक्षक और प्रवर्तक होते हैं। वे नगर-नगर और डगर-डगर घूमकर अपनी इस भूमिका को निभाते हैं। संन्यास बहुत शक्तिशाली परम्परा है, जिसका सार तत्त्व है—अलख निरंजन। ‘मैं अकेला आया था और अकेले ही जाऊँगा। कोई मुझे अपने रास्ते से हिला नहीं सकता,’ संन्यासी का यही मूलमंत्र होता है। उसे अपना मार्ग मालूम है और वह उसी पर चलता जाता है। अगले क्षण मरना भी पड़े तो कोई परवाह नहीं, क्योंकि वह जानता है कि जो होना है सो होकर रहेगा।

—स्वामी सत्यानन्द

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न तु अहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भविम् । कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनां आर्तिनाशनम् ॥

"I do not desire a kingdom or heaven or even liberation. My only desire is to alleviate the misery and affliction of others."

—Rantideva



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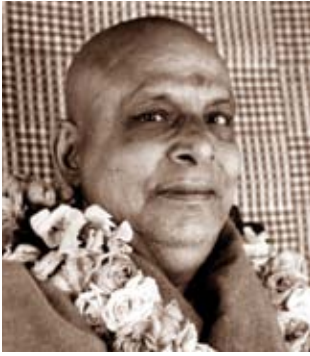
*Kaun sa sukha shanti ka aagaar
tumse maangtaa hoon*

*Tum pitaa ho isilieye mein
pyaar tumse maangtaa hoon*

*Not the treasures of peace and prosperity
do I ask of you*

*You are my father, therefore,
it is love that I ask of you.*

Towards Perfection



Spirituality means growing into the form of the divine ideal. It is the transformation of your nature from the human to the divine. You can hope to achieve perfection only when you effect this transformation. It is purification and change of heart alone that makes dharana and dhyana possible. To grow in sattwa you must entirely destroy the *asuric*, demonic, side of your nature. Never imagine for a moment that you are anywhere near the goal unless and until you strive with earnestness and diligence to rid yourself of negative tendencies and get established in pure, sattwic, ethical character.

Remember this point clearly. Constantly reflect upon this. Meditate upon this. Know that this is what true spirituality is. Fully realize the importance of becoming a changed man ethically and morally. Carefully avoid the dangers of self-deception. Do sadhana regularly and pray for grace. Regularity in sadhana is of paramount importance. Imagine not that you have scaled the heights of spirituality. Patiently wait for the results. When your nature is changed, purified and prepared, divine grace will flow of itself, illumination will flash of itself in the firmament of the soul. Bliss or *ananda* will spontaneously flow in and fill you when you have emptied yourself of harshness, egoism, pride and passion. Divine perfection and immortality will be yours. Where there is kindness, humility and purity, there spirituality springs up, saintliness shines, divinity descends and supreme perfection manifests itself.

Bathe in the river of spirituality. Plunge into it. Take a dip in it. Float in it. Rejoice.

– Swami Sivananda

Experience of God

The experience of God means an experience of your own self. The God who we look at in front of us exists within us; the face that we look at in the mirror is right here with us. The God who is formless becomes visible to us through a form.



What is the experience that is called a vision of God? Someone has a vision of Rama, someone of Hanuman, someone of Devi, someone sees a burning flame and someone sees his guru. These visions are not like dreams, they are as clear as a person appearing in front of you, and this is called darshan. To see outside that which is within is *darshan*.

In order to have a vision of God, your heart should be like that of a child. A child is innocent; when a person's heart is pure and simple, he has the heart of a child. The second thing is intensity of the emotion, bhakti. First make the house ready, then He will come.

When God gives His experience, it is a transcendental, universal and cosmic experience. However, that experience does not negate the experience of the world. It comes to you to indicate, "Follow this path." Therefore, whenever you have the experience of God, change your lifestyle. You have to discover what that experience means and if it does not come again, it means that it came to provide you encouragement; it was a message, an order or instruction so you may make certain changes in your life or thinking.

– Swami Satyananda

Mission Possible!

Date: January 2011

Occasion: Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi's Pilgrimage

Location: Tamil Nadu, South India

*In deep meditation had stood Rama
By these very waters, on this very sand
Invoking the Auspicious One, Shiva,
Calling the Lord of Dance to lead by the hand*

*Hearing the call the Lord left the Himalayan highs
And travelled faraway to the land's end
To appear before his ishta and devotee's eyes.
Ramalingeshwar, they called him:
The linga that Rama brought to life,
A supreme place of pilgrimage, a dham,
A jyotirlinga, made of light.*

*I offer my praise to Ramalingeshwar,
The bestower of happiness,
The source of bliss,
The three-eyed one,
Who is the Lord of all beings,
Wearing a garland of skulls and matted hair,
The consort of Parvati!
Om Namo Bhagavate Rudraya!*

At the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, in the Gulf of Mannar, is located the small island of Rameshwaram. Famous as the epic spot from where Sri Rama built a stone barrier bridge across the sea to Sri Lanka, it is one of the most important places of pilgrimage in India. Shaped like Vishnu's conch, it is hailed as one of the cardinal holy spots of the country and a place every believer aspires to visit. The story of Rama's bridge here

is not mythical, but the remains of the structure have actually been spotted under water through satellite imaging, and due to its antiquity it has been named Adam's Bridge.

The present temple of Rameshwaram was built by the Nayaka kings in the 12th century and said to have taken three centuries to build. It follows the Dravidian style of architecture with a nine-storey *gopuram*, spire, and a number of sacred tanks. Unique to the temple is a corridor lined with granite pillars that encircles the sanctum sanctorum and stretches for a length of 1,240 metres. In the sanctum sanctorum rests the lingam believed to have been installed by Sri Rama himself many centuries earlier. The story in the *Tulsi Ramayana* states that in preparation for the war against Ravana who had abducted his wife Sita, Sri Rama sought the blessings and grace of Lord Siva. When Lord Shiva appeared before him and bestowed his benediction, Sri Rama requested that he reside eternally in the lingam so that humanity may benefit from his presence for all times to come. Lord Shiva acquiesced, manifested himself as the lingam and was installed here for eternity. Another story in the *Kamba Ramayana* states that when Sri Rama returned



to Rameshwaram after his victory over Ravana, he had to perform atonement for having killed a brahmin. He prepared to perform a yajna dedicated to Shiva and asked Hanuman to bring a lingam from the Himalayas. The auspicious period for the beginning of the yajna was passing by, but Hanuman hadn't returned. Therefore, Sita prepared a mud lingam and the worship was begun. When Hanuman returned a little later, he felt very dejected by his failure. So, Rama instructed that the lingam brought by Hanuman should also be installed. Since then, both lingams are worshipped at the temple.

It was to this sacred place that Sri Swami Satyananda had come with his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda, in 1954. In fact, there is a room in the temple dedicated to Swami Sivananda. During that visit, as the young Satyam had stood on the beach with waves lapping at his feet, a vision had flashed across his mind: a multi-storeyed building with halls, classrooms and gardens, on top of a hill. It was only when Ganga Darshan was being built that he realized that all those years ago on the shores of Rameshwaram he had had a vision of his mission much before it had been even conceived of.

As Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi prepared to embark on their own new missions after the completion of the Mahasamadhi rites in January 2011, they arrived in Rameshwaram teertha seeking blessings for the successful completion of their first anushthana: the year-long Devi invocation. Prior to their visit to the holy city, they had had the blissful darshan of Ma Meenakshi in Madurai. The famous Meenakshi temple is actually the abode of Shiva who is known here as *Sundareshwar*, lord of beauty, and Ma Parvati as *Meenakshi*, one possessing eyes shaped like a fish. After receiving the blessings of Ma Meenakshi, the swamis travelled by road to Rameshwaram.

Upon arrival on the first day, they scouted the temple for possible places to sit to perform their sadhana. They found it: right behind the walls of the sanctum sanctorum, barely a few feet away from the presiding deity! Then, on the same day, they



had their first darshan of the Shivalingam during the evening arati.

Beginning the next day, for three consecutive days from 7 am to 12 noon, both sat for their respective anushtanas. In the afternoons, from 3 pm to 6 pm, they would spend time in the Devi enclosure at the temple where Shakti is depicted as Ma Parvati, the eternal consort of Lord Siva, and chant stotrams and do japa.

All through the stay, the presence of Swami Sivananda was a palpable reality. It was as if they were reliving the time when Swami Sivananda had visited the island with Swami Satyananda. There were visions of Sri Swamiji as a young disciple standing on the shores, brimming with dedication to guru and commitment to a cause.

As per the tradition of the temple, on the last day of the anushtana, Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi first bathed in the sea and then with the waters of twenty-one wells inside the temple premises before performing havan and Rudrabhisheka in front of the sanctum sanctorum. With the blessings of Shiva and Parvati imprinted upon their hearts and the presence of the gurus guiding their path, they returned to the northern plains. ■

Face of the Guru

Date: 6th February 2011

Occasion: Commemoration of Sri Swamiji's Bhu Samadhi

Location: Satyam Udyan, Ganga Darshan



Twice every month, the population of Ganga Darshan gathers in Satyam Udyan, or the Akhara, at Ganga Darshan to honour the Mahasamadhi of Sri Swamiji. Over the course of two evenings, the 5th and the 6th, rich tantric ceremonies are conducted alongside chanting and the singing of bhajans and kirtans.

Today it is the 6th of February and as he has done on this day for the last twelve months, Swami Niranjan is performing the abhisheka of Sri Yantra in remembrance of his beloved guru. The night air is cool and still, ethereal with the scent of fragrant flowers, fine incense and havan samagri burning in the sacred fire and around the grounds of Akhara in special

bowls. The peeths, living shrines to Devi, Shiva and Guru, are impeccably prepared for the evening, with every sacred ornament and oil lantern carefully placed to establish an air of thoughtful awareness befitting such a sacred event.

One after another, the auspicious liquids flow over the Sri Yantra. Performed with precise grace by a tantric master, the ceremony is one of reverent elegance. Refined but utterly raw, a feeling of joyful expression pervades the crowd. There is movement, creativity and expansion, and humble reverence.

It is fitting, then, that on such hallowed ground, in such refined company, as the liquid glides over the silver surface of the Sri Yantra, it congeals and settles to reveal a recognizable form. A face. Several onlookers see this: the face of Sri Swami Satyananda, as though painted by a divine hand on the surface of the yantra.

Some manage to take photographs of the occurrence. Upon seeing these reflections, Swamiji explained that all those present had been given darshan of Sri Swamiji.

While our logical minds may look upon such an event with awe or scepticism, the darshan was simply a revelation of the Divine, of Guru. It was a brief glimpse into the ultimate, and a moment of suspension of separation for those who witnessed it. ■

Spiritual life begins with a question: "Who am I?" You will have to participate in material life. There is no other way. You will have to go through instinctual life, but ask these questions: "Who am I? Where have I come from? What is my path of arrival? What will be the dock of my departure?" Having assumed the human form, ask these questions. That is when you will enter spiritual life.

—Swami Satyananda



Orbs of Shakti

Date: 6th March 2011

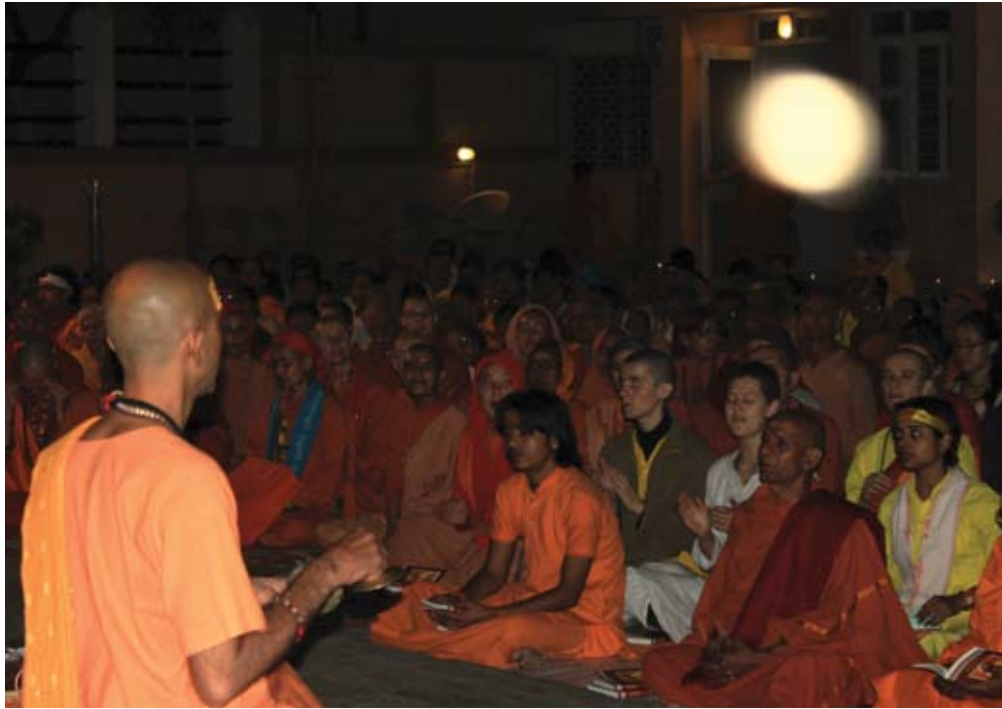
Occasion: Commemoration of Sri Swamiji's Bhu Samadhi

Location: Main Building and Satyam Udyan, Ganga Darshan

On the morning of 6th March 2011, the residents, students and guests of Ganga Darshan commenced their day in the usual manner. They performed their ablutions, and did their sadhana as the rest of Munger awoke around them.

On this particular morning, some of the people living on the western side of the Ganga Darshan property in Yoga Vidya found their awareness extending to levels of perception beyond the ordinary. One of them climbed up the stairs to the roof terrace, with the intention to greet the dawn. He stood silently, turned his gaze eastwards and what he beheld was a sight most unusual. An orb of light, roughly one metre in diameter, hung over the top of the Main Building, right above Sri Niwas, Sri Swamiji's residence. Made of translucent, bright light it illumined the area around which it appeared to float. Watching this curious phenomenon, his hair stood on end and not knowing why, his eyes were filled with tears. The moment passed, but the orb was still there, suspended in space. Was he imagining things? He looked around, and noticed another of his fellow aspirants had come up the stairs. He pointed out the vision to the new arrival and both watched in silent awe as the orb now moved, descending down towards Satyam Udyan, where it disappeared. The two continued on, slightly dazed, to breakfast. It was the morning of the sixth, the day on which, according to ashram tradition, a Sri Yantra abhisheka is conducted at the Akhara to honour Sri Swami Satyananda's union with the Cosmic Mother.

That evening, as the sacred Yantra was carried back inside Sri Peeth after the abhisheka, the same aspirant was



photographing the proceedings. At a curious moment, he looked at Swamiji who was seated in front of him, gazing steadily slightly above the Sri Yantra which was now at the doorway of Sri Peeth. The aspirant pointed the camera in the same direction and clicked. In that moment, a transcendental event and the photographic medium merged. As he looked at the picture he had taken, the aspirant realized that the very same orb of light seen that morning had been captured by the instrument, suspended above the group of swamis carrying the Sri Yantra. Immediately the camera was taken to Swamiji for inspection. The picture was unique among many. Neither the previous nor the subsequent photos contained the spherical vision. After some moments and further inspection, Swamiji said that what had been recorded here was a darshan of Shakti. The Universal Mother had graced us twice in one day at a most auspicious time. Curiously, the aspirant had spent all of the previous day fervently praying for relief from excruciating pain that he had been undergoing. After this day, all his pain miraculously disappeared. "I learnt several lessons from this

incident,” he later said, “One, when you pray from the bottom of your heart, the prayer is always answered. Two, always stay behind your guru and look where he is looking. You will be granted bliss and blessings that surpass understanding.”

The divine power inherent in a fresh spring morning had revealed itself directly in a form that was undeniable: a true and direct reminder of the union that our Guru had attained when he was placed in the lap of Mother Earth on 6th December 2009. ■



Under the Gular Tree

Date: March 2011

Occasion: Swami Niranjan's Pilgrimage

Location: Tryambakeshwar

*Thou art one of the twelve jyotirlingas
On the banks of the River Godavari
Originating from the Brahmagiri hills,
Close to Panchavati*

Where Sri Rama lived for a time . . .

O Lord Shiva, O Shambhu!

*Thou art the Lord of all beings,
Thou art the source of solace and peace
for the distressed.*

There is no other refuge but Thee.

O Lord, be propitious!

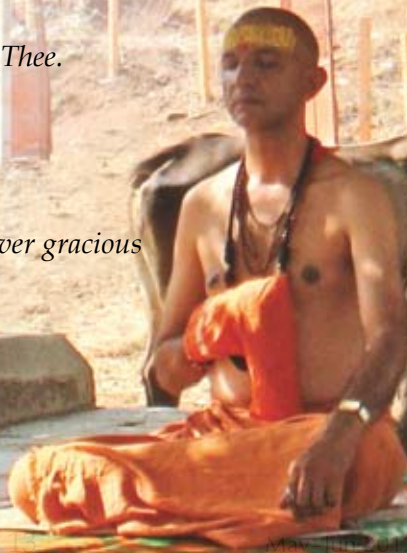
O All-merciful Lord,

Have mercy on me!

Else Thou will lose

*Thy reputation of being forever gracious
towards all Thy devotees.*

Om Namoh Mahadevayah!



In ancient times, Sage Gautama lived and performed tapasya in the Brahmagiri hills, close to present-day Tryambakeshwar, near Nasik in Maharashtra State. Pleased with his fervent prayers and steadfast devotion, Lord Shiva agreed to reside permanently along the holy Godavari River in the form of the three-eyed jyotirlingam as Lord Tryambakeshwar, the remover of all impurities and bestower of liberation. This is an especially important tirtha for our tradition, as Lord Mrityunjaya is the ishta devata of Sri Swami Satyananda.

In March 2011, Swami Niranjan travelled via Mumbai to Tryambakeshwar. He stayed in the very same goshala, at the foot of Neel Parvat, where Sri Swamiji had spent Chaturmas in 1989. It was here that Sri Swamiji had received divine instructions on the auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima: "Go to my Chitabhumi." The mission was to perfect constant remembrance of the Lord 'with every breath', the next chapter in Sri Swamiji's epic spiritual journey.

Swamiji spent three days in Tryambakeshwar, in quietness and isolation, assisted by Swami Sivarajananda who attended to his needs. He immersed himself in anushtana, dedicated to Sri Swamiji, seeking the grace of Lord Mrityunjaya, the presiding deity of Tryambakeshwar. From dawn till dusk, he sat on the same asana, in front of the same dhuni lit by Sri Swamiji in 1989, which has been burning continuously ever since.

Sannyasins from various centres and sannyasa akharas in the area heard news of Swamiji's anushtana and, over the course of the few days, came to have satsang and darshan with him. Some of the senior sannyasins were well-acquainted with Sri Swamiji from his 1989 visit and were delighted to spend time with Swamiji in the very same spot, reminiscing and exchanging stories about 'Avadhuta Parivrajakacharya Satyanandaji', as they used to address him. The sannyasins of Juna Akhara, who manage the goshala at Neel Parvat, would also regularly visit Swamiji and provide for his needs.

Every morning at 5 o'clock, Swamiji would go to the temple of Lord Tryambakeshwar and perform the first abhisheka of

the day in the *garbhagriha*, sanctum sanctorum. After returning to the goshala and partaking of a light breakfast, he would commence his sadhana. Save for a short break for lunch and rest, it would continue till dinner time.

For periods of time during the day, Swamiji would perform his anushthana and japa sitting in the shade of a gular tree that forms a large canopy outside the goshala, on the same *kattha* or platform that Sri Swamiji used to sit upon. Cows would amble past or stop for a drink of water while he continued with his japa, deeply absorbed. A stepped path behind the tree leads up to Neelambari Peeth halfway up Neel Parvat, and occasional visitors would walk past the yogi sitting under a tree deep in meditation and offer silent namaskaras. One day, a visitor walked by the gular tree and noticed the appearance of an oval aura surrounding Swamiji's body, giving the impression that he was being 'held' within its nurturing field of light. It appeared as if he was not sitting on the kattha, but was suspended a few inches above its surface.

Nightly, Swamiji would take an after-dinner walk in the temple town of Tryambakeshwar, and then return to the goshala to perform his practices before retiring. While in Tryambakeshwar, Swamiji visited the temple where the elder brother of Sant Gyaneshwar, Nivrattinath, was given samadhi, and spent some time in contemplation near the site. He also paid courtesy visits to the ashrams set up by different akharas.

After successfully completing his three-day anushthana, Swamiji spent a few days in Satyananda Yogadarshan Peeth, an ashram being established on the outskirts of Tryambakeshwar town by Swami Sivarajananda. One day, Swamiji travelled to Shani Shingnapur, the only town in India with a vibrant temple to Shanideva, Lord Saturn. Curiously, the doors and windows of this temple are without locks. Swamiji was accompanied by Swami Sivrajananda and Swami Swaroopananda, and the three had darshan and offered pooja to Shani devata.

Their next destination was the shrine of Sai Baba at Shirdi, not far from Shani Shingnapur. On his arrival, Swamiji was



taken to a room next to the Samadhi Sthal, to spend some time in quiet solitude. Later, he was escorted to the samadhi place of Sai Baba. He had darshan of Sai Baba's padukas and vastras, as well as of the jyoti that Baba himself had lit in a small container and which continues to burn even today.

The final day of Swamiji's sojourn was assigned to long-time devotees who hadn't met him for many years. Unable to travel the long distance to Rikhia or Munger due to commitments, old age or other limiting circumstances, many were eager to have darshan and satsang with him. About 300 people were expected, but it turned out to be a colossal gathering of about 2,000!

The day's activities commenced before dawn, as Swamiji performed abhisheka at the Tryambakeshwar temple. He returned to the ashram, with the sun still a gentle glow at the eastern horizon. Preparations for a havan were underway. Some incredible events were to transpire that day.

The havan, undertaken with the sankalpa of welfare of all present, began. Swamiji was guiding it, seated about five feet away from the actual fire. The sannyasins and karma sannyasins were performing the havan while the Mahamrityunjaya mantra was being chanted. The fire took its form, the fragrance of samagri infused the air, the mantras reverberated all around, and the sun rose high in the sky illuminating the surrounding Brahmagiri hills.

Some time into the havan, as Swamiji was performing japa, a 'glove of fire' appeared on his right hand. As he continued with the japa, this incredible, fiery gomukh increased in size covering his entire right arm, as if fuelled by the spiritual heat

of the japa meditation. This was recorded by a video camera.

Another manifestation was noted by the still cameras. In the review of some of the havan participants' casual photos, several showed a fiery trident emerging out of the crown of Swamiji's head! It seems Lord Mrityunjaya was blessing him with his weapon, the trishul, symbol of transcendence of the three gunas. The divine grace and presence, palpably felt by all participating in the event, were making their mark clearly.



The events were indications of Lord Mrityunjaya's acceptance of the worship offered to him by Swamiji and symbolized the Lord's reassuring message - "I hold you under My wings, My protection will always be upon you."

After the conclusion of the havan, there was kirtan and satsang with Swamiji. Sannyasins representing the different akharas in Tryambakeshwar were felicitated, and over four hundred aspirants received diksha. That afternoon, Swamiji departed for Mumbai, and then travelled back to Munger.

The experience of the goshala, Swamiji says, was something that took him back in time. He relived all the moments he had spent with Sri Swamiji during his chaturmas. In his own words, "For the entire duration that I was conducting my anushthana, I felt as if a larger body of Sri Swamiji was seated there and I was contained inside his body, going through the same motions, the same mantras, the same aradhana. It was not I who was doing anything, but I was within the body of Sri Swamiji. He was performing everything and I was simply like a mannequin, a puppet, who had no control over its body. I was just watching everything take place, knowing that I was being guided by the eternal grace and blessings of Lord Mrityunjaya and Sri Swamiji, our beloved Gurudeva." ■

Dance of the Deepak

Date: 6th April 2011

Occasion: Commemoration of Sri Swamiji's Bhu Samadhi

Location: Satyam Udyan

A warm spring evening. The air is soft and still. The hushed rumble and clatter of feet is heard from outside Akhara as the crowd assembles in a queue. Inside the premises, the usual preparations are underway. Guru Peeth is illumined with the tiny flames of candles and jyotis. Silent flames gradually assume their form around the altars.

The sannyasin on duty at Guru Peeth bends low to light the candles and deepaks. One by one, the flame is transferred to each wick. The initial micro-sizzle is the first tiny event in the lighting of a new flame: following that, a small puff of smoke and then the contented hiss as the flame finds its perch on the yielding wick. Satyam Udyan comes to life all around, as the crowd from outside begins to file in. The quiet is momentarily disrupted as the place assimilates the newcomers like a stone falling in a pond. The ripples ensure equilibrium. Soon, the whole crowd is seated before the altars in hushed anticipation. The people assemble amidst the tiny sea of flames with one common intent: reverence of the one true reality.

Hundreds have gathered this evening to participate in the ceremony, and even the birds high up in the mango trees are attending, chirping along to the drone of mantras being chanted by the crowd below. Though they are united with a common intent, the mental landscape of the crowd is as varied as a flame is singular. Amidst such peaceful surroundings some of the company almost falls into a trance, while in some, doubt and confusion reign. Painful memories arise in some and immense peace greets others. Desires rock some, stillness envelopes others. Hopelessness comes to the

surface and so does boundless joy. All shades of emotions, all variety of thoughts, course through the hearts and minds of those present. Yet, everyone experiences the moment when they are enveloped and included by the light of the jyoti: the singular point embracing and annihilating everything in its burning truth. Irrespective of the differences, the singularity of devotion makes the entire gathering one homogeneous unit. Remembrance of ishta and Guru, through faith or confusion, jnana or bhakti, is the reason for the presence of every single person this evening on these sacred grounds.

All eyes are on Swamiji, who is focused solely on Devi. With expert care he bathes her in unctuous liquids, then lovingly drapes her in fine garments and beautiful flowers. It is always a mesmerizing sight to watch our guru perform an abhisheka and we are momentarily lifted out of our mundane awareness, fixed upon the graceful flow of pure devotion. The gaze of the crowd is transfixed on the movement of his limbs, on the candles, on the form and easy grace of it all. It is as natural and spontaneous, as subtle and intelligent, as a flower blooms or a bird glides.

Suddenly, something flickers to the left of Swamiji. Perhaps we should have maintained our focus, but the distraction is too great. A few heads turn and peer into Guru Peeth where the movement appears to have taken place. Our eyes scan the area and collectively rest upon a tiny brass deepak situated between Sri Swamiji's padukas. Hourglass in shape, with a wide bowl on top for burning oil and an equally wide inverted bowl at the bottom which serves as a base, deepaks are designed to stand upright without tilting even when they are being shifted about. Yet, though this deepak has been set into place in the centre of a small plate which has not been moved, it is now curiously teetering over the edge of the plate, leaning so far to the right that it is about to spill its oil all over the padukas. No time for reactions, though those of us who have taken notice of this strange sight are in a bit of a wondrous shock. The sannyasin on duty quickly steps into the peeth and noticing nothing out of the



ordinary - no obstructions in the base of the deepak, no lumps or bumps on the plate, no hidden strings - places the deepak back in the centre of the plate directly between the two padukas.

The pooja concludes and everyone is bathed once again by the energy of love radiating from Swamiji, all thoughts washed away in a wave of exalted joy. Parikrama begins and guests begin to perambulate the grounds, glad to have the opportunity to pay their respects to the various aspects of the Divine. The line begins to file past Guru Peeth and emotions pour out the guru in pranaams and prayers. Again a flash of movement draws the attention of a few of us who have not quite shaken the memory of the moving deepak. We look to the padukas and see that it has somehow moved again, this time leaning to the left, so far that oil is spilling out from the top. Nothing else in the peeth is out of place. There is no wind at all, even the flames of the other deepaks are at a standstill.

We are anxious to understand what this unusual phenomenon is and the next day we gather before Swamiji with our questions - how did a static object such as the deepak move by itself. He smiled at our confusion and said, "That small deepak was sitting in between Sri Swamiji's padukas and the slow gentle movement it was making, from side to side, is exactly the movement that would be created by the pressure of feet in the padukas as he was greeting the people moving past in parikrama." A little flame noticed by a few, igniting everything. ■

Mellifluous Blessings

Date: May 2011

Occasion: Swami Niranjan's Pilgrimage

Location: Srisailam

O Lord Shiva!

Salutations unto Thee.

I know no invocation

Nor contemplation of Thee.

I know no stotras in Thy praise.

I know not Thy mantra, nor how to address Thee.

Yet I call out to Thee, from the depth of my soul.

Please protect me.

Thou are the support and immanent Soul of everything.

Thou are the very basis of the world.

Om Namah Shivaya!

On the banks of River Krishna in Nallamala Hills of Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh, sits the little town of Srisailam, home to the Bhramaramba Mallikarjunaswami Temple. One of the twelve jyotirlinga temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, its origins have been lost to antiquity. The *Skanda Purana* has a chapter called Srisaila Kaandam, which alludes to its ancient origin. Adi Sankara visited this temple and was inspired to compose the *Sivananda Lahari*.

Shiva's sacred bull Nandi is said to have performed penance at the Mahakali Temple until Shiva and Parvati appeared before him as Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba. Lord Rama himself installed the Sahasralinga; the Pandavas lodged the Panchapandava lingas in the temple courtyard.

The temple's name has its origins in the Puranas. Once, Shiva and Parvati arranged a competition between their two sons, Kumar Kartikeya and Ganesha, to circumambulate the world, and promised that the winner would be married first.



After completing his trip, Kartikeya returned home, only to find that Ganesha had already been married. He became enraged and left for Krauncha Mountain. Parvati, distraught at this separation from her son, implored Lord Shiva to accompany her in search for him. Meanwhile, at the Krauncha Mountain, Kumara learnt of this impending parental encroachment and fled a

further three yojanas. When Shiva and Shakti finally arrived at Krauncha, understandably dismayed, they decided to leave a light on every mountain they visited before continuing their journey.

From that time on, the temple came to be known as Jyotirlinga Mallikarjuna. It is believed that Shiva and Parvati visit it on Amavasya and Poornima, respectively. Worship at this jyotirlinga fulfils all desires, and even frees the sincere devotee from the cycle of life and death. Regarded as the Kailash of the South, it is believed that simply seeing the tip of the mountain frees one from all suffering.

It was to this holy place that Swami Niranjan came, in May 2011, via Hyderabad. Shiva and Shakti are both inherent in the name Mallikarjuna. Shiva is Arjuna and Shakti is Mallika, the beautiful white jasmine flower. A.K. Ramanujam, writing about the origin of the name, states that though the term *arjuna* means the victorious one, in this charming case it is Shakti in the form of the white jasmine flower who conquers Shiva with her intoxicating fragrance. She compels him to stay with her in this part of South India to keep a watchful eye on their son, Skanda, who has now moved even further south to the Palani Hills, near Madurai.

On arriving in Srisailam, Swamiji took lodgings in a cottage available for guests of the temple. Every morning, at around five o'clock, he and Swami Sivarajananda would take the two-kilometre walk to the temple and there have darshan of Sri Mallikarjuna. Afterwards, seated on the veranda of the temple, they would perform their anushthana until midday. In the afternoon, after taking lunch and some rest at the cottage, they would visit a nearby temple dedicated to Shakti. Here She is enshrined as Mallika and also as Bhramarambika, devi in the form of a bee. For three days, Swamiji performed worship of Sri Chakra in the temple, while the pandits chanted invocative mantras. As the yantra was splashed with the vibrant red of kumkum and the sacred sounds inundated the space, the pooja went on. By nightfall, the ceremony complete, Bhramarambika Temple was left alone in silence once again as the swamis returned to the cottage for dinner and rest.

The three-day anushthana went smoothly and effortlessly. On the last day, two special abhishekas were held. The first was conducted in the main temple while a subsidiary temple of Mallikarjuna, more ancient than the first and closed to the public, was host to the final ceremony. Still housing the original

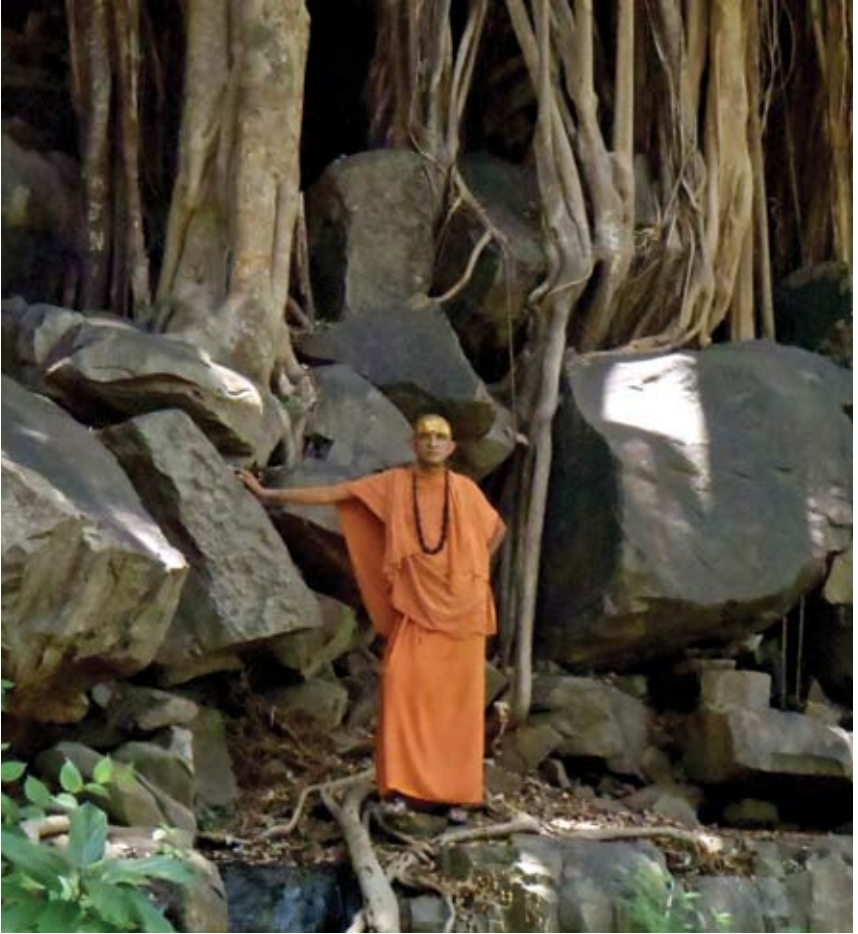


Shivalingam, the temple has been declared a protected site by the Archaeological Survey of India. It was on this hallowed ground that the concluding pooja was conducted.

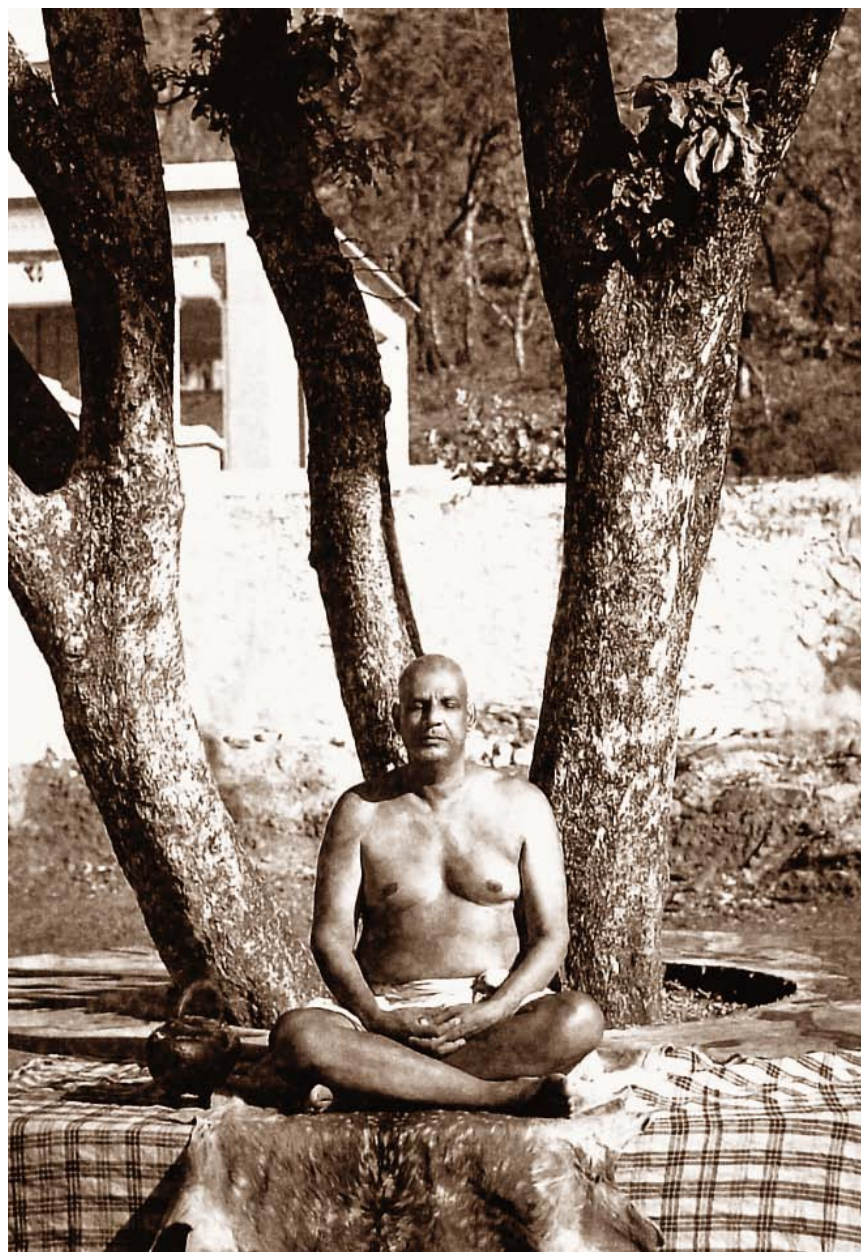
During his stay in Srisailam, Swamiji made several excursions to the surrounding peaks, visiting temples dedicated to Skanda, who stayed in these areas on his wanderings. A visit was also made to local caves in which the Pandavas stayed when in exile.

On one of these visits, after having just climbed up a hillside, Swamiji was sitting quietly. In a state of contemplation, he thought about the Pandavas, about the time they had spent there, living, working and praying there amidst the trees, the waterfalls and the caves. Without warning, he suddenly became aware of a subtle sound. As he sat and listened, ancient chanting began to flood his awareness. Deep, full and resonant, it came to him as if borne on the wind. The environment, the empty cave, the lush greenery, the pattering waterfall, seemed to be merging with him, merging with the Pandavas, merging with the time they spent there. The Pandavas, their mantras, their home, Skanda and Swamiji were fusing in a cosmic event in which he directly perceived these holy, subtle sounds. It was as if the trees, leaves and wind were whispering the chants that permeated the atmosphere from times long past when the Pandavas and Skanda inhabited the places. The sounds seemed to be embedded in nature; the resonance of those age-old mantras wove an invisible mantle around him, enveloping his entire being with a gentle breeze. As he continued to flow in the experience, a feeling of great joy and ecstasy overtook him. Lightness and optimism spontaneously arose as the mantras ebbed and flowed within his awareness.

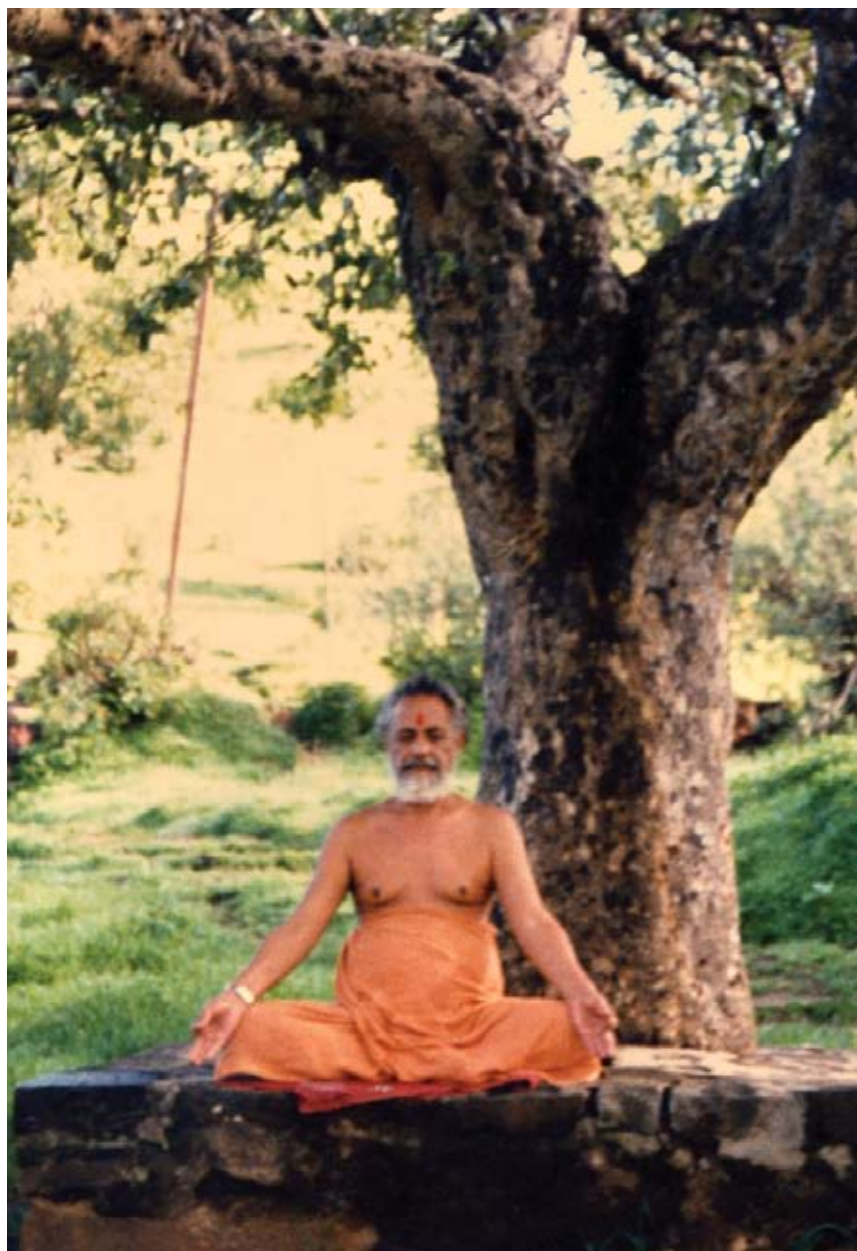
The three days spent in anushthana and worship of Shiva and Shakti at Sri Mallikarjuna were further enriched by the time spent in solitude amidst the forests and hills. Holding echoes of a glorious past, Nature revealed Her magic to a special soul blessed by the Almighty to perceive such subtle, timeless energy. ■



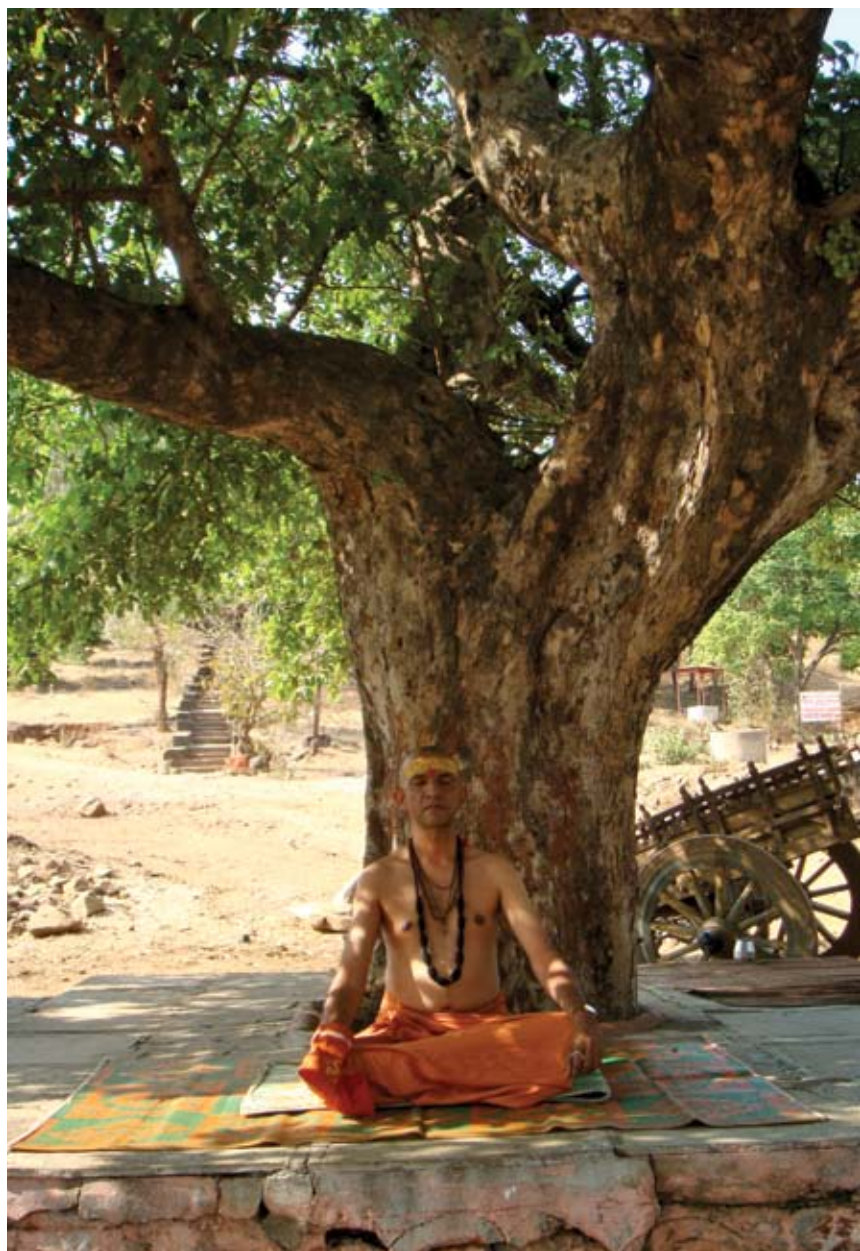
Srisailam, 2011



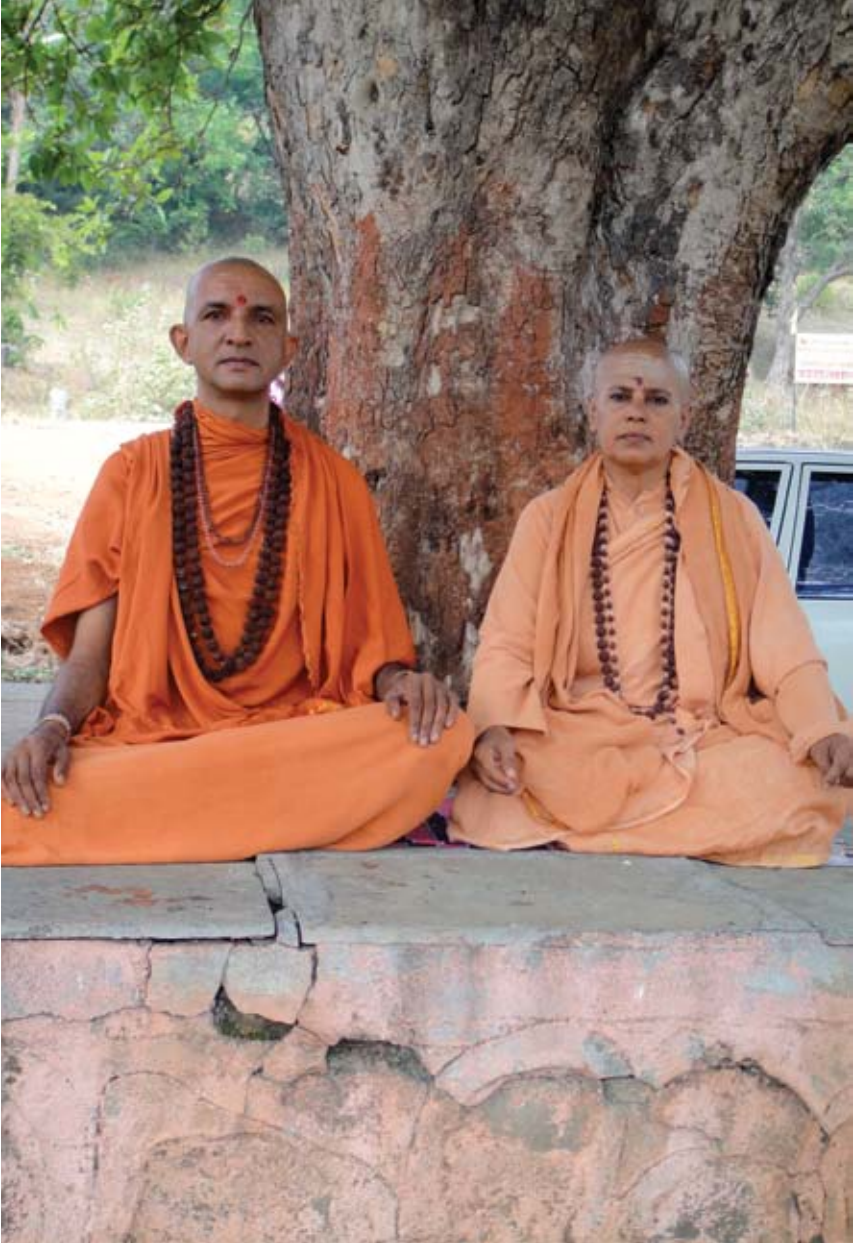
Rishikesh, 1950s



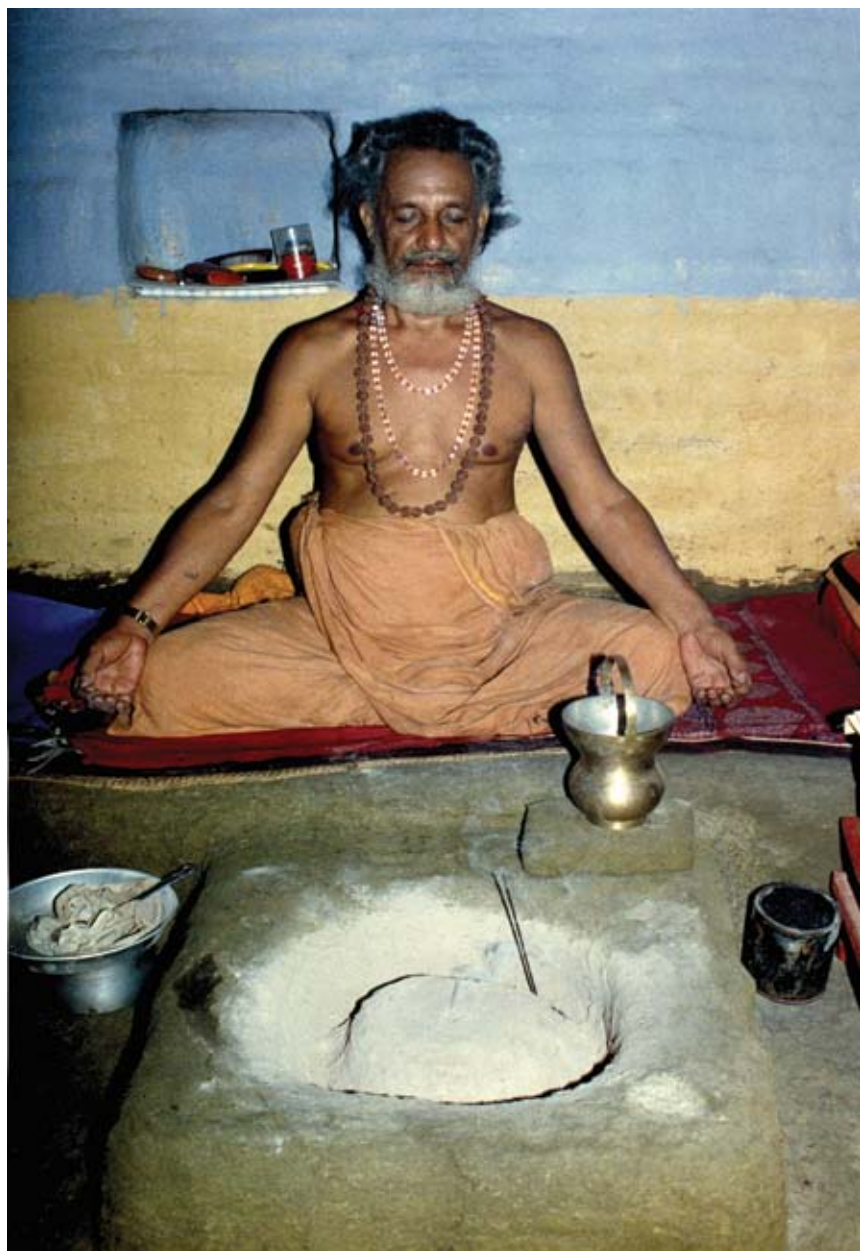
Tryambakeshwar, 1998



Tryambakeshwar, 2011



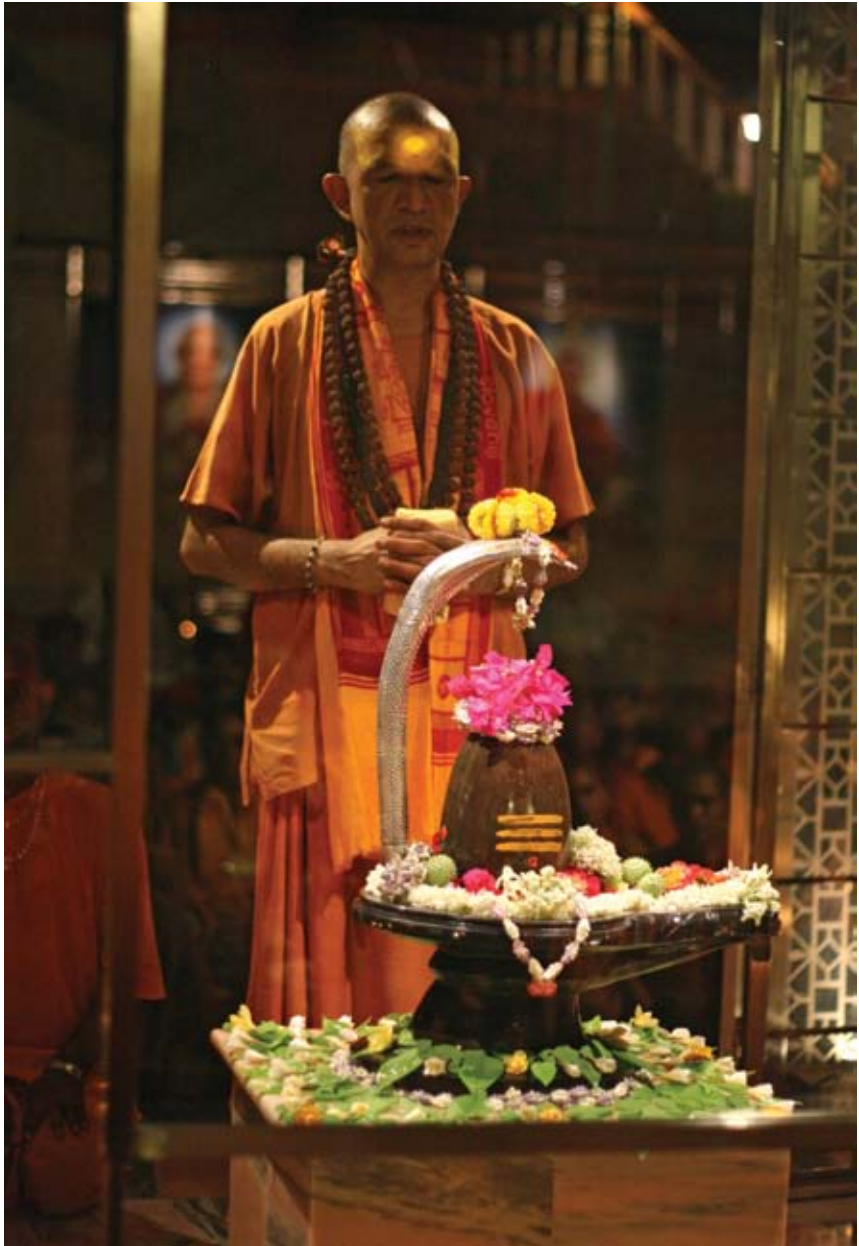
Tryambakeshwar, 2010



Tryambakeshwar, 1998



Tryambakeshwar, 2011



Munger, 2012



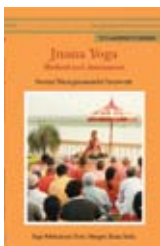
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हरि ॐ

New Yogadrishi Satsangs

In the year 2010, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati began a special series of discourses in Munger titled 'Yogadrishi (Yogavision) Satsang Series'. In these discourses, Swamiji imparted unique perspectives on diverse aspects of yoga and the spiritual sciences.




Jnana yoga was the theme of the satsangs which Swamiji gave in May 2011. Here, Swamiji outlines the step-by-step training necessary to attain the aims of jnana yoga and describes how the profound statements of the Vedas, the mahavakyas, unfold naturally in the process. The discourses shine with spiritual inspiration and practical guidance in the method of applying intelligence and developing true wisdom in life.

The yoga of Sri Krishna was the theme of the satsangs Swamiji gave in February 2012. In these satsangs, Swamiji provides a fresh, new perspective on the understanding of the *Bhagavad Gita*, as he enumerates the yogic sadhanas that lie hidden within the text and offers practical steps for the development of courage, peace and focus in negotiating life's challenges.

For an order form and comprehensive publications price list, please contact:

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थॉमसन प्रेस इण्डिया लिमिटेड, हरियाणा में मुद्रित।

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संन्यास पीठ

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Satsang Series Program 2012

Sannyasa Peeth, Munger, is pleased to announce that a series of satsangs will be conducted by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati on a regular basis at Ganga Darshan and Sannyasa Peeth, Munger. Please contact Bihar School of Yoga regarding bookings and accommodation advice. Dates are given as follows:

Aug 16-19	Satsang Series
Oct 17-20	Ashwin Navaratri Satsang Series
Nov 8-11	Satsang Series

Sannyasa Peeth Events 2012

Jan 28-Jan 2015	3 Year Sannyasa Training Course
Sep 8-12	Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna



World Yoga Convention 2013

Bihar School of Yoga will celebrate its Golden Jubilee with a World Yoga Convention which will be held in Munger from 23rd to 27th October 2013.

If you think you can contribute effectively and efficiently towards the Convention, please contact the ashram.

For more information on the above events, contact:

Sannyasa Peeth, c/o Ganga Darshan, Munger, Bihar 811201, India

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