

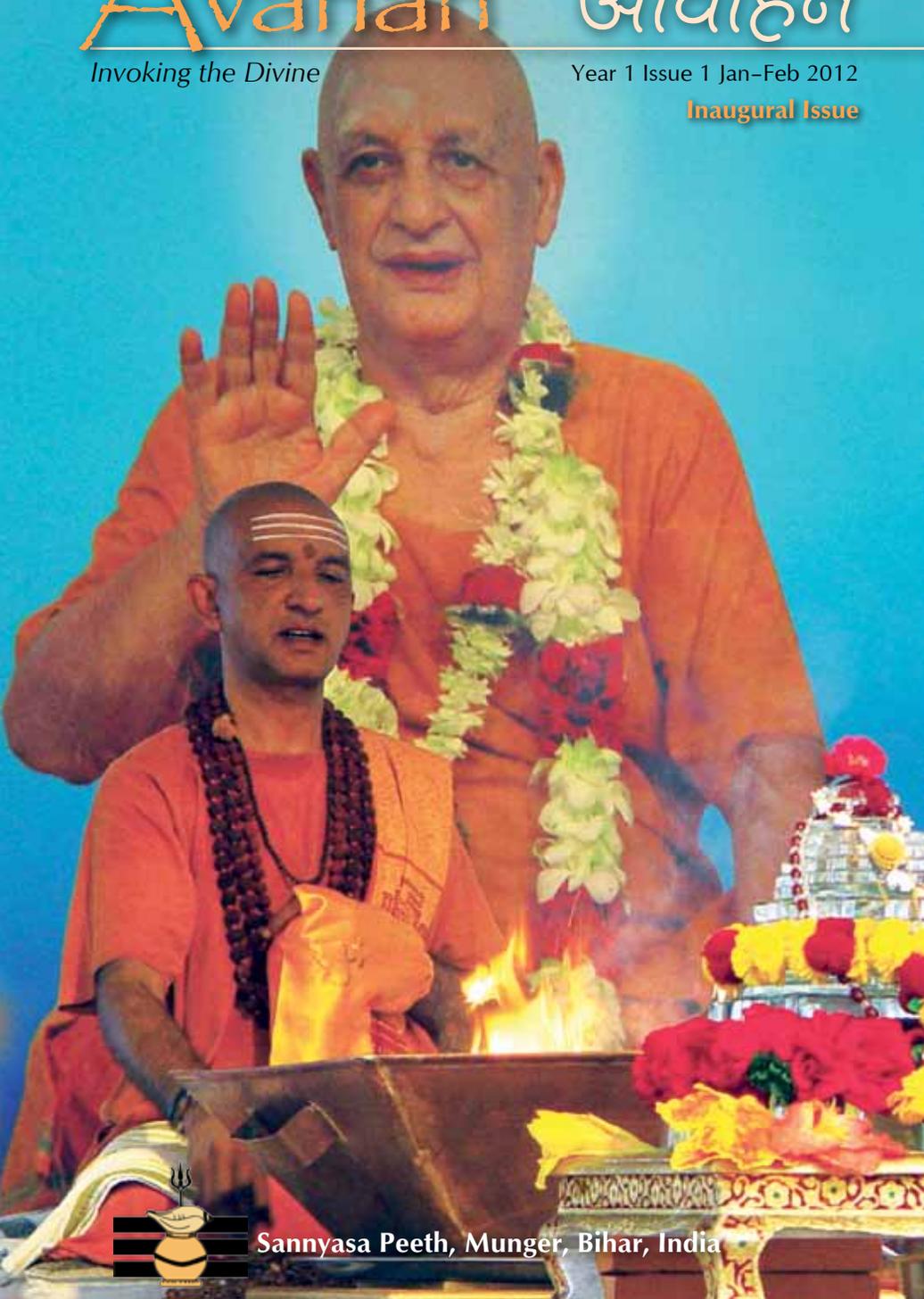
Satya ka Avahan

Invoking the Divine

सत्य का
आवाहन

Year 1 Issue 1 Jan-Feb 2012

Inaugural Issue



Sannyasa Peeth, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

Avahan is a bi-lingual 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.

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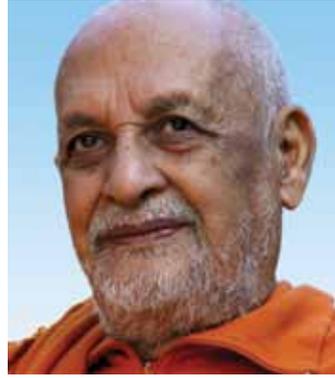
Sannyasa Peeth

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Bihar, India

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Front cover: Sri Durga Havan during Guru Poonima 2011

Plates: 1: Lord Shiva; 2: Sri Adi Shankaracharya; 3: Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati; 4: Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati; 5: Sri Durga Havan; 6: Swami Niranjanananda & Swami Satyangananda; 7: Paduka Darshan, Munger; 8: Sri Rudra Abhisheka



SATYAM SPEAKS – सत्यम् वाणी

The twenty-first century brings a new promise in the sannyasa tradition. Sannyasa is the key to a fuller life. It is the universal path on which one is able to fulfil the basic need to expand the experience and awareness of life by working in the world for the evolution of all beings. Sannyasa is not for perfect people. It is for those who want to make their life spiritually dynamic.

—Swami Satyananda

इक्कीसवीं सदी संन्यास परम्परा के लिए एक नई आशा और दिशा लेकर आयी है। संन्यास परिपक्वता और पूर्णता की कुंजी है। हर मनुष्य अपनी चेतना और अनुभव को व्यापक बनाना चाहता है। संन्यास वह राजमार्ग है जिसपर चलकर मनुष्य सभी प्राणियों के कल्याणार्थ पुरुषार्थ करते हुए अपनी इस मौलिक आकांक्षा को आसानी से पूरा कर सकता है। संन्यास सिद्ध व्यक्तियों के लिए नहीं, बल्कि उनके लिए है जो अपने आध्यात्मिक जीवन को गतिशील और कर्मठ बनाना चाहते हैं।

—स्वामी सत्यानन्द

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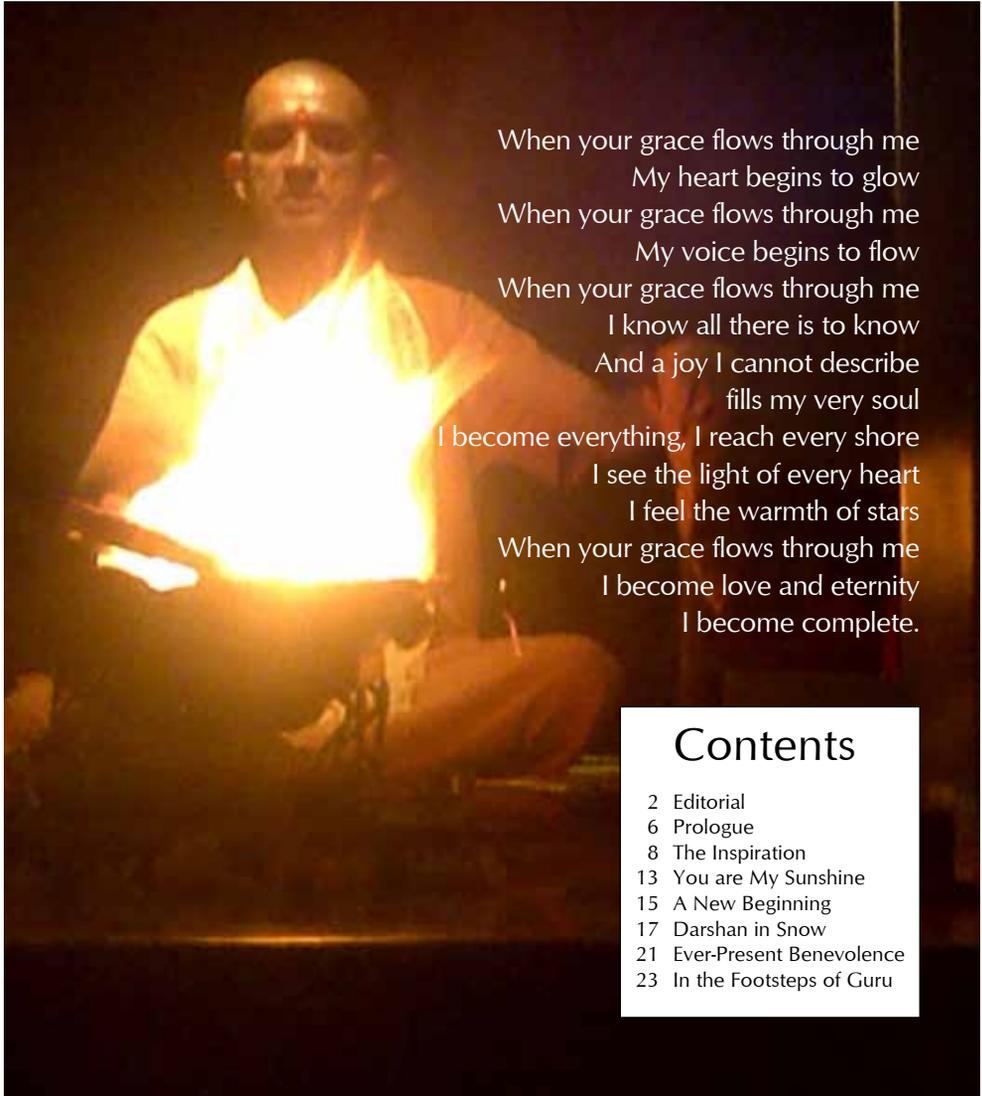
Invoking the Divine

Year 1 Issue 1 • January–February 2012

न तु अहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवं। कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनां अर्तिनाशनम्॥

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

—Rantideva



When your grace flows through me
My heart begins to glow
When your grace flows through me
My voice begins to flow
When your grace flows through me
I know all there is to know
And a joy I cannot describe
fills my very soul
I become everything, I reach every shore
I see the light of every heart
I feel the warmth of stars
When your grace flows through me
I become love and eternity
I become complete.

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Editorial

There have been three defining events of Sri Swami Satyananda's mission upon earth. In 1963, Sri Swamiji established the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY) in Munger to propagate yoga, based on the mandate of his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati. In 1989, Sri Swamiji laid the foundations for Rikhiapeeth in Rikhia, to propagate the spiritual teachings of his guru. In 2009, Sri Swamiji gave Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, his successor, the mission to accomplish his



third vision: the establishment of Sannyasa Peeth in Munger. Here, through the imbibing of positive samskaras and living a holistic lifestyle, the ideals of sannyasa will be practised, leading to the cultivation of an individual's spiritual awareness and dynamic contribution in the evolution of human society.



The three missions represent the vision of Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda for an integrated development of the head, heart and hands. BSY represents the cultivation of the faculties of the head, Rikhiapeeth of the heart and Sannyasa Peeth of the hands. Together, the three fulfil all aspirations of humanity.

The formal establishment of Sannyasa Peeth took place on 6th December 2010, the first anniversary of Sri Swamiji's Bhu Samadhi. It was also the day of commencement of the Sat Chandi Mahayajna at Rikhiapeeth. On this auspicious occasion, a special sannyasa abhisheka was conducted on Swami Niranjanananda, a ceremony which recognized and



bestowed upon him the mantle of one who has fulfilled all the requirements of the sannyasa tradition and risen to its pinnacle, and hailed him as the preceptor of the tradition.

The seat of Sannyasa Peeth is Paduka Darshan Ashram (previously known as Ananda Bhavan). An historic site and holiday home of the Goenka family, this was the base of Sri Swamiji's sadhanas in the years 1956-63, when he visited Munger periodically, prior to the

establishment of BSY. Sri Swamiji consolidated his sannyasa sadhana on these very premises during those initial years and today, they have become the catalyst for the development of Sannyasa Peeth.

The first sadhana of Sannyasa Peeth was initiated by Swami Niranjan at Satyam Udyan in Ganga Darshan on 2nd January 2011: Sri Durga anushthana, a daily havan invoking the Cosmic Mother, for the fulfilment of the sankalpa of his guru. In the year-long event, 11,111 *sahasranaam*, the thousand names of Ma Durga, were chanted.



Sannyasa Peeth also hosted the auspicious event of Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna from 8th to 12th September 2011 at Paduka Darshan. The benevolent energies of Narayana and Lakshmi were invoked during the event dedicated to the gurus of the tradition. Sri Swami Sivananda's birthday was commemorated on 8th September and Sri Swami Satyananda's



Sannyasa Day on 12th September. An unprecedented crowd of thousands flocked to this unannounced program to witness the descent of divine grace and become its recipient. Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna is an annual event of Sannyasa Peeth.

The present activity of Sannyasa Peeth is a three-year Sannyasa Training Course, which has enrolled hundreds of Indian and overseas aspirants. Commencing on Basant Panchami 2012 and culminating on Basant Panchami 2015, the course provides an insight into the traditions and teachings



of sannyasa. It also allows the participants to develop an understanding of how the ideals of sannyasa can be applied and lived in everyday life, to attain greater creativity, efficiency, clarity and peace in all that one undertakes.

In order to reach the eternal message of the luminaries of the sannyasa tradition to all, Sannyasa Peeth has launched this bi-monthly and bi-lingual magazine, *Avahan*. Beginning January-February 2012, it will bring to you the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda, share Swami Niranjan's inspiration and messages, as well as inform about the activities of Sannyasa Peeth.

In this inaugural issue, *Avahan* narrates some of the extraordinary events wherein the universal presence of Sri Swamiji was beheld, including the tirtha yatras of Swami Niranjan where he experienced the flow of divine grace leading him closer to the fulfilment of his guru's sankalpas. The magazine is compiled, edited, published and distributed by the sannyasins, devotees and well-wishers of Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati. It comes to you as Guru Prasad to inspire and uplift you in your spiritual understanding and life.



Prologue

Sri Swami Satyananda's last words, at his last darshan on 21st November 2009, during the Sat Chandi Mahayajna were: "You can call me whenever you like." Fourteen days later, on the midnight of 5th December, he entered into Mahasamadhi.

Death, he turned into a spiritual celebration, an explosion of cosmic prana that suffused all who were connected to him, whether far or near, aware or unaware of the event. He



transcended all laws of nature, time, space and object known to us in this act of masterful, yogic sublimation of the pranas – a feat we had only heard ancient rishis perform. However, in characteristic Satyananda style, he did not stop there. He broke the barriers of the phenomenal world even from the realms beyond, as if he was determined to show us what the spirit is truly capable of.

Many of us shed tears, felt lost, and ached to see the beloved '1923 model' once again, like one longs for the sun. We need not have worried! In fact, we only had to remember those last words.

The events that unfolded over the next several months clearly demonstrated that every time we called him, whether individually or communally, he came. He came as light, as flame, as movement, as an image carved in the snows, as a slept-in bed, as a song, as a bird, as a snake, as dreams, and as – himself. He came, whenever we needed guidance, inspiration or the touch of abiding love. On each occasion his transcendental light bathed us, we felt a little purer, softer, expanded, a little closer to where he resides. From the realms of beyond, he gave us: faith.

Yet, many were puzzled. After all, what need does an evolved being have of displaying 'miracles' to prove his presence? And

not once, not twice, but over and over again! Many even voiced scepticism: were these events real or products of the feverish imagination of disciples? Would Sri Swamiji make his presence felt in such precise ways merely to console his forlorn disciples or to give them the brief high of beatific experiences?

No, that cannot be. Sri Swamiji always acted with a purpose, and that has to be more resonantly true in his universal state of existence. Is it then possible to acquire an understanding of the events? Yes, by asking a simple question: what is the thread that connects them all?

In all the 'miraculous' events, Sri Swamiji used the medium of the objective world to make us experience transcendence. Thus, the flame no longer remained merely a conical light, a dream was not just a slide-show, a song was not just words, a mosquito net not merely perforated material . . . each of them became illuminated. We felt him in them. He gave us the direct experience of reality beyond reality. He taught us how to reach into the essence of things, how to let the externalities drop and recognize the truth inherent in everything – object, person or our own self. That essence and truth is Swami Satyananda in his universal form. It is Swami Sivananda; it is Narayana, Param Brahma, Param Shiva, Adi Shakti. It is everywhere, in everything. Sri Swamiji used the yogic technique of repetition to imprint this message upon our consciousness. Had he appeared only once, the event may have been remembered and retold, but we would not have had the benefit of experiential understanding that only repeated practice brings.

Can there be a greater teacher than Sri Swamiji! As always, he knows exactly what is needed at a given time for the evolution of humanity. From the realms beyond, he is bestowing upon us the quantum leap of consciousness through which divinity may be perceived in the world we see and touch. He is teaching us the greatest of yogic methods:

Satva Ka
Avahan

Invoking the Divine

The Inspiration

On 14th September 2011, the day after Sri Swami Satyananda's Sannyasa Day and conclusion of the first Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna at Paduka Darshan Ashram, Munger, Swami Niranjana called all the residents of Ganga Darshan to Sri Niwas, his sixth floor residence – for a special darshan.

To the right of the main hall of Sri Niwas is Sri Swami Satyananda's room. Articles of his daily use – his *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad Gita*, travel documents, sumerinis, yogadanda, dhotis, alflies, kaupins, turbans, winterwear, etc. are kept in a glass encased cupboard. His reclining chair rests in a corner. The bathroom has all the amenities for a bath: towels, soap, bath slippers . . . The bed is made every Thursday evening, on the day of the week dedicated to guru – the bedcover is removed, the blanket is placed at the foot of the bed, the mosquito net is put up, and if it is hot, the air-conditioning is switched on to a comfortable twenty-seven degrees. Were Sri Swamiji to visit, the room is ready for him.

“On the evening of the 11th, Swamiji (Swami Niranjana, who was in Paduka Darshan on that day) called to check if the room had been prepared,” related the sannyasin who had been assigned the duty, to the group gathered in Sri Niwas. “He called not once, but twice and enquired about all the details. It was slightly unusual and I wondered why he was being so specific . . . Anyway, I finished the preparations and left. The next morning, 12th September, a group of us came up to Sri Niwas to clean. I opened the door to Sri Swamiji's room and a shiver ran up my spine. The whole room felt alive! And then I noticed: the mosquito net had been pulled out of its tuck-in, one pillow had been moved, the blanket lay crumpled at the foot of the bed as if someone had pushed it back with the feet . . . Feeling stunned, I looked around. A bathroom slipper was out of its position as if someone had used it and then put



it back casually. It was obvious that someone had spent the night there – Paramahamsaji! I immediately called Swamiji and told him about what we were witnessing. Swamiji did not appear surprised. Clearly, he was expecting the visit. He instructed us to leave everything as it was. And it is still like we found it.”

Now, all the residents were led into the room in groups of three-four. As soon as they stepped into the room, each person felt as if they had entered a heightened energy field, as if a high-pitched buzz was emanating from the room; it was full of tangible prana, suffused with an auspicious presence. The upturned mosquito net, the displaced pillow, the crumpled blanket, the out-of-place slipper, indeed, every object in the room appeared to be peculiarly luminous. Everyone came out feeling as if they had been showered with light, blessed to be here now, blessed to be the disciple of a master such as Sri Swami Satyananda.

Back in the hall, moved beyond words, everyone sat in silence. Slowly, people found their voices and started talking about the signs, experiences, dreams that they had all had at

different times since the Mahasamadhi, filling them with the presence of Sri Swamiji.

Swami Niranjan stood unobtrusively at the doorway between the hall and the kitchen, holding a glass of water in hand. Many hadn't even noticed that he was there. Finally, when the voices became quiet, one of the sannyasins said, "Swamiji, won't you say something?" Smiling softly, Swamiji replied in a voice dewy with emotion, "I can hardly say anything." Everyone waited. Finally, Swamiji started speaking, "This has happened once before. In May 2010, on Buddha Poornima, we witnessed the same thing: Sri Swamiji had come and slept in the bed we prepared for him. But this time we were ready. I had a strong conviction that he would give darshan during Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, as we were fulfilling his own mandate to conduct this yajna in Munger."

"We feel truly blessed," remarked a sannyasin.

"Yes, we do," said Swamiji. "But remember, there is always a teaching in what Sri Swamiji does. He always enforces the faith. Do not consider these events to be religious miracles. They were experiences that just happened and touched people's lives. They were not events which healed the sick, gave sight to the blind or legs to the lame. Understand them as extraordinary events that enforced faith, conviction and determination, renewing the inspiration in our lives." Saying this, Swamiji came and sat before the sannyasins.

"I will tell you about the first time I experienced Sri Swamiji's presence in such a tangible way after the Mahasamadhi. It was on 7th January 2010. By this time, the Shodashi Anushthana and Shraddhanjali Saptah were over. On 2nd January, Swami Satsangi and myself left Rikhia and travelled to Tryambakeshwar. We conducted puja and Rudrabhisheka there, paid homage at the Goshala and then left for Rishikesh, reaching there on the 5th. We spent a long time at Swami Sivanandaji's kutir, a beautiful experience enforcing the belief that he was watching over us all. The next day we performed Rudrabhisheka at Vishwanath Mandir and Guru Paduka

Pujan at the Samadhithal. Bhoj was conducted for the whole ashram. Bhoj was also given at Tryambakeshwar on the 6th to sannyasins from all akharas, temple pandits and ashram devotees. We returned to Rikhia the next evening.

The crowds of disciples and devotees had largely departed. As I sat by myself, going over the events of the last month, I realized that my last darshan of Sri Swamiji had been on 3rd December and I was physically yearning for him intensely. No matter what I said to console myself, the world was different. The sunlight was missing its warmth and brightness. The agile wind currents had become subdued. The earth on which I walked felt devoid of prana. I was missing talking to him, being in his presence. Then I wondered if I could call him, ask him to appear in a dream, ask him to manifest himself in flesh and blood. With this intention I meditated.

That night, I had a vision.

In the midst of a hilly forest area, there is a stone platform about 30 x 25 feet, facing north-south. A reddish-orange sun is rising from the east above the treeline of the forest and the golden sunrays are bathing the whole platform with their glow. Swami Satsangi and myself are facing the rising sun from the western side of the platform, waiting for Sri Swamiji to arrive.

The radiant figure of Sri Swamiji comes walking from the south going towards north. He is wearing a geru dhoti and upper cloth and looking about fifty years old. We offer pranaam at his feet and then the three of us sit down on the stone platform to talk. The feeling was that he has never been away from us. The conversation felt like the continuation of a normal interaction that we would have with Sri Swamiji.

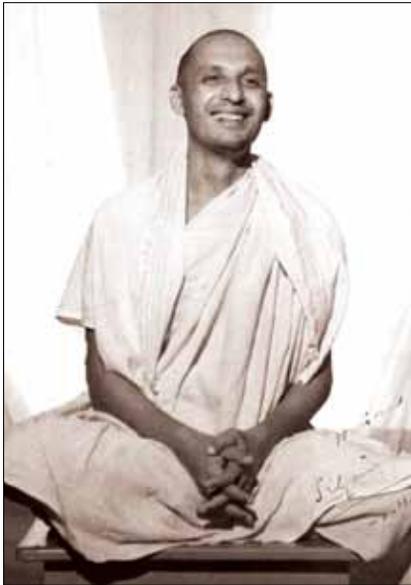
Sri Swamiji looks at me and says, 'Tell me everything that has happened since my samadhi.' I begin to tell him about all the events of Bhu Samadhi, Shodashi and Shraddhanjali, our trip to Tryambakeshwar and Rishikesh along with the Bhaskar family from New Delhi and the bhoj there. All the while, Sri Swamiji is smiling and intently listening to the precise account

of the events. At the end of my narration, he asks a question, 'What was the total expenditure?' When I tell him the exact amount, he exclaims, 'It need not have been that much!' He says it in such a simple and jovial manner that all three of us burst out laughing. And with the sound of his laughter ringing in my ears, I wake up.

Reflecting back upon this vision, I can say that he did come, speak and give solace, a confirmation of the fact, 'I am always with you.'"

Swamiji's words left everyone feeling deeply moved and inspired. Then Swamiji said, "All the experiences that you've had and witnessed, write them down. Share them, so that all can realize the presence of the master in our lives."

We did just that, and the collection of these events is the beginning of *Avahan*. What you are holding in your hand is not just a journal, but the experience of divine presence. The compilation is a homage offered to Sri Swamiji, who is the illumination on our path and the light in our hearts. ■



A sannyasin must be like a phoenix and arise to a renewed life. There has to be a fundamental and qualitative change, if not a complete change, in the structure of the thinking of a sannyasin. Even if you only live the life of a sannyasin for fifteen days, it will enrich you with very deep and abiding experiences. It will create a new type of mind, personality and person. Those who have worn this geru dress even for one night, I consider to be blessed.

You are My Sunshine

Date: 6th December 2009

Occasion: Last Darshan

Location: Jyoti Mandir, Ganga Darshan

On 6th December 2009, Ganga Darshan arose to the most momentous dawn of its history. At five in the morning, all sannyasins, residents, students and guests were asked to gather in Jyoti Mandir. Under the eternal flame, lit by Sri Swamiji on 19th January 1964, stood a single sofa and at its centre rested a photograph of Sri Swamiji: eyes closed, in union with guru and ishta, the tips of fingers joined in prarthna mudra. On the marble platform to the right, where a large picture of Sri Swamiji is ever present, today, another inscription had been added:

Born: Almora, 24 December 1923, Midnight

Mahasamadhi: Rikhiapeeth, 5 December, 2009, Midnight

A small jyoti was burning before it.

The sound of *Om* reverberated thrice and then the sannyasins sitting before the microphones intonated the first words of *Guru Stotram*:

*Akhanda mandalakaram vyaptam yena characharam
Tatpadam darshitam yena tasmaye sri gurave namah.*

Their voices were soft with emotion and deep with reverence. Even those who did not know of the event could intuit that something significant had taken place, feeling a vast presence in their souls. The first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* was chanted and then refrains of kirtans began to flow through the air . . . "Jaya guru, jaya guru, jaya guru jaya; Paramahansa Satyananda jaya guru jaya . . .", "Sri guru charanam namo namah, Satyam sharanam namo namah . . .", "Jaya Satyam jaya he, jaya Satyananda . . ."

For the next twenty-four hours, the singing and chanting continued non-stop – voices alive, hearts overflowing, minds suspended; one feeling, one thought, one experience coursing through all: “Beloved guru, master and guide, accept this homage.” Tears flowed, of grief and gratitude, of loss and fullness, of distress and bliss, of memory and the moment. A light had gone out, but a brighter light shone in our hearts.

At nine in the morning, something extraordinary happened, as a special heartfelt song coursed through the air: “*You are my sunshine, my only sunshine . . .*” one of the kirtanists happened to glance at the photograph hanging opposite, on the west wall of Jyoti Mandir. This is a large photograph of Sri Swamiji and Swami Niranjan together, against the background of a setting sun. To his utter surprise, the sannyasin noticed that Sri Swamiji was bathed in a golden light which moved from left to right and illumined his whole form. The chanters and kirtanists who were sitting facing the west wall could all see this stunning sight. In excitement they nudged each other, “Look, look, it is Sri Swamiji. He is here.” They all saw him, illumined and resplendent. Then the light on the photo dissolved in the image of Sri Swamiji, as inexplicably as it had appeared.



Later, we came to know that at nine in the morning on that day in Rikhiapeeth, Sri Swamiji was giving his final darshan in Tulsi Kutir to all assembled. We realized that Sri Swamiji gave his final darshan and blessings to all present at Ganga Darshan in Jyoti Mandir at the very same moment. ■

A New Beginning

Date: 22nd December 2009

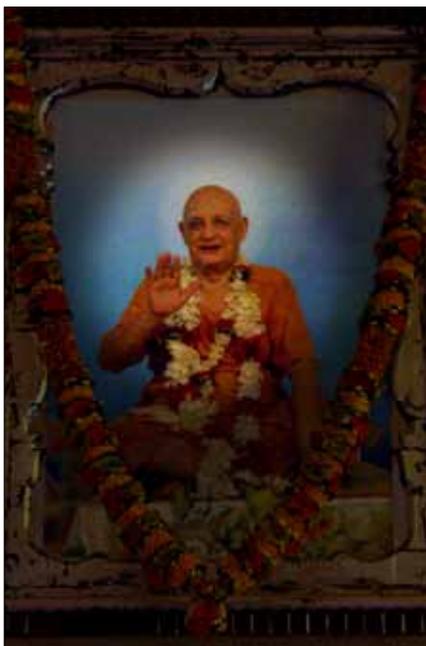
Occasion: Culmination of Shodashi Anushtana

Location: Jyoti Mandir, Ganga Darshan

It was the final day of the Shodashi puja, the sixteen-day ritual following the Mahasamadhi, at Rikhiapeeth. At Ganga Darshan, the sannyasins and residents were conducting Narayana havan and chanting stotrams and kirtans in Jyoti Mandir, which was full to the brim with disciples and devotees from Munger.

At exactly three in the afternoon, during the havan and chanting of *Vishnu Sahasranaam*, a deep golden light mysteriously appeared on the photograph of Sri Swamiji which hangs on the east wall of Jyoti Mandir. There was no sunlight indoors, yet Sri Swamiji's entire face and head was bathed in a circle of golden light, and he was glowing radiantly. As more and more people noticed the incredible vision, palms were spontaneously joined together in pranaam. For exactly nine minutes we observed this miracle of Sri Swamiji's grace and presence in our lives. Then the light disappeared without a trace.

All those who bore witness to the events of the 6th and the 22nd in Jyoti



Mandir felt that on the first day, as we began the Samadhi puja in Ganga Darshan, Sri Swamiji blessed us with his darshan from the west, like the setting sun, as if to tell us that the form in which we knew him had scaled the horizons, but we were not to forget that the setting sun always holds the promise of a new day. On the concluding day of the Shodashi puja, Sri Swamiji showered his grace upon us from the east, like the rising sun, as if the promise had been kept. And in that moment we knew that his Mahasamadhi was not the end, but a new beginning. ■



Darshan in Snow

Date: May 2010

Location: Gangotri in the Himalayas

Occasion: Swami Niranjana and Swami Satsangi's Pilgrimage

*High in the mountains
A timeless temple pays homage to the celestial river,
Where Bhagirath invoked her to come upon earth
Where Shiva opened his matted locks
to receive her fall at Gangotri.
In the sanctum sanctorum she presides,
Mother Bhagirathi, Ma Ganga.
She dances over mighty boulders,
the echo of her footfalls
resonating like anahat nada.
Sadhus in caves, huts and houses
seek Her favour and practise tapas.
The spiritual vibrations
of this eternal pilgrimage
gives new life to all who breathe its air
or step into the Mother's icy mantle.*

*O Mother Bhagirathi, O Ganga,
Thou givest boons to all.
Thou art the remover of all miseries.
Thou art the purifier of all sinners.
Thou art the mistress of this world.
Thou art the nourisher of all.
Prostrations unto Thee, O Mother.
Om Namah Bhagavati Ganga Rani.*

To be at the place where the most revered river of India originates, is an experience unparalleled. During the long mountainous drive to reach this snowy abode, the curve

of the road continuously plays with the curve of the river, gradually rising higher. It is as if one is tracing the paths of ida and pingala, and ascending chakra after chakra. Arriving at Gangotri finally is like reaching home – like experiencing the bliss of sahasrara, like being drawn into the lap of the mother after a very long day.

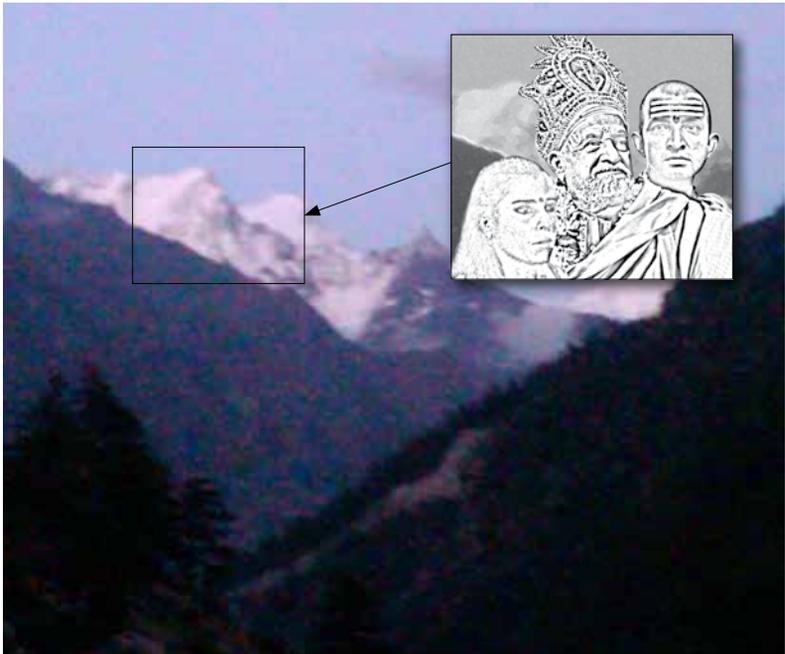
The high Himalayan air, the fragrance of the pines, the snow-topped peaks, the presence of the river as a vibrant cosmic entity, and the subtle presence of pranic emissions of accomplished sages over thousands of years . . . it is not surprising that Gangotri is famed among tirthas as the ultimate place of purity, sanctity and spiritual emanation. Situated in the magnificent Garhwal mountains, at an altitude of 3,048 metres above sea level, is this sacred origin of the Ganga.

Along the right bank of the river stands the shrine of Gangotri, dedicated to the Goddess. According to the scriptures, Lord Shiva was pleased with King Bhagirath's intense penance and let the celestial river Ganga come down to earth. A sacred rock near the temple denotes the place where Ganga first touched earth. The bestower of boons, the redeemer of all, Ganga is to the devoted spiritual aspirant as a mother is to a new born babe.

It was here in sacred Gangotri that Swami Niranjana arrived for his mantra anushthana in May 2010, along with Swami Satsangi who had just returned from her first overseas trip since the Mahasamadhi, to France, Italy and Greece.

The duo travelled to Gangotri via Haridwar, the place where the Ganga first enters the plains. After darshan of Mother Ganga and washing in her waters at Har-ki-Paudi, they proceeded to Rishikesh, the abode of Paramguru Swami Sivananda. Here they had darshan of Ananda Kutir, the cottage where Swami Sivananda used to reside, now preserved as a shrine. Staying the night at Glass House on the Ganges, a former retreat of the maharaja of Tehri now converted into a tranquil resort, they undertook the picturesque eight-hour drive to Gangotri the next day.

Arriving at Gangotri in the late afternoon, they proceeded to the Garhwal Nigam Rest House near the temple site, which would be their home for the next four nights. After settling in the sparse quarters of the Rest House, the swamis went for darshan to the Ganga temple. Having paid obeisance to Mother Ganga, they emerged from the temple and went for a walk along the banks of the river. It was about four in the evening. As they strolled along, basking in the rarefied air and the spiritual charge of the place, Swami Satsangi stopped, pointing to a high mountain peak. Swami Niranjan looked. The falling snow and natural snow banks on protruding rocks had created a clearly visible image: the face of Sri Swamiji wearing a crown, Swami Niranjan with shaved head and Swami Satsangi with long hair. It was as if Gangotri had welcomed in her fold the two offspring of her beloved son, Swami Satyananda, and Sri Swamiji was there, etched on the mountain, blessing and reminding the two disciples, "You will always be with me."





The next day onwards, every day from 6 to 11 am, Swami Niranjan would go and sit upon an isolated rock in middle of the Ganga, with the icy waters cascading all around, and perform his mantra anushthana undisturbed by pilgrims or visitors. Swami Satsangi was engaged in her own sadhanas.

Afterwards, both would walk to the temple for darshan and puja. In the afternoons, from 2 to 5 pm, they would sit in the courtyard of the temple to chant

stotrams, perform japa and participate in the arati at the temple to invoke the blessings and grace of Mother Ganga. Swami Niranjan continued his mantra anushthana upon returning to the room, from 7 to 10 pm, before retiring for the night.

After the three days of anushthana were complete, the swamis performed the elaborate Ganga Puja at the temple together and had a vitalizing bath in the chilled and refreshing waters of the Ganga. The image on the mountaintop was still there. After a final darshan of Sri Swamiji in the Himalayan snow-clad peaks, they left the holy precincts of Gangotri and returned to their respective ashrams. ■

Ever-Present Benevolence

Date: 27th May 2010

Occasion: Buddha Poornima

Location: Sri Niwas, Ganga Darshan

It was the last day of the lunar month of Vaishakh and the auspicious day of Buddha Poornima. Strong hot winds had been blowing all day long and the temperatures were soaring. The *Satsang Series* of the month had just concluded in which Swami Niranjana had told us how to manage the mind with the help of raja yoga. Early in the afternoon, Swamiji left for Rikhiapeeth.

It was a Thursday. As per the tradition of Ganga Darshan, after dinner in the evening, a sannyasin went up to Sri Niwas to prepare Sri Swamiji's room for the night. The moon, resplendent in its fullness, shone brightly out on the terrace. The bed was made, the mosquito net was put up, incense was lit, the air-conditioning was turned on and the doors and windows were bolted. Then, locking the room and Sri Niwas, the sannyasin left. The next morning, when the cleaning team arrived, they opened the door to Sri Swamiji's room to clean and pick up the bedding. They were in for a marvel!

To their incredulity they noticed that the room was not the same. The mosquito net had moved; instead of being tucked-in, it was put up. On the bed sheets, there was a clear imprint of a person of medium build having lain. The sheets were creased and there was indentation on the pillow, created by the weight of a head. The sheet was wrinkled at the foot and had indentations of heels.

Without a doubt, the room had been visited, even though all doors and windows were locked. In fact, an invisible presence of great power could still be experienced there. All those who entered felt as if they were showered with benevolence, as if Sri Swamiji was sitting right there, blessing all who came

before him in his characteristic abhaya mudra. We also realized that the previous day had been Swami Dharmashakti's birthday – per chance did Sri Swamiji arrive to bless her?

When Swamiji returned, we told him of this event and experience. He became quiet and after some time slowly said, "Sri Swamiji's presence at Ganga Darshan is eternally abiding. It is a perpetual reality, subtle and invisible to the human eye. It is an immensely real and all-pervading force of benevolence and grace. That is why it can be felt and experienced in different ways and forms. All of you who have witnessed these events are blessed, for you have experienced the transcendental luminosity of Sri Swamiji. Always remember that you have received a great blessing in your lives. You have had the rare opportunity to realize and witness the luminous and energetic presence of the master."

That evening, during satsang, Swamiji said to all present, "Ganga Darshan Yogapeeth and Rikhiapeeth, karmabhoomi and tapabhoomi of Sri Swamiji, are the geographical receptacles of his dedication to his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda. They are the creative actualization of his guru's mandate and teachings. Sri Swamiji's devotion and surrender to his guru and ishta are alive and vibrant in these two places. They are sacred and represent Sri Swamiji's spirit, which is ever-present here." ■



In the Footsteps of Guru

Date: June 2010

Occasion: Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi's Pilgrimage

Location: Vaishno Devi, Jammu & Kashmir

*Deep in a mountainous cave She dwells
High above ridges, glens and vales.
Hearing Her call, men become pilgrims
And walk the arduous paths, to receive Her blessings.
Restorer of balance, Ma Vaishnavi
Your essence is one, though your forms many.
In the cavernous darkness you shine triumphantly
As Maha Saraswati, Maha Lakshmi and Mahakali.*

*O Devi, O Goddess! Salutations unto Thee.
Thou art the bestower of divine wisdom.
Thou art the embodiment of spiritual love.
Thou art the Manifest and the Unmanifest.
Thou art earth, water, fire and air.
Om Parashaktyai Namah.*

The Puranas tell the legend that once there was a great imbalance between the powers of good and evil. To restore the balance, the Cosmic Mother was invoked. Her three principal forms, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Kali, who govern the manifested creation, came forth and emitted their *tejas*, potency. The three forces became one concentrated ray of light and from this emerged Vaishnavi, vessel of the three powers and preserver of equilibrium.

Vaishnavi vanquished the evil forces, and then retired to a cave in the Shatashringa mountains. There she is present even today in all her three forms, ever engaged in the worship of Narayana. The goddess is perceived both as a devotee of Lord Vishnu and the receptacle of his power. She is the force in which the three *gunas*, qualities of nature, are held in perfect balance. Thus,

under her auspicious gaze, creation can function harmoniously. The Vaishno Devi shrine is a natural cave carved into the Trikut ranges in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. A 14 km walk over a steep terrain takes one to this revered place of worship, located at an altitude of 5,200 feet. It is said that only those called by the Mother are able to journey to this abode of Hers. And upon them She showers grace and blessings in abundance.

Responding to the call, Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi undertook the pilgrimage in June 2010. They arrived and spent the first night in Katra, the base for the trek. Early next morning, they took the walking trail, treading the same path that their guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, had walked twenty-one years ago when he had undertaken the tirtha to have darshan of the Devi.

Both the swamis walked at a steady pace, feeling the footsteps of the guru guiding them. Far in the distance, the peaks glowed. At this time of the year, the meadows were lush and dotted with alpine flowers. The cries of 'Jai Mata Di' rent the air, as streams of pilgrims walked on with determination and exultation. They reached the shrine in the late morning.

Inside the cave, noise and silence became harmony. Light and dark became effulgence. The presence of the Devi – gracious, benevolent, equipoised – was palpable. After darshan of the three pindas representing the three aspects of Shakti, the swamis said their prayers and lit deepaks in front of the pindas in memory of, worship and gratitude to Sri Swamiji. They remained there for some time, sitting quietly, lost in the overpowering presence of Mother and guru. Returning the same day, they spent a night in Katra, and then returned to Rikhia and Munger respectively.

The tirtha yatra of Swami Niranjan are being undertaken with the sankalpa to visit all the *siddha tirthas*, awakened places of pilgrimage, that Sri Swamiji visited upon leaving his home in 1943 and Munger in 1988. They are tirthas where Sri Swamiji found inspiration, clarity and guidance from the Divine. To these very same places Swami Niranjan journeys, to offer his prayers and respects and receive blessings and guidance for the continuation of the mission of his guru. ■





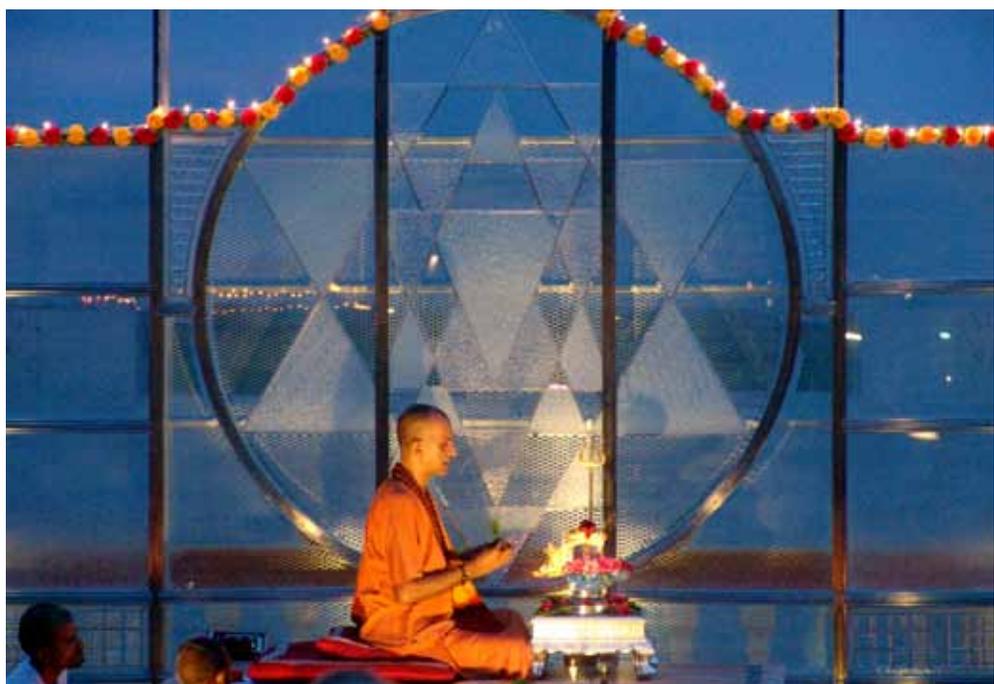














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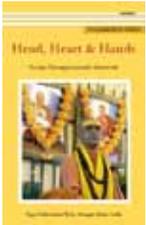
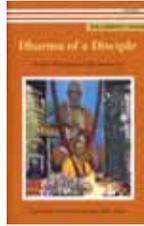
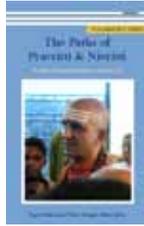
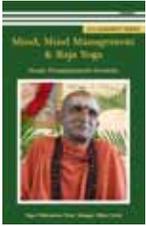
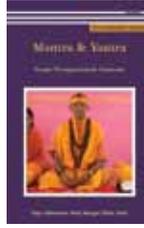
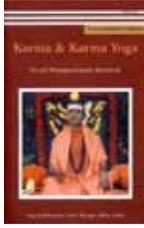
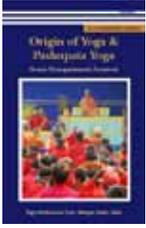


हरि ॐ

2010 Yogadrishi Satsangs

In the year 2010, Swami Niranananda Saraswati began a special series of discourses in Munger titled 'Yogadrishi (Yogavision) Satsang Series'. The satsangs were held in Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth, Baidyanatheshwar Shankarbagh (Sivalaya), Chandisthan and Dashbhuj Temple. In these discourses, Swamiji imparted unique perspectives on diverse aspects of yoga and the spiritual sciences.

We are happy to present the entire 2010 series in English as Sri Swami Satyananda's prasad of jnana yajna, with prayers for your peace, plenty and prosperity.



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

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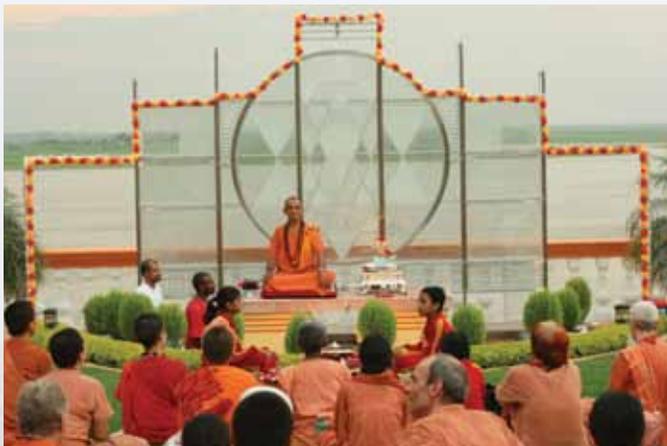
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कवर फोटो : गुरु पूर्णिमा 2011 में श्री दुर्गा हवन

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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:

<i>Feb 15-18</i>	Satsang Series
<i>Mar 24-27</i>	Chaitra Navaratri Satsang Series
<i>Apr 12-15</i>	Satsang Series
<i>May 3-6</i>	Satsang Series
<i>Aug 16-19</i>	Satsang Series
<i>Oct 17-20</i>	Ashwin Navaratri Satsang Series
<i>Nov 8-11</i>	Satsang Series

Sannyasa Peeth Events 2012

<i>Jan 2</i>	Durga Havan Poornahuti
<i>Jan 28-Jan 2015</i>	3 Year Sannyasa Training Course
<i>Sep 8-12</i>	Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna

For more information on the above events, contact:

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