

How to Pray for Someone

by Swami Veda Bharati



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

Spiritual guides are often asked to pray for someone. From illness to wellness, from poverty to wealth, from failure to success, from emotional distress to peace, from grief to acceptance, from anger to equanimity.

Frequently, the seekers also ask “how may I pray for someone”. Here is a brief answer.

Often people think of prayer as so many words, “please help him. Oh God”, “please make my daughter well”, “please make my son pass his examination”, “Dear Divine Mother, please, please, reduce my husband’s anger” – and so on.

Or we think of prayer as reciting or chanting of some mantras, shlokas, set compositions, verses from holy books of our religion – whichever religion.

The way of prayer for a meditator is a silent one. My Master, Swami Rama of the Himalayas, said:

Prayer is intense feeling.

Even one who does not believe in God can pray for others.

But, one needs to learn to prepare one’s mind to offer such a prayer. A clear, sattvic and selfless mind.

Also, learn the technique of meditation. This can be a long and complex process, or short one. One may even use a recording of guided meditation ⁽¹⁾. Here briefly is one (missing out many details):

Relax all your muscles, especially the forehead.

Bring your attention to your breathing.

Simply observe how you are breathing.

Through that simple observation your breath will slow down.

Bring your attention to feel the flow and touch of your breath in the nostrils.

Breathe slowly, gently and smoothly.

Keep feeling the breath stream touching in the nostrils.

[Here you may choose a name of God from your religion and language, or a sacred phrase. If not, just count the breaths, not in words, but in thought alone, Onnnne...Twooo... repeatedly, while feeling the breath stream.]

*When the mind has become an undisturbed even-flowing stream,
Visualize the presence of the person you are praying for.
Visualize the person in the condition in which you wish to see him/her.
Let this be an intense feeling.
Interspersed with the breath observation as described above, keep returning to this intense feeling.*

If you are a believer, let there be an intense feeling of surrender to Divinity.

Do this repeatedly till your goal for the person is achieved. But, let there also be a sense of acceptance, surrender of the desire and the fruit. If the Divine Force accepts the prayer, you are grateful.

For a more advanced mode of this feeling prayer, one needs to learn diaphragmatic breathing, otherwise chest problems can ensue. For this, take some lessons in the Himalayan yoga meditation methods from a certified teacher.

When diaphragmatic breathing has become a natural process, one may move to the next step in this feeling prayer.

*Feeling the breath stream in the nostrils [with the divine name or the count of onnnne...twooo... as above],
Breathing diaphragmatically – and not otherwise.*

After some time, whenever the mind feels settled, bring the mind's attention to your heart centre, the area between the breasts.

*Feel as though there is a cave in that area.
Dwell in that area mentally.
Feel as though you are entering that cave.*

In that cave visualize the person in the condition which you wish him/her to attain.

Let this be an intense feeling.

You may intersperse between the intense feeling and the breath-awareness and sit doing this as long as you wish.

Do not complain: “God when will you hear my prayer? I have been praying for so long and you have not fulfilled my wish!!”

Secrets of success in prayer are:

- Intense feeling
- Surrendering the desire for fruits; acceptance.

I wish you success in your prayers.

⁽¹⁾ The recordings of guided meditations are available from ahymsinpublishers@gmail.com

‘Last Words of the Rishi’

Retreat with Swami Veda, the Netherlands, June 10-14, 2011

by Dirk Gysels

Introduction



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

It was said that this late spring retreat with the enigmatic title ‘Last words of the Rishi’ in a wooded area in the south of the Netherlands, would be the last retreat in Holland with a ‘speaking’ Swami Veda.

(But as he assured us during the retreat: if we take care of all practical aspects, he will come again to sit with us silently from 2014 onwards).

140 participants from many parts of Europe didn’t want to miss this opportunity.

I wondered in which sense this awareness of the closing of a cycle would color the general atmosphere of the retreat. My anticipation was true: it did influence the feel of the gathering as well as its contents, but in a way I did not expect.

During the retreat, skillfully, our collective mindfield was geared towards looking upon Swami Veda’s upcoming 5-7 years of silence as a joyful occasion. We were shown how, from that level of supreme Silence, transmission and guidance will be even more powerful and clear.

This made the retreat truly epochal. Apart from Swami Veda, the three other teachers Asutosh Sharma, Swami Ritavan and Swami Nitya , both on a conceptual and experiential level, presented us with the tools to link up with this Silence and make it our own.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

Using the Mundaka Upanishad and Guru Gita as the framework for the transmission was a brilliant idea. Verses of both scriptures were presented in the context of meditational practices and this worked very well.

To truly take advantage of the retreat, Swami Veda advised us to look upon the monastery as an ashram and, for a couple of days, to leave all worldly concerns at the gates: *“Don’t worry for them, they will still be there waiting for you.”*

But as I can testify myself, with a clear mind and a broader vision, they looked much more insignificant.

Joint & Glands and Hatha with Asutosh: welcoming the day in an optimal way.

Pratassmaraami hridi, samphuradaatmatatvam ...

'Early in the morning, I remember the shining truth of the Self in the heart ...'

Led by Sonia, we chanted these moving verses from Shankara as part of the morning prayers.

Then, as silent as the atmosphere evoked by the Sankrit *shloka*'s, Asutosh enters the hall and seats himself, his hands folded before his heart in the *Namaste* gesture.

Instantly, the *guna* of silence even deepens.

Whenever Ashu leads a session, he radiates equipoise, gentleness, excellence, full mastery over the words he speaks and the tone in which they are spoken. He enables the participants to close their eyes and to surrender to his masterful guidance.

During the 90 minutes, I could feel a deep stillness reverberating through my body. The body could shed its stiffness, but at the same time it became even more quiet.

When Asutosh, again with a *Namaste* and his wishes for a pleasant day, leaves the packed hall, one feels how pleasant it is for the mind to have a more relaxed, awakened and flexible body.

Pilgrimage to the guhachara: the Cave of the Heart

"He who knows the Purusha residing in the cave of the Heart, destroys the knot of ignorance in this very lifetime" Mundaka Upanishad, chapter II, Canto I, verse 10.

Swami Ritavan is, as he said himself, a 'man of few words'. Instead of too much elaborating on the metaphysics of the Mundaka, he chose to lead us through the methodologies that were hinted at in the second canto of the Mundaka Upanishad: how to enter the Guhachara, the inner cave of the Heart.

Swami Rama, in his commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad says that the details of these practices are given in the *tantric* tradition. Swami Ritavan guided us in a number of these *kriyas* that enable the practitioners to become aware of the subtle energy body. These methodologies are indeed a trademark of the living, oral tradition of the Himalayan adepts.

Guided by his presence and voice, he skillfully led us through various pathways and points, training our attention to become more and more subtle and focused.

At one session, using a variation of the well known 31 points exercise, he brought us to the Indweller in the core of our spiritual heart.

Gradually he was preparing us for *manasa puja*, the inner worship of the Divine Light as an expression of our very Self in the *Guhachara*.

Swami Ritavan showed us that Upanishadic study is not merely the study of ancient texts.

These verses come alive when decoded in an experiential way by the age-old methodologies provided by an able guide like Swamiji.

Making the Guru come alive

When a teacher announces to go into a period of prolonged silence, it is not a bad thing to explore what is actually the meaning and function of the concept of 'guru'.

The answer to this question will help clarify the nature of the guidance when the verbal interaction with a teacher comes to an end.

To find an answer to this question, Swami Nityamuktananda expanded upon the first verses of the *Sri Guru Gita*, a major part of the *Skanda Purana*.

Swami Nitya herself is a born teacher. She is a treasure house of erudition coupled with a vast experience of various meditative approaches. This combination results in her ability to make unfamiliar concepts easy to digest. She is a master in out-of-box thinking, presenting insights and correspondences that regularly make our minds come to a standstill.

Preparing the ground for diving into 'Song of the Teacher', Swami Nitya started off with juxtaposing our educational system with the traditional ones.

Nowadays, as we all can testify, studying is about assimilating facts and being able to reproduce them.

It is about treating facts as objective as 'true', ignoring the 'fact' (pun intended) that we are just reconstructing sensory input by using the existing memory files in our mind. This fabrication is erroneously seen as objective knowledge.

The vantage point of sacred traditions is different. In these approaches knowledge deals first and foremost with the 'knower'.

Who is the one who claims to know? As Swami Rama said repeatedly: "*How can you know anything if you don't know yourself?*"

This kind of experiential knowledge only dawns when one reverentially looks upon the entire universe as the teacher.

In this sense, life is the teacher. Authentic human gurus, the ones eulogized by the *Guru Gita*, have crossed the gap between knowledge and life.

As American Indian wise men say: such a one walks her talk.

When the whole universe, when life itself is teaching us about ourselves, then the spoken or the written word can only contain a fraction of the entire spectrum of knowledge.

So, when we cultivate the right attitude, situations, encounters, inner experiences and so forth are our teachers as well.

A true guru will be able to transmit experiential knowledge in this way because he or she is a channel for the transmission of intelligent energy (Shakti).

So the concept of 'guru' is much vaster than a mere human teacher.

The *Guru Gita* reveals three different levels of this Teaching Presence:

1. The personal guru as a channel of the lineage (and in this sense, a true human guru can only be a disciple)
2. The wisdom mind which carries many names like Brahma, Hiranyagarbha...
3. That absolute presence where knowledge, knower and knowing are one.

True to the spirit of the teaching, the sage Suta who is the spokesman of this knowledge, empathically states: “*It is not me speaking, but Shiva, a name for the infinite, the unmanifest potential*”.

Shiva is speaking to Parvati, the Shakti (Intelligent, manifesting Energy) at Mount Kailash, meeting place of heaven and earth, the unmanifest and the manifest.

In this sublime setting, purified by the fire of years of tapasya, in a gesture of surrender and humility, only then the revelation of the guru can happen.

Parvati expresses her readiness by touching her guru’s feet.

Swami Nitya explains that the feet are our most solid part., they stand for the earth element. For us, average human beings, they symbolize our ‘dirt’, the karmas we carry along.

The guru’s feet, on the contrary, are solidified godliness.

Bowing to or serving the guru’s feet is bowing to existence, loving everything because the guru’s feet are everywhere.

This uncompromising contemplation on the omnipresent supreme Guru is true mindfulness.

Swami Nitya uses Parvati’s *tapasya* to put the question in the group: ‘And we, what are we willing to give up in order to receive *guru diksha*?’

In the Song of the Teacher, the Guru is often addressed as Sri Guru. Since Vedic times Sri connotes the feminine presence of Wisdom, Auspiciousness, Harmony.

The knowledge about *Sri*, which flows from the guru mind, is *Sri Vidya*, the highest initiatory wisdom taught in the Himalayan tradition.

This highest wisdom unfolds in meditation and surrender.

But before we are able to truly surrender, we have to know what we want to surrender and why! Sooner or later, we will have to face the shadows in ourselves, the way we deal with the four primitive fountains.

And so, Swami Nitya invites us to deep contemplations, inner dialogue, emotional purification. Then and only then, the ‘guru’ will become alive for us.

Mundaka Upanishad: an introduction to ‘Sathyasa sathyam’, the ‘truth of the truth’



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#) Of course we were all very eager to hear Swami Veda’s words of wisdom. And he did not disappoint us!

Full of vigor, from a space of infinite calmness inside, he effortlessly captivated the audience day after day.

'Om bhadram karnebhiv srunyaama devaah ...'
Om, oh shining beings, may we hear auspicious words with the ears ...'

Swami Veda started his exposition of the Mundaka Upanishad, with the chanting of the *Shantipath*, a term which he defined as a 'recitation of self pacification'.

Using four times the word *swasti* is an invocation of the forces of benevolence in the universe and in ourselves. Without inner peace, without the benevolent support of all forces, *Brahma Vidya*, the wisdom of the Upanishads, cannot be received.

The Shantipath is *mantric* language. In this kind of language, SVB asserts, one doesn't always form complete sentences, 1 or 2 words are enough to evoke a meaning, so that Silence does not have to be broken without necessity.

To receive the knowledge, the Shantipath implores: *'May all our limbs be stilled'* This includes the inner constituents of our personality so that our lifespan will be in the form of *devas*, the Shining Beings .

With this introduction, Swami Veda set the tone for his exposition on the initial verses of this Upanishad.

'This Upanishad is for the monks or 'shaven-headed', so we don't qualify for it', Swami said with a chuckle.

In line with Swami Rama's translation, he broke down the term '*upanishad*' into '*upa*', 'closeness', as a quality of a clear attuned mind which knows no distances, '*shad*' which has various meanings, one of them to loosen bondage so that one is able to attain' and '*ni*', the annihilation of *avidya* or ignorance.

Swami Veda always started by chanting the verse he intends to explain.

The text opens with an overview of the origin and first lineage bearers of this *Brahma Vidya*.

The first proponent of the supreme Wisdom was Brahma or *Hiranyagarbha*. SVB asserts that it is short-sighted to assume Brahma - *Hiranyagarbha* to be an embodied being, he (or it or she) is a universal mind field.

According to his analysis, *Hiranyagarbha*, the first deva, has four basic powers in which he excels above all other minds: *dharma* or lawfulness, *jnana* or knowledge, *vairagya* translated by Swamiji as being without colours (or blemishes) and *aiswarya*: supreme sovereignty. These are all qualities of buddhi in its fullness: so supreme knowledge can only flow from a vast, infinite mindfield.

Within this transmission of wisdom, after a few generations, one comes to Angiras who is approached by Shaunaka with great humility and respect.

Swami Veda remarked that Shaunaka carries the surname, the 'One of great Halls', hinting at the fact that Shaunaka must have been a man of many possessions.

This indicates that *Brahma Vidya* is open to all.

Shaunaka asks his master the pivotal question of this Upanishad: "*What is the one thing we have to know in order to know all?*"

Angiras replies by expounding on a theme that reverberates throughout many Upanishads: distinguishing lower knowledge from higher knowledge. Even the Veda's are part of the lower knowledge. The higher knowledge (*para*) is *akshara*, 'that which cannot be destroyed.'

To be eligible for this wisdom, one has to be *dhira*: a Sanskrit term meaning wise and patient at the same time. (For the sages of old, it is impossible to be wise without being patient!).

Swami Veda spent quite some time at explaining verse 8, the cosmological *mantra* describing the stages of manifestation.

In ancient times, Vedic words had different meaning than nowadays.

Tapas in verse 8 does not mean disciplined methodologies of meditation or purification. It is Knowledge. *Anna* is not food but a very subtle, undefined state of universal *buddhi* or *mahat*.

In this way, SVB explained quite a few terms. Once again, we can see how we need the voice of a living master steeped in the tradition to unlock the secret of ancient texts.

To give another example, the text provides us with two words to describe the knowledge inherent in Brahman: *sarvajna* and *sarvavid*. The first term connotes the knowledge of everything in its oneness, the second word is the knowledge of all possible divisions and differences.

Swami Veda not only shared some jewels of his profound exegesis, he also grounded us in our meditation practice. He was never tired of reminding us about the necessity of incorporating 2-minute meditations throughout the day.



When small children were brought to him, he held them close under his now legendary meditation blanket whispering sacred syllables into their right ear. One could see that they really cherished these blessed moments.

He remarked that if children do not spontaneously come running towards us, we have made no progress in our meditation!

The last satsang, shortly before lunch on the final day, was truly the apotheosis.

The setting was perfect. The evening before, Swamiji had masterfully clarified all issues surrounding his upcoming seven years of verbal silence.

In a certain way, he made all of us shareholders in his *tapas*. We left that room uplifted, inspired, consoled.

Then on the last day SVB put the final touches to the guided meditation he has been building up over 4 days. Enveloping us in the clarity of his being, he allowed us to discover the *chakra* we were most resonating with. He advised to use this center as the focus point of our meditations. (CD's of these advanced meditations are available, please don't experiment on your own). In the lively talk that followed, he elaborated on the tantric wisdom from which these advanced meditations stem.

He stated that by discussing these issues, he was actually commenting on the second canto of the Mundaka Upanishad in which the topic is fire offerings.

The way to practice meditational fire offerings is an integral part of *tantra*.

The *tantras* describe three ovals of light (*lingams*) at the navel, heart and eyebrow center. In our tradition, and at our level of development, these serve as the main points for *dharana* and meditation.

Since our attention is already there most of the time and since we do not really know how to make the energies ascend, we do not concentrate on the two lower centers. However, in *Kaula tantra* they are included.

Neither do we meditate in the *Sahasrara chakra* at the top of the head.

By the grace of the master and the lineage, one has to learn first the pathways going from the *Ajna* center to the *Sahasrara*. These initiations belong to the highest level of *tantra*: *Samaya*



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

SVB translated this term as '*saha maya*=with me'. At this level, the disciple no longer meditates, it is the guru who meditates within the disciple!

Swamiji disclosed that there are 'push and pull' relationships between *chakra*'s. Lower *chakra*'s may push the energy upwards and higher *chakra*'s may pull the energy upwards. However, the best way is to wait until the energy is pulled up from above.

These are only a few of the gold nuggets SVB shared with us.

Swami Veda left us with the strong aspiration to explore the inner goldmine ourselves

[A last word about the organization](#)

A last word about the organization: if one wants to see what *Guru seva* (service) looks like in reality, then just see organizer Willem Meijer in action.

Like the proverbial *Purusha* from the Rig Veda, he seems to have a thousand eyes and a thousand legs. Untiringly and full of wit and inspiration, he was the motor that kept the entire event running smoothly.

To Willem, Kries, Marilou, Ute, Sailesh and many others who shared their time, energy and skills: thank you very much for creating such a wonderful opportunity to learn and practice together!

Himalayan Neem Nursery

by Sunil Trikha



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

I revel in unraveling the mysterious ways in which the energy of the Guru, *Gurutva* in Guru-Tatva (magnetism in Guru force) operates as to how, why and when to initiate, undertake, channel or maintain any or every course of an action. And from That source, an ordinary word, a casual glance, a gesture or a non-verbal intention operates so effectively at the subtle level that it cuts across all the obstacles and makes itself manifest in the physical world.

Swamiji's spiritual instruction (How many trees can you plant this year and watch over them like your own children?) came like a jolt to shake a slumber of about eight long years. During all those years, I had been thinking and making plans of planting trees in and around Ludhiana, my home town. The implementation came only after Swamiji's instruction as if I were waiting for a nod 'yes, go ahead'. And the next morning, I found myself in the fields of forest department, purchasing Neem saplings.

The meaning of the instruction's words has always had meaning for me in this way ...

'How many' as ...	how much;
'trees' as ...	grow, evolve;
'can you plant' as ...	the will, capacity, ability;
'this year' as ...	short time, just a year; let's begin it now;
'watch over them' as ...	monitor, observe your own progress, growth;
'like your own children' as ...	expanding consciousness thereby encompassing the Whole, beyond personal possessions / relations.



And thereby, the process started. The project was discussed with my colleagues, friends and neighbors who extended their loving support. Few funds were raised to execute the drive, gardeners were engaged and appointments fixed with Park Management Committees in different areas of the city.

After about a month, when we had completed the task of planting 1000 Neem saplings and successfully organized plantation of another 250 Neem saplings and 500 plants in D.P.S. School and Guru Nanak Engineering College respectively we came to know that it was not over but we were on an unending mission of making plantation a

regular feature of Himalayan Yoga Meditation Association of Ludhiana.

And to achieve the goal, a “mother sapling” that was planted with all other plants was “Himalayan Neem Nursery”, a nursery which will cater to the requirement of developing and nurturing Neem plants for their free distribution. The Himalayan Neem Nursery wishes to distribute about 2000 plants every year in schools and colleges, private clubs, social and charitable organizations.

With observance of this Purashcharana, I feel an expansion within as the whole city has become my dwelling place. As I drive through the city now, the places make me feel connected and people, familiar and friendly.

Some Notes

ਐੱਲ.ਆਈ.ਸੀ.ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦੀ ਸੁੱਧਤਾ ਲਈ ਨਿੱਮ ਦੇ ਬੂਟੇ ਲਾਏ

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)



ਭਾਰਤੀ ਬੀਮਾ ਨਿਗਮ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਨਿੱਮ ਦੇ ਬੂਟੇ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ। ਨਾਲ ਸੁਨੀਲ ਤ੍ਰਿਖਾ, ਆਰ. ਪੀ. ਸਿੰਘ, ਹਰਮੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੂਰ, ਰਵੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ।

ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ, 14 ਅਗਸਤ (ਸੁਲੁਜਾ)— ਭਾਰਤੀ ਬੀਮਾ ਨਿਗਮ ਯੂਨਿਟ-2 ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਿਮੋਲਿਆ ਯੋਗ ਮੈਗੀਟੇਬਨ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਬੇਨਤ ਹੇਠ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਦੂਸ਼ਣ ਮੁਕਤ ਅਤੇ ਹਰਿਆ ਭਰਿਆ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੜਕਾਂ, ਪਾਰਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਬੂਟਾ ਨਿੱਮ ਦਾ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਸੁਨੀਲ ਤ੍ਰਿਖਾ, ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ, ਹਰਮੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੂਰ, ਰਵੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ, ਅਨਿਲ ਪੁਰਾਕਰ, ਆਰ. ਪੀ. ਸਿੰਘ, ਸੁਰੇਸ਼ ਨਾਰੰਗ, ਅਰਵਿੰਦ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ, ਟਿਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਹਾਨ, ਅਬਵਾਨੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ, ਸੁਲਿੰਦਰ ਬਾਪਤ, ਹਾਕਿਮ ਖੁਰਾਣਾ, ਭੁਰੇਸ਼ ਬਜਾਜ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਸੁਨੀਲ ਤ੍ਰਿਖਾ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਨਿੱਮ ਦਾ ਬੂਟਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਗੁਣਵੱਤਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਨੂੰ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੁੱਧ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਨਿੱਮ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਸੁੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ, ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਟੀ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਅਪੀਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਬੂਟੇ ਲਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੇਣ।

The Neem plant *Azadirachta indica*([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azadirachta indica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azadirachta_indica)) has been selected for its varied health benefits, as every part of this plant is useful in one way or the other and it is known that the plant can cure about forty different diseases. Recently the United Nations Environment Programme mentioned the “Indian Neem” as Nature’s Drugstore. Read the article: <http://www.unep.org/wed/tree-a-day/neem.asp>

In Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave words to the wonderful aarti (prayer) which is being hummed by Nature before the invisible altar of God, the creator of this universe:

Kaisi aarti hoye Bhav khandna teri aarti - - What a beautiful worship is this, O Destroyer of fear !

Gagan mein thaal rav chand dipak bane - - In the bowl of the sky, the sun and moon are the lamps;

- - The stars in the constellation are the pearls;

- - The fragrance of sandalwood is the incense, the wind is the fan;

- - All the vegetation is flowers offered to you, O Luminuous Lord !

Tarika mandal janak moti
Dhoop malyanlo pavan chavro kare
Sagal banray phulant joti.

Guru Nanak Sahib says All that is going on in this universe is His Sadhana, (His worship). We have to associate ourselves as Sadhaka (devotee) and then volunteer to become a Sadhan (means) so as to partake in this ever reverberating Sadhana (worship of The Creator).

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)



I reverently bow at Swamiji's blessed feet that he gave us an opportunity to plant the sapling of our own being, nurture ourselves as a gardener, grow like a tree and finally, ripen to fruition.

In humble gratitude,

Sunil Trikha

Himalayan Yoga Meditation Association of Ludhiana.

Editor's note:

Himalayan Yoga Meditation Association of Ludhiana is an affiliated center. This is a link to their Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Himalayan-Yoga-Meditation-Society-Ludhiana/127910867225147>

We invite you to read once again the 2010 – 2013 practice given by Swami Veda Bharati at <http://www.ahymsin.org/main/index.php/Initiates/2010-2013-practice.html>

Challenges on the Spiritual Path

by Pandit Hari Shankar Dabral



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

To a person who is increasing his or her commitment or intensity of their practice, the worldly situations will start testing your faith, commitment and your determination. You will all of the sudden start to see things becoming difficult in every aspect of your life. Starting from family, spouse, kids, vehicle, work, boss, your own meditation – everything will have a challenge all of the sudden.

From a spiritual point of view – it is positive. **Those are good signs.**

But from worldly point of view, it's a hassle – it's difficult.

You will think, “Why am I feeling this? I am meditating and I am doing my mantra and everything is becoming difficult.. Why is this happening?”

That is where we misinterpret. We think that things will get better by our meditation, but things may get worse before they get better. And so challenges upon challenges upon challenges appear.

A spiritual seeker sees it as an opportunity to **GROW** and to **Purify**, to expedite the wheel of Karma and to pay off your Karma quicker. The karmas that would take ordinary people one year to pay off are happening in one day.

Everything gets challenged and everything is challenging.

From physical health, relationships or work challenges - deal with that challenge within your capacity and knowledge of what needs to be done.

When a challenge comes into your life, there will first be a reaction that comes; maybe it's anger, maybe frustration? Become aware of that reaction. That is the human reaction and is normal. You shouldn't actually ignore and suppresses this reaction and you can immediately come to watch the reaction. Then the third level comes in - the law of Karma – and you can ask yourself ‘What is in my duty to do?’

As challenges come, tell yourself that it is an opportunity to go through the fire. A goldsmith puts the gold into the fire- it's a difficult process for the gold, but at the end that gold shines. When you go though the fire, **then only** the light comes. See those challenges or difficulties as a part of your spiritual progress.

Swami Veda says that whenever he gets sick first he thanks the Lord himself that he has the opportunity to close himself and he goes into silence. So each time he has pain he just closes his eyes and he thanks that now I have an opportunity to look within more.

Any time that a difficulty arises, think:

1. **Acceptance** as an opportunity that you are paying your debts faster and quicker

2. **Purification**
 3. **Remember** this will pass because you are moving forward so that state of yourself will never stay the same.
-

Editor's note:

Pandit Hari Shankar Dabral, Ph.D, is the Spiritual Director of The Himalayan Yoga Meditation Centre in Calgary. The website is <http://www.himalayanmeditation.com/> He shares this article from his blog, <http://apps.himalayanmeditation.com/Blog/>

Panditji is an experienced teacher in the Himalayan Tradition. A disciple of H. H. Swami Rama of the Himalayas, he has been trained by Swami Veda Bharati. Trained and authorized by Swami Rama to give initiations; Panditji has initiated many hundreds of people. His knowledge of Sanskrit and the Yoga Scriptures is vast and comprehensive yet he is able to explain complex ideas in ways that are easy to understand and apply to daily life.

Upcoming Events

Pandit Dabral will be leading a Pilgrimage to the sacred sights of the Himalayan Mountains of Northern India 9th – 26th September 2011. For more information:

http://www.himalayanmeditation.com/pb/wp_77261bf6/wp_77261bf6.html

Swami Veda will be visiting Calgary in 16th – 19th August. For more information, please see

http://www.himalayanmeditation.com/pb/wp_6973f6f1/wp_6973f6f1.html

Highlights from Korea



Korean hosts and hospitality

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

At the first door beyond Incheon Airport's baggage claim we were welcomed into the waiting arms of our Korean hosts for 14 days of superb hospitality. Without a doubt, their loving and generous concern for our enjoyment and comfort was one of the most outstanding features of our visit. Like clockwork our food, accommodations, places to go, things to see, people to meet, cars and drivers, all graciously appeared or we were delivered at precisely the right moment. Yet like other Korean art that we learned about while there, subtlety was its style. The artist in this case was none other than Helen Chu whose skill made it all unfold so seamlessly.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

A truly special feature of the hospitality was that one or more former gurukulam students-- Borim, Doi Lee, Hee Jung, Mi Ryang and Hueng Min— were always nearby to help us get around and to share our experiences. Also Mi Kyoung as well as Dr. Chu and family and even Yeahee's Mom were regularly part of the action.

Everywhere we went in Korea we were welcomed with great warmth and genuine interest in what we had to share. We were clearly respected as honored guests. Rather humbling on our side ...

Helen is a vital link

Whether it was in a mall, a restaurant or walking down the street, wherever we went, we repeatedly happened on a chance encounter with one of Helen's students or former students. The loving response and memories shared by those we met at those times began to make clear the impact this devoted and energetic teacher has made on the entire Korean Yoga community.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

As seen in other modern countries popular Yoga in Korea is showing itself in similar ways, with fitness and flexibility being the core expression. Thanks to Helen's one pointed concentration on service to the Himalayan Tradition, she is ensuring that the pure and complete teachings make their way to the hearts and minds of the Korean people. She has served as a catalyst, as a sponsor and leader for Himalayan Tradition programs, in Korea for 22 years, coming to collaborate with teachers of different schools in order to share

the universal reach of the teachings.

Helen Choe is also an initiator and a member of the AHYMSIN Adhyatma Samiti, or Spiritual Committee.

Teachers training retreat in the mountains

The main purpose of our Korea visit was the teachers training retreat. This year it was held in Pureunsol Pension, a retreat center in a beautiful mountainous area some distance from Wonju. Swami Ritavan and Ashu have participated in the Korean retreats many times before, and now Swami Ritavan has come to have the special role of presiding over the retreats along with Helen.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

The theme of the retreat was “Opening the Heart with Yoga”. On this theme, Swami Ritavan lead heart centered meditations and Swami Ma Radha gave lectures on love as taught by Swami Rama. Each day Silvia taught joints and glands while Ashu, of course, modeled HYT hatha yoga. The classes given by Korean teachers were in Korean, so we were unable to participate.

It seemed to us that the students in attendance were very serious and many are already teaching. Six were initiated at the retreat. Unlike the retreats that we are familiar with at SRSG, most of these students already knew each other. Over the course of the 3 days, up to 130 persons participated in the retreat.

Something new for the retreat was that a retreat for children was going on while the parents were in class. Swamis Ritavan and Radha each had a turn at spending an afternoon with the kids. Ma Radha discovered that playing “Tarzan” with kids has new meaning these days.

Quality time with yoga groups and leaders

Dr. Won's Institute

One of our days was spent at Dr. Won's new retreat center, located a couple hours out of the city in quiet countryside. Dr. Won, a well-known yoga teacher in Korea, with regular television and radio appearances, has been serving the Yoga community for many years. With the total support of her loving family, she has been able to expand her capacity as a teacher and provider of yoga services by establishing this exquisite new retreat facility.

Respect for the Tradition and its teachers — which we continually felt throughout our Korean visit — was expressed artfully during this visit in the form of an elegant table setting (and partaking) of Korean tea delicacies. Their gratitude for the blessing given for their center (at their request) by Swami Ritavan was expressed in a full Korean bow by Dr Won and her students.

Dr. Won has learned from and been inspired by Swami Veda and the Himalayan tradition, for a number of years and regularly brings groups to Sadhaka Grama in Rishikesh for further study.

Mr Jeong's Yoga Studio



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

As another messenger for the Himalayan Yoga Meditation Tradition in Korea and a devoted practitioner, Mr. Jeong has, for several years, been bringing groups of students to SRSG and Sadhana Mandir. Now was our chance to join him at his well-established studio in An Guk Dong of Seoul. We offered a guided meditation, a lecture and joints and glands exercises for the full capacity room of his students. Most special that day was a graduation ceremony for students of the center. Swamis Ritavan and Radha were happy to serve by signing copies of the newly released Korean translation of Swami Veda's book "**God**",

gifted to the graduates.

The event ended with a beautiful "Yoga Dance" presentation performed by a number of the flexible and agile yoga students.

Our visit to the secret garden at Changdeok palace with Mr. Jeong and some of his students after the programme was a truly eye opening cultural education of Korea's majestic royal past.

The palace grounds provided many shady places for us to rest and enjoy each other's company.

Young Gi's Center: Joy Yoga



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#) Practice was the focus of our yoga-meditation programme at the compact Joy Yoga studio, also in Seoul. With Swami Ritavan's guided meditation, Silvia's joints and glands exercises and Ma Radha's contemplative walking, participants left with a mini package of Himalayan style highlights. Young Gi, the director of Joy Yoga has taken up the "Joy" of teaching Yoga from her father who has been teaching Yoga in Korea for 45 years. Now she is guiding and inspiring her own students.

The communication and cooperation we witnessed amongst these leading Korean teachers who put the programme together from the beginning to the end of our stay was impressive. We also saw how the students of these different teachers actively participated in each other's programmes, not only as students but as collaborative caretakers of the called upon representatives of the Himalayan Tradition.

Buddha's Birthday is celebrated throughout Korea as evidenced by special paper lanterns strung out near all the temples. The celebration involves the people going to the temples to individually perform short rituals and to participate in a community meal. Helen had arranged for us to visit the beautiful, large Sung Moon Temple to observe this event. Much to our surprise, Swamis Ritavan and Radha were given the honor of lighting all the candles in the main hall. We (and perhaps some of the temple-goers who were observing the process) wondered if any other swamis had ever had this privilege.

Buddha's Birthday



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#) One surprise led to another as we (the four of us) found ourselves seated with the President of the Korean Young Men's Buddhist Association for a very special meal that had been prepared at the temple for the mayor and dignitaries of Wonju. Such an honor is evidence of respect between the Buddhist and yoga communities.

Next day the birthday celebration continued with an invitation to Buddhist Acharya's Temple, Hak Su Jung Sa, a mud and log structure that was built in the countryside by one of Swami Veda's Buddhist initiates. Most noteworthy was the attentiveness of the people as they participated in brief yoga practices with us and a Q and A session. We should mention that, again, we were invited to share a wonderful meal with the community there.

Out and about in Korea

For Silvia and Swami Ma Radha--fresh from yet another harrowing India road experience--it was especially noted that Korea's highways were well-marked, wide and clear. Hence it seemed paradoxical that none of our drivers went anywhere without first setting their GPS.

Korea is a beautiful place. Sixty percent of it is mountain and the countryside is unspoiled by billboards, gas stations and strip malls.

The view from our window in Wonju included an ordinary small lake. But still we had to blink many times in order to understand what we saw. There on each long dock was a row of big easy chairs for the fishermen to lounge while fishing. One of the docks along the shore was covered with an awning.

Downtown Seoul has a mix of new and old plus a small river diverted through it to create a special ambiance.

There seems to be no end to unique places where one can go to enjoy food or a favorite tea.

Last but not least: **FOOD, food, food !**

Every meal was beautiful, abundant, fresh and oohhhh so good! **(Click for a larger photo)**



The Himalayan Tradition in Italy

The Institute in Florence

by Sabina Cesaroni - Teacher of HYI-Italy



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

The Himalayan Yoga Institute in Florence, Italy, was established by Victor Bischoff, on mandate of Shri Swami Rama of the Himalayas, in 1991 in Florence.

Its activities are continuing in the will and passion of those who, in the course of time, have continued to participate and believe in the ancient teachings from the Lineage of the Himalayan Tradition.

The Institute, affiliated to the AHYMSIN, is located not far from the center of the beautiful city of Florence, in Via Faentina 33r.

The aim of the Association is to be able to transform into daily practice the guidelines of this Tradition, promoting the confluence

between the eastern and western cultures, to reach a state of well-being and global health as handed down by the ancient Masters.

In addition to the spreading of the Hatha Yoga and its benefits and to the study and practice of Meditation, there are also cycles of meetings and courses such as: Yoga in Pregnancy, Play Yoga for children, Yoga Dance, Soft Yoga for the elderly.

The latter was born thanks to a close and friendly cooperation with the Public Institution and the citizenship, something that has allowed us to create a direct and open contact with an ever wider public.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

Thanks to the agreement with the Municipality, the University of Florence, the Club of Budapest and the ONLUS Association Un Tempio per la Pace, in October 2007 the HYI has been able to realize, inside the Salone dei Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio, destination of actual artistic pilgrimages, a conference with Swami Veda Bharati on the theme “The inner journey of Peace and the Meditation: Gathering among different Spiritual Traditions.”

On this occasion it was possible to publish, thanks to the well-known Italian Publisher Giunti, the Swami Veda’s book “Quando l’Uomo fa la Pace” (Italian version of “What is right with the world”).

The Institute organizes seminars, also residential, individual and group sessions and silence retreats (the last realized in full spring 2011 in the splendid Tuscan countryside).



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#) Seminars are held by Masters and teachers such as Swami Veda Bharati, Swami Ritavan Bharati, Swami Nityamuktananda, Stoma Parker, Shri S. Rajagopalan, Ashutosh Sharma, Margo Balog, etc. thus facilitating the approach to the authentic and traditional system of the discipline of Yoga received directly at the presence of a Master.

La Verna, holy land, famous in the course of time for the presence of St. Francis of Assisi and the cave where he lived in silence and meditation, has been repeatedly preferred place for these meetings, also at the international level (see European Retreat of the Himalayan

Tradition 2010). PHOTO 4

The Institute, each Wednesday, opens the doors to the study and practice of meditation followed by a Satsanga with readings of excerpts from books of the Masters, creating moments of sharing and reflection.

The aim of the Association is also to promote projects of help and support in the world (see KHEL Project to support education and the livelihood of children and the poorest families in Dehradun, Uttaranchal – India <http://www.khelcharities.org/>). Recently a couple of teachers of the Institute visited the headquarters of KHEL to give their contribution and, on their return, a photographic exhibition organized in a public place of the city was a lively and important witness of this experience.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

Since 2006 the HYI is committed to run the Teacher Training Program of yoga and meditation in the Himalayan Tradition with a four years program of study, led by Masters and teachers in the Lineage of the Tradition. The project is part of the International Teacher Training program of the AHYMSIN. In 2010 it has successfully completed the first cycle of Teacher Training with 33 new teachers. A new Course

(2011-2015) will start next October. Please see: <http://www.himalayaninstitute.it/?p=1534>

33 New Teachers.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

The Italian Center is proposed as a meeting place not only to acquire a technique but, above all, as a vital point for information, exchanges, communication, expansion and personal growth, opening the doors to people, even those simply consulting books, reading and studying audiovisual material or meeting to satisfy and deepen doubts, curiosity, reflections.

There are, thus, theme evenings where you can contemplate the various aspects of Philosophy, Psychology of Yoga, Ayurveda, holistic disciplines, the study of Sanskrit and global health.

In the section dedicated to the study, there are numerous translations from English to Italian in the form of books and booklets (some of which are also available at SRSR Rishikesh - India) and audiovisual material.

Behind all this a large group of people: the Teachers, the Governing Board of the Institute and the Members that all collaborate moving toward a single goal to facilitate the development of the Institute and its programs in the course of time.

Editor's note:

Himalayan Yoga Institute Italia is an AHYMSIN affiliated center in Florence, Italy. We invite you to visit their website at this link <http://www.himalayaninstitute.it/>. They contribute much to sharing the teachings of the Himalayan Tradition with the greater world.

Himalayan Yoga Institute Italia will be hosting a European Retreat with Swami Veda and senior teachers in La Verna, Italy, in June 2012.

Surrender to the Wave of Silence

New Jersey, May 2011

by Jim Whiting



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

April 2003

"It is time to become the teaching. It is time to become the teacher," with these words, I went out into the world to begin my journey.

May 2011

It has been seven years; I have become a teacher, exploring the wilderness. Learning and re-learning with my new eyes, wandering with beginners eyes.

My path is the way of all flesh, the experience of duality, the pain of beginnings, the pain of endings. Change is often my unwanted companion.

Subtly, over time, in silence, something began to call.

Almost whisper at first, a vibration in the silence, a rift in the field. Becoming louder as I moved deeper into the wilderness. In time it became a clear message, "find others, seek out, and find the light-bearers of Swami Rama's teaching."

The Search



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

There are many of us now. The paths of light are growing, spreading that ancient traveler to all points of the globe. Swami Rama continues to ripple throughout the ocean, throughout the unified field. The internet has been busy documenting his ripple, and connecting us. AHYMSIN, Swami Veda, The Meditation Center, the Rishikesh Ashram.

The ripples of light are connected.

Word comes through the ripple, a silent retreat being held in New Jersey, USA. The teachings of Swami Veda. Surrender to the Wave of Silence, led by Stoma, Dr Stephen Parker.

I had done this before, going into silence benefitted me greatly. This could be what I am looking for, what I am seeking. The retreat is organized by Barbara Aschettino and Janice Englund, fellow seekers on the Himalayan path.

I make my way toward the silence.

The event is hosted at the Stella Maris Retreat Center, a beautiful sea side sanctuary cared for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

Listen, silence.

Three hours from my hometown, I have time to contemplate the gravity of coming events. Silence. How far my busy mind seems from those calm waters.

Stoma leads us into the moment, silence begins with the opening ceremony.

It isn't long into the retreat before I am made aware of just how far I must go to become accustomed to not expressing verbally. The schedule consists of hatha in the morning, meditation, meals, and studying at the feet of the teacher.

Stoma is steeped in the knowledge, mythology, the genealogy of our tradition.

I am humbled by this experience.

My beginner's eyes soak up his teaching.

It is the meals that feel most awkward. It has been a long time since I ate in silence, sharing breaking bread, with only my eyes to communicate.

Stoma explains that silence is a form of fasting.

When we withdraw anything-food, words, thoughts, the senses, we are fasting.

My fasting continues, my silence deepens.

The Initiation

I requested to be initiated. Rather, re-initiated. Part of the calling that led me here was to be initiated back into the tradition. To come home. To ready myself, I read Swami Veda's preparation for going into silence, and the meaning of mantra. Still, I was unprepared for what happened.

The schedule for initiation was set, 7:00 PM, after a full day's activities. The initiates are to wait in meditation to be summoned.

7:00 PM. Six or seven of us sit in silence, waiting to receive the gift of mantra. This is what I have been waiting for.

Any minute, I am going to receive my mantra, my new best friend.

7:30 PM. Any minute now they are going to come and call me in. I am going to have a life changing experience like no other. I am sure that my entire life has been leading up to this moment.

Any minute now.

8:00 PM. My thighs are beginning to ache, but, I'd better stay seated in lotus, everyone else is. Everyone else is still meditating.

It is starting to get dark in here. I hope they hurry up.

8:30 PM. My thighs are beginning to burn. No one has been called yet. The sun has set. It is dark, there are no

lights on in here. I'm not breaking meditation, silence, coming out of lotus to find the lights. Where are they?
Have they forgotten us?

9:00 PM. I can't believe this! What is happening?
I can't feel my legs anymore!

9:15 PM. That is it. I am so mad! How DARE they leave ME here. When they come for me, forget it! I am so out of here!

9:20 PM. I feel consumed by complete rage. A fire that consumes all else. What is this anger? I look this demon in the face, it is some ego based karma, deep inside of me. It is a part of me. I then become acquainted with a darkness that lives inside of myself.
A darkness that must be dragged, kicking and screaming into the light.

9:30 PM. I name it, I own it, I surrender it.
I move into a place of stillness, my silence deepens.

9:31 PM. I am called in.

9:40 PM. I am waiting outside a room. When the bell rings, it is my moment. I am called in. I surrender my offering. We meditate together.
I can feel the presence of the other soul in the room.
Time begins to lose meaning. I float deeper into silence.
A voice whispers a mantra into my ear, an electrical current shoots through my spine. The mantra is beautiful. Perfect.

Everything that had gone before, anger, frustration, seems distant. Another lifetime ago, as if it was someone else entirely.

In truth it is.

I brought this samskara into the light, I have looked into its eyes, and I would know its face.



The silence wave deepens...

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

During one of the daily lessons Stoma explains — the silent practice can be extended into 10, 30, 90 days, and sometimes even years. At that point, it can become a choice of if you ever want to speak again. It could become your chosen path.

During our daily routine, we walk along the shore. Drawn to the ocean. Watching the tide coming in and going out. The sound is always in the background, we are that close to the sea. As I slip deeper into silence, my breath begins to synchronize with the waves crashing into the shore. Every breath is an ocean, every breath the tide coming in and going out.

The sound of the tide becomes my mantra.

I am connected to the ocean, the ocean is connected to me.

I know, this is where I belong.

The silence calling for me to surrender.

The silence calling me home.

Editor's note:

Jim Whiting teaches in New York state in the United States. His website:
<http://www.jimwhiting.net/home.html>

Lithuania Silence Retreat

10 June 2011

by Darius Plikynas, PhD



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

On the day of arrival Swami Nitya, Stoma and Jelle landed with the same flight in Vilnius, though, they departed from the different places around the globe (England, USA and India). This small detail showed a lot about inherited discipline and coherence of the Himalayan yoga tradition for those who have never met it before.

Straight after arrival Swami Nitya gave an interview for the local journal titled “Women”, and Stoma was eager to learn more about those initiated a year ago. Meanwhile, younger Lithuanian fellows were excited to see Jelle – a very young guy who came to teach Joints & Glands instead of Ashutosh.

The yoga camp took place in the nice historical vicinity, where ancient cultures lived since IX millennium BC (see photo) and, indeed, it felt like we were in the silent spiritual heart of the country. As if blessed from the skies, during the whole retreat program we enjoyed sunny and beautiful weather. Early around 5 am every morning and during the day time we enjoyed swimming in the lake.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

The silence retreat program started with an introduction to the Himalayan yoga and meditation tradition. Teachings were alive and easy to comprehend. So everything went smoothly and nicely. People at once got interested to know more and to dive deeper into yoga science. Even certified Shivanada teachers were surprised to find out some simple and universal truths concerning everyday yoga practices, meditation and philosophy. Some of them were interested to get personal mantras later on.

I served others translating teachings for almost 6 hours every day. It was amazing to practice inner peace and silence while being verbally active. It felt like Guru's grace is helping to concentrate the mind, using it as a channel to transfer universal truths. Sometimes our minds were harmonized in such a way that different speakers and listeners were absorbed into one and the same Oneself, which enjoys expression of Itself.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#) Teachings went almost spontaneously, without a preplanned strict schedule. But it felt like a well balanced continuous stream of consciousness, harmoniously carried out by the Guru Lineage represented by Swami Nitya, Stoma and Jelle, who complemented each other very nicely. People were very happy, feeling no distance between themselves and the teachers, who shared love and respect for all.

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

Some people were more attracted by Swami Nitya's lightness, heartiness, playfulness, practicality and depth at the same time. While others enjoyed Stoma's deep wisdom, grace and sincerity. Meanwhile, Jelle also surprised everybody as a teacher who can stand alongside others. Evidently his life is already happening in yoga (conscious union), not yoga happens in his life.



[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

inner silence and peace...

At the end of the silence retreat everything was apparent from the joyful and watery eyes of the participating people, which expressed harmony, gratitude and feeling of the inner silence, which just started. People even wished to stay longer in the state of dawning grace of the

Editor's note:

Stoma, Swami Nityamutkananda, and Jelle were hosted by the Soham Yoga Center <http://www.soham.lt/> in Lithuania.

Health Camp for Virpur Khurd

A Joint Effort of SRSB and RDI

Virpur Khurd is a small village, of about 3 to 4 thousand population, around our SWAMI RAMA SADHAKA GRAMA Ashram. It was felt that we should serve the local people in whatever way we can. As it happened, the Managing Directors of the Ashram are Dr. Manju Talekar and Dr. Shirin Venkat. Both belong to the medical faculty and thus it was decided to hold a Health Camp. This was done on 30th May 2011 at the local Government Mother and Child Center.

The Rural Development Institute (RDI) of the Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT) in Jolly Grant, India supported the initiative and joined with their pharmacist and health workers. Even the local Grama Panchayat (village governing body) and midwife and Asha workers all gave a helping hand.

The health camp was organized for women and children in view of the fact that Dr. Shirin Venkat is a well qualified Obstetrician and Gynecologist and her husband Dr. V. Venkat similarly is a well qualified Pediatrician.

In India women always take a back seat in the family and often neglect their medical problems until late. As it turned out, 70 women and 66 children turned up, and a great variety of problems was addressed most common being anemia, worm infestation in children, menstrual disorders in women and usually backache and headache! Medicines were dispensed free of cost and simultaneously education on nutrition, hygiene, contraception, AIDS and cancer was carried out via DVDs and one to one counseling.

The most significant aspect of this initiative is that the RDI (Rural Development Institute) will do a follow up every month and a year later we shall assess how successful we have been in helping the population.

Mr. Bhupendra, who is the Ashram Accountant, was the chief organizer of this camp; along with him all the ashramites worked towards making it a success.

Editor's note:

Rural Development Institute (RDI), a rural outreach division of Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT), was created by Swami Rama in 1991, with an intention for not only providing the people of underdeveloped area with quality health care, but also to ensure overall development of the people focusing on quality of life issues.

To read more about their work, please go to <http://www.hihtindia.org/> and then go to the heading "Rural Development." They also have a Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/hihtrdi?sk=wall>

A Contemplation on the GURU-Gita

by Swami Nityamuktananda

As it is Guru Purnima in July, herein follows a contemplation on “GURU – Gita” (Verses 32 and 67) as cited in the prayers of the Himalayan Yoga Tradition (edited excerpt from the book: *GU-RU* by Swami Nityamuktananda Saraswati, a journal of unfolding understanding of GURU)

Verse 32

*Gurubrahmā gururvisnuh gururdevo maheśvarah
Guru sāksāt param brahma, tasmai śrīgurave namah*

Śrī Guru Maharaja is Brahmā. He alone is Visnu and the Supreme Lord Maheśa. He alone is Parabrahman, to that Śrī Guru, salutations

or:

The Guru is Brahmā the Guru is Visnu, and the Guru is Maheśvara. The Guru is actually the Supreme Divinity, and therefore we bow down to the respected Guru. (Svami Satyananda Saraswati)

The Guru is Brahma, recognised and described as ultimate reference-point. ‘Brahma’ - the Sanskrit root of the word is 'bra' which means: to swell or to increase. We can say that it was originally used to denote “the power of pervasive expansiveness”. In time it became a prayer to activate that power by the priests. Priests directed their 'brahmans' (mantras) to objects and deities and through this practise became themselves known as 'Brahmins'.

Brahma is part of the trinity Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva to be distinguished from Brahman which according to the Atharvaveda (10.8.25) is "the universal thread of which the tapestry of existence is woven".

This is fascinating because it illuminates how the worship of deities evolved. First there is the insight, the direct experience; then it becomes ritualised, personalised and finally objectified - becoming an object to worship outside the worshipper. This is not of just intellectual interest to me, but it shows me a way back: transcending the object and its apparent practises, leads to understanding the ritual and spiritual practices, which then in turn might enable us to get in touch with the original insight.

The Guru here is identified first with the outer forms, recognisable by all as the Gods Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva. Each form highlights a different aspect of the 'power of pervasive expansiveness' (or indeed describes the three types of energy we know in Sankhya philosophy as sattva, rajas and tamas; all three can be understood as forms of Prakriti/Mahaprakriti). These are in this sutra, and in many popular places describing GOD as creator, maintainer and as the one who dissolves all these concepts. Swami Muktananda writes, "The Guru is Maheśvara (Śiva) when he destroys the world of concepts, stirring the disciple's heart; the Guru is Brahmā when he purifies the disciple's heart and sows in it the seed of highest truth. He is Vishnu when he sustains and protects this newly created wisdom of Yoga within the disciple." (Everything that exists is Śiva, p.97)

He is all those forms and in abstraction/beyond all form –he is Brahman. It is as though God in his compassion gives a choice. Those who can climb to abstract contemplation see him as nirguna - without form; others worship him as saguna - with a form.

Being a typical child of my time and culture - I have difficulties grasping the personal level of this concept. How can a physical person of any kind (my Guru) and a frequency of energy inconceivably pure occupy/be/exist in the same space, how can a body contain such vast power and energy; is the human existence not too frail and limited? Or could it be that both physical Being and 'energy inconceivably pure' be the same?

(When the author was writing this, she was...) "staying at a retreat centre in the foothills of the Himalayas and here witnessed Tibetan rituals involving many, many high Tibetan Lamas. The power unleashed in the rituals is enormous and installs fear in me. The highest Lama is a friend, a Healer, an incredible loving and compassionate man, yet there is fear in me. I feel myself holding on, of needing to focus on my own inner Guru, as protection, hold on to my inner light. Protection from what? I realise that the fear I experience is abstract, is awe of such greatness; there is a glimpse of the enormous 'power of pervasive expansiveness'".

(The author similarly was overwhelmed with the power that is behind each and every aspect of existence; when she...) first met Swami Chidvilasananda in Ganeshpuri. A time was set aside where people could go up to her chair and meet the Guru in person such "darshan" is an old Indian practice.

I stood in the courtyard, behind a tree, hoping She would not see me. For the entire session - I was too afraid to even join the queue! I was so filled with awe, even fear of the power of Her being, I could hardly move. Who is this me, which is so afraid?

The 'pure I' cannot be afraid - for it would melt into that power, recognising itself for it knows 'I am it'; 'I am That'. It must be the 'ego-self' which is afraid. Personally it feels as though, somehow through the many life-times and accumulated karma, there is fear of being exposed (found out). Found out for what? - Its own estrangement?

Where does this fear of 'being found out' come from? How far I have grown separate from who I really am? ... Am I frightened of my own powerlessness, or being "delivered"?

Or (if the Guru is a mirror, and Nelson Mandela is right, when he said in his inaugural speech, that we are afraid not of the darkness but of the light) — am I afraid of my own light, afraid to own my own power of divinity?

Only by recognising greatness, my own inner Self, my essence, the core of my being (which appears as the form I call "I") can that be overcome, only by recognising my own divinity can I lose that fear. Only by fully realising that I am the 'power of pervasive expansiveness'; that I am 'the universal thread of which the tapestry of existence is woven.'- only by accepting fully that "I am THAT" I realise who I am, and with it I lose the fear of my own light.

Strangely enough, then "I" is actually not me! But "I" is the intelligent energy, the divine power of wisdom, the Guru inside me. Meaning, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva- GURU is inside me! I am that GU-RU

Verse 67:

***Akhanda mandalākāram vyāptam yena carācaram.
Tat padam darśitam yena tasmai śrī gurave namah***

Like an unbroken circle, the Guru has permeated the animate and the inert world and it is he who reveals this supreme state called, Brahman, to that Guru salutations are offered.

Or:

He is the cause of the entire circle of existence. He is the means by which arise distinctions of movable and immovable objects. He is the intuitive vision of the syllable 'That'. Therefore, we bow down to the respected Guru. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati)

Or:

(That which) pervades the entire unbroken form of the circle (of creation) moving and unmoving. To that beautiful and benevolent guru through whom that state was revealed (to me), salutations. (Swami Veda Bharati)

That ultimate Guru, to which even Śiva bows, (as the beginning of the Guru Gita indicates) ... is Guru beyond the limitations of our mind, and thus beyond the limitations of our perceived world of movable and immovable objects, HE pervades everything including our mind. We invoke the presence within us, by which all divisions and delusion of our minds that lead to separation, that sees existence in separate parts and identifies with them - becomes whole again.

It's fascinating to realise that it is our mind which “breaks” the world into separate bits, we call it analysis! Via this tool the mind uses, the world appears as of manifold objects, thus it makes our subjective world (which collectively makes ‘our apparent world of diverse objects). Hence it is we ourselves who make the world as small or as big as our minds can think. Looking back through history, it is quiet fascinating that on the material, analytical level - the universe expanded with the expansion of science. Once our mind had perceived another galaxy, we could invent the instruments to see, to measure, to describe the newly discovered.

We have been able to discover more species of plants and animals than ever before- yet we live in a way that extinguishes these faster than ever before. We perceive through our senses ever more parts, but have lost awareness of the underlying whole, and furthermore of the millions and millions of interconnections! We have found some threads, and delightedly cut them into strings, not realize the synergy. The carpet is more than a few bits of thread.

We segregate and illuminate some aspects and with it lose the whole; we look at brush strokes and don't see the picture. The reason is that we rely on our thinking mind, which governed by sense-input, sees only “bits”. Once we become aware that this is a limited mis-perception, we seek refuge in that power which pervades all, which now and forever reveals itself as holding all threads in a beautiful design (mandala). In the Mandala of existence there is no division it is one complete whole; creating and dissolving simultaneously - as one.

The Christian mystic, Meister Eckhardt said: From all eternity, God lies on a maternity bed giving birth. The essence of God is giving birth, (Med.p.88)

Giving birth, always simultaneously starts the process of decay; there is no division. However, it appears as life and death to our minds which separates; we do not see the whole! Inside is like outside, and outside like inside. To be aware of consciousness within ourselves is to find the Divine, the Guru and the whole universe within ourselves - as one beautiful Mandala: One.

The Guru resides as consciousness in us, in our extended mind, in our heart - HE is the noble and beautiful wisdom, knowledge from where to restore that wholeness. Once we see – once we discover that He is that wholeness there is no division. He is the one that reveals and at the same time is the One that is revealed; He is knower and the known; any further description would be a limitation.

Ultimate consciousness comes forth, awareness, knowledge arises - like a beautiful sound; if we allow that vibration of knowing, that beautiful ‘sound’ to arise ...and don't interfere with our limited ego-minds – Brahman/Guru/Shiva arises in us.

"We allow"- is that not limiting mind again?

We can use the mind to undo the mind. Use the mind energy to control the mind, to silence the continuous chatter of the mind that attaches its energy to images our senses and our ego chooses. Focused silence might be rewarded with the intuitive awareness of that state which pervades the entire sphere of this universe- pure consciousness, pure universal mind, or to phrase it differently: it might be rewarded with Śiva himself. When Śiva, the Ultimate Guru reveals himself, a state of awareness is reached, that in the scripture is often simply described as That - for mind cannot fathom it.

It says in the sutra: ‘Tat padam’ – referring to Him, the Guru who has been showing me that level, that awareness which is Tat (That!); to Him I bow.

And yet he is no person, he is that vibration, that sound, that vibrating energy that “Spanda”, which pervades the entire universe, permanently creating and dissolving. This is, in the context of the Guru Gītā called Śiva, the ultimate Guru! Yet it equally can be called “that force, that interior sound which is the concentration of the vibration of all the mantras.” (Swami Veda Bharati)

To that Śrī Guru, we bow. We come across this mantra throughout the scripture:

tasmai Śrī Gurave namah.

With this line another door is opened, because that Gu-ru, (Gu - darkness, ru, remover) who removes darkness (light removes darkness) does that, via the presence of the force (manifesting energy) called Śrī. Śrī is an honorific female address; here it addresses the energy of Śiva (we also call HER Śakti). He himself is pure potential; however the very energy of sound and vibration is his active principle, his consort. And it stands for benevolence, for beauty and divinity; it is feminine power, it’s the Divine Mother’s beauty and SHE is radiant light!

Remember I said earlier, there are many stories told about the three forms of what we call ‘God’: Brahma, Vishnu, and Śiva; ultimately these three are said to exist in the heart of the Divine Mother; she sings them to sleep, she rocks them in the sky-cradle chanting the mantra Om that pervades as the original sound the universe etc. Śrī refers to Her, the Divine Mother.

Now looking at Oneness triggers yet another insight (don’t forget One has no parts, no angles) about our struggle to express insights (revelations) about a state beyond division, beyond description. In the Lalitashasranam (a scripture with thousand names for the Mother/Goddess) one of HER names is Śiva! SHE and HE are One. Now then, referring to the ONE, is referring to that indefinable womb from where all emerges; it’s before there is form...There SHE and HE are One!

[\(Click for larger photo\)](#)

We have to admit, that ultimately we have no words to describe THAT which is Brahma/Shiva/Vishnu or indeed the Great Mother/or Hiranyagarbha (the eternal womb/or golden egg). To that indescribable state, to That namaha (we bow, we surrender).

“Into that one I merge all my exterior beings and say of them not mine, not mine, not mine. Not mine the body, not mine the limbs, not mine the organs, not mine the senses, not mine emotions, feelings, sentiments. Not mine, intellect, intuition, doubt, resolution, not mine. Intent, declaration, statements that I am, not mine. Unto that one I surrender all my claims of ego.....” (Swami Veda Bharati).



To surrender our entire existence towards this end I surrender, meaning form dissolves into formless. Śiva and Śakti are One, Śiva becomes aware of Śiva. There is only absolute indescribable potential, Śiva himself.

Hence he is ultimate GURU.

Life's Twists and Turns

“Accepting life's twists and turns through meditation and its practice fills me with humility and strength.”

by **Marylou P. Nunamaker**

When entering meditation, I tried to be aware of my breath at all times. Yet my mind would wander, and at other times thoughts would pop into my consciousness. Those thoughts would be about areas of my life that were problematic and sad. As a student of meditation, I would release those thoughts and center on my breath. When those thoughts arose at other times, they seemed less troubling, eventually seeming to be resolved without me giving them any consideration. Eventually I began to think of my challenges when not meditating, and becoming more accepting of my life as it is. Somehow I felt more comfortable, happier, peaceful, and strong. On occasion these old thoughts still come to me in meditation, and again I just let them go, returning to breath awareness and peace.

Reflecting on this statement was suggested by a new friend that I have recently made over the internet. In fact, I wrote it to her and didn't even recognize it when she sent it back to me asking me to write about it.

Becoming aware of how subtle meditation is in my life does make me humble. As I said, I didn't recognize my own statement. This is just the beginning for me of knowing and understanding that I hold the answers to my questions, my problems, my challenges, and my life path. Unfortunately, I don't know all those answers right now, but am filled with an awareness of comfort and being...being here in the present, taking each breath in the now, calm at how my life is.

Becoming more aware of my thoughts, statements, and actions is an on-going challenge for me. My usual course of action is to be reflective. There hardly seems to be time to just sit and think. My sitting time is devoted to lesson planning for my yoga classes; meditation, where I only think of my breath; and juggling all the activities that I try to fit into my retirement.

So with a joyful heart, my life's twists and turns keeps me upright and spinning in gratitude to my new friend that asked me a question, causing me to sit and think. :0)

New Magazine Announcement

“A new e-zine (electronic magazine), [Yoga-Week.com](http://www.yoga-week.com), will bring subscribers new FREE stories, videos, instant video streaming, and audio pod-casts to you and all your friends who subscribe,” announced Dan Prideaux, webmaster and publisher. “You will be asked to enter your name & email as the video progresses which will get you FREE access to future distributions of Swami Veda’ select stories, videos, news in weekly updates.”

With the approach of Guru Purnima, Dan launched Yoga-Week.com (<http://www.yoga-week.com/>) with a video of Swami Nityamuktananda talking about the “Guru Principle” and almost immediately afterwards with a video of Guru Purnima at The Meditation Center in Minneapolis, MN, USA.

Immediately people responded with gratitude. Here are just three of these responses:

“Feeling blessed to receive prasadam from Swami Veda and all Bharati Swamis through this medium so kindly facilitated by Dan. So far yet so close. Om” – Tejas

“How wonderful to share with our spiritual family. Hari Om” – Elizabeth

“On this Day we really feel sooo far away physically from the spiritual family. But we close our eyes and feel the Bliss of Recognition that we are in fact very close in Spirit Aum Shree Guruwe Namah”- Geeta Currimjee

Dan works on [Yoga-Week.com](http://www.yoga-week.com) daily to provide videos, Swami Veda’s stories, lectures, and archives from the past to an audience of over 830,000 yoga enthusiasts. “Swami Veda has given me permission to proceed with his content and has sent numerous articles to me for publication.”

“About a month ago I emailed SVB about a very special e-zine which has been named [Yoga-Week](http://www.yoga-week.com). Yoga-Week is more than an e-zine, but is combined with automatic emails to subscribers. Systematic updates will be sent out once or twice each week,” Dan explains.

“Early results have been stunning with many new subscribers who are eager to get helpful information.”

All costs have been born by the editor and publisher and donations have already been received to support Swami Veda’s global mission.

Twice weekly individuals who sign up will get an email with a story from Swami Veda or one of the other contributors such as Swami Nityamuktananda, Swami Nijananda, and Michael Smith and others.

New content will be available from selected contributors who contact Dan Prideaux, webmaster and editor. Contact: dan@prideaux.com .

“Future content will provide repurposing of books published by Swami’s Veda, Nitya & Nijananda, for distance learning. The result will be courses built around each book’s content,” Dan says.

Dan believes that the Guru Lineage will supply content.

“Surveyed yoga targets on which Yoga-Week will focus are over 835,000 yoga enthusiasts with special private computer technology. The targets are segregated from over 500 million Facebook current registrants. The average time spent on the Yoga-Week content is 25 minutes each log-in per subscriber. With the proper content

from a few (limited) qualified writer/authors, expert internet capabilities, appealing design, and the right targeting to an interested and motivated audience, we should do very well with this new Yoga e-zine.”

Dan invites us all with:

“Welcome to <http://www.yoga-week.com> where the wisdom of The Himalayan Sages and personal success meet. You will find quality videos, mind-stimulating articles, and downloadable audio files, as well as self-improvement courses from which to select. Enjoy!”

Upcoming Events