

BEFORE AND AFTER YOGANANDA



In a cave in the Himalayas, near the temple of *Badrinaryan*, accessible only to those who overcome the steep and treacherous slopes of the climb to the Self, lives the ancestor sage ***Mahavatar Babaji*** who maintains his physical form, always cheerful, working as God instrument. His only purpose: to raise the spiritual intelligence of mankind.



In 1894, a time when Baba was visiting *Allahabad*, during a *Kumbha Mela* (religious festival held from 12 to 12 years), he was sitting under a tree surrounded by his disciples, and he addressed to one of them and gave him a specific order:

"That man over there is an Enlightened One, but with a turbulent soul. Go and bring him to me!"

The disciple obeyed solicitous.

The man who had attracted his attention was a *swami*, a monk, called ***Yukteswar***, who, at that precise moment, watching the festival, commented:

"They're all fools if they think they can gain merit through religious festivals! The scientists from the materialistic Western countries, who work for the practical good of humanity, perhaps they are pleasing more to God than these beggars in ocher robes."

Listening attentively to the message, he replied:

"I'm not interested in knowing any Guru, but I feel attracted to that one. I will go."

And, once in the presence of the *Mahavatar* he greeted him respectfully:

"I salute you Master!"

Babaji immediately informed him about his intention:

"I called you here because I know how worried you are. A synthesis of the Eastern spirituality with the Western zeal of action would do much to help humanity. I perceive potential saints in America and Europe, waiting to be awakened. Some years hence I shall send you a disciple whom you can train for yoga dissemination in the West."



Meanwhile, when that student was born in *Gorakhpur*, a town located at east of *Uttar Pradesh* state, India, near the border with Nepal, at 5 of January of 1893, *Bhagavati Charan Ghosh*, his father, gave him the name of Mukunda, and his mother, *Gyana Prabha Ghosh*, approved, commenting that it was really a nice name for her child.

Both also agreed that he would have to receive the blessing of a wise man, as the tradition of their people. Thus, shortly after, they took him to the house of their guru **Lahiri Mahasaya** who, at seeing him, immediately prophesied addressing particularly to the mother:

"Little mother, thy son will be a great yogi. As a spiritual engine, he will carry many souls to God's kingdom."

Lahiri Mahasaya did not live to see his prophecy realized, because a few years later he entered *mahasamadhi*.

The religious nature of his parents helped *Mukunda Lal Ghosh*, baptism full name, to awaken his spirituality at an early age. Even very young, he showed a strictly religious mind, meditating daily morning and afternoon.

One day, while practicing, the physical form of **Lahiri Mahasaya** emerged from his photograph ... and *Sat* (Grace) appeared in front of him. Later on, this would repeat many times, over and over.



At 8 years old, he became seriously ill with cholera, and the doctor informed the family that Medicine could do nothing for him. However, his mother was not discouraged and imbued with an unshakable serenity and faith, reassured him:

"Do not worry my child, what Medicine cannot do, our omnipresent Guru can. Bow to him and pray. He will heal you."

And that was precisely what happened.

As he was growing too weak, even to lift his hands in salutation, one day he decided to bow down mentally before a picture of **Lahiri Mahasaya** in his room; a luminous blaze and a curative intervention emerged immediately as a response. The infant reacted quickly:

"Mother, I feel much better now!"

And, grateful, his mother recognized the omnipresence of the Master.

All these supernatural events have sprung up in him an inherent devotional nature with a clear and strong spiritual direction:

- Once, from the window of his room, he noticed a flash of light in a temple outside, and he knew by intuition that he would become a *yogi*.

- At another occasion, while meditating, he saw a beautiful light moving towards him. The vision was vague at first although with differentiate forms that became increasingly clear.

Then he asked:

"Who are you?"

And the forms answered:

"We are the Himalayan yogis"

And to which, driven by his spiritual fervor, he remarked:

"Ah, I long to go to the Himalayas and become like you!"

At that moment, the supernatural apparition vanished and a beam of silver light appeared in its place. *Mukunda* exclaimed in divine ecstasy:

"This light fills me with great peace. I wonder what it is."

And the light became verb:

"I am Ishwara!", "I am Light!"

Again, the burning ideal took hold of him:

"I want to be one with Thee."



These deeply mystical experiences that were increasing in waterfall, escaping the daily routine, also enhanced within him, in direct proportion, the manifestation of spiritual power.

One day, while studying with his sister *Uma*, she complained of a boil that had appeared on her leg.

"I will put ointment on it, Uma."

He volunteered with natural and spontaneous kindness.

However, immediately after consummating the *intention*, with indescribable belief, he did the same to one of his arms.

"Why are you doing that!"

"Because tomorrow I will have a boil here!"

And he pointed with one of his indicators.

"But how can you be so sure?", "You're a liar!"

The unbelieving sister questioned, dominated by astonishment, before such an unexpected and unusual attitude.

"You're calling me a liar! Tomorrow your boil shall swell to twice its present size!"

The next day, in fact, it occurred exactly as he predicted.

In view of this, she complained to her mother about the curse that her brother had cast on her as the boil not only became greater but also got worse with excruciating pain.

"You called me a liar and that hurt me too!"

He reacted also suffered.

Considering the responsibility of what was said and who said it, on the occasion, the mother reprimanded, with tenderness and wisdom, the quarrelled son:

"Mukunda, the power you possess is a gift from God. Never use it to hurt others."

"No mother, I will no longer use it!"

He surrendered to the magnitude of the appropriate warning embedded of crystal wisdom. He would never forget...



A painting of *Kali*, the Divine Mother, used to be hung glorified on the balcony of the young Mukunda house. In this sacred and quiet place, his little heart, restless and insatiable for the things of God, beat even faster, feeling that every prayer would get fulfilled.

One day, *Uma*, in that magical atmosphere, perhaps touched by the singularity of the feminine nature, blowing and uplifting, asked him:

"Why are you so quiet?"

"Uma, isn't it wonderful that Divine Mother gives me whatever I ask?"

The appearance of the inaccessible reigned, and doubt, her inseparable pair, made her suspicious:

"I suppose she would also give you those two kites!"

"Why not?!"

And he retired immediately in a silent prayer.

Suddenly, they both floated down, magnetically attracted in his direction. He seized them and presented them to his sister.

"Indeed Divine Mother listens to you! This is all too uncanny for me!"

And she ran away like a frightened fawn.



His mother, who had taken a leading role in his conventional education, was also his qualified and inspired spiritual adviser, furthermore she was his most intimate friend. She was the person whom he always went to. He loved to hear her telling stories:

*"Ple-a-se, Mom! Tell me one more story about Lord **Krishna!**"*

He often begged.



But fate conspired... and gradually took shape. One morning, a *sadhu*, unexpectedly, wanted to speak with his mother to pass her a message:

"Mother, your stay on earth will not be long. A silver amulet shall materialize tomorrow in your hands as you meditate. Instruct your eldest son Ananta to keep the amulet for one year and then to hand it over to Mukunda. The amulet shall vanish when it has served its purpose"

On the following afternoon, when *Gyana Prabha* was meditating, the materialization happened, as the *sadhu* promised.

Two years later, she left the physical form definitely. Inconsolable, *Mukunda* cried copiously for his loss. To the frequent appeals of his family for not doing so, with a poignant sorrow he responded prostrated in a sore whisper:

"Mother, Mother! They took you away from me."

After some time, he was still in a deep suffering depression, **Divine Mother**, Herself, the unselfish love personification, unattached and timeless, materialized to him to comfort him:

"My son, it is I who has watched over thee, life after life, in the tenderness of many mothers! See in My gaze the two black eyes, the lost beautiful eyes, thou seek!"



From his brother *Ananta*, he also had a surprise, when he fulfilled the role he had been entrusted in this plot:

"In bed, before her departure, our mother asked me to give you this."

And as he touched the amulet, he said to himself:

"Oh! What a wonderful feeling it gives to me! I feel that I am receiving the guidance of the great masters that I met in my past lives."



However, the urge to become a yogi was still growing.

Once, while he was talking with two boys in school, he challenged them:

"Let's go to the Himalayas and become yogis. I heard that they can control even the most fearsome wild beasts!"

They all agreed. Secretly, he left his home, and in the company of the other two embarked on a train.

However, *Ananta*, the elder brother, noticing his absence, alerted the police and the intrepid adventurers were intercepted. On the train a man approached him and warned him:

"You are Mukunda, aren't you? You cannot go ahead. Your brother sent us a telegram. He will arrive here soon to take you home!"

Soon he returned to Calcutta, where his family lived. When he arrived at the residence, his father was waiting for him undisturbed, probably inspired, without knowing it, by the complicit intuition of the future that his son waited:

"I will not stop you from seeking God, my son! Instead, to help you to achieve this goal, I got someone who will give you lessons in Sanskrit. But first you have to complete your schooling."

"So be it as you wish, father."

He accepted at once that decision, thinking to himself:

"It's comforting to know that my father is not against my spiritual quest."



With unwavering determination, he continued to seek God.

Once, talking about Sri Krishna with his closest friend, this one asked him, relieving, why the great Avatar had never appeared to him. What would be the real reason for that.

"You can! Tonight, we will meditate until Lord Krishna appears to us. "

He diluted the discouragement of his companion of journey with the simplicity of innate certainty. The souls of election already perceive adversities on a level of spiritual understanding inaccessible to the common man. And so it was.

However, very early in the morning, just after the sunrise, before the failure that persisted, his friend admitted, discouraged, that he had done enough and therefore he would lie down.

"I will never give up!"

The resolute Mukunda answered, looming in the refusal to surrender to the threatening ghost of imminent failure.

Suddenly, a bright light flooded the room and he saw **Krishna**. As his friend was still unable to see Him, he gently touched him and so he also had the Grace to contemplate the divine *Bhagavan*.



In obedience to his father wishes, he did not give up school education. But an intense fire never ceased to burn his heart, leading him to think of other matters during that time:

"All this is worldly knowledge. What I seek is spiritual Truth. I have to find my Guru."

Completed his secondary education, though without ever having felt any serious interest in the studies, he approached his parent in order to give shape to his dream of experiencing the Absolute:

"Now I want to go to the hermitage, Father."

"I make you one last appeal, son. Don't forget your family."

"Father, please, don't stop me from seeking God, Who was who gave you to me. Let me seek Him with your blessing."

The young heart was sensitive to paternal love, but his spiritual roots were already too deep and the sap circulated in them eager to provide appetizing fruits. And the wish was fulfilled.

At 17 years old, in 1910, he went to live in an *ashram* in the holy city of *Varanasi*. However, he did not take long to realize that this place had not the spiritual environment that he was looking for so hard.

On a time when he was meditating, another monk rebuked him for meditating at that hour:

"You should devote your time to devotional singing of the ashram!"

He warned, categorical.

Mukunda was a visionary who showed a spiritual maturity unattainable by those immature and distracted companions on the journey. He would often be misunderstood, even in his native India, and he began to pay that price here.

This way, all his efforts in meditation, essential and unique management tool for the application to the experience of Being, were systematically brought into question. Witness to this are the following comments made on another occasion, thoughtless and therefore irresponsible, distressing, with the aggravating circumstance of coming from whom they came:

"Why do you spend so much time in meditation?"; "Don't try to attain God too quickly."

"I seek the direct perception of God."

He explained patiently and with wise objectivity.

But he also started to show worrying signs of suffering for the distress this climate of tension, constantly adverse, especially of an astounding lack of understanding, caused to him.

In desperation, sometime later, he touched the silver amulet that he kept securely closed in a box and thought to himself:

"The slightest touch in this amulet brings me comfort."

The next minute, the amulet was gone, as the *sadhu* had promised. Anguished and tearful, he appealed to Divine Mother:

"Mother of Mercy, I pray Thee: Thou teach me or send me a Guru."

"You will know your Guru today."

Assured him the Mother deity, responding directly to Her son prayer.

At that precise moment, a colleague came in and informed of the need they had, at that time, to go and buy food for the *ashram*.

"Come with me!"

And they went.

Arrived at the bazaar, and after buying some merchandise, Mukunda, who was walking at that moment, felt his body suddenly immobilized.

Puzzled, his companion questioned him about what was going on with him, and in view of the answer he heard, even doubted his sanity:

"I cannot move! That saint is pulling me to him!"

Immediately afterwards he rushed towards the good man who was waiting for him. It was neither more nor less than [Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri](#), a disciple of **Lahiri Mahasaya** and **Mahavatar Babaji**.

When he approached the saint more closely, he was already drunk with devotional ecstasy, and letting himself reverently fall at his feet, he exclaimed:

"Gurudeva!"

"Finally, you come to me!"

The Master let out, his voice half embargoed by the commotion that seized him.

That meeting had been patiently weaved for so long by the invisible plan above. Celebrating, echoed chants of heavenly hosannas that poured in torrents of crystalline light penetrating them and spilling over into bubbling of uncontained complicities:

*"Please, guide me to the **realization** of God!"*

"I promise to teach you everything I know. Now you have to go home."

"I am not going home! I want to accompany you to your ashram."

"Even my ashrams will be yours - but not now. Come to the [Serampore](#) (near Calcutta), in four weeks."



Once in Serampore, on due date:

"It is my desire that you receive a college education."

But the apprentice, diligently, tried to circumvent the plan his master had designed for him. However, he remained intransigent; his decision was definitive and justified it:

"No, 'but` ! One day you will go to the West, where people will be more receptive if you have a college degree. Go home and visit me whenever you can."

"I will come every day."

Obedient, he returned to his home in Calcutta and enrolled at a higher education establishment, the *Scottish Church College*.

However, he would spend most of his free time in the *ashram* of his Guru, regularly attending to his lectures. And it was during one of them, when appeared in his mind some images of the first of the three buildings of the school of Knowledge - Self-Realization Fellowship - which he would establish in the United States of America, years later, that took place this charming and emblematic dialogue, revealing the spiritual stature of both:

"Mukunda! The truth cannot be apprehended without concentration."

"I can repeat every word you said, Gurudeva."

"I know! ... But you are dreaming with the three institutions. Your dreams will materialize later, but now you have to study... "



Mukunda has spent many years in the blessed company of his Guru.

The days ran faster, bathed in light and hope that fed the soul predestined to fly at unthinkable altitudes. And his wings were already stretching, attempting the first flights.

One fine morning, he was called into the Guru presence:

"Your heart's desire will soon be realized!"

At his touch, the disciple received the Grace of the Guru and entered in state of *samadhi* - the Omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness. And he continued:

"You shouldn't be lost in ecstasy; much work you have to do yet in this world."



Sometime later, [Sri Yukteswarji](#) has taken the care to organize a religious ceremony in *Puri* to celebrate the summer solstice. He then instructed his disciple to conduct his colleagues around the town and the beach.

However, this one, concerned with the adversities that were coming ahead, questioned him discouraged:

"Gurudeva! How can we walk barefoot on burning sand? "

"The Lord will send a hat of clouds and everyone will walk comfortably."

In fact, it was so. No sooner had the group left the *ashram*, the clouds filled the sky and it rained. But when they returned, the clouds and rain passed away traceless. All happened as if by magic, at a glance.

All of them, singular witnesses, recognized, by looking at the sky, that it was a miracle.

"You see how God cares for us. Just as He sent rain at my plea, so He fulfills any sincere desire of the devotee who approach Him with confidence."

On the occasion, the Master emphasized the relevance of firmness in our convictions, which is applied even in the way we mobilize our divine nature.



Completed his studies, his father held that, as usual sequence of his new situation, he should go to work. And curiously there was "by chance" an attractive

position of executive ... vacant (!) ... in the Railways. Which, indeed, was not easy to happen, and, therefore, for that and all other reasons of this world, he would have to accept it. With no discussion:

"But Father, I have other plans!"

"Let me speak to my Gurudeva."

Once in the presence of Sri Yuktेशwar:

"Gurudeva, my father wants me to accept a job, but I want to be a sannayasi."

"Mukunda, the life of a monk is very hard. Don't you want the companionship of a wife and children later in life? "

"No Gurudeva! God will always take the first place in my life."



It was the year of 1915, the month of July, when he became a swami, reason why he had to adopt a monastic name. And *Yogananda*¹ was the elected by him, and he started then to be recognized as ***Swami Yogananda Giri***, at least until a certain point in his brilliant and luminous trajectory.



A proper education, for the development of body, mind and soul, was always one of the ideals of the heart of *Yogananda*.

In 1917, to achieve this mission, he founded in India the school of Knowledge, [Yogoda Satsang Society of India](#), and established the *Brahmacharya Vidyalaya* at [Ranchi](#), for boys only. To this end, he planned an educational program for agriculture, industry, trade and academic subjects, with the originality of introducing the yoga meditation in its courses. Underlining that through yoga techniques, among other benefits, a person could consciously and instantly recharge his vital energy.

Two years later, [Rabindranath Tagore](#) invited him to go to *Shantiniketan*, where they talked about many subjects including education, culture and spirituality. At a certain time, Tagore even said that a child would only be in his natural environment when surrounded by flowers and birds, and *Yogananda* noted that, indeed, both had very similar views.

1 *Ananda* is a Sanskrit word which means "supreme happiness", "joy without end". The Indian *swamis* often add the suffix *ananda* to their names; best known examples are *Yogananda* and *Vivekananda*.



One day, while meditating in *Ranchi*, retired in a store room, *Yogananda* had a vision:

"America! Surely the people in these images are American! I see many great souls waiting to be spiritually awakened. The Lord called me to America."

After a short time, he received an invitation to visit that country, which led him to consult his Guru:

"First, I had a vision and now I received an invitation to speak at the International Religious Liberal Congress of Boston!"

"All the doors are opened to you"

He was at the door of the timelessness of a mission: he was going to access it, and direct all his spiritual transforming power in a part of the world that lounged sleepy in that regard.

However, his progenitor, to whom he owed filial obedience, naturally led by the emotion of the unexpected, was not at all prepared to admit such a perspective. He placed serious reservations, particularly to its financing.

"The Lord will finance me, perhaps through you!"

His son lovingly recalled to him, with the firmness that was already characterizing him.

The time had come when, gradually, he was taking the reins of his own destiny. It foreshadowed clear signs of the warrior of the Divine Glory battles. This has happened only to a few selected!

"Me!?" Never! I have other responsibilities!"

Surprised, replied and protested the indignant father, stunned by such audacity. Probably still trying to believe if he had heard right.

But the night is a good counselor. And in the next day, he addressed to his son to open the loving heart of an elevated spirit, and the purse strings:

"Here's the money for your trip. As a faithful disciple of [Lahiri Mahasaya](#), I want you to spread his message of [Kriya Yoga](#) throughout the world."



Shortly after, he was apprehensive in his room doubting whether he was really prepared for the great task waiting for him in the unknown West. He had the responsibility to spread the ancient knowledge of [Kriya Yoga](#) - spiritual science for the [self-consciousness of Being](#) - taught by **Lahiri Mahasaya**, by indication of **Mahavatar Babaji**; and, by his exemplary praxis, to make, of the common man, a receptacle aware of his one true nature: consciousness of existence in the absolute stillness.

In this state of mind, he appealed for divine assistance:

"Oh my God, please, assure me that I will not get lost in the fog of modern utilitarianism!"

A few hours later someone knocked at the door. He thought to himself who could be, since he had asked not to be disturbed.

But when he opened it, to his utter amazement, a [Mahavatar Babaji](#), of majestic serenity, stood at the doorway in front of him.

"Babaji!"

He exclaimed, suddenly enraptured by the vertigo of joy to see himself in the holy and magnificent presence of one of the supreme planetarium guides.

That meeting, in that way, was at the antipodes of any prediction. It was very far from being conceived even in the arcana of the most fertile imagination.

"God heard your prayer. Go to America. You are the one I have chosen to spread the message of Kriya Yoga: The scientific teaching of Self-realization will finally be spread throughout the lands."

Babaji reassured him, extending the diaphanous mantle [of his Grace](#) on the shoulders of his vigorous missionary, delegating to him the responsibility to initiate a new array of spiritual development of the man of the land where the Sun goes down.

In this opportunity, also gave him personal instructions, and afterwards, some sacred prophecies.



In August of 1920, finally, he embarked with destination to the remote America on the ship called "City of Sparta." It is a name, a curious coincidence, which carries historical evocations of bravery and courage.

"Which lies, will I find ahead?! Lord, please, be my only inspiration."

Expectant, fervently he prayed in the loneliness of silence, when he just arrived to the maritime transport. At each step, the consciousness of the notion of duty loomed in anguishing perspectives. They danced implacable in his fertile imagination, tormenting, harassing him without mercy.

Finally, in that year, when September closed curtains and caulked doors and windows, announcing the start of another cold autumn season, the ship docked triumphant near Boston. Yes! It was triumphant too. Why not? Such was not the symbol of something wonderful and great that was going to happen? Did it not resume the determination and the hope that had furrowed and overcome the ocean troubled waters of the dark night of skepticism, dogmatism, fundamentalism, obscurantism and doubt?, unpredictably tempestuous and insidious? Populated with "*Adamastor*"¹ giants that, from their renewed cables of good hope, blew and shouted to the lightning heavens the devastating cyclonic winds? And by hypnotic muses inspiring misty atmospheres of indecision, chanted over and over in epic poems by exalted poets? Had he not been an accomplice to the Divine Plan for a future which could be sensed and would take place in the west, by having brought in his belly the artisan and the genius, a material expression of such undertaking? How sublime and remarkable passenger? So, with him had not arrived, finally, the millennial torch of the sacred fire of the wisdom of the rising Sun to mate with the wisdom of the Sunset? Would it not be this igneous mystic link, the origin of the foundations of a planetary spiritual-scientific new dawn that would begin the overwhelming current new *era* finally emerged, blossomed and victorious in the sixties and a long ago predicted? In the remote and recent history of this planet, which society, which culture can boast, denying in absolute the existence of seeds of spiritual inspiration in the genesis of their foundations?

¹ *Adamastor* - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adamastor>



Yoganandaji is undoubtedly the mark of quality in the access to knowledge, excellent and serious, of what came from India to the West, until today. It is a patent of guarantee. And it prevails until today. With absolute certainty, we can say: **before and after Yogananda**. He was, truly, the first great Indian leader, enlightened, in the full sense of the word, which lived longer among us. And this is more and more recognized. The undoubted importance of his work and his aura extend unstoppable throughout this planet.

He is at the hinge point of the conception and execution of the truly revolutionary wave of spirituality which has spread out in North America in the

twenties of last century and from there, spilled out, from every pore, to other countries.

From the sixties, he gained even more prominence by the powerful and fruitful synergy with the fracturing events that produced an historic rupture with the values until then consecrated and untouchable.

But it was, mainly, in the nineties and in this new millennium, with the impetus advent of the computer network (Internet), that he reached the levels that now spring to our eyes and do not stop growing and surprising, for our happiness.

Thus, increasingly, followers or not of Mahavatar Babaji Kriya Yoga recognize him as the incontestable guide who mobilizes consciences of multitudes for the exploration of a new spiritual inwardness, generative of the new planetary paradigm, in parallel with the contributions of quantum physics, frankly ongoing.

The connection Creator Vs creature (concept of the febrile human mind) is replaced in the heart of the matter as we begin to envisage that the human mind and the mind of the universe appear fragmented only in appearance, because in the Unified Field of quanta² they are one and inseparable. Tucked in the same bag, they are nothing but a mere reflection of the self-effulgent Consciousness of Existence. This one has no precedence and no end at sight. It is the causal efficacy.

² *Quantum* (plural *quanta*) is defined as "a non-continuous quantity of electromagnetic radiation."

Today physicists describe creation as non-solid and non-continuous. Quantum physics has shown that the world really occurs in very short and fast explosions of light.

What we believe to see as the spin of the baseball bat, for example, in quantum terms is nothing more than a series of isolated events that occur in sequences very fast and close. Just as many images make up the movements of a film these events are, in fact, small pulses of light called *quanta*.

The *quanta* of our world occur so quickly that, even though our eyes may be able to catch them, our mind does not distinguish the individual explosions. Instead, the pulses (of waves) are chained together to form what we see as an ongoing event, in this case, the bat spin. Quantum physics is the study of these tiny units of radiating waves, forces that, through their movements, create our physical world, although they themselves are not physical...

... According to the vision we have of creation, a view that is always changing, many scientists now believe that everything we know as our world is, after all, made of the same substance: tiny packets of light (*quanta*) that vibrate at different speeds. Certain forms of light, at times, vibrate so slowly that resemble rocks and minerals. Others vibrate faster and resemble to living matter: plants, animals and people. And others even more rapidly, such radio and television signals. Ultimately, each of them can be reduced to a quality of vibrant light.

Extracts of the book The Isaiah Effect, 2001, by Gregg Braden. Publisher: Three Rivers Press

That the mind is, from the outset, unable to understand and experience its own origin and purpose, it is a fact. Bonded as it is, in the limitations of its own "genetic code", is like the sunrays trapped in the water inside the narrow limits of a clay pot. Thus amputated, the mind cannot grasp that which exists beyond the mechanical activity of thought. It is thus an epiphenomenon.



Each of "us" can only experience fully and permanently the awareness of being, when thoughts, which create the false notion of individuality (*jiva*), become residual by meditation, the natural state of Consciousness of Existence.

The awareness and experience of existence is an attribute that belongs intimately to the Intelligence. The Ever-Solitude. And it is for this reason that Yogananda, like other great Illuminated, teaches us constantly that we are only One.

Thus Awakened, they live in the equanimity of this state of absence of "I, you, he, we, ye, they". They live in the plenitude of a single consciousness of existence. Everything else is trick of the mind that has the presumption to take itself very seriously. But that is nothing more than a mere exercise of an agglomerate of ideas. Just that. And you call it human or universal, everything will be the same.



Unequivocally, it was by merit of his selfless pioneering work that doors were opened and favorable conditions were created for the coming to us, from the same locations, of *other spiritual masters* who have enriched us as well:

Indeed, people have been gradually assuming over the past four decades, with firm steps, an adult maturity in the quest for their hidden divinity. Fortunately, they are not so few in number.

We bend eternally grateful and reverent before his disposition, courage, wisdom, kindness and humility.



But most Americans had never seen a *Swami* before, and consequently often mistook him for a soothsayer:

"No! I tell people how to repair their destiny!"



On October 6, few days after he arrived in that country, he gave a speech in the Religious Congress, where he captivated a vast audience with innovative and invigorating concepts, because heartfelt, that flowed from his flowering heart and flourished mature in the heart of others:

"Religion is universal and unique. We cannot universalize small customs and conventions, but the common elements in religion can be universal. God is one. The paths to Him may be different, but the real experience of God is the same for everyone."

His views about the "science of religion" were so well received that he gave lectures in the eastern United States for four years.



Even thieves have been influenced by his distinct character. One day, while walking alone, three of them tried to rob him. Responding, with the naturalness of the unconditional and transcendental love constantly overflowing from his heart, whatever else seemed to be going on, he expressed by words that sentiment:

"If it is money you want, take everything I have!" entering immediately into ecstasy.

This spontaneous and touching reaction left them completely disarmed:

"He doesn't hate us even when we try to rob him!"

Commented one of them, almost at once; and another one, enraptured on the wings of that experience, added:

"I can feel his love! He is wonderful!"

Such was his intensity, that sudden and deep their hearts were opened, expanded and left exposed their true nature: Divine.

Astonished, bewildered, sorry and embarrassed for the unexpected revelation, humble they bowed and thousand apologies were asked for their behavior. And such a short time had elapsed.



The Impersonal Love, sublimely Universal, of which he was already a living incarnation, practiced without any equivocation or hesitation, was experienced by the privileged ones who shared the vicissitudes of day-to-day life with such a wonderful human being. And for inspiring that reciprocal love in the hearts of others, he was called, quite properly, *Premavatar*: the incarnation of Divine Love.

"All men can know God personally", he taught and exemplified. Being that the only cure for human suffering.

Thus, wherever he went, thousands of those who were already at the stage of "*when you are ready, the Master appears*", were gathering to hear him and follow him. After all, even if they had forgotten, they were spirits who intuitively kept, in the recesses of their souls, the promised meeting, a long time ago. They were imprisoned, shackled by secular religious conceptions, retrograde and contradictory. They were remitted to the alleys of misunderstanding, with no way out to realize the real purpose of the sense of Existence.



However, despite that wave of receptivity that was increasing more and more at each step, Yogananda began to understand intuitively that his mission did not begin or end in his gift, gentle but sweeping, to rescue the suffered hearts from ignorance.

What more could be done, then, for that same cause?

Increasingly, the awareness of the experience of Being (Absolute Truth) flowed overwhelming from his innermost nature, in direct proportion to this untiring and exciting adventure of the Self quest.

Endlessly, clear and precise memories continued to emerge firmly into his consciousness: the real reasons for his trip to North America appeared clearly in the form of a vision of the Self-Realization Fellowship building, which made him understand, without any shadow of doubt that he should go to California.



In 1925, Yogananda finally reached Los Angeles, not only to comply with a program of lectures, but also for what the invisible plan had further reserved to him.



One day, while he was looking for a place to establish his headquarters, he felt an inner guidance. The group that accompanied him went up with him to the top of a hill, known as Mount Washington. His disciples warned him not to go any further because it was private property, but he answered them:

"It is ours! God showed it to me in a vision."

And so, through Divine Grace, it was discovered that this property was for sale.

But there was no money to acquire it.

However, "occasionally," a lady, by asking him for a clarification, apparently of no consequence, led to the reorientation of the events to fruitful results:

"Swamiji! Aren't you going to found a monastery in Los Angeles?"

"Yes indeed, we found the perfect place but we do not have the funds to buy it."

"But I am very grateful that you have cured my husband! Do you accept a donation to help you buying it?"

"Your answer meets my prayers." "I not only accept but I also give bless!"

But despite the aid he received, even until the day before the payment, he could not have enough money.

Then, struck by that scene of probation, as it has happened with other great masters³, Yogananda has left to posterity one more impressive example of the legitimate interrogative perplexity, when the mysterious transcendental plan challenge us:

"Lord, is this fair?! It was You who sent me to the West!"

And the Manifestation, which is continuous, gently erupted in the form of an inspiration of confidence.

In the centre of the storm, the soul strengthens, becoming Wise on its own. Stiffened in the path of action, imbued with the indomitable spirit of *purpose* with deep conviction and foresight, then opens up the major door giving access to the divine element that is its only and true nature.

He went to his room. Suddenly, a window opened up abruptly and a blast of wind hit his face. He turned and his eyes met the phone. At a glance, he associated the idea to call to a disciple, thinking:

"Probably, she might even help!"

He did so. Unexpectedly, she told him she had just received some money, and was willing to know whether he would accept it.

3 Jesus of Nazareth, in the paroxysm of suffering –thrown to the brutality of the challenge "surrender to the martyrdom of the cross" that appeared gigantesque before his eyes, questioned the deaf loneliness of that moment: "Father! Father! Why hast thou forsaken me?" "If you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done"

Responding to her that surely it would happen, he asked her right away to be at the office of the estate agency on the next day at midday or they might lose the opportunity to buy the property.

The next morning, another candidate was there too offering more money to purchase the property. But the seller refused to accept, explaining that Yogananda had made the first offer and that was enough for him.

Established the headquarters in Mount Washington, and named his organization under the name of Self-Realization Fellowship, he resumed his lectures.

There, he spoke of a man of all races - brown, yellow, red, black, white - by a single denomination: Brothers under the fatherhood of God. And they sang together His name, usually over three hours, which lead his disciples to have difficulty in understanding how it was possible that this was happening between the American public. The prophecy of his guru became true. The interest in his teachings increased.

But his main mission was to teach the scientific techniques of the Self Realization. And through his example and unique action, from 1920 to 1930, hundreds of Americans would start practicing yoga with that purpose as a model of life.



Meanwhile, also through him many were blessed and miraculously cured of acute and chronic diseases.

Once, in Salt Lake City, he asked to a young woman, who had come to him, her name and why she was so debilitated:

"My name is *Faye Wright* and, over the last three years, I have been suffering from a blood disease."

"*Do you believe that God can heal you?*"

"Yes! Absolutely! "

"*From this moment you are cured.*"

Completely recovered from her terrible illness, a few weeks later Faye Wright came to the *ashram* of the Guru in Los Angeles. She was later known as *Shri Daya Mata, Sangha Mata* of the *Yogoda Satsanga Society* and of the *Self-Realization Fellowship*.



One day in 1935, while meditating, he heard the warmly and friendly voice of *Shri Yukteswar*:

"*Yogananda, come! Soon I will leave this body.*"

Sure of its origin, he ran to meet his physical presence: his beloved Guru was waiting serenely. It was the long-awaited handover of testimony.

Two athletes of long run, whose eyes were fixed on a single goal: their neighbour. Two valiant marathonists harmoniously tuned to the purpose of giving, to the common man, what was legitimate for him: the Consciousness of Existence in Absolute Stillness.

The Epic of Truth, traced back thousands of years, will continue:

"My work is over. I leave all my ashrams in your hands. I bestow on you the high spiritual title of '*Paramahansa*'⁴".

Shortly thereafter, he would enter *mahasamadhi*, and three months later the blessed disciple was watching the master in a resurrected body of glory, revealing to him the secrets of life and death.

⁴ *Paramahansa* is a *sanskrit* word translated as "Supreme Swan." It is composed of *sanskrit parama*, meaning: transcendent, supreme, [from PIE (Proto Indo-European), meaning: through, across, beyond, cognate with English far] and *Sanskrit hamsa* meaning swan. The prefix *Parama* is the same element seen in the title *Parameshwara*.

English scholars euphemistically translated "*hamsa*" as swan, because in the English tradition a goose (the domesticated one) traditionally denotes stupidity and irresponsibility. But in *Hindic* tradition the wild goose is noted for its characteristics of discipline, strength, grace and beauty. This is especially true for the *Anser indicus*, whose migratory route from Central Asia to India and back, forces it to fly over the Himalayas twice a year. A feat which makes it fly higher than any known bird. And that is why God is also denoted as the "Paramahansa".

"*Hamsa*" may be a religious pun or allegory with a philosophical meaning. One such etymology suggests that the words "*aham*" and "*sa*" are joined to become "*hamsa*" ... "*Aham*" is "I" and "*sa*" is "He" – meaning "I am He." Here "I" refers to *jivatma*, the living soul, and "He" the supreme soul. This is part of *Advaita* philosophy which indicates one-ness of *jivatma* (living soul) and *Paramatma* (the supreme soul). The word "*Aham*" is common for many religions. From "*aham*", "*ahamkara*", 'ego' is derived. The alternative spellings are due to differing Romanizations of the *sanskrit* word.

In October of 1948, *Paramahansa Yogananda* entered *nirvikalpa samadhi*: the highest spiritual state. For more than twelve hours he talked with Divine Mother, and his disciples had the Grace to hear Her answering, through his voice, but in a different tone.



He knew that he had little time to complete his writings. At that time, he wrote this inspiring interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"No matter how evil man is, he shall be forgiven if he loves God profound and sufficiently."



On March 7 of 1952, he was invited to speak at a banquet in honor of Shri B. R. Sent, the first Indian Ambassador to North America.

Early that day, he had engaged with Sri *Daya Mata* a revealing dialogue that has made known to the world the natural state of omniscience on which he already remained, by confiding to him:

"Daya Mata! Within a few hours I will leave the earth"

"Guruji! How can we go on without you?"

"Only Love can continue in my place."

Indeed, at the banquet, as he predicted, entered *mahasamadhi* and his last words were about God, India and the arduous task of eradication of ignorance about spiritual truth that spreads throughout the world:

*"... God created the earth; man created the neighboring countries and their imaginary and cold borders.... But the **Ganges**, the forests, the **Himalayan** caves and men dream with God. I was blessed, my body touched that ground";*

"My body will end up but my work must go on."

After finishing his speech, a beatific smile flooded his face and he entered *mahasamadhi* - conscious and definitive exit from the physical body of the great yogis.



As one of the great and true spiritual masters of his country, he also made an outstanding pioneering work out of his country, establishing decisively a connection of life between the East and the West, to demonstrate how vital is to mankind to unite each action to love and to divine wisdom.

India made a formal tribute to its great son on the 25th anniversary of his [Mahasamadhi](#), publishing a commemorative stamp.



There is a most beautiful promise of Paramahansa Yogananda to those who sincerely seek him in order to know themselves.

To those, therefore, to you too, Yoganandaji promised one day that, when his physical form would be silent forever in our midst, the deep love he felt for us would remain well alive, in a faithful and unshakeable alliance guru-disciple. A solid guarantee of continued guidance and protective action in our lives. A hymn to brotherhood, to unconditional universal availability to love and serve. Continuously.

Let us listen to him hence attentively, with the tenderness of his presence:

"When I am gone, the teachings will be the guru. Those who faithfully follow the path of self-realization, and practice these teachings, will be in tune with me, with God and with the Paramgurus who sent this work."

"Many true devotees came to me during my present life. I recognize them from past lives. And many others are to come and I recognize them as well. They will come after I have left this body. Remember that, even without me being able to talk with you with this same voice, I will know each one of your thoughts and will be aware of every act you practice. I never introduce myself in the lives of those who do not want me to, but I am always present in the lives of those who give me this privilege and those who seek my guidance.

My conscience is in tune with them. I am aware of the slightest tremor of their consciousness. My body will cease to exist, but my work will live on. Even after my death, I will continue to work with you for the liberation of the world with God's message. Prepare for the divine glory. Strengthen yourself in the flame of the Spirit."

In Memoriam is a book published by SRF with testimonies from students, authorities, religious, newspapers and Yogananda admirers. It can be downloaded in the download area.

http://www.autobiografiadeumiogue.com/in_memoriam_yogananda.htm#Memoriam+%B9

Om Shanti Yogananda





Some of Yogananda Sayings:

- Ⓜ *God is Love. His plan for creation can be rooted only in love. Does not that simple thought, rather than erudite reasonings, offer solace to the human heart? Every saint who has penetrated to the core of Reality has testified that a divine universal plan exists and that it is beautiful and full of joy.*
- Ⓜ *There is much to know! So much to see within! The answer to every problem comes to you straight from the infinite. The Truths that I perceive within by meditation reveal the truth that science is discovering by other methods.*
- Ⓜ *The happiness that God gives is greater than anything the world can offer. Divine joy is enduring, eternal. When everything else melts away, that joy remains.*
- Ⓜ *When you know God, there is no more sorrow. All those you loved and lost in death are with you again in Eternal Life. **You don't know whom to consider your "own" anymore, because everyone is yours.***
- Ⓜ *Knowledge prepares the way to Love. **You cannot love that which you do not know.** Knowledge of God must therefore precede love for Him... **When you know God, you will love Him; and when you love him, you'll surrender yourself to Him.***

This text was inspired and based on the book *Autobiography of a Yogi*, contains even portions extracted - **Paramahansa Yogananda, the saint of the East and West** - by Paramahansa Yogananda, acclaimed worldwide as a classic in the Yogi literature.

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