

Swami Kripavananda

The Two Paths

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Divine Energy

Lovers of God, lovers of guru, spiritual brothers, sisters and everyone.

Over and over, may God be glorified. My love to you!

Today you have gathered here to celebrate my birthday. I am a renunciate. I have renounced the world in order to free myself from the bondage of birth. Since birth is bondage, then what is the value in a birthday celebration? None! However, this is from my viewpoint, not yours. I am not celebrating this occasion; it is you who are celebrating. I am your invited, loving guest.

Scripture generously praises the celebrating of the birthdays and anniversaries of the incarnations of God and master gurus and has correctly ordered their celebration. Worshipping a master guru is the same as worshipping God; they differ only in name and physical appearance. The core of their being is the same. It would also be accurate to say that master guru is the physical body and God is the core of being.

The worship of guru is not the worship of a person, it is worship of virtue and good character. It is paying homage to virtuous conduct, and it shows respect for knowledge. Those families, societies or nations that do not worship virtue never prosper. Worship of virtue is the only sure way of progress; however, that worship must be spontaneous and loving. There are two aspects of celebration: gross and subtle. The gross aspect is the consumption of food. The subtle aspect consists of studying the holy life of the guru, which is like drinking nectar, discussing the spiritual principles of scriptures, devotional singing, chanting of holy sounds, and meditation. This one-day celebration is spiritual food for a whole year. A disciple who strengthens his own character from this spiritual food and returns twice as hungry next year is a true disciple and a true yogi.

The Paths of Yoga

Now, I will give you an introduction to the two paths of yoga, the path of the will and the path of surrender. The path of the will uses the impressions in the mind and is meant for those involved in worldly activities, such as wealth, fame, family and pleasure. The path of surrender does not use impressions in the mind and is for those who have abandoned worldly activities and want only the Absolute.

When humans were first on the Earth, life was difficult. For eons they struggled just to survive. Eventually, in order to improve their lot, they established a system of life consisting of family, society and nation. This system of living is called dharma. Without dharma the human race had suffered for many years. So, dharma was set forth in order to have happiness, peace and bliss. One who does not understand dharma has not understood life. Dharma is the pilgrimage of life and cannot be separated from it. Conceiving of dharma as being separate from life is not to deal with dharma at all.

Scriptures say that animals and humans share in common food, sleep, fear and sexuality. The special attribute of humans is dharma. An animal's highest sense is vision whereas a human is can also think. The power of reflective thinking is unique to humans and is what differentiates them from animals.

Ignorance is the opposite of dharma and brings unhappiness to everyone. When ignorance manifests, we find ourselves in bondage. Knowledge is dharma and brings happiness to everyone. When knowledge manifests, we are liberated. That which evolves the mind is dharma and that which distorts the mind is adharma. Peace results from mental evolution but through mental perversion an individual becomes disturbed. In short, tranquillity is life and distortion is death.

In ancient India, knowledge was defined as that which liberates from bondage. Knowledge enables one to transcend beastliness and achieve humanness and divinity. People raised without good character become wanton and unhappy. Family and society were established as a solution to this problem of bad character. Only after tuning an instrument is one able to sing with it, and only after establishing the two harmonious instruments of family and society is the chanting of life possible.

Humankind, by eons of continual struggle, has obtained enough knowledge to establish heaven on earth. However, we will not evolve to divinity until the empire of Almighty God is actually established here. Because, in modern times, knowledge is defined as that which results in fame and wealth, there will be no improvement in people, family, society or nations. Considering knowledge to be that which results in fame and wealth results in selfish people who do not live a life of love of family, society and nation. This definition of knowledge is incorrect, and if one follows it, harmony is not possible. To have harmony one must live with love for family, society and nation. An animal acts selfishly and unless we consider others in our family, society and nation, we must be considered adharmic, uncultured and inhuman, like animals.

Dharma which uses the will is family dharma, social dharma and national dharma. That the dharma of the will took many centuries to develop shows that it does not happen without extraordinary effort. Love, cooperation and service are the foremost aspects of dharma. Hatred, possessiveness and tyranny are the foremost aspects of adharma. People

have a right to belong to any religious sect; however, they should know that even though their nature is dharmic, they must apply dharma in everyday life in order for it to be effective, or appear to leave the world starving for dharma. Even though people have learnt wilful dharma that agrees with the inner nature, they still have not always practised it. An aspirant of surrender dharma, which is meant only for great masters, does not realise that he is trying to jump from the earth to reach the holy feet of Almighty God and that unless he succeeds first at wilful dharma he does not deserve the path of surrender.

Celibacy

Celibacy is the major principle lying at the root of both wilful dharma and surrender dharma. In wilful dharma, celibacy is practised to the best of one's ability. In surrender dharma an aspirant practises celibacy in order to reabsorb the sexual fluids. Both types of celibacy need to be fully understood. To be celibate is one thing; however, to sublimate the sexual fluids is another. Never having participated in sex does not make one a master of sexual energy or sexual fluids. Such a person would not even necessarily be a good celibate!

Some scientists say that the sexual urge is as uncontrollable as the eliminative urge, both of which are present at birth. They say that one who tries to wilfully control the sexual urge will have great difficulty. They conclude that since even innocent celibacy is not possible, how then can one propose sexual mastery?

This view cannot be ignored, because it is based on physiological facts. A few well-known aspirant-scholars, believing themselves revolutionary, have practised the degenerated path of indulging in sexual techniques with other people. These aspirant-scholars have accused the ancient wise men and teachers of dharma, saying, "They have taught society incorrectly. The sexual urge can never be controlled, so it is not possible to follow the instruction to be celibate." An aspirant of yoga should carefully think over these opinions, but should be careful to do his spiritual efforts correctly.

Ancient, experienced, great masters not only believe that celibacy is possible, but they say that it is possible to transform the sexual energy and fluids and make them rise up the spinal column. Their view is based on the science of yoga. Iron is heavier than water, so iron sinks; this is a fundamental principle of physics. However, thousands of tons of iron can be transported around the world on a ship; this is also based on the principles of physics. In the same way that modern scientists have used physiology to support their arguments against celibacy, ancient wise men used the science of yoga to support arguments in favour of celibacy.

Innocent celibacy occurs in childhood. If that innocent celibacy could be re-established and sustained then celibacy would be possible. This has been experientially demonstrated through the science of yoga. A point moving in a straight line generates distance between the beginning and the end; however, when a point moves in a circle, the end of the inscribed line joins with the beginning. Yogis are well aware that passion is the cause of the conception of every being, and that passion, therefore, is at the root of every human.

Physiologists say that the sexual urge exists from birth. This statement cannot be completely denied but it can be partially opposed. In childhood the sexual urge does exist but only in a subtle form and the sexual fluids do not flow out of the genitals. In the child's body there exists an internal secretion of sexual fluids which mixes with the blood. In childhood there is another difference. There are two kinds of passion: physical-spiritual and mental-sensual. Physical passion comes from life energy. Passion in a child's body is the result of life energy; there is no mental passion. In a child the sexual centre of the mind is not developed; hence, the passion is not coming from his mind and if there are any subtle mental phenomena the child is not conscious of them. Passion born of life energy is considered spiritual because through it a yogi becomes master of sexual energy and fluids. In natural yoga, through spontaneous meditation, the freed life energy awakens the dormant evolutionary force by the heel pressing on the perineum and spiritual passion is born. But the lot of a yogi is not easy like the child's, because the yogi's mental-sexual centre is fully active and passionate thoughts occur there. In a yogi, passion in the mind and passion from the evolutionary force combine and form an obstacle. This is such an overwhelmingly difficult stage that only a perfect yogi can give correct guidance to an aspirant faced with it. Others who give guidance at this stage do so only from logic and not from experience. In the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 7, verse 11, this spiritual passion born of life energy is described as passion favourable to dharma. It says, "In beings I am passion which is not contrary to dharma."

Usually, passion in the mind of a sensual person is due to outside stimulation. This stimulation activates the sex centre in the mind, gradually stimulating the genitals. This is mental-sensual stimulation. In all adults both mental-sensual and physical-spiritual passions arise. Yogis derive benefit from physical-spiritual passion through the techniques of yoga, while worldly people do not. Physical-spiritual passion can come from either physical impurities or purity. Physical-spiritual passion develops the body and mind of children, makes the master yogi healthy, long-lived, immortal and omniscient, and drives worldly people to sensuality.

The blood of people who do little physical activity is only slightly purified. The blood of those who do regular physical exercise is moderately purified. The blood in the body of a yoga aspirant whose life energy is fully released is eventually completely purified. Great physical vitality is produced by this purification. This energy tries to ascend through the

genitals and thus activates passion. The idea of seeking relief in the opposite sex comes from visions that appear to be true but are false. In yoga these visions may occur several times before the final state. Such methods have been encouraged by erroneous interpretations of ancient scripture, which are filled with deep, secret meaning. Discussion of this is useless. Those who have not understood the importance of celibacy may be scholars, but they are foolish. Progress is not possible without celibacy. One who is firm in celibacy is a hero. After succeeding at celibacy, what is amazing about attaining wealth, fame and worldly happiness? Lord Shiva says, "After conquering semen, is there any power not available to a yogi?" Celibacy is the best austerity. Other austerities, while still austerity, are of a lower order. A penitent who has mastered his genitals is not an ordinary being, but a great adept, a god on earth.

In early adolescence, the sexual urge arises and bewilders both boys and girls. With puberty downward flow is opened forever. Controlling sexual energy and making it ascend is as difficult as making the Ganges River flow from the earth to the sky. Without complete detachment no aspirant can tread this path.

There are two classes of celibacy. Primary celibacy can be followed by students, hermits and renunciates. Secondary celibacy is meant for householders, that is, those active in the world. Householders should limit their sexual expression to their spouse and to once a month, between the fourth and sixteenth day after the beginning of the wife's menstrual cycle, except during religious festivals, and the sexual contact must be for procreation. This is celibacy for householders. Those who teach celibacy have studied deeply the sexual urge and they have set this noble limit for householders. No self-controlled householder should be dissatisfied with this limitation and it may be that any householder dissatisfied with this limit is not ready for the spiritual path. People who are busy striving for wealth, fame and knowledge do not have difficulty with passion and practise self-control easily. But those who continually stay in the company of the opposite sex and are thinking of sensual pleasure will never succeed in self-control.

Controlling the Mind

Those who live in a family and society must learn techniques for controlling the mind-stuff. Controlling the mind-stuff is the second most important part of the wilful spiritual path. When the mind-stuff is disturbed, it causes disease and death. Tranquil mind-stuff results in good health and immortality. At first, one should try controlling one's mind while dealing with one's own family. One must relate to every member of one's family with love. By never considering the mental state of others and fixating one's concern on oneself,

disagreement, friction, dissatisfaction, hate, mistrust and mental upsets occur. If we cooperate with others, they cooperate with us. First, we must instil the love of God in our family. Without cooperation and service, love cannot evolve. Controlling one's mind results in tolerance and lack of control leads to intolerance.

Once there was a scientist who spent all his time completely involved in his research work. He couldn't remember if he had eaten his meals or had taken his bath. After watching his strange behaviour, his wife decided to intervene. One day, when it was time for his bath, she went to his study and, without saying a word, gestured to him to get up. This unexpected action startled him, but when he saw that it was his wife, he laughed and asked sweetly, "What do you want me to do?"

She didn't say a word. Like one leading a blind man, she led him to his bath. He said, "I have already bathed."

His wife replied, "You bathed yesterday, not today."

At lunch time, when she took him to their dining room, he was again surprised. "Why have you served me lunch twice?" She replied, "Yesterday you did not eat at all and today this is the first meal you have been served."

He affectionately patted her on the shoulder and expressed his pleasure, "Thank you, thank you; you are taking good care of me."

Later it happened that his wife took him to their dining room and left him there after serving him lunch, while she spent two hours with friends who had come to visit her. When she returned to the dining room, her husband was writing on a piece of paper. He had forgotten to eat his lunch.

Seeing this she became angry and snatched his pen away from him. She scolded him, "How strange you are! Your lunch is cold and I have to reheat it!" His concentration broken, he looked at his wife's angry face, then at his meal. He understood and acknowledged his offence. Then he took his plate of food and put it on his wife's head.

She could not understand what he was doing, but she sensed a joke and laughed, "What are you doing?"

Her husband replied, "I'm warming my lunch; anger is so hot that my lunch will be heated quickly." Her anger melted away and she burst into laughter.

To love is to suffer. When love is tolerant, fragrance spreads out from it, overflowing the heart of the beloved with joy. If a lover cannot tolerate the anger of the beloved then that love is about to shatter.

Chapter 5, verse 23 of the Bhagavad Gita says: "He who is able to withstand the impulses of desire and anger before liberation from the body - he is a yogi and a happy man." This verse appears to be ordinary, but is very extraordinary. Great penitents cannot prevent the impulses of passion and anger from occurring. And if this can't be done by a great master, how then can an ordinary person hope to succeed? One might ask, "Where is the power of a great master, and where is the weakness of an ordinary man?" Mastery of passion and anger can be accomplished through the use of techniques. What are these techniques?

Bondage is caused by mind-stuff. Liberation is caused by life energy. Because of this, a seeker of liberation who practises surrender yoga avoids wilfully controlling his mind-stuff and lets the life energy flow naturally. An aspirant of wilful dharma, one who desires wealth, pleasure and dharma, suppresses life energy and wilfully directs his mind-stuff. The use of life energy is the way of not using impressions in the mind-stuff and the use of the will to control the mind-stuff depends on using impressions in that mind-stuff. This is the difference between the two paths of wilful and surrender yoga. Surrender yoga is for outstanding individuals who seek only liberation. Wilful dharma is the way for family, society and nation and everyone can use it.

I first taught the path of controlling the mind-stuff to Amrit Desai and through it he has attained success as he desired. Thus he has experienced the use of the will as the best path, giving him love and faith. His followers have also had the same experience. Because of this success, he has called it Kripalu Yoga and is spreading it everywhere. Mind-stuff is the cause of bondage. Through mastery of the mind-stuff an aspirant attains worldly powers; however, he does not attain spiritual bliss, peace or happiness. An aspirant who wants worldly powers and who does surrender yoga with full release of the life energy is deluded, because that path is meant for attaining spiritual powers; it is the path of liberation. Worldly powers can be attained only through wilful dharma.

A follower of wilful dharma, as an aspirant with desires, controls his life energy and embraces his mind-stuff.

As one continues the wilful path for a long time, one's will becomes very powerful. After years of practice, the will becomes so powerful that the dominated life energy cannot easily reassert control over the mind-stuff. Through concentration the will makes the life energy so impotent that it becomes still.

An aspirant of surrender yoga gives the life energy total freedom, allowing it to control the mind-stuff, whereas an aspirant of Kripalu Yoga uses his will to totally control the life energy. Passion and anger are expressions of intensely flowing life energy. Intensely flowing life energy agitates the mind-stuff. Statesmen and outstanding people in every field

have the ability to keep their mind tranquil in any situation. This is because the life energy is restrained by their will, so there is no disturbance in their mind-stuff.

In both the wilful and the surrender dharmas, it is necessary to awaken the evolutionary power. Without the awakening of the evolutionary power it is not possible to develop spiritually. In all the techniques of wilful dharma the evolutionary power is awakened; however, because it is awakened to a minute and controllable degree, the tranquillity of an aspirant's mind-stuff is not disturbed. In surrender dharma, all the techniques awaken the evolutionary power in its complete, terrifying form, and the life energy becomes so powerful that the aspirant is not able to maintain tranquillity of mind. In order to keep life peaceful, a true seeker of liberation retires from worldly contact and activity and observes seclusion.

Code of Behaviour

When one follows a code of restraints and observances, one is following a wilful path. In yogic scriptures, the following of restraints and disciplines is greatly stressed. One's mind-stuff is disturbed by violence, lying, theft, adultery and avarice. Therefore, nonviolence, truthfulness, non-theft, celibacy and nonpossessiveness. are instructed. By wilfully being intolerant, cowardly, deceitful, gluttonous, sloppy, discontented, faithless, greedy, indecent, neglectful of self-study, resistant to God, neglectful of studying scripture, neglectful of repeating God's name and neglectful of duty, one's mind is disturbed. Because of this, the yogic scriptures prescribe the observance of forgiveness, patience, mercy, straightforwardness, purity, contentment, faith, charity, shame, self-study, devotion to God, listening to holy discourses, repeating God's name and intelligent behaviour. This code of restraint and behaviour is a glorious part of yoga and there is marvellous strength in it. People who are outstanding in some area of life are using some principle of yoga resulting in personal development. By following codes of restraint and behaviour, the evolutionary energy is awakened in a partial, controllable way.

In chapter 2, verse 50 of the Bhagavad Gita, it says, "Yoga is skill in action." Action may be worldly or spiritual but when the result of action is art, the one who does it is not a mere doer but an artist. Art is skill in action and an artist is a master of his work. Skill in action is not easily attained. To attain skill one must make a sustained effort for a long time. A great master does not differentiate between average effort and extraordinary effort, but looks upon it all as austerity. Without practising austerity, powers do not occur. In trying for skill in action, austerity of life energy is minimal and austerity of will is maximal; however, in one's body both mind power and the power of the life energy are valuable. Life

energy is the vehicle of mind-stuff. The senses are the vehicle of life energy. Mind power and life power can work independently, but sometimes they work in harmony. Sometimes life energy dominates and the mind follows, and sometimes the mind is dominant and the life energy follows. They are close friends.

The Techniques of Wilful Yoga

Through the scientific techniques of wilful dharma, control is gradually achieved by one's will over the senses of awareness: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch; and the organs of action: tongue, hands, feet, genitals and rectum.

In the technique of the eyes, one looks at a symbol of God or guru with love and without blinking, first for one minute, then two minutes, gradually increasing to three minutes by the end of one month and to a maximum of 36 minutes by the end of one year. Thirty-six minutes is the limit and after this there should not be any further increase in amount of time in this technique. One should try to infuse one's eyes with attention and love. By holding the eyes and the visual system still, the instability of attention and life energy is lessened and tranquillity is born. Smooth flow is strength. Where there is smooth flow of attention and life energy, the strength to follow celibacy automatically increases in the mind and body of an aspirant. Disturbed life energy results in victory for the eliminative urge and smooth-flowing life energy results in the defeat of the eliminative urge.

In the technique of the ear, the aspirant sings one or two lines of a devotional chant which is full of meaning to him, slowly and repeatedly. Or, one slowly repeats one line from scripture. In this technique the aspirant is both the speaker and the listener. One must concentrate on the faculty of hearing and listen to the words by making the right ear very attentive. One must listen attentively as if one were straining to overhear a secret conversation. This attentiveness is critical as it results in the attention and life energy being steady. This technique can be done aloud or sub-vocally; both result in the control of one's breath. An aspirant can choose the method for which he feels a loving attraction.

In the technique of the nose, the aspirant closes the right nostril with the right thumb and inhales through the left nostril. Then, also closing the left nostril using the third and fourth fingers of the right hand, one retains the breath. In this technique retention of the breath is more important than the inhalation. One fixes the attention at the point of retention. This point may at first be difficult to establish; however, after a few days of practice it can be done.

In the technique of the tongue, the tongue is held touching the palate and, with great longing, one fixes one's attention and life energy at the place of contact between the tongue and palate.

The fifth technique, that of the skin, is done by the right hand's longing touch of the feet of a picture or statue of God or guru. If a master guru is present physically, his feet can be used. This touch should be infused with life.

The following are the techniques for the organs of action.

The tongue is used both in the sense of awareness and as an organ of action. It gives awareness of taste and as an organ of action it is used for speech. The aloud or sub-vocalised chant or line of scripture used for the technique of mastering hearing with the ear is also used for the technique of the tongue. The difference is that in the technique of mastering the ear one's attention is on listening, while in the technique of mastering the tongue one's attention is on speaking.

The hands are organs of action; they give and receive. In the technique of receiving, the aspirant holds his hands cupped and fixes his attention and life energy on his hands. He should have the feeling that he is eagerly receiving something from God or guru. In the technique of giving, one takes a beautiful flower and offers it at the feet of a symbol of God or master guru. In this also, one eagerly fixes his attention and life energy on his fingers.

Feet are organs of action and are for locomotion. The technique of the feet is done by circumambulating a symbol of God or guru. While circumambulating the picture, statue or person, one eagerly puts one's attention on the soles of one's feet and raises and sets down the feet very slowly.

Each of the above eight techniques can be practised daily for three minutes. The genitals eliminate urine and sexual fluids. It is not necessary for beginners to try the following technique; however, if they do try it, they must first practise the techniques given above for one year. When urinating one tries to stop the flow of urine once or twice. In the same way, during sexual intercourse, one eagerly tries to stop the flow of sexual fluids once or twice.

The rectum is an organ of action and eliminates faeces. It is not necessary for beginners to try the following meditation technique; however, if they do they should first practise the first eight techniques above for one year. When in the act of defecating, one tries to stop the elimination once or twice.

Control of the mind-stuff can be achieved through the above ten techniques. This is why spiritual teachers of yoga call it royal yoga. However, this is the wilful path of royal yoga, not surrender royal yoga, and this is why it is easy to do and is without difficulties.

Yoga postures are skilfully included in wilful yoga, by doing the postures in sequence, passing from one posture to another very slowly.

By doing the techniques of wilful yoga the following powers can be developed: personal strength, determination, imagination, thinking, logic, memory and decisiveness. An aspirant of wilful dharma must keep constant control over his mind, remaining totally aware so that no disturbances are permitted in his mind-stuff. In wilful dharma, moderate eating is its body, stillness of mindstuff its energy and celibacy its personality. Those who believe that dharma applies only to the meditation room are greatly mistaken, because one must practise dharma in society as well. Doing techniques in a meditation room is easy because there are no external distractions, but one encounters many disturbances while practising dharma in society, making it very difficult. A true aspirant is one who applies the results of doing these techniques in society where he has to control his mind. To achieve this, one must treat everyone with love. A smiling face, loving sweet speech and treating everyone with respect are keys to success. However, one must be a yogi, not an actor. If one does not follow this principle, he will not succeed in any field of life. Only after practising this excellent wilful yoga for 1 ¼ years can the effects of this approach be evaluated. After that period the primary worldly powers of this yoga will be experienced. An aspirant should practise, depending on his ability and circumstances, for two hours a day, accompanied by following self-control, fair conduct, moderate eating and celibacy. By this the evolutionary force will partially awaken in a controllable form. This complete system of Kripalu Yoga should be practised with discrimination. In order to achieve the desired results, a smooth flow of attention and life energy must be attentively maintained. This is the yoga practice for controlling the mind. To achieve the desired results, one must practise skilfully.

Surrender Yoga

The highest of all yogas is called by several names: natural yoga, adept yoga, purification yoga or evolutionary yoga. It is also known as the eternal yoga. All yoga is included in it. Wilful or social dharma creates disciples, while surrender dharma or individual dharma creates great masters. Natural yoga is unique in that the evolutionary force is awakened in its complete, uncontrollable and terrifying form. Ordinary and medium aspirants cannot stand the intensity of this evolutionary force, and even the best aspirants cannot control it and so they do not practise this yoga for long. In wilful dharma, the will power is increased, so the subject's life energy is not disturbed; one's mind is tranquil all day, and if a disturbance should occur due to the environment, it can be controlled easily. In natural yoga, on the other hand, the released life energy is allowed to

surge powerfully and the subject's mind-stuff becomes very unstable. Because of this, an aspirant's control can be lost anytime by any type of stimulation. Disease and hallucinations are always standing near him. While an aspirant of wilful dharma gradually becomes luminous, victorious and receives respect, the aspirant of surrender dharma gradually becomes pale, frustrated and is insulted.

The Importance of a Guru

A surrender yoga aspirant must continue to study scripture, follow the guidance of his guru and remain secluded. In natural yoga, after the full release of the life energy, a yogi has many yogic experiences and his enthusiasm greatly increases; however, he is continually confronted with new problems, and if he does not keep faith in his guru as a guide or in the guidance given him by that guru, he must give up his spiritual efforts or he becomes diseased, mad or follows the wrong path. For this reason ordinary, medium and even some of the best aspirants do not sustain the practice of this path for extended periods of time. If this initiation is given to weak-minded people, they are greatly harassed by the movement of the life energy and they try to stop it but they can't.

I believe that the master yogi should give surrender yoga initiation to four or five highly qualified disciples, those who surrender completely and practise only yoga for the rest of their lives. I am the only one to whom my guru gave initiation. At that time, I could not understand why he was not initiating other disciples; but now, through my own experience, I have understood. Once after being impressed by his powers, I exclaimed, "Gurudeva, you are a great master adept!"

He burst into laughter.

Astonished, I asked, "Why are you laughing? Aren't you a great master adept?"

"No."

"You're not a great master adept?"

"No! No! No!"

I was amazed.

He clarified, "According to the ancient yoga scriptures of India, I have not attained the characteristics of a great master adept."

"What are those characteristics described in scriptures?"

"Only when the disciple of a disciple becomes an adept can that great master be called an adept. When you become an adept, and then when a disciple of yours becomes an adept, only then is it established that I am an adept."

I laughed, "This can become the truth only by your grace. Nothing can be done through my efforts or the efforts of my disciples."

If a guru has millions of disciples and amongst them not even one has attained the highest stage, then all his disciples are of no consequence. If a disciple, even after rising to the highest level of society through following spiritual practice, still constantly remembers his guru with tear-filled eyes and frequently describes his glory, he is a truly graced disciple and is also a true guru. Today, there is no gross physical body of my guru; however, I have with me the yoga initiation he gave me, and through it I frequently remember him and his great grace. A disciple who does not understand the value of yogic wisdom, or who has not done yogic practice, can never understand the importance of guru or wisdom. The importance of yogic wisdom and guru are understood only after he becomes an adept. The master guru who loves his disciples is always giving them his best wishes; however, until a disciple firmly feels in his heart that his guru is his well-wisher, he will not progress. With the aid of vehicles one can quickly travel across the ground, sail on water and fly through the sky; in the same way, the journey within can be rapidly completed only with a guru.

Yogic Experience and Scripture

Each and every word of this discourse is filled with my deep experiences.

If you read and reflect on it frequently, you will have new realisations. I have been doing yoga practice for 28 years, along with deep study of yogic scripture. Yoga and yogic scripture are saturated with secrets. The meaning of a word is understood differently by aspirants in different stages of yogic practice, and the true meaning of the word is apparent to a yogi only after achieving the final stage. When this true meaning occurs to a yogi, he automatically will bow down at the holy feet of the author of the scripture. In every word of every scriptural verse is the crystal clear reflection of the true experience and subtle consciousness of the author. Yoga scriptures are in a very succinct form. Only important principles of yoga are collected in yogic scriptures. Even though only the final stages are described in yogic scripture, they are unique in that one can discern the beginning and middle stages from them. In other words, the same experience will occur but in different forms at different stages of yogic practice. As a painter creates contrast by using different shades of the same colour - dark, medium and light; so, yogic experiences are variations on one theme.

I did not plan on coming to America, but God ordered me unexpectedly and so I came at once. When I announced this, Amrit Desai and Yogeshwar Muni were in India. They had celebrated the full moon of the guru there. Now, I am in a state in my yogic practice in which I cannot plan even a short trip and moreover, I cannot participate in public activities. Yet, today I have risked doing so because of your love. And, by the grace of Almighty, Merciful God, I have not experienced any difficulty. The same Ocean of Grace has fulfilled your auspicious desire for the celebration of my birthday, and so I also feel pleased. I have accepted your love and surrender with pleasure. I give you my blessings! May everyone be happy; may everyone be healthy; may everyone be prosperous; may no one be unhappy. Your loving Grandfather Guru Kripalu.