

Siddha Marg



आत्मानुरज्यः

It is a wonderful teaching for each and every one of us to remember that love is the most important thing. Love is what each and every one of us seeks, wants, and wishes to have. We look for it outside ourselves. The sages tell us to look for it inside; it is there.

Baba's message is "Love your own Self." When we love our own Self, then what we share with everyone is that love. So I pray and wish that each moment of our life, every single day, is filled with love.

MAHĀMANDALESHWAR SWAMI NITYĀNANDA

The purpose of Siddha Marg is to communicate the teachings of Mahāmandaleshwar Swami Nityanānda as he shares with us the knowledge and practices of the sanātān dharma (universal law). This issue features excerpts from a talk Gurudev gave at the Somers Retreat during the 2014 tour of Australia.

Namaste. Good morning. Gidday. With great respect and love, I'd like to welcome everyone here to *satsaṅg*.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* says, "If you are born, it is certain that you will die. And if you die, it is certain that you will be reborn."

There is no way of avoiding this. I'm sure many of us, with our doctors and our insurance policies, would like to live forever. And we do our best. But the sages and scriptures tell us that on the day that it is destined, we will go.

In *Play of Consciousness*, Baba Muktānanda says that he saw death with his own eyes.

We know he was not talking about his physical death because he was still alive at the time. He meant the death of the ego.

I thought we should begin there. For most spiritual seekers, the greatest obstacle is their ego. As one progresses in understanding, in wisdom, the ego gets subtler. Therefore, it becomes even more difficult to let it go. One thinks, "I don't have an ego because I have been meditating, I have been praying, I have been doing so many practices."

Become Empty

Baba used to tell a great story. Nasruddin is a therapist. Somebody goes to him and says, “I get these headaches.”

Nasruddin asks, “Do you smoke?”

“No.”

“Do you drink?”

“No.”

Nasruddin asks, “Do you do this? Do you do that?” To everything, the man says, “No, no, no, no.”

Finally Nasruddin says, “I think I know the reason for your headaches. It is your sense of righteousness, of always being correct, of being proper and in the meanwhile looking down upon others. That is the cause of your headaches.”

Baba never advised us—and neither would I—to smoke and drink and do all these things. No. Just get off your high horse. Come to planet Earth and live amidst everybody else. Understand and know your Self.

The whole idea of separation, of duality, of the other, must die. Note that I didn’t use the words “gotten rid of” or “eradicated” or “lost.” It must die.

To understand any great saint, we must realize that his identity with “I” and “mine” is gone. Bhagavān Nityānanda always referred to his body as “this one.”

It would be a challenge for all of us in society to say, “This one wants chai.” “This one would like lunch.” “This one wants to go for a walk.” Even when speaking to friends who are on the path with us, it doesn’t come out as easily and naturally as “I want some chai!”

You would have to train yourself to say “this one.” If you did, then when you were in deep sleep and somebody woke you up, you would not even think, “Who woke me up?” or “Who is disturbing me?” You would simply think, “Who has woken this body up?”

Many years ago on a train, I found a riddle in a magazine. From a tree, a ripe mango is seen falling. One who did not see that mango goes running. The mango is picked up by a third one. Then the mango is eaten by somebody else—not the one who saw it, not the one who ran, not the one who picked it up.

The question is “Who are these four?”

All the parts of the “somebody” are parts of the body: the eyes see the mango, the legs run, the hand picks it up, the mouth eats it. Although they all live within the body, they act independently. We could even go a step further and say, “Who is actually the enjoyer?”

The death of the ego is a big subject. There is a song that says, “O Lord, let my mind, which is filled with pride, touch the dust of Your feet. Let my mind, which is filled with ego

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Become Empty (continued)

and fluctuations, repeat the name of the Self.” It’s a poem we heard often around Baba. It says, “I have come to the faultless one, seeking refuge. My prayer is this: let me become empty, and let the flame of love light up within me.”

Become empty. Here is a very simple example. A professor goes to a Zen master and wants knowledge.

The Zen master offers him tea and begins to pour tea into his cup. When the cup is full, the tea flows into the saucer. The Zen master keeps pouring, and the tea overflows onto the table.

When the tea begins to overflow onto the floor, the professor says, “Wait! Stop! You can see the cup is already full.”

The Zen master says, “Ah. Your cup is also full. Just as the tea overflows onto the saucer and the table and the floor, the knowledge that will be given to you will pour out. It will not stay in you.”

**“Let me become empty,
and let the flame of love
light up within me.”**



The City of Nine Gates

A yogi simply sheds his body at the time of death.

If you have ever walked up to a fruit tree and put your hand to a fruit that is ripe, it falls into your hand. You haven't twisted it or turned it or done anything but put your hand to it. I love it when that happens because the fruit is perfectly ripe. You can eat it right then and there.

That is how ready one has to be for death.

We hope that we never die. Right? If I ask anyone in this room, "Do you want to go yet?"—the "yet" is not necessary, but we always add that "yet"—you would say, "No, I still have a few things I'd like to achieve, some things left to do." And fear comes up. Of course, maybe here you'd respond differently because you want to raise your hand and show "I'm spiritually knowledgeable." But think about it and ask yourself this question when you are alone.

All of our study is preparation. All of this conversation in satsaṅg is preparation. We ask, "How does this apply to me?"

We also realize that so much of what we do on the outside is actually futile. What matters is what we do within ourselves.

A man is dying, and the messenger of death arrives. He sees the man has a suitcase, so he asks what the man is bringing. The messenger goes through a whole list of possible things—clothes, toiletries, and so on.

To everything, the man answers no.

Finally the messenger says, "Well, tell me, what is in the suitcase?"

The man says, "Moments." In other words, memories.

What goes with you at death is only that which you carry in the subtle body. If you have been kind, if you have been loving, if you have been friendly, if you have been giving, if you have been compassionate—that's what goes with you, not your house or car or any of the normal attachments we have in life.

Sometimes we hear that somebody is in a coma, and that he is hanging on. I would say that shows the amount of attachment that individual has to the body. Nothing else can hold a person in that state besides attachment.

A yogi is exactly the opposite. He says, "I'm ready," and when the time comes, he's gone. A yogi simply sheds his body at the time of death.

The sages teach us, "Don't cry, don't be sad. It's only the external cover that is shed. The inner core is still alive and well. It is looking for the next body to enter."

In the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa explains that the body is known as the city of nine gates. At the time of death, the yogi withdraws all his senses. He closes all his gates, and he brings his *prāṇa*, the vital force, to the heart region. This is where the yogic scriptures say the mind dwells in this body.

According to the Indian tradition, the soul leaves this body in one of four main ways. One is through the anal opening.

The City of Nine Gates (continued)

When you listen to pure sound and let go of all other vibrations, the yogis say, then you hear *Om*.

When people excrete as they leave their body, you have to assume that is the port they used. It is said that is the worst form of passing. Such a person needs to do more good, to live a better life. The soul has to uplift itself.

Another port is through the mouth. The mouth of such a person is open at the time of death. The next port is through the eyes.

The port yogis use is the top of the head, what we call the *sahasrāra*. As his vital force rises to the *sahasrāra*, the yogi repeats *Om*.

Now, you have to realize that in this moment of death, you can only repeat *Om* if you have been repeating *Om* throughout your life. It doesn't happen accidentally. Even if a CD or iPod is playing *Om*—which many people do for a family member—it doesn't matter. Every cell, every molecule in your body needs to be repeating *Om*. If the yogi has prepared himself, his soul, the *ātman*, will exit through the *sahasrāra* as he repeats *Om*.

Kṛṣṇa says that individual has attained the highest. He has freed himself from the cycle of birth and death.

We told ourselves, "I'm going to the Somers retreat today." On Sunday, we'll say, "I'm going back to Melbourne." Whether you go by car or with a friend, everybody knows where you have gone. In the same way, the yogi tells his

ātman that his destination is being expressed through *Om*.

The *Upaniṣads* describe *Om* as the primordial sound from which creation has come into being. Everything is contained within *Om*. When you listen to pure sound and let go of all other vibrations, the yogis say, then you hear *Om*.

Baba's teaching was "Remember God and remember death." He would say you never know when death will come, so if you remember God all the time, then you will remember God at the moment of death. This is the same teaching Kṛṣṇa gave: "Remember *Om* as you are leaving the body."

You will only remember *Om* if you have been chanting *Om* all along. We do it three times before we begin a chant, and sometimes I think, "Maybe, after doing this for so many years, it's time to increase it to five. Or eleven."

Baba Knew

Good people infuse goodness upon this earth, and then that goodness stays for a long time.

Over the years, as I travelled, I have met people who asked, “Do you think Baba knew?”

The answer then and now is yes. And I don’t mean because he appointed me successor, and therefore it is clear he knew. But if you look at all the things he physically did and created for that day, October 2, 1982, you would say he knew that was his time to leave.

For sure, in May 1977, on his birthday, Baba got a good idea of how many more years he would live upon this planet. After that day, the speed with which he worked was amazing.

I was there on that day, that morning. He told his attendant to tell the doctor and his nurse to be in his room after lunch because he was going to have a big heart attack.

Of course, we didn’t have lunch.

My job was to answer the door and manage who came in and out. Because, you know, when the news spread throughout the ashram, everybody wanted to be by Baba. They felt they could be of help.

So Baba had lunch. Then he came and lay on his bed. He rang the bell and said, “Call the doctor.”

Being young, one wondered, “How can he manipulate it to have a heart attack now?” But we were taught never to question him, just to do what he said. So we did.

The doctors came. Everybody came. And then...he was gone.

Baba’s bed was against the wall, and at the foot of the bed were a bunch of people. The word had gotten out: “He’s gone.”

Around 2:30 pm, Baba opened his eyes. He looked at everybody and said, “What are you doing? Have you had lunch?”

The main doctor looked at him and said, “But, Baba, you were gone!”

He said, “Well, I talked to my Guru. He sent me back.”

Some months later he explained in great detail in a talk how he had left his body and his Guru had said, “Muktānanda, you have work to do. You can’t leave yet.”

My own belief—which I have never confirmed or discussed with anybody—is that his *prārabdha* karma as Swami Muktānanda was finished on that day in May 1977. You can compare how he looked before and how he looked after. If you study his pictures with an open mind, you can see the change. He became younger.

As we travelled on the third tour, Baba was in touch with Venkappa, the manager of the ashram. Baba had one of the rooms where he had lived removed, and a pit dug there. Wood planks were put on top. When he came back from the world tour, in the evening when nobody was around, he went with Venkappa and checked that the work had been done. He saw that the place to bury him was ready. And he danced on those wooden planks.

Baba Knew (continued)

**A great saint who
has become one
with Consciousness,
become one with Truth,
carries that vibration
within him.**

We went to Kashmir in September. After we came back, Baba said to every person he met, “Come next Saturday. Come next Saturday. Come next Saturday.”

Some people took him seriously and came. Others thought, “Baba just wants me to spend the weekend with him. I’ll go like I always do, on Sunday.” Of course, they said, “Yes, Baba, I’m coming.”

Life was normal in the ashram. At one point, the swami in charge of the kitchen came to Baba and said, “How many *laddus* should we prepare for Sunday?”

The 3rd of October was to be a *bhāṇḍārā*, and Baba said, “Five thousand.”

The swami said, “But we are only a thousand.”

Baba said, “Five thousand.”

Of course, Baba left his body on the 2nd, and so for the next three days, the ashram was open twenty-four hours a day. The news spread, and people from all over the world came for Baba’s final *darśan*.

It is believed that a great saint who has become one with Consciousness, become one with Truth, carries that vibration within him. Therefore, the place where such great beings are buried is called a *samādhi* shrine. Their Consciousness radiates from that place and continues to bless those who visit it.

We buried Baba on the 5th of October. The 6th of October was my twentieth birthday. We had a thirty-day chant of

Om Namo Bhagavāte Muktaṇandāya. You could feel Baba’s presence there just as much as it had always been. Even today, hearing that chant takes me back to the feeling of October 1982.

One night, I had a dream. In the dream, it was around 10 o’clock in the morning. I was walking in the hallway outside what we knew as Bagve’s office. I had come out of the temple and turned the corner, and Baba was coming toward me. It was just the two of us.

I said, “But, Baba, we buried you some days ago. You are supposed to be inside that *samādhi*.”

He laughed. He said, “Now I am free of that body. I can go wherever I want. Nobody can tell me where I can or cannot go.”

The scriptures say that beings such as Bhagavān and Baba have a choice. They have the freedom to be born or not to be born. As long as you are bound by the cycle of karma, you will come, you will go, you will come, you will go. But a free being just comes, does what needs to be done, and goes.

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya only lived on this planet until he was thirty-two. Swami Vivekānanda was only thirty-nine when he passed.

Some people say, “Why do good people live only for so long?” I think good people infuse goodness upon this earth, and then that goodness stays for a long time.

G L O S S A R Y

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya

[788-820] sage, originator of Advaita Vedānta

ātman

the soul, Self

bhaṇḍārā

feast

Bhagavad Gītā

Hindu scripture

darśan

vision of the divine, experienced in the presence of a holy being

Guru Gītā

commentary on the Guru

KṛṣṇaHindu deity, Guru of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā***laddu**

ball-shaped Indian sweet

Om

primordial sound

prārabdha

karma from a former life that manifests in this lifetime

sahasrāra

the crown chakra (energy center)

śakti

the creative energy of the universe; the awakened spiritual energy

satsaṅg

in the company of the Truth

Upaniṣads

ancient Hindu scriptures

Vivekānanda, Swami

[1863-1902] disciple of Rāmakrishna