

Siddha Marg



GOD DWELLS WITHIN YOU AS YOU.

*Baba Muktaṇanda would say,
“God dwells within you as you.”*

Words alone cannot adequately describe, explain, or take us to that deep place. We have to allow ourselves to be taken there. We have to become immersed within, where ānanda, bliss, continually arises, rather than remain in the shallow realms of mind and emotion.

This is the teaching. This is the understanding we must cultivate in our life.

MAHĀMANDALESHWAR SWAMI NITYĀNANDA

Mahāmandaleshwar Swami Nityānanda spoke at Shanti Mandir in Walden, New York in October 2010, on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the passing of his Guru, Baba Muktaṇanda. This issue of Siddha Marg features this talk, which celebrates Baba's life and the legacy of spiritual wisdom he left for the world.

A Great Way to Live Life

*G*ood morning to everyone and welcome to Sunday *satsaṅg*, on this third day of our celebration of Baba Muktaṇanda's twenty-eighth *mahāsamādhi*.

Three words are used for the day a saint leaves his body: *mahāsamādhi*, *puṇyatithi*, and *nirvāṇa*. You might hear these words at different times and wonder why we use three words.

Samādhi refers to the experience of union with the Absolute that one has as a final stage of meditation. *Mahāsamādhi*, or the great *samādhi*, is a term used for the final absorption a sage experiences as his individual self merges back into the Absolute. He no longer remains as an individual person, but becomes one with the ocean of Consciousness. Imagine taking a jug of water and pouring that water into the ocean. There is no longer “my jug of water.” It is all part of the ocean.

Another word that is used is *puṇyatithi*, which means a holy day, an auspicious day. Normally, we think of death as a sad occasion. Everybody cries, worries, and wonders about what has become of the person who died. In India, we believe the death of a great being – or of any person who has lived a full life – should be considered a cause for celebration because that individual has lived a complete life according to society; that is, he or she was married, had children, grandchildren, and maybe even great grandchildren, and generally did well in life.

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

Throughout his life,
a sage practices and
prepares for the
moment of death.

When a saint dies, his body is taken out in a procession, with music and mantras. It is said that the purpose for which he was born has been achieved. He left his body having done what he came to this earth to do. Therefore it is a holy day, an auspicious day.

If you read Baba's *Play of Consciousness*, his autobiography, you will see that during his days of *sāadhanā*, of spiritual practice, he told the people around him, "Soon I will be leaving this body." The people were a little sad and upset when they heard this, but he said, "Look, I've been having visions of the God of Death, and therefore I know it is time for me to go. So please prepare a place where you can keep this body."

In the Indian tradition, a monk's body is not burned. Either it is put in a river for the fish to eat or it is buried. If you have enough devotees who will come to visit you afterward, it is buried. And if you don't have anybody, it goes into the river. Otherwise who would take care of it? It is a simple way to dispose of the body. So when Baba told the people to prepare a place, they began to think and prepare and plan.

As Baba went through his *sāadhanā* experiences, he came to the realization that what was dying was only his individuality. He had the experience of his death.

The poet-saint Tukārām Mahārāj says, "I have seen my death with my own eyes."

Most individuals fear death because they don't know what will happen to them after they leave their body. But a sage actually experiences the death of his individuality, his sense of limitedness. Therefore, when he finally does leave his body, it is said he attains *nirvāṇa*.

Throughout his life, a sage practices and prepares for the moment of death. He is like an archer who, as described in the *Upaniṣads*, practices his skill because he wants his arrow to hit the bull's eye. The sage performs spiritual practices so that when his soul is released from his body, the arrow hits the bull's eye; that is, his soul merges into the Absolute.

There's one more word used for the occasion when a saint leaves his body: *brahmalīn*. When a sage leaves his body, we don't say that he is dead or has died. A person who has died will be reborn, and whoever is born will die. But when a great being leaves his body, it is said he is *brahmalīn* – he has merged with Brahma, he has merged back into the Absolute.

The poet-saint Brahmānanda sings, "The Sadguru has come to my home today, and therefore I am filled with great joy."

In this poem, I think Brahmānanda wants us to understand "home" as the body, not as a physical building. The soul dwells in this body, so therefore the home of the soul, or Self, is this body.

When the Guru comes to my home, as he says here, "I am filled with great joy." I am filled with bliss because I have allowed the Guru to enter this person, this body, this individual.

The Guru's grace comes to us through many forms. We see a great being and we have his *darśan*. We hear the mantra. We hear the Guru's words. The Guru gives us *śaktipāt*, initiation, through a touch.

Toward the end of Baba's life, he used peacock feathers to touch those who came to him in *darśan*. Imagine

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

**Grace is experienced
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trying to touch one or two thousand people every day. The peacock feathers were a good way to touch many, many, many people.

Sometimes when the Guru is sitting wherever he's sitting, and the disciple is sitting wherever he's sitting, they have what we would call today a wireless connection.

Earlier today, I was looking at a peach that was becoming overripe. I was reminded of what people saw when they went for Bhagavān Nityānanda's darśan. You can still see the pictures of him with coconuts and fruits and flowers lying all around.

One day somebody said to him – I'm sure this happened more than once – "You know, Baba, you should do something with this pile of fruit."

He said, "That which is to happen is happening. Those who need it, get it."

Probably in those days, the person didn't know what a wireless connection was, so he didn't understand what Bhagavān meant. But now that we know what wireless is, we can understand Guru's grace is not something that is limited to a physical space. Grace is experienced whenever an individual allows himself or herself to connect. Wireless connections need repeaters, as those who are familiar with the technology know. Similarly, grace has built-in repeaters through God and through all the individuals around the world who have allowed themselves to connect with grace.

Brahmānanda says, "Now that the Guru has entered this body, this house, and I've had his darśan, my sense of limitedness is gone."

You have to have, in my words, "married" the Guru to understand Brahmānanda's poem. And by marriage I don't mean in today's terms, whereby if the marriage works, fine, and if it doesn't work, fine. The kind of marriage I mean is one that always works, that will always work, or that we'll make work.

When you marry the Guru in this way, knowing this is a relationship that has been, is, and will always be, you can say, as Brahmānanda says, "Simply hearing the nectar-like words from within me, the darkness has vanished. I have attained the divine, which has always dwelled inside myself."

What happened? All your doubts, worries, and fears are gone. They have vanished, disappeared. All of a sudden you realize, "When I am a part of this big ocean that goes all over the universe, what should I worry about?" Because within the ocean are waves. Waves rise and merge back into the ocean.

So Brahmānanda says, "I, his devotee, his disciple, his servant, have taken refuge at my Guru's feet. I am holding onto his feet."

Sometimes people literally want to hold onto the Guru's feet. But I don't think Brahmānanda sat at his Guru's feet and held them.

Tukārām Mahārāj says, "You will not easily find someone like the Sadguru. So when you find him, grab onto him. Grab onto his feet."

I always clarify this by saying the feet are the foundation upon which an individual stands. If you want to stand up, what do you do? You get on your feet. You put on your shoes.

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

What does the Guru stand upon? If we think about being with Baba, it was his ability to always to be present, always to be aware.

Many people think being in samādhi means “I don’t have to worry anymore. Let God worry. Let others worry. Now I am in samādhi, so don’t disturb me.” In other words, they want to check out and not fulfill their responsibilities.

That’s not what we learned around Baba. We learned many things around him, but today I’ll share four *sūtras* that came to me over the years and that summarize what Baba stood for and what he taught us.

The first is *stillness in action*.

Your movement has to be such that it does not create any ripples. It does not disturb yourself or others.

I can give some simple examples of actions performed without stillness. We go out a door, but we don’t worry about making sure the door doesn’t bang. We go out the door without bothering to be aware that somebody is behind us. We let the door slam shut. We say, “Oops, sorry. I didn’t know you were there.”

Baba had a simple Hindi word for this kind of action: *jaḍ*. Jaḍ means inert or dead, like a stone. But I think even a stone has some life. Because to Baba, if you were pulsating Consciousness and aware of your true essence in every single moment, how could you really be inert? How could you be unaware of that which is happening around you?

So think about stillness in action. You don’t need to have clairvoyance; you just have to move with awareness.

The second *sūtra* is *anticipate, don’t be anxious*.

Such should be your presence of mind that you always know what will happen next, what must happen next, what should happen next.

I often share that Baba would just look at us and make a gesture to indicate what he wanted us to do. You might think, “What does he mean by that gesture?” But if you were aware of your inner Self, and aware that you and Baba were reverberating in that same Consciousness, you would know exactly what his gesture meant. Because the awareness was there within you, you were aware.

We never dared to ask him, “What?” Because we knew the answer would be “jaḍ.” Especially when you were among your peers and friends and colleagues, you never wanted Baba to call you jaḍ. So you’d have to immediately figure out what he meant. If you weren’t already in that awareness, you instantly had to go into it.

The third *sūtra* is *acceptance and patience*.

These are two qualities we always find lacking in life. We never accept what is because we think, “I can make this better.” So we never fully enjoy what is happening around us, what is here. We are never patient enough to allow what is unfolding to unfold.

Back in the early 1970s, Bhagavān Nityānanda’s statue was placed in the Ganeshpuri ashram. The silver canopy for the statue was made in South India. One day at about 11:30 or 11:45 am, just after Baba had finished his lunch, somebody came and told him, “The canopy has arrived.”

He said, “Okay.” He went to the temple to see the canopy, which had been brought there. He said, “Let’s put it up!”

Such should be your presence of mind that you always know what will happen next, what must happen next, what should happen next.

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

Somebody said, “But Baba, we must look for the auspicious time.”

He said, “Now is auspicious.”

That is spontaneity. We always think, “Wait a moment! I must think, I must plan, I must prepare.” But the planning already has been done. You have the awareness, the foreknowledge, of what is coming, so in the moment that it comes, you are ready.

I often joke that people say, “Okay, after satsaṅg we’ll have lunch. And at two o’clock we shall leave.” But then two o’clock arrives, and they say, “Are we leaving now? What is our plan?”

I tell them, “Well, if it has been decided that you are leaving at two o’clock, then that means you must be ready, with your bags in the car, to leave at two o’clock. You don’t come at two o’clock and say, ‘Are we going to leave now?’”

These are habits we create. Often we don’t even realize we’ve gotten caught up in our own little world.

When we think about becoming aware, about reverberating in divine Consciousness, we have to think about stillness in action. How should my actions be? Perfect. You never have to doubt that anything is wrong with your actions because you know they have been thought out thoroughly. It may not seem like that to the rest of the world, but if you are aligned with Consciousness, it should seem that way to you. If you are prepared for what is to come, you won’t feel any anxiety associated with it. You’ll be patient. You’ll be accepting of what is.

The next sūtra came to me at a traffic light in San Rafael, in Marin County in California, way back in 1983. The

person who was driving me in the car was trying to decide whether he was going to make the red light.

I said, “Go for it.”

He said, “No, we can’t.”

I said, “Yes, go for it.”

I think we made it.... In that moment, I said to him, *“Think twice, don’t hesitate.”*

You have to ask yourself, “Is the light at that point where it could change?” But don’t let your foot off the gas because that will slow you down. Let the hesitation not be there, but let the wisdom, the knowledge, the understanding continue their work.

We think, “I’m not going to meditate and do sādhanā till I figure all of this out.”

That’s like putting all your vegetables on the counter and then saying, “I’m not going to chop them until I figure out how I’m going to cook them.”

You have to start chopping. You have to start washing. You have to start preparing. As you’re doing all of that, those things will talk to you. They will tell you how to go about it.

You may think, “This is silly.” But all these things do talk. It’s just that we don’t listen because we’re busy with our own small talk: “Yes. No. Cabbage, no. Carrots, yes. Green peas, ahh....” Just stop. Just go about your work, and you’ll see that they will tell you. But you have to listen. Think, and ask questions. At the same time, be prepared to listen to the answers. Because as the questions come, so do the answers.

When we think about becoming aware, about reverberating in divine Consciousness, we have to think about stillness in action. How should my actions be? Perfect.

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

These are the four sūtras I wanted to share with you. Of course, many more have come to me over the years. But I think following these four is a great way to live life.

I'm not suggesting you should go around telling yourself, "Stillness in action! Think twice, don't hesitate! Patience and acceptance! Anticipate, don't be anxious!" These sūtras have to become a part of you. You can't have teachings from a book and say, "Oh, let's see...." No, the teachings have to become part of who you are. They have to become alive. As Baba would say, imbibe them. When they become a part of you, then you don't have to think so much about what you are going to do. Your actions will come naturally.

I'm reminded of a story. It's a very practical story.

Imagine you've gotten in the car on a Sunday morning. You're all ready to go to satsaṅg. Then, along the way, you have a flat. Normal minds would begin to analyze, "What is God trying to tell me? Is this a sign I shouldn't go to satsaṅg? Is it the wrong day to go to satsaṅg? What have I done?"

Instead you can rewrite this story. Imagine Baba is on his way to satsaṅg. He has a flat. What does he do? He gets out of the car. He gets out the wrench and he loosens the nuts. He gets the jack out and lifts up the car. He puts the new tire on. He throws the other tire in the back. Off he goes to satsaṅg.

You see the difference?

A person of wisdom realizes, "These things happen. It's a fact of life." It's a nail. It's a stone. It's whatever. But you can't stop and sit and analyze. You must just keep moving, keep going.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* talks about this. It says, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. "There should be skill in action."

When I think of Baba and of our time with him, these are the things we learned. To always be ready. To always be prepared. To always allow your mind, as the *Gītā* says, to be *dakṣa*, alert. Never allow yourself to go into a moment of lethargy.

Mistakes are not allowed, either. Mistakes are not possible. The word mistake does not exist in your vocabulary. What does that mean? It means your skill should be such that it always is perfect. Everyone who worked for Baba, everyone around him, had to learn that this is the only way to live life.

Often when people visit the ashram, they spend about three to five days, a week, or a little bit longer. When it's time to go home, they say, "Oh, I'm so tired from having been in the ashram." Because here everybody is up, or at least is supposed to be up, by four or five o'clock in the morning. The whole day goes on, and it comes to an end at about nine or ten o'clock in the evening. It's a wonderful routine because you always know most of what the day is about and what has to be done. And of course there's a lot of energy and movement because of the chanting and meditation and satsaṅg and just being in community.

It takes so much time to work out all the "Should I or shouldn't I? Do I or don't I go...?" Just stop that! There is no need for that in the ashram. Everything is prepared. Everything is laid out. You just need to keep moving.

At home, when you return at five o'clock in the evening, maybe you have happy hour. Then you watch television. You have a nice dinner, and then some chitchat, which

The teachings have to become part of who you are.

A Great Way to Live Life (continued)

**May we all experience
freedom within
ourselves. May we all
share that freedom,
that wisdom, with
everyone.**

you might call “unwinding.” But here we have to have happy hour for twenty-four hours a day. We don’t have happy hour for an hour and then say the other twenty-three hours are unhappy hours. For one who isn’t used to it, constantly being in touch with that joy, with that happiness, can require some effort.

People thought Baba was high strung because he was always going. He walked at a good speed. Every action was fast. He’d always say, “Keep moving, keep moving, keep moving.”

I would always think to myself, “For what? We’re here. Nobody’s going anywhere.”

But as I thought about it over the years, it dawned on me that we always think, “Time? I have so much time....”

Last night, someone said to me, “I can’t believe we’re already getting ready for Christmas. It’s only two months away.” She said, “Where has the year 2010 gone? It seems that we just began it a few months back.”

I said, “Yes, ten months back.”

The sage Bhartṛhari says you can imagine that a priest has blessed you, saying, “May you live well for a hundred years.”

Bhartṛhari says, “Birth to twenty-five is gone in youth.” Today youth is shorter, but in those days, up to age twenty-five you were thought of as a child.

Then he said, “Twenty-five years is spent in sleep.”

When you add up the years, you have twenty-five in youth, twenty-five in sleep, and twenty-five in sickness. I don’t know if everybody spends twenty-five in sickness, but sometimes I ask people, “Why didn’t you come to satsaṅg?”

“Oh, I had a headache.” “Oh, I had a stomachache.” “Oh, I had a cold.” “Oh, I had an earache.”

We are so full of aches! So twenty-five in sickness means we may not be hooked up in the hospital, but still we’re basically left with twenty-five good years, give or take. And even in those twenty-five, God knows what we do.

With Baba, we had seven-day *saptāhs*, during which we chanted nonstop for seven days, twenty-four hours a day. Some people did not go to the chant, but during those seven days they sponsored a breakfast or lunch or dinner. So there’d be lots of food because there’d be so many people. One of the ways people gain merit is by serving food to all the guests who come.

Baba would say, “Everybody chanted very well. Congratulations to those who chanted.”

Then there were some people who, he said, “came and just ate and slept and filled our septic tanks.” He said, “Don’t come to the ashram for that.”

Baba always reminded us that we come to the ashram to gain wisdom, knowledge, and merit and to become free of all the actions we have done that bind us, that limit us, that take us away from the experience of I am That, of our divinity.

As we celebrate Baba’s twenty-eighth mahāsamādhi, the lunar anniversary of the day he left his body, we can only be grateful that such beings come upon this earth to give knowledge, to give wisdom. May we all experience freedom within ourselves. May we all share that freedom, that wisdom, with everyone.



G L O S S A R Y

brahmalīn

merging with Brahma

Brahmānanda

[1772-1832] poet saint

darśan

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

mahāsamādhi

final merging with the Absolute

nirvāṇa

final liberation

pūṇyatithi

final departure from the physical body

sādhana

spiritual practices

samādhi

union with the Absolute

satsaṅg

in the company of a knower of the Truth (saint)

śakti

the creative energy of the universe;
the awakened spiritual energy

śaktipāt

transmission of śakti by the Guru

sūtra

aphorism, verse

Tukārām Mahārāj

[1608-1650] poet saint

Upaniṣads

ancient Hindu scriptures