

Siddha Marg



धर्म अर्थ काम मोक्ष

The philosophy of yoga says we have four ideals in a human life: dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa.

We first have to understand dharma: what should I be doing, what sustains me in life? This takes some clarification, wisdom.

As we come to understand dharma, we also earn money, or wealth (artha). This isn't just about making money; it's about using our wealth for a higher purpose.

If our desires (kāma) sustain goodness and are uplifting, then as we satisfy them, we can be aware that the purpose of our life is liberation (mokṣa), becoming free of the cycle of birth and death.

MAHĀMANDALESHWAR SWAMI NITYĀNANDA

The purpose of Siddha Marg is to share the eternal teachings, sanātan dharma. Formal talks, study, conversations, questions and answers, kirtan, meditation, and silence are some of the methods used by Gurudev, Mahāmandaleshwar Swami Nityānanda Saraswatī, to share his ruminations on and expression of the universal philosophy. This issue features excerpts from a talk he gave while in residence at the ashram in Walden, New York, on Guru Pūrṇimā, in July 2017.

The Day of the Guru

With great respect and love, I would like to welcome everyone here this morning. Today is the full moon of this month of July. All over the world, yesterday and today, many people have celebrated Guru Pūrṇimā.

Today we also celebrate thirty years of the existence of Shanti Mandir. Thirty years ago, we started doing this. For me, actually, it's been fifty-six years of celebrating Guru Pūrṇimā.

Now we have a small place, half an acre, in Ganeshpuri, that someone donated. On this day of Guru Pūrṇimā, we are there for the first time. I think we have one bedroom, a living room, a verandah, a kitchen, and a bathroom—it depends on how you add up the rooms.

To clarify what some of us were talking about earlier, the ashram Bhagavan Nityānanda gave Baba Muktaṇanda in Ganeshpuri was the front portion of that property. Many people who came after 1970 never saw the original building, which had an L-shaped meditation hall and three rooms that became what is today the Nityānanda Temple.

When you walked in the gate, there was a parijata tree. It was very simple. In the hall, there was a picture of Bhagavan similar to—or maybe the same one as—the picture that's up in Turiya Mandir now. And there was Bhagavan's statue.

Baba originally had that statue made for the *samādhi* shrine in Ganeshpuri. But the main trustee there did not want a gift from Swami Muktaṇanda. Baba was, we could say, positive aggressive. I've heard people talk in these last few years about being passive aggressive, and I don't think that's the right word. Positive aggressive fits better. So, when the temple trustees decided not to take that statue, Baba said to his man Friday—whom some of you may remember, Venkappa—"Okay, let's build a temple at the ashram."

The Day of the Guru (continued)

Baba wasn't just positive aggressive, he was doubly positive and doubly aggressive. The original three rooms were taken down, and within three and a half months, a whole new building had been built. This was in 1970, while Baba was away on his first world tour. For those of you who think India is backwards today, imagine doing all that in three and a half months!

What had been the meditation room became Baba's room. He lived there for a short time, and later it became his shrine. In the meantime, they built him a new house in the back, which he moved into.

Baba always said, "See God in each other. God dwells within you as you."

Sometimes you may forget to see God in each other. You think, "Well, they just don't see the God in me yet, and I don't see the God in them yet, either."

Another thing Baba said was "The belief that anything other than love will end suffering is the cause of suffering."

When we think about Baba's messages, we realize that one of the words common to many of them is *love*. The exact word *love* doesn't exist in the Indian scriptures. Strange, isn't it? I guess the sages thought, "Love as people think of it is temporary, fleeting, dependent, so why talk about love? Let's talk about *ānanda*." *Ānanda* means, we could say, love-bliss.

Today, as we celebrate Guru Pūrṇimā, we think of *ānanda*.

When we lived in Pine Bush for three years, there was a devotee who drove a huge station wagon. One day, it drove itself into a ditch, and then she got a little car.

I have an interest in cars and I know the brands, models, technical details, and so on. So when this woman told me about the Ford she bought, I said, "There's no such car, no such model of Ford."

She said, "Come, look."

So I went with her. When I saw the car, I said, "Wow, I've never seen this model before!" We drove it, and the mechanic said it was good, and she bought it. But then, everywhere we went on the freeway, guess what I saw? Not her car, but that particular model of Ford.

When it comes to God, or to the Guru, I think something similar can happen. You've never heard of the Guru. You've never seen the Guru. You've never even thought about the Guru. Then, all of a sudden, somebody puts the Guru in front of you, or you run into the Guru. And then, as the poet-saint says, "Wherever I look, I only see You."

In India, one can buy the statues of deities from an artist who makes them.

The artist says, "One lakh rupees."

You say, "No, 65,000."

A deal is finally struck somewhere around 85,000 or 90,000.

You buy the statue and take it home. Then you sit in front of the statue and say to the deity, "I'm buying a lotto ticket this week. It's worth so many hundreds of millions."

When you bought that statue, you were negotiating with the artist for a few thousand rupees, but now you're asking the deity for millions and billions. This is how we treat love—as this kind of deal.

As we celebrate this day of the Guru, we have to ask ourselves some serious and sincere questions: What am I really doing? What is really going on? And where is it that I am headed?



**"See God in each other.
God dwells within you
as you."**

May I Never Forget You

We should forever be grateful for all that we have received in life.

These fifty-six years of life have been wonderful. That doesn't mean they have been without challenges, with no turbulence. The seat belt has been on. Sometimes one feels that the pilot has been doing acrobatics when he shouldn't be. Then he says, "Trust me."

Many years ago, somebody gave me a book somebody had given him. He said, "I don't understand the language. I hope you can read it." It was in Marathi, and the author is sharing the teachings of Bhagavan Nityānanda. I just love the title: *May I Never Forget You*. Or *May You Never Be Forgotten*. I often think simply of this title, and I tell my mind, "May you never, even for a few moments or seconds, forget the Guru, forget grace."

We should forever be grateful for all that we have received in life.

In Magod, we had a student who was with us for almost twelve years. He has a brilliant mind. He graduated and has now gone off to study Sanskrit grammar with a different teacher.

A devotee who was visiting the ashram a few years ago asked this student, "How are you?"

The student was probably sixteen or seventeen at the time. He looked at the devotee and said, "Great. How else should one be in the ashram?"

Somebody who overheard this conversation reported it to me, and I said, "Excellent." I was impressed that somebody

who was only about sixteen knew that the question "How are you?" is invalid in the ashram, where one lives in the balloon of grace.

That is gratitude. A person who experiences gratitude becomes content. His mind becomes cheerful. In his life, there is no misery, no suffering. In such a person, the *buddhi*, the intellect, moves away from wrong thinking and wrong doing and becomes established in the upliftment of oneself. When the mind no longer goes down, but simply rises, we experience *prasād*, a blessing. We experience grace.

We tend to think of struggle as trouble. But our scriptures tell us that struggle is not trouble. Struggle is simply the polishing of the individual so he can shine.

People come to the ashram and they say, "Why don't you have television?"

I say, "It's not necessary." Really, it's not.

Come and visit us. We have lots of ideas we can share with you. And you can entertain yourself, as well. You can laugh. You can cry. Terrifying things won't happen to you here, because if you chant, meditate, and have *satsaṅg*, the mind stays positive and only thinks uplifting things.

Somebody who was part of an ashram from a very young age told me that some bad things had happened to her in life. Of course, that can happen. She said, "You know, many people think that one bad thing makes the whole thing bad, or wrong."

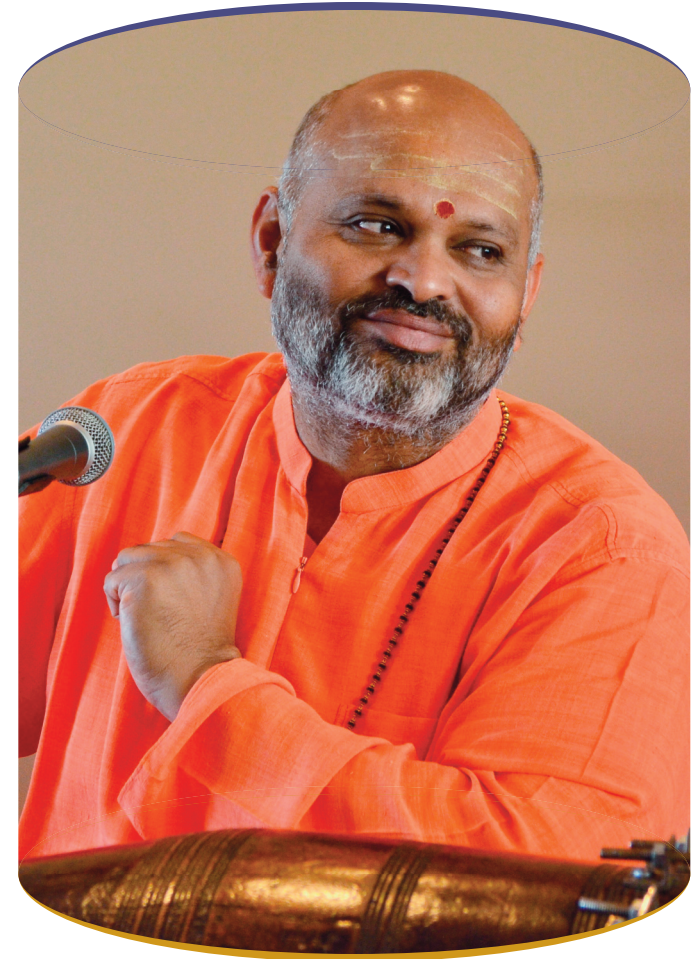
May I Never Forget You (continued)

In English, there's a saying: "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water." I think those of us associated with an ashram, a temple, or a path should always remember this. After all, we are human. Whether we live out in the world or live in the ashram, we are the same person. If a person does stuff out there, he's going to do that same stuff here in the ashram, too.

This person who had the bad thing happen gave an example. In the ashram we serve khichdi, which is made of rice and lentils, for dinner on Saturday nights. Those who love khichdi come to the ashram on Saturday night. She said, "Imagine that khichdi has been laced with poison. The khichdi is nectar, but it has been laced with the poison of wrong understanding. So, do I say, 'No, I won't eat it'? I'm hungry. I want food. I need the nectar to take care of this body." She said, "Like that, over a period of time, I have gotten rid of the poison in my life and I have kept the nectar."

What I want to share with all of you is this: Don't throw the good things away. See the nectar. Take the nectar. Simply get rid of the poison.

**Take the nectar. Simply
get rid of the poison.**



From Darkness to Light

The knowledge you
receive has to be
digested.

In the *Guru Gītā*, in verse 23, we sing, *gukāras-tvandhakāraśca rukāras-teja ucyate*. “The syllable *gu* indicates darkness and the syllable *ru* indicates light.”

When you are in the darkness, you don’t understand any of this because you are ignorant. But when you are in the light, when you are in the Self, when you are in Consciousness, all of this makes great sense.

Here is something you could do at home. Take a piece of paper. Draw a line down the middle. On one side, write *gu*, meaning darkness. On the other side, write *ru*, meaning light. Then look at your life and fill in the two sides.

The idea is to look at what is poison, what is darkness. Eliminate that and focus upon the light.

This same verse says, *ajñāna-grāsakaṁ brahma gurureva na saṁmīśayaḥ*. “There is no doubt about what the Guru, the grace-bestowing power, does in our life.”

If you choose to sit in a dark room and say, “It’s dark. It’s cold. It’s dark. It’s cold,” you cannot do anything. You have to come out of that room. Sit in the sun and say, “Wow! Feel the warmth of the sun.”

Of course, my mother always advised me, “Avoid the sun from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.” Similarly, sometimes you have to go away, you have to hide from the Guru, because you have to digest what you are eating. Otherwise, you’ll get diarrhea because you’re eating too much. The knowledge you receive has to be digested.

Whenever somebody asks me, “What was the best time of your life?” I say, “Without a doubt, April 1978 to October 1982.” Those were the days, months, and years I spent in the physical company of Baba Muktaṇanda.

But—I want to tell everyone—don’t be too historical about those days. That is a mistake many of us make. The Guru is alive today. The Guru is present in your life in this very moment.

Yesterday, as we sat here chanting the *Guru Gītā* in the morning, I wrote down a few verses. I have chosen six. The version of the *Guru Gītā* we sing has 182 verses. There are many different versions because people come along and think, “I’m going to make it better. I’m going to delete some verses I think make no sense, and I’m going to add some that make good sense.”

I tell them, “It’s fine the way it is.”

Verse 21 says,

*ananyāś-cintayanto mām
sulabhaṁ paramaṁ padam,
tasmāt sarva-prayatnena
guror-ārādhanaṁ kuru.*

Ananya is a name for girls in India. It means unbroken. Lord Śiva says to Pārvatī, “Let the mind never stop thinking of the Guru. Let it just focus on the Guru.”

And then, *sulabhaṁ paramaṁ padam*. He says, “That attainment is so easy.” How so? He says, “Constantly, with effort, without being lazy, follow what the Guru has said.”

From Darkness to Light (continued)

Somebody might say *ārāadhanam* means to worship the Guru. But worshipping the Guru doesn't mean that you go to the Guru and say, "Guruji, I'll squeeze your legs."

The Guru would say, "Excuse me, it's hurting." That happens, you know.

The person says, "But that's what it says here in the *Guru Gītā*."

The Guru says, "I think it means that you should live the teachings."

The relationship between Guru and disciple is the fruit of many lifetimes. I've shared before that wherever I find myself today is not an accident. It's something that has come about over lifetimes.

Where you are is not just because of what you've done, it's also because of all those along with you. Somebody in your family whom you don't even know may be praying for you, doing something for you, or thinking about you. They may not know why, but they are.

There is a devotee in Ahmedabad who has often shared a story with us. He and his father and mother and sisters used to come to Ganeshpuri in an Ambassador car. One morning, Baba came out at 4 o'clock, just as they were leaving. They had to drive eight hours to get back home. They had already told Baba the night before that they were going and said their goodbyes. But Baba came out in the morning and asked the guard, "Which is the car that is going to Ahmedabad?"

The guard pointed to the car, and Baba took his stick and went around to all four tires and hit them.

The devotee said, "We don't understand what the Guru did. Maybe we were going to have a flat. Maybe the car was going to have a problem. All we know is that the guard told us this. We never asked Baba why he did what he did."

Verse 73 says,

*aneka-janma-samprāpta-
sarva-karma-vidāhine,
svātmajñāna-prabhāveṇa
tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ.*

The collection of good karmas from so many lifetimes finally gives you *svātmajñāna*—the knowledge of the Self. And then you offer salutations to Śrī Guru for this.

Verse 87 says,

*dhyānam śṛṇu mahādevi
sarvānanda-pradāyakam,
sarva-saukhyakaram nityam
bhukti-mukti-vidhāyakam.*

Lord Śiva says to Pārvatī, "Listen carefully because the Guru gives you love-bliss."

So, when you think of the Guru, think of light. Think of the khichdi. In the West it is known as comfort food.

Sarva-saukhyakaram nityam. I want you to understand this word, *saukhya*. Those of you who own dogs will understand it. When its boss or the owner returns home—it doesn't matter who it is: man, woman, whatever—the dog becomes tranquil, content. Everything's okay. *Saukhya*. Even if one member of the family is missing, the dog sits at the door until that person comes back.

Nityam means always, eternal, without fail. It describes the bond, the relationship, the friendship, the attachment, the love. Happiness to many people means "I'm happy when I get my ice cream. I'm happy when I get my Pepto-Bismol after lunch." Their happiness depends upon all these factors.

The scriptures tell us that when we do our practice, when we do our *sāadhanā*, then both *bhukti* and *mukti*, both the pleasures of the world and the liberation of the Self, will come to us.

**The relationship
between Guru and
disciple is the fruit of
many lifetimes.**

From Darkness to Light (continued)

You may wonder, “What should I worship the Guru for? Why should I worship God? Why should I be spiritual?” The only thing I would say is that life in this world is nothing without prayer. The level of prayer doesn’t matter. Prayer itself is what’s important—your connection to divinity, to Truth. That brings you *sarva-saukya*.

Verse 169 says,

*mātā dhanyā pitā dhanyo
dhanyo vaṁśaḥ kulam tathā,
dhanyā ca vasudhā devi
guru-bhaktiḥ sudurlabhā.*

It says, “The mother is blessed, and the father is blessed. The entire clan is blessed.” Nor is it just the family and the ancestors; *vasudhā* means this earth. The earth, too, feels blessed by God, by the Guru.

And the verse says *guru-bhaktiḥ sudurlabhā*. This love we feel for the Guru—this emotion, this longing, this absorption, this affection—is rare indeed. Here in the ashram, you might think, “Oh, so many of us feel this.” But go to Times Square. You will realize how many don’t feel this. The contrast is huge between those who believe, who trust, and those who don’t.

Why? Verse 90 says,

*nityam śuddham nirābhāsam
nirākāram nirañjanam,
nityabodham cidānandam
gurum brahma namāmyaham.*

These are the qualities of the Self—the qualities of divinity, of Truth—that dwell within each and every one of us.

One quality of the Self is *nityam*. It’s eternal; it’s always there. Whether you believe in it or you don’t believe in it, the Self is always there. Nothing can happen to it.

It’s *śuddham*. It’s pure. It’s *nirañjanam*. It’s untainted. It’s *nirākāram*. It cannot be touched. It’s *nirābhāsam*. You can’t even actually feel it.

When we were in California, one of the transcribers of Baba’s talks said, “I’ve had *śaktipat*. I’ve experienced it. I know it. But still I don’t know what it is.”

That’s why this verse says *nirābhāsam*: you can’t know the Self the way you know, say, ice cream. You can take a slurp of ice cream, right? You can’t do that with *śaktipat* or with the Self. You just sense what is happening inside you. You know you have been touched.

The way I would describe it is to say that the Self, Consciousness, the Truth we seek is always in the light. We might sometimes retreat into darkness. We can sometimes get lost in our ignorance. But the Self, the Truth, is always in light. Why? It is *nityabodham*. It is self-illuminating; it’s constantly illumined. It’s constantly in light.

Within yourself, when you are in that space of light, of Truth, all that you can know is knowledge. All that you can know is wisdom. That wisdom is *cidānandam*. It is the bliss of Consciousness.

Therefore, *gurum brahma namāmyaham*. I offer salutations to the Guru.

When somebody grabs you and says, “There’s only darkness, there’s only poison,” you say, “No, no, no. There’s only light. There’s only light. There’s only light.” Got it?

This is why, whenever struggles come, you have to be clear within yourself about what the Guru has given. Don’t get lost. Don’t look at the poison. Look at the khichdi. Look at the light. Look at the Truth.



Whether you believe
in it or you don’t believe
in it, the Self is always
there.

G L O S S A R Y

ānanda

bliss

buddhi

intellect

Guru Gītā

commentary on the Guru

Guru Pūrṇimā

full moon of the Guru in July

Pārvatī

Hindu goddess, wife of Śiva

prasād

blessed gift

sādhana

spiritual practices

śaktipat

transmission of śakti by the Guru

samādhi

union with the Absolute

satsaṅg

in the company of the Truth

Śiva

Hindu deity, the primordial Guru

Śrī

used to indicate reverence

