

# Siddha Marg



## लोकानन्दःसमाधिसुखम्

*The Śiva Sūtra Baba often talked about was Lokānandaḥ samādhi sukham, “The bliss of the world is the bliss of samādhi.” When you first hear this, you ask yourself, “How can external enjoyment be the same as immersion within?”*

*The scriptures say we must come to realize that the joy we experience doesn’t come from any object, it comes from within us. Therefore, you can have a thrill, you can have joy. But your awareness and understanding is there that it comes from within.*

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 Gurudev gave at a satsaṅg in Mullumbimby, Australia, in March 2019.*

## Become Steady

With great respect and love, I’d like to welcome you here to satsaṅg this evening. It is our third evening, and what should have been the final evening. But we will have an evening tomorrow as well, with a dancing kirtan.

We began this journey a couple of weeks ago, after our final satsaṅg at the ashram in Gujarat, India. For two months, we will be on the road—first in Western Australia, now here in Eastern Australia, in Melbourne, through California, and Hawaii. We’ll meet many people, including some who have been part of this tradition since before I was born, who lived with Baba Muktānanda, and who have been following this path of yoga and meditation.

As we started the tour, I was thinking about what message to carry with us. And I always feel we could do better. We could improve.

For example, when people play the *pakhawaj*, it is tuned. Yet because of the weather, sometimes it gets sharp. And sometimes it gets flat. The same is true for most instruments that need tuning. The weather affects them.

The weather affects us too. We go along. We’re good. Everything’s fine. And then we hit some turbulent weather.

In an airplane, all of a sudden, the pilot says, “Okay, put your seat belt on. There’s some turbulence coming up. We’re stopping the service. Flight attendants, please sit down.” So there’s no coffee, no water, nothing.

## Become Steady (continued)

Life is like that. It's smooth. Everything's going along fine. Then all of a sudden, turbulence shows up. At that moment, we have to ask ourselves, "How am I? What is going on within myself?"

Each day we pray, "May the wicked become good. May goodness arise within each of us who lives upon this earth."

Through the process of satsaṅg, may these noble qualities arise within each and every one of us. May we feel peace. May we experience it. May we share it wherever we go.

Nobility is about thinking uplifting thoughts. It's about sharing through uplifting speech. It's about performing our activities so they are uplifting.

When we spend time in the company of one who is noble, we feel uplifted. We feel good. We benefit. Even though nothing may have transpired externally, we sense within ourselves that something wonderful has happened.

We live a noble, uplifting life not only for ourselves but also for those around us. When we do that, we begin to gather knowledge, wisdom. We begin to become wise. Then when situations arise in life, when turbulence happens, we remain steady. We don't falter. We don't lose a beat. We keep moving with that wisdom, with that understanding.

I feel that when life is turbulent, it is a test of how established we are in knowledge, in wisdom. If in that moment we forget the wisdom, the knowledge, we haven't really, as Baba Muktaṅanda would say, imbibed it.

Baba shared a story about a man who sells oil. He has a parrot outside his door, and he has taught this parrot to greet every customer who walks through the door by saying, "Sītā Rām, Sītā Rām."

Now, there is a cat who watches this bird every single day. The owner feeds the parrot, then closes its cage, and the cat watches all that.

One day, when the owner is feeding the parrot, a customer comes in. The owner forgets to close the cage.

The cat has been waiting for this very moment. He goes and he grabs the parrot.

Baba would laugh and say, "In that moment, the parrot forgets "Sītā Rām, Sītā Rām." Instead, the parrot begins making his parrot-like sounds, because now he is filled with fear. He knows death is near, waiting to finish his life.

Baba would say that, for those of us who come to satsaṅg, who follow this path, the teachings and the practices should become part of our life. Then when such situations arise, our mind doesn't waiver. Rather, our mind remains steady. It remains settled.

In Pātañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, there is a *sūtra* that says, "Not only the *āsanas*, the physical postures, we perform in yoga but the foundation upon which we have based our life should be steady."

Sometimes when you hold your hand out, you will see that it shakes. That shaking doesn't always come from the physical body as much as it comes from a lack of steadiness, a faltering, within. In the same way, steadiness, stillness, is what you have to find within yourself.

Where does this steadiness come from? It comes from wisdom. It comes from understanding. It comes from knowledge.



**Steadiness, stillness, is what you have to find within yourself.**

# Become Holy

**Yoga is not about acting holy but about feeling holiness within yourself.**

As we move along on the path of yoga, the path of meditation, the path of satsaṅg, life actually becomes simpler. The *Upaniṣads* speak about living with a sense of detachment, a sense of renunciation. Don't become caught in the things of this world, but be free of them.

Bhagavān Nityānanda would talk about the cashew fruit. Most seeds are inside the fruit. But the cashew nut is one seed that lives outside the fruit. So he said, "Live your life in the world in this manner." You are part of the fruit, part of the world, yet separate from it. There is a sense of detachment, yet also a sense of freedom.

Someone shared with me yesterday that she tried to invite friends to come to satsaṅg. They were a little bit worried and said, "Is he going to stare into our eyes? Is he going to do *kuṇḍalinī* movements?"

This is what people think of these days in the name of yoga. In their minds, yoga has nothing to do with contemplating "who am I?" It has nothing to do with what's going on within oneself.

Yoga has become externalized. We think that what is outside represents the path of yoga, of spirituality.

Actually, yoga has nothing to do with any of that. Yoga is about becoming free of all of those things. It is about finding steadiness. It is about finding the sense of comfort within.

Yoga is not about acting holy but about feeling holiness within yourself.

So be noble, be wise, be holy. And lead a simple life.

Eventually, hopefully, you'll become an uplifted being, an enlightened sage. But until then, at least think about these things, remember these things. Remind yourself constantly: be noble, be uplifted, be wise.

Being wise, I always say, is not about being clever. It's not about playing mind games with one another. The scriptures tell us that when one is wise, humility follows naturally. That wisdom is awake, is alive, within that person. So live in this way.



# Which Is Real?

**The waking state is as unreal as the dream state.**

Somebody asked Baba Muktānanda, “If I receive a message in a dream, how true is it?”

His answer was that the dream is as true as your waking state.

So the next question should be “How am I in my waking state?” Thinking about your waking state, ask yourself, “Am I a good person? Do I have good thoughts? Do I do good things? Are my actions uplifting?”

After you have answered those questions, understand that what happens in the dream state is a reflection of how you have been in your waking state. If you’ve been a good, wonderful person in your waking state, then in your dream state, wonderful things will happen to you.

The sages say the waking state is as unreal as the dream state. The dream state is as unreal as the waking state. And the deep sleep state, which many of us experience without dreams, is just as unreal.

Why is the waking state unreal?

Because as soon as I close my eyes, none of this exists for me.

Why is the dream state unreal?

Because when my eyes are closed, I am watching that dream, but when I open my eyes, I see that the dream is unreal.

As much as all of this here in this room exists for me now with my eyes open, as soon as my senses withdraw into themselves, all of this becomes unreal. And whatever dream I’m having, that dream becomes unreal when I wake up.

Of course, when I get close to deep sleep, none of this exists—neither the waking nor the dream. I’m lost, unconscious. The mind has become as quiet as it can. In that state of deep sleep, we come closest to the Consciousness that dwells within us.

So, in your waking state, use your time to do something that’s uplifting. Do *japa*, repetition of the mantra. Study the scriptures. Have uplifting conversations. Do things that are beneficial.

Then, when you go into the dream state, you take these things with you into that dream state. The dream state is nothing but an expression of that which you perform in the waking state.

In Vedānta there is a story about King Janaka.

Janaka is fast asleep in his bed in his palace. While he is asleep, he has a dream that he goes to war with another king. He loses the war. He’s tired, he’s hungry. So he goes to a farm and takes some sugarcane. He begins to eat it.

The farmer comes. He tries to drive Janaka away from the field, saying, “Get out! Go away! This is my field. This is my sugarcane.”

As he’s being driven away, Janaka wakes up. He finds himself lying in his bed. He’s in his palace. He’s next to his queen.

Then he closes his eyes again. He’s back in that sugarcane field. He’s lost his kingdom. He’s tired, he’s hungry.

When he wakes up the next morning, he calls his ministers.

## Which Is Real? (continued)

He says, “I have a question. Which one is real: me sleeping in the bed, with my queen, in my palace, or me with eyes closed, dreaming that I’ve lost my kingdom and I’m being driven away by the farmer?”

Nobody has the answer to this question, so the king says, “Tomorrow I want the answer. If you don’t have the answer, I’ll throw you in jail!”

News begins to spread around the kingdom that King Janaka has a question none of his wise people are able to answer.

The next day, when the court gathers, a young man walks in. His name is Aṣṭāvakra. His body is bent in eight places. You can imagine that it’s an odd sight.

Aṣṭāvakra walks into the court and announces to the king, “I can answer your question.”

The whole court begins to laugh. The king begins to laugh.

As Aṣṭāvakra watches the court laughing and the king laughing, he too begins to laugh.

When he begins to laugh, everybody else becomes quiet. They think they know why they are laughing, but they don’t know why he is laughing. What does he find so funny?

As Aṣṭāvakra walks toward him, the king asks, “O sage, why did you laugh?”

He says, “O king, first tell me why you and all your courtiers, your wise people, laughed.”

The king says, “That’s obvious. Look at you. Your body is bent. It looks funny, it looks strange. All these people here are considered to be the wise people of this kingdom. I have a question they were not able to answer. Yet you claim you can answer my question. But you look so funny!”

Aṣṭāvakra says, “O king, I was told that King Janaka is wise.

He has satsaṅg. He’s surrounded by wise people. So when I came to this court, I expected the people here to be full of wisdom. But when you began laughing, I realized you were laughing at this body. So you can’t really be wise. Because all you are looking at is the external, the outside. You’re not looking at what I carry within me. So therefore I laughed. I realized nobody here is as wise as I thought they would be.”

Then Aṣṭāvakra addresses the king’s question: which is real, the waking state in which the king is with his queen in the palace bed, or the dream, in which he is in the field, eating sugarcane, having lost his kingdom, and is driven away by the farmer? He says, “O king, neither is real! Your waking state, where you are King Janaka, in your bed, with your queen, in the palace, is not real. And neither is your dream of being driven away by the farmer, as you are tired and hungry, trying to get some sugarcane to eat.”

He says, “O king, what is real is the experience of the *Ātman*, the experience of the Self.”

This is the foundation of the philosophy of Vedānta, which takes twelve, fifteen, twenty-four years to know and to understand.

In the beginning, the Guru tells us, “You are the Absolute.”

And we say, “Wow! Wonderful!”

But then, in order to fully realize “I am none of this,” we do yoga. We have satsaṅg. We study, we meditate. We tell ourselves, “I am the Absolute.” It is a journey that each one of us goes through. It is not the destination. It is not the goal. It is not where we want to arrive at. It is only the journey.

When we do arrive, having had glimpses along the way of oneness with Consciousness, we realize we were caught up in the game, busy in the play, the drama. Even after we have heard about the Truth and read about the Truth and understood the Truth, to actually become free of the whole play takes a long time.

**What is real is the experience of the Ātman, the experience of the Self.**



# Baba's Message

**“We love each other because of the existence of Consciousness.”**

I was fortunate to have met Baba Muktañanda at birth. My parents were devotees, so I lived for the first fifteen years going to the ashram every weekend and on vacations, and spending as much time as possible in Baba's company.

My parents always said, “Believe in the Guru! Trust the Guru! Love the Guru! Do what he says!”

But then I had friends in school in Mumbai who thought, “What does this boy do every weekend? Go to the ashram?”

In retrospect, I look back at all the wisdom, all the knowledge, that I sat and listened to. At times I wondered, “What is oneness? What is the Self? What is Consciousness? What is meditation?”

But then slowly I came to understand and experience and feel that which the scriptures, the sages, and the Gurus talk about. I realized it's not just a fleeting moment, it's not a glimpse here and there. We actually have to become, as Patañjali says, established in Truth, steady in it.

I think of the dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his young wife, Maitreyī.

He says, “We don't love each other, we don't care for each other, for the sake of each other but because of the existence of that Consciousness which is within one another.”

In the Indian tradition, when somebody dies, if the death has happened early enough in the day, by sunset the body is already gone. We don't have funeral homes yet, so we don't

have ways to keep the body. If the death was an accident or a murder, the matter goes to the police. Otherwise, if the death occurred at home, the doctor comes, he gives a certificate, and the body is cremated. All that is left the next day is a pot of ashes.

When someone has died, the sage asks us, “What is it that has died?”

The living physical body, the body made of five elements, is inhabited by Consciousness, by the Self, or soul as it's sometimes called in English. As soon as Consciousness has departed from that body, no matter how much we love it, we are done with that body.

I think recognizing what happens when somebody dies is the best way to understand what Yājñavalkya means when he says, “We love each other because of the existence of Consciousness.”

He says, “O Maitreyī, if there is something to be seen, it is that Self. If there is something to hear about, hear about the Self, that divinity. If there is something you want to contemplate, contemplate the Self. If there is something you want to meditate upon, meditate upon the Self.”

When Baba traveled all over the world, reporters would ask him, “What is your message?”

He said, “Meditate on yourself, honor yourself, worship yourself, respect yourself, because God dwells within you as you.”

## Baba's Message (continued)

And the reporters said, "Anything else?"

He said, "That's it. Just understand this much: meditate, honor, respect, worship that divinity that dwells within each and every one."

And how?

He said, "See God in each other." See that divinity, see that Truth, inside your own being, and see that same divinity, that same Truth, in all.

Experience that within your own Self first. Then because you see it in yourself, you see it reflected in others.

Many people claim, "I got it! I'm there. I am established. I am steady."

I offer a test. Take a jug of cold water. At night, when such a person is fast asleep, say about two o'clock in the morning, pour that cold water on their face.

If they are established in the experience "I am the Absolute," they will say, "*Om Namaḥ Śivāya*" or whatever their mantra is. Otherwise, they'll say, "Who the hell is pouring water on me?"

When I talk about becoming steady, about becoming established in Truth, that is what Pātāñjali wants for us. That is what the sages want. They want us to feel comfortable in that experience within ourselves. Then even if we get cold water dumped on us at 2 a.m., we remain with the mantra, we remain with divinity.



**"See God in each other."**

## G L O S S A R Y

**āsana**

yogic posture

**Aṣṭāvakra**

a Vedic sage

**Ātman**

the soul, Self

**Janaka, King**

Vedic king, student of Aṣṭāvakra

**japa**

repetition of a mantra

**kirtan**

chanting

**kuṇḍalinī**

spiritual energy dormant within all humans,  
can be awakened by the Guru

**Maitreyī**

wife of Yājñavalkya

**pakhawaj**

Indian drum

**Om Namaḥ Śivāya**

mantra; literally, "I bow to the divine"

**Pātañjali**

[2nd c BCE] author of the *Yoga Sūtras*

**satsaṅg**

in the company of the Truth

**sūtra**

aphorism, verse

**Upaniṣad**

Vedānta scripture

**Vedānta**

philosophy based on the *Vedas*

**Yājñavalkya**

sage, one of the authors of the *Upaniṣads*

**Yoga Sūtras**

scripture compiled by Pātañjali