

Sharad Sangam 2009
11 a.m., 4th November 2009
Autobiography – A Scripture for This Age
-by Sw. Shuddhanandji

As we normally do, let us begin with a chant. Then those who are still coming to the pandal will be able to join smoothly and also it will give us a cushion for those who come late. Chanting – *Think yee in Thy heart, lotus feet of Thy Guru.*

May Beloved Gurudev be in our hearts, be in our thoughts. Om Shanti Shanti.

Let us begin from the beginning - meaning from Autobiography of a Yogi and end with the end i.e. end of Autobiography of a Yogi. It is wonderful to see both the beginning and the end cover two basic things: purpose of live and help of the Guru. As you remember the first two lines of the Autobiography of a Yogi are:

‘The characteristic features of Indian culture have long been a search for ultimate verities and the concomitant disciple-guru relationship. My own path led me to a Christlike sage whose beautiful life was chiseled for the ages.’

Guruji has ended with the lines:

"Lord," I thought gratefully, "Thou hast given this monk a large family!"

Guruji has given all of us a universal family, a holy family, a sacred family and as members of this family we are blessed to receive his sacred vibrations all the time and you keep receiving it all the time. Our class today is right in the middle: 3 days are gone, 3 days are left. It is right in the middle of the Sharad Sangam and right in the middle of the day. First I thought I will cancel this talk and I will give you a holiday and take a holiday myself. Yesterday I had another mischievous thought. I thought I will tell them all the jokes in the beginning so that I don't have to tell them anything later on.

Once when Ma was sitting beside Guruji, Guruji turned to her and said: Today why don't you also speak. And then before Ma had the opportunity to say 'No', Guruji announced, **"Today Faye Wright, brother of Richard Wright is also going to speak."** Ma burst out laughing. It helped her to relax. We are very serious when we are doing work, but when we become so serious then we cannot concentrate. There was a fellow in my college who was so serious that he would always miss the point. He was always trying to grasp all the thoughts intellectually. You must keep the heart open, and allow the intuition to flow. Intuitive understanding will help you to grasp a thought. So from this point try and understand this:

Yesterday during the chanting session, I was given two tamburas. One was tuned to C and the other tambura was tuned to B. If I did not know how to choose, I would have been flat.

[In traditional Indian music, the tamburas provide the drone, which delineates the key in which the solo instruments perform. The traditional tamburas come in two sizes, called the male (left side of photo) and the female (right side of photo.) They each cover a different range of keys in octave. These instruments can have four to six strings and are usually tuned to the tonic (Sa) and the fifth (Pa) of the raga (scale) being played. The large tuners at the top are for basic tuning. There are fine tuners at the bottom for more precise tuning.

Indian Notes Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Nee

Western Notes	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Western Names	Do	Re	Mi	Fa	Sol	La	Ti

Tamburas are most often tuned to Sa/Pa or Sa/ Ma, where Sa is the tonal center.

If you play in any other key, your fifth, for example, will be several per cent flat. This can't be avoided.]



The Autobiography of a Yogi is a living scripture. It is filled with Spirit. Feel the strength coming to you, not just the words, in the Autobiography. In his very first meeting with Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji, Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji kept pulling Guruji, drawing Guruji magnetically to him. How he expressed his affection to Guruji:

"O my own, you have come to me!" My guru uttered the words again and again in Bengali, his voice tremulous with joy. "How many years I have waited for you!"

Both were in ecstasy. No words were necessary. Vibrations were flowing from one to another.

Again when Lahiri Mahasaya met Babaji in the cave, Babaji said to him:

"For more than three decades I have waited for you here—waited for you to return to me!" Babaji's voice rang with celestial love. 'You slipped away and vanished into the tumultuous waves of the life beyond death. The magic wand of your karma touched you, and you were gone! Though you lost sight of me, never did I lose sight of you! I pursued you over the luminescent astral sea where the glorious angels sail. Through gloom, storm, upheaval, and light I followed you, like a mother bird guarding her young. As you lived out your human term of womb-life, and emerged a babe, my eye was ever on you. When you covered your tiny form in the lotus posture under the Nadia sands in your childhood, I was invisibly present! Patiently, month after month, year after year, I have watched over you, waiting for this perfect day. Now you are with me! Lo, here is your cave, loved of yore! I have kept it ever clean and ready for you. Here is your hallowed asana-blanket, where you daily sat to fill your expanding heart with God! Behold there your bowl, from which you often drank the nectar prepared by me! See how I have kept the brass cup brightly polished, that you might drink again therefrom! My own, do you now understand?"

That is the relationship between the Guru and the disciple. Not related to a few days, a few months or years but on and on eternally. In the Bhagwad Gita (God Talks to Arjuna), Chp. 4, Vs. 5, Krishna tells Arjuna:

sribhagavan uvaca

bahuni me vyatitani janmani tava carjuna

tanyaham veda sarvani na tvam vettha paramtapa

The Blessed Lord said:

O Arjuna, many births have been experienced by me and by thee. I am acquainted with them all, whereas thou rememberest them not, O Scorcher of Foes.

Guruji advices, that the best prayer is:

Prepare yourself for the glory of God. Charge yourself for the flame of Spirit.

I have said this to you earlier also that we are divine beings having human experiences. We have associated ourselves with frailities, human weaknesses. We are divine beings. Keep on impressing upon your minds this thought:

‘No birth, no death, no caste have I,

I am He, I am He, Blessed Spirit, I am He.’

Remind yourself of who you are. Experience Guruji’s delight when he discovered the joy of Samadhi. Guruji had got fed up with the ashram life, with so much work to do night and day. When he was increasingly getting frustrated he asked Sw. Sri Yukteswarji, **“Please permit me to go to the Himalayas. I hope in unbroken solitude to achieve continuous divine communion.”** Sw. Sri Yukteswarji in his characteristic style, without wanting to disburse Guruji’s plans had said:

“Many hillmen live in the Himalayas, yet possess no God-perception.” My guru's answer came slowly and simply. "Wisdom is better sought from a man of realization than from an inert mountain.”

Ignoring Master's plain hint that he, and not a hill, was my teacher, I repeated my plea. Sri Yukteswar vouchsafed no reply. I took his silence for consent, a precarious interpretation readily accepted at one's convenience.’

When maya catches us and we are immersed in delusion, we don’t get it even when the truth is standing in front of us. It is so obvious to others, but when the screen of delusion comes we can’t get it. Same way Guruji didn’t get it and cunningly interpreted Guruji’s silence as permission.

The same thought was expressed by Ram Gopal Majumdar:

“Young yogi, I see you are running away from your master. He has everything you need; you must return to him. Mountains cannot be your guru.” Ram Gopal was repeating the same thought which Sri Yukteswar had expressed at our last meeting.’

When Guruji came back, Sw. Sri Yukteswarji greeted him by saying:

“I am here, Guruji.” My shamefacedness spoke more eloquently for me.

"Let us go to the kitchen and find something to eat." Sri Yukteswar's manner was as natural as if hours and not days had separated us.

Guruji expected to be scolded because he left all the ashram duties aside and went away.

"Master, I must have disappointed you by my abrupt departure from my duties here; I thought you might be angry with me.”’

He was surprised when Sw. Sri Yukteswarji was not angry. Sw. Sri Yukteswarji said:

“No, of course not! Wrath springs only from thwarted desires. I do not expect anything from others, so their actions cannot be in opposition to wishes of mine. I would not use you for my own ends; I am happy only in your own true happiness.” Guruji was so much moved. **“Sir, one hears of divine love in a vague way, but for the first time I am having a concrete example in your angelic self! In the world, even a father does not easily forgive his son if he leaves his parent's business without warning. But you show not the slightest vexation, though you must have been put to great inconvenience by the many unfinished tasks I left behind.”**

We looked into each other's eyes, where tears were shining. A blissful wave engulfed me; I was conscious that the Lord, in the form of my guru, was expanding the small ardors of my heart into the incompressible reaches of cosmic love.’

This is an expression of that divine unconditional love. This is one of the most moving passages for me. A few pages later, in the same chapter:

‘A few mornings later I made my way to Master's empty sitting room. I planned to meditate, but my laudable purpose was unshared by disobedient thoughts. They scattered like birds before the hunter.

“Mukunda!” Sri Yukteswar's voice sounded from a distant inner balcony.

I felt as rebellious as my thoughts. “Master always urges me to meditate,” I muttered to myself. “He should not disturb me when he knows why I came to his room.”

He summoned me again; I remained obstinately silent. The third time his tone held rebuke.

“Sir, I am meditating,” I shouted protestingly.

“I know how you are meditating,” my guru called out, “with your mind distributed like leaves in a storm! Come here to me.”

Snubbed and exposed, I made my way sadly to his side.’

Guruji was in such a low position, his thoughts were disobedient, he was depressed. Imagine how you would feel in such a situation. But just see, a few minutes later, he had the Samadhi experience. Just a few seconds earlier he could not even meditate, but the next few seconds later he was experiencing the state of Samadhi.

Now look at today's thought in the Spiritual Diary:

November 4: Simplicity: It is not wrong to tell the Lord that we want something, but it shows greater faith if we simply say: “Heavenly Father, I know that Thou dost anticipate my every need. Sustain me according to Thy will.”

- Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, “Sayings of Paramahansa Yogananda”

So it is not wrong to ask from Guruji, but it shows better wisdom when you ask Him to sustain you according to His will for you. Surrender to Guruji completely.

When Guruji wanted to go to the Himalayas, to seek seclusion, it was His idea. But when he surrendered to Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji, then he experienced the highest state of Samadhi. So also when we surrender, we get the highest. But sometimes we are worried whether we should ask Guruji; will he satisfy my wishes – he may not.

In the Holy Science, Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji has said that we are in the ascending *Dwapara Yuga*. The materialistic Iron Age, and the Bronze Age has gone. So now vague concepts cannot be in vogue. (I cannot help the pun of words now.) In this age of space annihilators, time annihilators,

in the Golden Age, we have to work in harmony with the Divine Plan. As God therefore to sustain you according to His will. Aligning yourself to God's will, will help us to come out into the highest age. We will then naturally and automatically follow the highest age. We will tune in effortlessly with God's plan. We don't have to necessarily live in this Yuga. We can attune our minds to the Higher *Yuga*. That is why Autobiography is a scripture of love. No one has explained this so nicely that if we attune our minds to the highest *Yuga* we transcend all other limitations. The Autobiography states in Chp. 30, Law of Miracles:

'On the epochal Theory of Relativity have arisen the mathematical possibilities of exploring the ultimate atom. Great scientists are now boldly asserting not only that the atom is energy rather than matter, but that atomic energy is essentially mind-stuff.

"The stream of knowledge," Sir James Jeans writes in *The Mysterious Universe*, "is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine." Twentieth-century science is thus sounding like a page from the hoary Vedas. From science, then, if it must be so, let man learn the philosophic truth that there is no material universe; its warp and woof is maya, illusion. Its mirages of reality all break down under analysis. As one by one the reassuring props of a physical cosmos crash beneath him, man dimly perceives his idolatrous reliance, his past transgression of the divine command: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

You may imagine, we are speaking from the Vedas. If you don't want to listen to scriptures then, listen to the scientists, the businessmen. What Gurujī wrote in the Autobiography of a Yogi is now being validated by all these people.

What is a scripture? *Dharam-Shastra*. On the inaugural release of the Deluxe copy of the Autobiography of a Yogi, Sw. Vishwanandaji said, this book tells you on 'How to make a living.' Instead of reading innumerable books on 'How to live?' this book will tell you how we can live better. It is not God's plan that we ignore the average man and live without the knowledge of yoga. This idea came from the Autobiography of a Yogi. It is God's plan for the modern age. In this age of turmoil and misery, God's plan is not to ignore the average man. In one of my free moments I paraphrased one of the Cosmic Chants:

***No break, no pause, no stop have I,
Retreat, relaxation, have I none,
I am He, I am He, Modern Man I am He.***

In the Oct-Dec issue of the Yogoda Magazine, there is an article on Multitasking. It says:

As you are reading this article, are you listening to music or the radio? Yelling at your children? If you are looking at it online, are you emailing or instant-messaging at the same time? Checking stocks?

Since the 1990's we've accepted multitasking without question. Virtually all of us spend part or most of our day either rapidly switching from one task to another or juggling two or more things at the same time. While multitasking may seem to be saving time, psychologists, neuroscientists and others are finding that it can put us under a great deal of stress and actually make us less efficient.

Although doing many things at the same time – reading an article while listening to music, switching to check email messages and talking on the phone – can be a way of making tasks more fun and energizing, "you have to keep in mind that you sacrifice focus when you do this," ..

We tell ourselves I have to do everything fast, we are panicky and we find things get done much slower. When we do multitasking we lose focus and it can lead to fatal accidents. E.g. when we are sending an sms to someone while driving, it is an assured formula for fatality. We think we are more efficient than the previous generation when we are doing many things but ultimately we realize that nothing gets done. Modern gadgets dictate our lives. We have the tendency to check our emails constantly when we are working on the computer. We can't concentrate for even a few minutes. Just automatically we do multitasking and it is a sure way of increasing tension and misery. Faster and faster may lead to tension and misery.

In Finding the Joy Within You, Daya Ma has listed ten points to free yourself from tension:

“To sum up, to free yourself from tension:

- **Keep the mind calm through practice of meditation**
- **Think one thought at a time.**
- **Don't interrupt others while they are talking. Let them complete their sentences.**
- **Read books that require deep concentration.**
- **Learn to eat slowly, and preferably in silence.**
- **Exercise regularly.**
- **Relax. Don't get bogged down in little things.**
- **Set aside time for seclusion, when you can be alone with God and have time to think.**
- **Keep your mind fixed, at all times, on the polestar of God's presence.**
- **Try always, to the best of your ability, to walk in the footsteps of the Guru.”**

Anyone who comes to the Guru, feels Guruji is only talking to me, no one else. He is listening to only me, he is understanding me, knowing my needs. One is naturally attracted to such a person and we want to go to such a person. If you are looking at something else, while someone is talking to you then the person gets put off.

Simplify your life, your acts. The Autobiography presents profound ideas in a very simple way. Before I read the Autobiography of a Yogi, I was reading many books. The more I read, the more confused I became. After reading the Autobiography of a Yogi I acquired great clarity. Similarly Mahatma Gandhiji's writings are very simple. Such people become childlike and explain in a very simple way. When I was in college a guide told me that 'There was a topic I didn't understand, and finally I ended up writing a book on that topic.' You can talk a lot, read a lot, and write a book on it, even when you don't understand.

I was searching for something on 'thrift.' In the Autobiography of a Yogi, it is mentioned:

My guru would not excuse himself to eat alone; none left his ashram hungry or dissatisfied. Sri Yuktेशwar was never at a loss, never dismayed by unexpected visitors; scanty food would emerge a banquet under his resourceful direction. Yet he was economical; his modest funds went far. "Be comfortable within your purse," he often said. "Extravagance will buy you discomfort." Whether in the details of hermitage entertainment, or his building and repair work, or other practical concerns, Master manifested the originality of a creative spirit.

Make any person feel welcome. Anyone coming to your place, make the person feel at home – it can be accomplished powerfully or very simply. Anyone who came to Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji's ashram always went away satisfied, never dissatisfied. Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji had a simple

advice: Live within your purse. Be thrifty, control your expenses, and economize. If you are freely spending money you don't feel freedom. You will have to wake up some time. Then you will feel freedom. Guruji and Ma both say, 'In these times of economic meltdown, always save some money.' Live within your means and save for the future. If you are earning Rs. 1000, save Rs. 900 for the future. Grow your own vegetables, become self-sufficient. Live close to nature.

If you take the topic of 'humility' – again there are so many examples in the Autobiography of a Yogi. There is one incident of Mahavatar Babaji in the Kumbh Mela:

"The scene was a Kumbha Mela at Allahabad," Lahiri Mahasaya told his disciples. "I had gone there during a short vacation from my office duties. As I wandered amidst the throng of monks and sadhus who had come from great distances to attend the holy festival, I noticed an ash-smeared ascetic who was holding a begging bowl. The thought arose in my mind that the man was hypocritical, wearing the outward symbols of renunciation without a corresponding inward grace.

"No sooner had I passed the ascetic than my astounded eye fell on Babaji. He was kneeling in front of a matted-haired anchorite.

"'Guruji!' I hastened to his side. 'Sir, what are you doing here?'

"'I am washing the feet of this renunciate, and then I shall clean his cooking utensils.' Babaji smiled at me like a little child; I knew he was intimating that he wanted me to criticize no one, but to see the Lord as residing equally in all body-temples, whether of superior or inferior men. The great guru added, 'By serving wise and ignorant sadhus, I am learning the greatest of virtues, pleasing to God above all others—humility.'"

Another reference about Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji's humility:

He would listen respectfully to words of truth from a child, and openly ignore a conceited pundit.

Autobiography is therefore a guide book on how to live. There are answers here on almost everything. In the last portion, Guruji describes the most important passage, saying:

"God is Love: His plan for creation can be rooted only in love. Does not this simple thought, rather than erudite reasonings, offer solace to the human heart? Every saint who has penetrated to the core of Reality has testified that a divine universal plan exists and that it is beautiful and full of joy."

In the Smriti Mandir it is written at the entrance:

"Only Love can take my place."

Feel that love inside, share that love. Whatever be your role, whether you are a minister or a worker, a sweeper or a mali, whether you are washing or sweeping; as long as we play the role that is enough. See how you can align yourself with the Divine Plan. I will finish off with a story...

Just as Sw. Vishwanandji mentioned Guruji's picture on the Autobiography is so enigmatic. When you are facing a problem or want some question answered, close your eyes, ask a question, then open your eyes, and the answer as to what to do would come in your mind.

Also remember Guruji has two roles:

One is to help those who have given their lives to Guruji and the other is to uplift everyone, whether they belong to this path or not, to bring them closer to God.

Autobiography of a Yogi is a handbook for all races and religions. Therefore it is a scripture for this age.