

The Shivabalayogi Journal

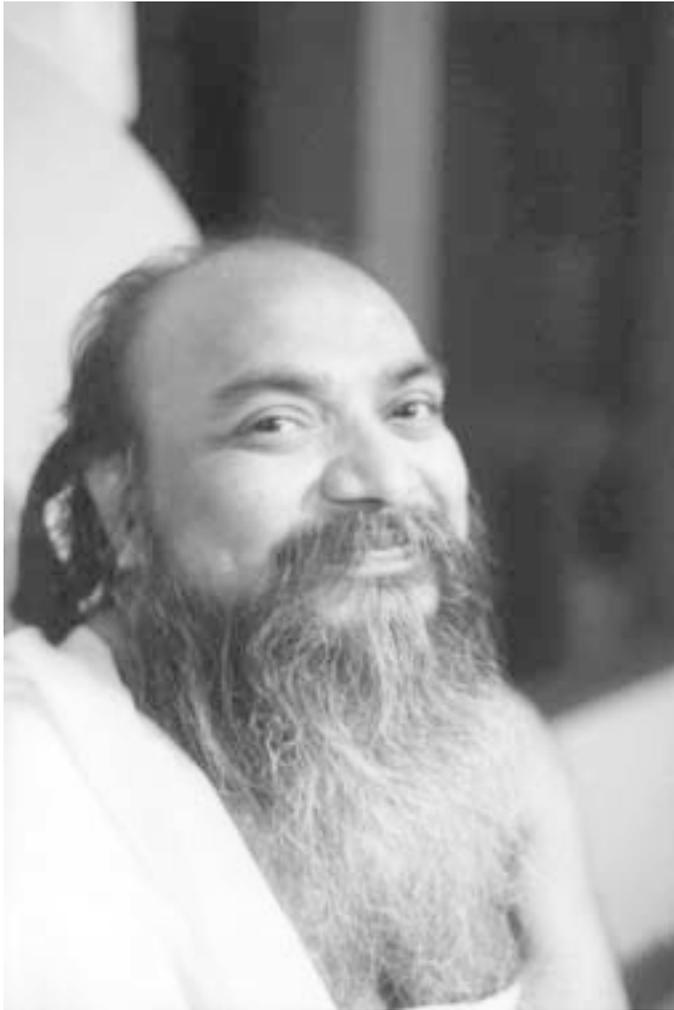
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Tenth Anniversary 1988-1998
Shri Swamiji in the United States

Dedicated to the encouragement of meditation. The Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj International Trust

Shri Swamiji Travels to the West



On August 7, 1987, Shivabalayogi gave life to the deities in the Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara Temple at the Bangalore ashram, the only one of its kind in the world. After the temple was consecrated, he made the statement, “*Now my work in India is established. From now on I’ll be working in the rest of the world.*”

Almost immediately, in September of 1987, he left for his first visit to the West. He traveled to England and remained there through December, visiting several cities and towns and conducting evening meditation and bhajan programs. He returned to England the following year, and then continued on to the United States in the last week of September, 1988. This year marks the tenth anniversary of His Holiness’ first visit to the United States.

One can speculate on the significance of Shivabalayogi coming to the West. The *nadis* — prophesies written centuries ago — state that the life of Shivabalayogi is the culmination of many prior lives, including Ramakrishna, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Nityananda. Each of these great yogis had a profound effect on the West through their disciples: Ramakrishna sent Vivekananda, Lahiri Mahasaya (through Shri Yukteswar) sent Yogananda, and Nityananda sent Mukhtananda. Ten years ago, instead of a disciple, it was Shivabalayogi who arrived in the United States.

Five tours in the United States during 1988 to 1991 reflect the tireless commitment to service which Shri Swamiji demonstrated in India and Sri Lanka over the previous twenty-five years. During one three month period in the United States, Shri Swamiji conducted mass meditation and bhajan programs in Seattle and Portland in the Pacific Northwest; Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Laguna Beach in California; Reno, Las Vegas and Santa Fe else-

where in the West and Southwest; Columbus in Indiana; New York, Boston and Washington D.C. area in the East; and North Carolina in the South. Often he would stay only three or four nights in one city before flying to his next destination. These were schedules which would have worn out the strongest of men, but nothing deters Shivabalayogi from carrying out God’s work.

In the early 1970’s, Shri Swamiji used to tell his Indian devotees that he would go to the West and that when he did, he will unify all religions. In the beginning of the 1990’s, communism still controlled the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Shri Swamiji told devotees that he wanted to travel to those countries because there was such a desire and need for their people to know God. Shri Swamiji would talk about the revival of Buddhist practice in China and how he wanted to travel to that country also. A month before Shri Swamiji dropped his physical body, he was telling devotees that over the next forty years, he will bring about a common spiritual tradition among India, the Near East, Europe and America.

All this additional travel and work remain to be done, and Shri Swamiji shall accomplish it through his astral or subtle body presence and his disciples and devotees. Once a devotee remarked that in the history of Shri Swamiji’s past lives, there seemed to be a pattern in which he sows a seed and leaves the work of nurturing its growth to disciples. Shri Swamiji responded, “*You have said it. Even in this birth it is the same.*” ॐ

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Darshan Conversation: A Common Tradition

Swamiji says that all yogis know the same truth: the ancient culture of yogis, gods, and *dharma* (right conduct) that belongs to all the world. Originally, all people recognized that there was only one God, and they respected all the divine beings that live in the spiritual worlds. They shared common traditions, spiritual practices, and stories about the past.

When asked how to reconcile the different gods that different people worship, Swamiji responds that there is only one God. Politics makes people say their God is the only one. As people spread out, Shri Swamiji explains, their cultures diverged. An example he gives is his own Guru, the god Shiva who is known by many names throughout the world. Christians do not understand that God the Holy Spirit is the same as Shiva.

These ancient ways are preserved to some degree in many traditions, but for most people and cultures, they have been ignored and forgotten. It is India, with its rich history of yogis and great souls, that has best preserved the ancient culture. In the United States, Shri Swamiji would remind devotees that the culture of the Native Americans is similar to the ancient culture. It is part of Shri Swamiji's mission to make the ancient truths available to all people. In doing so, he is restoring the teachings of the other great yogis.

Most of the following questions and answers were recorded in Bangalore in January and February of 1994. The rest are taken from the book *Tapas Shakti*.

Q Does Swamiji talk about yoga in the context of Hinduism?

The word 'Hindu' was coined only a thousand years ago. Before that no such word existed. Then only the Indian culture existed. This culture is what Swamiji is teaching. Hinduism is a religion; it is not a culture. Religious leaders started religions. Before that no religions existed. Even the people of the West were of the Indian culture. Gradually they were distracted by the religious leaders. Now they are again interested in the Indian culture.

Yogis do not talk about religion. No yogi has ever talked about religion. Yogis bring people from all lines together and teach them how to practice. They are practical. Religions are started by spiritual leaders.

Q How many fully enlightened masters like Swamiji are there on earth?

There are many people like that.

Q Are there any American masters?

There are Self realized people in America, but they will not come out and reveal themselves to the public. They are among the natives of this land, the Native Americans.

Q Will these Native American yogis reveal themselves publicly?

If you bring them out, they will come out. You brought Swamiji, which is why he is here. Otherwise he would not have come. If you go and beg them to come here, then they will come. They are not interested for themselves. What interest does Swami have to come here?

Q What is the role of India in the spiritual development of the world?

The culture of India is the culture of the rishis.

Q What does that mean for the whole world?

The meaning is to bring everybody into this line.

Q What is your opinion on people in the West becoming spiritual?

It is Swamiji's intention to change all of them.

Q If people in the United States want to worship God, do they have to become Hindus?

All along Swamiji has been saying that people should not leave their spiritual path. He will help them to follow their own path, and he will never ask them to deviate from their path. Swamiji will only help to guide you. He will never ask you to come out of your religion or path.

Q Swamiji says that the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara [God in the forms of Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer] belong to all the world. That may be true, but nobody worships any of them in the United States.

You are doing so now.

[Swamiji would explain that the same gods are known throughout the world, only each culture depicts god through its own perspective. A god that in India would seem very Indian, for example, would be known in another part of the world by a different name and with a different appearance. The god is the same, only we tend to project our own culture. Swamiji would also explain that god will appear to us in whatever form we wish.]

The gods are in the path of Christ. They are in the path of Shivabalayogi. They are in the path of every other rishi. They are the source of everything and of all these lines. People will have to worship them. The gods do not believe in caste or any religion. The gods do not belong to any particular religion.

Q Swamiji, the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara are acceptable in India, but nowhere else.



Above: His Holiness during a television interview in Santa Barbara, June of 1989. Below: Shri Swamiji in Seattle.

Because of their ignorance. We will have to teach them. It is not just India. The whole world is going to offer salutations to the gods.

Q Maybe in spirit, yes, but not in actual practice.

Nobody knows about the Ganges River. Only when you go and bathe there do you understand what the Ganges is. If the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara appear to people in their meditation, then what will they do? Will they not come and pray to them? If you teach people something about which they do not know, what will it take to get them changed? The world did not know about India. It was only when the Portuguese, the British and the French came to India did the West come to know about India. When people do not know, it will



take some time for them to understand.

Q Did Jesus complete his mission in the few years that he taught, or was that cut short by the crucifixion?

SBY Only because he completed his mission does he have so many devotees around the world now. Otherwise, how could he have so many devotees?

Q Would that have happened faster had Jesus not been killed?

Yes.

Q That would be the same for Mohammed and Buddha?

Yes.

A tiger came onto the roads and was walking around, so the people shot and killed it. The same thing happened to Christ. He came to teach devotion to the people. There were a lot of people opposed to that. So they got him killed. Although his body was destroyed, his spirit continued the work and he performed his duty and his mission. Even now his spirit is doing his work. But people now are unable to do what he asked them to do.

Q As Swamiji's mission goes on, will people in the West worship Jesus more?

Whatever Christ had taught and preached, that is exactly what Swamiji teaches and preaches. So automatically people will start believing more in Christ and they will follow the path of Christ.

Q People of different religions assert their founders to be the ultimate guru, like Jesus Christ. Was he or the Buddha truly a unique being or was each just another spiritual person?

Yes, there is something unique. Christ and Buddha are yogis.

Q Are they unique from other yogis, like you?

Swamiji is not a holy man. He is a yogi. ॐ

Experiences

It was June 1988. We had spent three incredible months in India and a month in London with Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. At the Bangalore ashram, several close devotees had told us Shri Swamiji would soon come to America. We were leaving for home in a few days and we were already anticipating the loss of His Presence. So at darshan that evening we asked Swamiji if He would come visit us in Portland when He came to the United States. He smiled silently.

The next morning we were sitting in a bakery eating pastries when Swamiji's translator told us: "Swamiji said He will come in September and you should arrange the programs."

We flew home with the mission to arrange Shivabalayogi's first U.S. tour in two months time. There was no time for jet lag or culture shock. On the plane home the flyer was written introducing Him to American seekers. It was Swamiji writing. The copy came out unedited, in the basic form that is still used today, ten years later.

We had never done anything like this before. We were totally green and naïve. A month before we left for India, inner directions in meditation had prompted us to move to Portland. So when we came back, we were living in a camper vehicle on some friends' land in Yamhill, Oregon, and we had no home to which we could bring our newly found Master. We didn't have friends in the area and we had no place to hold programs. We knew this tour could only happen through Shivabalayogi's Grace.

Later when we asked Swamiji why we were in Portland, He said it was for His mission. It astounded us to learn that even before we met Shri Swamiji, we had received the message to move to Portland for His mission. As we experience the power of the yogi more and more over the years, this is no longer so surprising.

We attended an annual gathering of Sai Baba devotees in Olympia, thinking maybe someone from this group would like to host Shri Swamiji. We arrived late and pulled into the parking lot, wondering where the meeting was. There was only one person in the large lot, sitting alone in her car. As we approached, I noticed she had vibhuti on her forehead and she was reading the *Yoga Vāsistha*! Swamiji had told us this was the only scripture worth reading, as it is still intact, so we knew this meeting was significant. And it was. This dear lady turned out to be the person who arranged Shri Swamiji's first programs in Seattle.

Two weeks before Swamiji arrived, we received a phone call from one of His devotees who knew Him from India. She was living on the East Coast and had just telephoned Swamiji in India. He had told her that He was coming to Portland. She couldn't believe it.



Shri Swamiji in North Carolina

She was calling us to make arrangements for Him to visit North Carolina, and so Raleigh was added to the programs.

We had placed an advertisement in a national periodical. A woman in Portland saw the ad, called us, and offered to help put up flyers. After Shri Swamiji arrived and she saw Him for the first time, she could not stop crying. She became one of Swamiji's Portland coordinators. Someone else came for darshan who had an empty house that was up for sale. The house was donated for Shri Swamiji's use. There was no furniture, so we pieced together a dais, and put up the white and gold "Om" sign made by devotees in London. On the walls we tacked up some bamboo paintings of Lord Shiva, Durga, Buddha and other Divine Beings we had bought in India, and on the hardwood floor we threw some pillows. Each morning this empty living room was filled with people seeking meditation, and each night crowds came to the public halls.

Being new in the area, we didn't realize the house where we had taken Swamiji was in Portland's crack district, one of the worst drug dealing districts in America. We heard dogs barking all night long. We watched prostitutes walking, pimps cruising and the customers coming and going from the house across the street where crack cocaine was sold. We apologized profusely to Swamiji and said we would find another place. Calmly Shri Swamiji replied, "*No, no. We go to the worst places and we make them better. Don't worry, Swamiji will take of everything.*"

Shri Swamiji never left His room except for darshan in morning and evening. But in a matter of days, the dog stopped barking, the pimps and prostitutes disappeared, and the crack house across the street closed down.



Experiences



Above: Shri Swamiji in Seattle.
Below: Picnic between Portland and Seattle.



Most people come to Swamiji's programs because of his picture on the flyers. They cannot remember what the flyers said about him or his mission, but they are compelled to come by that face.

I showed Swamiji's picture on a flyer to one person and she recognized him from her dreams, the last one only a week earlier. I showed a copy of Shri Swamiji's new booklet to another person. On the cover was a picture of Swamiji sitting on a tiger skin. The person looked at the picture and declared that she had seen it before, but that was impossible

because the photograph was new to us and had never been distributed here.

When I first saw the photograph of Swamiji on the back cover of the *Darshan* book, I was convinced that I had seen it before, even though I knew that was physically impossible.

ॐ

Before I met Swamiji I was meditating for about two to three hours a day. The week before I was working full time, but the job was ending and I had decided to move to another part of the country. At the time, I had no idea of who might be my guru, except that I had been meditating on a photograph of Shirdi Sai Baba and asking for a teacher.

The day I was to leave, I stopped at a grocery store and saw a picture of Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. The picture struck me because the yogi was so beautiful. I had never seen anyone like him. I found out that he was in town, and I decided to see him that night.

I went to the house where he was staying. To my surprise, the meeting was in the basement, and most of the people were Indian. I had no idea I was to be initiated at that time. I was told to close my eyes and someone put vibhuti between my eyes. At that instant, I was put into meditation so deep that it was like a trance.

My car was already packed, so after the program I drove several hundred miles to where I planned to move. However, I could not get that little man out of my mind. I could not stay away. I knew that if I drove back, I would have no place to stay, but I did it anyway. I had to see him one more time.

I have been with him since. Even when I am not with him physically, he has never left me in my meditation.

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I have a friend who does not believe in God at all. He only believes in what he can see and touch. He is a real skeptic. Not only is he a doubter, he is never serious. He always jokes about anything.

This friend was at our wedding a couple of years ago. It was a special wedding ceremony because Swamiji was present. It was a coincidence that this friend and Swamiji were at the same place together. This friend is too skeptical and jokes too much to be interested in seeing Swamiji, and he never went to any of Swamiji's programs.

One day recently this friend was driving with me in the car and he uncharacteristically made a serious comment. He is never serious. He said, "You know, I think of Swamiji a lot." This stunned me because I always thought of this friend as being anything but serious or spiritually minded. His newly revealed side

surprised me. All I could say was, "You do?" He said, "Yes. I guess that's the closest I'll ever be to having peace."



I own a 1931 Pierce Arrow limousine which I like to use to chauffeur gurus. I consider it to be a part of the seva or service I do. I heard about Swamiji at a Sai Baba meeting, and contacted Swamiji's host to offer my services.

Some people think there is something not right about driving a renunciant in an antique limousine. I personally feel that the guru represents God on earth and when God comes to town you offer your very best. I offered my services but was told that other arrangements had been made.

The day before Swamiji was to arrive, the hosts were still unsure whether to take my offer of the limousine or go with someone else. I got a telephone call that they had made arrangements with three other cars to drive Swamiji, but each had fallen through. So they asked me to drive Swamiji from the airport. Then, that night they made arrangements for yet another car to go to the airport, but that car broke down. Despite all these efforts to have someone else drive him, I ended up driving Swamiji in the Pierce Arrow.

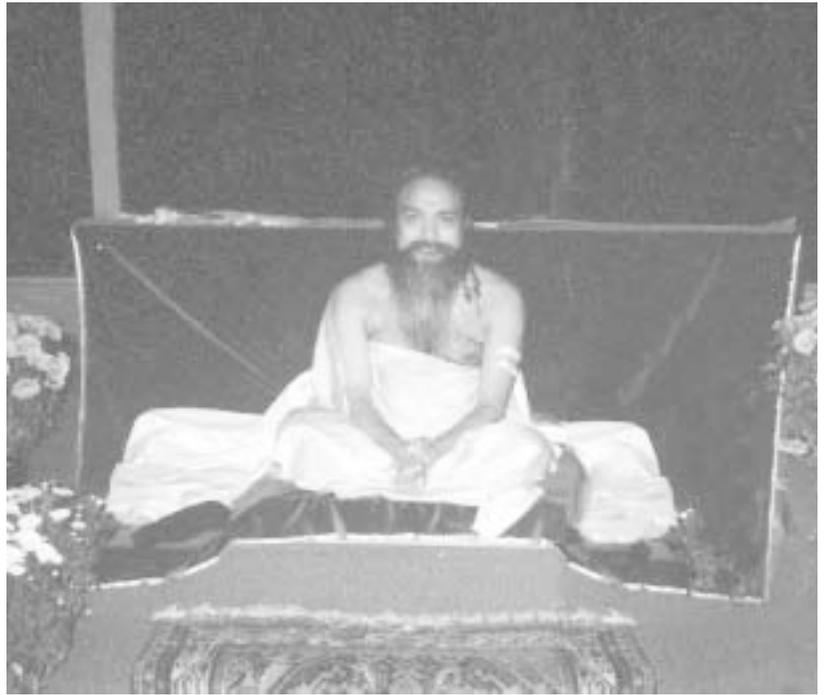


I first saw the yogi in a photograph on a flyer and I immediately had a reaction that he was open, clear, and without any ego. When I touched the picture I felt a healing energy. I decided to see him that night.

The program was at a church in the woods. It was a very quiet forest setting. Ten minutes before he was to arrive I felt that the room was flooded with heat. Many people in the room began to stir, smiling and looking very relaxed. I closed my eyes and saw a flood of gold light. When the yogi walked in, that light became brighter and dazzling. The heat continued to increase during the meditation. The singing afterwards stirred the energy into healing swirls of energy.

I have met religious teachers from all over the world but the yogi's eyes were very unusual and clearer and more powerful and beautiful than any I had seen before. I felt intense heat when he smiled at me. Holding the vibhuti is like being touched by him. It radiates a healing and soothing energy. I hold it in my hand at bedtime and it immediately carries me into a deep meditation. If I am worried or tired, it immediately energizes me. The vibhuti is powerful and if I relax deeply, I can feel it. The yogi's presence is in that vibhuti and it is a blessing to everyone in the world, whether they know of him or not.

All the people I knew who met the yogi were energized and had intense meditations for months after he was here. Two years later they are all still very close to him and are inspired by him. He is a tower of golden light. He gives focussed attention to everyone he meets.



There is a lamp which is continuously burning in my house in Agra. Day and night it burns. In addition I have a practice of getting up early in the morning — three o'clock, three-thirty, two-thirty some times — and lighting a lamp in the puja room. I clean up the puja room and Swamiji's picture, and the sit for meditation.

One such morning I was sitting in meditation. This was in 1991 when Swamiji was in America. Suddenly I saw a vision in which Swamiji was with some Westerners, one of them playing the harmonium and the others in trance. I was surprised, the vision was so real. The whole room was full of the smoke from the incense I was burning, so I opened the windows and doors, trying to look for Swamiji and all the people I had seen. But I couldn't find any of them in my small puja room. I didn't know what the vision was or what had happened to me.

Later I described my experience to a friend. He said, "That was the vision of what Swamiji is doing in the US now. You have seen what is actually happening there. Because the light of the lamp was glowing in your room, Swamiji's power was attracted. That is how it had come to your house and you could see it." ❧



Shri Swamiji at one of his very first public programs in the United States. Below: A sacred touch.

Meditation & Bhajan Programs

His Holiness dropped his own physical body in 1994. For decades he had assured devotees that he will be more available after he leaves his body.

Now people are experiencing his increased presence. Those who take his initiation into dhyana meditation continue to have profound experiences. His presence in bhava is even stronger now. He is present in meditation, in the vibhuti (ash) he blesses, and during bhajans sung in his presence. He continues to give blessings and guidance. He is present in the heart of each devotee.

It was prophesized in the ancient nadis: "This soul is a universal guru. Swamiji has no beginning and no end. His astral body will be here until the end of the age." Shri Swamiji has no successor because he continues to work directly. He is The Living Yogi.

Shri Swamiji's presence is the most obvious when devotees get together for meditation and bhajan programs. His presence is as strong and transforming as when Shri Swamiji was giving darshan in his own physical body. This is the experience of those devotees who attended Shri Swamiji's programs when he was present in his own body, and recent programs when he was present through bhava samadhi.

This year, there will be special meditation and bhajan programs in various cities throughout the United States. In September, devotees have organized the following evening programs:

Bozeman, Montana

(contact Anna Marie Riley, 406-587-7901)

Tuesday, September 8, Wednesday, September 9

Minneapolis, Minnesota

(contact Vivien & Ken Purmort, 612-925-9499)

Saturday, September 12, Sunday, September 13

Columbus, Indiana

(contact Dan Gobin, 812-342-2991)

Wednesday, September 16, Thursday September 17

Durham, North Carolina

(contact Stewart Walker, 919-489-5355)

Monday, September 22

Roanoke, Virginia

(contact Chris Visscher, 540-342-6291)

Friday, September 26:

11 a.m.-1 p.m. United Metaphysical Churches
1488 Peters Creek Rd. NW, Roanoke; 6:30-8:30 p.m. Dayspring
(private retreat center) 2445 Tinker Mill Rd., Daleville

Saturday, September 27:

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Shanti Niketan (Indian temple), 7721 Branico
Drive, Roanoke; 6:30-8:30 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church
of Roanoke, 2015 Grandin Rd. SW, Roanoke.

Sunday, September 28:

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Dhyana Center of Roanoke, 833 Woods End
Lane, Roanoke; 6:30-8:30 p.m. Unity Church of the Roanoke
Valley, 3300 Green Ridge Rd. NW, Roanoke.

**Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj
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