Commemorative Volume of the Glorious and Luminous Divine Life and Mission of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj

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Who Attained Mahasamadhi and the Lotus Feet of Lord Shiva

at Arudra Darshan, 2-20 a.m. Wednesday, December 29, 1993.
DEDICATION

This volume is lovingly and humbly dedicated to
the exalted and exhuberant spirit of

THE LION OF PONDICHERY

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj

Such a spectacular personality emerges from the clouds
of Maya, like a brilliant sun bathing all in its luminous
glow, rarely even through centuries of human time.
Fortunate are those who have perceived Reality through
the benevolent grace of his DIVINE LIGHT.
We bow our heads before the great Rishis of yore, who having embodied themselves on this sacred Punya Bhumi, Bharat Matha, have sought and found that Luminous Reality by the power of their immense will and the strength of their one-pointed Sadhana.

We bow our heads before all the great Rishis, who in their infinite compassion, clearly and carefully marked the Path to Liberation, to Moksha, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

We bow our heads to that great indomitable soul, the Lion of Pondicherry, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri who in his magnificent and luminous form was the true embodiment of the spirit of the ancient Rishis in this degenerate age of Kali Yuga. We bow our heads before this great Master, who codified the ancient teachings of Rishiculture Yoga and made them palatable to the modern mind in a systematic, rational and scientific framework.

May the spirit of the Rishis inspire us!
May the spirit of the Rishis bless us!
May we be worthy of the blessings of our great and glorious Guru and Preceptor, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj!
May we live His teachings!
May He live eternally through us!
COMMEMORATIVE VOLUME

THE LION OF PONDICHERRY

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri
Guru Maharaj

This Commemorative Volume contains Tributes to the great Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, photographs of the Yogamaharishi at various stages in his spiritual evolution, essays by his students on their experiences in the Guru Kula, an account of the last year of the great Guru's life and articles by the Yogamaharishi. The volume has been divided into five sections for easy reference.

SECTION ONE : TRIBUTES TO A GREAT GURU
SECTION TWO : THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE MASTER
SECTION THREE: AT THE FEET OF THE YOGAMAHARISHI
SECTION FOUR : THE LAST AND FINAL LESSON
SECTION FIVE : CONCEPTS OF RISHICULTURE YOGA

Compiled and Edited by

Yogacharini MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI—Editor

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THE LION HAS CEASED TO ROAR

BY YOGACHARINI MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI

The last three weeks (today is January 19th, exactly twenty-one days since Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj left his mortal Koil) have passed in a dream-blur of images, sights, sounds, tastes, touches, colours—a stream of particles of thoughts and droplets of emotions of every possible hue. From morning to night, and often all morning through all night, our bodies have been engaged in some necessary, ritual or action, some immediate and pressing work which demanded completion. Our Pujya Swamiji’s glorious departure; fulfilling our commitments at least minimally to the International Yoga Festival January 4th to 9th; performing Sri Kambli’swamy Puja and Moksha Deepam on January 11th; taking care of more than fifty persons who stayed in the Ashram during the past month; maintaining the Ashram teaching class schedule; re-establishing Anand Balayogi back at his medical college to continue his studies; fulfilling the obligations to take some of our visitors on tours of South Indian temples; continuous arrivals and continuous departures. Swamiji’s departure was an explosion which blew us all apart. We are now following his off-repeated instructions: “Pick up only the remaining pieces which are useful and good and put yourself back together again.”

The following article is a hurredly penned report by myself for immediate world circulation. It can in no way do justice to this momentous experience, but it is the best I can do at the moment and will share for all our Sadhaks world wide something of what we feel. More perceptive and reflective articles will follow in future issues of YOGA LIFE. Indeed, YOGA LIFE will become more than ever the Voice of Swamiji as we resurrect old writings, transcribe old taped lectures. But we will not allow ourselves to be caught in the past. Through a renewed commitment to our own YOGA Sadhana and the path which Pujya Swamiji has laid out so carefully for us, we will contact and manifest that LIVING SPIRIT OF YOGA which has been, is and always shall be the essence of Pujya Swami Gurumaharaj Gitananda Ji. To become ONE with Swamiji in the HERE and NOW we must now LIVE YOGA and become YOGA. This is the challenge Pujya Swamiji has given us. With the grace of the Guru, we shall rise to meet it with dedication and courage.

—Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani
THE LION HAS CEASED TO ROAR

PONDICHERY: The Lion of Pondicherry will roar no more. Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj, the head of Sri Kambli-swamy Madam, Pondicherry, and one of the five foremost authorities on Ashtanga Yoga, the ancient Hindu system of spirituality, took Samadhi at the auspicious time of Arudhra Darshan at 2-20 a.m. on December 29th, 1993. (Arudhra Darshan is one of the most important moments of the year in the Hindu calendar. It is the one time when devotees can view the normally fierce Rudra-Shiva in his most peaceful and benign aspect or mood). The Yoga Maharishi was placed in Samadhi will the full honours due to a Mahant of his status in his Madam, Sri Kambli-swamy Madam, Thattanchavady, Pondicherry at 11 a.m. on December 30th, 1993.

Thousands of persons thronged the ancient Madam site, from the early morning of December 29th, as news of the Yogamaharishi’s Samadhi spread throughout the community. Abhishekams (cleansing and purification ceremonies) were done to the Yogamaharishi who was placed into a meditative sitting position in Padma Asana. Floral offerings were made and blessings taken of his physical form for the last time. At 11 a.m. on December 30, 1993, the Yogarishi was placed in a grand pallaquin and carried in an enormous procession around the premises of the Sri Kambli-swamy Madam, so that his final blessings could be given to all corners of the Ashram. He was then placed into the Samadhi which he had constructed for himself in July 26th, 1986, in the entrance to the main Ashram Hall. The Samadhi is four-layered and is in the geometric shape of the ANANDA MANDALA, literally “THE SHAPE OF GREAT JOY AND BLISS”.

The final Aarthi to the face of the Maha Guru before the Samadhi was closed, was performed by Ananda Baleyogi Giri, the Maharishi’s son and chosen successor. The thousands of devotees present chanted Mantras and sang Bhajans non-stop throughout all ceremonies. A large number of government officers and political leaders who had fought the Yogarishi fiercely during his life, paid tribute with floral offerings at the time of his leaving his body in Mahasamadhi. Thus in the end even his opponents acknowledged his greatness.
The elaborate rites and rituals which lasted nearly 38 hours were directed by the centenarian Guru Sri Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal, who was assisted at every stage by Ananda Balayogi Giri, son and successor to the Yogamaharishi.

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda, at the age of 88, was one of the most potent and effective forces in the field of Ashtanga Yoga world wide. Trained in modern allopathic medicine, he combined the ancient traditional spiritual sciences with a modern scientific temperament. His hundreds of thousands of students around the world were attracted to his clear, rational, scientific expositions of ancient philosophical and spiritual concepts. A practical man to the core, the technology of Yoga which he transmitted to his students has proven an effective method of attaining perfect health, well being and personality and intellectual development. An outspoken and frank man, he made many enemies along the way, especially from the politicians, accustomed to obsequious and fawning behaviour at every turn. A real Rishi, he spoke out boldly for the cause of Dharma, and called on his students to live by its principles. His tireless crusades to prevent governmental and political interference into the affairs of Hindu institutions and temples took him on many occasions to the Madras High Court. His most notable victory in the Madras High Court was on December 10, 1986 when Justice S. Mohan struck down the Pondicherry Government’s takeover of Sri Kambliswamy Madam, and the Pondicherry Hindu Religious Institution Act as well, judging it to be “unconstitutional”.

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj was the purveyor of a vast, scientific, rational and systematic body of Yoga knowledge. He embodied in himself the Bengali Tantric tradition of his life-long Guru Sri Kanakananda Swamigal with the Shiva Yoga and ritualistic expertise of the line of Gurus of Sri Kambliswamy Madam, as imparted to him by his predecessor Sri Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal.

The vast living and vibrant knowledge which he imparted so freely to hundreds of thousands of students included a complete and rational system of Hatha Yoga practices which provided a base for the higher techniques. For those who prepared themselves properly, he offered a complete system of Jnana Yoga techniques to purify, steady and cultivate the mind, and free it of hang ups and false concepts and conditions. Those few who were able to deepen, concentrate and purify themselves sufficiently were led along an amazing path of Raja Yoga practices, which initiated the disciple into the psychic world of spiritual energy, colours, forms, sounds and shapes, sensitizing the seeker to the meditative qualities of mind and matter.
THE LION HAS CEASED TO ROAR

The Yogarishi’s expertise and contribution to Indian society was recognized by the Central Government when he was appointed in March 1985 as a member of the prestigious Central Council for Research in Yoga, under the Ministry of Health, New Delhi. He held that post even up to his Samadhi. The Central Government further recognized his contribution when the President of India, Sri Giani Zail Singh, awarded him the title YOGASHIROMANI at the World Yoga Conference, December 1986, at Asian Village, New Delhi.

Poojiya Swamiji’s valuable contribution to Indian society was recognized with honours from the Central Government

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj looked every inch a Rishi, with long flowing white hair and beard and a majestic stance. His magnetic personality dominated the stage wherever he went. He was a marvellous orator, capable of holding crowds of thousands in thrall with his large-hearted humour and resonant voice.

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj was alive in every cell of his being. He vibrated immense energy and Shakti which lifted and carried all those who came within its orbit. His presence charged any occasion with immense vitality and joy. Consequently his presence was avidly sought as Chief Guest for Conferences, meetings and Satsanghas all over India and the world. When he entered a room, all felt the effect of his presence. A disciple once described Swamiji as: “A locomotive engine which can pull innumerable cars along behind it with its sheer strength and power”. To be in the presence of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj was to feel that the impossible was indeed possible.

A naturalist to the core, lush gardens grew up around him wherever he lived. He loved the earth and all things there upon and had innumerable pets, including monkeys, deer, peacocks, parrots, rabbits, mice, ducks, swans, and many types of dogs. His favourite pets were his two Lhasa Apsos, Shambu and Karpagam. (Tibetan dogs). The little male, Shambu, had appointed himself as Swamiji’s special protector and guarded Swamiji well against any unruly vibrations. Significantly, the little male Lhasa Apso Shambu died exactly four weeks before the Yogamaharishi left his body,
from unknown causes. Swamiji taught his disciples to love the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth. He said, “Yoga is for people who love the water. Whenever you travel, make it a point to take a bath in the nearest body of water—whether a river, lake or ocean and you will immediately feel at home.” Swamiji loved the sea and spent the last year of his life enjoying his “rooftop kutir” on the top of the Ananda Ashram Beach Centre, right on shores of the Bay of Bengal. “This is really paradise, ‘he used to remark several times a day, feeling the cool breeze coming off the ocean, and gazing at the vast expanse of waters.

The Yogamaharishi was a strict disciplinarian who did not allow his disciples to “make any excuse” for their deviances from the Yoga path. He cut away layers of false conditioning in a single stroke with his sharp tongue and totally transformed the lives of all who came in close contact, He often would joke, “I am not here to make money or gain your votes. Therefore, I do not have to please you. My job is to help you grow. And to grow, you have got to shed all this false conditioning which binds you back”.

The Yogamaharishi’s approach to living was entirely positive. ITI. ITI. GOD IS THIS. GOD IS THAT. EVERYTHING IS GOD. He enjoyed every moment of his life. He enjoyed animals, people, plants, the sun, the moon, stars, food, gardening, keeping current on global events, his correspondence. Most of all, he enjoyed teaching. His booming voice could shake the whole Ashram with its power. His dramatic enactments of foolish situations and people could evoke the deepest “belly laughs” from his students. His tender elucidation of deep spiritual principles could draw tears too deep for words. He was a born teacher and taught Yoga his whole life from the age of 13, even while in the midst of a busy professional and family life. He set up Ananda Ashrams wherever he travelled and lived: in the United States, in Canada, in South America, in Europe and Australia. His immense zest for living inflamed dead and dull hearts to new life and joy.

The Yogamaharishi never turned a visitor away from his door. From the lowly ricksha walla seeking money to finance his daughter’s wedding, to the delegation of fishermen wanting a donation for a temple festival; to the wandering foreign traveller looking for God; to the high government officer seeking spiritual solace, the Yogamaharishi was immediately available, willing to drop even his most urgent personal work to attend to his guest. The Yogamaharishi was a wonderful correspondent, and answered, very often at a great length running into several pages, every single letter which crossed his desk.
THE LION HAS CEASED TO ROAR

For most of his life, he was an invertebrate traveller. He made ten world tours, spreading the message of his Gurus. His greatest delight was to take his students on pilgrimage and he had paid his homage not once but many times at all the great holy sites of Hinduism. He lent his physical, moral, spiritual and emotional patronage to hundreds of thousands, and many a young career was boosted by him. He was a true well wisher of men, and bolstered this good will with concrete action.

He was one of the active founders of the modern Yoga Sports movement, and had done preliminary work towards getting Yoga Asanas accepted as a demonstration sport in the Olympic games. He was the sponsor of the First International Yoga Asana Championships in January 1989 in Pondicherry. He had also sponsored four World Yoga Conferences in Pondicherry and was the inspiration for the two International Yoga Festivals held in 1993 and 1994 in Pondicherry by the Department of Tourism, Government of India.

He was the Director of the International Centre for Yoga Education and Research, Kottakuppam, Tamil Nadu, near Pondicherry and had collaborated in and written more than 200 scientific research papers on the effectiveness of Yoga. He worked in close conjunction with doctors and research scientists at such reknown institutions as JIPMER Central Government Hospital, Pondicherry; NIMHANS in Bangalore; the National Defense Institute, Ministry of Defense, New Delhi; Central Research Institute in Yoga, New Delhi; Indian Council for Research, Bhopal, amongst many others. His life’s work was to establish Yoga as a rational life science, and invest it with all the prestige of any of the other modern sciences.

One of his foremost messages was: “YOGA IS A WAY OF LIFE”. He was an exemplar extraordinaire of his own words, and lived life fully, consciously and skillfully. Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj was a great Patron of all the Hindu spiritual arts, and had sponsored hundreds of artists throughout India in performances, travel abroad, and pensions, and other form of livlihood. He was a true Rasika,

Poojya Swamiji was a glowing example of the power of Yogic living
who delighted in attending Kutcheries of Carnatic Vocal music, whenever the opportunity rose.

One of his major projects was the uplift of village children, through Yoga and the Carnatic cultural arts. To this end he founded the Sri KambliSwamy Yoga and Cultural Arts Programme, in which more than 10,000 children studied Yoga, Bharat Natyam, Carnatic Vocal music free of charge. He also supplied food, school books and uniforms and other material help in large measure to children who participated in the programme. He was a prolific writer and the author of 30 books on the science of Yoga and publisher of the international Yoga journal YOGA LIFE, for 25 years. His articles were published in Yoga magazines all over the world.

Swamiji was a popular though somewhat controversial figure in Pondicherry as his outspoken and forthright views were not always understood. His vibrant personality, however, touched everyone, and he was open to all, from the lowest of the rickshaw wallas to the leaders of the country.

His roar woke many sleeping souls to the higher values of a truly human and humane existence. The Lion of Pondicherry will roar no more. He will be sorely missed by all who understand the value of the ancient life principles contained in Ashtanga Yoga, especially for modern man, who, lost in the mad melee of materialism, cannot see the path out of all this madness.

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, like the Rishis of old, shouted for those with ears to hear:

"Lo! A way has been found! A way has been found out of all this darkness!". And he, like the true Guru that he was, led hundreds of thousands of persons along that Path to Light.

TRIBUTE TO POOJYA SWAMIJI

Dear Meenakshi: I feel as though a part of me has been pried out and thrown away. I don’t know if it’s my heart, my brain, my psyche or whether it’s a small piece of every part of me. Even though, as Yogis we celebrate Swamiji’s return to the source, as humans and as sentient beings I share your sense of personal loss as well as the enormous loss for the entire Yoga community, and the loss for mankind as a whole. As his daily companion for so many years, your feelings must run that much deeper and I extend my deepest condolences to both you and Ananda. He left a great treasure in our keeping and you can count on my support and assistance to help carry forward his work. If anything, that obligation is even greater now that he is no longer here to do it himself. Even though he used to tell us that when the teacher died the students should burn down the ashram and move away, I hope that Ananda Ashram and all its on-going functions will continue to flourish under your guidance. With deep affection, Yogacharya Rajdev Giri, California 94925, USA.
TRIBUTE TO THE GURU

BY WILLIAM UBER

Center of Rishi Culture Yoga, 311/North 10th Street, Wausau, Wisconsin 54403 U.S.A.

Those who have never known a Guru cannot possibly understand what such a man means to the world and its children. Where will we go, those of us who seek to know the Truth, and how can we find our way without his help? We come to him, caught in the many traps we have set for ourselves, puffed up with pride, and hemmed in by fear—living despairingly in the endless night of our ignorance, and hoping without reason for dawn. We think we are happy, but we don’t know ourselves well enough to be sure. We think we are healthy, accepting that our shameful weakness is only the natural order of things. We believe we know what it means to live a spiritual life, yet our ego-centric preoccupations and sub-conscious desire for self-aggrandizement are without bound. We arrive on his doorstep with intemperate words on our lips: “Yeah, I’m alright, Jack; just the usual quantity of disease in the body, chaos in the emotions, confusion in the mind, all wrapped up nice and neatly in a thick blanket of existential despair. Maybe I’ll stay on a week or two ‘til I’ve learned all you know. Then I’ll accept my certificate of merit and go. By the way, where’s the kitchen?” And so, for the hundredth or thousandth time, the Guru sighs for the impoverishment of the human race—once so grand and glorious—and begins to teach.

Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji is a human being so vast and incomprehensible, so faceted with talents and accomplishments, so relentless in his pursuit of Tat Sat, that he could only be a Guru. No other role in this life could possibly contain him. His personality is an explosion and one fragment of him or another is bound to penetrate even the thickest human carapace. It may be possible to ignore for years that Self that resides within us, but it is impossible to ignore for a second the Self within Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji. It will overwhelm us, drive us to the brink of desperation, and then yank us back, delivering us finally to the very gates of Paradise. The Atman in the Guru knows that nothing but the Atman in the disciple is real; this he loves with a purity that nothing can touch. All else, he treats with a severity that borders on the ruthless. If the personality does not serve the Atman, and does not serve the goal of spiritual evolution, it must be cut away, and the Guru says, “So be it. Bring me my sword.” And we are cut to pieces, winnowed, cultivated. Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji has removed many pieces of me. And each day he continues to remove more. For the miracle—which is no miracle, but merely the birth of love in the heart of one more student—is that Swamiji lives on inside me. The sword his hand once held, my hand now holds.
and I perform the cutting operations on myself, as needed. The tender words of communion he sent straight to my Self, I now send as tenderly. The tirelessness he showed in exhorting me to live up to the highest ideals of Goodness and Truth, I now show in pursuing my destiny, my re-union with God, my Paramyoga.

The Guru’s gift to the world is the knowledge that all of us may open ourselves up to the perfection of the Universe; all of us may know the Infinite and experience the dissolution of all boundaries and barriers; all of us may feel the timeless flow of Love moving through our bodies, connecting us with each other and with the Nature that sustains us. None are doomed, none are damned, except that, by their own willfulness, they reject the life of the Spirit, and seek to destroy it. What greater gift can be offered? What greater gift is there?

All I have to offer in return is my pledge to walk the path of spiritual unfoldment—resolutely, courageously, compassionately—until my journey is complete. Along the way, if any should note in me traces of the man who showed me how to walk when I could only crawl, they could pay me no higher tribute than to say this: “His light, I see in you.” Thank you, Swamiji. May a thousand blessings be upon your immortal soul. Om Shanti Om Shanti Om.

Dear Meenakshi, Ananda and Renuka; On December 30th, I received the call informing me of Swamiji’s passing during Samadhi. I found my emotions fluctuating wildly between great sorrow and an all-encompassing joy. Through saints and scriptures of all cultures through the ages as well as through personal meditation, Yoga and dream insights, I know that there is no death in the realm of spirit and for Swamiji it must be a truly ecstatic union with the Divine. Yet we who remain behind still sorely grieve and miss the bodily presence of one who gave so much to the spiritual enlightenment of so many. To you especially, his immediate family, my heartfelt thoughts and sympathy go out across several continents. The morning of December 31st I sent Swamiji light and peace in meditation (6 a.m. Eastern time) along with his students all around the world and am continuing to do so at various times throughout each day since. During the previous weeks, I was severely oppressed by certain conditions in my life, praying and meditating daily for guidance and also calling on Swamiji for spiritual aid. After the New Year, I planned to write him to request his personal advice and intercession on my behalf. After the news of his passing, I have on two occasions experienced what seemed to be his presence in spirit and have wondered whether he had planned his exit from the body partly in order to become even more present and accessible to students and seekers everywhere who need his help. My gratitude will extend to him always for the Correspondence Course YOGA: STEP-BY-STEP and for his world wide contribution to enlightenment. To you, I send my sincere prayers and beams of peace and light! —Yours in Love and Yoga, Marina Dutzmann, 6, Bayview Lane, Newbury MA 01951 U.S.A.
The Guru Passes....

Long Live the Guru!

Ananda Balayogi’s Succession to the Paramparya Re-Confirmed

By Yogacharini BHARATHI DEVI (Bianca Reitsma)
Centre of Rishi Culture Yoga, Vloedstraat 34, 4321 An Kerkwene, Holland.

A continuous flow of Shakti, energy radiating out to us in a very gentle and peaceful light—this was the atmosphere on Thursday, January 13, 1994, in the sacred precincts of the Sri KambliSwamy Madam, Thattanchavacy, Pondicherry.

The official and public performance ceremony re-confirming the spiritual succession of Ananda Balayogi to his father’s spiritual position as Madathiapathy of Sri KambliSwamy Madam took place two days after the Moksha Deepam of Poojya Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj. It was a highly refined, peaceful and pleasant ceremony. I took this as a sign that all the Yoga teachings of Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji will emerge in the future from a more peaceful plane.

Poojya Swamiji has been a tremendous and far-sighted architect, a builder, and he constructed and directed the Yoga teachings in such a concrete and stable way, that all students now can continue this Yoga path safely and surely.

The touching and simple ceremony began with Ananda Balayogi performing first a Puja for Sri KambliSwamy and then for his Father-Guru Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji. After that we sat together in front of the Samadhi of Sri KambliSwamigal while the respected lawyer, Mr. M. Suganantham spoke and explained what was needed to be done legally, in order that the Sri KambliSwamy Madam may continue to fulfill its Divine destiny. I was one of six people chosen to sign as witness of the confirmation of succession of Ananda Balayogi to his father’s Gadhi (literally, spiritual throne)

This day, Thursday, January 13, 1994 was truly a historic event, which happened in a very quiet spiritual atmosphere. I felt as though I represented all senior students from abroad as well as all students from all over the world. To sign on this document was a sacred Kriya, new future, a new step forward and a new plane of Yoga manifestation
on earth. I feel this new phrase of Poojya Swami Gitananda’s work will open up like a beautiful lotus flower.

All witnesses spoke to the audience and reflected on Swamiji. All gave Ananda full support, best wishes and invoked the Divine Blessings on Balayogi. It was and is the collective and joint will of respected elder Swamigal Shankaragiri and Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji that Ananda Balayogi assumes all spiritual Yoga duties, and fulfills all Dharma needed to continue the evolution on Earth of the Rishi Culture Yoga. Though a journey lies ahead and Ananda is still very young and now fully occupied in his medical training, Poojya Swamiji has trained him well and has laid already a solid Yoga foundation in his spirit.

Through these trying and thrilling weeks, Ananda Balayogi showed already his devotional and dedicated skills in Yoga and performed ceremonies needed to perfection and in full consciousness and control, assisting Swamigal Shankaragiri perfectly. Surely Ananda will attain great success in his Yoga life, and will fulfill the tremendous mission enjoined on him by his Father—Guru.

I offer my great respect and honour to revered Swamigal Shankara Giri whose presence was a great support and who gave us confidence to continue Yoga life. With spiritual ease, Srila Shri Shankaragiri Swamigal directed all necessary Pujas assisted ably by Ananda Balayogi. How beautifully alive and skilled he was, even though his age is nearly 100 years! He was the embodiment of Yoga skill in action.

I call upon all sincere students of Rishiculture Yoga world wide to support Ananda by offering all talents, qualities and material help each one of us has, so he will feel encouraged to continue his Yoga Dharma. May the Divine love empower him, so he will understand the deep meaning of Yoga living. We sang the Pancha Akshara 1008 times (Om Nama Shivaya) in a beautiful and meditative way, while all legal papers were being signed by all witnesses. Ananda said: “The dream of Swamiji’s Yoga University has not yet been fulfilled. Surely within ten years we will establish this university and Thattanchavady will become a beautiful Yoga light once more. It is my sacred duty to fulfill each and every one of my Guru-Father’s wishes and desires, both small and great. This is my Dharma and I undertake to fulfill it.”

Srila Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal garlanded Ananda Balayogi and presented him with a special Rudraksha Mala as the sign of his spiritual authority. Ananda Balayogi prostrated himself before the aged Guru and received his Shakti-filled blessings. Sweets were
distributed to all to commemorate the pleasant nature of the occasion, and all those present, numbering around seventy-five persons, came forward to garland Ananda Balayogi, honour him, bless him and in turn, take his blessings as the successor to his father’s spiritual powers and authority.

The lawyer Thiru M. Suganantham, who has been an intimate family friend for two decades, also spoke of the greatness of Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji and his great confidence that Ananda Balayogi could fulfill all his father’s spiritual visions. He recalled to all present that Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji had first anoint Ananda Beleyogi as his successor on July 24, 1976, when Ananda was only four years old. Poojya Swamiji had confirmed his succession by means of a simple ceremony on Sunday, November 21, 1993, in the Madam and had furthermore at that time written a will, directing that Ananda Balayogi should take up all spiritual duties after his own passing. “The Guru in his wisdom prepared everything well, so that his transition would be smooth and handed his work over with clear instructions as to the direction and steps now to be taken,” said the respected lawyer. All present were thrilled to hear his reassuring words.

With his mother Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi to guide him and all devoted young friends around him, Ananda Balayogi will be able to continue this work in a natural manner. Life takes care for itself. The Guru has passed. Long live the Guru.

MEMORIAL

Yogamaharishi DR. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI GURU MAHARAJ
Yoga Samadhi 2-20 a.m., December 29th, 1993

Guruji, where would I “BE” if you had not “BEEN”? You once told me that “I have hitched my wagon to a star” and now you are with the stars.

My deepest feelings and love are with the Yoga family on the occasion of our beloved Maharishi’s Samadhi. A privilege for me to have known such a great personage who has touched all of our lives.

Ram Nam Satya Hai. OM NAMAH SHIVIAH

Dr. John Mumford, Yoga Jivana Centre, Westgate House, 17, Oxford St., Bondi Junction, New South Wales 2022, Australia.

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Tributes to The Guru

Disciples Around The World Honour Poojya Swamiji

Literally thousands of letters and telegrams have poured in from all over India and the world, as students and well wishers have heard either through radio or television reports, newspapers or by word of mouth and letters of the passing of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj Ji. The dominant tone is one of disbelief. Apparently all of us expected Swamiji to live forever. The second most powerful reaction is one of total and even deeper commitment to Poojya's Swamiji's teachings and to living the Yoga life as he showed us by his powerful example. Most express great sorrow at losing this precious and irreplaceable personality and loveable form. Yet, most also report that they feel his Presence, in an even greater, more powerful way. "Now he is not limited by the body, so he can become unlimited. Now he is not here......he is everywhere," as one student said tearfully. Poojya Swamiji touched hundreds of thousands of lives. Most who came in contact with him, would say the very best times and days of their lives were spent in his presence. Though many spiritual leaders have the power to soothe and heal, rarely do they have the power to transform. This was the greatness of Swamiji. Anyone who could bear the burning reality and intensity of his presence, was absolutely transformed, reborn, reshaped. This is the tone and the tenor of the thousands of messages we are receiving. Almost everyone has pledged utter and complete support to the Mother Ashram here in Pondicherry, with its three branches, ICYER the Beach Centre on the Bay of Bengal, eight kilometres north of Pondy; Sri Kambliswamy Madam, the holy and sacred site which now contains the Samadhi of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj Ji; and our Yoganjali Natyalayam, City Centre for Yoga and Carnatic Performing Cultural Arts in Ayyanar Nagar, downtown Pondicherry. This triangular base should be strong enough to support the world wide activities of all of Swamiji's students. We will strive to make it the true "centre pole" of all Rishi Culture Yoga Sadhaks and the centre of their Yoga Universe. Without exception, all have pledged their continued support and help, in every possible way and many have already in concrete fashion demonstrated their support with commitments to come for studies, to send students, to bring tour groups and with substantial financial donations. With Poojya Swamiji's Shakti, blessings and guidance, his teachings will blossom and grow as never before. Now that he is limitless, who can limit him? Only our egos......and those egos should be our sacrificial offerings in the holy fire of our Poojya's Swamiji's glorious teachings.
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We are there to fulfill his every dream, his every desire, his every wish, from the smallest to the greatest. That is now our living mission, and the avowed mission of all those who are so lovingly and generously corresponding with us and supporting us in this time of transition. YOGA LIFE will be printing selected letters from devotees and students in future issues so all may share their collective experiences, and take inspiration and energy to carry out their own work in their own places; doing it now......not tomorrow, not next week.......but now.......in this eternal present, living Yoga, breathing Yoga, thinking Yoga, acting Yoga.......fulfilling in our finite bodies the infinite Yoga vision of Yoga Maharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani

Dear Amma, Ananda and Renuka: We have just received the message, that Swamiji has left the physical plane. We had always overlooked the age of his body and took his vibrant presence for granted. And although we knew that he could leave at any time, this thought was banned so we didn’t expect it to happen. It is difficult to control the emotions as the pain shows us what a deep bondage we have with our Guru. We feel immensely close with you as we imagine what you are going through. We are with you. We are in despair like Arjuna but Swamiji calls us to action. In this moment we realize how much Swamiji works in us. He is present and we hear his powerful voice- “No excuses allowed here! Go ahead!” He wouldn’t allow us to surrender to mourning and pain.

He has always challenged us and his departure is the biggest challenge for all of us. He used the example of mother eagle who flies up high in the sky to drop her little eagles and leaves them on their own. This time it’s true, all the other times he kept us in the air with his letters of encouragement and with his example, the way he worked and lived. Now we will have to fly on our own by living according to his teachings, disciplining ourselves, trying to encourage others and prove our commitment to Swamiji and the Paramparai. But before he left he had spent a life of indefatigable work to prepare thousands of us to fly. He has taught us to walk on holy mountains, to swim in the sea and even drink water, to breathe the air and enjoy the Prana, to worship the sun and become aware of the lifeforce within us, to fulfill our Dharma and to work out our Karma.......he has prepared us for any possible situation that may arise during our journey towards fulfillment in joining the universe in Yoga.......and now it is up to us to strive towards this goal, living his teachings. He continues to exist in spirit through our World Wide Yoga family. We will keep close in contact with you and need your advice and guidance and will support your activities as always as much as we can. JAYA SWAMIJI JAYA, OM NAMAH SHIVAYA. With Love and Respect, Yogacharya Chandra Kumar, Yogacharini Indumathi, Yoga Jivana Centre, Krachenechastr, 78343 Gaienhofer 2, West Germany.
Dearest Amma: As a shock the message arrived to us here at our School of Yoga and house (your telegram arrived at the same time that Rudra from Queensland rang) and we felt deepest grief over the sad event of such a great soul leaving the circle amongst us. Swamiji left so unexpectedly and very much like him, leaving us with the question of what to do and probably only with one answer; to live our life in Yoga and in accordance with his teachings. Swamiji’s Maha Samadhi was such a final and powerful lesson for Carolyn and myself. We felt his message and complete love once more in a highlighted way, saying: DIn.......do it now, live and grow. No words can express the appreciation and love, expressed in our mourning for Swamiji, his dedicated life,.......a source of joy and teachings of Anandam. Through the past days Carolyn and myself have been with you, Ananda and with the Yoga family in grief and in positive thoughts, sending you our empathy and the support you deserve to continue the work of the Paramparal. On the 9th of January we were married in a wonderful ceremony and shared the honeymoon with my parents and my brother who came all the way from Germany to attend. We recalled Swamiji’s last letter, his blessings for our union and his strong advice for our life together.

Receiving the news on Tuesday the 4th of January, the first working day here “down under”, a sleepless night was spent by both of us and we were challenged by having to teach an early morning class. We shared the news with our students and very much felt Swamiji’s presence especially that morning. A candle was and is burning in front of Swamiji’s picture in the teaching room. Tears of sadness were and are mixed with the endless joy that was felt, which had been given by Swamiji so generously throughout his whole life. A father has died. The true spiritual father for me, Swamiji also became even more alive to Carolyn since all my descriptions about the amazing time in India with all of you and from truely being reborn out of the Guru Kula in Ananda Ashram. Still I can feel Swamiji’s presence and feel highly committed to support you in any way possible. Again I would like to express my deep empathy, love, respect and support in mind, thought and emotions with you all, Yours in Yoga. Om Shanthi.

—Klaus Ulrich Walden-Baur, 54, Hill Street, Lanceston TAS 7250, Australia.

Dearest Meenakshi: The very sad news of Swamiji’s transition has weighed heavily on all his followers and disciples here in Australia, with whom I am in contact. All of us know full well that the passing from this life is both a time for sadness and, in another sense, joy. But this doesn’t lessen the fact that the greatest living teacher of Yoga is not with us any more. Those of us who have had the great privilege to study at the feet of this great Master will surely miss him. We will miss his extraordinary and limitless mind, the innovative and boundless energy that swept all along with him who were fortunate to be in Swamiji’s presence. But above all, Meenakshi, I will, personally miss Swamiji’s love and compassion. I was the beneficiary of a
Side of Swamiji that may not have been apparent to many; Swamiji knew and understood all the trials of my life, and he loved me because of it all. He overlooked my faults and shortcomings because he knew that through conscious work on myself, through the great science of Yoga that I could be transformed. Indeed I was transformed by Swamiji. I have truly been a recipient of his Grace and Infinite Love. For this I am grateful beyond measure. I loved Swamiji with all my heart and being and I will miss him ever so much. Swamiji’s transition I believe must mark for those of us who have received his message and teachings a new beginning for the life of Yoga, as it is us now who form the unbroken line of this living ancient and eternal teaching that came through Swamiji with full and unparalleled force. I truly hope that you and Ananda are OK and believe me, if there is anything at all that you want me to do then please, just ask. In Yoga, with much love.

—Yogacharya Bharat Kumar Giri, P.B. 121, Bellingen, NSW. 2454, Australia.

Dear Meenakshi: This past week I have thought about very little other than Swamiji and his passing. I have been speaking to Bharat, Jonn and Klaus, about how we are to keep Yoga alive in ourselves, and others, in this part of the world; but it is at a more personal level that I have found confusion. We in the West are not well served insofar as our traditions about death and dying are concerned; we are, largely, in this part of the world at least, told very little (other than the religious stuff) about how to deal with it. We know we are expected to grieve; some people do so for years. But I cannot identify with any of this. Now Swamiji has left his body, and again I am confused about how I should feel about this. Should I feel sad? Sad for whom? Certainly not for Swamiji. He was in control of his leaving, and had the wisdom and knowledge to make conscious decisions denied most people. He knew it was time for him—why should I be sad about that? I cannot question his decision, and to grieve would be to suggest that in some way he had not done what was right for him at the time. Should I feel sad for you, and Ananda? Certainly I feel in sympathy with you, but that is different from sadness. I know that you had been prepared for what happened. While no doubt it was difficult for you both, and will always be so, I cannot somehow imagine that you are feeling sad for yourselves. So why should I feel sad for you?

To do so is in some way to question the validity of your own feelings.

And to feel sad for myself and for Swamiji’s other students is simply to be selfish. Swamiji has shown us all the way, and it is up to us to follow it. We have depended on him, and it would be self-indulgent to feel sorry for ourselves that we are not able to go on depending on his physical presence. He will always be with me in any event—his influence over me for the past many years will not disappear just because he is no longer in his body. In fact he has not left me, us, at all. We just have to find other ways to keep in touch with him. For all these reasons I don’t feel sadness. A sense of loss, perhaps, but not sadness. Yet my
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cultural imprinting tells me that is wrong, that I should feel sad, that there is something wrong with me for not feeling so. In a sense Yoga is teaching me about dying, about death and the passage through death to the next life. I feel sure that in a past life I have been deeply involved with Yoga, and that vestiges of my knowledge from that past life remain with me in this, so as to be almost intuitive. My Sadhana should therefore be directed at building on that knowledge, and taking as much as I can with me to my next life, when I leave this one.

Thus I am determined that Swamiji's passing from this life is to be an incentive to me to strengthen my own work in Yoga. I am resolved to try harder, and not just to let things slip on the basis that I can catch up later. I feel strongly that his teachings are the right Yoga for me. They are YOGA and am hopeful that I can do something in my own way, inexperienced and incapable as I am, to spread the influence of his teachings. I know you had, many years ago, accepted that as your life work; and realised that you will need help to keep that going. Please call on me if there is some way that I can provide assistance to you. Yours in Yoga

Rudra Giri (Russell Hay), Post Box 165, Mossman, Queensland 4873, Australia.

Beloved Selves: I find it hard accept that Poojya Swamiji is no longer in the physical body. Yet he will always be here in another dimension. I first met Swamiji in Pondy in December 1968. I'll never forget the look in his eyes as he looked at me. It seemed obvious that I was in the presence of a great Master. In January 1969 the first intake of Yoga students was held. I enrolled and received sound instruction in the many aspects of Yoga under his spiritual guidance. The conditions in the Ashram in Pondicherry were spartan in those days but did nothing to distract from the personal attention we all received. When the Teacher Training Course was completed I returned to New Zealand and founded the Lotus Yoga Center in 1971. Ever since Swamiji has encouraged me to follow him in the Rishi Culture system which he taught. Those aspects were highlighted during Swamiji's tour with his family to these Islands in 1975. Thousands of students benefited from his Shakti and he still lives in the hearts of all his followers.

In 1989 I visited India and met Swamiji at the Third Decennial Convocation of Vishwa Yoga Samaj in Pondicherry. Since then Ananda Ashram under Swamiji's strong leadership seems to have gone from strength to strength. I believe that the heavy schedule took its toll. It has always amazed me how he could find the time and energy to comment on every one of my letters by return mail. Nothing seemed too much for him. I can honestly say that in my humble view there is a clear example of Swamiji's unlimited goodwill and universal love in action. Truly these are the hallmarks of the life of a Godman! In one of his last letters Swamiji wrote about his plans for the next
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13 years. No doubt these plans will be put into action and obtain fruition. Much of the responsibility will rest with Meenakshi, Ananda and helpers at the Ashram. May I send out a plea worldwide to all Yogis who have studied with Swamiji to offer their fullest support. The message has been delivered. The messenger has departed to other regions. It is up to everyone of us to apply the contents of that message. May the Messenger be blessed eternally.

—Yogacharya Eric Doornekamp, Director, Lotus Yoga Centre Inc.
91. Ruapehu Street, Paraparaumu, New Zealand.

Dear Meenakshi, Dear Ananda: To leave the world in Samadhi is the final fulfillment for a great Yogi and we should rejoice all of us. However I cannot feel but deepest mourning, as if my father has gone a second time, though in the meantime I have become a bit calmer by inner experiences. How deep must be your own grief! I have always been aware of how precious Swamiji’s guidance has been for me, but its full value has become acute just now, when the loss is irretrievable. The gap Swamiji has left behind is tremendous. I shall not stop striving to become what he wanted me to become, I promise. His work shall not be lost on me. That is what I am owing him. Swamiji is always in my prayer.

Yours in Yoga, sharing your grief with all my heart.

Johanna-Maria Kaiser, 64291 Darmstadt, Hebbelshrit, Germany.

Respected Dear Meenakshi Devi: The Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy have learnt with shock and sorrow the sudden and untimely death of Swami Gitanandaji, who was a Member of Governing Body of our Council, barely a few months after the celebration of his 87th birthday. His contribution to the revival and popularisation of Yoga in India and abroad is immeasurable. His valuable advice and guidance for the development of Yoga under the patronage of this Council will always be remembered. Swamiji’s boundless energy and personal attention to even the smallest detail of any project taken up by him even in his advanced age used to be watched with admiration by those closely associated with him. His unexpected and sudden passing away has certainly created a great vacuum which cannot be filled. I sincerely convey my personal sorrow and sympathy to you, Shri Ananda Balayogi and other members of his vast spiritual family in their hour of personal loss and pray God to give them courage and wisdom to carry on the torch lit by Swamiji for the welfare of humanity. May the soul of illustrious Swamiji rest in peace. My colleagues in the Council also join me in this condolence. Yours sincerely,

Dr. Naresh Kumar, Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, Ministry of Health, Government of India, W-14, (Flat No. 5), Greater Kailash Part-II, New Delhi-110 048,
Dear Brother Anandaji: I was really shocked when I heard about the MUKTHI of our respectful beloved Poojya SWAMIJI. I feel very sorry. Do convey my message to Mathaji also. Even though the "LION OF PONDI-CHERRY" had left the world, leaving us all in sorrow, we feel happy that the "CUB" is there to guide the future generation. Yours Sincerely,

S. Sekar, Editor, Gnanavazhi, Guru Publications (Pvt.) Ltd., 33. Kesava Perumal Koil East Street, Mylapore, Madras-600004.

Revered Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani: I have been in hospitals and places where I could regain my lost health. I came back to Madurai only on Monday, where YOGA LIFE has brought me the news that our Revered Guru has attained Maha Samathi. He has dropped his physical Coil and body base and has taken a Divine body. Those, whose inner eye is opened, know. He is everywhere now. But his presence can be felt especially in the Yoga Beach centre and Kambliswamy Madam with greater vibrations and Amritham. I hold you, Ananda, Renuka and others in the Ashram in my prayers. Ever Yours in the Divine, Dr. K. Arunachalam, Chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Gandhi National Trust) New Delhi.

Blessed Self: I am greatly grieved to know the unexpected sudden demise of your revered respected husband Yogashiromani Dr. Gitananda Giri in the last week of December, 1993. Dr. Gitananda was not only a Yogi but internationally known as a philosopher of Patanjali Yoga Shankya Darshan and so many other faculties and disciplines for the physical, mental and emotional developments of the down trodden people in particular and nation as a whole. I pray to God to give peace and tranquility to the departed soul in the heaven and strength to you and our lovely dear son Ananda to bear the pang of agony of this irreparable loss due to the sudden demise of our great devoted leader of Yoga and human mankind. My wife Smt. Pranpati Devi was broken into tears when I informed her of this sad news on phone at Patna. She has also requested me to convey her feelings to you and requested you to obtain strength mentally, physically and emotionally to follow the path of your husband and carry out the work of Yoga which he has left behind. But we know that you are a very devoted lady and you have got the urge to do a great deal of human services. Kindly keep in touch with me at Patna at the time of your need. I send condolences to you and dear Ananda.

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Dear Amma: It was a real shock for me to read the Mahasamadhi of beloved Swamiji. I may console myself by reading your editorial that our beloved Puja Swamiji has simply changed his form. No doubt he was and he will be with us forever and blessing us. After seeing the Kanakabisekam of HH Kanchi Munivar, I thought that our Swamiji will be with us more than that, in his physical form. But our Swamiji willed the other way. Jaya Jaya Guru Deva.

—Prof. (Capt.) Dr. DVP Raja, Director, Madurai Institute of Sciences, Alagarkoil Road, Madurai-625 002.

Dear Amma: Today, I am very shocked to hear about our Yoga Guru Bhavan Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji death through Yoga Life. He was Guru of Yoga and served the poor. I knew yours and Swamiji's service for the last fifteen years. One day all men will disappear in the world. But their service only will not disappear as Buddha, Jesus, Mohamed Nabi, Gandhi, and Swamiji. He surely will live in your figure through service. So, I believe Swamiji did not disappear through death. His body only disappeared. He will live ever.


Dear Meenakshi, Ananda, Renuka, Dhinagaran, Ramani, Gajendiran, Lalitha, Saraswathi, Devasena, Prabhavathi: I send all of you a lot of positive energy and love. I can't imagine how sad you must be as you were around Swamiji all of the time. For me sometimes it seems that it is all not true and when I come "home" to the Ashram Swamiji will be of course there. Then I know that it is true and that I'm just hoping for a wonder. I feel very sad inside, but still there is peace and somehow I feel Swamiji stronger than before. I would like to support your very young "Business Wing" by purchasing the audio tapes of Swamiji's Satsanghas. And some books. I feel now the urge to be closer to Swamiji by studying everything he has written and listening to his recorded talks. Now I must find Swamiji "inside" myself. I also know he lives in you and I want to be closer to you all. Our Yoga family must become even stronger and more tightly knit. It would have been so nice to be with you in India for Christmas and during the Yoga Conference and for January, but I have already told Amma why we couldn't come this time. I'm sure Amma will tell you. I feel so sad as twice this year I wanted so strongly to come to see Swamiji and stay with you and both times it was not possible. I had a quite difficult Karma this year, but through my belief in Yoga and Hinduism, I knew that all was necessary for my personal growth and I'm still a very positive person. Although I miss Swamiji and you a lot. Especially now during this difficult time for all of you. Much love to all.

—Gayatri Devi, Vienna, Austria.
Dear Meenakshi: Since Swamijis passing I feel even closer to him. I have made a collection of photographs of him for my altar and as Jyoti says, we speak to him daily. Tricia is having a meditation night tomorrow and many of our students will be there. I have undertaken to make contact with many of Swamiji's students so that one day a major gathering can take place. I have made a decision to move to Sydney for a period of time to continue my Yoga Sadhana. I wish to be with other Yogis so that I have the support I need. Bharat is there and I am hopeful I can practice with like-minded people. I have explained the situation to my students, I am committed for a month and will then reassess the situation.

Meenakshi, how are you? How is Ananda? I telephoned Aruna in Italy as I was so anxious to share my sense of loss. Aruna was not available, however I did speak with a very lovely lady named Maytilli who is secretary and a staunch devotee of Poojya Swamiji and I shed tears yet again. Some how it helped. I want to come to India; and I am sure that the right time will present itself as well as the necessary finances. I look forward to this visit. I had felt Swamiji would live on and on in his physical body and I had wanted to share my progress with him. I feel he lives on forever and I dedicate my daily practice to him which makes me feel stronger. I can now feel my breath, my practice of alternate nostril breathing is a deep enriching experience instead of a battle to regulate the tala. I can sit still and I do: so many little-big things to relate. Deeper insights as I meditate, strong electrical currents almost like lightning bolts as I sit, I have inner glows of light, I breathe with the Pranava AUM and so dearest Meenakshi the list grows. I am so fortunate to have shared even the briefest stay with you: yet I practice and I continue to seek and be hungry for knowledge. I still need a teacher, a Guru, so I look towards the Gurukula and I look inside.”

How foolish was I not to sell my car and come last year? I am going to seek out other students of Swamiiji so that we may grow stronger against the tide. I send blessings, love and understanding. You have always been my most respected and adored role model. Accept these words in the true spirit of Yoga. Yours, Affectionally in Yoga,

—Maratana Hope, Bellingen Australia.

Meenakshi Devijee: I happened to know about the very sad demise of dear Swamiiji. Please accept my condolences. It is indeed a great loss to the field of Yoga. I am sure, you will continue to carry on with the mission started by the revered Swamiiji. May his soul rest in peace and reach ultimate salvation. Yours Sincerely,

—Dr. Samprasad Vinod, Director, Maharishi Vinod Research Foundation, Shanti-Mandir, Vijayanagar Colony, 2100, Sadashiv Peth, Poona-411 030.
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

My dear Meenakshiji and Ananda Balayogi: I heard the sad news of Swamiji’s demise only today. I am very sorry indeed. Please accept my sincere and heartfelt condolences. We have all lost a great man, born with a mission. To me, his unique message to mankind was to “breathe deep, slow and rhythmic and experience good health. Incorporate the primordial sound with it and experience vibrant health.” I am sending you a few testimonials of my students and student—patients to reveal to you how I incorporated his teachings in my therapy programmes and achieved most reassuring success. I am also sending you a copy of my bio-data to let you know how I have steadily progressed during the last thirty years and how my studies culminated with Swamiji. I saw and heard Swamiji for the first time at the Kaivalyadhama International Yoga Conference held in December 1984. I was deeply impressed. I thought he had descended from the Himalayas and something told me then that I had to track him down for he had something to impart to me. Immediately after the session I searched for him but he had departed.

Four years later I was given an old copy of the “YOGA LIFE” by one of the Swamis at Mangrove Mountain wherein is located the Satyananda Ashram headquarters in Australia. By that time I had realised the need to learn Pranayama under an authority. Immediately I wrote to Swamiji and came over in late 1988 and stayed till January 1989 and studied under him and you. Now you may realise why I said in my last letter from Thailand that Swamiji’s teachings were unique and should be spread. All of the traditional practices which he imparted so forcefully are progressively phased to deeper and subtler levels. They are also harmoniously blended into very effective programmes. Yours in Yoga,

—Sri Bala Ratnam, Yoga Therapist, Breath Therapy Clinic, 5A Ian Grove, Mount Waverley 3149, Australia.

Divine Self: I am writing with wonder, surprise and shock on the sudden demise of Swami Gitanandaji. How I unlucky I was that I could not come to Pondicherry due to my accident. Dr. Swamiji has been my inspiration, guide, master, protector and a father who took every opportunity to bring me in to the Yoga community. It is impossible to forget him, his dynamic personality. He became a living legend in the history of Yoga in the contemporary world. My brief association with him awakened a new era of Yoga in me which I am pursuing till now. In this hour of grief, along with members of Yoga Employees Association of which he was the dynamic Patron, and the world-wide Yoga community, I pay rich homage to Lion of Pondicherry, a living legend, a dynamic leader of Yoga. I, with melted and overflowing heart, pray Divine to bestow you, Ananda Bala Yogi and others, a divine strength to bear this loss.

—Girish Jha, Yoga Employees Association, Central Institute for Yoga, Government of India, 68, Ashok Road, New Delhi 110 001.
Tributes to the Guru

Meenakshi Devijee: The light the burned so brightly, that led many thousands from darkness to brightness, that removed diseases and gave health, that replaced anxiety and sorrow with peace and joy, is no more available to be seen with the naked eyes. But, I am absolutely sure that like many of our ancient seers, he will, through his monumental writings, continue to inspire people to health, knowledge and joy. He was a powerful and ideal Raja Yogi, a real Monarch of Yoga with a body full of health, strength and energy, a mind that overflowed with creative thoughts, an intellect with the sharpness of a razor and a spirit that always experienced and gave joy. With his magnetic personality, he dominated proceedings at every session, public or private, that he took part in. He was endowed with a tongue that had a joke for every occasion, that could soothe weary hearts, resuscitate drooping spirits and cut to size the evil designs of manipulating men. He lived purposefully, thought clearly, spoke lucidly, guided correctly, wrote prolifically, laughed uproariously, acted dynamically and died majestically.

Dearest Meenakshi, what can I say to you? Born in America and making India your homeland, you have been an inspiring example of an ideal combination of the best of both the countries. You have been an illustrious instance of an ideal wife and a wonderful student, in the best traditions of Ashram life of ancient India. I earnestly pray that you will be blessed with strength to carry on with the same vigour, the great work Swamiji and you did together. I hope that Ananda Bala Yogi will soon blossom forth to follow the example of his great father.

—Yogacharya Yogi Ram, Sitaramiah, Director, Yoga Academy, B-9/F-4, Vidyanagar Colony, University Road, Hyderabad 500 044:

Dear Meenakshi: I heard, from Rajudev, that Swamiji had left the body, and I felt moved to write you. His life’s work will go on, through each and every one of us that had the great good fortune of taking his teachings as a way of life, and teaching others in as poor a manner as we can, what this great teacher taught us. There is a poem I would like to share with you, “On the day I die, when I am being carried toward the grave, don’t weep.

Don’t say, “He’s gone! He’s gone!”
Death has nothing to do with going away.
The sun sets and the moon sets, but they’re not gone, Death is a coming together...................
..............it’s really a release into Union.
Your mouth closes here and immediately opens with a shout of joy there.”
—Rumi.

With much love. In Yoga, Victoria Whitehand,
1384 Barlow Ln. Sebastopol, CA, 95472. U.S.A.
Life in Ananda Ashram

By NATASHA ARSHAVAKAYA
Apt. 248 No 10, Smolenskaya St., Moscow 121 099, Russia.

No, never-never I forget you, Swamiji and you, Meenakshi,
The peace and the nobility of the Ananda Ashram,
The sounds of ocean waves
And the fantastic garden where trees and flowers
whispered me the tales

Of the Lord Ganesha statues in the hall,
The portraits of your Guru on the wall,
The ancient temple dances, so marvellous your dancers
And the Karnatik songs which sang for us your son
The mornings watching on the roof how raised the
golden sun.

The ancient Puja rites, Lord Shiva Mantras chanting
The breathing of Eternity......
OM, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Natasha, a geologist by profession and a grandmother, is a student,
of the 1993-94 International Yoga Teachers Training Course, ICYER,
She will be establishing a Centre for Rishi Culture Yoga in her native
Russia when she completes her course on March 27, 1994.

Divine Self: Swamiji's life was his teaching. He created a vibrant environment
around him wherever he lived, an environment which imparted Yoga principles by
its very structure, to whomsoever lived and moved within it. His Guru Kula has
given birth to thousands of 'baby Yogis.' May they grow and mature and be a
credit to their Master. Yours in Yoga.

—Yogacharya Chandra Kumar Giri, Germany.
THE FLIGHT OF THE ALONE TO THE ALONE
RETURN TO INDIA:
SWAMIJI IN
BOMBAY
1967
A NEW CHAPTER OPENS:
Swamiji on April 16, 1972
SWAMIJI IN 1992:
MEENAKSHI AND
SARASWATHI IN BACKGROUND
Tributes To Poojya Swamiji

Yogamaharishi
Dr. Swami
Gitananda Giri Ji

Literally thousands of letters and telegrams have poured into the Ashram from all over the world after Poojya Swamiji's Maha Samadhi on December 29, 1993. So many loving thoughts and spiritual insights have given us here at the Mother Ashram the strength and courage to bear with our great loss. We hereby print a few letters so that our Yoga family around the world may share our sentiments at this crucial junction in our spiritual lives.

My Dear Shrimathi Meenakshi Devi Ji: This morning I was shocked to read in the newspaper that Swami Gitanandaji breathed his last in Madras hospital and his body was brought to Pondicherry. A valiant fighter for the establishment of Yoga and a good friend of us all is no more. There is no death for a Yogi. So there is no room for me to offer my condolences. The Yogi knows that he comes alone naked and goes alone naked. As Lord Krishna has said in the Gita, his soul may be reborn again in the family of Yogis to carry on his unrelentless force to establish Yoga in man's daily life. He was to have attended the Delhi Conference.
but God called otherwise. I share and bear the personal loss with you and your son and may his soul rest in peace to shower all blessings in Yoga. In deep sympathies.
—Padma Shri Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar, 1107-B/1, Shivajinagar, Pune-411 016

Namaskar to Thavathiru Poojya Swamijis feet: We are very shocked and sad, when we learnt Swamiji has attained Vidheha Mukthi Kaivalyam. Swamiji worked and served his entire life for all people, teaching and explaining Hindu Dharmas and specially, he taught Yoga Sasthras in a very dynamic and appealing way. We can never forget that Poojya Swamiji came and spoke and lectured in a very great manner at all of the Sant Sammelans, gathering of Hindu saints, held by our organisation and told us all: We must be proud to be Indians and Hindus. Hindu society has lost his spiritual fire. This dynamic spirituality can not be matched by anyone. Swamiji’s blessings and his example will show all people the right path to follow. There is no doubt Swamiji’s Atma is victorious and free.

Our Namaskaram to Swamiji’s feet, Yours in the spiritual path.
—S. Vedantham and R.B.Y.S. Manian, 43, Remanyam Street, T. Nagar, Madras-17. (These men are valiant fighters for the Hindu cause and organise Conferences of Hindu Swamijis)

True Copy of the resolution passed by the Managing Committee Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra at the meeting held on 30th December, 1993 at Prashantikuteeram, Bangalore, under the Chairmanship of Dr. M. Lakshmikumari, President, Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra:

"The Managing Committee of the Vivekananda Kendra was sorry to learn of the death of Swami Gitananda at Pondicherry on 29th December, 1993. His contribution to popularise Yoga is well known and he was closely associated with Vivekananda Kendra Yogas at Bangalore. The Committee prays for the peace of departed soul."

—Prof. K. N. Vaswani, Vice-President

Blessed Self: Adorations ! Thank you for your kind letter of January 24, 1994 informing me of the Mahasamadhi of Yogamarshishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri. Indeed he was a great patron of our work and I personally received a great inspiration from his dynamic personality. His Mahasamadhi has been a shocking news for us. However, in this transient world great ones play their part and leaving their shimmering footprints in the sands of time and filling the atmosphere with a heavenly aroma they depart and become one with the Absolute Self. May the light he has kindled in the hearts of his disciples continue to burn brighter and brighter. We are offering special prayers to reverence and adore his great soul. May his son and successor Ananda Bala Yogi receive the choicest blessings of God and may God bless you. With regards. Prem and Om. Yours in the Lord.

—Swami Jyothirmayananda, Founder, Yoga Research Foundation, 6111 S.W. 74th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33133, U.S.A. Tel. (305) 666-2006,
Dear Mrs. Meenakshi Devi: I was shocked to hear the sad demise of Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj and at this juncture we have no words but to pray God to lay his soul in rest. My wife joins me in sending our condolences to you and I am aware now the responsibility lies mainly on you carrying out the Mission of Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Maharaj. With regards.


Devi ji: It was with profound sorrow and shock that I have received the news about Swamiji’s demise. Swamiji was a great soul, whose life was dedicated to the cause of spiritual upliftment through the practice of Yoga. The Demonic forces in India built untold hurdles on his noble path but with true trust in the final triumph of Yoga, he withstood all the challenges thrown to him and you, like a Puranic heroine, stood by him in all the trials and tribulations. We, who knew, both you and Swamiji from close quarters, always felt proud of you and also in the power of Yoga, which has attracted and attached you to the Indian soil. India has lost a great friend, philosopher and guide by Swamiji’s demise. May God give you and Balananda strength and long life to carry the torch of Swamiji to yet unachieved horizons, and thus bring more glory to India. I and my family sincerely grieve the leaving of Swamiji’s soul from the body. Long Live Swami Gitananda’s fame. Long Live Yoga. Yours sincerely,

—Dr. T.K.S. Nair, Professor of Chemistry, Pondy University, Pondicherry.

Dear Sister Meenakshi Devi: It is with a profound sense of loss and grief that I learnt of the physical loss of our Gurudev Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj. Swamiji’s presence used to be the source of inspiration and guidance for all of us to ascend spiritual heights. His absence should become the starting point of a journey of discovery to find out how much we have learnt from him. It should be the starting point of redecoration to his spiritual ideals and his vision of an emancipated and liberated society. He had sincerely desired to give Yoga a scientific base. All this is very difficult. His loss is difficult to fill and the grief difficult to forget by mortals like me. I request you and pray to God to give you strength and courage to forget the grief and work harder for the cause for which Swamiji lived and died. Let his teachings be a source of uninterrupted sacred guidance. With regards, Yours faithfully,

My Dear Meenakshi Devi ji:
Namaskar! I felt sad and shocked to hear about the sad demise of great Master, Dr. Swami Gitananda. I have no words to console you and dearest Ananda Balayogi and other friends in the Ananda Ashram. Our great Master Dr. Swami Gitananda who himself was an institution, and not a single soul, is no more. He created a new and scientific concept of Yoga world wide. He was like the sun, which attracted many many stars and planets around him. He gave a notion of life to this circle of human beings and all of us danced in the style of the Cosmic Dance of Shiva. It is very difficult to replace him, for such illuminated souls come to this world after centuries. Now, all this heavy work has fallen on your shoulders. I am confident that you will continue the good work, started by our Master, Yogarishi Dr. Swami Gitananda. I am confident that your illustrious son, Ananda Balá Yogi, will do his best to help you in this work of refining world awareness and consciousness. Please rest assured that like me—thousands of disciples of Swamiji—are around the world at your service.

With regards, Your Obedient Servant,

—Prof. Fida M. Hassnain, Dastagir House, RD 377 Channapora, Srinagar 15, Kashmir (India). Tel. 1094-30423. (Note: Sri Hassnain, a lawyer and a historical scholar is a Sufi, and a universalist with whom we have had close contacts for a decade).

Respected Meenakshi Ji: I was stunned to hear the sad news of Swamiji’s Maha Samadhi. I can’t express my sorrow in words. He was like a foster father to me always writing and replying to my letters with great affection. It was he who first recognised the skill of my Nauli Kriya in Yoga Life of March 89 and brought me—no, pulled me up in the Yogic world. He gave me
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

an identity as “the Nauli Man”. With his passing away there has been a
great void in the Yogic field which will be difficult to fill for years to come.
He was a force to reckon with and a source of courage for Yoga lovers. With
his beaming health, a roaring voice and a smiling face it was expected that he
will live for many more years to come to serve the cause of Yoga but the
Almighty willed it otherwise. On my return from Delhi we held a meeting of
the Rajasthan Swasthya Yoga Parishad on the 6th throwing light on the life of
Swamiji and observed a two minute silence praying for peace to the great
departed soul. I pray Almighty to give courage to you and dear Ananda Bala
Yogi to bear this unsurmountable loss. With deep reverence.

—Sri S. K. Jindel, Advocate, President, Rajasthan Swasthya Yog Parishad,
6-14, Krishna Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302001.

Dear Madam: I was shocked to learn about the sudden demise of Poojya
Swamiji. I do realise that you and Anand would have been shaken by the unex-
pected event that has over taken you. At these hours of your utmost grief, I am
unable to command enough words to console you. The passing away of Swamiji
has not only left a void in the life of you both but also in the hearts of his many
thousands of followers. The passing away of Swamiji is an irreparable loss to the
world of Yoga. I can only say at this hour of mourning that what cannot be cured
has to be endured. My wife and I pray the Almighty to give you and Anand enough
strength to withstand the rude shock. Yours faithfully,

—Shri G. Masilamani, Senior Advocate, Madras High Court, Madras.

My dear Meenakshi Devi: I have been deeply grieved and shocked to hear of the
passing away of Poojya Swami Gitananda Ji. His was an abiding presence in my
life. He was my first Guru who was so wonderfully able to bridge the West and
the East for me when I returned to India from Oxford, trying to find my roots. He
was my first teacher and retained a special niche in my affections and respect.
I also remember with affection my second visit to Ananda Ashram with Meenakshi
who was later to become my wife. When we travelled there to shoot my film on
Mudra, Swamiji was as ever erudite, compassionate and ebullient. Through regular
issues of Yoga Life, we followed the vagaries of your own struggles with the
Ashram and with the Government of India. We were delighted that things seemed
to be settling down for Swamiji and for you to continue your efforts in promoting
Yoga and a holistic way of life. Meenakshi joins me in sending you our very
warmest affection and sincere condolences. I know that words are of little conso-
lation but two full hearts here speak for themselves. Affectionately yours,

—Rajiv Mehrotra, 136 Golf Links, New Delhi-110 003.

(Rajiv is one of India’s best known young documentary film makers and
a television personality. —Ed. Note)
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

Dear Madam,

We are extremely sorry to hear the sad demise of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri in the early hours on 29-12-'93. All the members of our branch staff join the undersigned in expressing our heartfelt condolences. May his soul rest in peace. Undoubtedly all of us miss a towering personality, world renowned Yoga expert, a great philosopher, ever helping and dedicated religious guide. There is no substitute for Dr. Swamiji. But we have to carry on. We pray the Almighty to give all of you the courage and strength to go ahead in the same path of the great leader Swamiji. Yours faithfully,

—P. J. Srinivasan, Chief Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, Pondicherry.

Madame Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani: I was shocked to know from January issue of YOGA LIFE about Srila Sri Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Maharaj leaving his body. Poojya Swamiji and I have been associated for many years and although HE was not my GURU, I had a similar respect for HIM. I send my heartfelt condolences and pray to the Almighty to give you and Yogi Ananda Balayogi Giri all the courage to support this great loss and enable you both to continue the great work HE has left behind. I am sure HE will always be guiding us all. I am aware of your talents through your magazine YOGA LIFE and I have not forgotten that Swami Ji called you the SHAKTI behind all the successes. AUM Shanti,


Dear Meenakshi Devi: With a very heavy heart I participated in the Yoga Conference in January in Pondy and everytime felt the absence of Swami Gitanandaji throughout the programme. I hope that you must be coming out from the greatest shock in your life and accepting the situation for future generations. If you and Anand require any help from me, kindly do not hesitate to write. I will try to do my best. Thanking you,

—Yours sincerely, Dr. M. Bhole, M D., Kaivalyadhama, Shriman Madhava Yoga Mandirë Samiti, Lonavla-410 403 (Pune), India.

Divine Self: We have had notice of the death of Swami Gitananda from Dayamatha. It has caught us and we were dismayed at the news. We had very good news about his health not long ago, and his unbelievable vitality has given us the possibility to hope for a very long life for him. For the Yoga, for all of us, it is a very big loss. Our hearts, our mind are near you and we will be forever. Our students and all the members of the Federazione Italiana Scuole Yoga are joined together with us in our affectionate and reverent embrace to you and Anand.

—Yogacharya Guru Priya and Yogacharini Thayee Devi, President, Federazione Italiana Scuola Yoga, Via XXV Aprile 12/5 Sd, 16123 Genova, Italy.
Dear Smt. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani Jee: We are very much sorry and grieved to learn the death (Maha Yoga Samadhi) of Sri Sri Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji Guru Maharaj, on 29th December, 1993. Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji, has done a great work in promoting Yoga and Indian Cultures among the peoples of East and West. The coming generations will always remember the noble works of Swami Ji. We have the good relations with Swami Jee, since last nearly 15 years and for that we are grateful Aum. Ever in Yoga,

—Naresh Gupta, Director, Indian Books Centre, Exporters—Importers—Booksellers and Subscription Agents, 40/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110 007 (India)

Dearest Meenakshi: We received the news of Swamiji’s death with deep sorrow. We grieve for you and with you. It is difficult to imagine a world without Swamiji who was always there to advise, instruct and enlighten us. For you Ananda and all the other close to him, this will be a tragedy of the greatest magnitude. May God give you the strength and fortitude to bear with it and to carry on Swamiji’s great work. Yours in Yoga.

—Nergis Dalal, Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun 248 001.
(Nergis is an author and one of India’s best known freelance feature journalists)

Dear Amma: When Bhima phoned me I could hardly believe what he was saying and even now I won’t believe it, but I was happy to know that Swamiji has united himself in Lord Shiva. May his words in his last letter to me be true, that the next twenty years will become the most successful of his life,
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

anchoring his teaching in the consciousness and hearts of people willing to do something for life on this beautiful planet. My heart will always be with you in India and I hope very much to be able to see you again, very soon. I am looking forward for a fruitful relationship with you all. Yours in Yoga
—Dr. Nalini Devi, C. Portola, 10E-1, 08023, Barcelona, Spain.

Dear Meenakshi Devi, Ananda Balayogi, and all at Ananda Ashram: We were very sad to receive the latest copy of "YOGA LIFE" and to learn of the passing of our dear Swami Gitananda. That is, we were not sad for our dear Guru, who indeed had passed to his Samadi. It is for ourselves that we weep. Although I had not expected, now that I am almost 80 years old, to ever see dear Swamiji again, yet the fact that it can now never be, nor to hear the Lion of Pondicherry roar again, fills one with melancholy. However, away with all that, We think now of all the positive things and of how our dear Swamiji changed and enriched our lives. That can only be repaid in passing on some of what we have learned to others. If we have a sense of loss, so far away, then we can only imagine how you must be feeling at Ananda Ashram, You must feel as though the sun has sunk in the sky. That great Master upon whom you leaned is no longer there. You will feel as though half of yourself has been torn away.

I admire your brave words: "Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji is with us in spirit. It is our sacred duty to fulfill his grand Yogic Vision in every conceivable manner for the rest of our days upon this earth." So may it be! But all the time, dear Meenakshi, we know that your heart is bleeding, even though you are facing the world with a smile. But of course his great spirit lives on, and for those who loved him his constant presence will be ever felt, the sound of his voice, the roar of his laughter. You will feel as though his voice is talking to you and guiding you still. There is so much one could say of such a great spirit, the things are endless. All members of the Muller family join in sending their love especially to yourself and to Ananda Balayogi, as to all at Ananda Ashram. Yours in love,
—Phyllis Muller 1/21 Felton Mathew Ave., Auckland 6, New Zealand.

Dear Meenakshi: Vannakum Amma. I have been meaning to write to you much earlier as my thoughts have been with you and all the other members of Ananda Ashram so much these days. Still it seems difficult to believe what has happened and it seems so difficult to imagine, that Swamiji in his physical form is no longer there. This is all the more so, as his mind, his heart, his spiritual personality and his teaching are as present as ever for me, which makes all "grief" feel like self-pity and ego-vanity. And through my sadness I can sense his joy, his laughter: a laughing God filled with light...... He has left you. Renuka, Ananda and all of us students who studied with him (and still do) to carry on the teaching of Yoga and his mission in the world.
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

My thoughts are especially with you as I feel the task you are facing now. I have no doubt that as a true Yogini you are mastering it beautifully, as difficult as it may be. I have always appreciated your support and encouragement throughout the years, be it in Yoga, Bharat Natyam, Sanskrit or my medical studies. Despite the physical separation I feel the strong link, that connects us all together as one spiritual family. It has been a great blessing in my life........In my heart and mind I am with you every day and send you much light, love and peace. Yours in Yoga,


Dearest Meenakshi Divine Self: This morning I was meditating in my room when I suddenly felt that I had to stand up and go and collect the mail, as there was some important letter in the mail box. It was not a letter, but the issue of YOGA LIFE with the announcement of Swamiji’s passing. After the first shock, something strange happened. I was swamped with a feeling of elation and confidence, an unexpected sense of well being, hope and trust in what is definitely a very dark time of my life. The image I got was as if the visible form of Swami that I did not have the privilege of encountering—had expanded and exploded into innumerable sparks of light, one of which had reached poor me.

So thanks, dear Meenakshi, thanks dear Swami. Of course, I also understand and sympathize with the sense of loss that you must be bitterly experiencing on the human level. Though I was not able to come and meet him in [the Ashram, I had an intense exchange with Swami during the correspondence course, and learnt so much from him. Besides, he was always so encouraging and you with him—answering so many of my questions, showing a genuine interest in my reflections and ideas and supporting me in my moments of discouragement. In his last letter to me he wrote: “I am sure in all that is happening to you that you will come out the other side and benefit by same.” That is what is happening, after a year and a half of bitter suffering. What happened, was in a way what you described in your poem Skillful Hunter (do you remember how struck I was by it?). He really shattered me—my human personality—and ripped all—and is still ripping me—of my masks and useless skins, like leaf after leaf, like an onion. When I first took up Yoga I did not know it would entail this too: but once embraced, the process goes on and now I know that this is an absolutely necessary, though painful, phase. Many changes have taken place in my life, and I begin to hope again—if God so allows it, to come to India although I am weak, at the same time, I am transformed, more truthful, more myself, more ready to receive. Thanks again, Meenakshi dear and may the Divine, whatever name we give it, help you carry on Swamiji’s formidable work with strength enthusiasm, and love, Yours in Yoga.

—Mariella Lancia, Via Pavese 33, 40141. Bologna, Italy.
IN THE HANDS OF HIM

People often ask me, "What techniques can you teach me to obtain enlightenment?" I can only smile to myself at the folly of the human race. There is no technique which will produce enlightenment. That high state of ONE-NESS, of SAMADHI, of COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS occurs as the fruit of previous labour, as a reward for virtuous and honest and truthful living, as a prize of self-scrutiny and self-study, as the flower of Tapasya. But there are many practices which we can do to purify and strengthen our bodies, minds and hearts, so as to make us an Adhikarin, or one fit for the higher life. This is where the sincere Abhyasa of Yoga Asanas, Pranayama and Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga Kriyas is important. Not that they in themselves will produce ENLIGHTENMENT. This is the subtle distinction that most people miss. If one undertakes an active Yoga Sadhana, according to the Rishiculture system, with a sincere love and profound interest in the various techniques, with enjoyment and zest, then the Sadhana is performed for its own sake and not for the hope of a reward. ....however elevated that reward may be, such as the desire for Samadhi or Cosmic Consciousness. If the Divine so wills it, heightened states of consciousness may occur as naturally as a flower blooming on its vine. If the Divine does not will it, one simply enjoys the Sadhana for its own sake. This is a most necessary attitude to keep one's Abhyasa fresh and innocent and joyous. Otherwise, one simply becomes, after twenty years, disillusioned and disappointed, thinking: "In spite of all this work, what did I get after all?" Those kind of thoughts have no place in a Rishiculture Sadhana which is a wholistic Yoga life lived for the sake of living well, and not for the sake of any reward........spiritual or material. There is no quid pro quo in Yogic living....there is no....this for that....There is only THIS or THAT....OM TAT SAT....and THAT IS TRUTH. When we are ready, the illumination will come on its own accord, on its own will. At the proper moment, the cucumber ripens on its vine. With our sincere Sadhana, we cultivate the ground, plant the seeds, tend the plants. But the fruition of it all........yea, that fruition is in the hands of HIM.

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Girl Guru Maharaj, in Satsangha, March, 1992, at ICVER, Tamil Nadu, India.
Devotees and disciples of Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj around the world have expressed a desire to share fully in the momentous transition which the work of Poojya Swamiji must undergo in order to manifest in the altered circumstances after Poojya Swamiji's Samadhi. YOGA LIFE will be sharing this eventful time fully with devotees and disciples through photos and stories in future issues. Here with we are printing a chronological list of the important "points of passage" during this time that all may attune themselves and keep themselves in harmony with us, Yogically and consciously. —Meenakshi Devi

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21st, 1993: Poojya Swamiji annoints Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani his physical son and spiritual disciple as his successor to the Ghadi of Sri Kambliswami Madam and his successor to the Rishiculture Tradition, following the lineage of the Bengali Tantric Sage and Saint, Srila Sri Kanakananda Swamigal. A will was executed and a simple ceremony performed in the presence of a few close disciples. Ananda Balayogi was first publically proclaimed the heir and spiritual successor to Poojya Swamiji Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri in a public ceremony July 24, 1976 in the premises of Sri Kambliswamy Madam, when was four years old.

2-20 a.m. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1993. Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj left his body peacefully at the most auspicious time of Arudhra Darshan during the Poornima (full moon) in the most sacred month of the Tamil calendar, MARGAZHI. Arudhra Darshan is the one time of the year when devotees may have the sacred viewing, or Darshan, of the normally fierce and angry Rudra (the Primordial Shiva) in his most benevolent and benign aspects. Pandit Narayanan Swami, the Devaram singer for Ananda Ashram for 25 years, was attending the Arudra Darshan Puja at Chidambaram. When he returned to Pondicherry, immediately upon hearing the news of Poojya Swamiji's Mahasamadhi, he brought a gigantic rose Mala (flower garland) and Prasadam from the Arudra Darshan Puja held at Chidambaram and placed the Mala at the feet of Poojya Swamigal as an appropriate offering. At the moment of Poojya Swamiji's passing, rain fell for half an hour in Pondicherry, though this is not the monsoon season.
11:45 a.m. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1993. Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji was placed in Samadhi, the Ananda Mandala, which he had himself constructed as his final resting place on July 17, 1986. The Mandala, a four-tiered geometric shape which embodies the concept of Anandam, or Cosmic Bliss, is located at the main entrance to the Ashram complex, just before entering the large hall leading to Sri Kambliswamigal Samadhi. Elaborate Dravidian Poojas and rites and rituals thousands of years old, began at 6 a.m. and were conducted by the Paramaguru of the Sri Kambliswamy Samadhi site, Srila Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal, who himself is nearly 100 years old. The venerable Swamiji was assisted in all the rites and rituals by Ananda Balayogi. Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji was placed in Padma Asana, at 2 a.m. in the morning of December 30th and sitting in this position he gave his final Darshan to the thousands of devotees and disciples who came to touch his feet for the last time and to take his blessings and make floral offerings. By 6 a.m., the Abhishekas, or ritualistic cleansings with various materials, including sandal wood powder, Vibhuthi, coconut water, rose water, milk, curd, fruits etc. were performed and Poojya Swamiji was dressed in new cloth. By 10-30 a.m., the Abhishekas were completed, and Aradhana (or the decoration and dressing) and the Aarathi (the offering of sacred flame) were performed. Poojya Swamiji was placed in a pallequin and was carried throughout the Madam premises, that he might give his final benediction in this body to the institution. This was a grand procession with pomp and ceremony. Poojya Swamiji was placed into his Samadhi following all rules and regulations handed down through hundreds of generations of Dravidian and Sivayoga Gurus. The final Aarathi was performed to his face for the last time by his heir and spiritual successor Ananda Balayogi and the Samadhi was sealed. Just at the moment of the sealing of the Samadhi, light rain fell for about fifteen minutes. The thousand of persons present all took this as an auspicious omen, signalling the passing of a great spiritual Master. The Samadhi was then decorated in an elaborate manner with flower garlands and wreaths.

2:00 p.m. WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1994. Nearly all the delegates of the International Yogs Festival, numbering nearly 1000 people, gathered at the Sri Kambliswamy Madam for a Memorial Service and Shraddhanjali for Poojya Swami Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji. 108 oil lamps were lit and placed on the Samadhi, each one carried by a close disciple. Students and disciples from 27 countries were represented. Great Yoga and spiritual personalities from around the world paid homage and spoke of Poojya Swamiji's magnificent life and the invaluable contribution his work has been in elevating global consciousness. Honoured speakers on the
occasion included Mahamandaleswar Ma Yoga Shakti from New York, USA., who chanted a beautiful rendition of verses from the BHAGAVAD GITA; Sri Vishwatma Brahmachari Bawra Ji of the Vishwatma Brahmarchi Bawra Mission of Chandigarh; Yoga Shree Indar Nath of the Patanjali Yoga Centre in England; Dr. M. V. Bhole, Joint Director Research, Kaival- yadhama, Lonavla; Ed and Debbi Shapiro (Swami Darmananda and Swami Dharmavathi) of England and the U.S.A.; were amongst the speakers. Bhajanas were led by Ananda Balayogi, P.R. Ramani and Puduvai V. Manikannan. Other devotees also spoke. Meenakshi Devi and Ananda Balayogi also gave messages. The function lasted for four hours, during which a wonderful and blissful sense of peace and happiness filled the heart.

2 a.m. TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1994. Installation of the special-three part granite-meteorite Lingam specially designed by Srla Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal and Ananda Balayogi and carved according to ritualistic specifications at the holy site of the Sacred Shiva Mountain Arunachala in Tiruvannamalai. The Lingam, made in three parts, represents Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, and other sacred triune aspects of the spiritual life. Elaborate Pujas were performed as the Lingam was installed atop the Ananda Mandala, Poojya Swamiji’s Samadhi. The Ashta Bandham, or the eight holy elements which bind the Lingam into its place and the three parts together, was applied.

6 a.m. TUESDAY, JANUARY 11th, 1994. The 120th Aradhana or Guru Puja celebrations for the Paramguru of the Samadhi site, Akanda Paripurna Srla Sri Kamblishwamigal who took his Samadhi in Amavasi or new moon in the holy month of Margazhi 120 years ago in the Tamil year known as Sri Mugha. In the Tamil calendar, every sixty years the names of years repeat themselves. So, this year in the Tamil calendar, was called Sri Mugha, the same name of the year in which Poojya Srla Sri Kamblishwamigal took his Samadhi 120 years ago. Hence, this year was an especially auspicious year for devotees of the Paramparai. At 6 a.m. the Orange Flag of the Sannyassin was paraded throughout the Madam premises by Ananda Balayogi, the spiritual heir and successor to Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda, with great pomp and ceremony, and then the flag was hoisted high over the Ashram buildings.

Bhajans and Sanskrit Mantra, chanting then were rendered as the ritualistic Abhisekams and Aradhana for Srla Sri Kamblishwamy were performed, Aradhana and Abhisekams were also performed at the Lingam of the Samadhi of Pooja Dr. Swami Gitananda. The Paramaguru Srla Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal has stated: Srla Sri Kamblishwamigal and Poojya Swami Dr. Swami Gitananda are now one. Whatever ceremonies are done for one, must now be done for the other”. By 12-30 p.m. all Pujas
and the spectacular floral decorations were completed at both Samadhis. The final Aarthis were shown, making the Guru's spirit come alive in the hearts of all true devotees. By 1 p.m. the community banquet began. More than 1000 persons were served a sit-down feast in the beautiful upper Satsangha Hall of Sri Kamliswamy Madam. This is the first time the hall has been used since 1986. The service of the food continued all day from 1 p.m. til 6 p.m., with long-time devotees K. Ramamurthi and M. Satyarat supervising.

7 p.m. TUESDAY JANUARY 11th, 1994. The MOKSHA DEEPAM, or the Ceremony Celebrating the Moksha or Spiritual Freedom of Poojya Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj was held, with eminent saints and sages from all over South India attending, as well as devotees from all over India and the world. 108 lamps were lit and placed on the Samadhi and Panchakshara Mantra chanting (AumNama Shivaiah Mantra) was held continuously. Bhajans were sung and Sanskrit Mantras chanted. Hundreds of devotees were present to honour Poojya Swamiji's life and work. Notable Swamis graced the occasion and spoke.

9 a.m. THURSDAY JANUARY 13, 1994. The floral decorations were removed from both shrines for the first time since the Guru Puja was done. The PAAL ABHISHEKAM or the Bathing with Milk of the Sri Kamliswamy Samadhi and the Samadhi Lingam of Poojya Swami Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri was done and Aradhana and Aarthi was performed.

10 a.m. The formal confirmation of Ananda Balayogi's appointment as spiritual heir and successor to Poojya Swami Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri and to the seat of the Madathiapathy of Shri Kamliswamy Madam, to serve as the Junior Madathiapathy under Srila Shri Shankaragiri Swamigal's guidance was held. AUM NAMA SHIVAIH, the PANCHAKSHARA was chanted in a meditative fashion 1008 times by the nearly one hundred devotees and disciples present, as the Paramguru presented the symbol of spiritual power, the Rudraksha to Ananda Balayogi and garlanded him. After this Ananda Balayogi took the blessings of the Paramguru. Close disciples served as witnesses to the moving ceremony and offered their blessings and devotion to Ananda Balayogi in his new and responsible role. Thiru M. Sugangantham, family friend and legal advisor for 25 years, conducted the legal side of the ceremony reading out the official papers of appointment and appointment and supervising the signing by the special witnesses on all the papers. Witnesses to this important ceremony included Yogacharini Renuka Giri, India; Yogacharini Bharathi Devi, Holland; Sri K. Rammurthy, India; Shri M. Sathyaraj, India; Sri Krishna- murthy, India; and Shri P. Shanthaseelam, India.
These are the major POINTS OF PASSAGE to be remembered during the transition of Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji during the last week of December 1993 and the new first week of January 1994. Many more Pujas and ceremonies, meetings and talks were held as hundreds thronged in and out of the Madam and at ICYER during these days. Hundreds came from far and near to pay their personal respects and condolences and thousands of telegrammes and letters have poured in from all over the world. YOGA LIFE will be carrying detailed essays and stories on the thoughts and feelings which have been experienced here at the Ashram, but these POINTS OF PASSAGE will give all devotees, students and disciples a clear understanding of significant dates and times during this great period of change and transition for us all.

WANTED: Photos-Audio Tapes-Video Tapes of Poojya Swamiji

We want to build up an extensive collection of audio tapes, video tapes and photographs of Poojya Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri here at the Mother Ashram for our spiritual inspiration. We therefore make an urgent call to all students to send to us any copies of any photos, video or audio tapes which they possess, that other members of the world family may enjoy same when they make their pilgrimage here to the Mother Ashram, and also for the benefit of new students who have never had the privilege of Darshan or meeting Swamiji in his body. We are calling upon our students to treat this as part of the DHARMA TO THE GURU, their sacred and pleasant duty and opportunity to serve their Guru, and this Paramparai. Please make blow ups of the photographs, especially if they are good, clear coloured photographs, as large as possible. We will frame them here in Pondicherry. The quality of printing is much better abroad than in India, so do not send negatives, but rather have the photos blown up into the largest possible size and send them to us by registered post. Be prepared to go to some time, trouble and expense to fulfill this SACRED DUTY, this GURU DHARMA, so that we may keep POOJYA SWAMIJI alive in every possible dimension. Send all photos, video and audio tapes to us here at ICYER: Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, ICYER, 16-A, Mettu Street, Chinnamudaliarchavady, Kottakuppam, Tamil Nadu 605 104, India.
Sparks of the Guru

Poojya Swamiji’s Fire Ignites Thousands of Hearts

Tributes to the Yogamaharishi

Letters continue to pour into the Mother Ashram as students and devotees world wide begin to come to grips with their new reality. Maria Lancia of Italy wrote: “I felt as though Swamiji’s spirit had burst into a million bright lights, one spark of which has reached poor little me and given me illumination.” The general response to Swamiji’s passing has been one of sorrow, combined with a resolution to rededicate oneself to every ideal for which Poojya Swamiji had stood so firm. Dr. Rajpulkar of Pune put it so well when he said, “This must be a starting point for us all, a point where we stop, realise everything Pooja Swamiji has given us, and then walk on, determined to realise his teachings.” The letters have become a vibrant form of Satsangha, a communion of Truth Seekers, and YOGA LIFE will continue to print these precious, tender and inspiring sentiments so that all of us may be motivated to go Higher—Deeper—Faster in our spiritual quest—Editor.

Dear Meenakshi: Nancy (Ford-Kohne) and I have just received word about Swamiji’s passing. As a woman who lost her husband in 1970 after a six year bout with cancer, I share your loss and pain. As a teacher, student and friend I share the loss of the Yoga community of an inspiring and dedicated teacher. His energy, vitality, enthusiasm and roar live on in his students and teachings. All of us in Unity in Yoga International send you our thoughts, prayers, and love. In a philosophic frame we understand and share the joy of this ultimate Samadhi for him. Yours in Yoga, Patricia M. Hansen, President, Unity in Yoga International, 22226 Meadow View Road, Morrison, Colorado 80465 U.S.A.

Dear Meenakshi, Ananda and Renuka, I am deeply sad at the news. Swamiji will remain in my life for ever. I offer you all my sympathy and love in these difficult moments. I hope that you will carry on the grand work that Swamiji started. I will always remember his voice that sometimes made me tremble and his warmth that made melt. Take great care of yourselves. Yours in Yoga,

—Eswari Kumari, Isabelle Kerjose, 13, Kings Head Street, Harwich CO12 3EE, Essex, England.
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

FROM: SRI SWAMY SATCIDANANDA
SATCIDANANDA ASHRAM—YOGAVILLE, U.S.A.

Smt. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani: Beloved and Blessed Self, It was with great shock that I received the news of the passing of our beloved and respected Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji. Had it not been for my own ill health, I had planned to meet Him when I came to India. But that was not meant to be. As the shock and its emotions subside, we get a glimpse of another plan the Lord has. He has taken from us the delightful and radiant form of our dear Swami Gitanandaji. But this seemingly cruel and anguish-filled act is only that—an act! The Cosmic and Divine Leela of the Lord! In order for every devotee to be liberated it is necessary to become rooted in the Absolute Truth—and this Truth proclaims that the body is merely a temporary shell. One can become attached to and dependent upon the Guru’s Form. In His mercy, the Satguru withdraws at the right time so the devotees can attune to the Inner Guru and can glimpse the Light Within. May all the devotees of Yogamaharishi Gitanandaji always feel His great spiritual presence within them and thus unlock, through the science of Yoga and the Guru’s Grace, all the Divine Treasures. My Love and Blessings are with you, beloved Ananda Balayogi and all the members now and always. Om Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi. Ever Yours In the Lord and Light,
Shri Swami Satcidananda Ji, Yogaville, Buckingham, Virginia 23921 U.S.A.

Dear Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, On behalf of the National Committee of the International Yoga Teachers Association and all our Members, I would like to express our sincere condolences on the Samadhi of Swami Gitananda. Swamiji was such a source of inspiration to all of his followers and his presence will be greatly missed in the Yogic world. It is profoundly hoped that those he inspired will carry on the work he commenced. With our sympathy and prayers, Yours sincerely,
—Merle Eltink. National President, International Yoga Teachers’ Association
IYTA 17, King Street, Waverton, 2060 Australia.

Respected Ma Meenakshi Ji: I am shocked to learn the sad demise of Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji. He devoted his life to the cause of development of Yoga. He developed his organisation to an international level and brought with him different shades of opinion on one platform. He has set an example to the entire younger generation to imbibe his good qualities and ideas. Members of our Institute offer their condolence and sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and pray to God that departed soul may rest in eternal peace. Please accept my
heartfelt condolence to you and convey to same to Balayogi Anand and other members of Ashram. I pray God to bestow peace on the departed soul. Yours,  
—Dr. Dina Nath Rai, Kundalini Yoga Research Institute, Department of Psychiatry, K.G’s. Medical College, Lucknow 226 003 U.P.

My dearest dearest Meenakshi, Divine Soul: What a shock. What a big loss for you and Ananda, for all the students, and for the whole Yoga-world. Dearest Meenakshi, let me express my deepest sympathy—I feel so sorry especially for you and Ananda. I will pray for you. May God send His Divine Blessings upon you, Ananda, Renuka and your Ashram. May He give you the necessary strength to see everything in the right spirit. Swamiji will never die. He will be always with us. Please continue His unforgettable work. You are a marvellous, competent and warm-hearted person. You know that I love you and I admire you from deep within. Take care of yourself, lots of love, yours affectionately,  
—Hanna Boerkey, Bangalore, Karnataka State.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NATUROPATHY  
(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF HEALTH)  

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE  
It is learnt with deep regret that Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj has taken Samadhi on 29-12-1993. The country has lost a seer of Yoga Sadhana. Please accept the condolences on behalf of National Institute of Naturopathy, Pune and its staff.  
—Leena Mehandale, Director, National Institute of Naturopathy, Bapu Bhavan, 6, Ramabai Ambedkar Road, (Old Tadiwala Road), Pune 411 001

My Dear Friend: The news that came with the Yoga Life this month was as unexpected as it was shattering. The departure from this physical life of our Spiritual Father is the end of a Yoga era. The lifting of the physical burden from the broad shoulders of our beloved Swamiji has scattered the light from his radiant soul into millions of words and thousands of individual memories. I pray that I may forever remember with love and humility the moments that we were as one in our quest for enlightenment. My love and compassion goes out to all my dear friends at the Ashram in their moments of sadness and loneliness. May God guide us all to follow in our beloved Swamiji’s footsteps. I must add my dear Meenakshi, that I am at your service to do anything in my power to help you in your personal and organisational struggles at this moment.
There may be many mundane and important decisions to be made and I wish you to be aware of my dedication to Ananda Ashram and its future. I have not seen Ananda since he was a boy running around on bicycles that we tried to keep repaired, but have followed his progress through the Yoga Life with some pride. These immediate moments of grief and despair will seem to wreck the very foundation of his beliefs. I pray that the remembrance of those times when his father's eyes would light with the pleasure at something well done will carry him through this difficult period and provide him with the incentive to look for the spiritual blessings that will surely come in the future. Medical school is a must and I am willing to help all I can to make that possible. This is a sad time for me with the passing of my second Spiritual Father, Often we regret that we didn't express the love we felt in words when we had the opportunity. That is a great human failing.

Permit me, dear friends, to express that love to you all, at this time.
Yours with Love and in Yoga,
—Captain J. Alan Harding, 5121-47th Avenue, Chetwynd, B.C., Canada VOC IJO

Respected Dear Meenakshi Ji, The International Council of Ayurveda, its Board of Directors, have learnt with great sorrow and personal shock about the Nirwan and Moksh Prapti of our Yoga Research Council Chairman, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Ji. He served as a Light House for our organisation. In the last summer month Dr. Giri Ji visited Chandigarh on
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

Invitation to address a meeting with H.E. Shri. Dhanik Lal Mandal Ji Governor of Haryana State in connection with Institute of Alternative Medicine Panchkula and to decide about how to run a Yoga centre by the International Council of Ayurveda. We then could not imagine his separation from us.

His inspiration and blessings and memories will always be remembered. I sincerely convey my personal sorrow and sympathy to you and Shri Ananda Balayogi and other spiritual Yoga followers of Swami Ji. Members of Executive Council join you in these hours of condolence and agony. It is also requested that now yourself has to act as Chairman of Yoga Research Council of the organisation. It is as desired and requested. OM SHIVA

Please Confirm. Yours in Condolence


Dear Madam, Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani: It was a shocking news that Dr. Swami Gitananda Ji left us for "Vaikuntha". It is a great loss for the community of Yoga and students of Yoga. I personally feel that Swamiji has done the best service to the Art of Yoga. He has done his work with Yoga as a social scientist, using life as his laboratory. I send condolences to you, Anand and students living with you. Yours in Yoga,

—Dr. K. Bandre, Indore School of Yoga, Amit Apartment, E/5, Ratlam Kothi, Indore-452001.

Dear Meenakshi, I have just got the January Yoga Life and the news of Swamiji's Mahasamadhi which terribly shocked me. I just couldn't believe my eyes. I had to read and read again the articles before coming to the terrible evidence. Dear Meenakshi, so many things are running along in my mind, so many beautiful souvenirs of everything we did together under Swamiji's guidance. How empty the place is now. Throughout the distance, of course, I can't do anything but take you dearly in my heart. I share your suffering with the love I have for you as a "part" of Swamiji, as a great Yoga teacher, as a sister, as a friend. I think of all the students over the world. We must keep up the unity of that big family. We must keep our Guru "alive" in spirit through our actions for Yoga. This is the best way to thank and honour HIM for the tremendous love he gave to each of us and the tremendous work he did.

I am sure he will go on looking after all of us, guiding us in our work for love and service. Swamiji will never really die. That's impossible. That's unthinkable. He knows the world needs his blessings as well as the blessings of all the great Gurus, saints and sages he has now joined. We must put our courage and energy
into action so that Swamiji’s message through Yoga continues to flourish all over the world. Swamiji will “live” as long as his devotees keep on the path. We will always hear him “roaring” when we give place to weakness. He will continue to push and pull us up. Certainly Shiva needed Him for some important work over there. He couldn’t find a better devotee to serve Him. Now Swamiji is no more bound to the limits of a physical body and he can serve God and humanity fully, helping us in all the “dimensions”—(I am thinking of the tape I was listening to recently)—while contemplating Shiva in his greatest reality. He is more strongly than ever our Beloved Guruji. He was and will always be for us a great man, a perfect human, an extraordinary Master: the example to follow. Today I fully realise how lucky I have been for having met HIM and lived for some time at his sacred feet. But you, Meenakshi, I will say that like Mary, Mother of Jesus, you have been blessed amongst the women. Be strong and He will be HAPPY. Let’s carry his flame all together.

With much love to all you,

Vogacharini Priya Devi, Yoga Education and Training in Rishi Culture Centre, BP 556, 97447 St Pierre, Cedex, La Reunion, Indian Ocean.

Dear Meenakshi and Ananda: I have started this letter so many times, I cannot express myself—yet I have so much to express. I am thinking of you both and send my support, warmth, love and pledge to you and to Swamiji. I feel so privileged to have met and studied with Swamiji. I cannot imagine life without knowing such an Incredible Energy and Presence. Since I met him at Sri Kambliswamy Madam in 1988, it was as though I had known him forever, as a bolt of lightning passed through me—in recognition, in shock—My whole life to that date was turned upside down and inside out—I yearned to be there again, to be near Swamiji and learn how to fulfil my Dharma. And now “it is my sacred duty to fulfill Swamiji’s grand Yogic vision in every conceivable manner for the rest of my days upon this earth”. I accept this gladly and seriously. Swamiji has left a path for every one who has studied with him—we must tread this path step-by-step, spreading his teachings and vision. He gave his life totally to this vision with ZEST, and inspired me greatly. Since I read this sad news in Yoga Life, I have felt many things. The incredible LOSS of Swamiji, emptiness, the disbelief that he is not physically with us, my loss, you, the sadness that my husband Alan and our baby twins, Giridh and Cridaran did not meet with Swamiji.

Then I hear Do-Do-Do-Act-Act-Act, “Yoga is Skill in Action”—there is no time to waste. I must channel these feelings, these powerful feelings into ACTION to fulfill Swamiji’s Vision. Then I feel positive. He is here, he is still with us, I am still with him, feel him—he never really left. His Living Spirit is there to be found, I am going to find him again, I know it won’t be easy but I shall, step-by-step, I shall become nearer and nearer to that big fountain of energy, those twinkli-
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

ing eyes, the smile that flashed, the loud roar and the silvery mane of hair. Such an immense character and presence! Swamiji, you gave me a reason, purpose and belief in being and in life. You turned my life upside down and inside out and for that I am eternally grateful. Dhanyawad, Swamiji! And now I must BE UP AND DOING—there’s a whole world out there to teach, and with Swami’s guiding light I shall endeavour to fulfill his vision, starting in Scotland. I start another class on March 1st—teaching Yoga to Birth Education Trainers... mothers to-be... babies... children... adolescents... adults... grandparents... We have a big task—let’s do it! ! ! !

I want you both to know, Meenakshi and Ananda, that I am right there with you. I may not have lived with you for long, but for me it was and is my lifetime. I feel part of your Yoga Family... You certainly made me feel like family. I hope to visit in the next couple of years. Alan and I had planned to come and see you and to introduce you to our “wee bundles of joy” as soon as we could. I feel I want to come and stay with Meenakshi, and you all—I only wish I could come right now... If there’s anything I can do from this end Meenakshi please tell me. I am writing to Scottish Yoga Teachers Association to inform Scotland of Swamiji’s passing—I hope this is in order. I shall write again very soon with news of my little cherubs, but for now shall leave you with a photograph of two of Swamiji’s youngest and most earnest students....... I have Swamiji to thank for this.......the privilege and immense pleasure of becoming a mother... he prepared me and made me ready to accept the responsibility of being a woman, wife and mother. He reminded me of the values of commitment and responsibility.

Dhanyawad, Swamiji! Yours affectionately in Yoga,

Yogacharini Savitri Devi, (Avril Berry), Edinburgh, Scotland.

Dearest Meenakshi: I thank you so much, both for giving news of Poojiya Swamiji’s Mahasamadhi and the copy of Yoga Life. I had no premonition of this, but it somehow seems quite right and natural. The closing of one door, the opening of another, and the house still there. And as I sat at my desk, that morning last week with the wintry sun coming in over the towers of the city, and read your communications, the funniest remembrance returned to me. Swamiji had given us all tasks for Easter in the first International Yoga Teachers Training Course in Pondy (In 1968). He gave us exercises to produce Siddhis, or psychic powers, for our Easter celebration. We had to prepare for Easter day when with a special Mantra spoken by himself, all the Siddhi feats would occur. My Siddhi was “levitation” and my exercises were breathing exercises. I practised assiduously; if it could happen, no exercise should be left undone by me! Come the day, I lay on the floor, Swamiji standing over and everyone else in attendance. I closed my eyes, breathed in the manner taught. ‘Up Otis’, intoned Swamiji. ‘Up Otis arise!’ he said, Ot's
TRIBUTES TO THE GURU

was invoked again. (This was not a personnage I had heard of before.) 'Up Otis!!' for the third time. There were stifled giggles from yourself and then everyone burst into laughter. And now, whenever I go in a London lift (which I do quite often) and see the Otis trademark plaque on the wall (which is sometimes there.) I am reminded. Everything to its purpose. With all my love,
—Rosemary Petit, 93-A Blenheim Crescent, London W11 2EQ.

Dearest and Divine Meenakshi: I am writing this letter on the train from Milano to Savona. I have just cancelled my trip to India because at the last minute, things got too difficult and too late. The very first impulse when I got the telegram was to get on a plane and come to Pondy and now 24 hours later I have decided to give it up. Is it really true? I had thought in the past that sometimes and some ways Swamiji was getting old and like all of us could leave his body, but now it is too difficult to accept it. I do not know what to say to you, I feel I could only hold you in my arms together with Ananda and Renuka. Please keep in touch and let us know how things are going, what are your plans for the future etc. etc. Swamiji will always be alive in ourselves. Even now that he is no more in his body, he is still beating my ego up like he did when I was in his inspiring presence. We are all together in Swamiji’s Divine—Soul—Love in Yoga,
—Yogacharini Dayamatha and Ian, Centre of Rishi Culture Yoga, Via Gozo, Savona, Italy.

January’s Yoga Life reached me today. At first I could not—or would not—understand. The physical presence of a mighty rock within a mighty rock within a weary land has long dominated the better part of my thoughts. I can only dimly imagine what it has been for you. The Geeta advises well, and contains all truth, but it would be glib to urge the naked truth to you and Ananda, when such a light seems to have been taken away. By now, I hope the realisation will be more bearable to you both. May the great Guru clear the path for the next stage of your way. In any case the victory you shared in the last year, after the long fight over ignorant, malevolent forces many of us less gifted would have surrendered to, I regard as justification for an entire life time. You will go on to more and greater triumphs.

For me it has been an amazing gift to have sat in Swamiji’s classes, to have received instruction from so exceptional a spiritual teacher. He seemed so much more solid than common reality, as though life had centralized the essence of its vitality, its bright power in him which accounts for the luminous quality of his teachings. Even so unpromising a student as I was, he taught me to walk spiritually, It is as though my life was gross existence before I met him in which there were nothing but doubts and fears. Then suddenly I felt to my depths who I certainly was. Swamiji was strong, cheerful and positive, and in the light of his sheer common sense, cancelled out self-deception. Now that Swamiji is in Samadhii at Kambliswamy Madam, I am sure the plants will grow as luxuriantly as they did when he tended them. How good, and simple was Sri SankaraGiri’s epigraph: He is now a God.” Love and best wishes to yourself, Ananda and the others at ICYER.
THE END OF AN ERA

During the entire year of 1993 and the beginning of 1994, the world has been spiritually impoverished by the departure of so many global spiritual teachers. Such international luminaries as Swami Vishnudevananda, Swami Brahmananda Saraswathi, Swami Chinmayananda, Father Dom Bed Griffiths, and Swami Tejomayananda, to mention a few. One of the Spiritual Pontiffs of the Hindu world, His Holiness Shri Chandrasekarendra, the Sankaracharya of Sri Kamakoti Math, about 80kms to the north of Pondicherry, left his body a few months short of his 100th birthday on January 8th, 1994. Our own Poojya Swamiji, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri has left us to join that celestial Satsangha. No doubt he will be the organising force behind the spiritual gatherings in those blessed higher realms of consciousness. Poojya Swamiji was on intimate terms with all the great spiritual personalities who have done their work and passed on. Indeed, it had been his mission in life since a young man, to seek out Spiritual Masters and obtain their Darshan and blessings. Poojya Swamiji had thus met personally nearly every living Master during his lifetime. Now, he has joined their company. It truly is the end of an era, when so many spiritual personalities pass on, in quick succession, one after the other. A whole new chapter is beginning. It is up to us, those who are left behind, to make sure that the "story" continues at the same, elevating level. HINDUISM TODAY, the international newspaper published by the Saiva Siddhanta Church of Hawaii, USA, which circulates millions of Hindus throughout the world, generously devoted the entire back page of their March, 1994 issue, to a memorial to Poojya Swami Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda's life and teachings, along with three beautiful coloured photos and a small, black and white inset portrait photo. The Acharya and Spiritual Preceptor of the Saiva Siddhanta Church, Satguru Sivaya Subramaniya Swami, who is also the publisher of HINDUISM TODAY, wrote a beautiful editorial in that same issue, giving a deep, reflective insight into the meaning of the passing of so many great souls within such a short period of time. YOGA LIFE here re-prints his editorial for the benefit of its readers. (Those who are interested in obtaining a copy of the March issue of HINDUISM TODAY OR BETTER STILL SUBSCRIBING TO THIS VERY INFORMATIVE and useful monthly newspaper, may contact HINDUISM TODAY, 1919 Second Street, Concord, California 94519 USA. In India, those interested should write : HINDUISM TODAY P.O. Box 2850, New Delhi 110 060 or HINDUISM TODAY, San Marga Trust Office. 53/A4 Ansari Flats, South West Boag Road, Thyagaraja Nagar, Madras 600 017.

A large number of magazines and newspapers around the world have published photos and memorial tributes and stories on Pooja Swamiji Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giriji Guru Maharaj. YOGA LIFE asks any of our readers who come across such stories to send us either copies of the magazine or photostats for our Ashram use.

—Editor’s Note

THEY ARE ALWAYS WITH US

By Satguru Sivaya Subramaniaswami
THE END OF AN ERA

In the past few months Hinduism Today has reported on the beautiful lives and the blessed departures of more than the usual number of spiritual leaders. These have included my long-time friends, Swami Vishnudevananda, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati and Swami Chinmayananda. Now again, on page one, our Madras journalist reports on the extraordinary Mahasamadhi rites for the beloved head of Kamakoti Peedam, Sri Chandrasekharendra, a venerable 99-year-old soul whose light illumined the path for countless seekers. On page 27 there is a eulogy to Swami Satchidananda, 62, of the Divine Life Society in Trinidad, who had his release in December. On page 28 we honour the magnificent life of Master Yogi Swami Gitanananda, 87, known as the Lion of Pondy.

We do not and must not mourn their death. No grieving for the great ones, just joy that we shared their spirit and their wisdom. We must be happy for their new life and rejoice with them as they focus their spiritual power through their chosen devotees. They did not die. They once worked eight hours a day. Now it is 24. No more foot-pilgrimages, no more air tickets to buy. Now they can travel at the speed of light to be here and there and everywhere.

These souls never quit their job. They fulfilled their Dharma, sustained their Divine Mission, met the challenges that came, without failing, without cringing, without even complaining. That is much of what set them apart from others who did falter, who did let difficulties wear them down, who did not see their spiritual aspirations to the very end. Not these souls. In the face of character assassination, emotional distress, they never quit their job. They endured, stood strong and saw the vision through to the very end. And that is an example for all to follow.

These were what we might call SPIRITUAL PROS. How will we replace them? They were trained in the old way, when families were families, tightly bonded together, when heads of families reigned supreme, when Gurus were tough and did not have to temper their demands for perfection due to anti-cult cultists. There was no feeling in those days that you just worship the Peedam and not necessarily the person sitting on it. They worshiped the person sitting there as the embodiment of the Divinity. In those days things were so intact that the Brahmins could actually chant the Vedas from one end to the other. The community honoured the discipline of the personalities who never marry, who live the austere life, who were strict and unfailing. There was a time if the sannyasin gave up his own kavi robes, he would never be accepted by or employed in the community. [Exile was his reward.

As these preceptors pass, are we losing all of this great stability and
training? Who is to replace them? The Divine has its own ways and works them mysteriously. To whom the power will come in the various countries of the world where Hinduism exists today is yet to be known. Obviously it is based on their sincerity, on years of Sadhana and Tapas, on the maturity of their soul and most importantly, their willingness to serve selflessly without even a thought of personal reward. This question yet remains unanswered.

My first encounter with His Holiness Chandrasekharendra was in Andhra Pradesh. I drove there with the late Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan, who had recently completed a beautiful biography of the Shankaracharya. It was a pleasure to present the Swami with my own little book, called The Self God. He was passing a small village, giving Darshan, as was his discipline. We arrived late in the evening as it was getting dark. It was like the Self meeting its Self.

The second meeting with this great soul was in Tamil Nadu in 1990. I received a telegram from the Kamakoti Peetham, right from him, saying he noticed his Mutt was not on our itinerary, and we should come to see him. We journeyed there to find all three Shankaracharyas. The eldest reclining after blessing long lines of devotees, granted a beautiful Darshan, lifting his arms towards me in a silent exclamatory gesture. He instructed Jayendra and his junior to give us all the time needed. We explained to them our project of building in India a hand-carved stone temple called “Iraivan,” to be erected in Hawaii. Holding the architect’s blueprints, all three blessed the Iraivan temple for it to come up soon.

Continuing to reminisce, we first met Swami Gitananda in Canada in the early 1960s. Later he visited our Ashram and small temple on Sacramento Street in San Francisco, where Swami Bhaktivedanta danced to Krishna a few years later. We met again at our Ashram in Nevada, where he came to stay for a few days before leaving for India. In Bangalore, in 1972 Swamiji arranged a great reception when we arrived on a pilgrimage with 72 devotees. He also graciously received our group of pilgrims at his garden-like Pondicherry Ashram in 1981, and then again in 1990 we spent the night at his City Center after the disastrous attack by rogues which injured, but never harmed his spirit.

Treat your Swamis and leaders kindly. Keep them lifted up by your worship and inspired by your voicing your gratitude and by being responsive. Honour them without fail, for the day will come when they will not be with you, will not be able to guide and counsel you, not be there to be an example to you. Be grateful for their presence in your life. Every day.
A Son's View of His Father

ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI
Talks About His Father Dr. SWAMI GITANANDA Giri Guru Maharaj

Yogi P.R. Ramani has undertaken as his topic for his Master’s Thesis at Pondicherry University the subject THE ROLE OF YOGAMAHARISHI DR. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI IN MODERN YOGA. As part of his research work, he has sent out hundreds of questionnaires to our Yoga Teachers around the world. The following essay is part of an interview given by Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani, the son and successor to Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri, to Yogi P.R. Ramani. —Editor’s Note

I have been blessed with the privilege of not only being a ‘Chela’ of the greatest Yoga Guru of this century, but also of being his son—Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri strode the world of Yoga as a colossus and has left such an impact on it that the Yoga of the future will be based on his teachings, as the Yoga of the present age is based on Maharishi Patanjali’s teachings.

He was acclaimed as the “Father of Modern Scientific Yoga” and brought a scientific and medical insight into the ancient science of Yoga. He taught that Yoga was the “Mother Science” and worked all his life to bring it back to its past glory.

He was an ancient Rishi incarnate and codified the system called as Rishi Culture Yoga.

A wise parent trains his child in such a way that when the child is an adult he can take mature responsibility and begin a life for himself in the role of a parent. So also the Guru nurtures the life of the student so that as he matures he too becomes a Guru. A true Guru doesn’t seek followers, rather he begets Gurus. The Yogamaharishi trained hundreds of thousands of students and most of them are mature, well endowed and spiritually aware human beings who are now capable of setting an example for thousands of others.
In the earlier part of my young life I saw more of Poojya Swamiji as a father who cared for, nurtured, taught, disciplined, loved and guided me in such a wonderful manner that I can look back on my childhood with so much happiness and joy and remember the many great experiences where he taught me that “Love was caring” and that some times, it is better to be strict and teach children the right way of life than let them be spoilt.

In the latter part of my young life I have seen more of the Yogamaharishi as a jGuru, who was such a vast encyclopaedia of knowledge, such a wonderful teacher and a living example of the Yoga Life. He was Anandam personified, and was always in a state of Divine Bliss be it whether he was working, teaching, eating, gardening, lecturing or travelling. He had a very wonderful sense of humour and his classes were always so exciting, interesting, enlivening and humorous that no one would feel bored even for a second. He could keep audiences enthralled for hours on end and no one would leave. He was always looking at the positive side of things and would get up early in the morning saying “God is so great. He has created such a wonderful universe—it is so wonderful to be alive.”

Swamiji taught that Yoga could never and should never be learnt from a book. He felt that a Guru was absolutely necessary to live a Yoga life properly. He believed that the best place to learn Yoga was in the “Womb of a Guru”, the Gurukula. He felt that unless it was, so the Yoga would get corrupted. He was a great Bhaktha of his Gurus and never a day passed without his remembering them with the deepest gratitude. He had immense love for his Ashtanga Yoga Guru Sri La Sri Swami Kanakananda Brighu and used to say, “He was the only totally realised man I have ever met.”

Swamiji loved life and was an admirer of all things good. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva [the Eternal Goodness] and every breath of his would resonate with the Maha-Mantra “Shiva-Shiva”. This is why I feel

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Poojya Swami felt the only place to learn

Yoga was in the Guru Kula
A SON’S VIEW OF HIS FATHER

it to be so fitting that he decided to attain Maha Samadhi at the auspicious time of Arudhra Darshan at 2-20 a.m. 29th December, 1993.

He was the pioneer of the concept of Yoga Sports and worked very hard to get it accepted by all the yoga fraternity of the world. He believed that when Yoga could be taught to everyone, why cannot sportsmen who already have some basic discipline, take up the practice of Yoga. He saw that Yoga and sports had great potential to work together and organised many conferences and competitions to further the concept of Yoga sports. Youngsters need encouragement and he believed that Yoga competitions were

**BIO DATA**

Name: ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI

Age: 23 Years

Address: Ananda Ashram, Thattanchavady, Pondicherry-9.

Sri Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani was born to Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri and Yogamani Smt. Meenakshi Devi in Pondicherry on 16-4-72 and has lived in Pondy for the past 23 years. He has been trained in the rites and rituals of Sri Kambliswamy Madam and in RISHI CULTURE YOGA since the age of four. He has twice attended the “Six month Teacher’s Training Course in Yoga” offered by ANANDA ASHRAM (91-92 and 92-93) in addition to attending classes since the age of four. After the Mahasamadhi of his father he was appointed as the junior Madathiapathi of Sri Kambliswamy Madam by Sri La Sri Shankaragiri Swamigal in accordance with the wishes of the Yogamaharishi. He is at present studying in 3rd year M.B.B.S. at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Wardha where he stood 1st in the 1st M.B.B.S. exams (94 November) in the College. He is a talented mridungist and is a B Grade artiste of ALL INDIA RADIO. He is also a good Carnatic vocalist and has given many concerts. He is studying music under Sri Sirengam R. Ranganathan and has learnt mridungam under Sri Thiruvaroor R. Krishnamoorthy. He also is well trained in Bharat Natyam by Padmashri Adyar K. Lakshmanan and has given many performances. He is Life Chairman of THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR YOGA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH and for YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM. He has received the title SAKALAKALAVALLAVAN (Master Of All The Arts) due to his multi-faceted talents.
of great help in this regard. He conducted yearly competitions and I saw from my own experience how it motivated the young people to take up the Yoga practice.

He was an organiser par excellence and anything he organised whether conferences, lectures, pilgrimages or camps were always very well run and were a great success. His energy would carry everyone and any function, or conference he attended would be a success on his efforts alone. He was such a source of energy that people used to be attracted to him like flies to the light.

He used to teach that happiness and sadness, like heaven and hell, are within us and it is for us to choose the right attitude and live that way. "You live in an infinite, wonderful, bountiful, amazing, loving Universe – then how can you be sad or lonely?" was one of his favourite sayings.

He was a strict disciplinarian and used to joke that he ran his Ashram like a ship. He taught that the key to success was dedication, discipline and determination. He said "Do it now, tomorrow may be too late" to make us realise that by putting off things we don’t achieve any thing.

From very close quarters I was privileged to observe and learn from him so many wonderful and marvellous things about life. His rich and varied experiences were shared readily with the needy. He was most generous with material, love, and knowledge and I feel it most apt that he received the title "Shiva Yoga Gnana Vallal" (He who gives wisdom most generously to others) from OMKARASHRAM in 1993.

He loved plants and had gardens planted wherever he went. He individually knew all the plants and cared for them in a manner usually reserved only for humans. He used to comment that the Yoga Life and gardens are similar. "If you don’t care for and nurture and water your garden, you lose it and in the same way if you don’t care for, and nurture your Yoga life you will lose it," he said.

I saw him practise what he preached and I never saw him not keep a promise, He believed in saying what he felt and doing what he said.

He was a true Rasika of the Carnatic Music and Bharat Natyam and supported the cause of these wonderful arts. He organised so many programmes for artists and felt that artists performing with real devotion were practising a Yoga also. Thousands of youngsters have learnt music and dance due to his benevolence and he was responsible for thousands of
A SON'S VIEW OF HIS FATHER

foreigners learning our Tamil Bajans and songs. He was an excellent singer and loved to sing the Tamil songs with gusto. When he sang "Om Namah Shivaya" everyone felt Shiva's presence.

His Pujas were Shakti-filled and the whole congregation was lifted up to another energy plane. He explained the various intricacies of the Puja in such simple language that many people owe their love for the Pujas to him.

I realised his greatness only later in my young life and regret not having the opportunity to share more time with him in this physical life. He inspired so many thousands of people to take to the Yoga life and work for universal harmony through Rishi Culture Yoga. His advice to aspirants of the Yoga life was:

"Dedication to the goal and a commitment to the Self is the prerequisite. Avoid the traps of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, the useless waste of time in TV and cinema, the great demons of our society. Take the advice of a senior Guru and be resolute and determined to evolve."

He gave me a goal in life and the tools with which to achieve the goal. He taught me that Mother, Father and Guru are God and that Determination, Devotion and Dedication are only pathways to success in the spiritual life. There has never been and will never be such a great Yoga Maharishi on this planet.

Jaya Guru Sri Guru Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Ji.

THE FUTURE: Swamiji's main dream was to see the Sri Kamblishwami Madam free from Government control and to establish a Yoga University and Hindu School on the Madam lands. Though this dream couldn't be achieved in his lifetime, I plan to fulfil this dream to the best of my ability.

I hope to propagate the Yogamaharishi teachings and Rishi Culture Yoga throughout the world. I would like to see that his contribution to Yoga is fully understood and appreciated. I want to continue his legacy of uniting medicine and Yoga, thus bringing the modern cure and ancient science of prevention together. This system would be of most benefit to mankind, and it would be a complete system involving change in lifestyle, diet, habits, Yoga practice and some limited medical treatment.

I would like to perform more research into the phenomenon of Yoga as wanted by Poojya Swamiji. Finally I would like to live my life in such a way that Swamiji can see it and say "I am proud to be his father."
THE GURU AND A "DEER" FRIEND — 1984
A FATHER GIVES ADVICE 1988

FELICITATED IN TRINIDAD—1967
TOGETHERNESS — 1989

AT ANANDA’S ARANGETRAM 1988

Opening Pujas of Renovated Shri Kambliswamy Madam 1975
Walking the Path Together:
LONDON 1974
POINTS TO PONDER FROM POOJYA SWAMIJI

Love is profound interest. It is not the emotional pleasure which our modern day society has come to believe. All emotions fade and pale. Love is something deeper, which is abiding and cannot be changed by any outer circumstances. It implies as well a deep caring, a commitment, a strength and a skillful reaction to objects, situations and people within one’s environment, as they rise and fall, come and go. The following simple equation will show the place which LOVE takes in the YOGIC scheme of things.

THE SPIRITUAL EQUATION OF LOVE

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<td>PROFOUND INTEREST</td>
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<td>EKAGRATHA</td>
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<td>DHYANA</td>
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<td>SAMADHI</td>
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A crisis is an opportunity for change. Thus, we should never fear a crisis, for it will reveal to us our inner nature and teach us “who we really are”. The Greek origin of the word “crisis” literally means “an opportunity to change”. It is very easy to put on a peaceful face and a happy smile when everything goes well, but what is our reaction when the going gets tough? This is why one should never fear a crisis, but meet it boldly, find out what it has to teach you about yourself, change that part of your nature which you find lacking and walk on, cheerfully and with a smile.

The reason that EVIL triumphs in the world is because the GOOD are passive and weak. The EVIL ONES do not fear to act. Without a thought, they kill, murder, rape and destroy. But the good ....they sit in their houses and wonder ....“do I dare to eat a peach” “......” should I wear my trousers rolled? .... The message of the BHAGAVAD GITA is very clear. There is no spirituality, no real GOODNESS without action. The GOOD must be ACTIVE and STRONG. Only then are they truly GOOD. Inactivity, passivity and weakness have no place in a truly spiritual life, no matter what fancy excuses the ego may dream up for “hiding from confrontation”. THEREFORE I say to you, as LORD KRISHNA said so long ago to that Best of all Warriors, that Best of All Disciples.....ACT ARJUNA ACT .....ACT IF YOU WISH TO BE TRUELY AND WHOLELY GOOD.
Divine Solves, dearest Meenakshi Devi, dearest Ananda, We hope you received our telegramme and felt our loving thoughts which we sent you by telepathy. We are all very aware of your and our bereavement and at the same time we realize that, we try to drive the pain away. We see slowly that the Path, which Swamiji has shown us, is still there, and that we can follow him to the peak, as it was so well expressed by you, dearest Meenakshi. It only seems as if we were alone now on the path, this path, which he has signposted so well for us. And we hear his words: "life after life after life". We remember his clear laughter, his bright eyes and his thundering voice. He would not like our weeping, our pain. This would be like hail and storm where he is now. We know that the quality of Ananda or Cosmic Bliss belongs to a Yogi and we have to play our role well in this earth's theatre. This would please him. Every day we go in our meditation to Swamiji like we are doing it for our parents, who have departed long ago, we become close to him and wish him bliss wherever he may be. Last night I dreamt of Swamiji in the Ananda Ashram. In my head I only had wonderful scents, my head was wonderfully clear and I had a feeling of being free. I had already waited for a sign like this. I think this had been his answer. Since this dream I can see the world clearer and brighter and I can laugh now about many things which before annoyed me. In Keshav's meditation Swami appeared and reminded him of his duty to live intensively the Yoga life and to teach it. We regard ourselves as your senior students and try to be pillars of Yoga Jivana Satsang. Our task will be to pass on Swamiji's teachings, the Yoga life and Yama and Nyama. The better we do our work, the more merits Swamiji will earn. We think this is the best way to show our devotion and thankfulness to you. We were so glad to hear that Anand will take over the holy duties of his father. We are convinced that he will do his Dharma at your side very well. Whatever we can do to help you, we will do. We will keep in touch with you as always. You will both feel our energy, love and devotion. We are one family in Yoga.

On July 17, we start a new course for Yoga teachers. We are at the moment preparing a Puja in Swami's honour with all our Yoga students who trained with us for becoming Yoga teachers. Dearest Meenakshi, may Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram be always with you and Anand. Our best wishes for Anand and blessings for his work and studies. We will write to him soon.

We are yours in Yoga, Yours

—Yogacharini Asha Rekai, Yogacharya Kesav, Yoga-Schule, Asha Rekai, Helmstedter Str. 15, 10717 Berlin Germany, Europe.

Dear Smt. Bhavani: Just recently I came to know through a friend about the Maha Samadhi of Yogarishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri some eight weeks ago. The news came like a bolt from the blue as I did not know that he had any serious health problem in recent months. Of course, I have been travelling in India and abroad during 1993 and did not receive any communication from you or Swamiji for quite some time now. If possible, please keep me informed, as a friend and wellwisher, of developments at your end. What can I offer you by way of condolences and consolation? You were fortunate to live with and be guided by a multi-faceted, many-splendoured and charismatic personality whose monumental contributions to the study and propagation of classical Yoga will be remembered by Yoga Sadhakas all over the world for a long time to come. Let us cherish his fragrant memory and carry on his valuable work. Sharing your and Ananda Balayogi's grief, Yours in Yoga

—Professor T. R. Amantharam, D.I.I.Sc. (Met), D. Phil. (Oxon), D.Sc., (Oxon), Vidya-Vacaspati, FASc, FNAE, FASM (formerly Director, Institute of Technology & Rector, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi) Research Director, Birla Academy, New Delhi; Residence: K-13/8, DLF Qutab Enclave, Gurgaon-122002.