

# Stamp Release Ceremony- to commemorate 100 years of YSS March 7, 2017

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## **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's speech on the occasion**

Swami Sh Vishwanandji Giri, Swami Sh Smarananandji Giri, Swami Sh Suddhanandji Giri, Swami Sh Nityanandji Giri, Shri Bakshiji, Swami Ishwaranadji Giri, Swami Shraddhanandji Giri and all members of the Yogoda family.

On this day, the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 65 years ago, a body stayed back with us, and a soul hitherto embodied in a limited form, freed itself to become the devoutness of the ages.

We are gathered here today on March 7 to commemorate a special occasion. I humbly greet Sri Mrinalini Mataji as I am told that she has also joined this program live from Los Angeles.

As Swamiji just said, 95% of the population of the world can today read the Autobiography of a Yogi in their own mother tongue! But even more than this fact, my attention veers around to the following question- What could be the reason that a person who does not know our country, does not know our language, nor does he understand the meaning behind the way we dress- he thinks it is a mere costume- what could be the reason that such a person becomes desirous of reading this book?

What could be the reason for that person to feel like translating this book into his own mother tongue to make it available to others? It is the result of the experience of this spiritual consciousness that every person thinks he should share some 'Prasad' with others. When we go to a temple and receive even a little Prasad, we share little portions of this Prasad with as many people as possible once we return home. This Prasad is not owned by me and has not even been prepared by me, but it is pure and I feel satisfaction in sharing it.

When we are continually distributing, Prasad-like, the volume of work done by Yogi ji, we are experiencing an inner spiritual happiness. And while we in India often discuss the path to liberation, there is also a section of people who feel that life is what it is. Who has seen tomorrow?

There are those who try to pave the way towards freedom. But if we look at the complete journey of Yogiji's life, we find it is about an inner journey rather than about a path to freedom- How deep can you go within and how can you merge with your own self?

Natural expansion is the characteristic of creation. Spiritual practice is an endless, ceaseless and blessed inward journey. And in order to enable us to undertake this journey on the right path, at the right speed, and towards the right destination, our saints, sages, ascetics and teachers have made a huge contribution. And from time to time, in some way or the other, this tradition has been continually progressing.

The speciality of Yogiji's life, which was a very short life, (maybe that was also a spiritual indication)...at times practitioners of Hatha Yoga are criticised, but he intensely and logically brought out the constructive aspects of Hatha Yoga.

But he inspired everyone to move towards Kriya Yoga. I now believe that while there are many kinds of Yoga, Kriya Yoga has established among these, a place for itself.

Will power is required to take us inwards. Some types of Yoga require physical power, but Kriya Yoga is such that we require soul power. It takes us inwards through spiritual power.

And therefore, what was the purpose of his life? Very few people have such a purpose in life.

Yogiji said "I do not want to die on the bed in a hospital! I want that role in which I make my final exit one day while wearing my boots and taking the name of my great India.

Thus though he bid farewell to India, he left with the dream of delivering a message to the western world. But perhaps not even for a second was there an instance when he was away, in his consciousness, from Mother India.

I was in Varanasi yesterday. I returned from there last night. And in his Autobiography there is ample description of his early days in Varanasi. His body was born in Gorakhpur, but his boyhood was spent in Varanasi. And the impact of Mother Ganges, and all the traditions of that spiritual city was deeply etched upon his consciousness. This shaped and nurtured his boyhood, and made his inspiration flow like the holy stream of the river Ganges. And even today it is flowing within us.

When Yogiji left his body, on that day too he was active, on the path of his duty.

A reception in honour of the Indian Ambassador to the US was on, and he (Yogiji) was delivering his speech at that prestigious Indian reception. In a matter of time which would hardly suffice even for changing clothes, he did not even take that much time, and he left his physical form, just like that.

And while departing his last words...I understand what patriotism is, what humanity is, and where spirituality leads life's journey to... Those words, his last words, were matchless. And that too in the same ceremony, being held in the presence of the Indian Ambassador, thus an official ceremony.

Yogiji said, "Where Ganges, Woods, Himalayan caves and men dream God..." So just see, what expanse! Where not just men, but even the caves, the jungles and the Ganges also dream God! "I am hallowed my body touched that sod."

These were the last words from the body in which he dwelt. And that soul went ahead on its journey after distributing its expanse within us.

I understand this feeling of oneness with the soul...and Sri Adi Shankaracharya discusses the principle of non-dualism and says where there is no duality, there the Absolute is. Where there is no I, no I and you, there Advaita (non dualism) is. It does not believe in human existence as separate from God (in terms of "this is me and that is God") but it believes that God is in me and I am in God, that is Advaita.

And Yogiji has very beautifully explained this in a poem of his....what I am sharing now is not mentioned in this poem but in my interpretation of this poem, when I used to read it, I found that it is actually very close to the principle of Advaita.

And in that poem, Yogiji says “Spirit has become one with me, and I have become one with Spirit”– this in itself is a very simple form of the principle of Advaita- Spirit has become one with me and I have become one with Spirit. “Knowing, Knower and Known” have all become one.

Like we say- the doer and the deed become one- then realisation becomes natural. The doer does not have to act, nor does the act have to wait for the doer, the doer and the doing become one and realisation becomes a unique state of being.

Similarly, Yogiji further says ‘Calm, ceaseless, romance forever (*repeats thrice*).

A living, ever awake, ever existing, ever-new peace... Ever-new-peace, meaning yesterday’s peace may not work for us today, so I must find ever new peace today. And that is why, here too, Swamiji’s last words were, Aum, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

This is not a protocol! This is the final destination of soul-transformation after lots of penance- that is why we say Aum, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

The joy that comes from the supreme bliss of Samadhi is beyond all hope and imagination... this state is described in Yogiji’s poem Samadhi. Yogiji has most beautifully presented this to us in his poem.

And I feel that to mould one’s life in such a simple fashion...and if you see Yogiji’s entire life...we cannot live without air, air is present every moment....but if we have to move a hand in this direction the air does not tell us to halt, to let it move aside. If we stretch a hand here, it does not tell us to stop here and let it flow... Yogiji has similarly merged his presence around us, in that form. So that we can constantly feel it but there is no obstacle anywhere.

He ponders that if we cannot do it today, we will do it tomorrow. This waiting and this patience are rarely seen in various orders and traditions...

Yogiji gave such flexibility to the spiritual order...and today it is a century...he himself left us after giving birth to this organisation, but this has become a revolution and a ceaseless state of spiritual consciousness. And now probably

it is the fourth generation that is active in this. Three or four generations have gone before this.

But there has neither been any dilution nor any diversion in this. If there had been an attachment to the organisation, if it had been a process centred in the establishment, then there would have been an impact of a person's thoughts, behaviour, and time upon the organisation.

But the revolution that is beyond time and not subject to its limitations...different generations come yet there is no conflict or distance in such orders. They keep doing their pure work in a light and natural manner.

It has been a great contribution by Yogiji that he gave such a spiritual order, in which there are no fetters. Just as there is no written constitution in a family, but the family still runs smoothly. Similarly Yogiji created an organisation in which things move in a simple manner. Even when he went abroad they ran smoothly and we too are running this organisation while imbibing his spiritual joy even today. This, I think, is a huge contribution.

The world today is affected by economic factors in life and by technology. And thus, people weigh the world according to their domain of knowledge. I judge you according to my understanding. When my understanding changes, my judgement changes, i.e. it is according to the calibre, temperament, and environment of the one who is evaluating.

For this reason, when India would be evaluated from the world's point of view, it would be on the basis of its population, it would be on the basis of its GDP, it would be on the basis of employment-unemployment. So these are the world's measuring scales.

But there is a measuring scale that the world has never known or recognised, there is another parameter for measuring India's identity, another measuring scale, and that is verily India's strength, that is India's spirituality.

It is our nation's misfortune that some people treat spirituality too as if it is religion. This is really a further misfortune. Dharma, religion and community- these and spirituality are very different from each other.

And our former President Abdul Kalam ji would repeatedly say that in India's spiritualization lies its true potential and this process should carry on continuously.

Our saints and sages have attempted to propel this spiritualism to the global level. According to me, Yoga is a simple entry point for this purpose. If you try and teach the people of the world the meaning of 'Atmavat Sarva Bhuteshu' (*one should feel the happiness of others as his own*), then where is the meeting point? At one end, where the philosophy of 'Eat, drink and be merry' is being discussed, if I say 'Tena tyaktena bhunjitah' (*What is given by Him, allotted to you, you enjoy that*) then how will it be absorbed?

But if I say, "Brother, please hold your nose and sit like this, you will feel comforted", then he feels it is something that he can start with! Thus Yoga is the entrance point of our spiritual journey. No one should consider it to be the ultimate. But unfortunately money and power have their own strength. Money centred consciousness also exists. Thus even this is being commercialised. "For this many dollars, you will receive this much Samadhi!" This is also happening.

And some people have accepted Yoga itself as the Ultimate. Yoga is not the ultimate it is the first entrance to the path that leads to the Ultimate. And if we need to take our vehicle to the top of some hill, and its engine stops, we have to push. But once it starts, it picks up momentum.

The entrance point of Yoga is such that once, for the first time, if we get hold of it, and we start off, then it keeps us going.

Then we do not have to try too hard, the process takes us forward, and that is Kriya Yoga.

In our country, to recall Kashi (Varanasi) once more is natural. Sant Kabir Dass-how, in such simple terms our saints have presented everything to us- Sant Kabir Dass said something very interesting and I feel that it is totally relevant to Yogiji. He said "Avadhuta Yugan Yugan Hum Yogi, Aave Na Jaye, Mitein na Kabhun, Sabad Anahat Bhogi." Kabir Dass says, "The Yogi, the Yogi lives for ages and ages, he does not come, he does not go, he does not disappear.

I have a feeling that today our experience is as if we are co-passengers with that spiritual form of Yogiji. Then these words of Sant Kabir Dass are so true “Yogis do not come, yogis do not go, they are with us, in our midst.”

I bow to that very Yogi. It felt really good to have the opportunity to spend time in your midst in these pure environs. Once again I bow to this great parampara (heritage) of Yogiji, and I bow to all saints. And with the expression of my reverence to each citizen who endeavours to further his spiritual journey, I hereby end my speech.

Thank you.

