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Yoga by Tysu May 2011

Sri Shivarudra Balayogi

Timeless wisdom of yoga meditation teachings will be coming to Evergreen from a great Yogi—Sri Shivarudra Balayogi of Himalayas of India. Our town will be deeply blessed by his holy presence. He is on a world tour!

Sri Shivarudra Balayogi was born on September 20, 1954 into a Brahmin family of four children. His birth name is Srinivasa Dikshitar—Seenu for short. He is the youngest of the four children.

His father, Shankara, had grown up in difficult circumstances following the deaths of his parents while still a young boy, but through hard work and perseverance, he overcame these challenges and graduated as a medical doctor with the aim of serving humanity. He worked long hours in the service of his patients and would charge no fee if their financial circumstances were difficult. This formed the basis of his spirituality—the devout service of God through serving mankind.

Seenu's mother, Sharada, devotional in nature with high a standard of morals, instilled a devotional attitude in her children. Thus, Seenu grew through his childhood in an atmosphere of devotion to God and dedicated service to humanity.

Seenu's, innate nature from birth was meditative, contemplative, devotional, and inquisitive in search of truth. "Did my existence commence with the birth of this physical body? If so, what will happen when this physical body will eventually die?" Seeking answers to these questions, he read the teachings of the great spiritual masters of India but still found that it only provided an intellectual answer—the knowledge was not a living experience for him. (In India, we are not satisfied with mere beliefs about God. We practice the laws of concentration and sit for hours knocking at the gate of Spirit to attain direct experience of God (Paramahansa Yogananda). He would spend many long hours during his teenage years in solitude in the caves of the sacred Chamundi Hills near his home in deep search of truth. Slowly, the desire grew that he might find a God realized master as a guru to guide him to the highest truth. He waited, performing his spiritual practices and praying to the Divine to provide such a guru.

Why do we need a spiritual teacher? A guru? An example is when a person wants to climb the Himalayan Mountains, he needs someone who has been to the top and knows how to get to there safely, because there are dangerous places to be avoided. Likewise, when we meditate, we need guidance in the spiritual realm of the unknown.

A true guru is one who has a direct contact with the creator Himself—God. Guru means "One who casts darkness away, bringing the light of truth." There is a saying in India: When a devotee is ready, a guru appears. At the age of 16, in deep contemplation at the Hanuman temple, Seenu suddenly heard a voice whisper in his ears, "Shivabalayogi is your guru. He will guide you to cross this ocean of worldly illusion." Opening his eyes to see who had spoken, he was amazed to find no one nearby. A few days later, he was walking through the Mysore town centre when he abruptly heard the voice again. "Go to the Raghavendraswami temple." As he went there, one of Shivabalayogi's devotees gave him a book on the life of Swamiji (what the devotees called Sri Shivabalayogi). And two days later, the great yogi came to Mysore on one of his tours. The night

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before the meeting, his guru, Swamiji, initiated him in a dream-vision into a mantra dedicated to Sri Shivabalayogi. Taking Swamiji's Darshan (blessing) the next day, Seenu fell in love with his guru at the first sight. There was wave after wave of torrential blessings pouring in from his guru (Guru-Disciple) relationship. He immediately wanted to leave home to join his Guru's ashram and practice his teaching. But his mother wanted him to continue his education and for him to be sure his feelings were genuine. He was studying Botany at the time at Mysore College. At the age of 19, Seenu was accepted into Swamiji's ashram in Dehradun, at the foothills of the Himalayas.

On September 20, 1978, Seenu's 24th birthday, he asked Swamiji to bless some vibhuti (sacred ash) and place him into tapas (intense meditation performed for several years). Blessing the vibhuti, Swamiji said, "If you want to sit for tapas now, I can make you sit for tapas; but if you sit for tapas now, instead of successfully completing it, you might acquire some ego and you may even go away from me physically and may not be able to serve in my mission." To this Seenu replied, "Swamiji, then I do not want to do tapas. Because what I want is Swamiji, that's all I know. I love you and I want to be in Swamiji's mission. I want to serve you only. Whether I get realized or not, that is not so important for me. But definitely I would like to remain at your lotus feet and serve you forever." Then Swamiji smiled saying, "Take this vibhuti and keep it with you. In due course of time, when the time is ripe, you will get what you want."

Seenu's devotion to his guru was complete and faultless for over 20 years. (Paramahansa Yogananda said: "The highest spiritual law is loyalty.")

"One day when I was bathing him, Swamiji suddenly asked, 'Hey do you think that you came to the ashram to do meditation, but instead you have a lot of odd jobs in this ashram life? Do not consider that you are being given odd jobs to do. Have faith in the name of guru. With total devotion, consider everything as a service to the guru and his mission. Then every karma (action) of yours will get converted into sadhana.'"

At one public Darshan session, a person once complained to Swamiji about having lost peace of mind and Swamiji asked him, "Do you do sadhana?" As Swamiji spoke mainly in Telugu, I needed to translate what he had said into Hindi for the man and I translated it as: "Are you practicing any meditation?"

Swamiji corrected me. "When I said 'sadhana,' why are you using the word meditation? Meditation means a person will be sitting and closing the eyes. But 'sadhana' can happen during dhyana (meditation), through Bhakti (devotion), through seva (service), and in so many ways when one is able to surrender to the guru. If you surrender to the guru, automatically the mind will get controlled." Thus, Swamiji always emphasized sadhana.

On March 1994, Sri Shivabalayogi took Mahasamadhi (dropping of the physical body to become oneness with God).

On the evening of November 10, 1994, Seenu's guru came to him and told him, "The time is ripe for tapas." "As I was closing my eyes, it felt as if I was sinking into a deep sea of space. Total darkness had engulfed, total silence and serenity were there. Nothing else seemed to be there. No thoughts were coming. In that state, I heard a strong voice telling me, 'Look, from this room

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either you have to come out as a Yogi, or your dead body shall come out. Do not abandon the practice under any circumstances until you reach the goal. I want you to do this for five years as you already have the fruits of seven years of tapas.”

After four years of tapas, Shivabalayogi gave Seenu the name Shivarudra Balayogi. On November 16, 1999, after five years of intense tapas, he experienced the dazzling manifestation of the deity Ardhanarishwara. Smilingly, Lord Shiva said, “You can ask any boon that you want. When you go out, you can have a large following. And no more you require your guru's presence, as you have become a Yogi.” Spontaneously, he replied, “I want the lotus feet of my guru. I offer my life at the lotus feet of the Divine Guru who helped and guided me to this. So please, if you want to bless me, bless me that I can always remain at the lotus feet of my guru and serve him and work according to my guru's guidance. The Divine Ardhanarishwara (Shiva-Parvati) blessed that the guru's grace will descend and that I would be able to work according to the Guru's instructions and guidance. After blessing me, they disappeared. Then for the first time, Swamiji had appeared in the form that I always used to see him. It occurred to me that Ardhanarishwara is none other than my Divine Guru. Swamiji said, *‘So after you come out of the tapas, inspire the people of this world to practice this dhyana meditation and know themselves. Through this practice, they can achieve total peace and they will be able to know themselves.’ Self Realization. I prayed to Swamiji to be with me always, to guide, bless and inspire me.*”

Shivarudra Balayogi radiates an aura of perfect peace with a beatific soulful smile. He told me he has meditated seven to eight hours daily for 15 years, and 22 hours a day for five years! He is approachable as a friend, thus you may ask him long sought spiritual questions to be answered.

Let us warmly welcome him. He will be at my studio on June 6th at 7 PM for full program. And 10 AM for meditation. It is free to all. Come and receive his blessing. Donations are very much appreciated, for his travels are expensive. www.shivarudrabalayogi.org

Visit Tysu's yoga studio at the Evergreen North Shopping Center, 3735 Evergreen Parkway in Evergreen. Call (303-674-5632) or email: tysuyoga@comcast.net. For schedule of classes: tysuyoga.com

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