

My Guru Sri Shriyukteshwarji and Kriya Yoga



By Paramahansa Hariharananda

I am going to tell you about my first encounter with the great sage who became my guru: Swami Shriyukteshwar Giri.

The Most Imposing Personality

The word guru evokes a unique feeling in the heart of a devotee. It is something divine and somewhat transcendental.

Sri Shriyukteshwarji was a unique disciple of Shrimat Lahiri Baba - the King of Yogis. I heard about him from various quarters. I even heard of him from the revered guru Sri Vijaykrishna Chattopadhyaya, a spiritual giant of great eminence. He told me that Shri Shriyukteshwarji was not an ordinary man; he was a superman, a great man and a divine personality. Having heard this and being acquainted with the life and super powers of Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahashaya, I cherished a great desire to meet Shri Shriyukteshwarji.

“Where there is a will I there is a way,” I thought. I got an opportunity, reached Serampore and arrived at his residence. Because I heard that he was a man of serious and grave temperament - a soul unlike others - I was a little afraid at heart. Again I thought, “Before a man of his stature and eminence with divine disposition where is the occasion for fear? If someone is afraid to go near a honey comb in fear of bees, how can one taste the sweetness of honey?” With a strong mind I approached Shriyukteshwarji.

At the door of the room I looked at him from a distance. With a quiet, calm and sublime disposition, he sat there cross-legged in a lotus posture. Standing in front of his august presence, I felt more attracted towards him than ever before. His body was of an extremely fair

complexion. I had never seen such a personality in my life. His height was approximately six and one-quarter feet. His weight was not less than two-hundred pounds. He was handsome with a muscular and strong physical frame. The muscles of his broad chest thrust forward and spine as straight as a ramrod, he sat there with all his glory. The muscles of his thighs and legs were so strong that the strength of three or four young men would have been of no significance in comparison with his strength. I was very much impressed by his personality. I admired his beautiful holy feet. A divine radiance emanated from his whole frame. My fear gradually melted away.

He lowered his gaze and looked at me. Again he turned his vision inward. I became aware that he had taken notice of me. I gathered my strength.

He was alone inside the room. With all devotion I went near him and bowed to him twice, touching the first toe of both of his holy feet by the middle point of my eyebrows. Holding my head with both of his hands, he kissed my forehead and bade me to sit down on the floor. He offered me a *chandrapuli*—a preparation made from cheese, coconut and sugar. I accepted it and wanted to keep it in my pocket I asked for a piece of paper to wrap it carefully, as I wanted to distribute the *prasad* among the members of my family.

He smiled at me and said, “You should take the whole sweet. I shall give you another for your near and dear ones.”

I could not ignore his words and took the whole sweet. Then he asked, “What is your name?” “Robinakaran Bhattacharya,” I answered politely. He inquired about my guru and the sign of my natal zodiac. He interjected, “Does it signify the name Harihara?” I answered, “Yes,” but wondered how he could know this.

He inquired about my parents and other relatives. He became happy because all of us were educated. He was overwhelmed with pleasure when he particularly heard that all my brothers, including myself, were well-versed in all kinds of rituals. He asked, “Do you know astrology?” “I have learned a little from my father,” I replied. It pleased him immensely. My education and culture, together with my parents’ and relatives’ spiritual bent of mind and their social status gave him much satisfaction.

“I think you know your horoscope?” he again asked. “My father has handed over the horoscopes to all his children, so I remember,” I replied. He asked for my horoscope. I showed it to him. It pleased him greatly and he predicted many future events of my life. He predicted that I would take sannyas in the future. He looked at my palm and showed me the line indicating sannyas. He immediately showed me a book on palmistry to corroborate the fact. Although I was happy, I lacked confidence, “But I do not possess any quality of a sannyasin.”

“You belong to the *brahmin* caste. You know all scriptures and rituals well. I myself am not a *brahmin*. You have a spiritual mind. Therefore, you possess a greater spiritual potentiality for the attainment of truth. He asked, “Are you following any particular spiritual path?” I answered, “A sannyas, who lives in the mountains, taught me a kriya technique. He is an old

man. Since many persons go to him, there was a crowd, and I could not approach him. Afterwards I met him, and he gave me the kriya. His name is Swami Paramananda.”

“You practice kriya technique before me. Let me see it,” Shriyukteshwarji directed me. I practiced kriya in front of the great master. Pleased with me, he said, “This is the kriya of Lahiri Baba. Swami Paramananda has taught you the correct method. But you have some defects.” I felt a little encouraged and said, “I have come to learn this kriya at your holy feet. I learned from Shrimat Vijaya Krishna Chattopadhyaya that you have attained *nirvikalpa samadhi*. It is my earnest desire that I should attain *khechhari*, *bhramari*, and *shambhavi* stages and ultimately *nirvikalpa samadhi* by the help of your guidance and blessings.”

I Was A Little Afraid

He called me to sit directly in front of him. He touched the two sides of my chest and my forehead while practicing kriya himself. He touched my head again to awaken the *kundalini* power. He purified my body. I felt a divine effulgence in my whole frame.

He said, “The kriya you got is almost perfect, but you had defects on two points, which I have corrected” he said. I offered my *guru dakshina* (money) at his holy feet.

“The money you offered is not *guru dakshina*. Your desire to surrender yourself at the feet of your guru and to feel eternal union with the guru is the real import of *dakshina*. You should abide by the words of your guru and should on no account ignore his words,” he commented.

I was a little afraid and felt a tremor all over my body. As I thought, I began to perspire all over, “Could I be able to keep his words if he asks me to do whatever he wants?” Ekalavya offered his thumb to his guru. Can I? I was confident of myself. I thought that I could do the same. “After all, there is no upliftment of the human soul without such devotion to guru. The only way to get respite from the pangs of the world is unconditional love and surrender to guru,” I thought.

He looked at my face and roared with laughter, “Are you afraid? What are you thinking?” “Lord Krishna asked Balasena to offer his head in his own hand as a token of guru dakshina. Balasena was so devoted that he fulfilled the desire of God without a murmur and so did Ekalavya, who offered his thumb and forfeited his chance to become the greatest archer in the world. Shall I be able to be as devoted to you? That is why I have a tremor and perspiration,” I answered with all humility. Again he burst into laughter. I was surprised. I learned from people that he was a man of reserved temperament and it was very hard to approach him. But when I found him very gay and jolly, spontaneously laughing and joking with me, I felt myself blessed.

Immediately he added, “No, no, I am not going to cut off your head. I will only insert my head inside yours,” I was dumbfounded. “What strange idea is he going to convey!”

He continued, “Undoubtedly, you have the deepest love for Shriyukteshwar. Had it not been the case, why would you think of Balasena and Ekalavya and their devotion to guru? I am extremely satisfied that you possess such devotion.” I kept quiet and with all humility accepted

his words. Afterwards he called Swami Narayan Giri and said, “Narayan! Here is a *brahmin* boy. He will eat with us today. There are many things to be discussed.” Narayan Swami glanced at my face and left.

Shri Shriyukteshwarji continued, “Puri is a holy place. I visited Puri for the first time when there was no railway I founded Karar Ashram there near the seashore. In the year 1921 I handed the ashram over to a trust. Until now I have been searching for a suitable person to be in charge of the ashram. But today, after reading your horoscope and looking at your palm, I feel that the beloved Karar Ashram of Pryanath has a future. You hail from a *brahmin* family and you are adept in scriptures and astrology. Educated persons and devotees from all over the world gather at Puri for the *darshana* (communion) of Lord Jagannath. Moreover, the people of Orissa are very spiritual. If a *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) of your caliber stays there, the people of Orissa and, especially the educated, together with the learned people from outside, will come in contact with your spiritual power.”

Now I could realize why the incarnation of knowledge and the omniscient great Guru was talking about the insertion of his head inside mine. I became thoughtful. “But where is that spirit in me to fulfill his mission?” I felt depressed.

As Lord Krishna could divine the innermost thoughts of Arjuna by looking at his face, so Shri Shriyukteshwarji could know the inner working of my mind. With a divine smile radiating his face, he said, “What do you think of yourself? Are you devoid of the divine qualities to accomplish the work? Listen to what I say. As the little seed of the banyan tree contains the potentiality of a massive tree in the future, so do you. By your sincere practice of kriya one day you will be the greatest kriya yogi, not only in India, but also in the whole world. You will be endowed with supernatural power and will attain nirvikalpa samadhi the highest attainment of a yogi..”

I remembered the sayings of the Bhagavad Gita and got divine inspiration. He directed me to practice meditation sincerely and to meet him from time to time. He advised, “Introvert your senses and always remain in the cranium in all your activities. You will get balance of mind and divineness in you. You are not an ordinary boy. Do not keep anything for tomorrow, and in every moment feel my living presence and divineness within you. Within a short period you will be realized. It is my heartiest desire that you should go to Puri and take charge of the ashram. Go there and you will get seclusion and be able to meditate for a longer period.

You Cannot Escape Your Destiny

My heart was quite heavy with fear. “Is it possible for me to do it?” I thought and thought. Again he said, “Don’t feel that you are unfit. Think of the instructions of the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna asked Krishna, “If anybody meditates deeply, what shall be his condition after death?” Krishna replied that he would be born in a respectable spiritual and divine family, where there is opportunity for soul culture. From that place his spiritual sheet would be revised and he would proceed on towards the divine goal. So you are born in a yogic, orthodox, *brahmin* family, here the main emphasis in life is spirituality. You have the aggregate balance sheet of your prior birth which is brought forward here. That is why you came to me, and my aggregated balance sheet also tallies with yours. It is a blessing in disguise on my part and on your part that we meet

together and my desire will be fulfilled. Don't tell anybody what I have predicted for you-not even to anyone in your family. If you tell, you will get extreme hindrances. Just meditate and meditate and do your duty and surely you will realize what I predict. Try to find a good opportunity to come to Puri and join the ashram."

I felt a numbness and could not judge. I was aware of my moderation, my balance of mind, my amity. I never quarreled with anybody. I had never even chastised anybody in my life, except my nephew once. But that was not a quarrel. That was a sign of love. Because we lived together, he had great reverence for me, otherwise he would not have initiation from me after my Self-realization.

Shriyuktेश्वरji looked at my face, "What are you thinking?" I told him my thoughts. He loved me, came near, embraced me and said, "Surely you have divine priority in you." I met Shriyuktेश्वरji several times. Before his *mahasamadhi* he told me to go to Puri and join the ashram. I told him, "Surely I will go there when I will feel that my field is quite ready for renunciation. I think my field is almost ready to accept your proposal and blessings."

Shriyuktेश्वरji told me why Kriya Yoga was the best technique. He said that mind is the principal thing in every human body. From the mind people get so many thoughts, anxieties, sorrows, emotions, passions, anger, greed, pride, delusion, crookedness, which are the main disturbances for God-realization. Our five sense organs are engrossed in the material world, so we are always busy in worldly thoughts. Until and unless we introvert our five sense telephones and our mind, we cannot get God-realization. If you sow seeds without cultivating land, your effort will be useless. Similarly, if you try to chant mantras, say prayers and read spiritual books, if you don't cultivate your body land, you can get spiritual madness only, not spiritual realization. A man walking from Puri to Hardwar on foot can reach his destination, but he may not reach it. On the road he may be killed, he may die from an infectious disease.

"You all know that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught all to chant loudly the Hare Krishna maha mantra, but he himself sat in a cell in seclusion and did not talk with anybody. Ratnakar (Valmiki Rishi) shouted, "Ramanama!" for two or three days, but afterwards he sought Rama within himself, calmly without any movement, and he got Self-realization. He sat so calmly that white ants could not feel that he was a man and they built an anthill over his body. Tulasidas was also pasting *chandan* (sandalwood) and constantly remained engrossed in the thought of Rama. He was so absorbed with the thought of Rama that he was not aware of the presence of Rama and Lakshman in front of him. When he pasted sandalwood paste on their foreheads, then Hanuman came and asked Tulasidas, "Have you seen that Rama and Lakshman came to you and smeared all the sandal paste on their foreheads?" Tulasidas was not aware of it. He was so calmly absorbed with the thought of Rama that he had no worldly sense.

"The authentic Kriya Yoga can grant calmness in a short time if a devotee practices the technique rigidly, sincerely, and deeply with love.

"How it this possible? Every human being has two-fold forces in him. One is the biological force and the other is the philosophical force. Biological forces remain within the whole body below the eyebrows down to the toe. It comes from the twelve pairs of cranial

nerves, (two vagus nerves and ten pairs of cranial nerves), and that force pervades the whole body. So people remain absorbed in the material world and they cannot feel that Soul is the sole doer in every human being.

“However, inside the cranium there are cuttial nerves (also there are *salsai* and *gairas* forces). These cuttial nerves can give every human being philosophical and physiological forces. If you drink nectar in a vessel of poison, surely you will get death. People are always cherishing the physiological and biological forces within them and, at the same time, are seeking God. That is why people cannot prepare their spiritual field and cannot get God-realization.

With Kriya All Sorrows Disappear

People have no control of their biological system. But people have control over their lungs and breath. If three or four persons hold the nose and mouth of a man, he will die within five minutes' time. The Kriya Yoga technique is completely based on control of breath. A realized kriya yogi can tell a person how to inhale and control his lungs. Moreover, a kriya yogi can control his breath without holding his nose. Automatically, by that force, he can control his cells, muscles, tissues, diaphragm and atoms. Gradually, a kriya yogi gets extreme calmness. All his thoughts, anxieties, and sorrows disappear, and he forgets his physical sense and worldly sense. He can also get the breathlessness stage which is the deathlessness stage. In this stage he will surely get divine touch sensation in different parts of the body. He will see illumination all over the universe. That is *savikalpa samadhi*. Inhalations and exhalations continue, but the *sadhaka* does not feel whether the inhalation has entered in or not. He only perceives three divine qualities. One is illumination all over the universe. Second is divine touch sensation in 108 parts of the body, even in the vacuum. Third, he constantly hears the *ishta mantra* (divine sound) in him. Through the super power the devotee will surely get divine love in the whole universe. He will feel that only God is abiding.

“Kriya Yoga is a combination of *karma yoga*, *jñana yoga*, and *bhakti yoga*. By the help of Kriya Yoga one will feel the movement sensation of the Soul in the 108 body parts. That is Kriya Yoga. He will see divine light inside the spine and also hear the divine sound. He will practically feel it. That is *jñana yoga*. Until and unless a man does kriya in the whole system, he cannot get divine perception, divine knowledge. And until and unless a man gets consciousness, he cannot get *para bhakti*, or love for God. When people practically feel this trinity, they will get love for God. Unless a man gets concrete remuneration in his work, he cannot work and he cannot get love for his work. The spine is the most important part of the human body. The authentic Kriya Yoga technique will open up the royal road of the spine through which the radiant life force travels. Anyone who practices this technique will then feel the simultaneous development of his body, mind, intellect, and soul, and his life will change to spiritual life.

“Kriya Yoga is the applied parts of Vedanta, *Brahma Sutras* and *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, Bible, Koran, and Torah.

“Kriya Yoga is not *hatha yoga* or *raja yoga*. There are no austerities. It is the easiest, simplest, quickest and best technique for becoming God-realized. It is the highway of common religion. It withdraws all the mental waves of human beings and gives extreme calmness. That calmness is godliness. Air is the vital thing of human life. If a man does not inhale air, he is a

dead body He has no passion, no anger. He cannot go to the church, temple or mosque. He cannot even pray loudly with others, as if God is deaf. Therefore, air is the vital force of every human being. It converts the electromagnetic force in every human life. In every inhalation the quality of air varies. We know the air can give us calmness. When we sleep, we have a peculiar type of inhalation. We snore, but we do not hear the sound of our snoring. We get extreme calmness in our sleep. So Kriya Yoga is based on that type of inhalation which will give extreme calmness, but not sleepiness. One will perceive only divineness and will feel nothing of the universe.

“The real Kriya Yoga guide can awaken the *kundalini shakti (maya)* in his disciples. *Kundalini* is a marvelous *shakti* within man. This is the Lord’s own power of creation which is only awakened through meditation. *Kundalini* is one’s very life. Whoever you are, you can get that power through your guru. It is the duty of guru to awaken it. The awakened *kundalini* imparts talent and success in practical life, success in the world, and gives capabilities in the field of intellectual pursuits.

“If the *kundalini* power is awakened, poverty vanishes, ignorance disappears and love blossoms in the heart of a man and he becomes sublime. By the practice of Kriya Yoga a poor man becomes rich and becomes the ruler of the kingdom within him. Man is the prototype of God’s thought. You are that immortal Soul. You are born for self-realization.

“You cannot die. If you practice Kriya Yoga in your every worldly thought and action, you will be happy to perceive the indwelling Soul as the sole doer in you. Your visible body is your enemy. Your invisible Soul is your sole doer. The more you practice kriya, the more you feel that whatever you are doing is being done by Him. This is your immortality and emancipation.

Untie the Cords of Desire and Sensations

“*Kri* means you do your work as directed by your brain. But a dead man cannot do anything. *Ya* means Soul is the sole doer in you. You cannot do anything until and unless the Soul forces you to do it. Suppose a beautiful venomous snake is playing. You may like to catch it and take it to your room. But you do not catch the venomous snake and do not carry it with you. Similarly, many evil propensities remain within you. You should not jump over them. Remain in society. You must have civic sense or you are a nuisance. According to your priority, God is functioning through you. You must also be careful about your food and drink, then you’ll never get heart trouble and you’ll live 100 years with joy.

“God made man in his own image and He breathed into their nostrils His own breath. He manifested Himself as human beings in the whole universe. It is our first duty to perceive God, conceive God, and realize God.

“There is an invisible counterpart for your every bodily part. That invisible part is real, that is the Soul. Without invisible Soul man cannot get delusion, illusion and error. That invisible man is a captive under the biological sensation. By the practice of Kriya Yoga you can untie the cords of desires and sensations which remain in the mind. By practice you can transfer the material consciousness into cosmic consciousness. Then, even through your delusion and

through your family life, you can perceive how the invisible power of God is constantly functioning within you. If you feel it, you will get divine joy, bliss and peace in your every activity. In ashtanga yoga there are eight stages to reach God perception. By only the first technique of Kriya Yoga within eight minutes, you can complete *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and you can immediately attain *pratyahara* stage, where there is no sense of mind, thought and intellect-is no sense of existence. You will only feel the triple divine sensations in you and will immediately get dhyana, the perception of God in everything. Spontaneous God perception is *dharana*. Just after this stage the *sadhaka*, with progressive practice, goes through *savikalpa samadhi*: 1. *subhechha*, 2. *vicharani*, 3. *tanumanasa*, 4. *asangasakti*, 5. *sattapatti*, 6. *padartha bhavini*. Then comes the last stage which is called *nirvikalpa samadhi* or *turiya*. This is the breathless, pulseless, deathless stage. It is the highest achievement of the yogi. It is possible to quickly attain all the stages by the practice of Kriya Yoga.

“Kriya Yoga does not entertain any sectarian views. It only cultivates the mind and removes the jungle or weeds from the mind of the human being. Any person of any order, race or religion can receive it for his soul culture. If somebody chants mantras and worships and prays without transferring the mind into cosmic consciousness, it will take fifty-thousand births to get God-realization. It is so written in the named *Jñana Shankalini* scriptures. If a man practices Kriya Yoga rigidly, regularly, and sincerely, he can reach the divine goal within ten years’ time.

“There is no consideration of age and sex to receive Kriya Yoga. At any time, when one gets strong desire for God-realization and wants to practice regularly, he can get it. As a man can cross a long distance by an airplane within a short period, so Kriya Yoga can give super divine sensations within a short period, if the technique is practiced regularly and sincerely in the way taught by the guru.”

I heard and learned all this from the great guru Jñanavatar Shri Shriyukteshwar Giri and became God-realized within a short period.