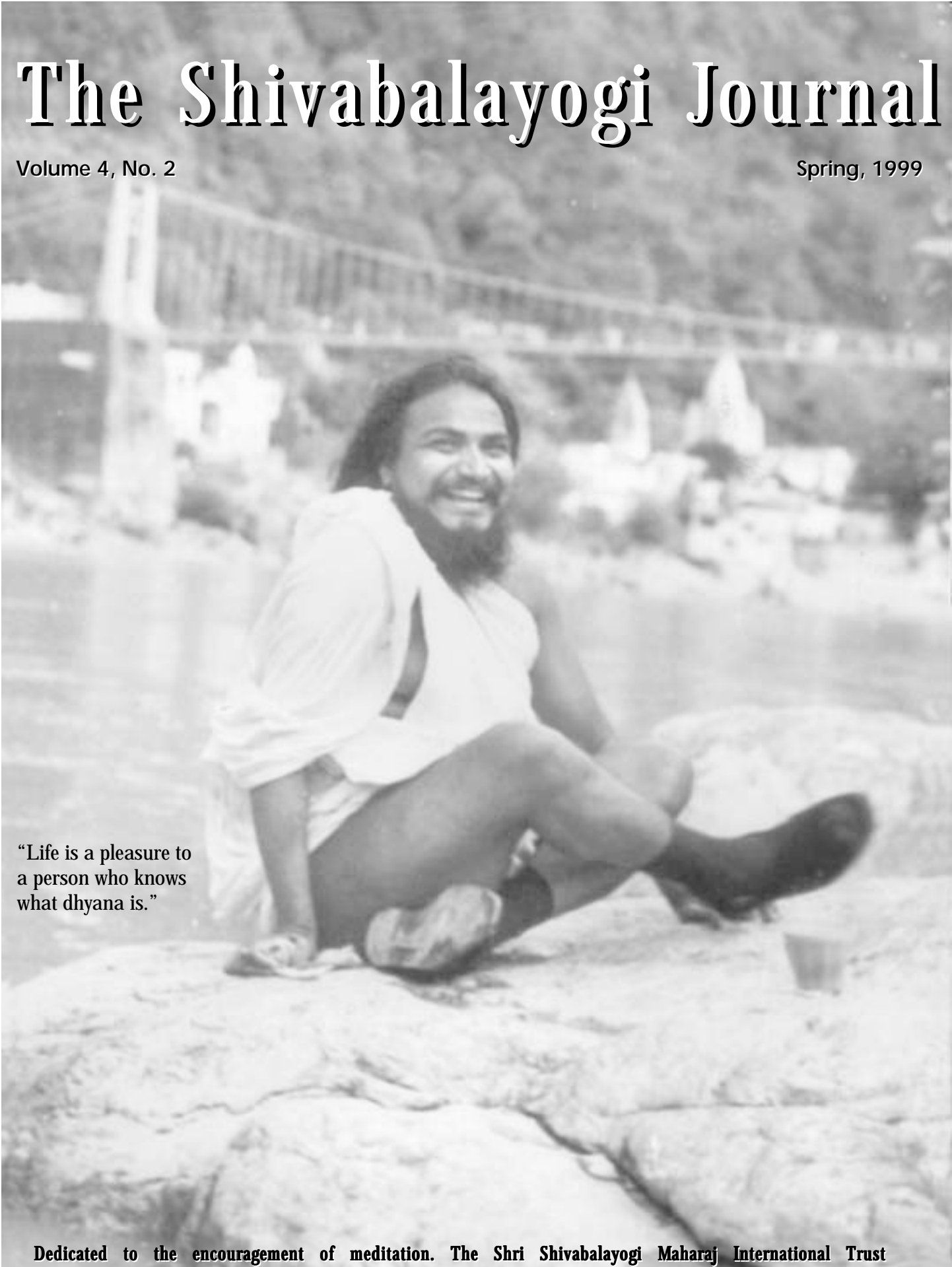


The Shivabalayogi Journal

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“Life is a pleasure to
a person who knows
what dhyana is.”

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

Balayogi — Boy Yogi & Bathing



Shivabalayogi's name reflects his complete male and female manifestation of his divine guru, Lord Shiva (God the Holy Spirit). "Bala" is a name of Parvati, Shiva's divine consort. But "bala" also means boy, and a yogi who begins tapas while still a boy is called a "balayogi."

Swamiji was only fourteen when he first sat in tapas, and for many years people referred to him as Adivarapupeta Balayogi. In addition to his awesome powers, it's good to remember that he is also a

boy-yogi with all the charming attributes of a divine child.

We see photographs of Swamiji in formal poses or smiles. The early films of Shri Swamiji show him with a serious demeanor, as if completely uninterested in what was happening around him. Many of us have seen him at functions giving public darshan and making the *puṇahuti* offerings at the *homa* fire ceremony. But to better appreciate how much he loves and cares for each one of us, even in the smallest details of our lives, to better understand how God is closer to us than our own breath, and to realize that we are the reflection of the Divine, we should enjoy the divine as playful.

One expression of Shri Swamiji's playfulness is his love of bathing in rivers and oceans. Even as a boy he was fond of bathing in the canals and small reservoirs around his native village of Adivarapupeta. He loved to jump from a high bridge into the Godavari River and go swimming in the ocean, activities his mother and others thought too dangerous. But his grandfather supported the boy.

Many say that Shivabalayogi's love of bathing comes from an incident during his tapas. After Balayogi mastered the mantra of the Sun, his guru took him to visit the world of the Sun. There Balayogi found himself looking down upon a landscape very similar to that on earth: mountains, forests, and river valleys. But he had to pass through the blazing orb of the Sun. The heat was so intense that Balayogi thought he would have been reduced to a cinder had it not been for the protection of his divine guru. Even with this protection, and even though the exposure to the heat was for the briefest possible time, Balayogi suffered intensely. To give his disciple relief the divine guru allowed him to dip in every river they happened to cross on their way back, both in the astral sphere and on earth. This incident seems to have established a precedent. Shri Swamiji cannot resist having a dip in any and every river he happens to cross.

Shri Swamiji suggests some metaphysical reasons for bathing. One is that rivers take on the sins of the many people who bathe in them. (Once a devotee asked Swamiji if it was true that bathing in the Ganges would take away all one's sins. Swamiji said yes. After a pause during which the devotee appeared ready to make a pilgrimage, Swamiji mischievously added, "But they are waiting for you on the bank when you get out.") After centuries and millennia, the god of the river is burdened with karma accumulated from countless souls. They pray for a yogi to come and give relief. So one of Shri Swamiji's duties was to bathe in the rivers and take on their karma.

Another metaphysical reason is that the waters allow Shri Swamiji to transmit blessings. Swamiji enjoys having devotees bathing with him, and sometimes he gives a hard shove to someone who might be afraid of the swift currents or deep waters. He explains that water conducts energy better than air, and he uses the water to pass power to devotees.

But as anyone knows who has had the opportunity to be with Swamiji on such occasions, he likes bathing with devotees in rivers and oceans because it is fun. Swamiji is playful and he delights in the devotees' joyfulness. ☸

I dreamed that Swamiji and I were sitting on a hillside and then went for a swim. We were playing in the water, splashing each other, laughing. I thought the dream was nice, but a little odd. I told several people about it. It seemed like something very out of character for Swamiji.

Later that year I traveled to India to visit Swamiji. I was with several devotees who accompanied Swamiji to his native village of Adivarapupeta. Swamiji decided to go for a swim in the ocean. Swamiji went into the water followed by devotees. There was the yogi laughing and splashing the water. The dream immediately came back, like *deja vu*. ☸

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Children Should Learn Courage

When His Holiness was traveling in the United States during 1988-1991, he would talk about how people in this country lacked foundation. He didn't give a categorical explanation of what he meant by "foundation." Instead he gave examples of social disorder and talked about our traditional culture that is preserved to some degree in India. But if one reflects on these conversations, it becomes clear that Swamiji is telling us that culture is rooted and preserved in how parents raise their children and how children respect their parents. This is the foundation upon which society is built.

During those U.S. visits, Swamiji would often say how important it is for parents to raise their children to be bold. Children should not be raised with fear but should be given permission to do what they want and take risks. Shri Swamiji enjoyed giving examples of his own childhood when he was being raised by his mother and grandfather. As the following example illustrates, a story told by Swamiji, his grandfather Goli Sathyam encouraged the boy to confront his fears.

Sathyaraju followed a village procession; it was the funeral of a village rowdy. The local people had a custom where they throw a clod of dirt onto the corpse to begin the burial. The villagers began to throw dirt onto the corpse and Sathyaraju picked up and threw a fairly good sized rock. It hit the corpse's head and split it open. The villagers were upset and frightened the boy by telling him that the dead man would come back and give the boy trouble for throwing the rock.

Sathyaraju ran to his grandfather and told him what had happened and what the villagers had said. The boy was afraid the dead man would come back to get him. Goli Sathyam reassured the boy and instructed him to return to the graveyard that night to confront his fears. The boy did go back and saw the jackals and dogs carrying off the corpse and eating it. He realized he had nothing to fear from that corpse.

Since then, says Swamiji, he has not been afraid. Most people in India are afraid of ghosts. They would believe a ghost was haunting a particular place, like a tree. However Sathyaraju learned not to be afraid. Instead he would wager that he was not afraid of the ghost. People did not believe him and they would accept the bet. Then Sathyaraju would fearlessly walk up to the haunted tree, then return to collect his winnings.

When people ask why God chose Swamiji to do tapas, his answers have to do with his strong character as a boy, and Swamiji would express his gratitude for how his mother and grandfather helped him develop that character. Sathyaraju acquired a reputation among his playmates and the elders of his



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village for his fearlessness, his bold outspokenness, and his deeply ingrained sense of fair play and justice. All these qualities combined to make him a natural leader of the boys in his village. When the Congress Party youth movement gathered momentum during India's push for independence, Sathyaraju took a leading role and his friends elected him leader.

But Sathyaraju's character and hard work did not earn everyone's approval. On the contrary, Shivabalayogi himself readily admits he was a naughty boy who quarreled with almost everyone in the village. His horoscope shows that he would be disliked by his relatives for his outspokenness. Swamiji once explained that he never cared about anyone's feelings; he was only interested in the truth. He was quick to accept a fight with anyone. The only people he got along with were the old people and the other children. He was so quarrelsome and stubborn that the villagers gave him an English nickname, "Against."

One of the men in the village had become attached to a sadhu whom he later accepted as his guru. The original meaning of "sadhu" is a holy man, but the word also has come to refer to someone who merely earns a living at it. This sadhu was a boastful and pompous fellow who threatened dire consequences to anyone who wittingly or unwittingly crossed his path. One of his constantly repeated threats was that he would curse people to turn them into one or another of some low animal species. The simple village folk readily believed these threats so they went about in awe and fear of this angry old man.

Not surprisingly, Sathyaraju took an instant dislike to this sadhu for his arrogant manner and his angry threats. He was convinced in his own mind that the sadhu had none of the powers of which he boasted, and so Sathyaraju secretly resolved to expose him.

One day, when everyone was sitting in the presence of the sadhu holding forth in his usual boastful manner, Sathyaraju asked him what he would do if someone were to steal any of his things. The sadhu promptly threatened to turn the person into a tiger. Sathyaraju pretended to express awe and wonder but remained quiet. A short while later the sadhu happened to go out. Sathyaraju was alone in the sadhu's room, so he quickly took the sadhu's bow and arrows and hid them on a ledge just above the place where the sadhu normally slept. He then left the room unnoticed.

When the sadhu returned he found his bow and arrows missing. Inquiries were made and a search conducted but they could not be found. The sadhu lost his temper and began complaining and yelling about what he would do to the culprit. Sathyaraju, who was an interested spectator of the whole scene, suggested in a seemingly innocent tone that the sadhu, by his powers, should be able to locate his missing bow and arrows as well as the culprit. This only enraged the sadhu further and Sathyaraju was quickly hustled away by anxious relatives for fear the sadhu would curse him.

The sadhu's terrible anger made Sathyaraju somewhat anxious, so he ran to his grandfather and told him in all innocence, "I hid the sadhu's bow and arrows. If he turns me into a tiger, then the people will hunt me down and kill me, so tie me up inside." Goli Sathyam could not help being amused. He told the boy not to worry but wait and see what would happen.

Reassured by his grandfather and realizing that some time had already passed yet nothing had happened to him, Sathyaraju became firm in his original conviction that this sadhu was a hoax. After some time, he presented himself before the sadhu who was surrounded by his usual gathering of admirers. The boy bravely told him that he had hidden the missing bow and arrows and then showed the sadhu their hiding place. To the astonishment and horror of his relatives, he now challenged the sadhu to transform him into a tiger as he had been threatening to do all along.

The sadhu fretted and cursed but Sathyaraju boldly stood his ground and nothing happened to him. Sathyaraju was soundly reprimanded by his uncle and others for his impertinent behavior but the boy had proved his point. This sadhu never again made such boasts, nor did he ever again succeed in terrorizing the villagers. ॐ



Questions & Answers

The following questions and answers about children are taken from interviews in Bangalore in early 1994.

Q Swamiji, your mission is peace in the world. Lately I have been feeling that the beginning of peace in the world comes from the family. It used to be that the mother raised the children. She was with them all the time. She was the one who raised the children. She was their role model from their early life. But today, both father and mother are away from home. Children do not have anyone to look up to as a role model, so they grow up in their own way. The trouble starts at home, then percolates down to neighborhoods and society.

“The present culture is not right. It is always good if the parents teach their culture to the children. Once that does not happen, the children will get spoiled. It is up to the parents to teach their culture to their children.”

Q But what if both the parents are working and do not have the time to spend with their children?

“They have the time, but they spend the time on entertainment, going to clubs or going out on the town. This is what they do. Everybody has time. Nobody works for twenty-four hours a day. They have the time.”

Q These days people are forced to work because of financial need. When the children are home, the parents do not have the time. It is not that they are spending their time on entertainment.

“Swamiji is going to change that. Swamiji will train those children. If the children are not trained by their parents, Swamiji shall train them.”

Q Will they be drawn to Swamiji?

“The children themselves are knowledgeable. If the parents do not get in their way, then Swamiji can change them. That is the role the parents have to play. If they cannot teach their children, then at least they should not get in the way of them learning good by themselves.”

Q What sorts of things should parents be teaching their children?

“Getting up in the morning. Keeping them in the philosophical [i.e. spiritual] line. Teaching them their exercises. You have to put them in the proper line.”

“Take the example of India. The parents go to the temple, but they do not take their children along with them. They keep their children at home. This is what is happening. That is the reason the children are unable to get to know what is the history of our country. Children who grow up like that are the ones



who do not know who is a yogi. If children are trained well right from the beginning, then they become top class citizens.”

Q Today in India, only forty percent of the people follow the traditional ways. Sixty percent do not follow, and children these days do not grow up at home.

“Once they grow up and become intelligent, they themselves will change.”

Q Swamiji talks about foundation and how India has the old traditions. How much can these traditions be adapted in other countries? Do we need to be singing Sanskrit songs in the USA? Do we need to be doing puja exactly the same way as in India?

“No, that is not the foundation. Foundation is not puja, mantra or Sanskrit. Foundation means one man should stay with only one woman. One woman should stay with only one man as her husband. If all men and women stay with only one partner, then the culture will continue. The blood carries the culture. If the father is devoted in spiritual life, then his son gets that blood and inherits that spiritual attitude. That

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continues from generation to generation provided the people stay like that.”

“Culture is carried over on such a foundation. Culture is preserved by the way you lead your life. If the life is not led properly, the culture does not get carried on properly. It gets broken down and lost.”

Q Can the culture built on such a foundation vary from country to country?

“There are such families in your country, and also there are people who do not follow those rules. You can see the difference between their lives. In your country there are a lot of people. Not all the people in your country are spoiled. Only some of them are spoiled. There are lots of people who lead good lives. You can feel and see the difference there in your country.”

Q Even in India, people who lead the traditional kind

of a lifestyle are considered primitive and old fashioned. Modern ways have become very common here in our country. A person who lives with another woman permanently is considered primitive, old fashioned, and not capable of falling in line with modern ways.

“Yes, we are also to pick up Western culture, and the Westerners are trying to pick up our culture. The reason for this is as you had mentioned earlier in your question. The parents are not training their children. Children see this wrong kind of culture around them. They watch television and movies everywhere, so they come to the conclusion that that is what is right. So that is how such Western culture is coming here.”

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Experiences

Children Play Marbles with Swamiji

There were some small Muslim boys who used to play with my son. I used to get all the children together and make them sit for dhyān.

This one time we were meditating and I kept hearing a very disturbing knocking sound. I opened my eyes but I didn't see anything going on. Then I saw this one boy named Ikra snapping one forefinger against the other, as if playing with invisible marbles. It was making a kind of a knocking sound. When the dhyān was over, I asked him, “What were you doing?”

In a very matter of fact manner, Ikra told me, “I was playing marbles with Swamiji.”

Constantly one was skeptical about the trances and what people were doing and seeing. So I said, “Oh, really? What was Swamiji wearing?”

“Well, He was wearing a blue shirt and He was wearing khaki shorts. And his jata was so long. And he was laughing. His jata was sweeping the dust.” Ikra had seen Swamiji sitting on His haunches and playing marbles.

The next time Swami came for his visit I asked him. “Ikra told me that he was playing marbles with you. He saw you as a little boy, but with jatas. Wearing a blue shirt and khaki shorts.”

“Yes, yes,” Swamiji said. “I had to wear that when I used to go to school. I was very good at playing marbles. I used to win all the marbles.” We did not know that, and especially Ikra did not know that.

This one little fellow wanted to travel in dhyān. The rest got up from dhyān but this boy remained in meditation. I didn't know what to do with this little boy. I asked Swamiji and He said to let him be. So I closed the doors and I left him sitting there. Swamiji retired to His room. We had lunch and then Swamiji rested.

This child continued to meditate. After a long while he got up and came to me and said, “Oh, I don't





know where I had been.” He had told Swamiji that he wanted to travel. He went traveling in his meditation and he didn’t know where he’d gone. This little boy came from a village. The only ocean he had seen was in a picture, yet he described traveling across the sky over the sea. The biggest town he had seen was Agra, but he had seen, “tall buildings, like you’ve never seen anywhere.” He described how he was looking down at an angle. “Across the seas. I don’t know.”

Can’t Say “No” to a Child

Swamiji came to our house in 1990. It happened that our neighbor had a boat and asked Swamiji whether he would like to go out in it. It was a beautiful sunny day, and Swamiji agreed. We hopped in the boat and had a wonderful time. At one point, it started to rain and we were thinking of going back, but Swamiji wanted to keep going. The boat ride reminded him of his childhood and he began telling us stories of the river he frequented as a child.

The following year we again invited Swamiji for a boat ride but his health was not well and he declined. Our children asked why Swamiji was not coming for a boat ride and we had to tell them it was because he was not feeling well.

The first night of the programs my six year old decided to ask Swamiji a question. When we got up to him my son looked at Swamiji straight in the eye and asked, “Why aren’t you coming to my house?”

All Swamiji did was look at him, nod his head, and say “Yes.”

A few days later, my husband went up to speak to Swamiji. Swamiji said that he would come to our house the next day, and that we should pick him up at eleven o’clock. That is how we had a boat ride this year. We had a wonderful time. Swamiji told me that the reason he came over was that he could never say no to a child. It was because of our six year old son that we had this privilege.

Four Children, One Program

I didn’t know what it would be like for my children when I decided to host two Shivabalayogi programs. The plan was for some devotees from Seattle to drive to Bozeman and help with set-up and initiation, and play bhajans. I arranged for a church hall near where we live, some publicity, and some local musicians to join in the bhajans. Living in rural United States, my children were not used to Indian bhajan singing or even meditation.

The first night my children arrived after the meditation was over, just in time for bhajans. The bhajan group was getting ready to play as we watched my eight year old son come to the front of the room and sit on the floor. The music started and within minutes he was sitting cross legged, hands clasped together and eyes closed. An extraordinary beauty came over his face.

He told me the next morning that Swamiji appeared to him and they had danced and played together. They were high above all the people at the program and from his bird’s eye view he could see us sitting in the hall. Moving above us were the two women in

Experiences

Swamiji's bhava. And at the highest height appeared a building with three pillars where my son and Swamiji danced and danced. He told me, "Swamiji is the best playmate."

While he was having these experiences, all we could see was him sitting peacefully as if in meditation. When the bhajans stopped, he sat for a long time without moving. Then he came to sit near where Swamiji was giving darshan through bhava samadhi on a devotee. My son sat speechless, locked in some silent higher communication with Swamiji. I sensed a power that Swamiji was transmitting to him.

After some time, my young son moved slightly aside to let his little sister come up. She was leading her teenage sister to Swamiji for blessings. More than anything, she wanted her sister to be healed. Swamiji gave blessing to them and gave her some rose petals for an altar. Nearly a year later, the petals still rest in front of His picture.

That first night, my teenage son had arrived with my other three children, but unlike the other three who came in front, he took a seat by the door in the back row of the hall. I was a little worried that he was uncomfortable or bored and it was the teenager's response to not wanting to be there. He just sat there throughout the bhajans. It turned out that the reason was very different. As soon as he walked into the room, he was hit with a blast of Shri Swamiji's energy so overwhelming that it almost knocked him down. All he could do was stumble quickly to the first available seat and remain there for the rest of the program.

We had organized only two nights of programs. and the devotees who visiting our city for programs had to leave, my children were ready to quit school and go on tour. My youngest son carries his vibhuti in his back pack every day and I know that Swamiji is with them every day. What a relief.

News Currents

Videos

The International Trust is producing a series of short videos of His Holiness. "Shivabalayogi and Introduction," "New Age Furum — On Meditation," and "New Age Forum — on Guru" have already been distributed. Newly available is "Kakinada Sea Bath" which gives a glimpse of Shri Swamiji's very playful side.

The tapes are being distributed without charge to trusts, ashrams, and meditation groups. Each video is about twelve minutes so it can be viewed before or after a meditation program. In the United States, the videos are distributed by Shri Swamiji's Oregon trust, the Shivabalyogi Trust, P.O. Box 99703, Seattle WA 98199.

Yoga Vasishtha

With this issue, the editors of *The Journal* are pleased to offer the first segment of *The Yoga Vasishtha* translated by Prof. P. N. Murthy from Sanskrit and Telugu at the request of His Holiness, Shri Shri Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. We hope to publish the work in serial form as inserts to *The Journal*, and Shri Swamiji's trustees are keenly interested in publishing this new English translation in book form.

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