



Learn to Behave: The Wisdom of Sri Yukteshwar Giri

Nandini Sarkar
nandini@cquel.com

Behind every great Master there is a very great teacher. Paramahansa Yogananda's speech, demeanour, teachings and interpretations bore the unmistakable stamp of his Master, Sri Yukteshwar Giri, whom he acknowledged in every utterance. They were like a team, with Sri Yukteshwar, the wise thinker and "think tank", and Paramahansa Yogananda, the able administrator and "general". The secret of Yoganandaji's superbly successful Kriya mission was his conduct and manner, which won him legions of friends and gained him worldwide acceptance. Indeed, if there is one teaching that I would pick as the essence of Sri Yukteshwar's message, that created an icon like Paramahansa Yogananda and an iconic book like Autobiography of a Yogi, it is this: ***Learn to Behave***.

Alas! I often tell myself when memories of inappropriate actions come flooding to my mind: I wish I had been taught all of this earlier. I was a pampered kid, very used to having my own way and thereafter also an indulged student and wife. This led to various behavioural abnormalities and the karmic consequences! of course. So the best gift we can actually give our peers, co-workers and children is pointing out the way. ***Learn to behave***, is a potent mantra, the secret of ***permanent happiness***, and the secret of ***averting potentially difficult karma***. No man is an island, said the poet, and it is true, that all of us wish to be loved, admired and be accepted within the family, country or world that we live in. A Master like Paramahansa Yogananda is a role model on how to behave, so let us examine what ***Swami Kriyananda***, his direct disciple, says about him in his scintillating autobiography, ***The Path***:
(Source: www.ananda.org)

1. Behave Accordingly

"Whenever I look at you," Norman once wrote Master in a note, "I see only the Divine Mother." "Then behave accordingly," Master replied with impersonal calmness when next they met.



2. Humility

Yogananda was the humblest man I ever knew, yet it was humility only in the sense that there was no ego there at all, not in the sense that his manner was self-deprecating. "I killed Yogananda long ago," he used to say. "No one dwells in this temple now but God".

3. Love vs Discipline

He once said to me, "I prefer to work with love. I just wilt when I have to work in other ways." I myself noted, whenever he scolded me, a deep regret in his eyes at the lack of understanding on my part that had made his reprimand necessary.

In the truest and best sense of the word he was a noble man. Because his self-integration was flawless, divine perfection expressed itself even in his casual behavior.

4. Respect for Others

In some ways I think it was his utter respect for others that impressed me the most deeply about Master. It always amazed me that someone whose wisdom and power inspired so much awe in others could be at the same time so humbly respectful to all. I had always considered respect something one gave only where it was due. As Master said once to Dr. Lewis, his first disciple in America, "Remember, God loves you just as much as He loves me. He is our common Father."

5. Incorruptibility & Ethics

A woman of considerable worldly means, once helped the Master's work financially, and behaved in consequence as if she owned him. Master, as unbuyable a person as ever lived, continued to act only as God guided him from within. Gradually the woman developed toward him a sense of possessive jealousy, and on several occasions spoke to him venomously, hurling such insults as would have made any ordinary person her enemy. Master, however, remained unalterably calm and respectful toward her. The lady gradually developed high regard for him. All her anger and jealousy became converted into ungrudging esteem.

6. Acceptance vs Anger

One of my brother disciples, acting under the spell of a violent delusion, once wrote Master a long letter filled with scathing criticism for what he imagined to be Master's faults. The letter announced his intention of leaving the ashram immediately. He must subsequently have seen his error, for he remained. One day, seeing him, Master remarked, "You should take up



writing. That was the best letter Satan ever wrote me.” Master’s voice, free of any resentment, held a note of genuine admiration.

His humility didn’t prevent him, however, from giving a strong reply sometimes, if he felt that one might prove helpful. An orthodox minister shouted at him one day on a train, “You will go to hell!” Master, seeing the anger etched on the man’s face, replied affably, “Well I may get there by and by, but my friend, you are there already!” At this answer, there came a general wave of laughter from the passengers in the carriage.

7. Sense of Humour

Wonderful as was Master’s quality of universal respect, it might be supposed that it entailed an inability to see the funny side of what is often called the human comedy. The supposition would not be valid. In truth, I have never known anyone with a keener sense of the ridiculous.

Don’t be Tall by Cutting off the Heads of Others!

There are two sources to Sri Yukteshwar’s teachings: the testimony of direct disciples like Paramahansa Yogananda and Sri Yukteswarji’s book, *The Holy Science*.

The Chapter, “Years in My Master’s Hermitage”, in Autobiography, throws up delightful snippets of how Yukteswarji set up a code of conduct for his young disciples. Sample these:-

Forget the past. The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until man is anchored in the Divine. Everything in future will improve if you are making a spiritual effort now.

***The darkness of maya is silently approaching. Let us hie homeward within.
(With these cautionary words Sri Yukteswar constantly reminded his disciples of their need for Kriya Yoga.)***

Destroy wrong desires now; otherwise they will remain with you after the astral body has been separated from its physical casing. Every natural passion can be mastered. A true devotee is finally freed from all instinctive compulsions.

Do not allow yourself to be thrashed by the provoking whip of a beautiful face. How can sense slaves enjoy the world? Its subtle flavours escape them while they grovel in primal mud. All nice discriminations are lost to the man of elemental lusts.



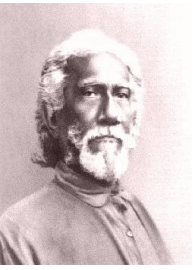
Imagination is the door through which disease as well as healing enters. Disbelieve in the reality of sickness even when you are ill; an unrecognized visitor will flee!

Good manners without sincerity are like a beautiful dead lady, he remarked on suitable occasion. Straightforwardness without civility is like a surgeon's knife, effective but unpleasant. Candour with courtesy is helpful and admirable.

Those who are too good for this world are inhabiting another ! (reprimanding a disciple who was negligent about his daily duties.)

Down to the Nitty Gitties: Learning to Behave

When my mother-in law passed on, a year after our marriage, I deeply regretted some of my exchanges with her. She had been very loving and helpful but sometimes her commanding or direct manner of speaking was like a painful arrow embedding itself into my “independent modern woman” ego. Sometimes, she also displayed a strong possessiveness for my husband, which I found annoying. How I wish I had had the maturity to understand, that her dependence on my husband stemmed from an unhappy marriage or overlook the small instances as coming from someone who was quite unwell, having already suffered two strokes before our marriage. I should have seen the bigger picture and known how to behave. She knew better and till the end, she trusted me with her keys and finances, something she did not discuss even with her sons and supported me in caring for my new born daughter. Life after her became very difficult and, ultimately, we were constrained to leave the joint family household, after many tribulations. The law of karma was swift in teaching me. I don't mind the learning, but I do mind that there is no way for me to go back in time and say, sorry Ma!



So, we must be ever conscious about the need to behave. Sri Yukteshwar gives us a four way approach in his book, *The Holy Science*.

- **The Gospel**
- **The Goal**
- **The Procedure**
- **The Revelation**

The Gospel According to Sri Yukteshwar

We are always searching for that “something else” which will make us happy. The human heart actually yearns for three necessities which are inside our own Self: Sat, Chit & Ananda. When we become fortunate in securing the favour of a Sat-Guru, and affectionately follow his holy precepts, the heart attains true contentment and experiences bliss or Ananda. It is this Sat-Chit-Ananda state that keeps us rooted in correct behaviour and actions. Ignorance, the mother of all evils becomes emaciated and consequently all the troubles of the material world, which are the source of all suffering, cease completely.

The Goal According to Sri Yukteshwar

The cessation of all suffering through correct behaviour is *Artha*, *the aim of the heart*, and the permanent cessation of all suffering such that their recurrence becomes impossible, is *Parmartha*, *the ultimate goal*.

The Procedure According to Sri Yukteshwar

Tapas (penance), **Swadhyaya** (self-study), **Pranav Dhyana** (Aum Meditation), **Shraddha** (devotion) and **Virya** (moral courage) are the **five pillars to attain Sat-Chit-Ananda** or the state of perfect behaviour, that destroys suffering permanently.



Learn to Behave: The Wisdom of Sri Yukteswar Giri

Nandini Sarkar
nandini@cquel.com

With the little meditation or study that I have done, I have found great benefits of this procedure. Your mistakes unfold and become crystal clear to you and you make an effort to change, your intuition blossoms and awakens you to opportunities you did not know existed, you learn to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, you tend to judge yourself before you judge others, you learn not bear rancour or bitterness in your heart despite the betrayals, you actually learn to forgive. It is like a spiritual spa treatment after which your body doesn't feel gross any more. You feel that your entire body is light and that all the painful incidents of your life are but fleeting dreams, having no power at all to trouble or traumatize you.

According to Sri Yukteswar, ***Tapas is patience*** in the midst of suffering and enjoyment both; ***Swadhyaya*** is study with deep attention leading to true conception of the Self: who am I, whence have I come from, what have I come for and whence will I go; ***Aum Meditation*** is the holy work required to attain salvation and the only way in which man can return to his divinity; ***Shraddha*** or cultivation of the heart's natural love and ***Virya***, moral courage will lead us to hear the Holy Word, Aum, in meditation. The virtue of love cannot be extolled enough, says the Master. When love, the heavenly gift of Nature develops in the heart, it expiates all germs-the source of diseases-and cools down all sources of excitation in the body, invigorating the vital powers. Without this love, man cannot live in the natural way, he often becomes excited by circumstances, not seeing them as the guidance of Nature and consequently, cannot find peace anywhere, finding life a burden. So, pure love is a pre-requisite for the holy life, as analyzed by Sri Yukteswar. To cultivate this love, we should seek the company of those who bring us peace, dispel our doubts through their actions and remove our sufferings; the opposite of such people, those who agitate us, creating doubt & confusion should be avoided like poison. The Sat-Guru is a powerful instrument who awakens the natural love of the heart.



Learn to Behave: The Wisdom of Sri Yukteshwar Giri

Nandini Sarkar
nandini@cquel.com

The Sat-Guru is to be regarded with love. To be with the Guru is not only to be in his physical presence as this may sometimes be impossible, but to keep him in our hearts. Swami Amarananda of the Yogoda Satsanga Society, recounts, that in his meditations, he visualizes holding on to the two hands of Paramahansa Yogananda and this visualization fills him with love and makes his meditation blissful.

Firmness or moral courage may be attained through Yama -absenteeism from cruelty, dishonesty and unnatural living. Natural living rests on the components of healthy food, a clean and airy dwelling place, good company and scientific methods of Pranayama, such as the Hong-Sau method taught in the Kriya tradition. Moral courage also dissipates the eight meannesses of the heart: hatred, shame, fear, grief, condemnation, race, prejudice, pride of pedigree and a narrow sense of respectability. When meanness disappears, the heart becomes magnanimous and loving. By culture of the breath through Pranayama, as taught by the Guru, the Holy Word, Aum appears spontaneously and is audible. The Pranav sound appears in different forms in different stages of advancement, according to the purification of the heart.

The Revelation According to Sri Yukteshwar

One who cultivates his heart's natural love obtains the guidance of a Sat-Guru and starts his sadhana. He becomes a Pravartaka, an initiate. He progresses in godliness, hears the Holy Aum sound and becomes a Siddha, a divine personage. Sri Yukteshwar aptly quotes Sir Walter Scott, in highlighting the importance of love as the foundation of good behaviour and spiritual accomplishment:-

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,

The men below and saints above;

For love is heaven and heaven s love.



Learn to Behave: The Wisdom of Sri Yukteshwar Giri

Nandini Sarkar
nandini@cquel.com

As Sri Yukteshwar says, *Love is God*, is not merely poetic sentiment but eternal truth, enshrined in our scriptures. Whatever may be our religion or creed, whatever may be our position in society, if we properly cultivate this ruling principle planted by Nature in our hearts, we are sure to be on the path of right behaviour, free from Mayic delusion & suffering.

As the great Adi Shankaracharya says:-

“Life is always unsafe and unstable like a drop of water on a lotus leaf. The company of a divine personage, even for moment, can save and redeem us.”

We have talked about right behaviour exemplified in the life of Paramahansa Yoganada. In my next article, I would like to give you examples of ordinary “mortals” like us, who triumphed on the sheer strength of knowing: how to behave.

*NS Bio: Studied Economics at St Stephen’s College & Delhi School of Economics.
Co-founder, C-Quel, a management services company. Lover of the spiritual Masters and follower in the Kriya Yoga tradition.*