

27-1-77

Bihar School of Yoga,
Monghyr, Bihar
India.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am well and happy. I took sannyas on the 24th and am now officially Swami Bhaktipoomananda Saraswati. Twenty-one people took sannyasa and one left the day after!

I have not received the money I asked you to send. Please send it quickly.

Work changes continually here. I am now writing receipts and entering registers as well as doing affiliation work.

We have just finished folding by hand 120,000 forms of the monthly magazines "Yoga & Yoga Vidya" (Hindi). It is the first issue and we have been working evernight on it. (Swamiji is going to get a ~~fold~~ folding machine because otherwise we'll never get any other books published.)

The ashram has had another floor built on the main building. Indian construction is incredible. The scaffolding is bamboo and the ladders are bamboo. Both are tied together with

coconut rope. The men and women climb these ladders carrying 11 and 9 bricks (respectively) on their heads. All the bags of stones, cement, etc. are carried likewise. They finished the building in two months. Indian workers start about 7 am and finish about 6 pm and are paid between 7 and 9 rupees per day. In buying power it is about \$6 to \$8 (in Australian currency 70c-90c).

I don't think I told you last letter about the hot springs. We went to them on the 9th. They are hot rivers or maybe you'd call the creeks or streams. The further up you go the hotter they get. The last pool we went to was so hot that you couldn't bear it for more than 2 or 3 minutes. It is in a nature reserve not far from Monghyr.

Indian culture is very different but very practical and beautiful. The country is very much like Australia except very flat. The people waste nothing. They have the ultimate in recycling. Paper, cardboard, old tyres, everything is used and used again. The ashes from the fire are taken by the villagers and they sort through for little pieces of coal. All the old bottles are kept and used.

The poor use all the good things the rich throw out.

I am learning Hindi and when I know Hindi I'm going to learn Spanish (they're quite a few South Americans here). There are people from many places here, Switzerland, Sweden, France, South America (Colombia, Brazil), New Zealand, U.S.A; many Australians and India of course. I am going to learn as many languages as possible. I already know some Spanish words.

It is about quarter to nine (p.m) and I have just finished issuing receipts and entering the register. I enjoy work here.

I am practicing the flute for at least half an hour a day, (the keys are leaking and it's falling apart) and I'm learning to write and read Hindi + Sanskrit. The lifestyle here is simple and beautiful. Menghys is a country town and relatively quiet (except we are about twenty yards from the ~~roads~~ train track). The general feeling is not tense like in a large city.

Sannyasa is a beautiful way of life. That is all it is, a lifestyle. You don't have to practise ~~asana~~ postures or meditate. It is just a simple way of life, a very free way. There are no

ties to wife or husband, children or responsibilities for another persons welfare, yet there is responsibility in doing your own duty. it is good in the sense that you can make mistakes, not do your duty properly and yet not effect other peoples welfare. That way you learn to be responsible and to act sensibly without harming or interfering with other peoples lives. If you want to come and go from the ashram when you like or dislike it you can, but to do it to your husband or wife would cause harm to them. In the ashram you can only harm yourself. It is a process which teaches you to be very responsible, like Swamiji, and to be able to take care of many peoples welfare, as he does, without the drawbacks of guilt from failure, and ties to people which bring out feelings of failure.

Swamiji says that when you don't know how to drive, you hire a driver until you have learnt, likewise when you don't know how to control your mind, you hire someone elses mind until you learn self-discipline, and Swamiji is an excellent driver. He is prepared to take on that task, to discipline ~~to~~ someone elses mind, to take care of their welfare while they learn how to do it themselves.

Swamiji uses ~~to~~ the abilities of his disciples to the ~~up~~ utmost. He brings out the best in people, uses all these talents. There are people here who write articles all day, others who draw, people working in so many different types of jobs. No wastage.

I am beginning to ramble on too much and I've just found out that it's about quarter to ten (much later than I thought) so Hari Om Tat Sat.

At Swamiji's Feet

Swami Bhaktipoomananda Saraswati