



P.O. Box 55
 Ocean Shores
 NSW 2483
 Australia

Swami Niranjanananda, Mangrove Mtn. Ashram,

I have for many years been unable to give voice to a number of intensely felt issues, and have maintained silence for fear of banishment and retribution. We may be united in spirit, but sometimes separated by misunderstandings and a lack of communication. I now feel brave enough and compelled to express the following issues, with the intention of liberation from their effects, and so move on to a cleaner, clearer place.

I feel angry about the ridicule we suffered as mothers in the ashram, and the pressure to spend our time in 'higher service', at the expense of spending time with our own children.

I suspect that some of the \$30,000 or so that I contributed over the years (trusting that it would be used for the greater good of all) may have gone into private bank accounts, and not been used for the purpose it was intended.

I think it unethical and highly suspicious that a handful of people left the ashram with the means to immediately set themselves up with property, house, car etc., while others who left had nothing.

I feel angry about the code of silence (see nothing, say nothing.....especially if it's negative) and think this is at the root of the mess which nearly brought an end to the ashram. Hence this letter.

I feel resentment that my daughter APN [redacted] was sent to 5 different schools in 2 years during the whole fiasco. It has been shown that children moving schools frequently have literacy problems, and she has.

I feel sickened and believe that as a direct consequence of that mess surrounding Swami Akhandananda, SHISHY [redacted] Negative publicity on the radio, TV and newspapers added to her feeling ashamed of her association with the ashram, so she pretended to her school friends that she was not a part of it, even while still living there. She was denying an integral part of her life just to survive day-to-day life and interaction with the outside world. Not only had her peer support vanished, but there was no other support forthcoming from the ashram in Australia, or India. The conflict and tension she experienced was too much for her to bear.

I felt abandoned to sort these problems out by myself, and that the support I gave the organisation was not returned to me or my daughter when it was needed.

I feel unappreciated for the effort of staying behind at Mangrove to try and hold the place together and help patch up some of the mess, when people were leaving in droves. Especially when it turned out to be at the expense of my daughter's welfare. I would appreciate acknowledgment for this sacrifice.

I now feel doubly unappreciated from the recent expulsion from membership of the ashram. The ashram brings up in me strong feelings of abandonment. I feel used and somewhat abused. And still the attitude appears to remain, that we give and continue to give in the name of service to Guru. I have no objection to service to Guru, having spent a good many years in it, both within and without the ashram. I continue to teach yoga, independently and at my own expense. An example; We were requested to submit artworks and designs last year for screen printed T-shirts and a backdrop for the stage. So we spent several days researching, designing and finally sending artwork. After some time and because we had not had a response, we made contact, only to be told that they had changed their minds and somebody else was going to do it now! If anybody conducted their business out here in the big wide world like that they wouldn't stay in business for very long! I consider that rude and abusive,

especially in the name of service to Guru. It costs nothing to show respect and consideration, and would certainly encourage me, and probably others, to continue to give, even in spite of the lofty ideal of giving without expectation of reward. I'm talking about civilised behaviour and don't subscribe to the notion that the lack of it is a spiritual virtue.

I suspect that no one wants to hear this or know about it, as it's 'negative'! Just like the week at Mangrove when all the poorna sannyasins were there, warts and all. 'Negative' was the way somebody from Mangrove described it. Nobody wants to be negative but if the crap's there what can you do? We are all a part of it in some way and we all want to fix it in another way. We are all interconnected, but separate ourselves with our misunderstandings and insecurities, which cause us to identify with one group (spiritually superior, dare I say) or the other, the negative influence. So, what do we do to heal this negativity? I was at the Havan which helped (thank you Swami Niranjan), and I do my sadhana and sing nearly every day. I teach yoga and live a clean simple and conservative life. I have a strong sense of duty and service and I'm not a bad person, and yet the problem still remains. So that's why I'm writing this letter. I want to let go and move on. But I risk having the 'negative' label slapped on me for it too. I'm burning my bridges in the pursuit of peace and healing.

And finally I feel really pissed off that I've never been to India, because I deserve to go! I can't quite take the big leap of putting myself in debt for a few thousand dollars, secure in the knowledge that swamiji will take care of everything, given the preceding explanation/experiences.

I feel hurt and angry because I worked very hard for a good many years (at my daughter's expense) making major physical and financial contributions to the ashram. I left to try and provide a safe, secure environment for my daughter and attempt to somehow find a solution on my own, because there was no other option. In so doing I/we (all three of us) forfeited our eligibility to go to India. Bad luck eh? Yes, but it still pisses me off.

This has NOTHING to do with yoga. It has to do with me and my mending. With the resurgence or new wave of yoga interest, it might also shed some light on the kinds of things that could happen again if we don't learn from our mistakes. I also hope we are not like the babies who were thrown out with the bath water. It's hard to know what our status is or where we fit in these days. Still, this stuff really all belongs in the realm of organisation, and luckily we are all much bigger than that, aren't we....?

APY

Would you please make
this available for
people to read? ॐ

P.O. Box 55,
Ocean Shores,
2483.

12 Nov. '95.

Dear Swamis,

Circumstances have necessitated
a self initiated process which I call
'Kunjai on paper.' I am sending a copy
for you to read (if you want), to
Viranjan + the relevant contents to
Akhandananda.

I don't expect a response, as
the act of sending this has its own
therapeutic effect.

Yours in Yoga,

APY

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