Baba Taught an Ancient Path
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After reading the article "Privatizing Public Domain Yoga Terms" [Nov., 1990] which discusses the inappropriateness of copyrighting ancient spiritual terminology for the exclusive use of one organization. I felt compelled to set the record straight. I became a disciple of Swami Muktananda in 1969 and remained with him until his passing in 1982. After his death, I remained in his South Fallsburg ashram for another 3[?] years before leaving.

During those years with Baba I served in the administrative department and as a manager of his ashram. Having worked closely with him for many years, I want to assure you that it was never Baba's intention to exclusively appropriate yogic and other spiritual terms for his own use. The purpose of trade marking certain terms was simply to assure the Siddha Yoga Dham of America Foundation (SYDA) of their ongoing use.

Baba always taught that Siddha Yoga is an ancient path, that there have been many Siddhas in the past and will be in the future. Anyone who knew Baba, or has studied his writings would see the foolishness of taking the stance that certain terms belong to one particular group.

Your article quotes the trustees of SYDA as saying they are protecting the purity and integrity of Swami Muktananda's teachings. But what about the disciples of Swami Muktananda who are not part of the current SYDA? Will they be taken to court for using his name, the mantra which he gave them or other terms taught by him?

"Mysterious are the ways of karma." Only twelve days after penning the above, I received a telephone call from a SYDA lawyer. I've known this lawyer for many years, having met him while I was living in the ashram. He informed that I was infringing on SYDA's trademark rights by my use of "Siddha Yoga Meditation" in a local magazine ad. He told me to stop using it. He also said that he would send me a list of other terms which were trademarked by SYDA.

In my conversation with him I questioned SYDA's right for the exclusive use of this and any other yogic terms, but he assured me that SYDA did have that right. I told him that as a disciple of Swami Muktananda I also had the right, and the duty, to teach exactly what Baba had taught me, and I therefore had no intention of stopping or changing my practice.

After speaking to the lawyer, I recalled a quote from an article Baba once wrote on Siddha Yoga: "...The original founder of Siddha Yoga was Lord Shiva himself, the one who created this entire universe. Supreme Shiva, when he created the cosmos, also created Siddha Yoga to give happiness, to give joy, to give love and freedom, and to make people free from fear...Even though the shakti of this yoga came down to me from Guru Nityananda, it really belongs neither to Muktananda nor Nityananda...Although I am giving you the touch I received from him, that touch is not mine, it's his. I only work for him" (Baba magazine Summer, 1967).

We, as disciples of Swami Muktananda, should learn true humility as taught by Baba's own life, rather than wasting our time proclaiming this is mine, or that belongs to me. I pray to Baba that he continue guiding us in making appropriate decisions in life.

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