

[Two Disciples Pilgrimage To Holy Land With Gurudeva For Sannyas Diksha](#)

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## Two Disciples Pilgrimage To Holy Land With Gurudeva For Sannyas Diksha

Years of Training to Culminate in Sri Lanka And India with Initiation into Monasticism

A small gathering of devotees offered their aloha and farewells Hawaiian-style at the Honolulu International Airport, garlanding Master Subramuniya and his two monastic disciples, Muni Natarajan and Selva Tinnan, as they prepared to fly to the Orient. The three pilgrims left Hawaii on Monday, May 5th, for Tokyo, the first leg of a journey that will take them through Japan, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand.

A day earlier Gurudeva met in Honolulu with the weekly Satsang Group, discoursing spiritedly on a rainbow of topics which included the imminent journey to Hinduism's Holy Lands, the future of Hinduism in the West, the need for ministers and missionaries for the Hindu Churches of America and the meaning of the Holy Orders of Sannyas which his two disciples would soon take. He explained that the two monastics had been under vows and disciplines as sadhaka for several years - nine years for Muni Natarajan and seven years for Selva Tinnan - and that the extensive preparations, challenges and qualifications for Sannyas had been admirably met by both, making them eligible to receive Holy Orders of Sannyas. These Holy Orders constitute the lifetime vows of the Hindu monk or swami, entering them into a brotherhood of men who have renounced the world in search of and service to Lord Siva. Master explained that this was a great moment, for Hinduism depends upon the strength, the service and the selflessness of those few who are drawn at an early age to abdicate a personal life in the world and dedicate themselves to the two great objectives of a renunciate monastic - realization of the Absolute, Parasivam, and full-time service to Hinduism. He further explained that our Order, the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order, maintains the strict traditional principles of the Sannyasin as a servant of the servants of the Lord: "When the Swamis of our religion come to the West, they are often persuaded, especially by the Americans, to become the ministers and priests, the rabbis and counselors, of their devotees. This is the pattern in the American Church, and it is perhaps a natural mistake for Americans to make. Still, it is a mistake. The Hindu Swami is not a minister. He is a man of God who has relinquished the world. It is unfortunate that he is made to involve himself in the personal problems of those who gather

around him, to again become immersed in the world which he renounced when he had his head shaved and was given his orange robes. Instead of speaking of God, he is asked for his advice on business affairs, on divorce and on social or even political issues. One day it will be realized what is lost by drawing these contemplative men into worldliness, and devotees will go to them for inner reasons and for spiritual teachings, trusting those trained in the external world to guide external affairs. When that happens, devotees will be drawn within by these men of the spirit rather than drawing them out into secular matters, and the Swamis of our religion will be able to serve as the exemplars, the unworldly wise teachers of temple worship, of scripture and of meditation." Gurudeva was initiated in Sri Lanka by the august Siva Yogaswami on the full moon day of May in 1949. In past years others among the Swamis of the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order have been initiated in Sri Lanka or on the River Ganges near the Himalayas.

It may prove helpful to have some background in Sannyas for our readers. There are traditionally two forms of Sannyas in Hinduism. The first is for unmarried men who are formally initiated into monasticism at a young age, and the second comes for householders in the last ashrama or stage of life - usually around seventy-two when family and societal obligations have been concluded - when the world is renounced and life is given entirely to Godly pursuits. We will delineate the first form of Sannyas. The word Sannyas is from the Sanskrit root which means 'to throw down' or 'to abandon,' and a Sannyasin is a Hindu monk, one who renounces the world. According to scriptural authority, training and preparation for Sannyas should commence before his twenty-fifth birthday, and in our Order those who begin their training with Master Subramuniya after this age serve as sadhaka rather than as Sannyasins. Once qualified, the candidate gives away all of his worldly wealth and possessions. On an auspicious day he is initiated by his Guru in a sacramental ceremony known as Sannyas Diksha. Diksha is a Sanskrit word for initiation. During this ceremony his head is shaved, certain specific spiritual instructions are given by the Guru and he receives the kavi or saffron robes which are the royal insignia of the Sannyasin. The new Swami takes three vows which he solemnly swears to abide by for the rest of his life. The first vow is known in Tamil as Ahatturavu - the Sacred Vow of Renunciation. It is the surrendering of the limited identity of the ego that the soul may soar to the very depth of soul may soar to the very depth of impersonal Being. It is repudiation of worldly involvements and karmas, and thus it includes poverty and simplicity as opposed to affluence and ramification in life. The Sannyasin owns nothing in this world, not even the robes he is given to wear. The second vow is the Sacred Vow of Obedience, known in Tamil as Tallvu Ennum Tanmai. It is a pledge to follow the traditional ways of the Sahatana Dharma and the specific directions of the Sat Guru, not blindly and without thought, but with well-considered personal conviction. It implies obedience to one's own conscience, to scripture, to God and the Gods. The third vow is Tirikarannasutti, the Sacred Vow of Purity. As defined in this vow, purity is of body, mind and action - or thought, word and deed. It is a vow

to remain continent throughout life, to live simply and naturally, to protect the mind from worldly influences such as deceit, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger, pride, covetousness and so forth. It includes a pledge to observe ahimsa or non-violence even in thought, to speak truthfully and to eat a vegetarian diet. For our Sannyasins, these vows, collectively called "The Holy Orders of Sannyas," are published and formally signed when the candidate is qualified. A separate ceremony held later enters the Sannyasin into the Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order.

In the Saivite tradition Sannyasins may be cenobites or anchorites; that is, they may live alone as wandering sadhus and pilgrims in secluded hermitages or in a monastic community with others in saffron robes. Sannyasins in our Order follow this latter pattern, forming a monastic brotherhood. Our Order is most strict in its commitment to bring the ancient heritage of Sannyas into the modern world, and considers it unfortunate that the lofty and sometimes stringent ideals and principles of the Saiva Sannyasin have been either abandoned or abused.

Such practices as giving Sannyas without qualification or commitment and initiating those who are not even Hindus is contrary to our heritage and scripture. Sannyas, it must be known, is Hindu monasticism, and Sannyasins, Swamis, are the defenders and promulgators of the Sanatana Dharma. They err who consider Sannyas as a non-religious or yogi path which somehow supersedes Hinduism. The Swami is by his very nature a Hindu, just as the rabbi is necessarily a Jew and the bishop is a Catholic. Thus, non-Hindus truthfully cannot be Swamis; and all true Swamis are religious exemplars of their Hindu faith. That is not to say that non-Hindus cannot become renunciates in the truest sense, only that they must do so within the context of their own religion. Thus we look to these two novitiate Swamis to be the pillars of the Sanatana Dharma and the disseminators of the illumined teachings of our Siva Yogaswami Guru Paramparai, and call upon them to uphold our religion with strength and courage, defending it against all who would infiltrate, dilute and destroy.

The love and good thoughts of the New Saivite World go with our Gurudeva, Muni and Selva as they traverse our Holy Land from the Himalayas in the North to beloved Siva Yogaswami's Lanka in the South entering the sacred shrines of Lord Siva. We close with a few quotes on renunciation from our Paramaguru and scripture:

Best of Sannyasins, of one-pointed mind,

Morning and evening worship

Without fail the Holy Feet

Of the Almighty Lord

Who here and hereafter

Preserves and safeguards three

Cast aside the fetters of thy sins!

By steadfast concentration of thy mind

Awareness of a separate self

Thou must extirpate.

Conquer with love all those

That censure thee

Thou art eternal! Have no doubt of this!

What is not thou is fancy's artiface.

Formless thou art!

Then live from all thought free!

Natchintanai 228

The Scriptures exalt

Above every other good

The greatness

Of virtuous renunciates.

Holy Kural/Verse 21

Who indeed overcomes maya?

He who gives up all attachment,

Who serves the great ones,

And who is freed from

The sense of "I" and "mine,"

He who lives in solitude,

Cuts through the bondages of this world,

Goes beyond the three gunas,

And depends on the Lord

Even for his living,

He who gives up the fruits of his actions,

Renounces all selfish activity,

Passes beyond the pairs of opposites

And attains unfaltering love for God -

Such a man, indeed, crosses this maya

And helps others to cross it.

Narada's Bhakti Sutras/Verses 46-50

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