

Jyotirmath Lineage

Well, I think I'm in a better position than just about anyone to summarize the known facts concerning Swami Brahmanand's untimely demise. I've read all the pertinent published literature, which I have cited, with copious footnotes, and I've interviewed three direct disciples of Brahmanand Saraswati, one that is still living, Swami Prakashanand Saraswati, who lives at Barsana Dham, one of the largest Hindu temples outside India, which is about a mile from my house.

In contrast, nobody else has referenced any published works, named no witnesses, or even spoken to the most famous living disciple. In my opinion, Perino and Vaj are perpetuating political rumors and posting misinformation. There's no evidence that Mahesh Yogi, in a conspiracy with the Jyotirmath ashram cook, murdered Brahmanand by putting poison in his food when he was at Calcutta. That's preposterous on its face!

I wonder, where, exactly, do they get their information?

I'm still waiting for anyone (and Professor Sawyer) to post a list of works cited. Please post any references to books, newspapers articles, reports, discussions on the internet - any source that would support your position.

The facts:

In fact, there is no real Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath because that lineage was extinct. The following exchange, which appeared on Usenet and on Yahoo! FairfieldLife:

Full text available here:

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<http://tinyurl.com/rzm7t>

My thanks go to Dana Sawyer of Maine College of Art, who kindly shared with me the results of his field studies and interviews. See also his article, "Monastic Structure of Banarsi Dandi Sadhus" in Living Banaras: Hindu Religion in Cultural Context, ed. Hertel, Bradley R. and Cynthia Humes, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, and his forthcoming publication(s) on the Dandi Sadhus.

So Kindly You Say!

Apparently, the Swami Prakashanand Saraswati gave Robert Kropinsky a 'letter of introduction' in order to get an audience with the Swami Swaroopanand at Guru Dev's oldest living desciple birthday celebration in Brindaban. But, when the Swami Swaroop finds out that the Swami Prakash hosted a recent VHP-America event, the Swaroop may wise up to the Prakash's game.

For sure the Prakash won't be invited to any more birthday party celebrations at the Swaroops's house! The Swaroop is opposed to the VHP and considers that rascally outfit to be nothing less than a gang of terrorists and radical extremists. I have spoken to the Maharaj Swami and he confirm this story.

So, how, exactly, do you become a 'former' disciple of Swami Ji Brahmannda, anyway? By visiting other saints, and gurus, perhaps?

That figures - when you go visiting other Saints like the Swami Prakashanand did, you probably feel like bashing your former guru - you are a case in point. In some other cases, the term 'former disciple' says it all, you know what I mean?

The 'former disciples' of Guru Dev, except the Swami Swaroopanand, are all sock-puppits for the RSS - that's common knowledge. What the Swami Swaroopanand was doing associating with those miscreants who support the VHP is beyond me - Swaroop favors the Congress Party and is staunchly opposed to your pals and their nefarious plans to turn India into a religious, fundamentalist, Hindutva state.

There are probably two or three former disciples of Guru Dev Ji still alive today - what's important is what the *current* disciples in the disciplic lineage of Swami Brahmananda have to say.

It is a fact that the Swami Swaroopanand and the Swami Prakashanand are no longer in the disciplic line of Guru Dev, having gone over to adopt the teachings of other saints, babas, and gurus. Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati is currently the *sole representative Guru Dev's lineage*, according to Vidyasankar Sundaresan. Vasudevananda was present at the appointment of a Mahamandaleswara of the Mahanirvani Akhada in 1995, according to Hinduism Today.

"Only the lineage of Vasudevananda (through Santananda) can be traced directly to Brahmananda, without any interruptions." - Vidyasankar Sundaresan

There is some very distressing facts related to the Swami Prakashanand. For example, the Swami Prakash, apparently, went to Jyotirmath, in 1950, and claims to have been initiated there. By whom I would ask? Apparently, Guru Dev wasn't even at Jyotirmath in the year 1950, according to Raj Varma, but was on tour in South India!

Prakash also makes the claim of having been 'offered the seat of the Jyotirmath' in 1952 by a committee of pundits down in Kashi - a full year before Guru Dev's untimely demise. That would have been news to Guru Dev, who only passed away in 1953!

That would have really been something - a Shankaracharya who was only 22 years old, who had been a Sannyasi for less than a year, and who had been in the presence of Guru Dev for probably a total of thirty minutes in his whole life. Sounds like something a stupid committee of politically motivated pundits down in Kashi would come with.

According to Mr. Sundaresan, "...although he was initiated into Sannyasa by Brahmananda Saraswati, his personal religious philosophy is Acintya Bhedabheda, associated with Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Gaudiya Vaishnavas. This leads me to seriously suspect his claim of having been offered the Sankaracharya post."

It is a fact that the Kashi Vidvat Parishad has attempted to place a political puppet on the Jyotirmath seat on at least two separate occasions after Guru Dev's passing - Swami Krishnabodha and Swami Swaroopanad. Mr. Sundaresan notes "...the Kashi Vidvat Parishad and the Akhila Bharatiya Dharmasangha have tried to exercise a right over Jyotirmath for the third time."

However, there is one undisputed fact - neither Swaroopanand nor Prakashanand's name was listed in Guru Dev's will. Another fact, is that in the Kropinsky interview Swami Swaroopanand does not deny the validity of Guru Dev's will. In fact, "...none of the civil suits in this dispute seems to have been framed in terms of contesting the legal bona fides of Brahmananda's will" according to Mr. Sundaresan.

Fact is, a new lawsuit was filed, on the grounds that according to Brahmananda's will, Dwarakesananda Saraswati should have been appointed in case Santananda stepped down! Thus, states Mr. Sundaresan, "...notwithstanding what was privately thought about the will and its legitimacy, its terms were co-opted, as a strategy to displace Vishnudevananda."

However, it is not a fact that Guru Dev ordered the Brahmacharya Mahesh to do anything, much less to 'go up to a mountain and never come down'. Someone made that up - probably Joyce Collin-Smith. However, the mere fact that the Brahmacharya Mahesh was called by Guru Dev, who was on his deathbed, says a lot about who Guru Dev favored, does it not?

Apparently, the Brahmacharya Mahesh was with with Guru Dev at his passing, but I don't know how *you* or anyone else would know what Guru Dev said just before he attained Mahasamadhi. But, I doubt that a Saint like Guru Dev would concern himself with the doings of mere clerk, would he? In point of fact, Mahesh Yogi used to be Brahmananda Saraswati's 'secretary', according to my sources - so it would be perfectly logical for Guru Dev to call for Mr. Mahesh.

In point of fact, Guru Dev had composed a will over 2 years previously and had it registered in Allahabad. But that's beside the point because Guru Dev's death was considered untimely, brought on by natural causes, according to the attending physician and the coroner's report. If true, Guru Dev would hardly be calling a clerk, in the middle of dying, in order to tell the clerk not to teach anything or go anywhere!

Besides, how a 'mere clerk' would come to be sitting beside a dying Saint and carrying out his last instructions doesn't make much sense unless Mahesh Yogi was much more than a clerk. It certainly boggles the mind to imagine how a low-level clerk could somehow get an audience with a fully-realized Saint sitting on his deathbed, then somehow get hold of Guru Dev's physical body, wrestle it away from all the other Ashram inmates, put it on a train, and make all the arrangements for the national funeral down in Kashi, then get Guru Dev's last will and testament out of the Jyotirmath Trust at the National

Bank, where it was registered, and then go about installing the successor to the Shankaracharya Seat, according to a forged will. That's a real stretch for a mere clerk!

That is, unless Mahesh Yogi was much more than a mere clerk for thirteen years. Apparently, Brahmacharya Mahesh was the Administrator of the Jyotirmath Ashram Trust and it was the Brahmacharya Mahesh who made all the arrangements for Guru Dev's tours and yagyas. That's not surprising to me in light of what Mahesh Yogi has been able to accomplish for his own program, and that was starting from scratch!

Never let it be said that Maharishi doesn't know how to organize a yoga camp! Apparently, it was the Brahmacharya who was instrumental in introducing the President of India to Guru Dev. There's a famous photo of Brahmacharya Mahesh standing next to the President of India - quite a feat for a mere clerk, don't you think?

Maybe Brahmacharya Mahesh went to the Upper Kashi in order to relax and enjoy. After all, thirteen years is a long time to be sitting at someone's feet, even if they were a Saint, you know what I mean?

Maybe Guru Dev didn't 'command' anyone to do anything - who knows? It hasn't been established that Guru Dev Ji commanded Brahmacharya Mahesh to go into isolation - but it's obvious, at least to me, that Brahmacharya Mahesh was probably the only person alive who could keep up with the demands of serving such a dynamic teacher as Guru Dev was!

I wasn't there of course, but it seems to me that Brahmacharya Mahesh was distrustful of some of the other disciples, and with good reason. Imagine what would have happened if the Swami Prakash had been appointed and accepted to the Jyotirmath seat by that committee - you'd have a quasi-dualistic rasavada proponent sitting on the seat of the non-dualist Shankaracharya. Now that would be a topsy-turvey chain of events! It's no wonder that the Mahesh Yogi was eager to fulfill the stipulations in Guru Dev's will right away.

In the case of the Shankaracharya it is the usual custom to follow the succession. According to Mr. Sundaresan, "...once Swami Brahmananda Saraswati was accepted as the Jyotirmath Sankaracharya, and there were no serious disputes about it at the time, further activities of these other institutions with respect to succession issues could be construed as unnecessary interference." I fully agree with this, but you obviously do not.

You are floating - this 'committee' of pundits has appointed no Shankaracharya to any seat, ever. Pundit committees do not appoint Saints, least of all do they declare a nobody to be a 'jagadguru', a teacher to the world, over and above the other four Jagadgurus, namely Puri, Dwarka, Sringeri and Jyotirmath.. Get a grip!

"A few centuries ago, such problems would have been referred to the local king, and perhaps solved quickly. In independent India, the dispute has been taken to the secular courts, but these are quite different from the old princely durbars in their procedures and rules. The judges also lack legislative and executive authority over religious institutions, unlike the Hindu king of old days.

It seems to me that those who did not wish to acknowledge Santananda as the Sankaracharya of Jyotirmath did not sufficiently appreciate these changes in modern times, and expected the courts to accept their cultural, moral and religious arguments as legally valid. Thus, none of the civil suits in this dispute seems to have been framed in terms of contesting the legal bona fides of Brahmananda's will." - Vidyasankar Sundaresan

It's a moot point, since the Jyotirmath was vacant for 165 years or more. Who knows what happened during that time? Apparently, the Rawal (head priest) of Badrikaashram considered himself to be the Shankaracharya. Who is to say? Certainly not a committee of pundits down in Kashi!

With all due respect, you're full of it. The Bharata Dharma Mahamandala, Kashi Vidvat Parishad, and the Akhila Bharatiya Dharmasangha were all present at the installation of Guru Dev's successor, Shree Swami Shantanand Saraswati. According to The Time of India, Shantanand was installed with all due pomp and ceremony.

Apparently, Shantanand meditated for over an hour in a public reception. Subsequently, Shantanand was present at a number of TMO activities, the least not being the Saints Course at Ram Nagar, the ground-breaking of Shankaracharya Nagar at Rishikesh, and at the Maharishi Guru Poornima at Noida held in 1990.

According to Kropinsky, Shantanand was present at the birthday celebration of Guru Dev at Vrindavan, which you cited. It is a fact that Swami Shantanand Saraswati and his successors fully approved of the Mahesh Yogi and the TM meditation program, according to Joyce-Collin Smith and If you think that meditation is not supported by the Dasanami Sampradya founded by the Adi Shankara, you are mistaken.

FYI: "Adi Sankaracharya (8th century) is traditionally said to have established four mathas (monasteries) in India, and to have placed them under the leadership of his four chief disciples. The heads of these four and other monasteries of the Dasanami orders have come to be known as Sankaracharyas themselves, in honor of the founder. They are considered to be the leaders of the ten orders of the Dasanami Sannyasins associated with Advaita Vedanta." - Vidyasankar Sundaresan

I can't speak for anyone else, but I have responded to each and every one of your slanderous accusations - including your bald-faced lie that the Maharishi murdered Guru Dev, in a conspiracy with the ashram cook, by poisoning Guru Dev's food, while the cook was at Jyotirmath and Guru Dev was down in Calcutta. Go figure.

Once again, I have responded to your false claims and accusations.

Namaste' and have a good day!