

Swami Kripalvananda and Yogeshwar

A Short Excerpt of the Yogeshwar Muni
(Charles Berner) Slide Show featuring
Swami Kripalvananda

Available in its entirety online at

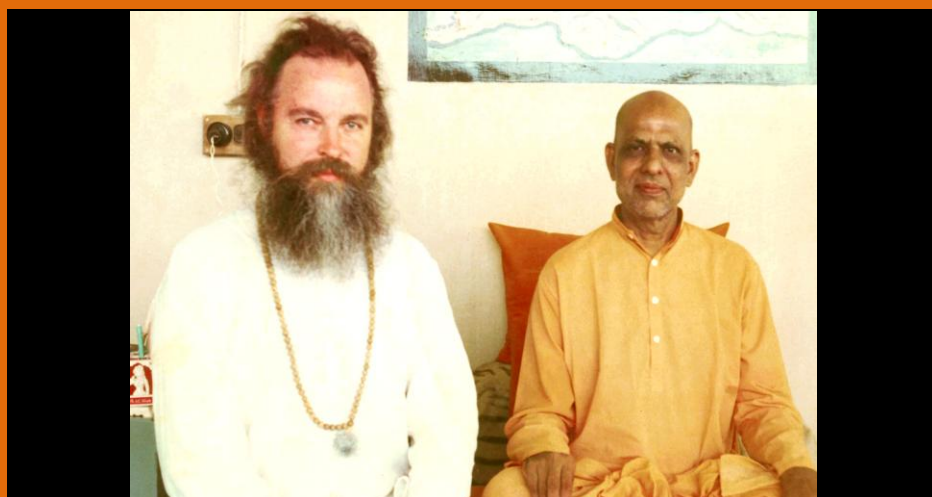
http://www.charlesberner.org/CBYM_picture_album.ppt

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Charles Berner, who was later to be given the name Yogeshwar Muni, master of yoga or divine union, found his spiritual teacher in Swami Kripalvananda. When he first saw Swami Kripalvananda, Charles, normally undemonstrative in public, began to cry. He thought, 'This is a true yogi - he's really doing it! I want to know what he knows.' On 26 October 1973, Swami Kripalvananda gave him shaktipat and initiated him into the path he himself was following, surrendering control of one's body, mind and feelings to whatever it is that is real, ultimate, divine. Swami Kripalvananda told him that this path has many names, among them, natural yoga.

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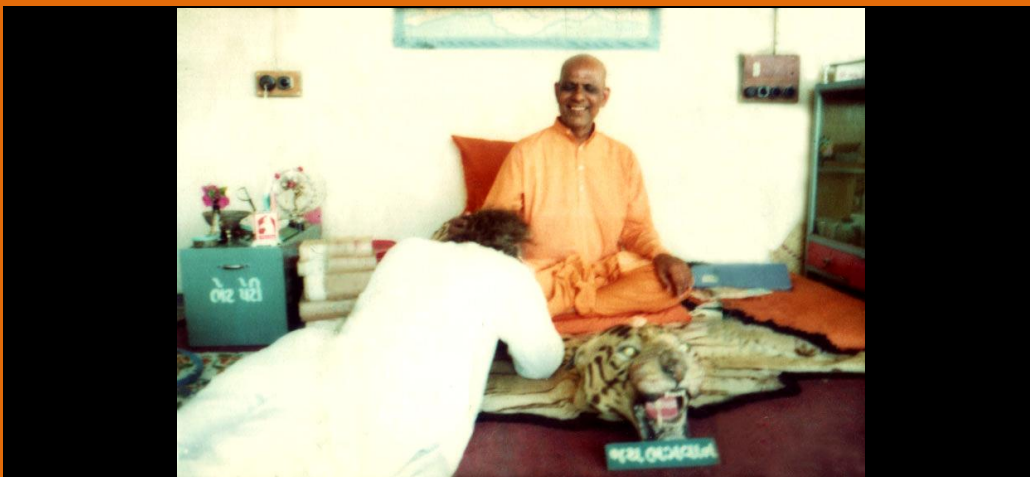
From that time on, Charles did, with rare exceptions, 8 to 10 hours of natural yoga a day. Swami Kripalvananda gave him the spiritual name Yogeshwar, 'Master

of Yoga', with the lineage title Muni, 'Sage'. This picture and all but one of the next sixteen were taken at Kayavarohana in 1974.

Yogeshwar later said, 'If we were to try to sort out what is the best way to reach full liberation, it could take a lifetime. By the time I found natural yoga, my life had been spent trying to work this out. I had finally come to the place where I had assembled about fifty different, quite excellent methods of dealing with the body and mind. I was trying to design an assessment method by which each person who came to our spiritual growth center could be directed to just the combination of techniques they needed, adjusted as their needs changed. And then one day I met my beloved spiritual teacher, Kripalu. He taught me natural yoga.

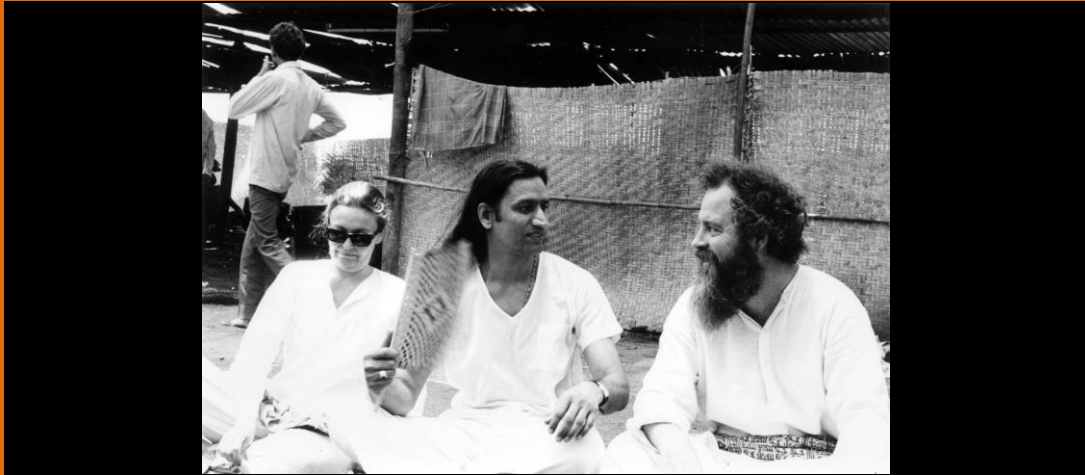
'With natural yoga all you have to do is surrender to God. And the exact thing happens to you at the exact time with the exact intensity to do exactly what is necessary for you - whether it be in your mind, your body or your feelings - to bring about the exact degree of purification you need. And the process continues naturally without any concern of asking questions or planning. What a relief! Then I thought, well, this is a Godsend!'

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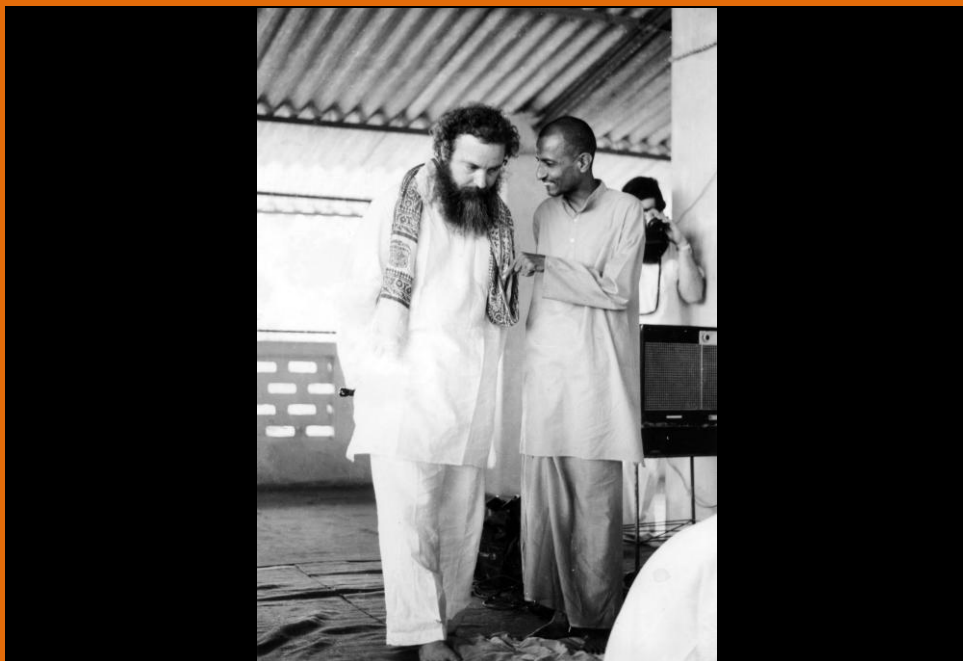
Yogeshwar said that you get the truth from God, and the one who helps you live the truth is the teacher. Yogeshwar bows to his beloved teacher and guru.

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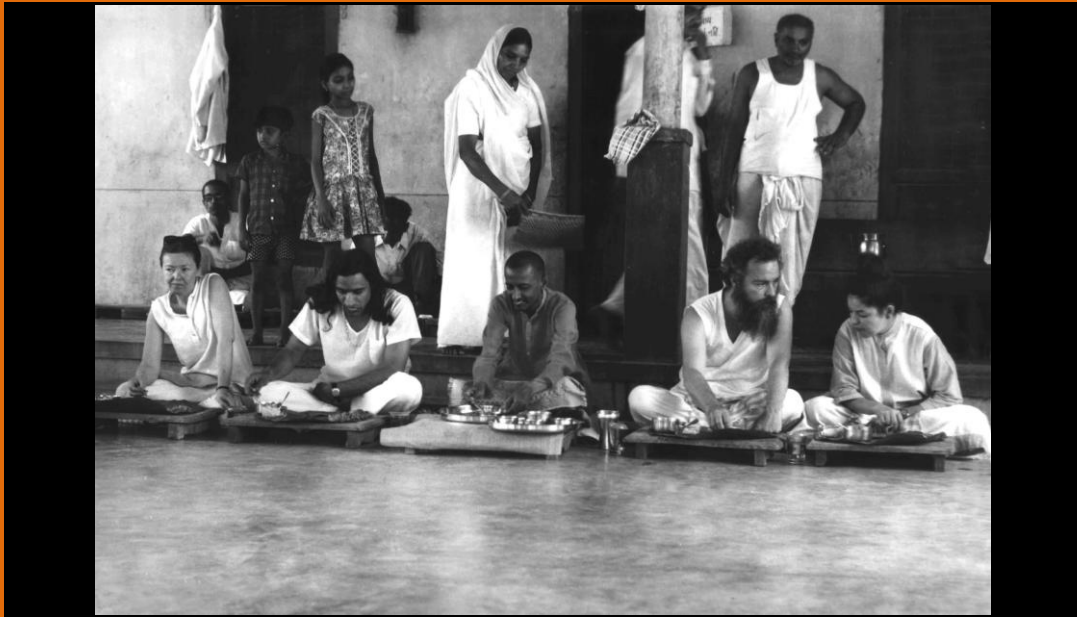
Swami Kripalvananda was the spiritual teacher and guru of Ma Om Shanti, Amrit Desai and Yogeshwar Muni. They were guru sister and brothers, 1974 India

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Guru Brothers, Yogeshwar Muni and Rajarshi Muni in India, 1974.

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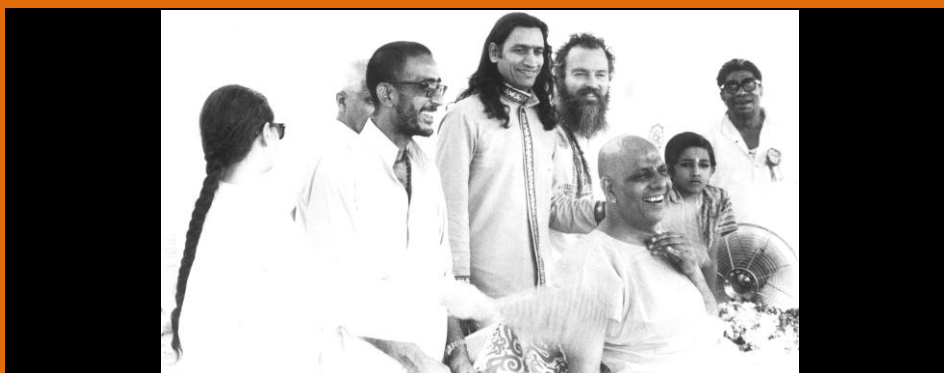
Guru Sister and Brothers: Ma Om Shanti, Amrit Desai, Rajarshi Muni, Yogeshwar Muni and Anata, devotee in India. 1974.

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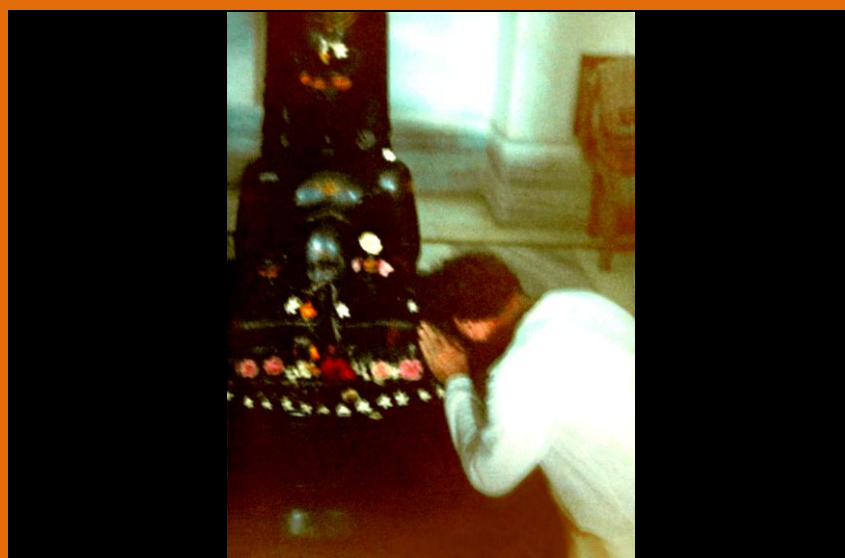
Amrit Desai, Yogeshwar Muni, Rajarshi Muni and Ma Om Shanti at a maharaja's palace in India, 1974.

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Swami Kripalvananda with Amrit Desai and Yogeshwar Muni standing behind him. It is Kripalu's 63rd birthday celebration, the day after the dedication of the Brahmeshwar Temple at Kayavarohana. Kripalu inspired the building of the temple, as a guide to yoga and to honor his guru, Lakulisha, named in various Puranas (ancient Hindu scriptural stories) as the 28th Incarnation of Shiva. Lakulisha taught only a few years after Jesus' ministry, yet he timelessly responded to Kripalu's prayer, teaching him natural yoga. Kripalu said that Lakulisha, having completed the process of yoga, is free of the illusion of time and death.

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Yogeshwar Muni is paying his respects to Lord Brahmeshwara at the Kayavarohana Temple dedication at Kayavarohana in India, 1974.

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Swami Kripalvananda leaves the temple. Yogeshwar Muni, bearded and in white, is standing to the left of the entrance.

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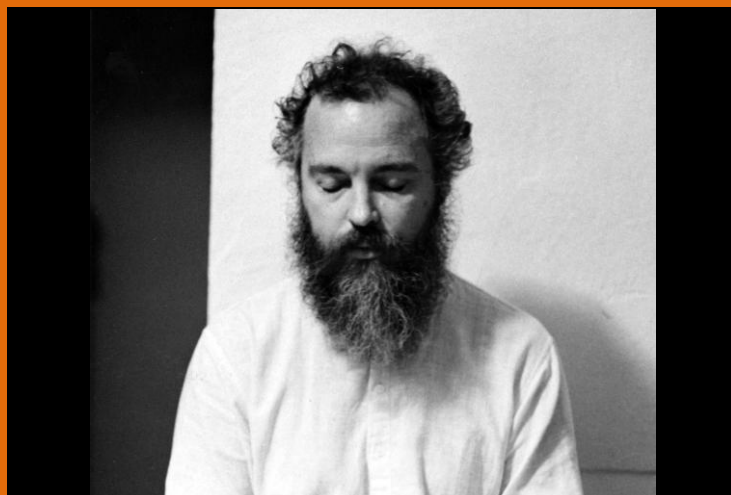
Yogeshwar Muni seated in front of the Temple entrance. Kayavarohana, India 1974

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Yogeshwar Muni pointing upward - 'Victory to God!' The flag of victory flies atop the roof of the inner sanctum (the garbha, the golden womb) where the statue of Lakulisha is installed. This is the temple that Swami Kripalvananda was commissioned to build by Lakulisha.

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A few years later Yogeshwar said, 'Humankind have been stuck with a choice between suppressing their energy or letting it take them into a wild state of frustrated attempts to fulfil their desires. In natural yoga, suppressed energy

is released and then transformed towards God. By surrender to God, by surrender to Truth, by not trying to use your mental will any longer, in the technique of natural yoga, liberation can be achieved. Your own true, divine nature comes into union with God or Truth. It is like pouring milk into milk. These two, which are both divine in nature, are in union.'

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Shaktipat Retreat 1974. Yogeshwar Muni giving a limited demonstration of letting the power of God, Shakti, run the body, mind and feelings. God's power operating in a body is called prana, the life energy. Swami Kripalvananda said that alone in one's locked meditation room; the life energy is to be released from the control of the will and given over to God. Yogeshwar asked Kripalu if anything is to be kept back and Kripalu replied, 'Yogeshwar, total freedom.'

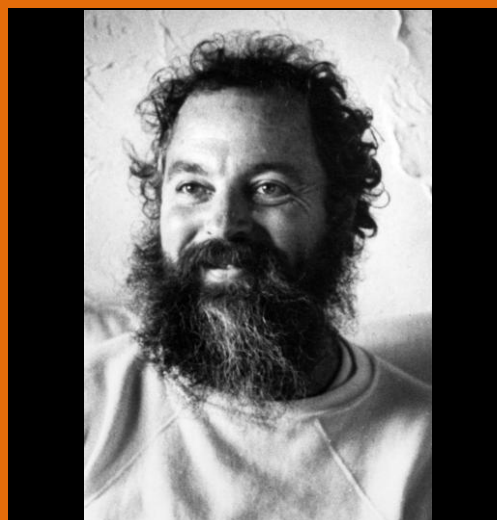
Yogeshwar said that, in shaktipat, knowing the teacher to be his well-wisher, the student receives with confidence the teacher's instruction to allow the energy of God to flow freely.

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Muni and initiated Western students (as commissioned by Swami Kripalvananda) singing to God, Earth Day, University of California at Davis, 1975.

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Lucerne Valley, CA, 1975. Around this time, Yogeshwar wrote: 'All is God. These thoughts are God. These memories are God. These feelings are God. This body is God. This world is God. These relationships are God. All is God

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Yogeshwar Muni and a group of his students in India in 1975 are on their way to see Swami Kripalvananda in Kayavarohana, India. In the above picture, they are planning to bathe at Prayaga, the confluence of three rivers: the Ganges, the Yamuna and the (central, subterranean) Sarasvati. Prayaga means 'the place of surrender to God'.

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Rajarshi Muni, Yogeshwar Muni, and Gauri Modi have satsanga (sharing of the truth) at Kayavarohana with Swami Kripalvananda in 1975. Yogeshwar said, 'In natural yoga, we release the life energy (prana) through the transmission, the gift, of the divine energy from the teacher to the student (shaktipat). That way

you have a linkage between yourself and the teacher. When something comes up, you know where to go.'

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Yogeshwar Muni took this picture of Swami Kripalvananda who said, "Aspirants of the path of cessation are taught only the technique of yoga, because by this method their evolutionary divine power (kundalini shakti) is awakened in its full and unendurable form. After that, posture, energy seal, the suspension of the life energy and other spontaneous yogic activities begin to occur in the body of their own accord; therefore, he doesn't need to learn these yogic activities from his teacher.

But this does not mean that the aspirant does not need the guidance of his teacher. This path is filled with impediments and illusions. In it, the guidance of the teacher is indispensable, like a lamp in the darkness. If the aspirant does not obtain the guidance of the truth teacher, his progress will stop. He will not be able to make this difficult journey."

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In the center, Yogeshwar Muni in white and Rajarshi Muni in orange at the Brahmeshwar Temple in Kayavarohana, India, 1975.

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Swami Kripalvananda, center in orange, with Yogeshwar Muni in white on his right and Vinit Muni in orange on his left in front of the Brahmeshwar Temple in

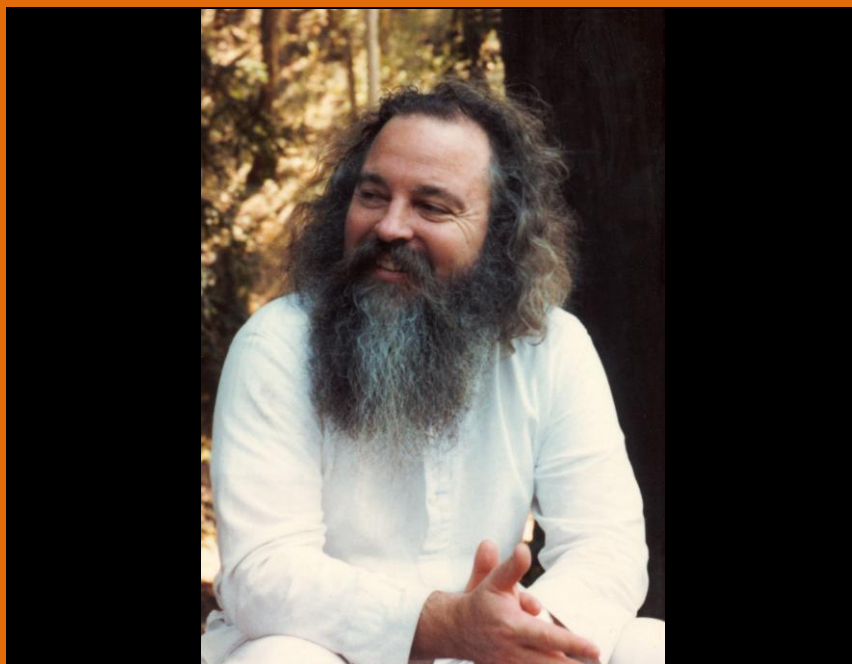
Kayavarohana, India, in 1975. Yogeshwar Muni's students surround them. The line down the center of the steps represents the central energy channel, the sushumna nadi.

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Swami Kripalvananda, Amrit Desai and Yogeshwar Muni in Malav, India in 1976. Swami Kripalvananda had never responded to his students' entreaties that he come to America; but suddenly he told Amrit and Yogeshwar he would come.

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June 1977. 'Surrender is to choose to let *God*, the Truth, or whatever you want to call it, guide what is happening in meditation to your body, your feelings, your mind, your thoughts and attention. He will lead you through the most fascinating, exciting, sometimes boring and even terrifying journey to His feet, to union with the Truth.'

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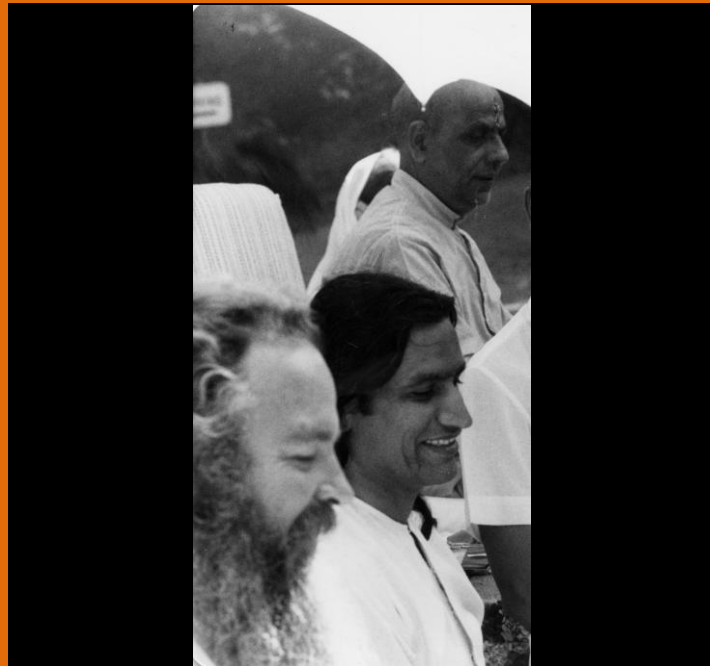
'You can tell who your spiritual teacher is by whom you follow or what you follow. If your guilty conscience says something and you do what it says, it is your teacher. If *God* tells you to do something and you do it, He is your teacher.' Yogeshwar Muni and Swami Kripalvananda in San Francisco, 1977

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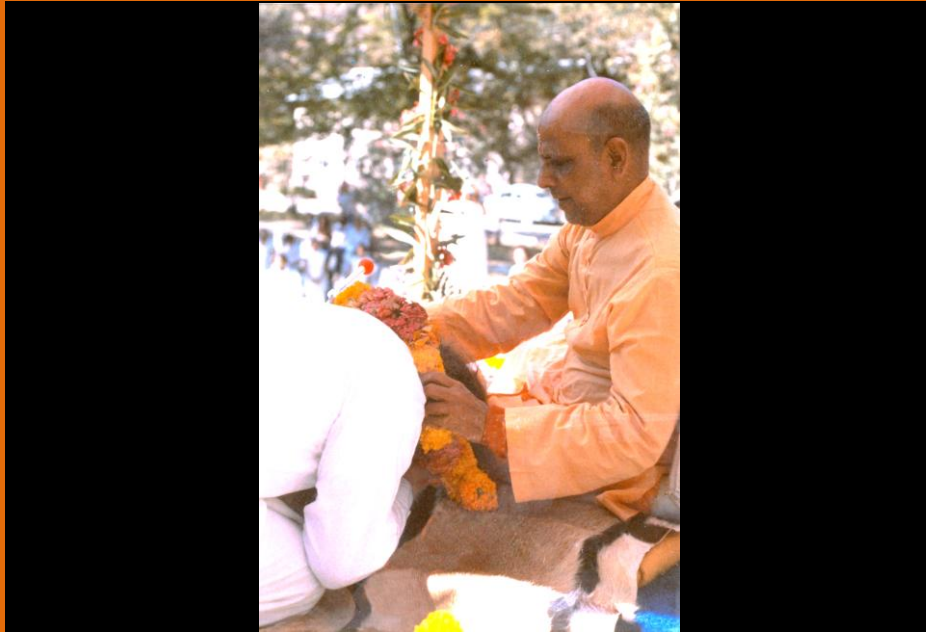
The dedication of the Rangavati Stream at Yogeshwar Muni's Ashram in Kayavarohana West, St. Helena, CA USA, August 1977. Swami Kripalvananda is getting out of the boat and his devoted disciple Yogeshwar Muni is attending him carefully.

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Swami Kripalvananda at the top, Amrit Desai in the middle and Yogeshwar Muni at the left front during the Rangavati dedication at Kayavarohana West, St. Helena, CA, August 1977.

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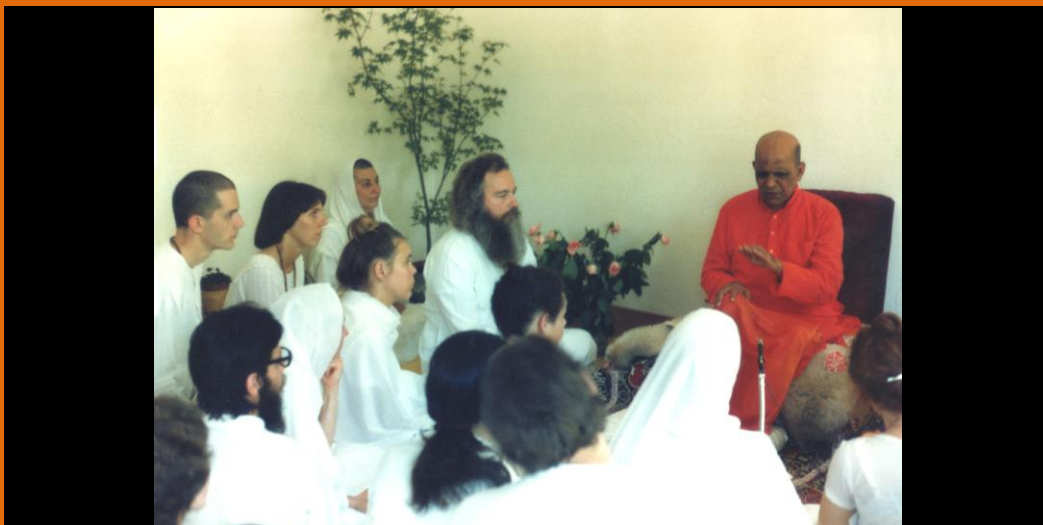
Swami Kripalvananda had been garlanded as a traditional part of the ceremony. As Yogeshwar bowed to him, Swami Kripalvananda took the used garland and garlanded Yogeshwar. This symbolic action is part of the teachings of Lakulisha given in his *Pashupata Sutram*.

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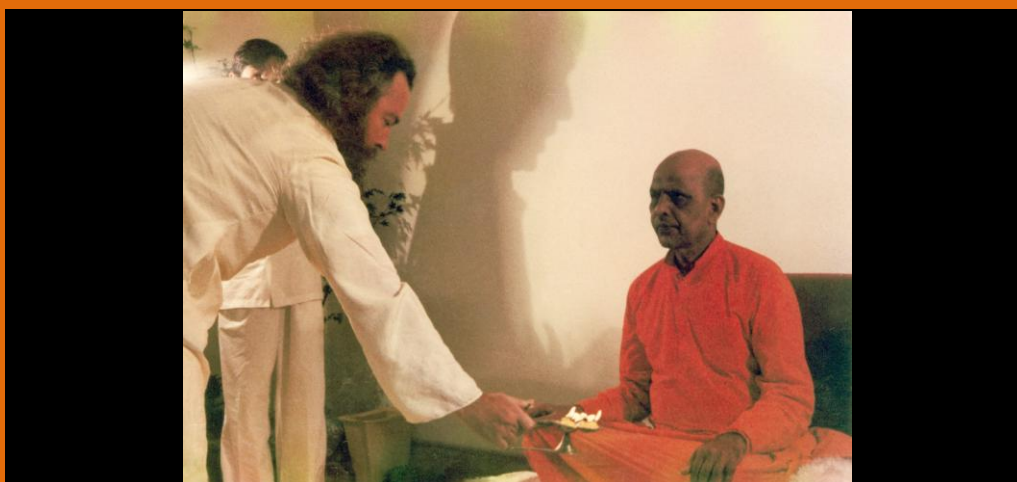
Dedication of the Rangavati, beside the stream with Swami Kripalvananda center, Yogeshwar Muni to the right, and the Hindu priest to the left.

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Swami Kripalvananda, teaching Yogeshwar Muni and his students at Shivadham ('Shiva's House') Kayavarohana West, St Helena, CA, USA, August 1977. Shivadham was named after Lakulisha, the 28th Incarnation of Shiva (Kind Dissolver), the one who dissolves illusion or impurity.

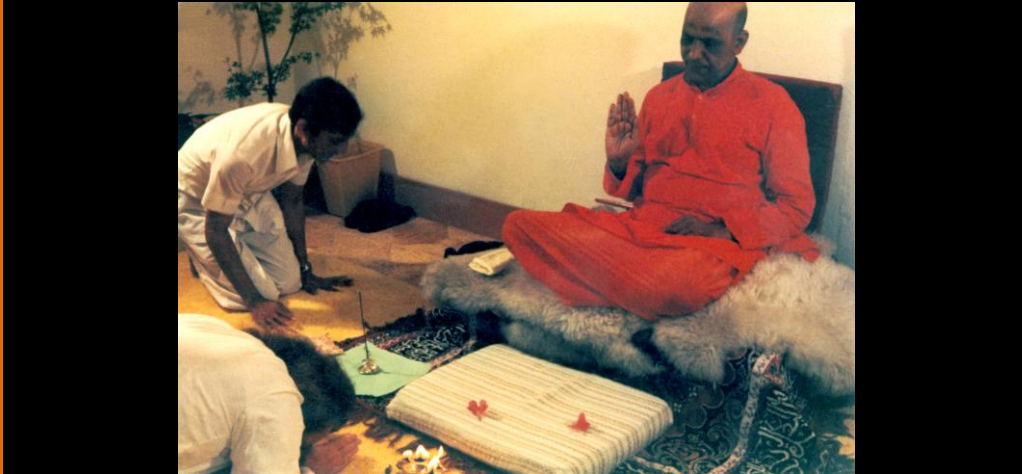
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Yogeshwar is performing the Arati Ceremony of Lights. Swami Kripalvananda explained why the defeat of death is discussed in the world's scriptures: 'The yogi (one on the liberation path) is not afraid of old age or of death. He only wants to attain liberation. He attains liberation through knowledge; he receives complete knowledge through complete purification of the body and the mind.'

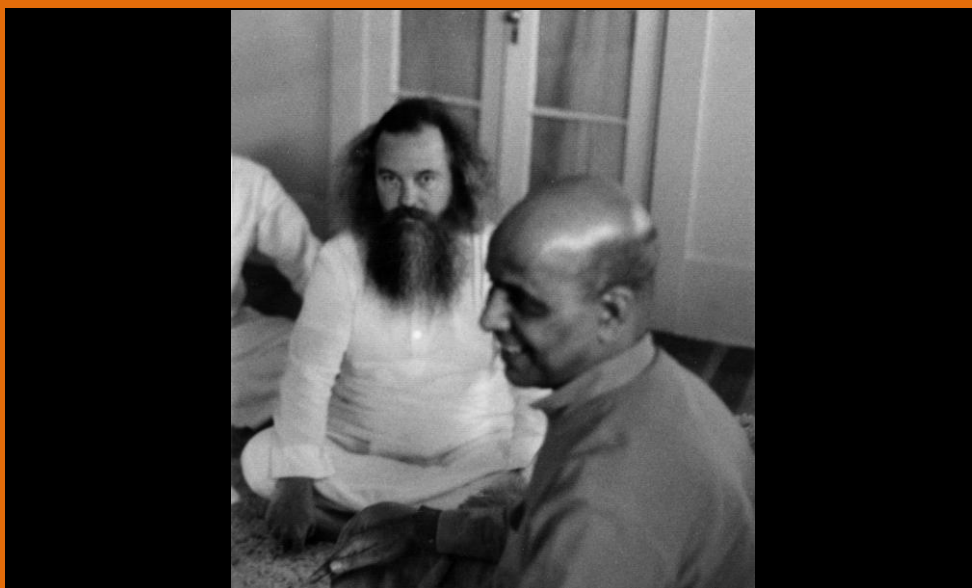
Old age and death are obstacles in the way of the achievement of liberation; so the yogi tries to overcome them.'

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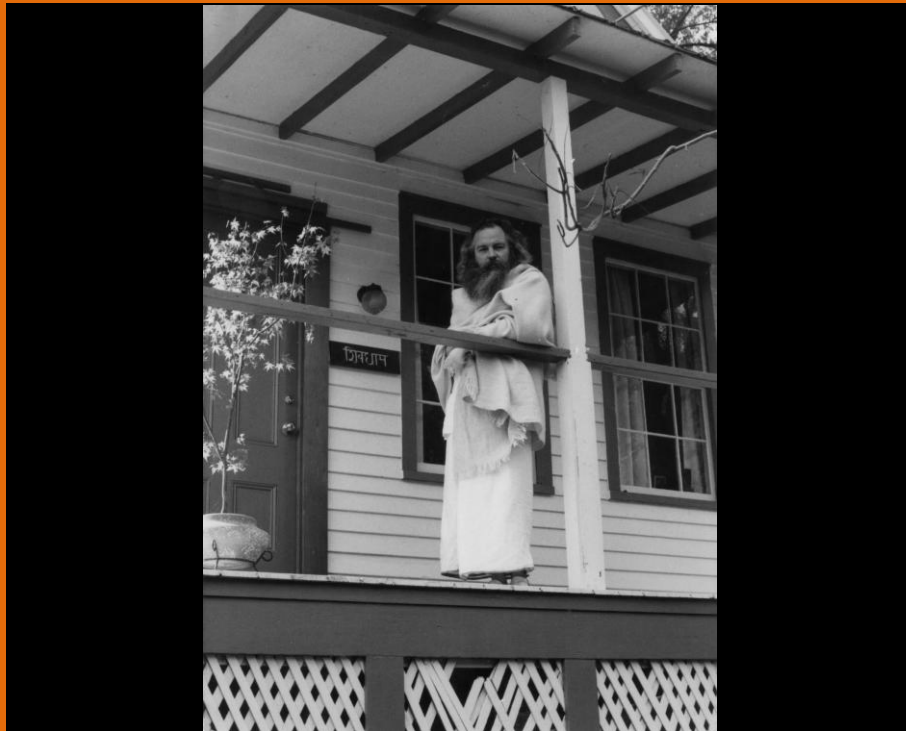
Swami Kripalvananda said, 'There is only one teacher. The new teacher is the conveyor of the ancient teachings, not their inventor. The teaching is the form of the Truth and the form of the Absolute; it is the teacher. Being free from all concerns, the aspirant should unceasingly perform only correct practice of yoga in accordance with the path indicated by the revered truth teacher (Sadguru).' Yogeshwar Muni pranaming (bowing) at Swami Kripalvananda's feet.

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September 1977 Satsanga Bhavan (Main hall, Temple), Kayavarohana West, St Helena, CA. Yogeshwar said, 'Sitting in Swami Kripalvananda's presence, I realized that liberation was a total state of absorption in the truth - not as a concept but as a living experience. This doesn't mean abstracted from the world or from the body, but realizing life's truth within and through the body. Then through this path the world itself is transformed.'

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Yogeshwar Muni at his residence in Shivadham, November 1977, Kayavarohana West, St. Helena, CA.

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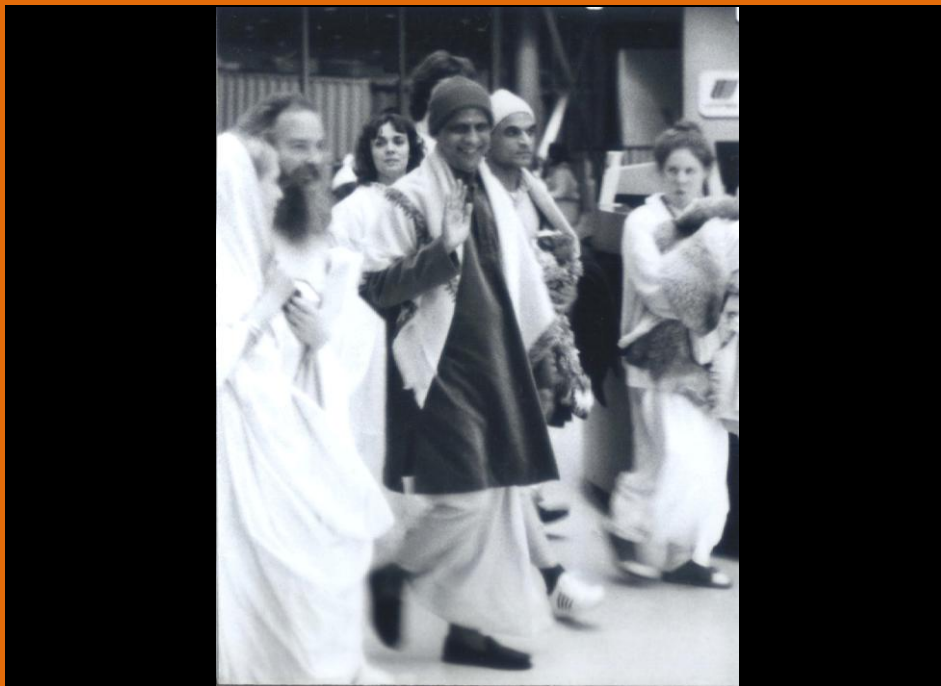
Yogeshwar Muni and his students gathered at Kayavarohana West, St. Helena, CA. Nov. 1977.

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First row, left to right, Yogeshwar Muni, Swami Kripalvananda, and Amrit Desai. Second row, a Devotee, Vinit Muni, a Devotee, Ma Om Shanti and Urmala, wife of Amrit Desai. San Francisco Airport, January 1978.

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Yogeshwar Muni, Swami Kripalvananda, and Vinit Muni; Kali Ma on right, Ava Berner behind Kripalvananda, San Francisco Airport, 1977.

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Yogeshwar Muni washing the feet of his guru Swami Kripalvananda, March 1978, Kayavarohana West, St. Helena, CA. Performing the ceremony of the guru's feet symbolizes following the path to liberation, step by step, as directed by

the teacher in the form of Divine Love. Kripalu said, 'The one who wants to attain the realm of the Absolute should be devoted to the truth teacher.'

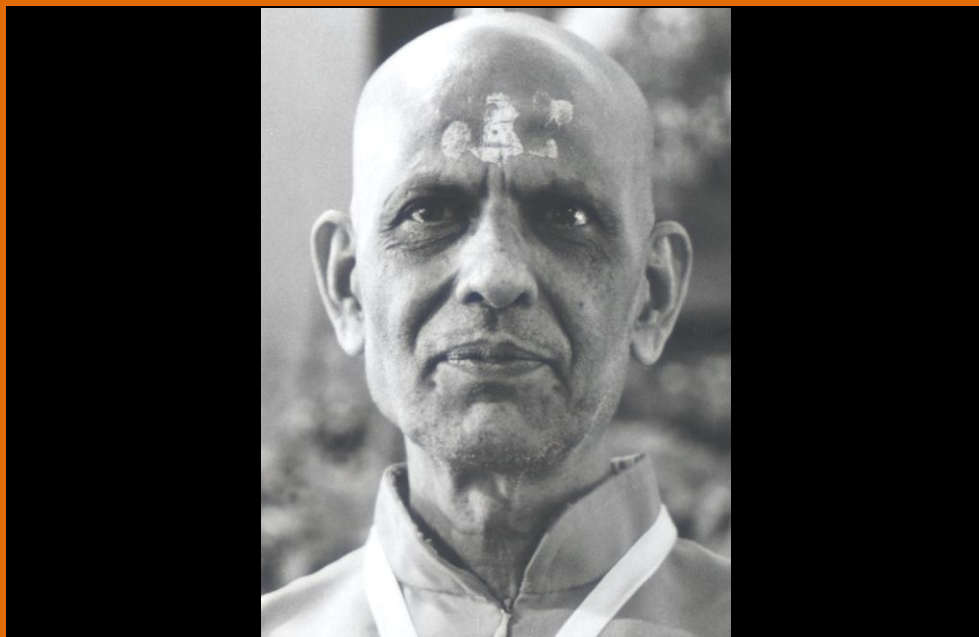
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Yogeshwar Muni says. "During my first visit to my spiritual teacher, I had only been there just a few days when I got an important teaching. I was just going out the door after having paid my respects and saying good-bye to him. I was the last person out. He called me back and wrote on his chalkboard. He called the translator back. And his message said, "The name of this yoga is love."

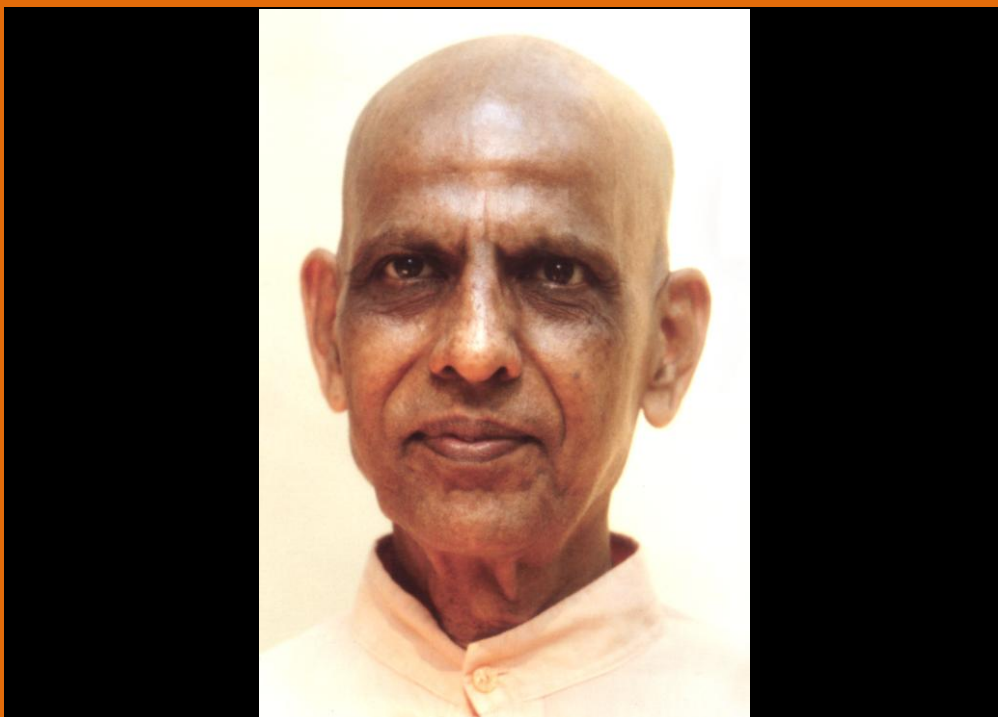
I did not know what he meant at the time. Now I have got a pretty good idea. Love and surrender are the same.

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In July 1981, at Amrit Desai's spiritual center in Pennsylvania, Swami Kripalvananda read from a work he had completed consisting of 500 couplets, *Principles of Yoga*: 'The yogi fears neither attachment nor death. He never retreats a single step no matter how many pains he encounters. A river that originates at the top of the mountain never returns to its source, similarly, a yogi established on the path of yoga never regresses to the path of seeking pleasure. His voice was weak and he enunciated with difficulty. He was in a difficult stage in his yogic sadhana.

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October 1981, Kripalu returned to India. There Rajarshi Muni urged him to take proper care of his health because he seemed seriously ill. Swami Kripalvananda responded, 'My son, my body has become emaciated because of a certain reaction that has taken place in my practice of yoga. It will only recover through the yogic process.'

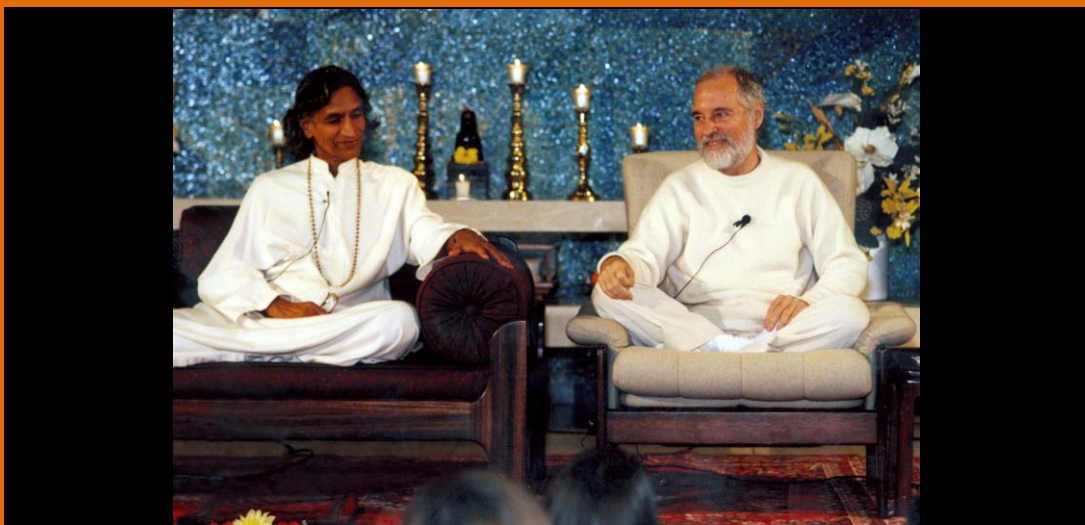
In December 1981, Swami Kripalvananda entered Mahasamadhi, the term used when a great yogi's body has stopped breathing and, usually, as with Swami Kripalvananda's body, has been pronounced clinically dead.

Yogeshwar reported several visits he had with Kripalu in the succeeding years in Siddha Loka, traditionally the world or plane inhabited by those who have

become stable enough in yoga that they can complete the process of yoga without rebirth. In these visits, Siddha Loka appeared to Yogeshwar as a grassy hill far up in the Himalayas.

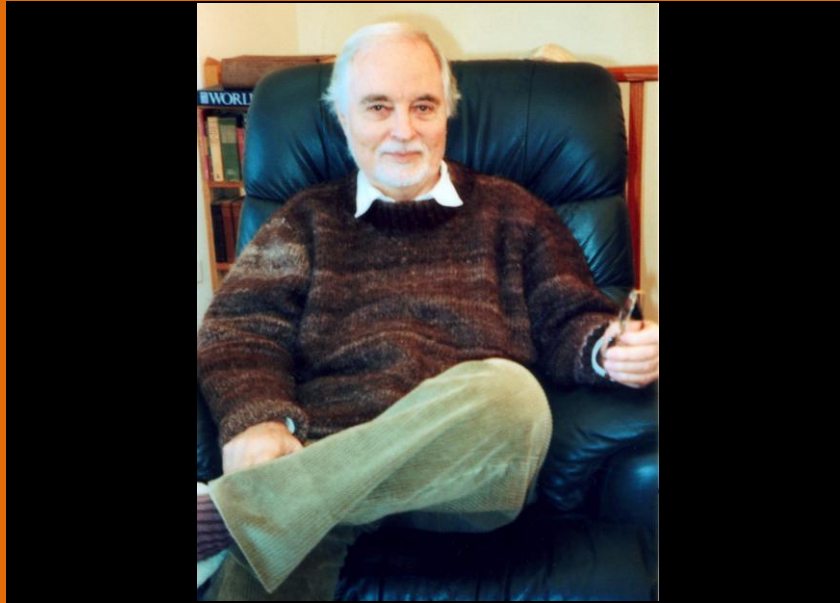
Each time they met, he found Kripalu higher up the hill. In *Revealing the Secret*, published in Hindi the same year, Swami Kripalvananda said, 'In the Holy *Bhagavad Gita*, God says, "That ultimate realm, having attained which, the yogi does not come back into the illusory world that self-illuminated ultimate realm that is my ultimate home."

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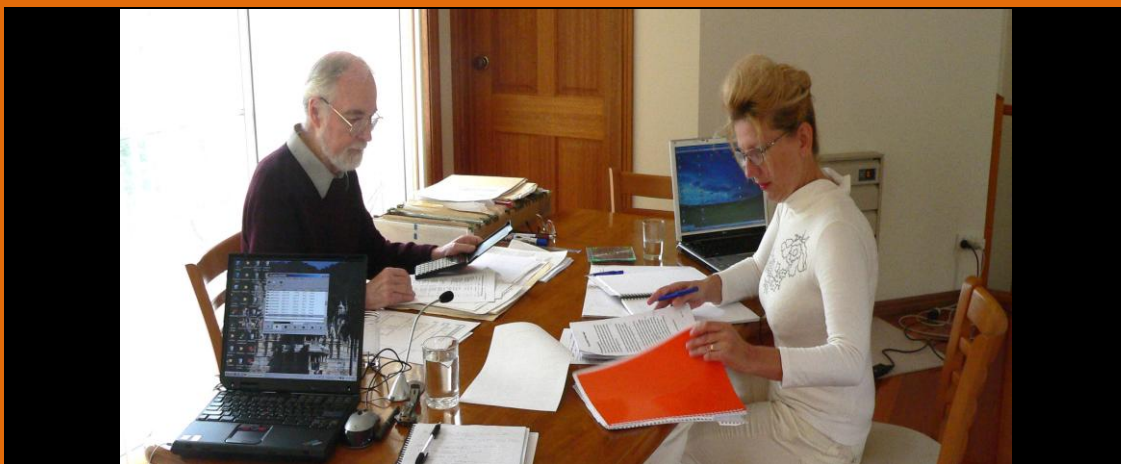
Amrit Desai and Yogeshwar Muni at Amrit's spiritual center in Lenox, Massachusetts, September 1993.

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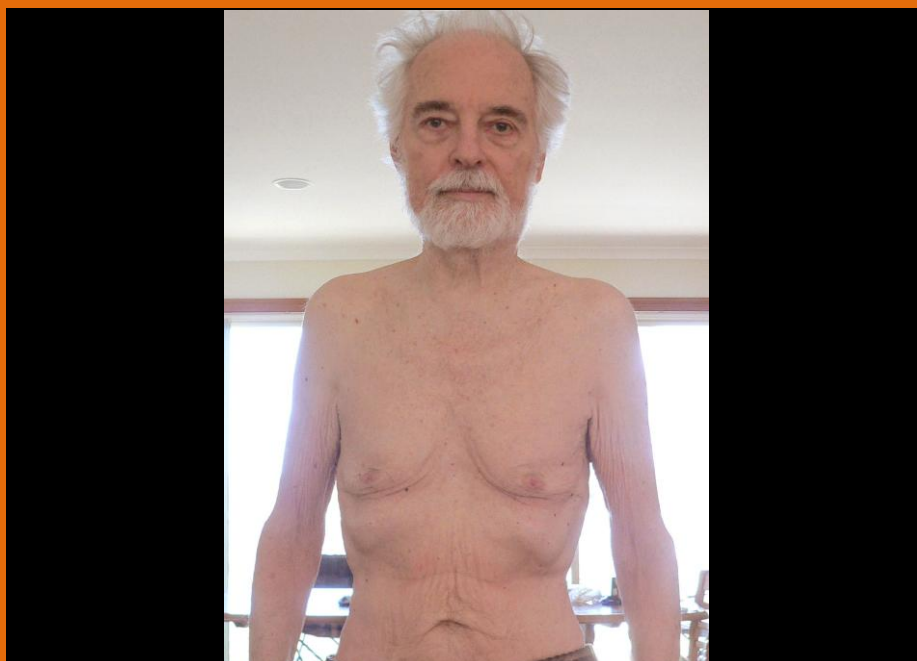
Yogeshwar Muni in 2005 in Merimbula, NSW, Australia. In his song 'Non-duality', Swami Kripalvananda says, 'Wherever I look, I see Your beautiful form; how can I ask for Your darshan's grace (Your loving, divine, visible presence)?'

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Yogeshwar Muni (Charles Berner) and Dr. Biljana Percinkova, working on the Lila Paradigm, November 2006, Merimbula, NSW, Australia.

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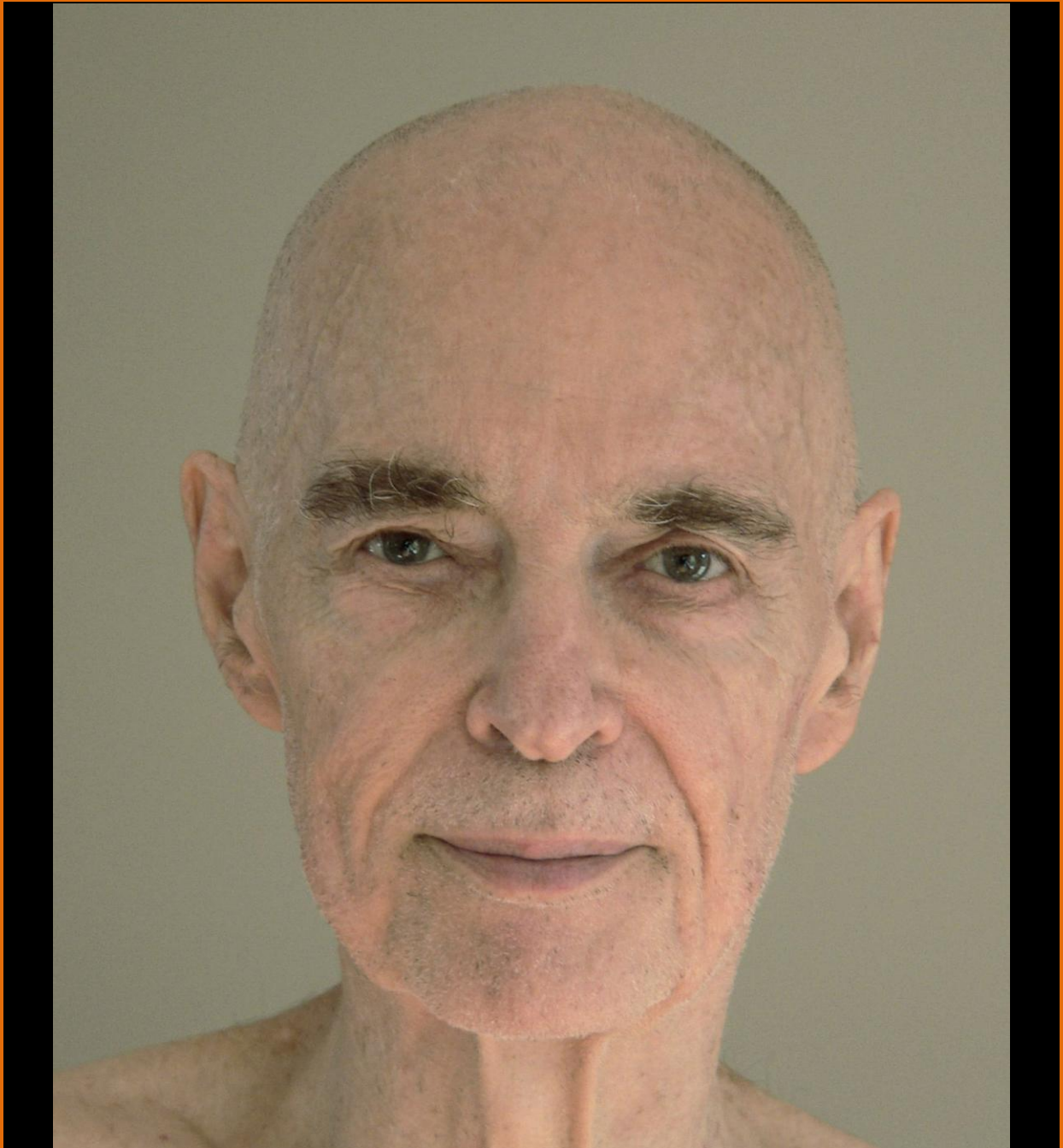
Yogeshwar Muni, 10 January 2007, Age 77. He said the underlying cause of the weight loss was the fundamental bodily purification that occurs at the beginning level of the formation of the divine body. His body lost weight steadily even though he ate the usual portions,

Kundalini is the power to transform impurities in the body and mind to a pure state. The transformation is called evolution. Kundalini is desire with impurities. It gets purified and becomes your friend, rampant against the impurities. What we are trying to do is to finish hatha yoga so you can do raja yoga. I asked Kripalu, "Why is it in that order?" (He smiled.) Swami Kripalvananda said, "It doesn't have to be in that order, if you can do it."

Sunday, 24 June 2007 Yogeshwar Muni's passing.

Yogeshwar's gaze became fixed upward and unblinking, face utterly still, the breathing regular. Both he and his body seemed to be in the realm of God, yet bringing the Absolute into this world. Apart from the steady breathing, his body was utterly still. There was a sense of standing on the edge of the Infinite, at the open doorway to the throne room where he was with God. When the last breath was released, he and his love seemed to expand out to reach those in the room, each of whom experienced his loving presence in their own way. Several days before, he had said, 'If the body dies I will still be in contact.'

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