

Roy Eugene Davis – Biography

The Secret Of Attunement



A God-devoted life

Roy Eugene Davis (1931-2019) was one of Yogananda's advanced, expansive, and independent disciples.

His organization *Center For Spiritual Awareness (CSA)* for half a century has inspired countless truth seekers. He writes: "Hundreds of thousands of people have been turned more Godwards as a result of this ministry." (pg. 84 in *God Has Given us Every Good Thing*. All quotes, stories, and descriptions in this blog are taken from that book, and from *Paramahansa Yogananda As I Knew Him*.) His lot to magnetically attract sincere seekers was obvious and his ministry is ongoing to this day.

About one year after Yogananda's passing Roy Eugene Davis left his guru's organization and taught independently. His authority to give the Kriya initiation was, unsurprisingly, denied by SRF. His answer was firm: "I am authorized because I am a disciple of my guru, who directly charged me with the responsibility."

Roy Eugene Davis, however, didn't fully represent his guru's teachings: he taught the Kriya technique in a slightly different way and offered the initiation without requiring discipleship from initiates; he practically neglected the central *Energization*

Exercises as well as the *Cosmic Chants*; the *Hong-Sau* technique wasn't given a central place either (he equally taught *So-Ham*, stating that "any mantra will do"); he put his own picture on the altar, eliminating the one of Jesus Christ, naming himself a guru alongside the other Kriya Masters.

The main reason for all this, perhaps, is that Roy Eugene Davis never considered Yogananda an avatar, but simply an enlightened teacher and Self-realized yogi. He therefore didn't base his own teaching exclusively on what his guru had specifically brought, but much on the ancient yogic precepts, on Patanjali, on Vedanta, and on universal principles. Yogananda was revered, but still given a back seat. To new students, in fact, discipleship to Yogananda was explained to be impossible, as they hadn't physically met him.

One might say that Roy Eugene Davis' "ray" is for those seekers who are inspired by the non-dual teachings of Self-realization and by the Masters of Kriya Yoga, but who don't feel a predominant commitment to Yogananda and his teachings, but rather to Mr. Davis' as their guru.

His message, at any rate, was magnetic, clear, direct, and encouraging: true Self-realization is possible and within the reach of everyone.

He was deep, rational but witty, and definitively powerful: devotees testified an impressive power which emanated from him during his talks. As we shall see, he was certainly a highly evolved yogi, was profoundly inspiring as a teacher, and was much loved by his followers and students. Their gratitude to him, in fact, was immense.

Let's have a look at his life.

Previous incarnations

Roy Eugene Davis has undoubtedly been a yogi, many times. One day he asked Yogananda: "Sir, have I been with you before?" He responded: "How could you be with me now if you had not been with me before? *Of course* you have been with me before, and you will be with me many times in the future. You have come, as have some others, to help me with this work."

The purpose, then, of Roy Eugene Davis' present lifetime was predestined: to help his guru spread his work and mission.

Concerning past lives, Yogananda informed him: "You died young last time. You would have died young this time too, but your love for God pulled you through." In fact he almost died at 18.

Childhood, youth, and adolescence

Roy Eugene Davis was born on March 9, 1931 in Leavittsburg, Ohio, USA. His father DeWitt T. Davis (June 3, 1900 – Jan. 14, 1989) was a farmer. His mother Eva Lee Carter Davis (1903-1949) died young, aged 46, when Roy was just 18 years old.

Roy grew up with a brother and three sisters on a simple farm, which in the early years didn't even have electricity. He was a "shy and somewhat introverted" child.

Already as a youngster his yogic realizations from previous incarnations surfaced. "When I was a child, I had frequent glimpses of higher realities and was often vividly aware of an all-pervading, benevolent Presence that included me and all things in its wholeness." He also discovered that "if I really wanted anything, if I could visualize it and feel that I possessed it, it would come into my life."

As a young adolescent, the minister in the small church he attended strongly awakened in him his God-devoted spirit. Roy publicly professed his life to belong to Christ, feeling a powerful inner call to become a minister himself.

Already then his mindset was universal: soon he began to read books on world religion and psychology, to explore truth in a more expansive way. When he finally discovered books on yoga, the inner yogi in him responded vigorously: without doubt, this was his path, his life, his direction. He found back his precious track of lifetimes.

In early 1949, aged 18, Roy Eugene Davis fell severely sick with rheumatic fever, coming "very close to departing from this world." He was bed-ridden for five long months. During that time he discovered, in an add, the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, which soon became his "second Bible". The impact of the book was profound and life-changing: Mr. Davis felt that, uncannily, he *knew* the Kriya Masters and also the spiritual states they had attained. He read that sacred book "from cover to cover, over and over again," experiencing a strong ancient soul rapport. He knew that his life would continue to be blessed by these great Masters.

He promptly ordered the SRF Lessons and started to practice the techniques. Soon during meditation, he could see in the spiritual eye "ever-changing patterns of brilliant lights". More than that. The vibrations of the *Autobiography of a Yogi* created in him a strong kundalini experience: his spine arched, the inner force drew his attention fully to the spiritual eye, with an immense inner heat which made him sweat all over.

These early experiences clearly indicate that he was an advanced yogi, who had in former incarnations achieved high inner states. And all this was but the merest beginning.

Meeting Yogananda

In late 1949, when he became physically well, Roy Eugene Davis hitchhiked to Los Angeles. His goal was set: he had decided to join Yogananda and SRF.

On arriving at the headquarters on Dec. 23, 1949, Mr. Davis was welcomed with a dinner. Afterwards he spoke with Swami Kriyananda, the SRF head monk, who inquired about his intentions and background. At that very moment Yogananda appeared. It was the first precious meeting of the young seeker with his guru, who asked him: "How old are you?" and "Do your parents know you have come here?" After satisfactory answers (he was 18, an adult, and his parents were fine), the Master blessed him on the spiritual eye, saying: "I will see you again."



What a blessed and unique time to join the guru! He and his disciples were just entering into the sacred Christmas celebrations. The very next day – the second blessing – the traditional long Christmas meditation was scheduled, which Yogananda lead alongside Rajarsi Janakananda. Dr. Lewis played the organ. 200 monks and nuns participated in that holy and divinely charged event.

The following day would bring about the third blessing: it was Christmas, and Mr. Davis was able to attend Yogananda’s special service at the SRF Hollywood Church.

After the talk, the fourth special blessing was waiting for Mr. Davis: the guru invited him to his private room, and asked him: “What can I do for you?” The answer was straight and clear: “I want to be your disciple.” The Master answered: “This is not a path of escapism, you know.” Then Yogananda, sensing Mr. Davis recent grave illness, inquired about his health. He felt his pulse, and then said, “You are alright now.” Finally the guru blessed him on the spiritual eye, saying, “You stay. I see you from time to time.” This was not yet, as Mr. Davis clarifies, his moment of officially being accepted as a disciple. That moment came three months later. Anyway, what a special Christmas gift it was!

The evening of that Christmas day came with the fifth amazing blessing, this time culinary: it was the elaborated Christmas banquet, presided by Yogananda and Rajarsi. More than good taste was involved, of course. The Guru’s atmosphere and words filled the occasion blissfully.

What a celestial entrance into his guru’s world!

Life with his Master

After these amazing holy days, normal ashram life started for Mr. Davis. His duty was to help in the gardens. He also assisted Swami Kriyananda in sending out letters to students who received the weekly SRF Lessons.

Every now and then he would meet his guru on the grounds, who at one point told him: “You have a wonderful future, Roy.” Yogananda apparently saw his extraordinary spiritual karma unfolding and blossoming.

Once the Master addressed him affectionately: “Here is my boy!” These are more than just sweet words. In India one of the terms for disciple is *chela*, or child. The guru saw Roy Eugene Davis exactly like this: as his child, his “boy”.

Soon another sweet (or rather spicy) incident occurred. Yogananda came down to the monks’ kitchen, telling them: “Line up, boys. You are in for an experience.” He took a bottle of extremely hot tabasco sauce and, while laughing and laughing, poured a little quantity into each one’s mouth. All of them laughed too, even though it hurt and burnt. It was done in an atmosphere of light fun, teaching the monks joyful freedom from the senses. **Here** you can listen to the story (and also grasp Mr. Davis’ philosophical emphasis).

Frequently now the guru told him: “Be patient, Roy. I have plans for you.” What did he mean?

After three months of living at the SRF headquarters, the plan was revealed: Yogananda asked to see him. However, twice the guru delayed his arrival, for hours. The first time Roy Eugene Davis finally left, after having waited for over four hours. The second time he was determined to wait, if necessary, throughout the night. It was, it seems, a teaching that the disciple needs to express an unshakable desire: “I *really* want you, Master.”



What followed was a deep blessing. When they finally met, Yogananda took Mr. Davis right hand into his, instructing him, “Kneel down, Roy.” This was the sacred moment of discipleship. The guru promised his unconditional love to the disciple, and the disciple in turn pledged his love for the guru, as well as his obedience.

Then Yogananda asked him to leave the headquarters, to move to Phoenix, in order to help at a goat dairy which SRF had just bought. Herbert Freed, an SRF minister, was in charge. Herbert too was young, being only two years his senior. It was a quite silent and secluded life for these two disciples. Every two months Roy Eugene Davis returned for a visit, to see Yogananda.

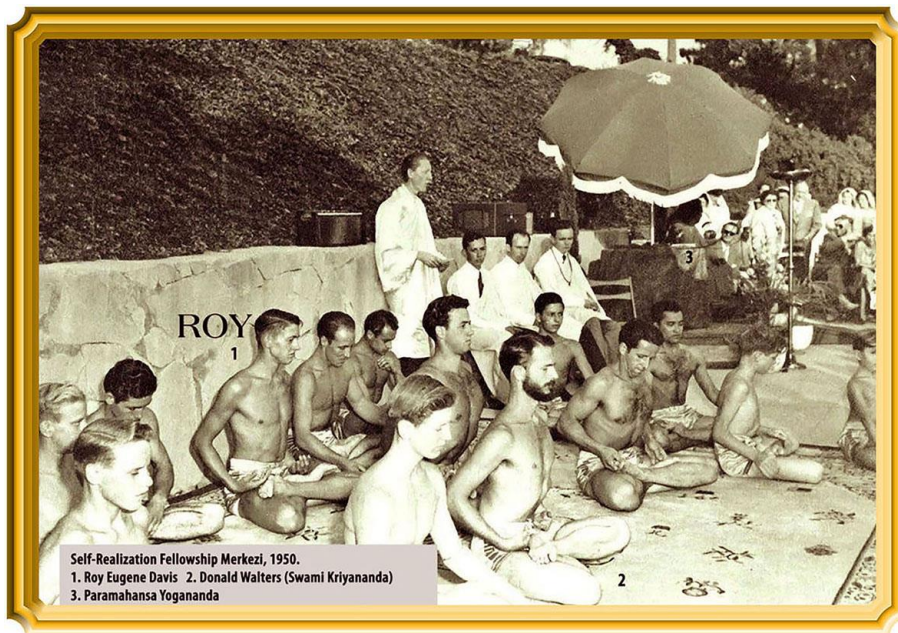
An older minister harbored understandable doubts, asking the guru: “Sir, isn’t Roy too new with us to be so far away in Phoenix?” Indeed, three months seem exceedingly little. The Master however replied: “You leave my boy alone. I know what I am doing.”

Yogananda, in other words, wouldn’t have sent the young disciple far away, if he hadn’t trusted that he was able to maintain his inner attunement in spite of the physical distance, and in spite of being separated from senior disciples and the magnetism of Mt. Washington.

The Master had instructed Mr. Davis about the crucial point: “Stay in tune with me and I will be able to help you. When you are restless, or filled with doubts, this causes static in the mental radio and makes it harder for me to help you. So stay in tune with me.” One notes that twice he repeated the instruction to “stay in tune with me”. It was indeed the central necessity.

Inner attunement in fact is the essential ingredient of discipleship. Yogananda in the *Autobiography of a Yogi* relates his own particular experience of attunement with Sri Yukteswar: “My own temperament is principally devotional. It was disconcerting at first to find that my guru, saturated with *jnana* but seemingly dry of *bhakti*, expressed himself only in terms of cold spiritual mathematics. But as I tuned myself to his nature, I discovered no diminution but rather increase in my devotional approach to God. A self-realized master is fully able to guide his various disciples along natural lines of their essential bias. My relationship with Sri Yukteswar, somewhat inarticulate, nonetheless possessed all eloquence. Often I found his silent signature on my thoughts, rendering speech inutile. Quietly sitting beside him, I felt his bounty pouring peacefully over my being.”

Lahiri Mahasaya too had trained his disciples in the art of silent inner attunement: “Please expound the holy stanzas as the meaning occurs to you.’ The taciturn guru often gave this instruction to a near-by disciple. ‘I will guide your thoughts, that the right interpretation be uttered.’” Such inner guidance is impossible without profound attunement on the disciple’s part.



Roy Eugene Davis in fact showed an extraordinarily deep inner attunement with his Guru: “As the months passed, I experienced direct transmission of knowledge through my guru. When I was with him I could discern his moods and his thoughts, and when I was not in his presence I could be ‘with him’ soul to soul. On many occasions when I would discern his unspoken thoughts, he would turn to me and share a knowing smile.”

His daily meditation procedure enhanced his inner attunement: it consisted of praying to the Kriya Yoga gurus, chanting Yogananda’s *Cosmic Chants* and practicing the *Hong Sau* technique, then surrendering to the spiritual eye (as his guru had taught), or listening to the inner sounds – he had learned Yogananda’s specific OM-technique in the SRF Lessons.

To deepen the young disciple’s inner attunement, Yogananda had told him to read only his own books and a few others he recommended. In Phoenix, however, Mr. Davis found a book, *The Gospel of Ramakrishna*, written by Master Mahasaya, whom Yogananda had personally known and whom he had described in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*. So he thought that in this case it was alright to read that different book. But it wasn’t. He started to think increasingly about Ramakrishna. Yogananda knew it perfectly well. In fact he knew *all* of Mr. Davis thoughts, as well as his inner conditions.

The next time he visited his guru, during a gathering of monks the Master completely avoided Mr. Davis. Finally he uttered in front of everyone these incredibly harsh words: “Roy is a spiritual prostitute.” Such drastic terms were certainly not used lightly. They were a stern warning, and a teaching for a lifetime.

Then the Master explained: “I asked you to read only my books and a few others for a purpose. After you are grounded in inner realization you can read anything without losing your attunement with me, or being confused. But for now you should do as I say.”

Mr. Davis touched his feet. When he got up the guru smiled, saying, "It's alright, it's alright." The tone was affectionate, the incident over, and Mr. Davis had learned a crucial lesson.

Yogananda in fact counted on his continuing inner attunement while he lived and acted in a distant location. The whole situation was, quite obviously, an important training for Mr. Davis' future, as he was a disciple who would later teach and represent the guru. He had incarnated, as Yogananda had told him, "to help me with this work."

Roy Eugene Davis concludes that his attunement was instant and deep: "Master never had to lecture me. He had only to say a few words, when necessary, and I knew what he meant, and what he expected of me. He knew it, too."

At any rate, for a year he lived at the goat farm, after which it had to be sold, and so he moved to the nearby SRF center in Phoenix.

His meditations intensified and deepened. At one point he lost all bodily identification: "I was a point of conscious awareness, with spherical vision, floating in a vast sea of blue space. It seemed that tiny sparkling white lights twinkled in the distance. The ocean of blue conscious light was still, yet vibrant with potential vitality."

At times he inwardly saw "saints and luminous personages whom I did not recognize. The influence was always benevolent, as if a stream of grace was flowing through them to me."

These experiences lasted even during outward activity: "I also experienced a degree of Cosmic Consciousness, during which I could perform my routine duties while, at the same time, I could be inwardly aware of myself filling the universe."



On the photo we see a group of monks building the “India House”. Mr. Davis is in the back row to the right, standing by himself.

Soon he was also able to perceive the thoughts of others. In addition, intuitively the Scriptures revealed themselves to him.

One time he asked his guru to help him see the inner light: “Putting his hands on my forehead, he told me to look into the spiritual eye. Two brilliant white lights in a dark blue field immediately appeared. As I gazed steadily into the spiritual eye the two white lights began to merge.” Then Yogananda removed his hands from Mr. Davis’ head, saying: “What you saw was Spirit and Nature. From now on you can see that anytime.”

Inner awakening, however, is always accompanied with inner struggles. Old desires and attachments surface mightily, to be faced and transformed. So Roy Eugene Davis at one point experienced “powerful sexual desire, so much so that whenever I sat to meditate I would automatically envision beautiful women, and the various possibilities of sexual experience with them.” It made him feel guilty, as he was a monk.

Though he kept his struggle private, Yogananda knew all about it and talked with him: “It’s normal for a young man to have such desires. But in your situation it disturbs your concentration. I’ll tell you what to do.” Like a father teaching his son, he taught his boy, “Roy”, a technique how to transmute sexual energy, directing it “upwards to the heart center, and to the third eye.”

Mr. Davis’ inner attunement with the guru produced wonderful results. He experienced strong kundalini awakening, causing his body even to jerk and twitch. It turned into ecstatic experiences whenever he was able to relax enough, thereby not allowing the energy to be dispersed in these bodily movements.

When he saw Mr. Davis, Yogananda once told him: “Dive deep into the ocean of God. Pray to God and tell Him, ‘Lord, I want nothing but you, only You.’”

One day at the *29 Palms* retreat, the Guru pointed at a nearby mountain and told Mr. Davis: “Most people, when they see that mountain, see only a mass of earth and rocks. When I look at it, I see only God.” It was a deep and lasting inspiration for the young disciple.

Mr. Davis began to live in a state of inner grace. He now wished for samadhi. In August 1950, he travelled from Phoenix to the SRF Lake Shrine dedication ceremony. At one point the monks and nuns stood in line to receive a personal blessing from their Master. When his turn came, he whispered: “Sir, will you give me samadhi?” “What did you say?”, Yogananda asked. Mr. Davis repeated his request. The Guru chuckled and grasped his hair, giving his head a loving shake. Then the Guru turned to Rajarsi, saying: “He wants samadhi.” They both smiled. Rajarsi commented: “Bless his heart.”

Later that same day, however, Rajarsi approached Mr. Davis who was standing by himself near the lake and placed one hand on his heart and the other on top of his head. He entered into a divine ecstasy: his consciousness extended beyond his body. He was motionless, filled with an indescribable joy, bliss, love, and purity. It was a touch of samadhi.



On the photo we see the Lake Shrine dedication. Yogananda is on the left, Mr. Davis on the far right.

Roy Eugene Davis himself relates the central point of it all: “I always found that when I was in tune with my guru, my meditations were deeper, I was more calm and peaceful, and circumstances in my life unfolded in more orderly fashion.”

Yogananda's words made a deep and lasting impression on him: "I don't want weak people around me, I want you to be as strong as I am!" Or: "I am not the guru. God is the guru. I am but his servant."

On one occasion Mr. Davis personally witnessed his guru's healing power. He had been experiencing occasional pains in his chest and left arm. When he described the symptoms, Yogananda touched his chest with his hands and said: "You'll be alright now." Indeed, the symptoms never returned.

He also witnessed his gurus' ability to help students during their moment of death. "On several occasions, over the years, he would tell close disciples, 'So and so recently passed. I was there and helped him into the next world.' He was once writing at Encinitas when he asked his secretaries to leave the room. Later he summoned them and told them that he had 'just been' to San Diego, some 25 miles distant, to assist the wife of a close disciple as she made her transition... She said before she passed, 'Yogananda is here.'"

The devotion to his guru was immense: Yogananda once gave a banana to him. He took it to his room and lovingly ate it *all*, including the skin. What a marvellously symbolic act!

In the fall of 1951, as Mr. Davis was kneeling down, the Master said: "I ordain you a minister of Self-Realization, and I empower you to represent God and the line of gurus. Teach others as I have taught, heal others as I have healed, and initiate them into the science of Kriya."

In this way Mr. Davis, aged 20, became the youngest-ever minister and Kriyacharya among Yogananda's disciples. He had been ordained by Yogananda.

So he started to instruct students in the practice of the *Hong-Sau* mantra, in the Om-technique Yogananda taught, and reviewed the Kriya technique for kriyabans. Later, when he left SRF, he started to initiate people into Kriya Yoga.

During his last birthday celebration on January 5, 1952, the Master informed the disciples about his imminent passing: "I will spend some time in space and then be reborn in the Himalayas, to be with Babaji." Then he added these surprising words: "I will one day return but you will not know me. My colors will be blue and gold."

Mr. Davis last saw his guru a few weeks prior to his *mahasamadhi*, at his desert retreat *29 Palms*. The Master told him these important words: "Take care of your body, Roy. You have much work to do and you must be healthy."

Then he added this divine encouragement: "Roy, don't bother yourself with whether or not others seem intent on the path, whether they talk too much or waste their time. The important thing is that you go all the way in this lifetime. And you can do it. Sri Yukteswar used to say, 'The boat that carries souls across the river of delusion is ready to depart. Who will go? Who will go? If no one goes, I will go!' You must be like that!"

It was a precious message which Mr. Davis would later always transmit to his own students.

Afterwards the Master talked about Sri Yukteswar's days before his death. Roy Eugene Davis knew that his guru "was preparing for the near future event of his own passing."

He was in Phoenix, on March 7, 1952, when he received a phone call from the Mother Center, that his Master had passed. He immediately contacted all local members and conducted a memorial ceremony for Yogananda. Then he left for Mt. Washington.

There he saw his Master lying in his ochre robe: "I had loved him so, and I loved him still. Now however, I could only commune with him inwardly. I would no longer feel the touch of his hand in blessing, no longer touch him with tender care when he would invite a helping hand to assist him into the car, or up a stair, or when he would reach out to invite closeness as we walked together. There would be no physical contact now, but there would be no real sense of loss. There are memories, and there are occasions of inner plane communion, when the heart is made glad and the soul enriched. Victory to the true guru, who is the embodiment of God for each of us!"



Daya Mata told Mr. Davis that Yogananda had wanted him to become the SRF minister in the Phoenix temple. There he guided was a small but sincere congregation. On the photo we see young Roy Eugene Davis as the Phoenix minister.

Departure from SRF

One year later, in the Summer of 1953 Mr. Davis began to feel the need to withdraw from monastic life in order to relate to a larger world. He was still very young, only 22 years.

He talked about it with Daya Mata who asked if moving to another SRF center would be helpful. But Mr. Davis felt he needed to grow outside of SRF. The possibility was discussed that he could remain a teacher also outside of SRF, in another city.

Over the phone he also talked with Rajarsi, who was now the SRF president. “Wistfully” he said: “I wish you had talked to me about this.” If Rajarsi’s sentiment can be used as an indication for Yogananda’s wishes, the guru was not delighted.

For about two years Mr. Davis served in the US army, until early 1956.

After that his plan was to serve SRF as a lay-teacher in Denver and lead a meditation group there. He proposed his intention in a letter to Daya Mata, the new SRF president. It must have created an ongoing discussion, as the answer came after “a long delay”. Daya Mata finally replied that the Board of Directors had decided that he would not be permitted to do so. Swami Kriyananda, it might be added, who in those years was the head of the center department (in charge of meditation groups), did not agree with the boards’ decision.

Since ministry was what Mr. Davis inwardly felt guided to do, he began now his life as an independent spiritual teacher. First he rented a lecture hall in Denver, where he created a temple, offering Sunday services and classes. His ministry began small but gradually grew big.

He came into contact, and became friends, with numerous spiritual teachers and New-Age luminaries, such as Neville Goddard, Ernest Holmes, Father Divine, Walter Lanyon, Masaharu Taniguchi, Sri Swami Rama, Swami Muktananda, and Satya Sai Baba.

In the 1960s Mr. Davis founded his own organization, *New Life Worldwide*. In 1967 he began publishing the *Truth Journal* magazine.



In the early 1970s Edwin O’Neal of the *Christian Spiritual Alliance* invited him to head the organizations’ teaching ministry, naming this outreach *Center for Spiritual Awareness*. Roy Eugene Davis agreed and merged his own organization, *New Life Worldwide*, with it.

In 1972 he moved from Florida to Lakemont, Georgia, to develop the ministry and retreat facilities of *Center for Spiritual Awareness*. In 1976 Mr. Davis was elected

chairman of CSA after O'Neal retired. In time he named many ministers, and



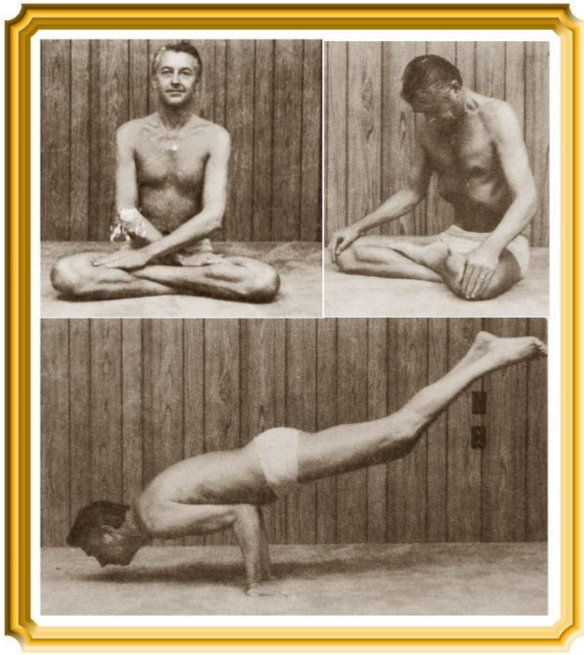
ordained Kriya Yoga teachers.

Roy Eugene Davis married and had children. His gentle and beautiful wife Carolyn Davis (1946-) sometimes accompanied him on his trips, lead hatha yoga and meditations, and worked quietly and unselfishly at his side. She also authored a book, *Making Every Moment Count*. They are seen on the photo, in 1977 in Germany. Mr. Davis married six times. He was a householder throughout. His last wife Willie Davis again was a very sweet, gentle and kind woman.

He successfully toured the world and lectured in more than 100 cities in North America and in Japan, Brazil, Europe, West Africa, and India. He also appeared in radio and TV, participated in many yoga conferences, and wrote numerous books, some of which have been translated in 10 languages. He initiated a great number seekers.

Roy Eugene Davis' message was pointedly universal. He represented the Kriya Yoga tradition, but in his very own, distinct, and unique way.

Throughout his life Mr. Davis felt inwardly secure: "Even though Paramahansaji was no longer with us in the body, my inner attunement with him remained undiminished. He was in my heart and mind every moment of each day, as he is now. Especially during moments of quiet contemplation, I would feel his presence, and his strength and love. Now, as then, when I feel his presence, there is also the vivid awareness of the presence and influence of Sri Yukteswar, Lahiri, and Babaji. It is then that I know that I am truly anchored in a teaching tradition through which God's influence is extended into the world."



He had a particular understanding of what it means to represent the Masters: “Through Paramhansaji and my guru line I am spiritually and telepathically connected with a line of enlightened masters whose influence extends into the present. A representative of this tradition does not simply teach what his predecessors taught. A representative of this tradition is the embodiment of this teaching. Through him or her are transmitted the consciousness and spiritual energies of God.”

In other words, Roy Eugene Davis saw himself as an “embodiment” of the teachings, transmitting God’s consciousness, but not necessarily his guru’s specific teachings. Was this his special Guru-given mission, to reach a larger group of souls? Did it come from true inner attunement? Or was it a blatant error in his discipleship? Only the guru knows.

Yogananda’s teachings

Mr. Davis in fact disagreed with his brother and sister disciples regarding their duty to teach exactly what the guru had taught. Indeed, his teachings are often quite disconnected.

He didn’t, for example, give much emphasis to his guru’s central *Energization Exercises*. When mentioning them in books, he teaches only a little part of them, with changed technique, and strangely explaining that they are done with “mild muscular tension,” while in truth they are done with low, medium, then high tension, even vibrating the muscles. In fact, in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, which Mr. Davis knew perfectly well, Yogananda relates how he taught these *Energization Exercises* to Mahatma Gandhi and his group: “Soon everyone was *vibrating* before me like a human motor. It was easy to observe the rippling effect on Gandhi’s twenty body parts, at all times completely exposed to view!”



Similarly, Mr. Davis taught Yogananda's meditation mantra *Hong Sau*, but equally proposed *So-ham*, stating that any other mantra will do. Was it alright not to continue what his guru had taught him as a meditation method? The *Autobiography of a Yogi* simply states: "*Ham-sa* (pronounced *hong-sau*) are two sacred Sanskrit chant words." Yogananda also stated his specific reason for *not* teaching *So-ham*.

And what about the *Cosmic Chants* of his guru? They too are a central part of his teachings. Yogananda pointed out that he had spiritualized each one of these songs, explaining their particular power: "One who repeats these *Spiritualized Songs* or *Cosmic Chants* with ever-increasing devotion will find a more direct way to contact God than by the repetition of songs which are the outcome of blind sentiment and not of God-communion. These chants properly repeated will bring God-communion and ecstatic joy, and through these the healing of body, mind and soul." Yogananda added that "chanting is half the battle". In the early 70ies Mr. Davis recorded an album with these *Cosmic Chants* (still available), but later they were hardly used anymore.

The same is true for Yogananda's *Scientific Healing Affirmations*, his specific healing techniques, his devotional *Whispers of Eternity*, his OM technique: they were all left behind.

Roy Eugene Davis was guided by Yogananda, as he states, in the *advaitic* aspect of the teachings. Therefore he explains, for example, that the notion "God is love" is "irrational", since God has no qualities. That, however, is far from Yogananda's teachings: "The sun and moon and earth and all things are held together by the love of God. If we want to know God, we must not isolate our love, but join it to Divine Love. In spite of the sorrow and the dance of life and death we know that **God is love**. Then the only purpose of life should be to find God. There is no greater tonic than love, which can beautify the body and mind of man. Love cannot be described; it can only be felt." (*Inner Culture*, November 1939)

Indeed, no fervent devotional relationship with the "Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Friend, beloved God" (so typical for Yogananda) was encouraged by Mr. Davis.

His *advaitic* method was to go into silence to realize the already existing oneness with Eternal Consciousness, overcoming the illusion of an independent existence. Mr. Davis adds: “Until you are Self-realized, it is all right to pray.”

In his books he rejected the thought of a God who is a kind Being, who takes care of His children and who works for His children. He proposed pure *jnana* (*gyana*) *yoga*, in which the duality “He and me” is dismissed. Yet even Sri Yukteswar, who was “saturated with *jnana*,” teaches in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*: “The Lord responds to all and works for all. Just as He sent rain at my plea, so He fulfills any sincere desire of the devotee. Seldom do men realize how often God heeds their prayers. He is not partial to a few, but listens to everyone who approaches Him trustingly. His children should ever have implicit faith in the loving-kindness of their Omnipresent Father.”

Does God talk with His advanced devotees? In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Yogananda recounts how God, and also the Divine Mother, indeed spoke to him, on several occasions: “A soft rumbling vibration formed itself into words: ‘What has life or death to do with Light? In the image of My Light I have made you.’” In his pure *advaita* approach, however, Mr. Davis denied it: “When Paramahansa Yogananda said, ‘God told me to do it,’ he meant that he was inspired to do it.”

At a certain point Mr. Davis removed the picture of Christ from the altar. His students [report](#) that he explained that “Christ has nothing to do with the Kriya Yoga line,” adding that “Yogananda put Christ on the altar to be more acceptable to Westerners and Christians.” This is a little hard to understand, because Mr. Davis had heard Yogananda’s talks, for example *Follow The Path of Christ, Krishna, And the Masters*, given during Christmas 1951, in which the guru explained: “That is why Christ sent me here, why Babaji sent me here.” In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, he writes: “[Babaji’s] chief nineteenth-century disciple was, as we know, Lahiri Mahasaya, revivalist of the lost *Kriya* art. The *Mahavatar* is in constant communion with Christ; together they send out vibrations of redemption, and have planned the spiritual technique of salvation for this age.” That technique is Kriya Yoga. Yogananda states in the same book that Kriya Yoga was known to “Christ, St. John, St. Paul, and other disciples.” Christ is an indispensable part of the guru-line.

Surprisingly, even the essential goal of his guru, “to reveal the complete harmony and oneness of original Christianity as taught by Christ and original Yoga as taught by Krishna,” is dismissed by Mr. Davis as “a perhaps noble endeavor that is impossible to accomplish.”

“The historical Krishna,” he writes, “is not known to be a teacher of yoga,” while Yogananda in his *Autobiography of a Yogi* points out that he was an avatar and that Kriya Yoga itself “is a revival of the same science which Krishna gave, millenniums ago, to Arjuna.” For Mr. Davis, however, the Krishna who teaches in the Bhagavad Gita is “a personification of supreme Consciousness” and is “a fictional character.”

In fact, when Mr. Davis interprets the Scriptures, he doesn’t seem to build on Yogananda’s specific teachings, but explains his own realization and perception.

Concerning Kriya Yoga, he had his own approach: his students relate how they were initiated by Mr. Davis right away, without preparation.

The guru



The reason for all this might be that Roy Eugene Davis now felt himself to be a guru, stating that this role is rooted in Yogananda's actual teachings. In fact his Master had written: "The Father sends unto His child one who knows God and is empowered to *confer that realization on others.*"

The guru, in other words, uplifts the advanced disciple to his own state.

The Master indeed had taught: "By attracting to yourself the guru's realization of God, you attain his state of Self-realization." And hadn't the guru told Mr. Davis specifically, "Teach as I have taught?" Hadn't the Master, concerning discipleship, frequently quoted Jesus, who taught: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons of God.*" And: "He that believeth on me, *the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do;* because I go unto my Father."

In fact, Yogananda had told his disciples a meaningful story: "There was a devotee who was sitting before an image of his guru, chanting and tossing flowers onto it as an expression of his devotion. His concentration became so deep that, all at once, he beheld the whole universe contained within his consciousness. 'Ah!' he cried, 'I have been putting flowers on another's image, but now I see that I, untouched by this body, am the Sustainer of the universe. I bow to my Self!' And he began throwing the flowers onto his own head."

So, perceiving his inner Self-realized state, Mr. Davis added his picture to the Kriya Yoga altar. Thereby, however, he distanced himself from all other disciples, who in unison stated that Yogananda remains the true guru, and that he is the last in a line of gurus (as they were avatars). Roy Eugene Davis concluded: "Because the few living disciples of Paramahansaji who serve as ministers and counselors, or conduct initiations, consider themselves to be representatives rather than teachers, I am his only remaining guru-successor."

Perceiving himself a legitimate guru, he felt that what counted for his students was not so much Yogananda's specific teachings or grace, but the immediacy of his own realized wisdom, his own meditation mantra, like "OM-God", his own methods, and most of all the personal *shakti-pad* (transmission of power) which he was able to give.



With a group at Yogananda's boyhood home, Gurpar Road, Kolkata, with Harekrishna Gosh, Yogananda's nephew.

Is Yogananda an avatar?

The reason for all this was, it seems, that Roy Eugene Davis rejected the notion that Yogananda was an avatar. He wrote: "When Paramahansaji sometimes said, 'Only God dwells in this body now,' he was not implying that he was an avatar – an incarnation of God in human form. Some of his disciples prefer to believe that he was a divine incarnation and are forthright in promoting their opinion. While he did express divine attributes, he described in *Autobiography of a Yogi* his need, during his early years, to learn from others."

In his *Autobiography of a Yogi* (while hiding his own stature) Yogananda explains what an avatar is: "The *Upanishads* have minutely classified every stage of spiritual advancement. A *siddha* ('perfected being') has progressed from the state of a *jivanmukta* ('freed while living') to that of a *paramukta* ('supremely free' – full power over death); the latter has completely escaped from the mayic thralldom and its reincarnational round. The *paramukta* therefore seldom returns to a physical body; if he does, he is an avatar, a divinely appointed medium of supernal blessings on the world."

So Mr. Davis' perception is understandable, but at the same time seems a bit strange, as he was present at the talk, in August 1951, *Follow the Path of Christ, Krishna, and the Great Masters*, when his guru declared: "I came liberated."

Audio Player

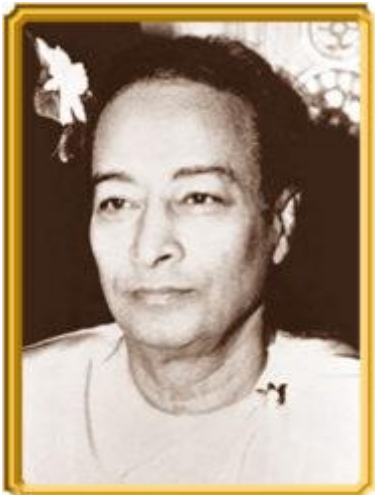
00:00
00:00

Use Up/Down Arrow keys to increase or decrease volume.

In short, Roy Eugene Davis stands quite alone among close disciples with his understanding. Rajarsi Janakananda in fact named Yogananda a *Premavatar* and regarded him “as a Christ”. Sister Gyanamata similarly addressed her guru as “God in man made manifest.” Durga Ma too describes Yogananda as a “guru and avatar.”

Daya Mata was publicly a bit more careful with such statements, but wrote: “Throughout the many years I was blessed to be with him, I never saw Paramahansa Yogananda merely as a man. He manifested such divinity; that is the only way I can describe him.”

Therefore even today SRF, while internally considering all the gurus as avatars, publicly states: “The spiritual lineage of SRF/YSS consists of these two great avatars [Christ and Krishna] and a line of exalted masters of contemporary times: Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda (last in the line of SRF/YSS Gurus).



Swami Kriyananda was more straightforward in his book, *The New Path*, where he explained a liberated soul: “When such a supremely free soul returns to this world, it comes only for the sake of humanity. Such an incarnation is called an *avatar*, or ‘divine incarnation’. Such, Master told us, was Babaji, the first of our direct line of gurus. Such also were Lahiri Mahasaya—*yogavatar*, Master called him, or “incarnation of yoga”—and Swami Sri Yukteswar, whom Master identified as India’s present-day *gyanavatar*, or “incarnation of wisdom. ‘Sir,’ I asked Master one day at his desert retreat, ‘are *you* an *avatar*?’ With quiet simplicity he replied, ‘A work of this importance would have to have been started by such a one.’”

Yogananda, while hiding his own stature in his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, was explicit concerning the avatar-hood of his line of gurus: “Just as Babaji is among the greatest of avatars, a *Mahavatar*, and Sri Yukteswar a *Jnanavatar* or Incarnation of Wisdom, so Lahiri Mahasaya may justly be called *Yogavatar*, or Incarnation of Yoga.” Christ and Krishna, of course, he described as avatars as well in that blessed book: “Christ had won this final freedom even before he was born as Jesus.” And “Krishna, Rama, Buddha, and Patanjali were among the ancient Indian avatars.”

Brother Anandamoy, like other disciples, intuitively understood that Yogananda too was an avatar. He tells how one day he saw his Master casting a shadow. He was quite

surprised, as in the *Autobiography of a Yogi* he had read that an avatar “casts no shadow”. So he slowly followed that shadow up the Master’s legs, then up his body, and finally into Master’s eyes, which were looking directly at him, “dancing with mirth”. In the next edition of the *Autobiography of a Yogi* the same sentence read that an avatar “sometimes casts no shadow”.

Can Yogananda still be a Guru?

There is another idea which Roy Eugene Davis completely rejected: that people who have never personally met Yogananda can become his disciple. Such individuals “have been misinformed, are emotionally immature, or prefer fantasy to truth.” Mr. Davis adds: “They may be inspired by Master’s writings, feel uplifted when they think about him, or imagine that they are in tune with him, but they cannot be instructed or guided by him.”

This teaching is deeply rooted in India: you need a living guru who can correct, guide, and discipline you. A book can’t do that. There is certainly validity to that thought.

However, Yogananda’s close disciples understood him to be an avatar, and therefore saw his role as being exceptional: Yogananda is a *Jagad Guru*, a world guru, for generations to come. Rajarsi, who was fully enlightened and completely eligible to assume the role of the next guru, reverently explained after Yogananda’s passing: “Master will always be our guru. There will never be another guru for Self-Realization-Fellowship.”

Daya Mata similarly emphasized to newcomers to “follow steadfastly the one supreme Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda.”

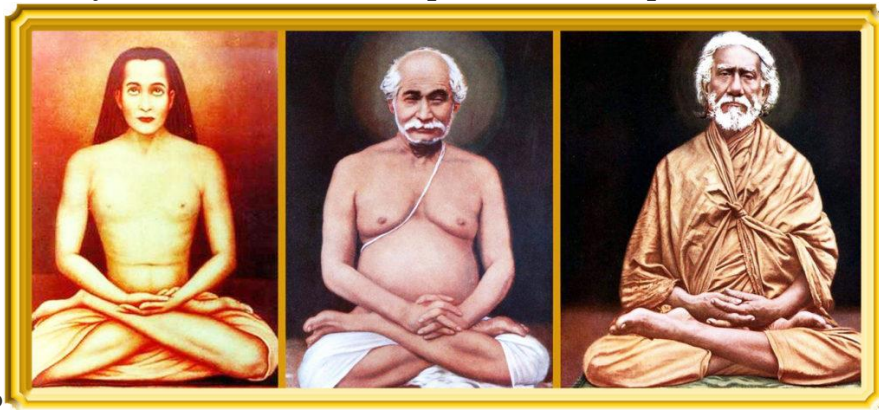
Swami Kriyananda taught exactly the same. At the end of one of his most important books, *Raja Yoga*, he writes: “It was my wish in any case to lead you to the teachings and blessings of my guru. He is the fountainhead; I am only a trickle, surviving but by his power. If you have benefited from these lessons, it is by his grace, not by my wisdom. I pray that you turn to him, and receive into your heart that grace which has flooded mine.”

He personally clarified the crucial question with Yogananda: “Isn’t it necessary to have outward contact with the Guru?” He answered: “There must be at least one outward contact with him.” The Master was referring, Kriyananda specified, to a *meaningful* contact, such as happens at the time of initiation. Since he had disciples initiate people into Kriya Yoga in his stead even while he was alive, Yogananda showed that this link with him would be forged by contact with successive generations of disciples who were in tune with him.

Yogananda had explained this “link through disciples” in his *Autobiography of a Yogi*: his sister Nalini, who had never met Sri Yukteswar, told him: “Your master has blessed our home, our entire family. The presence of such a man is a sanctification on the whole of India. Dear brother, please tell Sri Yukteswarji that, *through you, I humbly count myself as one of his Kriya Yoga disciples.*”

Yogananda at the same time assured his disciples about his future presence, after his passing. Also to Roy Eugene Davis he gave this incredibly precious promise: that he would be present whenever he conducted the Kriya Yoga initiation. But Mr. Davis explained away his guru's living presence: "When my guru told me, 'Whenever you initiate anyone into Kriya Yoga, I, or one of the gurus will be there,' he meant that the consciousness and spiritual force of one or more of the lineage of gurus would be present; not that they would always actually be there."

Didn't he thereby diminish his Master's promise, his importance, and living



presence?

Mahavatar Babaji similarly promised his presence, for all sincere devotees: "Whenever anyone utters with reverence the name of Babaji, that devotee attracts an instant spiritual blessing." By the way, Roy Eugene Davis was present when his guru strongly emphasized that Babaji was Krishna, the avatar. Some disciples in SRF had insisted, 'we can't say that'. Mr. Davis remembers: "[Yogananda] paced around the room like a lion, and demanded: 'Why can't we say that? It's true. Babaji is Krishna! I only speak the truth.'"

Lahiri Mahasaya in a similar fashion promised his living presence: "I am ever with those who practice *Kriya*. I will guide you to the Cosmic Home through your enlarging perceptions."

Sri Yukteswar's promise was given as well, but held a higher standard: "Tell all! Whosoever knows by *nirbikalpa* realization that your earth is a dream of God can come to the finer dream-created planet of *Hiranyaloka*, and there find me resurrected in a body exactly like my earthly one. Yogananda, tell all!"

Yogananda just before leaving this world gave his own promise of being always present and available: "To those who think me near, I will be near."

More than that! All of these Kriya Yoga Gurus have repeatedly appeared to devotees (outside and inside of SRF), not only in vision or as energy, but in flesh and blood.

What is the requirement for attracting their holy presence, blessings, guidance, and grace? It is sincere love and deep attunement.

To conclude: if Yogananda is indeed an avatar, he can certainly be a guru for all the ages to come, for all future generations, and for all souls who turn to him with devotion. The same holds true for all the Kriya Yoga Gurus mentioned above.

The role of advanced disciples: a tricky question

What, then, is the role of highly advanced disciples? Can they be a guru, or not, in Yogananda's Kriya Yoga tradition? It seems not an entirely easy question to answer.

Roy Eugene Davis explains how in informal talks Yogananda affirmed that Sister Gyanamata, Oliver Black, and one or two others, had their own disciples. Swami Kriyananda confirmed this statement, and adds that Yogananda had told him personally at *29 Palms* that "the soul must free others before it can itself receive final freedom." And: "The lowest number that each soul must free before it can itself be raised to the state of *param mukta* is, I believe Master said, six." In other words, each soul needs to become a guru for others, before being liberated.



How are we to harmonize this statement with the declaration, "Yogananda remains the true Guru"?

Maybe the answer is this: highly advanced disciples can, as we can see in Rajarsi's life, in Gyanamata's life, and also in Roy Eugene Davis' life, be a truly powerful and living instrument for Yogananda. They might be called a "small guru" for the supreme Sat-Guru and avatar, Yogananda, instructing and freeing other souls.

Such "small gurus" will always act as pure and humble instruments, consciously representing the great avatar-Gurus of Kriya Yoga and their teachings, always pointing to them and as the source of all blessings.

SRF might emphasize that an advanced state, and attunement, do not suffice: the flow of grace from the gurus depends on SRF membership. For disciples who are not within the SRF organization, "the chain is broken". Yogananda's liberating grace is

taught (or has been taught in the past) to flow exclusively within SRF, his organization and church.

At any rate, advanced living instruments and teachers will always be highly important for less progressed devotees, and also for keeping the guru's mission magnetic, vibrating, and powerful. They make the tradition come alive for younger seekers. Indeed, the life of Roy Eugene Davis was precious for that reason. He is, in fact, deeply loved and will be loved for a long time to come.

His passing

Whatever the truth about Yogananda being an avatar or not, and whatever it means to be a true disciple: the fact remains that Mr. Davis deeply inspired and spiritually helped many, many souls. It is very touching to hear the testimonials of his students. The love one feels is immense. Here is just one of them:

“Having known Roy Eugene Davis for 18 years, I can unequivocally state that he was ‘ever true’ to Master until his last breath. He had *no* ego. He wanted *nothing* for himself. His only motive was to serve, and to help others with their spiritual growth. Mr. Davis was still teaching within four days of his passing, and honored his guru until his last breath.”

He served even while becoming exceedingly weak. His condition in fact had been slowly deteriorating for the last six weeks before his passing. He was finally admitted to the *Northeast Georgia Medical Center Hospital* in Gainesville, Georgia, for shortness of breath and extreme weakness. There he was diagnosed with renal failure and suffered heart failure shortly thereafter. It was March 27, 2019. Mr. Davis passed quietly, without suffering, into the higher world. There, certainly, Yogananda lovingly awaited and welcomed his “boy”.

Thus ended the earthly life of a unique disciple. His devotion, dedication, and service were sincere, profound, and life-long. The secret for all disciples, Roy Eugene Davis knew, will always be the same, one which he had learned from the very beginning:

Attunement with the guru.

