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Swami John Spiers; A Visinory Discipileof Nataraja Guru

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ABSTRACT

In India, spirituality and philosophy are inseparable. Because Indian spirituality's fundamental element is philosophy. Swami John Spiers was a disciple of Nataraja Guru who was the founder of Narayana Gurukulam. Narayana Gurukulam 's aim is to propagate the ideologies and philosophies of Sree Narayana Guru. Sree Narayana Guru was one of the pioneering social reformer and philosopher of India.

Keywords: Narayana Gurukulam, Nataraja Guru, Swami JohnSpiers, Values, Ideologies ,Philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

Swami John Spiers was a Scotsman, who attracted the philosophy and spirituality of India. During his young age, he came to India in 1930. In 1937 he accidently met Nataraja Guru at a function. Later he became the disciple of Nataraja Guru and the part of Narayana Gurukulam Movement. He became the part of Gurukulam, his destiny had changed. John join with Nataraja Guru to accomplish the Narayana Gurukulam Movement with an unconditional dedication to disseminate Sree Narayana Guru's teaching and values.

John Spiers was born into a Calvinist family in Perth, Scotland on November 28, 1907. His father dead at his early childhood, so he grew up in a cold atmosphere. During that period he had interested in read books, especially eastern philosophical and spiritual books. He not only read the translated commentary books but also read the original books. Due to this habit he became a voracious reader. At the age of fourteen, he read Bhagavat Gita at his first time. This book created a drastic change in his life, John read all the available commentary books of Bhagavat Gita including Shankarabashyamwritten by Shankarachariyer, who was the founder of Advaita Philosophy. This book was much complicated to understood especially the inner core meaning, so he created a scientific method

for how to approach these kind of books. During this period he also approached to Madam Blavosky's "Theosophical Society" and he read a book "The Secret Doctrine" authored by Miss Blavosky.

At the age of 23, John moved to India. He was very enthusiastic and interested to know about India and its abundant knowledge through personal experience. He wrote his personal experience in his book 'What India means to me'. After he came to India, John travelled Himalayan mountain regions like Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and met a lot of siddha saints, whom had various knowledge in yoga, spirituality, meditation and so on, John also discussed and clarified his doubts among them. During this period he also met with Jithu Krishnamurthy, Annie Besant, V.K.Krishnamenon and he maintain a close relationship with them.

In 1937, John accidently met Nataraja Guru at a party in Ooty, this was organised by a theosophical family. Nataraja guru and John had talked their ideas each other. John was very impressed to Nataraja Guru and he intend to join with Nataraja Guru's journey. But Guru did not encouraged him of his decision. In 1939, the World War II broke out. John was a British citizen, but he did not like to join British army, due to his sympathy with India and its innocent people. But in that time he worked at an immigrant centre in Bangalore and he later took the charge of an editor in a journal called 'War News'.

During that period Nataraja Guru and John were met frequently and talked their views. This meeting gradually start a new dimension of relationship between them, the outcome of the meetings was John became the disciple of Nataraja Guru. In 1946, Nataraja Guru welcomed John to his ashrama in Ooty named 'Narayana Gurukulam'. John accepted Guru's welcome and started his journey as a disciple of Nataraja Guru. In the beginning period John wondered Nataraja Guru's dedication and his willingness of knowing the absolute wisdom called 'Brahmam'.

Nataraja Guru was one of the world renowned writer, his book world widely accepted and also quoted many writers for their books. At the early period Narayana Guru world widely known through Nataraja Guru's books and his articles in international journals. The world famous philosopher and writer Romain Roland, who knows about Narayana Guru through Nataraja Guru's article titled 'The way of Guru' on an English journal 'The Sufi Quarterly' published in 1928. Later Romain Roland commented that "Sree Narayana Guru was a Janin of action". Nataraja Guru decided to write a book on Narayana Guru's life and his teachings. In 1951, Nataraja Guru completed his hand written copy of 'The word of Guru', and he gave to John for the editorial work of this book. This was the first responsible duty of John given by Nataraja Guru, after he became the part of Gurukulam. John fully dedicated his duty and he also become the part of book design, printing and proof reading. Nataraja Guru was satisfied on John's handwork and his dedication. In 1952, 'The Word of Guru' was published.

After the first publication, Nataraja Guru wrote several books like, 'An Integrated Science of the Absolute', 'One Hundred Verses of Self Instruction', 'The Bhagavat Gita' (commentary work), 'The Autobiography of an Absolutist' and John also contributed a lot for the completion of these books. In the initial stage of Narayana Gurukulam, Nataraja Guru and John Speirs were the only members.

So they were very much struggled for the surviving of Narayana Gurukulam and they were work hard to establish this institution into a prestigious ashrama in this society. First of all they were more focused on published well authenticate books especially Narayana Guru's teaching, philosophies, writing new commentary on various books related with spirituality and philosophy. Nataraja Guru's 'Bhagavat Gita's' commentary book was one of the perfect example of his philosophical knowledge depth. Early publications preface described the struggles and survivability's of Narayana Gurukulam.

Johns one of the important contribution to Narayana Gurukulam was, he started an English magazine. 'Values' was the name of magazine, this publication became the mouth piece of Gurukulam. The first copy was published in 1955 September 11 at Thrissur with the presence of Nataraja Guru and Swami Mangalananda. The aim of this publication was to introduce Sree Narayana Guru's teaching through Nataraja guru's articles among the world. Nataraja Guru's majority of books were first published in 'Values'. Later this was compiled into various books. John pushed Nataraja Guru to wrote new articles for 'Values' and he also initiated and encouraged Guru for wrote his autobiography.

The 'Values' not only published the teachings and philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru but also they were published various contemporary subjects like Anthropology, Psychology, History, and so on. So this magazine become very popular among the western nations. But unfortunately in 1971 John discontinued Values's publication.

In 1952, Nataraja Guru gave 'sanyasadeeksha' (to start the life of monk) to John Spiers. Still he became known as Swami John Spiers. John became the heir of Narayana Gurukulam after Nataraja Guru. But in 1974 he decided to leave from Narayana Gurukulam due to such personal reasons. Later continues his life as a monk. At that period, a lot of Universities and organizations invited him to took class on Sree Narayana Guru's teaching, various philosophies and so on. In 1979 September 19, he died in Bangalore. As per his wish, after his body cremation the ashes put-on the trees of his ashrama.

CONCLUSION

Swami John Spiers was a great intellectual and philosopher among the Indian saint community. His life was fully dedicated to spread the teachings and philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru in the World. He was an inevitable part of Narayana Gurukulam. without the support and contributions of John to Narayana Gurukulam, then the history of this institution become change as per the current progress of Gurukulam.

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