

[The Satguru Lineage Continues](#)

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SUCCESSION

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Introducing Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Over-qualified" was Gurudeva's one-word description of his chosen successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, as he placed the gold rudraksha pendant on his neck October 21, 2001, ordaining him as the 163rd satguru of the Kailasa Parampara. In 1995 in Saiva Dharma Sastras, the Book of Discipline of Saiva Siddhanta Church, Gurudeva wrote, "I have established three successors, all very experienced in spiritual and religious matters. At the time of my grand departure, the senior most among the circle of my present three acharyas still living those being Acharya Veylanswami, Acharya Palaniswami and Acharya Ceyonswami will automatically become the guru mahasannidhanam, to sit upon the Kailasa Pitham, in full charge of Kauai Aadheenam, its branches and memberships, and thus carry forward the spiritual lineage of our parampara, fully empowered to give the dikshas [initiations] of our lineage—samaya, vishesha, sannyas and abhisheka. The announcement is now, and the appointment will take place automatically upon my Maha Samadhi."

Bodhinatha first met Gurudeva in September of 1964, in Virginia City, Nevada, at age 21. He stated, "I want to realize God." A year later, upon completing his university education, Bodhinatha took monastic vows and moved to the monastery permanently. In 1970, Gurudeva took him to Sri Lanka and introduced him to Jaffna Saivite culture and worship, just as Gurudeva had been introduced in the late 1940s. In 1972, at his Sri Subramuniya Ashram in Alaveddy, Gurudeva gave him sannyas diksha in a powerful ceremony. The young swami remained in Lanka another six months, pilgrimaging many times to the Columbuturai hut of Gurudeva's guru, Yogaswami, for worship and meditation, as well as to the famed temples of Nallur, Kumbalavalai and Katirgama.

Early on, Bodhinatha distinguished himself as a gifted teacher, working closely in the 1970s with the first large group of Gurudeva's Western devotees to formally enter the Saivite Hindu religion. Many of those devotees are today the senior members of Saiva Siddhanta Church. As a special discipline he lived for nine months as a solitary hermit in a small hut on the ocean in Kona, Hawaii, performing worship and meditation. In 1975, Gurudeva assigned him and Acharya Palaniswami to translate the Tirukural from Tamil into American English, which they completed in 1999.

In the 1980s Bodhinatha taught at Kauai Aadheenam on travel/study programs and accompanied Gurudeva on his lecture tours to Mauritius, Malaysia and Singapore. In 1988, after six months of pilgrimage in India, he was the first to receive acharya diksha from Gurudeva. In the 1990s, while Gurudeva concentrated on his Master Course trilogy, Dancing, Living and Merging with Siva, Bodhinatha travelled abroad often to minister to members and students. In 1997, Gurudeva initiated him as paramacharya, empowered to confer samaya (mantra) diksha (initiation), which he did for members in Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore and India. Behind the scenes, he has been the financial administrator and senior trustee of the Church's four corporations for 20 years. Bodhinatha is deeply respected by his fellow monks for his sagely insights, thoughtful graciousness and uncanny ability to bring harmony and fairness to any situation.

During the last two years, Gurudeva spent much time away from the ashram, leading three major travel/study programs, attending the Millennium Peace Summit of World Religious and Spiritual Lead