

# YOGA

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## Hari Om

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*Front cover:* Sri Swami Sivananda yatra montage

*Plates:* 1–8: Sri Swami Sivananda



## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

### Real culture

When the earth has hardened into rock, you cannot sow anything in it. When weeds have grown in the earth, it is difficult to bring it under cultivation. If you want to cultivate yourselves, you must begin before the mind is hardened by stiffening of the ego, and before the weeds of negative habits and thinking grow in it.

Yoga develops the body, mind, heart, will and spirit harmoniously. Through the practice of hatha yoga you will enjoy good health, abundant energy and vitality. And if you practise yama and niyama, you will enjoy peace of mind and develop willpower.

Culture is the process of the conversion of the animal nature in man, through the human into the divine. Real culture, real education, lies in the practice of yoga.

—Swami Sivananda

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# YOGA

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(51st year of publication)

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to Swami Sivananda  
Saraswati.

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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

3<sup>rd</sup>  
1<sup>st</sup> January 1946.

I was born of P.S. Venku Aiyar and Parvathi ammal on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1887 at Pattamadai, Tanjore Dist. S. India, in the line of Appayya Dixit. My star is Bharani.

I was extremely mischievous in my boyhood. I studied in the S.P.G. College, Trichy. I was a Doctor in the Malaya States for 10 years. I took Sannyas in 1924 in Rikhi Kesh.

I did Tapas and meditation for 15 years. I went on Lecturing Tours for 10 years. I founded the Divine Life Society in 1936 and the All-World Religious Federation in 1945.

Sivananda

# Swami Sivananda – Unique Visionary

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



We celebrate the 8th September as the birthday of our Paramguru Swami Sivananda Saraswati. Swami Sivananda represents a force of transformation in the chapter of humanity in the twentieth century. He was not only a sannyasin, a renunciate, a sadhu, not only a doctor, not only a good person. He was unique and outstanding in the pantheon of Indian sannyasins.

## **Sannyasin and rishi**

Normally sannyasa is a vocation in life, and in order to live sannyasa one has to be clear that this path is to unite with the highest Self within one. That is the purpose of sannyasa, not the adoption of a particular vocation, not to fulfil a cherished desire, not to become part or a member of a group. Sannyasa represents a process of upliftment, of realizing the dormant divinity within. This is the reason why people come to sannyasa.

Over a period of time in human history, sannyasa has been defined in different ways. For some it is a process of jnana yoga, knowing the self through the intellect. For some it is realizing the source inside by channelling the emotions through bhakti. For some it is realizing the harmony that can exist within, in the individual's microscopic world and life, the manifest world and life, and the divine, transcendental world and life, the harmony that can be experienced and lived in all these dimensions by balancing one's karmas. However, regardless of the path chosen, the aim of sannyasa has been to uplift oneself and realize the divinity inside.

Swami Sivananda lived the life of a sannyasin and by doing so he became a light unto himself. He lived what he believed in, what he taught and preached. There was no difference between his actions and his innermost feelings. Maturity in spiritual life is like boiling a potato. In its natural form a potato is hard, but when you boil it in water, the natural, hard form is transformed into a soft form which can be eaten and enjoyed. In the same way, with spiritual illumination it is the breaking down and splitting open of the hard shell of the ego that brings out the pure self.

In order to bring out the pure self, one requirement is to be simple in needs, thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. When the thoughts are complex and intricate, they cause frustrations and difficulties in adjusting to life. Then all human effort is directed to finding some balance in this disharmony, whether it is divine or a search for security, happiness, contentment, satisfaction, peace

and fulfilment. Inner harmony and purity are reflected when one becomes simple, and not crooked and devious. As you become simple, less selfish and egotistical, you become more and more humble. Humility is a quality seen in the lives of luminaries in the world. Swami Sivananda represents this ideal.



The outstanding quality, however, that identifies Swami Sivananda from other beings is that he was a visionary. A visionary is known as a rishi. In the course of spiritual development and growth, people go through different stages of becoming stable in the higher consciousness. Stability of higher consciousness is perceived as the manifestation of a character. This character identifies a person, whether one is a sadhu, a mahatma, a saint, a sannyasin, a siddha, a bhakta yogi, a jnana yogi, a hatha yogi, or whatever. A visionary, a rishi, is the highest form of illumination, because in that stage of higher consciousness, of having established an identity with the higher consciousness, one is able to foresee the events of the future. What one foresees indicates how humanity is going to develop, what track it is going to follow. Visionaries are able to ease the process, to smooth the path for future generations. Rishis have the qualities of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, of Godhood.

### **Practical spirituality**

Swami Sivananda was a rishi, a visionary who was able to foresee the need of human society, and who knew how to preserve the positive human qualities of humanity and how to maintain and develop human culture. Although the sannyasa tradition belongs to the vedantic tradition, where the individual effort is to dissolve duality and to establish oneself in unity with the higher Self, Swami Sivananda chose the process and system of yoga to fulfil the needs of future

generations. He trained his disciples in the systems of yoga and made everyone a yoga master.

During the last century three names stand out in the world of yoga: Swami Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda. Swami Vivekananda presented the theoretical idea of yoga to the public. Swami Sivananda made yoga a practical subject which could be applied in people's lives, whether to manage one's health, to manage one's confused mind, to manage one's emotional personality, to go into deeper meditative states, and to excel in applying the yogic principles in practical life through karma yoga and seva. Swami Sivananda brought yoga down to practical levels which could be accommodated by the human mind. Many people in the past had tried to do this, but they could not differentiate between the essence of yoga and the garb of spirituality coloured by religious overtones. Therefore, despite their efforts, nobody was able to bring yoga down to a level where it could be understood and practised by everyone. Swami Sivananda did that in all spheres of life. He sowed the seeds of the yoga that emerged as a potential, as a possibility and as a solution to fulfil the vacuum in a particular dimension of life.

This work was carried on by his disciples. Yoga was developed to its highest potential by Swami Satyananda, one of the bright disciples of Swami Sivananda. Swami Sivananda planted the seeds of yoga for use by human society and civilization, and Swami Satyananda defined and explained the process of yoga in scientific form. Swami Sivananda believed that it was the birthright of everyone to experience spirituality in a practical form, in action, in speech and in thought, in all of life's situations. Swami Satyananda further developed this philosophy into a system that is now being recognized as the holistic approach of Satyananda Yoga – Bihar Yoga.

### **Divine living**

Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda were not concerned with the development of yoga as a practice which people



only did for an hour every day in the morning. Rather they made yoga a part of the natural expression in life, to further develop and expand the horizon of the mind, to develop the human sensitivity to feel for others and to rise beyond petty egocentricity, arrogance and the inability to adjust and accommodate.

It is a human trait to overlook righteousness for selfish reasons. In the face of friction, strife and tension, two people will overlook righteousness because selfishness overlooks the sensitivity of the situation. This is the biggest human folly. It is one area which has to be worked upon by expanding the horizons of human sensitivity. People get affected by others because they expect others to be as they are. People always try to find fault with others, not themselves. Why? Are we so afraid of ourselves that we don't want to recognize our weaknesses and faults? Is that our strength, is that our willpower, is that our clarity of mind? This is one reason why, despite their wisdom, human beings have not been able to develop their minds and feelings. What is known as spirituality is only an effort to ensure that one is able to develop the mind and feelings by a process of sadhana which can lead to inner transformation. The sadhus and sannyasins throughout the ages, from the Prophet Mohammed to Jesus Christ, have advocated one basic component – live a righteous life.

Living life righteously has been classified in various scriptures as part of different religions, but how can living a righteous life be the subject of one particular religion and not of humanity as a whole? It is the subject of humanity, and yoga was made the medium to realize this by the rishis of this age.

It is the birthday of this rishi, Swami Sivananda, the visionary, that we are celebrating today. He was a towering spiritual personality, but he was not a religious zealot. For him the sutras of spiritual development were: i) regulation of the daily routine, ii) maintaining constant awareness of the need for transformation by means of a spiritual diary, and iii) bhakti, devotion to what you are involved in.

In his life we see these three components coming together and blending beautifully to make him into a perfect being. The example he has set before us is that we can also become that being. We can also live that divine life by bringing these components together and by forgetting our own egos, limitations, idiosyncrasies, ambitions and inability and inaptitude to adjust and accommodate. Adjustment and accommodation are considered to be the best virtues for a human being to have, either as a householder or as a sannyasin, because they lead to humility. Humility leads to natural learning, and it is natural learning which is the strength in life and the friend for life.

Today we celebrate in our memories and thoughts the birthday of this visionary Swami Sivananda. He inspired many to bring the best out of them. Let our sankalpa be to try to live that life

*– 8 September 2002, Ganga Darshan, India,  
printed in YOGA, Year 2, No. 5 (September/October 2003)*



3<sup>rd</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> January 1946.

I am ever hard-working. I have intense application to work. I never leave a work till it is finished. I never procrastinate any work. I finish it then and there. I am very quick in doing things.

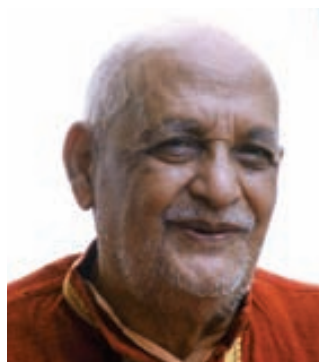
I cannot suppress the spirit of service in me. I cannot live without service. I take immense delight in service. Service has elevated me. Service has purified me.

I know well how to extract work from others. I extract work through kindness, service, respect and love.

Sivananda

# Loving Light of Guru

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Prior to my coming to Swami Sivananda in 1943, I was already connected to many teachers of tantra. I was practising meditation, other spiritual practices and various sadhanas. I had learned the modern systems of yoga therapy, psychotherapy and tantric practices in the burial ground. I also had some training with a tantric yogini for some time, and lived with an old man who was a master of tantra, but I was not satisfied.

## **Meeting the guru**

I already knew very well by then that family life was not meant for me. I always wanted to live alone and wander alone. I never wanted anybody with me, to protect, help or sympathize with me. I did not like money, property and friends. In my early days, I thought that society was a bundle of idiosyncrasies. Even now I hold the same opinion, therefore, the only way left for me was to take and accept sannyasa.

With the help of some people whom I had met earlier, I came to Rishikesh and to Swami Sivananda. His influence was spontaneous. I did not have to assess him. I did not have to decide whether to stay with him or go away. In his presence my analytical mind became stupefied. In fact, it was only after many years that I was amazed at what I had done: to live with a person for twelve years without having to analyze or without having to assess. If you want to have a good job, or purchase a house, you always think whether you should or should not. That is because of the analytical mind, but if

your mind shuts down, you will not think. That was my first experience of my guru.

### **Love above difficulties**

In the presence of the guru, the intellect is stupefied. Only the heart grows; you don't have to think through the power of reasoning. That is called surrender. Surrender does not mean prostrating flat before a person. Surrender means surrender of ego and intellect, but you cannot do this on your own. If there is anything really hard in life, very difficult, it is surrender of the ego.

I come from an affluent background, prosperous, wealthy, from a great family and with social prestige. I had never seen poverty. I knew nothing but comfort and luxury. In fact, I did not know that we could eat vegetables. I only thought those who were poor ate vegetables. We had many villages, cultivations, thousands of sheep, hundreds of ponies. Yet, when I came to Rishikesh I did not even have a place to sleep or anything to eat. There were a lot of mosquitoes, scorpions, serpents and monkeys. The Ganga waters were really cold. For many years in Rishikesh ashram, I suffered from diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, paratyphoid and typhoid. Still, I did not think to leave.

I used to work very hard. That was the beginning period of the ashram. In order to have my food, I had to walk four to five kilometers in the hot sun everyday. I never noticed it. That was the second experience, for when you have love for somebody, there are no difficulties. You become aware of the difficulties when you have no one to love. If you love your guru or if you love anybody, even if the whole world kicks you, criticizes you, you don't care. The personality of Swami Sivananda was so compassionate, so peaceful, that I never knew the disease and sickness that I suffered from.

If I look back on those years, I am surprised as to how it happened. Was I dreaming or was I under hypnosis? My ashram in India is relatively better than that ashram, but still there are people who have their own ego and complain

about it. When you have love for somebody how can you be aware of extraneous experiences. When you are in the warm embrace of a young boy or young girl, you do not even notice the passage of time. When you are under the grip of passion and violence, you do not think of anything else. When you are in the presence of your guru, how are you aware of your own self? I stayed like this with Swami Sivananda for a full period of twelve years.

### **The many forms of seva**

Swami Sivananda's fundamental philosophy of life was seva. He placed the singing of God's name at the top of his priority list and meditation at the end of his list, a long way off. Whereas most practitioners start their spiritual life with meditation, Swami Sivananda's spiritual life started with service and culminated in meditation. The beginning of spiritual life stems from service to humanity. Swami Sivananda's life was an example of compassion, charity and generosity. He was simple, devout, kind and compassionate. He was happiest when he was feeding and giving to people. His philosophy in life was that God is real and everything else is unreal. He was a generous and large-hearted man.

Swami Sivananda's heart was completely open, without any doors or windows. He was not at all interested in accumulating wealth. He used to say, "Spend more than you have. Feed the poor and give them medicine. Give blankets to the pilgrims. Make arrangements for drinking water during the summer, and extend all possible help to the sadhus and sannyasins." He always thought about others. Whenever he met people he did not give spiritual lessons, but said pleasant things to them and gave clothes, food and medicine. He could remember the names of each one of his acquaintances from thirty-five to forty years ago. If a man had become old, he would ask, "How is your grandson? He was in the eighth class. Where is he now? What is he doing? He had a mole here. Is the mole still there?" He cared for people, so he knew everything

about them, especially their difficulties, problems, ambitions and desires.

## My God

Here is a story of Swamiji's unquestioning and unconditioned love for one and all. One day Swami Sivananda was showing a wealthy devotee around the ashram. The wealthy devotee had just spent some rather uncomfortable nights in one of the rooms in the ashram, with a lot of mosquitoes and no mosquito nets, and the toilets far off.

While Swami Sivananda was showing him around the ashram, the guest noticed a very attractive looking kutir on a hillock. He said, "Swamiji, that kutir looks very comfortable. That is the type of kutir we should be building for the residents and guests who come to stay here." Swami Sivananda said, "Yes, but the money is in your pocket." The man replied, "Could I have a look at the kutir? I'd like to see the inside and see who is being housed there." Swami Sivananda said, "Of course, let's go and have a look."

Inside the kutir an old bull was convalescing. The visitor got a shock as he was expecting to find some VIP residing there. So when he saw the bull he could only exclaim, "My God! My God!" Swami Sivananda said, "Yes, exactly."



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4<sup>th</sup> January 1946

I am very regular in doing asans and exercises. I even now do Srikasan, Sarvang asan and other asans. I do pranayama also regularly. They give me wonderful health and energy. I run round the Bhajan Hall daily.

I cannot deliver fiery lectures sitting on a special seat. Special seat fricks me. I stand up or throw the seat away and then begin to speak. I never sat on a special seat when I presided over spiritual conferences.

I rejoice in giving. I always give.

Sivananda



# Feeding the Rowdies

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Swami Sivananda had a simple process before eating. When the food came to him, he first took a little piece of rice, roti, dal and vegetables, which he did not eat himself. He put it on the ground as an offering to the gods and divine beings. Some people before eating take some food to the cowshed, as for them feeding the cow is the highest *dharma*, or duty. Swami Sivananda used to do his offering first and keep some food for a swami in the ashram.

## **Everyone is God**

Every day people gave so much to Swami Sivananda: blankets and clothes, sweets and fruits, biscuits and money. He just kept feeding and giving to everyone, from human beings to monkeys.

In Rishikesh, there used to be a lot of monkeys who were shrewd rowdies, not gentlemen. The ashram had a big kitchen with a hall and the residents used to close the door to eat inside. The moment they opened the door, the monkeys would come into the kitchen with great speed and take up to twenty rotis. When the swamis carried food from the kitchen to the rooms of the sick, the monkeys would attack and take away the rotis, vegetables and other food. Swami Sivananda said that the monkeys represented the great Hanuman, the monkey god, and it was the duty of the swamis to feed them every Friday morning. On Thursday, a large amount of horse gram was soaked in water and the next morning it would be taken out onto the terrace for the monkeys.

Great figures such as Swami Sivananda come ready-made with that nature, but in the case of most people, good deeds can be an egoistic action. A person is propelled by his ego, so he does good deeds in order to feed that ego and self-satisfaction. However, there are people who always consider it their duty to do good to others, and who were born only with that purpose. There are many stories in both the East and West about people who consider the needs of others to be more important than their own.

Swami Sivananda did act without any thought of self. It is difficult for people who are practical and pragmatic to understand what he was doing. He thought that God was in every form. The monkey is God, the boys and girls are God, the ashramites are God, the guests are God. Therefore, if anybody was sick or in trouble, he helped them not for any gain but as worship of God. That is the attitude of saintly people.

Saintly people have the attitude of divinity and people who are charitable, humanistic and philanthropic have the attitude of doing good to others. Sage Vasishtha says in *Yoga Vasishtha* (6:2:47:30):

*Sajjano hi samuttaarya vipadbhyo nikatasthitam;  
Niyojayati sampatsu svaalokeshviva bhaaskarah.*

It is the nature of virtuous men to deliver their neighbours from danger and calamity, and to lead them towards wellbeing and prosperity, as the sun leads people to light.

### **The Millionaire's Messenger**

Swami Sivananda liked to tell stories and parables to elucidate his teaching. One such parable is about a millionaire who wanted to send an urgent message to another rich man living in a neighbouring town. He calls his best clerk and hands him the message saying, "Please take this urgently to my friend." The messenger delivers the message to the other rich man. This haughty rich man accepts the message and indifferently tells the messenger, "I hope you have had your food; if you haven't, take this fruit and get away." The messenger is deeply hurt and goes away.

On the way, a poor man meets the messenger and with great love and solicitude offers a glass of cool water. The messenger is greatly pleased and refreshes himself with the water. The messenger reports the whole matter to his master who, realizing that the insult heaped upon his messenger is verily an insult to his own person, looks with disfavour upon the rich man who thenceforward lives estranged from the millionaire. The poor man is amply rewarded.

Similarly, God sends humankind His messengers in the form of saints and sages. They come to the earth with the message of hope, joy and immortality. The haughty man filled with the pride of wealth, position and power, builds an ashram for the saint or donates lakhs of rupees for the saint's mission, but all this is tainted by arrogance. This does not please the saint. A poor man, on the other hand offers the saint a flower, a fruit or just water, but with it, he offers his heart to the saint. The saint is well pleased with him.

Through the saint the Lord knows the comparative merits of the rich man and the poor one. What matters is *bhava*, the feeling, the quality that lies in the act of giving, and not the quantity of the gift.

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5<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

I am 59 now. I never feel I am quite young. I am full of vigour, vim and vitality. I am ever cheerful. I sing, dance, run, and jump in joy. I am robust and strong. I can digest any kind of food.

I continuously work, read and write. I never go to hill-stations or sea-side for a holiday. Change of work gives rest. Meditation gives abundant rest.

Work gives me delight.  
Service gives me happiness.  
Writing bestows joy. Meditation energises and invigorates me.  
Kirtan vivifies me.

Sivananda

# A Man of Faith

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Swami Sivananada was a man of faith. He was a scholar and wrote two hundred, three hundred, four hundred books on every subject in yoga and tantra, but his main quality was not his intellectual capacity but his absolute faith in God. That was his greatness. I have never come across another man in my life that had his unconditional faith. I have



seen the greatest intellectuals and read their books. I have met many people in the East and the West who are dedicated, sincere, and honest, but faith is something else. It is not knowledge. To anybody who went to Swami Sivananda with difficulties, he always said, "It will be alright." There was so much faith.

## **Faith versus ego**

I know what faith is; but there are always doubts lurking in the mind. You are never sure what is going to happen. Even if you believe in God, you are never sure about it. There is some sort of doubt somewhere, an intellectual doubt, or maybe some religious doubt, but doubt is always there. You are never sure.

If you can say that God is omnipresent and omnipotent and that he is all-compassionate, all-loving; you say it, but that's all. You have no faith in it, for when you are put to a real test, you fail. A man having faith will never fail. For twelve years that was one quality I saw in Swami Sivananda.

He had intellect. He was a doctor, but he had so much faith. He used to tell me many times, "Ay, why do you rack your brain so much? You just pray to God and it will happen." It was difficult for me to accept it at the time.

As I grow in my life, as I see life and all the paths of yoga, bhakti, jnana, intellectualism, Sufism, Jainism, Lamaism, I think they are all difficult paths. They are not only difficult, but we are not even sure that any of them lead anywhere. I think they are all fronts. We don't mind the practice, it is all fun, but actually we are just passing time, seventy years, eighty years, ninety years. We are going nowhere. For years and years we practise, but the little ego doesn't come out of its nest. We are talking about changing the self. The same ego sits with us our whole life and we are not able to come out.

At most what do we get? We close our eyes and are unconscious. We just lose contact with time and space; that's all. Is this the highest truth that we are to attain? When we become unconscious of the external realities of life, is that the only role of life? Do we want to escape from external realities, because of competition, hard labour, jealousy, love, passion and imperfection? The world demands so many things from us, that we want to escape from it. What should we attain? Many paths that we have been taking and trying and working at, ultimately leave us at a point when we can do nothing. We can't even go back. It is too late.

The path, whether it is *guru bhakti*; faith in the guru, or it is bhakti for the Lord, faith in God, whatever it may be, there should be an attitude of inspiration.

### **It is possible**

There is something within us that must develop, and we should lose ourselves to it. It is not difficult. I tell you it is not difficult, but we have not tried it. Many times we know people who completely lose themselves in anger. They even kill, only to repent later. For a moment they lose themselves. We have seen people lost in passion. We know how to lose ourselves. It is not that we do not know. We have lost ourselves many times. Then why should we not lose ourselves in this total awareness, even for one minute, it is enough. It is said, if you can lose your little self, if you can lose yourself, even for one split second, in

the time that it takes lightening to come and go, even that much time is enough. Just cease to exist for a split second. That was the one thing that I saw in Swami Sivananda, for many years.

### **God-intoxicated**

In my life I have seen many people whom I call magicians. I have lived with people who are great intellectuals. Yet, I had never lived with a man who had



love, compassion, understanding, and eternal forgiveness not only in his mind but in his lifestyle. I distinctly remember three persons and no more. One was Mahatma Gandhi, another was Swami Sivananda and the third was Jesus Christ. If you lived with Swami Sivananda, you would think of Jesus Christ all the time. When Jesus Christ said, "God forgive them, for they know not what they do." I thought, this could not be said; no man could say that. However, in the lives of Swami Sivananda and Mahatma Gandhi, this was practised. This was a great experience in my life.

When Mahatma Gandhi was about to be assassinated, the department of police wanted to guard him physically with revolvers and pistols. Rumours were already in the air that an attempt to kill him was going on. Actually, there were many rumours circulating about an assassination attempt. The government wanted to screen the people who came into his meetings. They also wanted two police bodyguards by his side, but Gandhiji refused. He said, "The real protector is God and not the revolver. Man doesn't have to defend himself because he is the replica of the Divine. If one has faith in God, one has to have faith in one's own self. If you don't have faith in your Self it means you have no faith in God." That was the type of person Gandhi was and Swami Sivananda was of the same type.

# A Change of Heart

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Most people do practise putting others' needs first, although in a limited sense. Parents put the needs of their children ahead of their own. When a person loves somebody, whether parents, friend, husband or wife, he always places their needs ahead of his own. He does this because he considers that person as his daughter, son or darling. This sense of possession has to go away, and that is the difficult part. If one is able to extend oneself towards a monkey, an animal or a stranger, it means that one has become selfless.

Once during the Kumbha Mela, a man suffering with leprosy was brought to the ashram in a sack. Swami Sivananda told me to put him in a room and clean his body with the necessary antiseptics. He was a doctor and knew what to do. I carried out the duty I had been given. That man was obnoxious. I could not accept his smell, attitude, behaviour and entire being. The next morning, Swami Sivananda asked about the man. I said, "Swamiji, that man is so difficult; his disease and sores are so difficult."

Swami Sivananda replied, "You want to find God without any effort. You want to realize God without a change of heart, mind, philosophy and concept, without destroying your personal nest. First destroy your personality, character, views, habits, likes and dislikes and change your heart."

If it had been a beautiful young lady, I would have served her without complaining. If it had been a young or rich man, I would have served him. I was not fit to realize God. Before self-surrender can take place, the entire personality has to be rearranged.





## What Is Real Life?

To live in the eternal atman,  
To taste the bliss of the soul.  
To worship the Lord at all times,  
Is real life.

To do japa of the Lord's name,  
To sing His glory constantly,  
To remember Him at all times,  
Is real life.

To practise *yama, niyama*,  
To serve the poor and the sick,  
To hear the *shrutis*,  
Is real life.

To reflect and meditate,  
To serve the *Guru*,  
To follow his instructions,  
Is real life.

To realize one's own self,  
To behold the one Self everywhere,  
To attain *Brahmajnana*,  
Is real life.

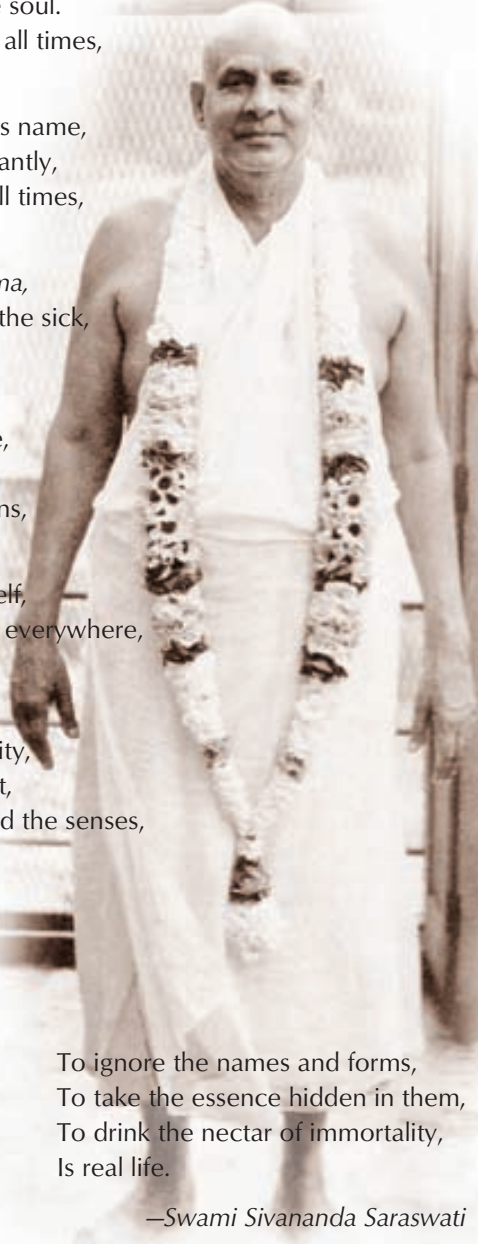
To live to serve humanity,  
To practise self-restraint,  
To control the mind and the senses,  
Is real life.

To practise *pranayama*,  
To do *Brahmavichara*,  
To stick to resolves,  
Is real life.

To live in *Om*,  
To chant *Om*,  
To meditate on *Om*,  
Is real life.

To ignore the names and forms,  
To take the essence hidden in them,  
To drink the nectar of immortality,  
Is real life.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



# Atmabhava

*From the teachings of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

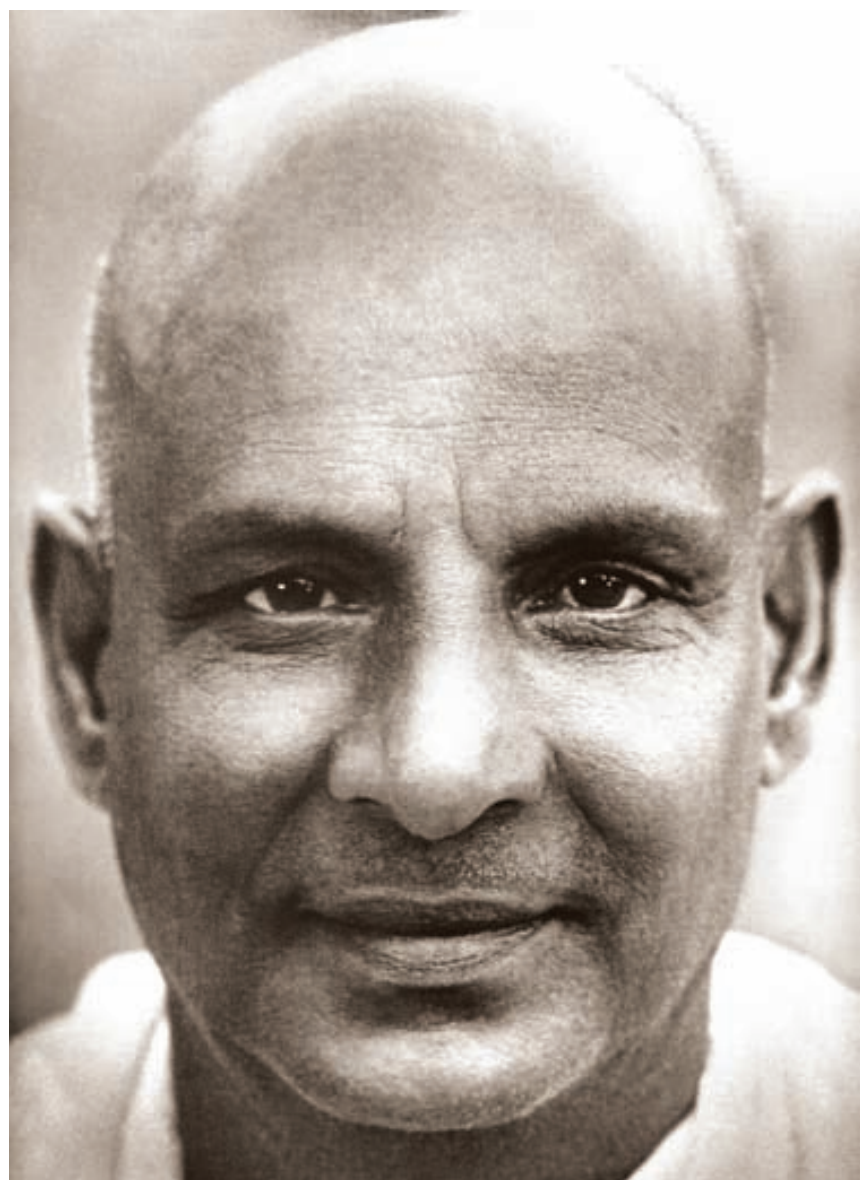


*Atmabhava* is the ability to see oneself reflected in another person. People see their reflection in their offspring and are connected with them, sympathize with them, love them and believe that the child is theirs because it is born of their womb. They are able to see a reflection of the nature of their soul in that child. However, when they are able to see their reflection in everyone, it is called *atmabhava*. Service

happens most efficiently when there is *atmabhava*.

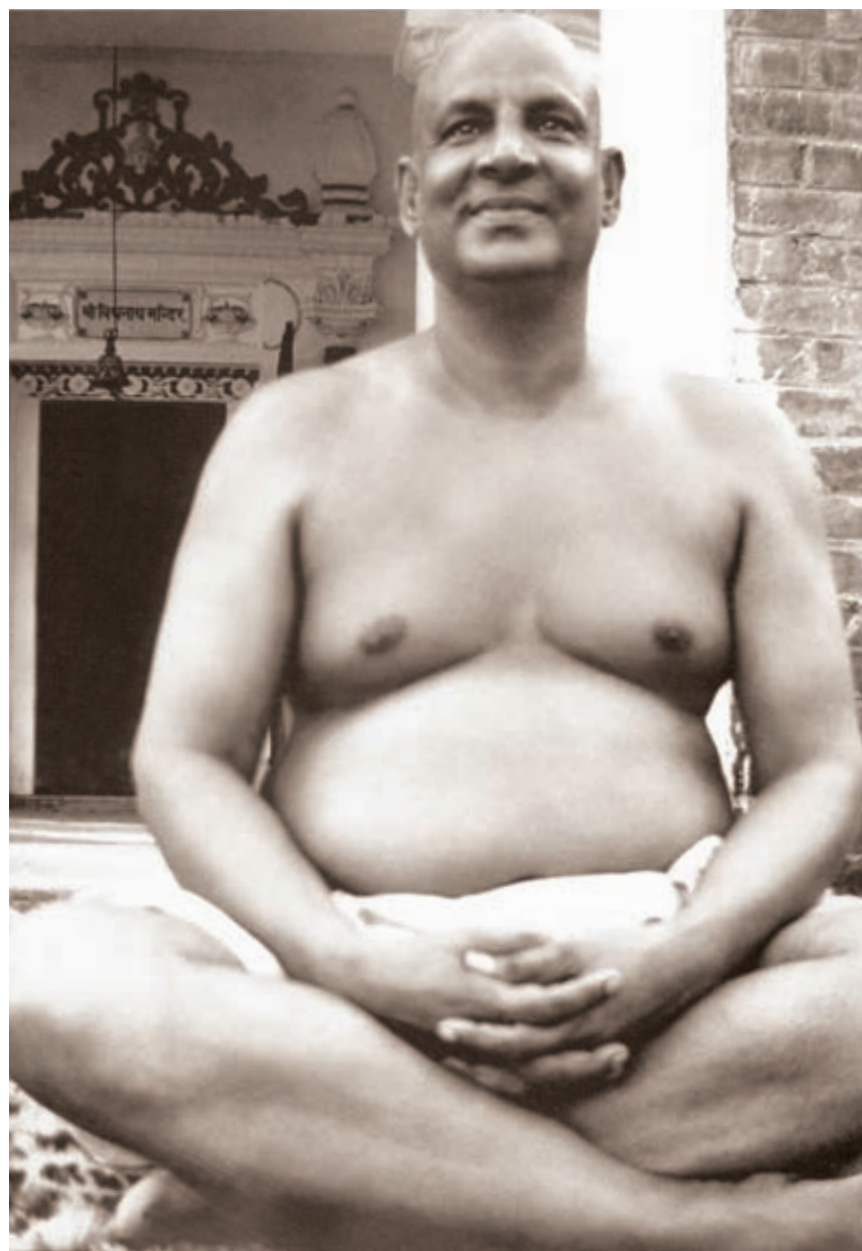
An incident in Swami Sivananda's life illustrates *atmabhava*. One day a pilgrim on his way to Badrinath came to him. In those days there were no roads or cars, only bullock-carts and the pilgrim's two legs. That particular pilgrim was sick. He came to Swami Sivananda's dispensary, described his problem and Swami Sivananda gave him some medicine. The pilgrim went on his way. Three hours later, Swami Sivananda felt that the medicine was not the appropriate one and a better one could have been given instead. He called Swami Satyananda and said, "Locate that pilgrim and give him this medicine for it is the better one. I have given him the wrong medicine." This was not an easy task for Swami Satyananda!

This is a story of *atmabhava*. It was not necessary for Swami Sivananda to go through this motion of compassion. He did not ignore the suffering of any individual or his responsibility, his commitment, *dharma* or duty, for he saw the divine presence in everyone.



















## Seva

Seva is the only way that God has given to ensure that others are helped. Seva means cooperation. In nature everything exists for others. The human being is the only creature who lives for himself alone. Until and unless this selfish, self-centred human being is convinced and has the strength of character to walk the path of seva, he will not be able to achieve anything.

Seva is the first expression of Swami Sivananda's yoga, which begins after having come to the state of Sage Patanjali's meditation and an understanding of atmabhava. As the spiritual aspirant serves more and more, as he connects himself with people more and more, he purifies himself internally and an unconditioned love emanates from his being, touching everyone.

The love of an enlightened being is universal and unconditional. Just as the rays of the sun shine equally on all, the love that radiates from an enlightened being embraces all.



# Uncovering the Light

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



I left my native town in 1942 and went to Rajasthan in the western part of India. I had an adopted sister who was a doctor. She had a guru, so when she knew that I was searching for spiritual life, she took me to her guru. Her guru was eighty years old and he was a master of tantra. I lived with him for over six months. The master was very kind to me and taught me the theories and philosophies of tantra, for he thought that I could be his good disciple. However, after six months I left his place and again went in search of a guru of my choice.

## **Work hard**

I went to Rishikesh, and there I met Swami Sivananda Saraswati. I joined him on 19th March 1943 at 9 am in the morning. My problem was not meditation or samadhi or concentration. I could easily withdraw my mind and go deep, up to a certain point of awareness, but beyond that I could not, I could not go beyond a certain level of mind or consciousness. I tried for many years but it didn't work. Therefore, the first question that I asked him was, "When I meditate I have this difficulty." He advised me to stay in the ashram and work hard. He said, "Stay here and work hard."

From that time up to March 1956, the same day, 19th March, I worked for him. The life in that ashram was so dynamic and so full of novelties, every moment was a surprise. No two days were the same. Now we have a mechanical life, everyday we

have the same program, same problem, same situations, but in the Rishikesh ashram, everyday was different, the experience was different, the difficulties were different, the place you slept was different and the food was different.

### **Sannyasa**

During these years the conflicts, the latent passions, the samskaras and the karma, which I did not know were there in me began to come up to the surface. Fear, anger, jealousy, laziness, hatred, passions, restlessness, anxiety, everything, one by one, and sometimes a hoard of them began to come up. So much so that in 1947, I began to think that it would be too difficult for me to live as a sannyasin, as a swami. It would be better if I went back and did some work somewhere to continue my spiritual life. I wrote an application to a newspaper where I knew the managing director. Immediately he sent me a letter of appointment as the subeditor of the newspaper, as he knew that I was a journalist. He also sent me some money, about fifty rupees. For fifty rupees one could buy a coat, pant, tie, and there would be money left. I did not tell anyone in the ashram. A few days before leaving, I went to my guru and told him, "I am



dedicated to a spiritual life, I am not going to fall into maya, so I think I will work and lead a spiritual life." I think it was 4th, 5th, or 6th of September. He said, "Oh, you are going? Alright."

In the evening he called me and said, "You have lived in the ashram for so many years and you have done a lot of work for the ashram, raised so many buildings, established the printing press, offices, departments, kitchen, everything. Now when you are going we will give you a farewell party." I was not a big man in the ashram, but I was an important man in the ashram, as I worked for every department. He said, "Okay, this party will be arranged after two or three days." I said, "Alright." I began to tell everybody that I was going to be the subeditor of an important newspaper. On 12th September in the morning Swami Sivananda called me and said, "You are going to take sannyasa." I thought, "My God! I have prepared everything. My appointment letter has come, fifty rupees have come." I couldn't say anything, the barber was already there, for according to Swamiji's concept I needed to shave my head. The dhoti was ready, the archarya who chants the mantra for sannyasa was ready. Everything was prepared. I said, "I told everybody you were going to give me a farewell party." He said, "Yes, I am going to give you a farewell party. Farewell to the old man, welcome to another man. Farewell to that man, welcome to this man."

Even with such a powerful mind that I had at that time, I could not oppose my guru on any issue. I stayed. I didn't know exactly what to do. He said, "Ready?" No reply. I was mummified.

I went to the Ganga, which was not far, only about twenty to twenty-five feet. I took my bath, and then I went to the barber who shaved my head. I didn't speak. Swamiji said, "Come, sit down near the fireplace." Mantras were chanted. In two and a half hours, my sacred thread was thrown out, the tuft, sign of Hinduism, was taken out and my white dhoti was taken away. This geru garb was put on, the mala was put on and my name was given. My name before sannyasa was Satya Chaitanya, but then chaityanya was removed and ananda was added.

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9<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

I love nature, music, art  
poetry, philosophy, beauty, good-  
ness, solitude, meditation, Yoga  
and Vedanta.

I am humble and simple.  
I am frank and straight-forward.  
I am perfectly tolerant and  
Catholic. I am merciful and  
sympathetic. I have spontaneous  
and unrestrained generosity.

I am bold and cheerful.  
I am patient. I can bear insult  
and injury. I am forgiving.  
I am free from vindictive  
nature. I return good for evil.  
I serve that man who has  
injured me, with joy.

Sivananda

# Be True to Your Nature

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

My guru, Swami Sivananda, never interfered with his disciples. He was not at all a dictator. He was a very benevolent man. He minded his own business, his own work, but surely he influenced me. There is a difference between him impressing me and him influencing me. I had my own personality and still do today, but the way he lived, thought, behaved and interacted with people was a very interesting way. His behavior was natural. I can't follow him and I don't follow him.

When a wretched person, or a real rascal, came to Swami Sivananda, he used to worship him. When the people who spoke badly about him came to Swamiji, he used to give them special respect. He used to say, "Those who prick you, give them the flower." He practised it every day. Even if Swami Sivananda was alerted that a certain person had come to cheat him, he would say, "That is his karma, and this is my karma."

He was very generous. If you went to him and asked for anything, he would give it to you. He was generous in giving food and distributing money, books, clothes, blankets, sweets and fruits. If you would have gone to his ashram you would have been very happy. His main motto was: "Give, give and give."

## **Thank you**

Here is an example of Swamiji's extraordinary personality and his ability to act according to his high principles without compromise.

One day, Swami Sivananda went to give satsang at a devotee's home. The hostess had spent a lot of time preparing the food and the house to make sure that everything was ready to receive the guru and guests. The satsang went on a little longer than usual and Swami Sivananda had a train to catch.



The disciples around him were saying, “Swamiji, you have finished the satsang. We will miss the train if you continue any longer.” So Swami Sivananda got in the car and went towards the train station.

On the way, he remembered that he hadn’t thanked the hostess for the effort she had made in making such a pleasurable and beautiful evening for everyone. He said, “Stop the car. I am going back. I haven’t thanked the hostess.” The organizers and disciples in the car said, “Swamiji, you can’t go back for you’ll miss the train and if you miss the train, you’ll miss the next program.” Swami Sivananda was adamant and said, “No, I must go back. I must thank the hostess. It is not right that she should have made so much effort and I just left the house without saying a word to her.”



He went back to the house, went in and asked her forgiveness. He bowed down, touched her feet and said, "Forgive me for not thanking you for the beautiful hospitality and everything that you had arranged for me. It was very amiss of me to have left the house without thanking you properly."

Again he got in his car and went onto the station. Swami Sivananda's high principles did not allow him to go away without behaving correctly and appropriately.

### **No imitation for me**

So naturally, these qualities impressed me very much, but when I thought about myself, I found that it was not my nature. I am made up of a different metal. If I imitated him, it would be unnatural for me.

Swami Sivananda used to touch the feet of his disciples, like a disciple touches his master's feet. Every morning he would touch them. Some of the disciples of Swamiji also did this, but it was unnatural for me.

He came to my room one day and saw that my room was simple. There was only one bed, one little bucket, one or two dhotis, the *Gita* and Upanishads. He told me that I should keep many blankets in my room, tea, coffee, cups and firestone. I told him, "I don't need these things." He said, "You are selfish." Selfish means only for myself. He said, "Keep things for others."

That was his nature, but I never did it. Even now I don't keep anything in my room. I don't like it. If you ask for paper I say, "Go to the office." I have a different nature and he had his nature.

Some of his disciples imitated him, but I didn't like it. Imitation has a negative effect on me because it is unnatural. Love has to be natural. If I just say, "Oh, I love you," that is unnatural. Love has to be put into action and come from the spirit. If you bring a crow and you put peacock's feathers on it, it doesn't become peacock. So I am what I am.

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11<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

My daily routine is like that of Lord Buddha. I always remain in the room. I do Japa, Kirtan, and meditation. I study sacred books. I write. I come out of the room for a short time for work, service and interview.

I talk a little. I think much. I meditate much. I try to do much and serve much.

I do not waste even a single minute. I ever keep myself fully occupied. I lead a well-regulated life. I perform worship of Atma at all times. I work for the good of others.

OM. OM. OM.

Sivananda

# The Yoga of Swami Sivananda

*From the teachings of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



When one turns a self-oriented karma into a selfless karma, it becomes seva. If the harmonium had a mind of its own, it may think, "Oh, I play really well." However, the harmonium cannot play itself. If an adept player plays it, the melody will be harmonious. If a first-timer tries to play, the melody will be disharmonious. Therefore, it is the player who is important.

When the aspirant understands that he is only a medium to fulfil a destiny, but something else is playing him, the first level of surrender comes. He says to himself, "I am not the doer. I am not the performer; I am only a box like a harmonium. Somebody is playing me, sometimes in accord, sometimes not, and with each melody, one part of my destiny is being fulfilled." The final commandment of yoga is *ishwara pranidhana*, complete dedication to the indestructible reality.

It is the first stage in transforming self-oriented karma into selfless karma and leads to purification of the emotions.

### **Start with service**

Swami Sivananda, in his practical eightfold path of yoga, has placed service on the first rung. Service or connecting with those in need helps to purify oneself. He says, "Do not fight attachments as they are a part of every individual." He gives the example of drops of black ink put in a cup of water. Does the water turn black or does the ink turn watery? If one wants to clear the water of the dark ink of selfish attachments, more water or selfless attachment has to be added. When the selfishness of attachment is diluted and one's attachment is directed not to one but to ten, not to ten but to a hundred, not to a hundred but to a thousand, the selfishness of one's attachment is divided by a thousand. The selfishness of attachments is reduced by including more people in the fold of one's life.

When more people are included, one experiences the eternal human connection that transcends intellect and feelings. It shows that one is a part of that unified field known as G-O-D, the source of Generation, Organization and Destruction. It is consciousness which creates, sustains and destroys. It is also the concept of ishvara pranidhana, leading to purification of the heart, due to expansion of one's perceptions and awareness.

### **Transformation and reconnection**

Sage Patanjali teaches the yoga of personal transformation, which is the first stage. Swami Sivananda teaches the yoga of reconnecting with the world after having transformed oneself. That is the last stage. After the samadhi of Sage Patanjali, one starts with service, becoming active again in the world, but this time as an enlightened being, not as an ignorant fool who only cares for himself. For an enlightened being everyone's needs become one's own needs.

Just as Sage Patanjali speaks of 'yama', Swami Sivananda speaks of 'seva'. Sage Patanjali speaks of 'niyama'; Swami

Sivananda speaks of 'love'. Through service, one embraces the whole world into the love and sentiment of oneness. There is no isolation from anybody, but connection with everybody, bringing light into the life of everyone. Sage Patanjali speaks of 'asana'; Swami Sivananda says 'give'. Sage Patanjali speaks of 'pranayama'; Swami Sivananda says 'purify'. Through giving, one is able to remove every remnant of the dross from life and purify oneself. Sage Patanjali speaks of 'pratyahara'; Swami Sivananda says 'do good'. The responses are now conscious and appropriate; the understanding is based on dharma and *nyaya*, the spiritually correct way. Therefore, one does good, whereas previously one did not have that understanding. When one does good, one is good. The goodness flowering within illuminates one from inside. When Sage Patanjali speaks of 'dhyana', Swami Sivananda says 'meditate'. Meditation comes forth once again; however, this time it is not for a selfish purpose, but with the realization that God pervades the entire nature. Finally, Sage Patanjali speaks of 'samadhi' and Swami Sivananda says 'realize'. Here they speak of the same.

Sage Patanjali's ashtanga yoga represents the personal aspect of self-transformation, and Swami Sivananda's yoga represents the expression of that yogic attainment in practical life.

### **The quality of humanity**

Living the principles of Sivananda yoga brings people together; it binds them and develops a force of conviction, faith and a belief, not in God alone, but in the quality of humanity. This belief in the quality of humanity is higher and more satisfying than a belief in God. God is always there as the last resource. Whenever one wants to see God, one only has to open the door of the heart. Therefore, it is not too difficult, but to see the qualitative goodness in humanity is difficult. By living these principles it was found through the ages that a qualitative life can be lived, which Swami Sivananda called the 'divine life'.

# Kirtan with Swami Sivananda

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Whether it was a sunny, stormy or a rainy day Swami Sivanandaji always came to kirtan on time, even if nobody else turned up. He used to call it satsang. He came every day. First we chanted *Om* three times, then Swami Sivananda used to start kirtan with Ganesha, guru, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Hare Rama, Krishna, Allah, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha and Zoroaster. He remembered all the gods and saints in the world. It took about five minutes.

Then he started reading a chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* was read every day as a recitation which used to take about seven to ten minutes. After that we took up one of the books: *Vishnu Purana*, *Srimad Bhagavata*, *Ramayana*. One swami

would read one chapter every day, and we would take turns.

After that three or four swamis would sing a kirtan. They had to be ready for there was no harmonium, nothing, just a kirtan without anything. We had to sit down and sing. Swamiji used to say, "Kirtan is singing the Lord's name. It is the easiest, surest and safest way for attaining God. Kirtan is the divine food for the soul. Kirtan can make you immortal." He said that just as fire has the natural property of burning things, so the name of God does have the power of burning sins and desires.



When the musician or the singer used to get into ecstasy, Swamiji used to say, "Ganga Mai Ki Jai," and just break the kirtan there. Ganga means Ganga. *Mai* means mother and *jai* means glory. 'Ganga Mai Ki Jai' means 'Glory to Mother Ganga'. That was Swamiji's slogan and he used it also when he wanted to say, "Don't get into ecstasy."

In all the years I was at the ashram, whenever a swami or any kirtanist went to a certain point and wanted to prolong it, Swamiji would say, "Ganga Mai Ki Jai." He stopped the kirtan then and there.

At the end of the kirtan, Swamiji used to give a lecture for three to five minutes maximum. His lectures were direct. He would say, "What is vairagya? It is a special detachment to the earthly objects of enjoyment for your own sake."

Like this three or five minutes of instructions, guidance or explanation. We finished with a little prayer and arati and then we went to sleep.



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14<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

I give very prompt reply to all my letters. I do several things at a time. I write with electric speed.

I spend every thing. I do not of charity. I do not keep anything. I take immense delight in feeding the poor and my students. I try to be a mother to them.

I talk to others on things which I have myself practised. I look within always, introspect, analyse and reamine. I hold the Trisul, spiritual diary, daily routine and resolve.

Sivananda

# Spirituality and Renunciation

*From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



On 19th March 1956 in the morning, I went to Swami Sivananda to tell him I was leaving. He knew that I was going. I told him, "I don't want to have anything to do with any ashram, because I'm too tired. My body is tired, my mind is tired. I just want to rest somewhere." He called me into his room and taught me the seventeen kriyas of kriya yoga in maybe five minutes, then he said, "You practise it. Now you go." He gave me 108 rupees,

which are still with me today. I haven't spent them and they are still in my locker.

## **Shaktipath**

On 13th July 1963, or early morning on 14th, I was in Munger and I had a great living experience which completely changed the course of my life. I experienced that I was in Rishikesh, not in Munger, in real flesh and blood. I was standing on the bank of the Ganga and a large motor launch was going across the water. On that motor launch, conches and trumpets were being blown and gongs were being beaten. On a chair he was seated - Swami Sivananda Saraswati. He was looking to the other side, as the steamer was sailing, but suddenly he looked at me, just for a glance. It was just a glance. The flywheel of the steamer sprinkled a little Ganga water on me and the living experience came to an end. When I got up, for about three or four minutes, maybe more, I did not know whether being in Munger was a dream or being in Rishikesh was a dream.

It took me some time to come to the conclusion that I was in Munger, and not in Rishikesh.

For some time I thought that I was in Rishikesh and I was dreaming of Munger. That was the experience, but gradually I was coming down and down. Until morning I was doubtful, thinking, "How can I be sure which experience is true? If this is the depth of human experience which I have had just now, how am I to be sure that this life, this experience which I have been living for the last forty years years can be said to be the truth?" Maybe it is a dream or some other experience? We don't know.

### **Gurukripa**

That was all, and after that the yoga movement came into being. Again I started involving myself in the same way as I did in 1943, giving my mind, body and life. Still now I have clear glimpses of my guru. For me he is not dead, for the death of the body is only a change, it does not indicate disintegration at any cost. I have his glimpses especially when I am fed up with the world and with human nature.

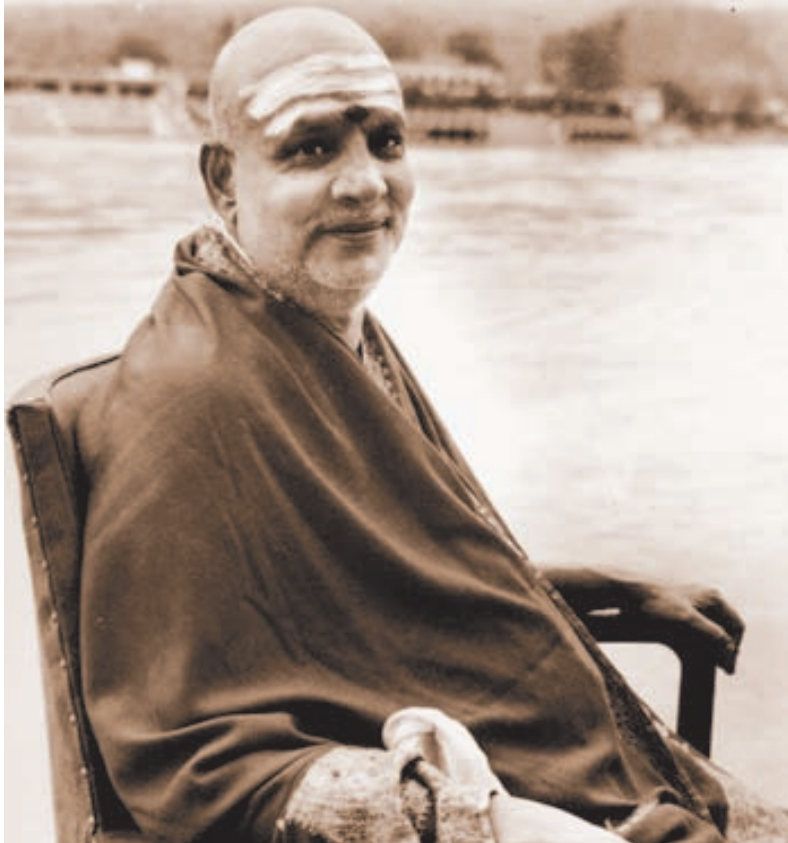
I think, "I'll close the printing press, I'll close the ashram, I'll sell everything and give the money to a hospital, lunatic asylum or to some charitable trust. I'll just get out and let these fellows, my disciples, go to the dogs." I have thought this many times, and exactly on those days I have a glimpse, and with that glimpse he gives me some idea of what to do.

When I came back from South America, I was fed up with a few swamis and was about to pass a resolution to the committee to sell everything and give the money away. "I don't want it, if you want it, you run it." The same night Swami Sivananda came, saying, "You must purchase that hillock opposite to the ashram." This is the place of Ganga Darshan. The same night he gave me the full master plan of all the buildings. I have seen the buildings that are going to be built there and the type of rooms they have. Swamiji came, "Here is your Ganga Darshan. Here is your Ganga Darshan. Here is your Ganga Darshan."

### **Commitment to guru**

After leaving Rishikesh in 1956, I travelled across the Indian subcontinent. Frankly speaking I don't like ashrams. I do not like to have disciples. Sometimes I am exhausted of all these surroundings and I want to give up the ashrams and go away into seclusion, to a forest and just sit down there.

I think when I have left my parents and my property, why would I get another? When I have left my relatives, why do I want to have these relatives? It is always at these times, that I have the vision. I don't know if it lasts for long or for seconds. At that time, I am transported into another realm of consciousness. During these times I am not Swami



Satyananda, and I hear clearly, “No, keep on moving. Don’t withdraw yourself.”

It has happened like this quite a few times after 1964 and I do not like it and I don’t want that vision at all. I know that it is the voice of Swami Sivananda. He has many outstanding disciples spread all over the world. They are in America, in Europe and everywhere and they can do a lot of work, because they want it and have that ambition.

Renunciation has to be complete. Each and everything you are attached to should be renounced. My house has become old and I renounce it. My robe has become old so I renounce it, but can I renounce the person I love? The object I love? We practise convenient renunciation; we renounce those objects which we dislike. Try to renounce what you like. That is renunciation. I know very well that sooner or later I am going to come out of this cycle. I had written a poem some time ago:

### **Let Me Roam**

*With nothing on the body,  
And with nothing in my hands,  
Let me roam on the bank of the Ganga  
With the name of Shiva on my lips  
And the thought of Devi and Durga in my mind.  
Let me not even know that I exist,  
And when I die,  
I will not know that I am dying.*

That is the type of life which Swami Sivananda infused in me, but I have to follow him. Once he told me, “We are instruments, we are mediums. We have to love everybody without passion and attachment. We have to serve everybody without expectation. We have to love God without asking anything from Him. The purpose of our spiritual life is to have a vision of the Divine. God has given us everything; we did not ask for it, yet He has given to you everything without you asking Him.”

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15<sup>th</sup> January, 1946.

I ever served my Masters with great sincerity and intense faith and devotion. I learnt many useful lessons for life. I developed many virtues.

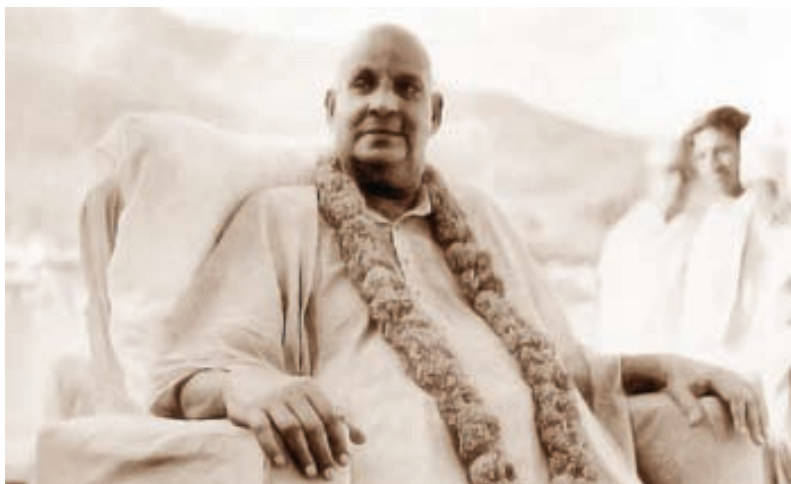
I wandered without food during my Parivrajak life. I slept on the roadside at night without clothing during winter. I ate dried bread with water.

I stick tenaciously to my principles and ideals. I do not argue much. I live in Silence.

Sivananda

# Steps on the Spiritual Path

*From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



The salt of life is selfless service, the bread of life is universal love, the water of life is purity. Hence, serve, love and be pure. The fragrance of life is generosity, the sweetness of life is devotion, the pivot of life is meditation. The goal of life is self-realization. Therefore, be pure and generous, be good and do good, meditate and realize the Self.

## **Ashtanga yoga**

*Serve:* The first step on the spiritual path is selfless service of humanity. Selfless service is the watchword along the road to salvation. Service always elevates and makes one divine. Service purifies, redeems and energizes. To live life through service is to be intimate with life's innermost secret. To serve humanity with sincerity and feeling is to be in union with the cosmic consciousness.

*Love:* Love is truth and love is good. It is the highest expression of the soul. It is the hope of the world. Wherever

there is love, there is peace, and wherever there is peace, there is joy. One should spread the gospel of cosmic love throughout the world. Let the message of love reach the hearts of all and awaken brotherhood in the bosom of humanity. The world has to be encircled with a heart of love.

*Give:* One must help the poor, sick, forlorn, orphans and widows. If a person gives, the wealth of the world is his. It is the secret of abundance and divine life. Therefore, give, give, give. A person makes a living by what he gets, but he makes a life by what he gives. If one gives in plenty, one will enjoy peace and prosperity, attain purity of heart and experience an indescribable thrill of divine ecstasy and spiritual bliss. This gives tremendous inner strength. An aspirant must radiate thoughts of goodwill and share what he has with others. He should use his material wealth, knowledge, and spiritual wisdom as a divine trust for the benefit of God's children. Prayer takes the aspirant halfway to God, fasting to the door of His supreme abode, and charity procures him admission.

*Purify:* Mental purity bestows calmness, cheerfulness, one-pointedness, victory over the senses and fitness to attain God-realization. The mind must be purified by the practice of virtues, self-control and devotion to God. A purified mind becomes a friend, for it wears out the shell that covers the truth. There is no greater undertaking for any aspirant than purifying his life of enmity, hatred and passion and filling it with love, goodness and peace.

*Be good:* Goodness is the highest virtue. It implies kindness, benevolence and morality. Positive habits have to be cultivated and good, sublime divine thoughts entertained. To be good is divine. If an aspirant wants to be good, he must see what is good, hear what is good, think what is good, do what is good, speak what is good, read what is good, write what is good, eat what is good and drink what is good. Ultimately, he will be good.

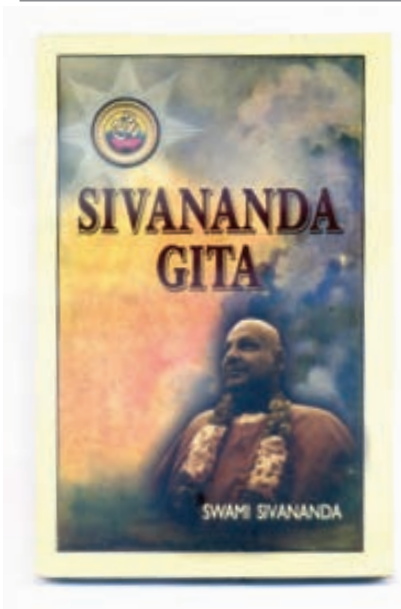
*Do good:* A good deed is never lost. It purifies the heart and leads to the descent of divine light and the dawn of divine



grace. Every good deed is a seed of immortality. People should do all the good they can, in all the ways they can, to all the people they can, in every place they can, at all times they can, with all the zeal, strength and love they can, and as long as ever they can. Their nature must be to do good.

*Meditate:* Meditation destroys the causes of sorrow and pain. Regular meditation makes the mind calm and steady, and opens the avenues of intuitional knowledge. When the practitioner enters the silence through deep meditation, the outside world and his troubles drop away, and he enjoys supreme peace. In this silence lies the light of lights, real strength and joy. He has to shut the doors of the senses and still his thoughts and emotions. When he sits motionless in the early morning hours, has a receptive attitude and communes with the Lord, he will enjoy the abiding peace of silence.

*Realize:* Everyone should live to realize the higher self within. No vision of truth or God is possible without annihilating the ego. The goal of life is God-realization.



The letters in this issue are reproduced from *Sivananda Gita, An Epistolary Autobiography*. In just eighteen letters, Swami Sivananda conveys 'a briefest glimpse of his inner nature'.

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18<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

To raise the fallen, to lead the blind, to share what I have with others, to bring solace to the afflicted, to cheer up the suffering are my ideals.

To have perfect faith in God, to love my neighbours as my own Self, to love God with all my heart and soul, to protect cows, animals, women, and children are my aims.

My watchword is Love. My goal is Sahaja Samadhi Avastha or the natural, continuous, superconscious state.

Sivananda



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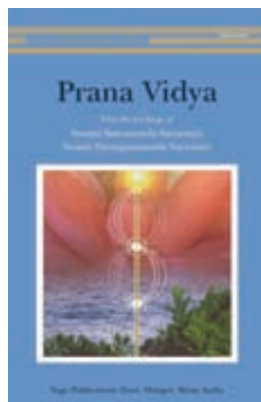
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New

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[www.biharyoga.net](http://www.biharyoga.net)

The official website of Bihar Yoga. Includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Sivananda Math activities, Sita Kalyanam events, Yoga Publications Trust catalogues.

[www.rikhiapeeth.net](http://www.rikhiapeeth.net)

The Rikhiapeeth blogspot posts a satsang of Sri Swami Satyananda daily on a wide range of topics concerning spirituality.



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[www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/](http://www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/). Dedicated to the vision and mission of Swami Niranjananda Saraswati, the spiritual successor of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, it contains news and articles.

[www.yogamag.net](http://www.yogamag.net)

The official website of YOGA magazine. Includes world-wide links to Satyananda Yoga centres and teachers, a brief history of YOGA magazine, news and more.

### Avahan Online

[www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/](http://www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/). Provides online access to *Satyaka Avahan*, the bi-monthly magazine of Sannyasa Peeth, which contains the higher teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.



### World Yoga Convention blogspot

[www.wyc2013.com](http://www.wyc2013.com). For useful information about attending the Convention, updates on the program and Golden Jubilee activities of Bihar School of Yoga.



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## Ganga Darshan Events & Courses 2014

<i>Jan 1</i>	Hanuman Chalisa
<i>Feb 1-4</i>	Sri Yantra Aradhana
<i>Feb 1-May 25</i>	4-month Yogic Studies Course (Hindi)
<i>Feb 4</i>	Basant Panchami Celebration
	Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
<i>Feb 14</i>	Bal Yoga Diwas
<i>Mar 1-21</i>	Teachers Training Course (Hindi)
<i>Mar 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: Asthma (Hindi)
<i>Apr 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: Diabetes (Hindi)
<i>Jun 1-Aug 25</i>	3-month Yogic Science & Lifestyle Course (Hindi)
<i>July 12</i>	Guru Paduka Poojan
<i>Aug 2014-May 2015</i>	Diploma in Yogic Studies (English)
<i>Aug 1-21</i>	Teachers Training Course (English)
<i>Aug 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: Arthritis & Spinal Ailments (Hindi)
<i>Sep 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: General (Hindi)
<i>Sep 8</i>	Swami Sivananda Janmotsava
<i>Sep 12</i>	Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas
<i>Oct 1-Jan 25</i>	4-month Yogic Studies Course (English)
<i>Dec 25</i>	Swami Satyananda's Birthday

\* HMC: Health Management Course

<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<i>Every Ekadashi</i>	Bhagavad Gita Path
<i>Every Poornima</i>	Sundarkand Path
<i>Every 5th &amp; 6th</i>	Commemoration of Sri Swami Satyananda's Mahasamadhi
<i>Every 12th</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitanamas

### ***For more information on the above events contact:***

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