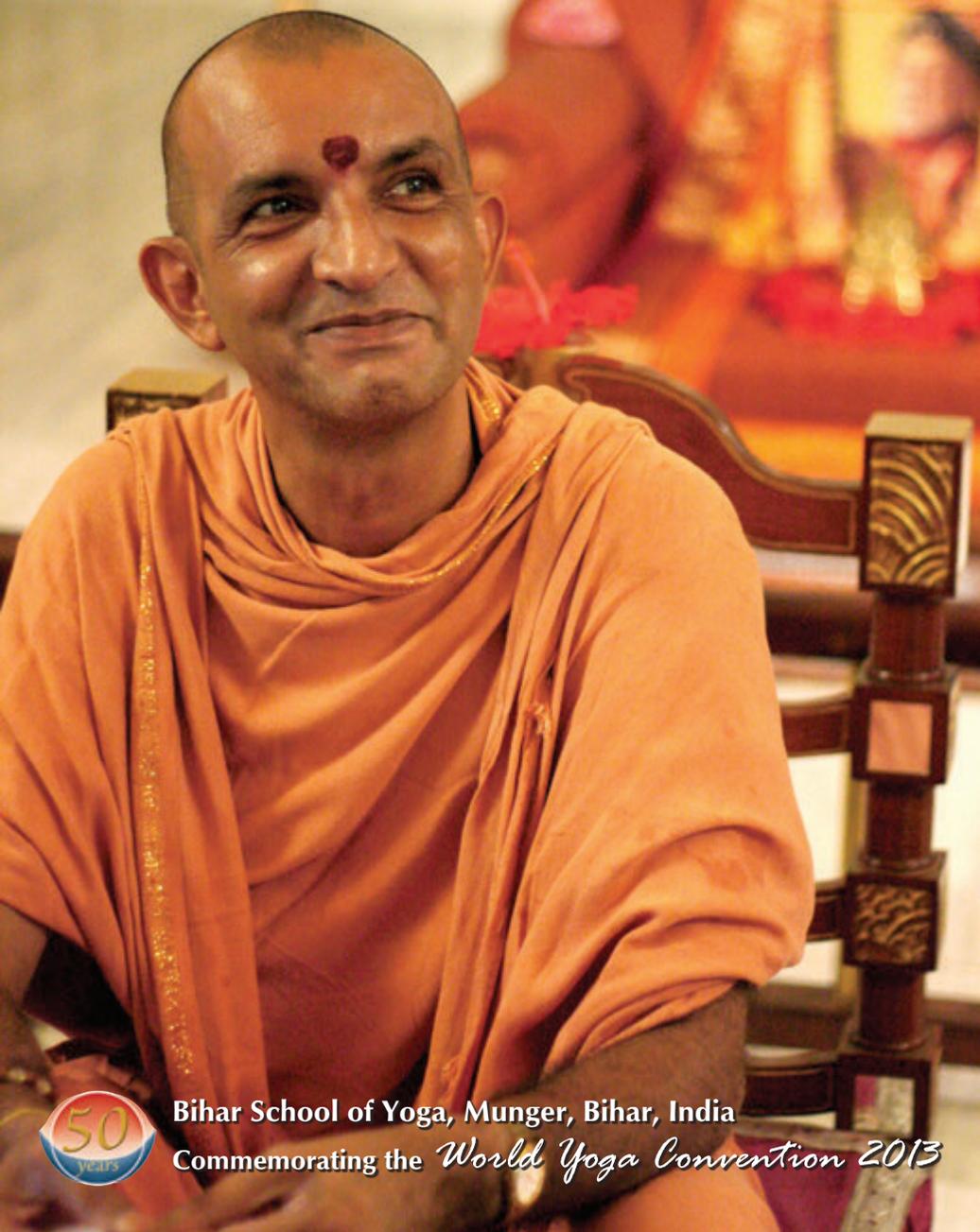


YOGA

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Commemorating the *World Yoga Convention 2013*



Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Make the World your Teacher

The world is your best teacher and guru. There is a lesson in each experience. The world is the best training ground for the development of divine virtues, such as mercy, forgiveness, generosity, nobility, courage, patience and strong will. The world is an arena for fighting with your negative nature and expressing divinity from within you.

The central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga Vasishtha is that you should realize your true self by remaining in the world: Be in the world, but not of the world. Therefore, behave like water on a lotus leaf, forever pure and untainted. Give up the lower nature of desire, anger, greed, passion, envy and jealousy. Assert your divine nature by living a life of mental renunciation and self-sacrifice.

—Swami Sivananda

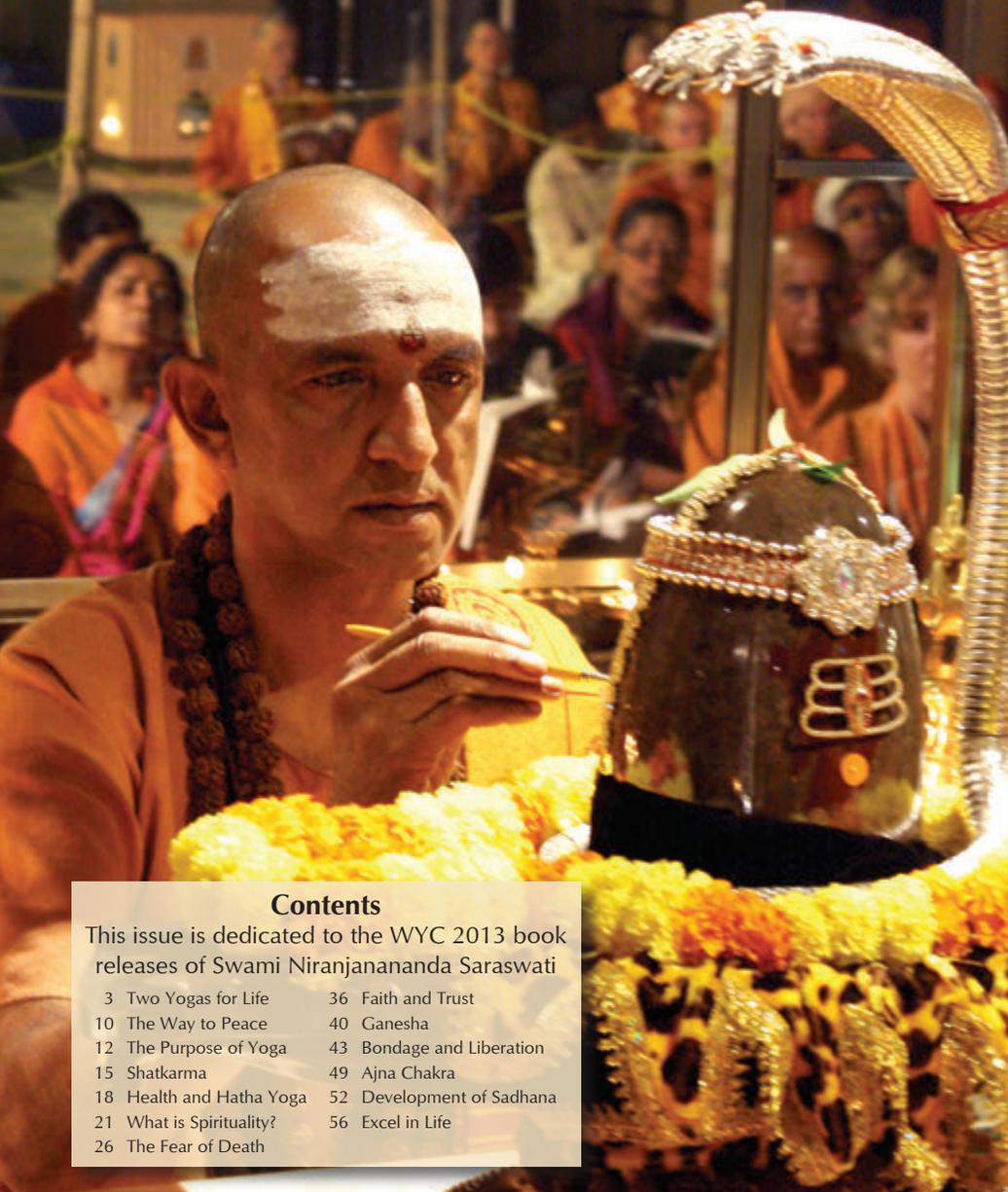
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

Two Yogas for Life

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Hari Om Tat Sat (x 11)

You have chanted the mantra *Hari Om Tat Sat* eleven times for an auspicious and good beginning to the second session of the second day of the World Yoga Convention. With this, welcome to the second part of today's program, where our eminent scholars will be presenting the scientific and modern research and outlook on yoga.

Yoga is a subject of developing life. It is a subject of an individual's evolution, and there are two aspects of yoga.

The first aspect of yoga is as taught by Sage Patanjali. The second aspect of yoga is as taught by our paramguru, Swami Sivananda. The first stage of Sage Patanjali's yoga is a personal sadhana to improve and to transform the quality of life, while the second, the yoga of Swami Sivananda, is expression of what you have gained through the transformation; you are expressing the beauty, joy and peace, and spreading the light.

We must look at yoga from two perspectives: the viewpoint of Sage Patanjali, the traditional, the classical, the modern and scientific, and the viewpoint of Swami Sivananda, the applicable, the experienceable, and the real. When I say 'real', I do not mean that the first one is unreal or incorrect. It is important, for it is this first stage that allows the change, the transformation to happen within oneself. The tools Sage Patanjali offers for transformation are *yama* or emotional self-restraints, *niyama* or mental disciplines, *asana* or postures, *pranayama* or breathing techniques, *pratyahara* or sense-withdrawal, *dharana* or concentration, and *dhyana*, the fixed, spontaneous state after deep meditation, which all lead to the experience of inner unity in samadhi. This is the yoga of Sage Patanjali.

After you have gone through the process of removing the veils from your own life, and after you have cleaned the inner rooms of your own mind and spirit, and when the nescience in your life is replaced by the luminosity of your spirit, it is not that final realization or *moksha*, liberation, is attained. No, at this stage the realization is that 'The divinity is within me'. You realize that you are a part of that Creative Power which allows you to express the beauty and the creativity in your life. This Creative Power has created the entire universe and all the life forms, whether people call it God, or Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, or guru and Shakti, or Paramatma and Parabrahma. These are the various names. Whether you call sugar 'chini', 'shakkar' or 'sucre' does not matter; by whatever name you call the sweet sugar, its sweetness does not change, although the names may differ. In the same manner, the Higher Reality

does not change, although people call it by a variety of names and have different kinds of understanding, awareness, beliefs and concepts of that reality. Sometimes it can be religious, sometimes it can be spiritual, and sometimes it can be the experience of living the right kind of life.

That is the realization of Sage Patanjali: discover the reality within you by removing the dross of life, the dross of mind. After the yoga of Patanjali stops, the yoga of Sivananda starts, for you have to again reconnect with the world after illumination. You must share the wisdom and creativity which you have developed, the grace and bounty that the Lord has given to you with everyone else, and that happens through service.

Sri Swamiji says, "If you can cultivate *atmabhava*, the feeling of unity with all, then service is not difficult, the act of serving is not difficult." However, to cultivate *atmabhava* you have to come out of the selfish shell and become selfless. *Atmabhava* is the power, the force that connects you with other human beings, with other life forms, for you see the radiance



of consciousness within each and every form. You do not see the colour, you do not see the race, you do not see the belief, you do not see the culture, but you see the same luminosity. That is atmabhava, and atmabhava is necessary to come to the apex of service, because at that point your heart, your actions and intentions become one. When you serve with the idea of serving the guru, there is still a distinction between you and the guru.

Do you know that the best form of service is not taking care of the poor or the sick? The best form of service is not sweeping the floor and wiping the windowpanes of a room, no. The best form of service is obedience to the vision, direction and mission of the guru. That is the best form of service, for it is the guru who inspires you, and if you follow the direction given to you by the guru, if you follow the mandate given to you by the guru, then you can serve with the best of your abilities. There are many dimensions of service, but I am not going to go into that. I am describing to you the yoga of Sivananda which begins where the yoga of Patanjali stops. The eightfold path of Patanjali is followed by the eightfold path of Sivananda. It starts with service, reconnecting with the world, which begins after samadhi.

In this new frame of mind, in this new attitude and vision that you have acquired, the natural and the spontaneous expression of your Self is love. Love knows no boundaries, and love connects each and everyone together like the thread of a mala. You know that in a mala there are 108 beads, and they are all individual beads, but something that connects all the beads together is the thread. In the same manner, something that connects all human beings with the Divine and with each other in this life is the thread of love. Love is a natural expression in the life of a person who serves and who has surrendered. There is no other option but to realize one thing: your duty, your inherent dharma which allows you to connect with everyone else in this world and not with your own desires, ambitions and aspirations.

As you serve, and as you express your love, another natural thing happens. You begin to give. You begin to sacrifice yourself, and sacrifice is giving. Giving is sacrifice and sacrifice is giving. A mother who loves her child can sacrifice anything for that child, even her sleep. When her child is sick, she is willing to sacrifice, and she is willing to give her care and love to the child, as she considers the child to be her own.

Where love is unconditional, and where service is done as a command of the guru and is obeyed, giving is a natural expression. By giving, you purify yourself. That is the fourth *avastha* or state of mind: serve, love, give, and purify. The more you give, the more you purify yourself, for the normal tendency of a human being is to accumulate, accumulate, accumulate. Look at your own houses, your rooms, and you will find things that are lying in your drawers, closets and almirahs for the last fifteen, twenty or thirty years, which are totally useless. However, you have an emotional attachment with these things that does not allow you to let them go. That is *sangraha*, accumulation. Sangraha or accumulation has many forms: one hundred pairs of shoes, forty sets of clothes, and such other innumerable objects.

This tendency, this self-oriented tendency, must change. It has to become selfless. When you become selfless, then you naturally become good, and then you naturally do good. It is the selfish people for whom doing good and being good does not always come naturally. A selfless person is always good, and good deeds are done by him.

This is an expression of the transformation that takes place within you after you have perfected the yoga of Patanjali. The yoga of Patanjali is sadhana, and the yoga of Sivananda is the expression of your attainment. The yoga of Patanjali is overcoming the limitations of life, and the yoga of Sivananda is expressing the beauty of life. Therefore, we have to understand yoga in two forms, not just the personal sadhana to attain health and enlightenment, but also as a creative expression of life where we can help each other grow, evolve and progress,

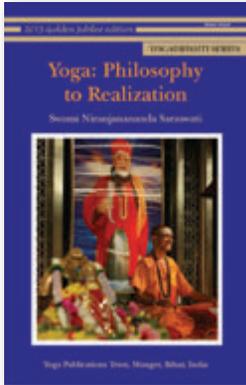
ultimately contributing in whatever form to the development of a better human culture and society.

Thus, the theme of today's discussion is 'Yoga for Health, Yoga in Therapy and Yoga for Wellbeing'; yoga in different areas of society, different strata of society, how it is being applied and what kind of research is being done. Please remember, though, these are only indications of the possibilities and potentials of yoga. The real experiencer is you and not the research. Research only indicates the achievement of a process, attainment of a system, benefits of a technique, whereas the application of yoga in its true spirit is by you, by your own effort. Therefore, the slogan of this Convention is 'Sincerity, Seriousness and Commitment'. Three things: seriousness in intention, sincerity in effort and commitment to the *laskhya*, the goal. If you can bring these three things together, then your yogic journey will definitely lead you to a world where you are one with peace, one with luminosity, and one with your spirit.



The Way to Peace

From *Yogadrishti Series: Philosophy to Realization*, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In the process of yoga, there is greater focus on understanding and improving *sambandha*, relationships and interactions. It is not necessary to meditate a lot. Instead, develop the awareness of how you can improve your connection and interaction with people, society, the environment, nature, and the Higher Self. The moment you start to improve your connection and relationship with people and with yourself, you will discover peace, or *shanti*.

Meditation will not give you *shanti*. Meditation can only make you aware of the causes of *ashanti*, absence of peace. In order to discover *shanti*, you have to improve your interactions, relationships and your moment-to-moment awareness. This includes how you speak, as there needs to be awareness of that particular moment. There must be awareness when engaged in doing something and in making the effort to give your best. That moment is lived only once in your lifetime, therefore give it your best shot. With the improvement of interaction and communication there develops an understanding. This is the beginning of yoga psychology. Cultivation of understanding makes you the *drashta*, the witness, and you are able to observe your traits, limitations, attitudes and behaviours, and cultivate the appropriate qualities to manage the agitations of the mind in a better way.

Imagine a bare piece of land with a lot of sunshine, making it too hot to live there. What do you do? You plant trees, and when the trees grow they provide enough shade. It is not

necessary to cover the entire plot with a ceiling and a roof to create shade. By planting trees, shade can be created even in the most bare of lands. Similarly, in life, if the seeds of good qualities such as hope, love and aspiration are sown, and the effort is made to break away from the selfish needs, and explore the selfless interaction with the community and people, there will be more shanti, peace, within and without.



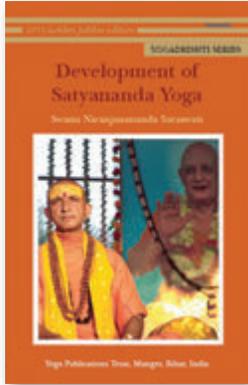
Hari Om Swamiji,

A month has passed since the Convention started. I was present to experience the glorious tradition to which I belong . . . the immaculate arrangements, the never-ending prasad, the volunteers and delegates, the swamis and sannyasins and, above all, your spotless perfection.

—Sannyasi Vijayashakti, Kolkata

The Purpose of Yoga

From Yogadrishti Series: Development of Satyananda Yoga, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The purpose of yoga is just one: to show humanity how to worship life. Everybody knows how to worship God, but how do you worship life? In reality, yoga is not a practice or subject of study, but the worship of life.

When we speak about yoga, what do we mean? What does the word 'yoga' really mean? Philosophers and intellectuals say that yoga is the union between the individual consciousness and the higher consciousness. In the Sivananda and Satyananda traditions, we say that yoga means integrating the faculties of head, heart and hands. Many other definitions of yoga have been given, but are these definitions given by the seers who originally developed the system of yoga? Did the seers say that yoga is a way by which one can come closer to the higher consciousness? Was it the seers who said that yoga is a spiritual science? What was the original view of the yogis and seers when they defined and developed the system of yoga?

The beauty of yoga is that it is nothing but contemplation and worship of human life. After exploring your nature and personality, and enhancing the faculties and qualities inherent within, you are ready to appreciate the beauty that life holds for you. The seers who developed yoga said clearly that yoga is a sadhana. It is a practice through which you rediscover yourself, your nature. It is not a philosophy containing abstract ideas that sound pleasing and interesting to an individual. It is not a religion; it does not involve any dogma. It is a collection of practical systems that you can incorporate in

your life experience. As you do so, these practices elevate your perception and appreciation of yourself. They lead you to the experience of *poornata*, wholeness, completeness.

Experiencing wholeness

The shanti mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* states:

*Om poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudachyate
poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevavashishyate.*

Everything is full. If you add full to the full, full remains.
If you subtract full from the full, full remains. If you multiply full by the full, full remains. If you divide full by the full, full remains.

Not everyone understands this kind of mathematics. From the perspective of this statement, everything is whole, everything is complete; even you are whole, you are complete. You do not realize that you are complete, that you are *poorna*. The purpose of yoga as an integrated system is to develop the experience of wholeness and completeness.

The experience of wholeness incorporates and integrates the gross manifested body, the subtle, invisible yet experienceable mind, and the transcendental spirit that is within you. When these three are brought together, the experience of *poornata*, wholeness, takes place. This experience of *poornata* is the purpose and the aim of life. Self-realization or God-realization is the result of having attained wholeness in life, without which that realization would not be possible. Why think of God when God is not your priority, rather achieving wholeness is? In actuality, you cannot think about a transcendental God anyway, as your mind, which is not transcendental, is not capable of doing so.

Setting priorities

Somebody once asked Sri Swamiji, "Is it possible to attain self-realization in this lifetime?" He answered that some people believe it is possible and make an attempt and effort towards

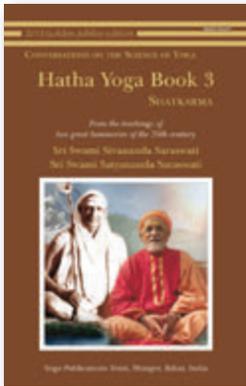
that goal. He, however, does not believe that God-realization is possible. The questioner asked him, “Why do you say that, when everybody says the purpose of life is God-realization or self-realization?” Sri Swamiji answered that to begin with, God is a transcendental state of being and existence. Your senses, brain and mind, with which you are trying to grasp that transcendental state, are limited and confined. The brain of a three-month-old child cannot comprehend the subject of physics or atomic science. Similarly, with your non-transcendental mind, it is not possible for you to experience the transcendental quality of God. Sri Swamiji was further asked, “Does this mean that everything we do in life with the aspiration of achieving God-realization is useless?” Sri Swamiji said, “No, it is very worthwhile. One should continuously make the effort, but with a different understanding, with a different perspective. First, you have to understand that God-realization or self-realization is not your priority. What is your priority? It is to change the quality of your mind so that it becomes capable of receiving and grasping the transcendental experience. If you cannot change the quality of the mind, it will not be capable of going beyond its own idiosyncrasies. It will not be capable of going beyond its own samskaras and natural limitations.” In this way, Sri Swamiji focused people’s attention on discovering what their priority in life is.

A blind person may say that he wants to see the sun, but what is his priority: to see the sun or to acquire vision? If he can acquire vision by dealing with the cause of blindness then he can see not only the sun, but the entire creation in glorious multicolour. However, without vision, not even the big rock right in front of his step can be seen. Therefore, forget about seeing the golden sun and focus on acquiring vision.



Shatkarma

From Hatha Yoga Book 3: Shatkarma, From the teachings of two great luminaries of the 20th century, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What is the role of the shatkarmas in the overall scheme of yoga?

Swami Niranjanananda: In the proper application of yoga, everyone must go through the practices of hatha yoga, including the cleansing techniques, to rid the body of the toxicity accumulated at both the gross and subtle levels.

The yogic tradition says, and it is implied in the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali, that before the commencement of raja yoga or ashtanga yoga practices, the practices of hatha yoga must be perfected. Without perfection in hatha yoga, one cannot enter into raja yoga. Life, and one's needs, must be looked at from two perspectives.

What is one's need? Why does one come to yoga? If someone comes to yoga for temporary gain, like eradication of a problem, illness, disease, stress or tension, and yoga is used as an alternative method of healing, it makes no difference what type of yoga is practised. Anything can be practised: the quality of health and life, body and mind can be improved, and after achieving one's aspirations, the practice of yoga can be forgotten about completely. That is one way of looking at yoga, and it is the trend which most people follow.

The other method is to decide whether yoga is going to become one's discipline in life or not. If it is taken on as a discipline, it becomes a way of transcending the limitations of one's senses, mind and personality. If one is aiming for this type of qualitative transformation to enhance the process



of evolution, and for an inner awakening which brings one closer to the world in which one lives with other people, yoga must be practised with an appropriate *sankalpa* and applied properly in life – not merely taking one grain here, one grain there, and another grain there.

Process and discipline

One must also begin the training, the self-education of the mind, as the state of physical purity and detoxification leads to a balance between the physical energies and the mental energies, *prana shakti* and *chitta shakti*, the vital force and the mental force, the solar force and the lunar force, yang and yin. They both merge in *ajna chakra*. The purpose of *hatha yoga* is to awaken these twin forces within and bring about balance in their functions.

Hatha yoga is a specific branch of yoga whose purpose is to cleanse the pathways of *prana shakti*: this cleaning is known as *nadi shuddhi*. The cleansing techniques of *hatha yoga*, numbering six, clean the entire system from the head right down to the perineum, including the oesophagus, the stomach, the small intestine and the large intestine: it is a complete cleaning system for the internal body. After the body has been cleansed with the practices of *neti*, *dhauti* and *basti*, *pranayama* is taught to ensure that the *prana shakti* goes through those *nadis*, those channels that have been purified. Concentration is taught, and activation of the *chakras* is stimulated through specific *kriyas*.

What comes after *neti*, *dhauti* and *basti*? *Kapalbhati*. *Kapalbhati* is not just one practice of *pranayama*, it is a series of methods to control the movement of *prana* in the body. *Trataka* is the simplest way to focus the mind without having to fight and struggle with oneself. *Nauli* is the specific *kriya* to

activate a particular psychic centre in the space of manipura chakra, the storehouse of prana shakti, the generating source of prana shakti.

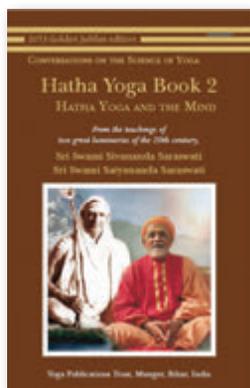
Along with these cleansing techniques and specific kriyas, are the *bandhas*, energy locks, and *mudras*, techniques to divert the flow of energy in the body. They must be learnt, for only then can one derive the actual, appropriate benefits from the practices of raja yoga. The yogic tradition states clearly that before the practice of raja yoga, one must perfect hatha yoga. And before attempting to practise the higher yogas, perfect raja yoga – it is a sequence, there is a process.

People like to jump the gun, that's the problem. If one is willing to make yoga into a discipline of life, don't jump the gun, follow the system. If the system is followed, attainments and achievements in life will definitely be positive.



Health and Hatha Yoga

From Hatha Yoga Book 2: Hatha Yoga and the Mind, From the teachings of two great luminaries of the 20th century, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Why does yoga place so much importance on attaining optimum health and relaxation?

Swami Niranjanananda: Generally, one of the two energies, physical or mental, is unbalanced in everyone. A person may say that he is healthy, but at some point in life he has to face anxiety and stress, frustration and tension, and physiological as well as psychological illness. When asana and pranayama are practised, the first job is to eliminate the blockages from the nadis, thereby ensuring that the body and mind attain a state of optimum health.

The experience of optimum health is a transcendental experience where one does not experience any limitations, where one does not experience any stressful situations, and where there is a free flow and full awakening of energy. With these effects in mind, many scientific experiments have been conducted to see how the practices of asana and pranayama influence the structure of the body and mind.

Yoga says that both physiological harmony and tension are felt by the mind. Conversely, mental relaxation and tension are felt in the body. When there is harmony, equilibrium and a feeling of optimum health in the body, one experiences it in the brain, and also in the mind. This state eventually influences the dormant areas of the mind, awakening the potential that is inherent within them. This is the concept of total health.

When we talk of health, we are not talking about the health of the body's muscular system. When we talk of health, we are not talking about the alleviation of physiological problems. When we talk about health, we mean harmony, balance, equilibrium at each and every level of the personality, in each and every dimension of the personality.

When this experience is attained, the state of true and complete relaxation is achieved. The sensory perceptions become introverted. In this state of relaxation, awareness of the worldly sense objects is also introverted. Awareness has been of external experiences but not of internal experiences, and the aim of yoga is to make one aware of internal experiences. It is to make one aware of both realities, external and internal, which in turn helps one to transcend or understand one's own capacities, limitations and potentials. Therefore, yoga is considered to be a science of the body, mind and spirit; it is a science for the total health of the whole being.

Many people become exhausted by life – how can purification through hatha yoga solve this problem?

Swami Niranjanananda: In order to make the body and mind free from disease and disorders, purification is important. *Shodhanam*, which means purification, is listed in *Gheranda Samhita* as the first of the sadhanas necessary for a sadhaka.

Generally, people pursue physical pleasure or follow thought processes through which they seek to advance themselves. Because of the effort they put into it, they naturally come to expect success. When failure comes instead, disappointment follows. In normal life a person then feels tired, physically, mentally and emotionally, but a yogi does not feel tired. Here tiredness does not mean the way the body feels after physical labour. It means *virakti*, disinterest.

Many people say that they are tired of fighting with life. There is no interest in doing anything; the mind does not like anything, as if there is no desire left. Sometimes this state of tiredness is so deep that there is no interest in the family,

eating, reading, writing and so on. Lack of interest is evident in every field of life. There is depression. However, there is no such lack of interest in the dictionary of yogis.

These deep feelings of exhaustion and disinterest are created when the past keeps revolving in the mind side by side with concern about the future. When the past is related with the future and not with the present, a state of virakti, indifference, disinterest, is created. A yogi remains unaffected by such physical and mental activities. When physical and mental purity are attained through hatha yoga, this affects the inner self, the *antahkarana*. Ahamkara, buddhi and chitta are the three main components of the antahkarana.

Why do yogis use the breath to harmonize the body and mind?

Swami Niranjanananda: The breath is the reflection of the state of mind. If one is agitated, the breathing is rapid; if one is angry, the breathing is short and shallow; if one is relaxed, the breathing is long and deep. The states of mind are reflected in how one breathes. Sometimes the breath may not even be noticeable, it is so gentle.

By watching the breath of somebody, one can know what kind of mood that person is in, whether it is an aggressive mood, a quiet mood, a depressive mood or a frustrated

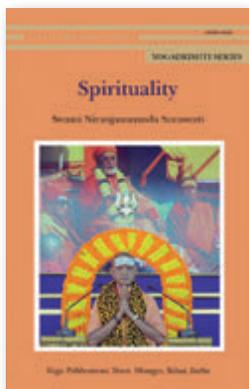


mood. All the symptoms of mental behaviour and mood can be observed in the way one breathes in and out.

For this reason, yogis use the breath to regulate and harmonize the physical systems, like the nervous system. They use the breath to tranquilize the functions of the mind.

What is Spirituality?

From *Yogadrishti Series: Chapters of Spirituality*, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The spiritual traditions say that spirituality is overcoming duality in life, and the experience of universality, the experience of unity in diversity. The foundation of your spiritual development is the dawning of the ability to experience unity in duality. Even in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the first prerequisite for a spiritual aspirant as defined by Sri Krishna is not asana, pranayama, relaxation, meditation, japa or mantra. The first guideline in the *Bhagavad Gita* is to overcome duality and see oneness in everyone, see the unifying factor in everyone. This is the first condition to becoming spiritual, according to Sri Krishna. It is also the first condition spoken of in the ancient teachings of saints and in scriptures. Duality is the barrier between the individual and the divine. When seen from a philosophical perspective it becomes difficult to eradicate duality; however, if it is approached from a practical perspective, it becomes possible to manage duality and attain unity.

Satyam Shivam Sundaram

In order to develop a unified, singular vision, what is the sutra that should be followed? Recall when Anasuya asks her son, Dattatreya, “Son, what is the truth?” Dattatreya replies, “Mother, the only permanent thing in this dimension is Satyam Shivam Sundaram; the truth that does not change, that is eternal and permanent.” If something changes, it is not eternal or permanent, therefore it cannot be the truth. Auspiciousness is that in which there is the possibility of attaining happiness,

contentment and fulfilment. Beauty is that appreciation of life where there is no sadness, distraction or disturbance; everything is seen as the manifestation of the higher power. The nature of God is Satyam Shivam- undaram; however, it cannot be realized by the individual due to the *dvaita bhava*, the dualistic mind. In another sense, the dualistic mind is a gift from nature to this creation, as nothing in creation or nature can be understood without it. The problem is that it creates a distance between yourself and your inner source. You identify with creation, the material world and sense objects.

In the scriptures, the state of duality is considered to be the biggest fault of the mind. Due to this state, you view circumstances and people as good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant. It makes you think in terms of high and low, rich and poor. Duality gives you the impression of 'having' or 'not having'. It is the cause of your perception of the lack or prosperity in your life, your strengths and weaknesses. It places the mind in a constant state of fluctuation, since the mind sees two and finds itself wanting in its given circumstances. The dualistic mind always changes its intentions, so one is never comfortable, no matter where one is. The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence. One never finds balance.

Beyond duality

If you want spirituality to grow in your life, first you must put an end to this state of duality. The end of duality and the awakening of non-duality and unity is the bedrock of spirituality. In this process, the sutra to be followed is: "See yourself in everyone." As stated in the scriptures, try to see God in everything.

A clear understanding of how to overcome the duality of mind is given by Sri Swamiji when he speaks of cultivating *atmabhava*, the ability to see yourself in other people. For example, your child is sick with a high fever. The doctor has given medicines and is treating the child. The child is being taken care of, yet you spend sleepless nights by your child.

Why do you not go to bed and sleep properly? Why do you have to stay up, and why do you stay up only with your child? Why will you not stay up when somebody else's child is sick? You do not express that same care and concern at that time. Why? The answer is simple: in your child you see a reflection of yourself, whereas in another child, you do not see your reflection. If you are able to see yourself in other people, then that reduces the dualistic mentality and cultivates atmabhava, the awareness which makes you see yourself in every object, in every other form. Therefore, reach out to all beings. Only then will the vision of duality end in your life.

Spirituality is not an order or a discipline. Religion is an order, a discipline, a belief and a faith; however, spirituality is the worship of life and of the beauty inherent in life. It is the search for peace in life and the experience of the Supreme Element. One who rises above the state of duality and attains the state of oneness takes the first step into spiritual life.

The world and nature are composed of tamoguna. When you come to this world of sense objects in bodily form, the



influences of tamoguna control the body and mind. The state of duality is where the kingdom of *maya*, illusion, begins. Due to *maya*, the mind remains confused. The state of duality is *maya*'s strength. If, however, you manage to attain the state of non-duality, you will get the visa to enter the kingdom of God, of Paramatma, the Supreme Spirit. Then you will be able to go there whenever you want; you can go on a pilgrimage, receive darshan and come back.

A sadhu's way of thinking

A sadhu has a particular way of thinking: 'Staying in this world is not the aim of my life. The aim of my life is to attain God. What should I do for that? How do I experience that Supreme Element? For that, I must free myself from the obstacles that bring destruction and downfall.' These obstacles are the six enemies in everyone's life: *kama*, lust; *krodha*, anger; *lobha*, greed; *moha*, infatuation; *mada*, arrogance; and *matsarya*, jealousy. These are the six children of duality, due to which strife, problems, difficulties, conflicts, confusions, and all types of psychological upheavals, mental problems and difficulties arise. The sadhu first struggles with and attempts to overcome these six enemies.

The dualistic mentality, with its six offspring, creates havoc in one's life. Thus, sannyasins begin their journey with the idea of renunciation. They renounce those things that bind them, and adopt those that can help reduce the weight of the six enemies. The weight must reduce. Renunciation means to reduce the baggage. If you have fifty kilos of baggage and can carry only twenty, you will renounce thirty kilos. A sannyasin will try to renounce forty-nine kilos and carry only one kilo. Renouncing and reducing the weight is known as *chhorna*, leaving behind. The spiritual journey of a sannyasin begins with leaving behind the dualistic mind, passion, aggression, greed, infatuation, arrogance and envy.

The last chapter of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says that the fires of lust, anger and greed burn a *manushi*, the human being;

they destroy human life and existence. One who can bear their heat is a sadhu, and one who cannot bear their heat contracts mental problems and diseases. If lust, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance and jealousy are strong and their disturbances go on for months and years in the head, what will be the state? There will be no peace. The mind will become restless, dissipated, imbalanced, aggressive and gross. That is why spirituality for a sannyasin begins with renunciation and non-attachment.

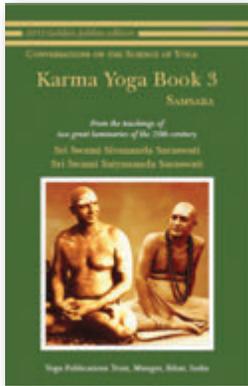
Destiny of every human being

As far as *shraddha*, faith, is concerned, it applies to both the householder and the sannyasin. However, if in householder life spirituality begins with faith and its growth brings happiness, in the lives of sadhus, faith is strengthened with renunciation. Renunciation is the basis for attaining freedom from the six enemies. Until this freedom is attained there will be no peace, even in the Himalayas. Once this freedom is attained, you will not hear noise in the midst of a busy market, due to the peace and quiet within.

To develop spiritual power and inner strength, one has to realize and eradicate the negative influences of the destructive conditions and traits of mind. For that, 'leaving behind the extra baggage' must be the theme. The idea of *tyaga*, renunciation, is cultivating this spiritual awareness, which is the destiny of every human being. Without renunciation, one cannot cultivate spiritual awareness. One can experience the spiritual nature, the awakened nature, the untainted nature of consciousness only by renouncing and staying away from the influences and effects of the six enemies of life. Avoid those things that stain the purity, simplicity, innocence and strength of consciousness. The one who adopts the path of renunciation by confronting the six enemies and is able to become free from the tamasic influences, reaches the heights of spirituality. Such a one gradually becomes a sadhu, a saint, and develops a unique way of thinking with a different perspective on life and creation.

The Fear of Death

From Karma Yoga Book 3: Samsara, *From the teachings of two great luminaries of the 20th century, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



What is the cause of fear of death?

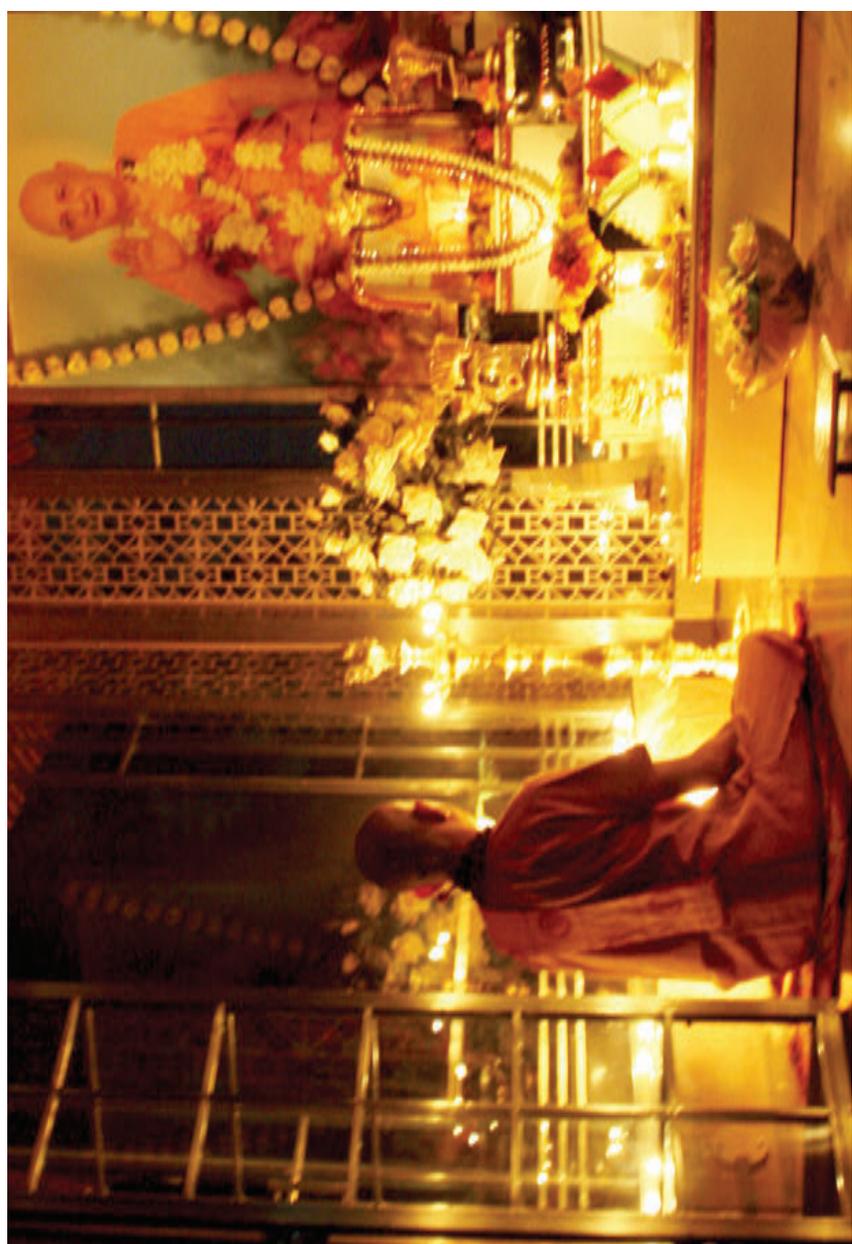
Swami Niranjanananda: People are not afraid of death, but of losing their associations with the senses, the environment, the people who surround them, with those things which they have created and are attached to. The fear of losing them is mistaken as fear of death. The fear of disconnecting oneself from these ideas and objects of identification is somehow confused with the fear of death. Nobody is afraid of death. It is just as enjoyable as sleep. It is only because of confusion and lack of clarity that one fears a survival without any association in life.

People are too insecure in life and develop associations in order to please the mind. Everything that one does in life is to please oneself. People believe that by pleasing themselves they will be happy. This has become an intricate process of pleasing and trying to find fulfilment and satisfaction in that pleasure, and has led to the development of associations with different objects, people, the environment, society, family and home. The mind becomes conditioned to associate and identify with these associations.

When one believes that the associations will not be there anymore, one develops fear. It is known as *abhinivesha* in yogic terminology – the fear of losing everything, the fear of dying and not being able to connect with life anymore. Life represents a sequence of associations, and death represents absolutely no association but being self-contained, withdrawing everything.

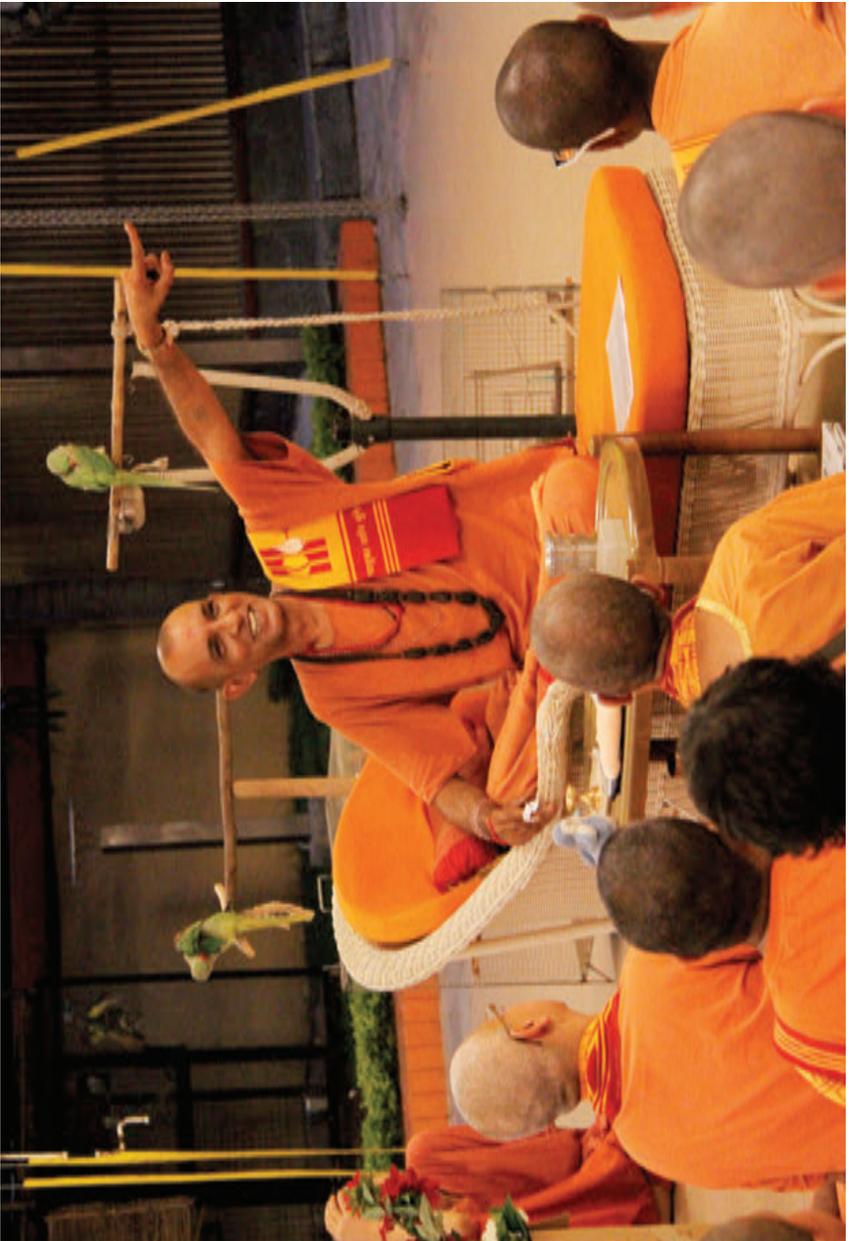




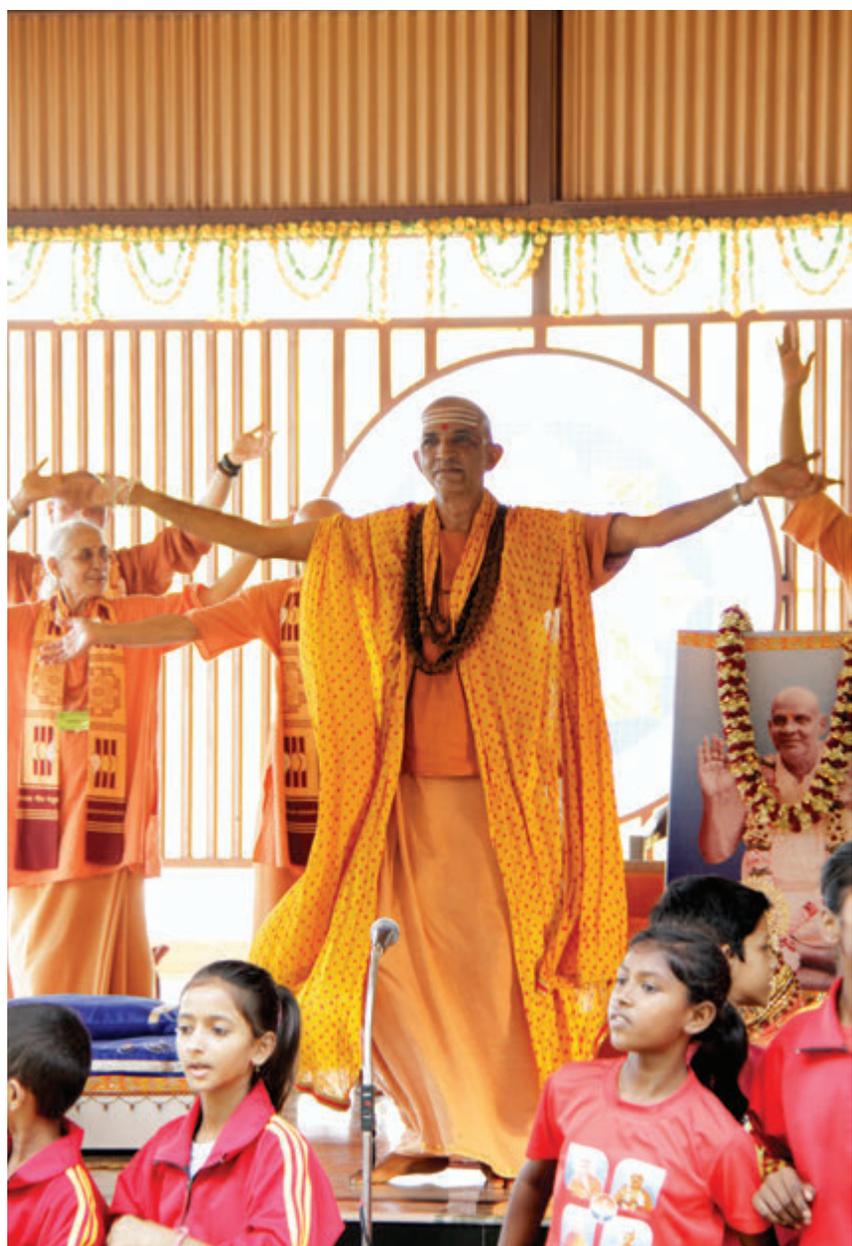












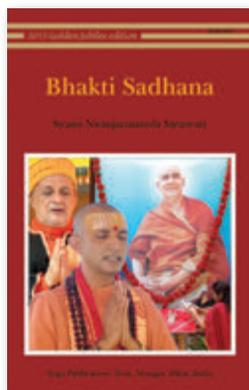
The body is a very intricate system. It is composed of matter yet what makes the matter tick is the energy within the matter. *Padarth* and *shakti*, matter and energy, both make up this human body. Once the energy is withdrawn from the matter there is nothing to hold the matter together anymore. Once the prana is withdrawn from the body there is nothing to hold the body together anymore, and the body decays. There is no other form of death, death is only physical. The mind remains alive and contains the karmas and samskaras.

The mind is a part of the soul. It is an integral part of the spirit. They are not two different things. The hand is part of the body. If it is not the body, it is part of the body. It has a function and a role to perform. Similarly, the mind is part of the spirit, it has a role and a function to perform. Spirit and mind travel together. It is possible that through awareness, understanding and experience, one can overcome such fears and insecurities in life and find peace and happiness



Faith and Trust

From *Bhakti Sadhana*, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



On the path of bhakti, two pillars or supports are essential for the mind: faith and trust. In the *Ramacharitamanas*, faith and trust have been acknowledged as the foundation of bhakti (1:2):

*Bhavaaneeshankarau vande
raddhaavishwaasroopinau;
Yaabhyaam vinaa na pashyanti
siddhaah svaantasthameeshvaram.*

Without *shraddha* and *vishwas*, faith and deep conviction, even great siddhas cannot achieve spiritual attainment.

Without faith and trust, even an adept cannot see the Spirit within, cannot understand, know, or recognize that. Therefore, faith and trust are considered to be the foundation of bhakti: faith in the higher power and trust in oneself. Have faith in God and trust in yourself.

Usually, people do not believe in themselves, they think they are weak and powerless, and they question their ability and capacity to do something in life. Even before beginning a task they feel defeated by it. There is a lack of *sankalpa shakti*, power of resolve; *iccha shakti*, power of will; and *kriya shakti*, power of action in life. If you are determined, you can accomplish anything in life. Resolve comes with trust: trust in one's own capacity and capability. Remember, God has not sent you into this world with anything less than the next person. The same power and energy in Rama or Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna, Jesus Christ or Prophet Mohammed are also within you. The difference is that they have realized it and you have

not been able to realize it. God has given that capacity equally to all. No one has more or less; everyone has the same capacity.

From a psychological point of view, God is an expression and experience of the evolution of consciousness; that is all. When a child goes to school, he learns and acquires knowledge of the alphabet. In the process of intellectual development, gradually many things are learnt, the understanding grows, the consciousness grows. The child who could not even write 'ABC', can grow up to become the head of a country, a great scientist or even a great saint. For that, the consciousness needs to undergo the process of development, whereby the child expands his consciousness, mind, intellect and emotions. From this viewpoint, God is an experience of the maturity of your mind. Maturity of the mind results in attraction for God, knowledge of God, belief in God, and attaining a vision of God.

Trust and faith are the foundation of bhakti. Trust that you are capable of acquiring joy, comfort and competence in life. Have faith that you are not alone in the world, that there is someone with you who is your intimate friend, closer to you than your husband or wife, closer even than your children, someone who is inherent in you.

Constant presence of God

In ancient Sparta, newborn babies were left outside the house all night, regardless of snow, rain or heat. The baby faced the natural conditions outside all night long. If it lived until the morning, it was brought back inside the house. There was another custom followed there. When a boy reached the age of sixteen, he was blindfolded and left in the dense forest. There would be wild, ferocious animals all around. Sometimes a tiger roared, sometimes a cheetah called. The blindfolded boy would be petrified. In the morning he was brought home and said to have become a man.

Once, after having gone through this process, a boy asked his father, "Tell me, when a child is left in the forest to become a man, don't the parents worry that some ferocious animal will

kill the child and eat him?" The father said, "Son, since you have passed the test I will tell you the secret. When you were blindfolded and left in the jungle, you were never alone. You thought that you were alone, but ten steps away from you I stood well-armed to protect you from dangerous animals. You did not know that someone was ten steps away from you, protecting you."

It is the same in your life. You think you are alone; however, you are never alone. Once, a devotee who was a dear friend of God said to Him, "Let us go for a walk." God said, "Fine. You walk in front, I will walk behind you." The devotee asked, "How will I know that you are walking behind me?" God replied, "Whenever you turn around you will find two sets of footprints: one set will be mine, the other set yours. By that you will know that I have been walking with you."

Happily, the devotee started to walk. He crossed a river, a jungle, a mountain. Many times he felt that God was walking behind him; he could hear the sound of footsteps. Many times he felt he was alone and upon turning around he would see only a single set of footprints. Finally, he felt dejected and said, "God, you are not keeping your word. You said that you would always be with me, but many times when I turn around to look, you are not with me, and I see only a single set of footprints on the ground. Why do you disappear?"

God said, "I do not disappear. When the path is difficult, I carry you in my arms. That is why you see only one set of footprints. When the path is easy, I put you down, we walk together again and you see two sets of footprints." When the path is easy God leaves one to stand on one's own feet, "Child, walk. There is no problem here, keep walking." The moment the going gets tough, God picks up His devotee in His arms and carries him.

You will find that all the great saints in history, no matter which culture or religion they belonged to, experienced God constantly in their lives, and the basis of that realization was faith and trust.

Global Tribute – Serbia

Swami Omgyanam

We have come from Serbia to participate in the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga, and to express our solidarity with the mission of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Sri Swami Niranjanananda, and the yogic vision that they have propagated through the Bihar School of Yoga.

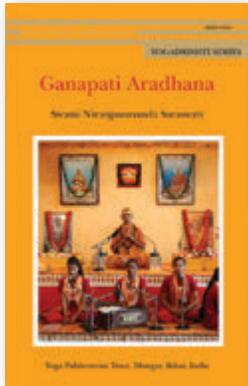
Satyananda Yoga came to Serbia in the 1970s and people embraced it wholeheartedly despite the communist regime and its restrictive systems. This well-developed system and its gradual progression with an integral approach is what we need, and through the strong guiding hands of Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjan, we have benefited immensely. As a people we have lived through many challenging situations – civil wars, occupations, communism, poverty – which have affected us in a way that does not make it easy to appreciate our inherent strength. But Swami Satyananda understood the Serbian character and we felt accepted, appreciated and loved by him. And we loved him immediately in our own way. Bihar School of Yoga is very much present in Serbia with many teachers and many, many followers. It has given us so much: how to live a disciplined life, cooperating with each other, and most of all, it opened our hearts.

We have come to pay respect to the tradition that has uplifted our lives.



Ganesha

From *Yogadrishti Series*: Ganapati Aradhana, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The symbolism of Ganesha is clear: a chubby god with an elephant's head who enjoys the beauty of life, who enjoys good clothes, who likes to eat good food, who always brings auspiciousness in life and who is a benevolent force that, when invoked, can help you to transcend your own shortcomings and limitations.

Mythologically, you can imagine Ganesha as a cosmic entity. Physically, you can experience him in your own body as the part of the body which takes you from primitive behaviour to rational behaviour, from instinctive behaviour to knowledgeable behaviour, from reactive behaviour to behaviour that is well thought out. In the psychic dimension, he is the guardian of all the *shaktis*, the powers, the feminine energies that are responsible for the creation and formation of life, of the body, of the mind, of sentiments and all other human experiences.

Ganesha is not the guardian of Parvati only. Parvati represents the Cosmic Shakti, and this Cosmic Shakti manifests in a myriad of forms; in the form of Lakshmi, Saraswati, Indrani or in any other form that you may like to conceive of it. The beauty of Ganesha is that he protects this Shakti and maintains the purity of Shakti, preventing it from being tainted by your ignorance.

Ganesha: the bridge

Time, matter and memory are three important aspects. In your life, your memory is limited. You say that you have memory

of this lifetime, but the memories that you hold of this life are not sharp and clear. You do not have the clear memory of what you did when you were young. Often people cannot even recall what they were doing on this day one year ago, or even remember what they did yesterday. Your memory is short-lived. Ganesha's capacity for remembering indicates that he has the memory of everything since the beginning of time until the present day. He is like the genetic imprint which contains all the information, right from day one of existence until today. He is the storehouse of knowledge, wisdom and information. Ganesha is the power; Ganesha is the shakti that bridges the gross and the physical with the spiritual and internal. It is a bridge between the two levels of experience, between the two dimensions: the gross and the physical, the psychic and the spiritual.

Another attribute of Ganesha is that he controls every kind of experience that enters the perception of consciousness; I am not using the term 'human perception', I am using the term 'perception of consciousness'. Perception of consciousness has to be understood in the right context. Right now you are aware, you are conscious, but you are not aware of each and every input of



your senses. You are not aware of the functions and behaviour of your own mind, yet you consider yourself aware. Ganesha has homogeneous awareness, total awareness of the past and the present, and therefore he becomes the ruler, the controller of all experiences that occur in the realm of consciousness, and nothing is unknown to him.



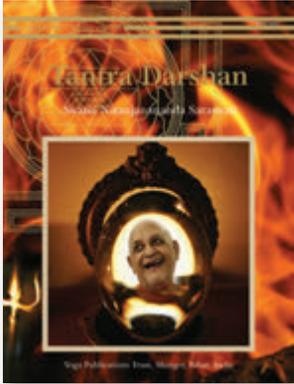
Ganesha: the controller

Ganesha is also the controller of all the agents that give you either a positive or a negative understanding, knowledge or experience: the divine and the demonical, both. Ganesha controls the demonical and the detrimental forces through strategy, and guides the benevolent forces through logic and deep, internal, intuitive inspiration. After all, when you encounter bad people, when you are surrounded by bad people, what do you do to get yourself out of that situation? You too must be sharp, clear and careful to avoid situations that can be detrimental to you. You have to use strategies to manage the bad which has surrounded you, and that is what Ganesha uses when he has to control the negative hosts, the negative shaktis, the negative powers.

When Ganesha has to deal with the positive, uplifting powers and forces, he uses intuitive, logical awareness and inspiration. When the spiritual aspirant is lifted up from fear and confusion into conscious awareness, then right thought, right speech and right interaction become the trademark of human life. When the right action, right speech and right interaction become the trademark of human expression, then you can say, "Ganesha is my friend."

Bondage and Liberation

From Tantra Darshan, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The purpose of maya is to create conditioning, to create limitations, to create areas where the senses can function and the mind can be used to enjoy the sense objects. The influence and nature of maya ultimately results in a decline of consciousness. As a person becomes more capable of releasing the noose of maya to realize the Self, maya becomes even more active. Looking into the biographies of enlightened beings, it is evident that these great souls have had to confront the last grip of maya in the form of the demonical and dark side of their nature. Jesus Christ had to face it; Lord Buddha had to face it. All those who walk the path of change and transformation have to face the final dark aspect, the dark nature of themselves, the 'dark night of the soul'. That is the last grip of maya; to create a distraction from the seeker's aspirations, purpose and goal. If it can achieve that purpose, maya reigns. If maya cannot achieve the purpose of keeping the individual bound to this material plane, it changes into yoga, and union is experienced.

Power of maya

An average individual can barely experience their own mind, let alone the spirit within. There is an awareness of the mind in the form of thoughts, ideas, desires and expectations among other manifestations such as logic, emotions, behaviours and attitudes. However, this awareness is only a superficial aspect of consciousness interacting in this world, just as the waves on the surface of the ocean are not the depth or expanse of

the ocean, but only a small part. In the same manner, as one begins to work through the conditionings and to break down the structures which define the character, the personality, the tamasic nature or other negative conditionings, the mind becomes free to explore the deeper aspects of consciousness.

The flow of maya is to carry the individual towards the world. There is no struggle against maya in this regard as it is a natural flow. However, when the individual wants to return to the source and discover the deeper spiritual nature, there is struggle with every stroke as one swims against the current of maya. Doubts creep in, inspiration falters, motivations dissipate, ideas and aims change, directions are lost and confusions set in. All this happens. It happens every day to everyone. There is indecisiveness over small issues due to lack of clarity on right and wrong choices.

People often ask, "What should I do with my life?" The answer is sought in someone else who does not know anything substantial about the questioner's life. God or the Higher Consciousness has given each person the capacity and intelligence to find their own solutions, yet others, who are also clueless, are sought for the solution to one's own life circumstances and challenges. The guru is often the target for such questions, but the guru points the aspirant back inside to find their own solutions and wisdom. This is an example to represent the level of disempowerment in people's lives due to the snare of maya. Confusion sets in, and the result is a dissipated nature of the mind caused by the duality of maya. The mind swings like a pendulum; it is never fixed in one place, but is always swinging from like to dislike, acceptance to non-acceptance, to be or not to be.

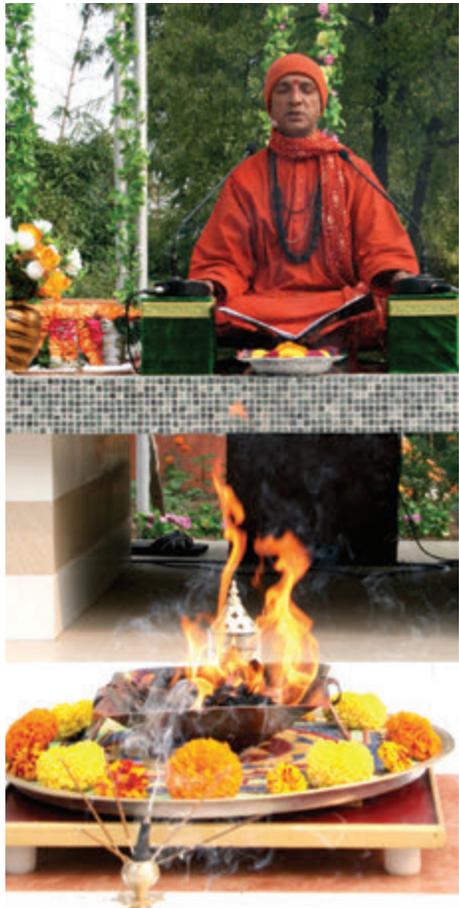
Sequence of events

Sri Krishna states in the *Bhagavad Gita* (2:62): *Dhyayato vishayan pumsah sangasteshupajayate* - "When an individual thinks of objects, attachment to them arises." When one is aware of a particular sense object in the field of attention, no matter

what the object is, the mind becomes associated and therefore attached to that particular object. With the association of mind, a particular emotion and response surfaces which is most often desire. The desire to acquire, to obtain, to possess, and to have the object arises like a wave. With that, motivation and aggression take birth and build up in the nature and the character of the person who now wants to make this acquisition.

The sequence is first desire and then aggression: dynamism, motivation and aggression. When this aggressive nature becomes dominant in order to fulfil the desire, there is delusion. In that rush of desire, passion and aggression, the intellectual awareness of what is appropriate and not appropriate is lost. The individual forgets what is right and what is wrong and is only guided by the force of desire and passion. In that state, clarity of mind is absent as the desire for the object and the motivation to attain it have taken the predominant seat in the mind. Consequently, the inner peace is lost.

Once the inner peace is lost, one moves into a state that can be compared to death. The individual effectively gets caught up in the whirlpool of maya's illusion and endures a perpetual struggle, like Abhimanyu of the



Mahabharata fame trapped in the *chakravyuha*, the impenetrable circle of soldiers. In the course of this struggle there is attack from all sides by passion, anger and attachment, with no clear exit available. The individual is like an animal, a *pashu*, caught in a state of bondage, or *pasha*, of nature and Shakti. In this state, a process is required to enable the struggling aspirant to cut the *pasha*, to break free from this *chakravyuha* and become liberated from the state of *pashutva*, animality, and this is where tantra comes in.

Ease and unease

Imagine emerging from a beautiful, comfortable room into the sun on a very hot day. The body reacts; one begins to feel the heat, to sweat, and to observe and analyze everything that one is experiencing in the body due to the heat of the sun. The urge to move out of the sun then arises. When one moves from a comfortable room into the hot midday sun, the state of comfort is gone, the state of peace is gone.

Similarly, as one moves into the realm of *maya*, the state of ease is gone and one must encounter, adjust and adapt to new situations, new environments and new climates. Then one has to live under the sun, sweating all the day. This is what has happened to the inherent transcendental nature with the separation of Shiva and Shakti; the transcendental nature has been limited to suffering the pleasures and pains of the material dimension. It is for the purpose of releasing this inherent nature from the bonds of *maya* that Shiva has propounded the philosophy of tantra to Parvati, for when the transcendental nature has the urge to move from the realm of *maya*, tantra becomes the vehicle for its liberation.

Path of bhukti

The cause of one's affliction and suffering is desire and the associations created by the consciousness in this material world. If one can understand one's associations and desires, the majority of the difficulty, strife and problems faced in life

will subside. Tantra says that there are two directions that one can take: one is the path of enjoyment, which is known as *bhukti*, and the other is the path of liberation, *mukti*.

The entire drive in life for most humans is to discover pleasure, fulfilment and happiness. It is understood that when human life comes forth, the senses, the mind, intelligence and emotions become the dominant tools for the realization and experience of life. In the process of realizing and experiencing life, these tools find different sense objects to attach themselves and associate with. This association of the senses and the mind with sense objects gives birth to both a sense of pleasure and disappointment.

The discovery of pleasure, happiness and fulfilment is directed by desire. However, whenever a desire appears in the mind it is an indication that there is something lacking inside. If the drive is to experience happiness, it is because happiness has never been experienced, and therefore it is that which is being sought. If the drive is to attain peace, it is because peace has not been experienced; it has only remained a concept. Hence, *bhukti* combines absence and attainment both. To fulfil that feeling of absence or lack, the desire presents itself to begin the process of acquiring what is desired, and to satisfy oneself by filling this sense of what is lacking in life. As desire is the cause of one's association with the sensorial world, it gives birth to the various experiences of pleasure and rejection, happiness and suffering.

Bhukti is the process through which one can experience joy, happiness, contentment and bliss, but it also subjects one to the influences of pain, suffering and distress. Both the positive and negative are experienced. Realizing how the behaviour of consciousness is affected by this *bhukti* state of receiving both the negative and the positive is one aspect of tantra.

Identification and enjoyment is the path of *bhukti*, and one can evolve even through this, provided the true nature is not forgotten. This can be achieved by maintaining an awareness of oneself experiencing enjoyment using the attitude

of the *drashta*, the witness, the observer. With the proper witnessing awareness, bhukti becomes a path to uplift and liberate human consciousness, as it connects the individual with aspects of consciousness which evoke the response of beauty and contentment. If pleasure is understood in the right manner, it can evoke the necessary response of beauty and contentment. However, if enjoyment is not observed with the right witnessing awareness, the individual is pulled into the vortex of enjoyment and pleasure, becoming disconnected from the higher source. One then only experiences that particular moment of enjoyment. After the moment has passed, new desires spring forth to again relive the response which has now been identified with the state of happiness. This creates further bondage. Hence, with the *drashta* attitude, enjoyment can become the path to experience the *sundaram* and the *shivam* aspect of consciousness, the beauty and the auspiciousness.

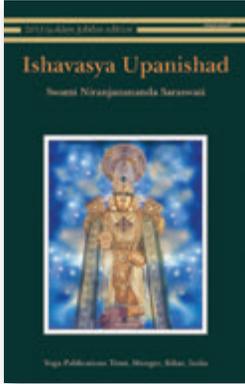
Path of mukti

The other aspect of tantra is mukti, liberation, freedom. There is an innate desire and drive to free oneself from the bondages that limit and restrict individual expression, to become more efficient, creative, and to become more whole. To achieve these aims is the concept of mukti, where the individual comes out of the shell which restricts and limits the expression of the positive virtues in life. Mukti is the experience of creativity flowering in one's nature and life. It has been said that the purpose of spiritual traditions is to move from bhukti as material involvement towards mukti as total freedom of the self. Thus, evolution involves the movement from identification with materiality and enjoyment towards freedom and transcendence.

In mukti, the mind simply withdraws from the senses and sense objects; it does not identify with external phenomena, but begins to experience its own inner self. The tantric process of both bhukti and mukti leads one through a sequence of experiencing the growth and maturation of consciousness.

Ajna Chakra

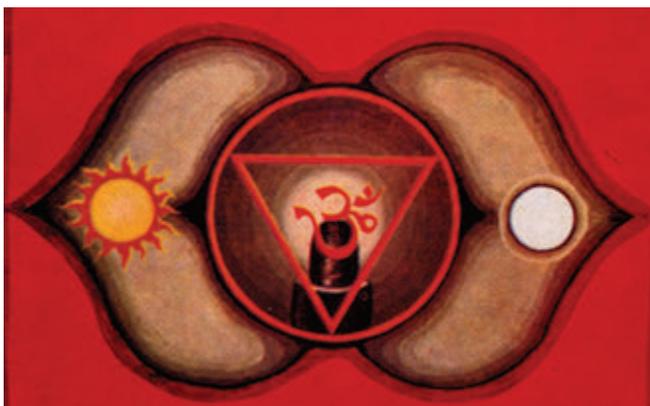
From Ishavasya Upanishad, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In the scriptures the word 'guru' has been used in two senses. One is the guru who dispels the darkness, and the other is the guru from whom we receive the mantra of initiation. Guru is he who guides us in our spiritual sadhana. There is an important chakra in the body known as ajna chakra, or the guru chakra. It is located behind the eyebrow centre, at the top of the spine, where ida, pingala and sushumna merge into one channel.

Ajna chakra has a unique quality: in the process of sadhana, as the external awareness of the sadhaka becomes inactive, this chakra becomes progressively and proportionately active. On the one side, the functions of the senses, manas, buddhi and chitta are withdrawn, and on the other side, the form of the *ishta devata*, or personal deity, becomes clearer and ajna chakra awakens simultaneously. As soon as the senses become extroverted, ajna chakra becomes dormant. The awakening of ajna chakra takes place during meditation only in those sadhakas whose senses are withdrawn and whose mind has become calm and detached to a considerable extent.

There are some sadhakas whose ajna chakra remains awake during meditation and even when not in meditation. However, such people are rare. In the state of deep meditation, when all the senses are withdrawn, ajna chakra receives the subtle instructions of the guru. Other than this, all the peepholes of perception are closed in this state. There is a membrane in between the gross and subtle states that acts as a soundproofing device. When you are in the gross state,



you do not hear the subtle sounds, and when you cross over into the subtle state, you cannot hear the gross sounds. The experiences of one area do not have entry into the other area. The senses are capable of perceiving only specific vibrations within a particular range, even though sound waves of all frequencies exist constantly.

Transmission

In deep meditation the instructions are not generated by thought, as thought is a product of the mind, which is gross. The guru instructs the disciple through a subtle form of communication known as transmission. Only those gurus who are able to remain in the subtle state can convey subtle instructions. However, it is very difficult to remain for long periods in the subtle state, where no karma or activity can take place. Two swords cannot be placed in one sheath. All actions have to be abandoned, whether direct or indirect, in order to remain in this state. It is necessary to give up all worldly attachments, erase all impressions of pleasure and pain, rise above the pull of the senses, mind and intellect, and have no distinctions between the auspicious and inauspicious. This calibre of guru is seldom available.

When such a guru transmits instructions to his disciple during meditation, a counter vibration occurs in the disciple's

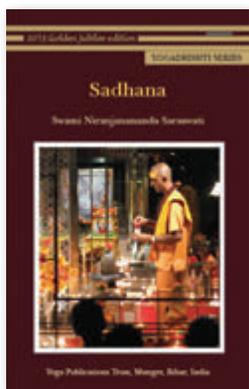
ajna chakra that takes him further on the path of sadhana. The moment the arrow of the guru's instruction hits the disciple, he feels as if he has crossed over from a small dark room into a vast space. This space does not appear as a special world of memories and dreams; it is exactly like the gross world in appearance, with all the same perceptions. This internal world is identical to the external world with only one difference: the external world is perishable, whereas the internal world is eternal. After reaching the internal world, the external world appears to be false.

This experience is only possible when ajna chakra is unlocked and the commands of the guru are heard there. After this stage, the sadhaka does not do any other sadhana except obeying the words of the guru. Until this point, he undertakes different sadhanas to awaken ajna chakra, but beyond this point, only the transmission of the guru can take him further. On proceeding further, he perceives the light of the Atma and has the experience that he and the Atma are one and the same. There is no difference between the two. This is the phenomenon of *Jaanat tumahi tumahi hoi jaaee* – "On knowing you, I become you." This is the goal of all yogas and sadhanas.



Development of Sadhana

From Yogadrishhti Series: Sadhana, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The process which takes you from *tamas* to *sattwa* has a name, and that is *sadhana*. Generally, when we use the word 'sadhana', people identify it with a spiritual discipline, a spiritual practice. However, *sadhana* means attainment of perfection in that which you do.

Define your intention

Sadhana is the attainment of excellence and perfection in everything that you do. It begins with involvement in constant, continuous awareness and focus. In the absence of awareness and focus, *sadhana* is not *sadhana*; it is only a waste of time. There has to be focus, there has to be awareness of the present mood and there has to be clarity of intention as to what you want to achieve.

Often people say, "I want to learn to meditate." Why do they want to learn to meditate? That, they themselves do not know. They have heard that meditation is good, so they want to meditate, but they do not know what their aim is and their teacher also does not know how to guide them. First, the intention has to be defined. Once the intention is clear then a path can be mapped. When you know that you have to go from point 'A' to point 'B' then you can plot a path on the map; however, if you do not know that you are going to point 'B' how will you plot your map? You will just go around in circles and not reach anywhere.

First of all, know what your intention is. That is the primary requirement of starting the *sadhana*, otherwise it is like ordering pizza. Imagine you go to a Pizza Hut and the person

behind the counter asks, "What kind of pizza do you want?" and you say, "I don't know. Give me one with everything." The pizza maker then puts a little bit of everything on it and gives it to you, and as there are so many items on the pizza you cannot taste any single item properly; it is a khichari pizza. You have to be clear about what kind of pizza you want; you have to state whether it should be cheese and onion, or cheese and mushrooms. There has to be an understanding of what you want. This applies to the food you consume and it also applies to your mental intentions. When you have decided, 'This is where I want to go' you can plot a path on the map, which becomes the starting point for every aspirant.

If the intention is not clear, you cannot start your journey. You reach the airport, but which flight are you going to catch? You want to go to London but end up in Timbuktu without a visa and you are deported from there. The same thing happens in your spiritual journey. Often, when you bypass your mind and go to a different place which you think is bigger, better and nicer, you reach there, then you find that you have no visa and have to come back. You cannot stay in that state, as there is no understanding and preparation.

Have conviction in the practice

The second point is that you must have conviction in and dedication to your practice. You have to believe that what you practise is going to lead you to your goal. Conviction and practice must go together. If you are practising something, you should believe, you should be convinced, you should know that your practice is going to lead you to your goal, and that becomes your focus, that becomes your aim.

Every practice in yoga, every branch of yoga has a specific aim. Every yoga and every practice has an aim, a goal, a target, and once the intention is clear and the path can be plotted, then the appropriate practices can be selected for you to achieve your goal. Conviction in practice is the second aspect: intention and conviction.

Accept the change

The third aspect is accepting the change. Accept the change that takes place. If through your sadhana you are experiencing some change, some transformation, then be ready to accept it and not negate, deny or confront it. Many people do not accept change. They want to remain the same with an added quality, but how can you remain the same with an added quality? If you bring in some new quality, the reflection of that quality will be seen in your behaviour, your responses, your actions and your performance. There is already a change, a new identity being reflected. There has to be an openness to accept the change that occurs spontaneously and naturally, without compulsive and obsessive thinking as to why this is happening or why that is not happening.

Often spiritual aspirants become confused by their own mind. This confusion is in itself a creation of their own mind. If I say, "In my practice today, I had this particular experience," then you sit down to think, "Swamiji had that experience, so I should also have it." You try and you do not have that experience. Then you begin to think, "Maybe I am not doing it in the right manner." The most important thing that you have forgotten is that you are not Swamiji. How can you compare yourself with another person? You have forgotten that and you are saying, "Maybe I am doing the wrong practice because I am not getting the experience which Swamiji had." It is not a question of having the experience that Swamiji had, it is a question of having the same mind as Swamiji in order to have the same experience. That very few understand.

Accept the change in whatever way you feel it, you observe it. It is your response to sadhana. When you eat or drink, external things are going into your body, but the satisfaction, happiness and enjoyment is you responding to what you are eating and drinking. In the same manner, accepting the change and allowing it to take place is your response, knowing that it is going to take you in a different direction where you can be different; perhaps better, perhaps expressive, but different from what you were before.



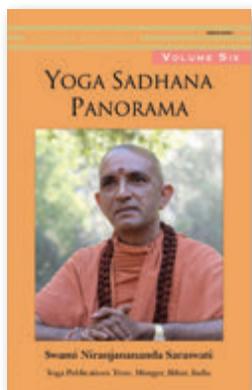
Practise continuous improvement

First is intention, second is conviction in practice and third is accepting the change. Fourth is improving the changed nature with more conviction, faith, determination and belief. You integrate that practice and the change into your life and improve upon that.

This is the process of *sadhana* in four categories. It can happen at a sensory level, at a mental level, at an emotional level and at a spiritual level. After all, the *asanas* that you practise are *sadhana* for the body. In order to practise one posture you have to go through preparation beforehand. In order to sit in the lotus posture, you need to practise *pawanmuktasana* for six months just to limber up your joints, legs and knees. Although the aim is *padmasana*, the lotus pose, your *sadhana* is not of *padmasana*; your *sadhana* is of *pawanmuktasana*. Your aim is to sit in *padmasana*, but your knees, legs and muscles are stiff and cannot bend. Do you make an attempt every day to sit in the lotus pose and crack your knee? Or do you practise *pawanmuktasana* for six months to limber up, become flexible and then sit in the *padmasana* pose? In this way, at times the *sadhana* is different from what the aim is, and only a teacher, a guru, can tell what is appropriate and what is not appropriate for you.

Excel in Life

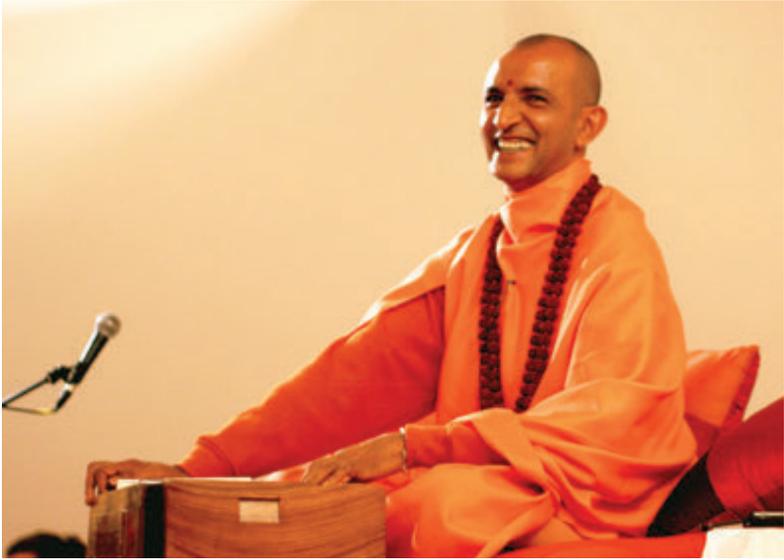
From Yoga Sadhana Panorama Volume 6, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The aim of life is not God-realization, it is the acquisition of excellence in life. That is the sankalpa I have taken. I don't care whether I see God or not. That is not my intention, not the ambition or aspiration of my life. If it happens, it will happen because it is bound to happen. My direction in life is the attainment of excellence in everything. In yoga try to excel in every moment, in relationships, in speech, thought and behaviour. Excel in frustration, in love, in passion. Excel in meditation. If you have this attitude, you will find that you live a spiritual life.

The defeatist tendency comes in material life. "Defeat the defeatist tendency within you" were Swami Sivananda's words to the former president of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. When Dr Kalam was a young man, he wanted to become a fighter pilot but failed the exam. Feeling dejected, he came to Rishikesh on his way home. He was sitting by the river Ganga, contemplating his future, when Swami Sivananda came walking along. He stopped and asked the young man what he was doing there. Dr Kalam explained what had happened, and said he felt without a purpose in life. Swami Sivananda said, "You have failed because you are not destined to excel in those areas. Your destiny is to do something else, so don't be dejected. Defeat the defeatist tendency in your mind, and again participate in the world wholeheartedly." Fifty years later, Dr Kalam still says, "This sentence has inspired me and continues to inspire me."

This is the essence of spiritual life. In material existence, in outer connections, we are defeated by situations, or we



feel defeated. Defeat indicates the tamasic state. If we can defeat that tendency, then we are in a sattvic state and we are spiritual, because that is one of the greatest instincts to be overcome. Therefore, spiritual life is not a religious or a devotional life, not a life of contemplation, not a life of thinking airy-fairy things. It is a pragmatic life in which we are aware of ourselves and what we wish to become in the course of time. The movement from tamas to sattwa is spiritual life.

Dear Swamiji,

Thank you very much, from the bottom of my heart, for the invitation to come to Munger to celebrate, to work, to live, to breathe, to enjoy, to learn, to give, to take, to thank, to feel, to doubt, to believe, to question, to explore, to see, to hear, to smell, to talk, to listen, to meditate, to laugh, to cry, to carry, to long, to be.

The ashram, Convention and Jubilee will always have a special place in my life along with the Satyananda family. Here is a soul-felt 'Thank You' for welcoming me to this worldwide family today.

May you be forever blessed.

—Katrin Schmitt, Switzerland

Mantle Of Light, Peace And Beauty



Dear Swamiji,

We would like to express our gratitude to you. We feel blessed to have been in Munger and to have attended the historic event of the WYC and the celebrations for the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga. For the majority of us this is something which happens only once in a lifetime. We felt surrounded by grace on all sides.

With these words we express the sentiments of our group – gratitude for everything we received in all dimensions – material and spiritual. We came back with full hands and hearts.

There was also your invisible help to overcome all difficulties for travelling to India; many shared their wonder at how things were arranged in a smooth, easy way and how they were able to manage with everything.

About the events it is difficult to express our joy and happiness seeing and hearing the Truth in different ways, colours and splendour. We felt surrounded by an invisible mantle of light, peace and beauty throughout. We felt that the masters of our tradition were present and gave blessings to all.

Thank you Swamiji!

—Swamis Vivekamurti and Yoga Gnana



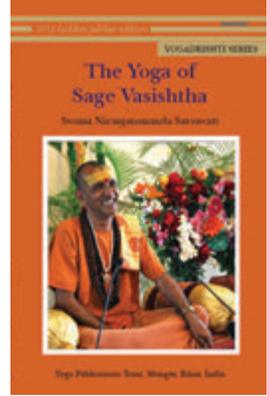
Yoga Publications Trust

The Yoga of Sage Vasishtha

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

61 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-93-81620-18-2

The yoga of Sage Vasishtha was the theme of the satsangs Swamiji gave in March 2012 at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth. The *Yoga Vasishtha* is a treatise in which Rishi Vasishtha instructs Sri Rama on how to overcome his depression and actively engage in the world while remaining unaffected by it. Selecting the key discussions, Swamiji explained how this ancient work provides fresh motivation and positivity to manage the challenges of daily life, while cultivating deep spiritual wisdom and perfection in action.



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Satyananda Yoga Websites



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.in

The Rikhiapeeth website is a sanctuary for all spiritual seekers so they can stay connected to the cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda, 'Serve, Love, Give', that are practised and lived at Rikhiapeeth. Includes inspiring satsangs, information about Rikhiapeeth, upcoming events, courses and more.



Living Yoga with Swami Niranjan

www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/. Dedicated to the vision and mission of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, the spiritual successor of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, it contains news and articles.

www.yogamag.net

The official website of *Yoga* magazine. Includes worldwide links to Satyananda Yoga centres and teachers, a brief history of *Yoga* magazine, news and more.



Avahan Online

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 Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.

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| Dec 11-14 | Ashram Life, Yoga & Satsang |
| Dec 25 | Swami Satyananda's Birthday |
| Jan 1 2015 | Hanuman Chalisa |
| Jan 2-11 | Kriya Yoga Course (Spanish & Italian) |
| Jan 21-24 | Sri Yantra Aradhana |
| Jan 24 | Basant Panchami Celebration |
| Feb 1-May 25 | Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day |
| Feb 14 | 4-month Yogic Studies Course (Hindi) |
| Mar 1-30 | Bal Yoga Diwas |
| Mar 3-20 | Yoga Instructor's Course (Hindi) |
| Jun 1-Jul 25 | Yoga HMC*: Asthma (Hindi) |
| Jul 27-30 | 2-month Orientation in Yogic Science & Lifestyle (Hindi) |
| Jul 31 | Guru Poornima Satsang & Aradhana |
| Aug-May 2016 | Guru Paduka Poojan |
| Aug 1-30 | 1-year Diploma in Yogic Studies Course (English) |
| Sep 8 | Yoga Instructors Course (English) |
| Sep 12 | Swami Sivananda Janmotsava |
| Oct 1-Jan 25 | Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas |
| Oct 3-20 | 4-month Yogic Studies Course (English) |
| Dec 25 | Yoga HMC*: Diabetes (Hindi) |
| | Swami Satyananda's Birthday |

**HMC: Health Management Course*

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| Every Saturday | Mahamrityunjaya Havan |
| Every Ekadashi | Bhagavad Gita Path |
| Every Poornima | Sundarkand Path |
| Every 5th & 6th | Commemoration of Sri Swami Satyananda's Mahasamadhi |
| Every 12th | Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamanas |

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Ensure that you do not bring your mobile with you.

For more information on the above events contact:

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