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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Song of Immanence of Rama

Om Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama
Bolo Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jay Rama
In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Rama,
In the heart, mind, prana and senses is Rama,
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Rama,
In sentiment, thought, word and action
is Rama.

Within is Rama, without is Rama,
In front is Rama, above is Rama,
Below is Rama, behind is Rama,
To the right is Rama, to the left is Rama,
Everywhere is Rama.

Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama Rama
Refuge, solace, path, lord, witness is Rama.
Father, mother, friend, relative, guru is Rama.
Support, source, centre, ideal, God is Rama.
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer
is Rama.

Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama Rama.

—Swami Sivananda

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Bharat Yoga Yatra 2014

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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 ॥

Spiritual Discovery

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In continuation of the yoga yatras that started after the World Yoga Convention, a program was conducted in Nepal. This was a groundbreaker and an eye opener, both. It was our first exposure to Nepal, and I had gone there not for the purpose of propagating yoga, but to pay my respects to the mother of Sri Swamiji, as she was Nepali. It was my intention for many years to go to Nepal to hoist the flag of Satyananda Yoga, more as an honour to Sri Swamiji's mother than for the purpose of propagating yoga. It was with this theme that the program started.

The venue of the program was in the middle of Kathmandu, at a huge ground, like the polo grounds of Munger, known as Tundi Khel, which is under the control of the army. A huge marquee was set up, in which twelve hundred people could

easily lie down in shavasana. The number of people that was inside the pandal was doubled outside every day. The programs were from 5.30 to 7.30 in the morning and then from 5.30 to 7.30 in the evening.

Nepal itself is a peculiar place, since mythologically, it is the place where the ancient tribe of Kiratas used to live. It was the Kirata group that later was known and identified as the Gorkhas. In the past there were three kingdoms in Nepal: the group of Newaris, the group of Likshavis, and the group of Paalvansh. The unification of these three kingdoms gave birth to Nepal.

The word 'Nepal' also indicates the three groups or the three kingdoms: Newari, Ne; Paalvansh, Pa; and Likshavi, La; Ne-Pa-La. The three kingdoms were unified by the first group of Gorkhas.

Towards unity

When we met the president of Nepal, he mentioned that presently there are three major influences in Nepal: Indian, Russian and Chinese. For further education, many people come to India, a big group goes to China, and another big group goes to Russia. Wherever the students go, they come back to Nepal indoctrinated with the ideology of the country where they studied. The people who come to India go back indoctrinated with the democratic system. The people who come back from China come back with their ideology. Those who come from Russia come with that ideology. The political situation in Nepal is a mix of Indian, Chinese and Russian politics. On account of this, there is loss of cultural identity. People do not know where they belong.

Due to the political disturbances in the country for the last twelve years, people and the minds of people are disturbed; they are not at peace. There seems to be an identity crisis between the youth, the elders and the young children.

Looking at this disparity and crisis, the thought came strongly that Nepal can be unified, spiritually and culturally,

with the proper implementation of the sadhu's principles. When I use the words 'sadhu's principles', I mean Swami Sivananda's principles: yoga along with seva. These are the two principles of a sadhu, for which a sadhu has to live, and these two principles will become useful in Nepal. Yoga, along with seva, can bring that focus and that balance back into their lives.

There are many yoga teachers in Nepal, however, for any substantial and right work to happen, it is dedicated sannyasins who must propagate, not teachers. Teachers have their own compulsions, families, responsibilities, needs, and financial requirements, therefore they cannot devote themselves totally to yoga. It is for this reason that I made the statement in Nepal that an ashram will open there directly under the guidance of BSY. It will be run by sannyasins, not by karma sannyasins, yoga teachers or householders who have their other priorities or convictions in life. It will be run by people who are totally focused on the development of yoga, and the unification of the culture. This will happen. It is the call of the land, and this call will be answered in the future. In four to eight years, we shall see the development of something beautiful in Nepal.

At the Indian Embassy

This yatra to Nepal happened at many levels. There was also a program at the Indian Cultural Centre, organized by the Indian Embassy and the Ambassador of India to Nepal. At the Indian Embassy, we met with many members of the Parliament of Nepal, ex-chief ministers of Nepal, and prime Ministers of Nepal, who showed a keen interest in bringing yoga to their country as a way to protect their culture and develop their community.

Before leaving Nepal we had already received a letter from a medical college which wants to open a department of yoga and do research on cardiovascular management. We had also received an invitation to bring yoga into a school and make



it a model for applying the principles of yoga in schools. If it can become a model, in the course of time yoga education will also move into other schools of the country.

To bring the spark of life

I feel that the people are in need of something, something with which they can connect and feel fulfilled, feel complete. That sense of completeness was missing from the people in Nepal, even when I went to the rural areas. In the village areas people were living, yet the spark of life was missing. In Kathmandu people were living, yet the spark of life was missing. It was a strong feeling, the realization that they are becoming disconnected from their own natural and spiritual selves.

Whenever there is disconnection from the natural and spiritual self, a lot of distraction takes place, and these distractions divert the mental focus to some other area. Yoga, along with seva, can provide a way to again bring back that focus and balance into their life.

I feel that the time is now right for the spiritual awakening of Nepal. There used to be a slogan: *Jaag Machhender, Gorakh aya* – “Wake up, Matsyendranath, Gorakh has come.” I modified that to: *Jaag Nepal, Niranjan aya* – “Wake up, Nepal, Niranjan has come!”

It was an inspirational journey and I can say clearly and openly that I have discovered the spiritual Nepal. Hippies had discovered the ganja Nepal, and I have discovered the spiritual Nepal.

—15 June 2014, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Why is it Important to Know Oneself?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



This question should not be seen from the philosophical viewpoint. One should consider oneself as *atma* or the self. Generally, people understand 'Know Yourself' as a discussion about the self and God. However, it should be considered in real life situations when one is full of tension and under stress.

Do you know the reason for your tension or stress? You should know how your mind behaves in different situations and how you can guide it, control it and make it peaceful. It is like travelling. If you go on a journey, you check the map and find out the whole route. Therefore, what is the route you have decided for your life?

I have decided my route and fixed my path, not only as a sadhu or renunciate. I am a sannyasin yet the goal of my life is not self-realization or liberation, for I cannot comprehend these ideas. They are theories. I do not know what are they in

reality. The people who have read a lot can give lectures for ten days, but it is irrelevant.

A blind man wants to see the sun. For a blind man seeing the sun is an ambition. It can be his aspiration but not his need. What is his need? His need is to get his eyesight and vision back for his practical use, not to satisfy his ambition. Once the blind man has his vision, he is able to see not only the sun but the entire universe. Similarly, our ambition is to see God, however it is not a need. It is not a necessity, only an ambition. The need is to improve ourselves.

As a sannyasin I have adopted this as my goal. I do not know whether it is written in my karma or destiny that I shall meet God or not. I do not even think about that. However, whatever one's actions, character and behaviour may be, if one can make them better on a daily basis, then in the future one may be an example for society. Therefore, the goal of my life is acquisition of excellence, not self-realization.

—3 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



The Need for Spiritual Regeneration

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



All materialistic ways of thinking and living should be abandoned. A simple, spiritual sense of the values of life should be carefully inculcated in all countries and in all societies. There should be an immediate return to the motto of 'plain living and high thinking', which was so successfully followed by our ancient forefathers. They understood well that the practice of renunciation is the *sine qua non* for the thorough

eradication of greed and fear, which lie at the root of all troubles in the world.

As a supplement to this, the spirit of selfless service should be infused into every man from his childhood days. This is the point where religion meets ethics and sociology; for the first posits, the one Self alone pervades all existence. Hence every piece of service done for others amounts to a benefit conferred on ourselves. The more this sublime basis of human actions is recognized and adopted, the more rapid will be man's evolution towards perfection and divinization.

Need for education

The emphasis in human relations should be shifted from rights to duties. Communalism, racism, nationalism - all 'isms' are only the different hoods of the same hydra-headed

monster of selfishness, and insistence upon rights and disregard of duties and should therefore give place to one all-embracing universalism. National borders should gradually lose their artificial significance and importance. One by one, all differences of religion and language, social and moral codes, cultural and political institutions should vanish and be replaced by the greatest common measure of uniformity of outlook, interests and conduct.

Great masses of mankind have to be weaned from the unfortunate hedonistic tendencies of thinking, feeling and acting with the grossness and greed of the mere beast. This is not an impossible proposition, for the Divine exists in all beings, and it is an integral part of every individual consciousness. The method to draw it out is right and true education. This task of gradually, yet surely regenerating the nature of the masses has to be seriously undertaken in all earnestness and worked out in the educational and the domestic spheres, in particular, and the wider social sphere, in general, if the hope of creating a new generation and bringing into existence a new humanity who will elect and manage the future government of nations in the best interests of all, is to be fulfilled.

A farmer for a better future

I know this is a difficult task; but no great thing is ever done as if by magic. All constructivity implies hard work, and more so for a creative and constructive task of a worldwide nature. The results may not be immediate. To a large extent the fruit of such work will be for posterity, while the tempo and the sincerity of the movement will set the elders thinking and gradually transform them as well.

A farmer who wishes to reap a rich harvest of healthy and luxuriant crop does not so much attempt to change and improve the existing crop that is already standing in the field, though he exerts to safeguard them from rot and pestilence, but rather he starts to treat the soil in which the seeds of the next harvest are lying and germinating in silence. In the same

way, those who are to work for future peace and universal wellbeing should first of all strive to create a right and ideal condition that will enable the future generation to fulfil the hopes and ideals that we cherish today.

If the world is to have peace, there has to be less hypocrisy, less prejudice and fear complex, less slavery to outdated traditions and exclusive material values. Above all, the ideal of righteousness, to live and to let live, and to consider the other man's rights, necessities and self-respect as much as our own should have to be realized first.

The greatness of good conduct

That act of exertion which does not do good to others, or that act for which one has to feel shame, should never be done. That act on the other hand, should be done, for which one may be lauded in society. This is a brief description of what right conduct is. To speak the truth, to practise ahimsa, not to hurt the feelings of others in thought, word and deed; not to speak harsh words to anyone; not to show any anger towards anybody, not to abuse others or speak ill of others and to see God in all beings is divine life.

It is by conduct that one acquires a long life, and it is by conduct that one acquires riches and prosperity. It is a means to attain the goal of life. Without good conduct no one can achieve the goal. Good conduct brings in fame, longevity, wealth and happiness. It eventually leads to moksha. It is conduct that begets virtue, and it is virtue that prolongs life. Conduct gives fame, long life and heaven. Conduct is the most efficacious rite of propitiating the celestials. One should show mercy to all orders of man. Virtue is singled out by conduct.

The good and virtuous are so on account of the conduct they follow. The marks of good conduct are afforded by the deeds of those that are good or righteous. Indeed, it is by conduct that one acquires fame that depends upon great deeds both in this world and the next. One may by conduct alone conquer the three worlds. There is nothing which the virtuous

person cannot obtain. A person of good deeds, of pleasant and sweet speech has no peer. People respect that man who acts righteously and who does good acts, even if they only hear of him without actually seeing him.

The dharma of love

“Do as you would be done by. Do unto others as you wish others do unto you.” This is the whole of dharma. Attended to this carefully, you will be saved from all troubles; practise this in your daily life.

One should cultivate unlimited love. All patriotism, love of one’s nation, race and religion should never be allowed to be factors to encourage disunity, discord, hostility and a superiority complex. The love of your country and personal freedom should all the more emphasize how sacred is the other man’s love for his country and his personal freedom.

True religion is love. True religion unites all in fellowship. Sages call upon man to see good in all, but our endeavour should be to see God in all, for only then will we be able to see the good in all. Let man be taught truth, purity, love, contentment and selflessness. Let there be a living faith in God in the hearts of men, for it is the essence of the spirit of true religion. In this faith alone, lies the hope of our victory. Having achieved this, the main task is all but over and such humanity in whose bosom the divine flame has been kindled will spontaneously direct all endeavours towards the materialization of all these ideals.

May the world be free from the fear of war and destruction; from fanaticism of religious intolerance, racial prejudices and hatred; from the delusion of fostering civilization through enslavement; from the self-righteous pride of charity and doing good to others; and from ungodliness and the diabolical dialectics of materialism.

May peace be unto all beings!

—*printed in YOGA, Vol. XIV, No. 1, January 1976*

Hatha Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Hatha yoga is not only physical yoga. The indication of this is found in the name itself: ‘ha’ and ‘tha’, ‘hatha’. These two words, *ha* and *tha*, represent two different forces in the body, the solar or vital force and the lunar or mental force. Balancing these two forces is the purpose of hatha yoga. The solar force is known as *prana shakti*, and the lunar force is known as *chitta shakti*. The solar energy is associated with the sympathetic nervous system activity, and the lunar energy is associated with parasympathetic activity. These two flows control the vitality, energy and health of the body and mind, emotions and spirit. Harmonizing these forces to attain not only physical but also psychological, mental, emotional and spiritual health, is the purpose of hatha yoga.

Shatkarmas

From this perspective, hatha yoga begins with shatkarmas, which are specific practices whose purpose is to help purify and detoxify the body and internal systems. With the detoxification

of the body, the internal systems of the body are regulated and imbalances, which occur within the body due to irregular lifestyle, irregular habits of diet and irregular habits in general, are overcome.

The first three *shatkarmas* or six practices are: neti, dhauti and bhasti. They cleanse the head, stomach and intestines. The cleansing helps to remove the toxins from the body, and once the toxins are removed, the body gains energy and health. The next three practices are known as nauli, kapalbhathi and tratata. They help to regulate the energy structure. Nauli activates the centre of energy in the solar plexus, or *manipura chakra*, which is the source of prana shakti. The activation of manipura chakra happens with nauli kriya. The second practice is kapalbhathi, not the pranayama, but the practice in which the left and right brain hemispheres are brought into balance.

There is a joke: People have these two hemispheres of the brain, the left and right hemisphere, however, the problem is that in the right hemisphere there is nothing left and in the left hemisphere there is nothing right.

The practice of kapalbhathi helps to balance the functions of these two brain hemispheres, and thus bring tranquillity and harmony to the cerebral activity. There different waves are being generated in form of beta, alpha, delta and theta waves. The sixth practice is tratata, which brings the dissipated energies together, focuses them in the energy centres within the body, and allows the dormant centres of energy to open and awaken. This is the beginning of hatha yoga, for the shatkarmas constitute the first practices of hatha yoga.

Posture of the body

The second practice of hatha yoga is asana. *Asana* does not mean exercise; it means a posture of the body. This posture of the body is a static posture, not dynamic movement. When one lies down, that is a posture, an asana. When one is seated quietly, that is a posture, an asana. Therefore, asana is known as a posture or condition of the body in which one is able to

regulate and bring about balance in the various functions of the internal organs.

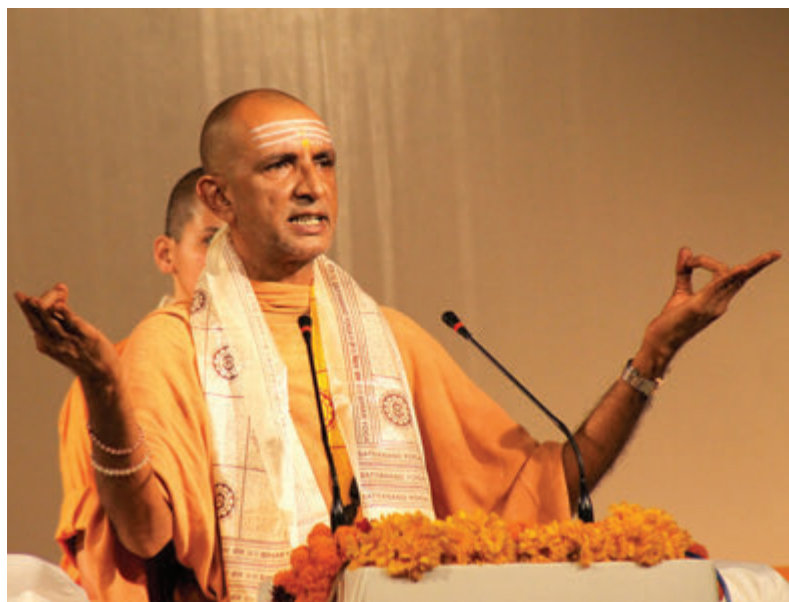
With the practice of asana it has been found that many illnesses which are due to imbalance in lifestyle are eradicated. The Bihar School of Yoga has done a lot of medical and scientific research over the last fifty years to study the benefits of asanas on the human body. Research is still being undertaken to determine the efficacy of asanas in long-term practice.

The right combination of asanas according to age, body type and stamina of the body have proved beneficial. When the right combination of asanas is selected, they can become effective in the management and treatment of many diseases and illnesses that occur in life, including diabetes, asthma, arthritis, cancer and HIV. The Bihar School of Yoga has been involved in research globally. With the help of many medical professionals, institutions, hospitals and clinics investigations are being conducted on a regular basis. The results of the research have been published by the Bihar School of Yoga.

Pranayama

The third practice of hatha yoga is pranayama. Pranayama is practised to increase the vitality of the body. Fifty years ago, nobody knew about pranayama; only the sages knew. The Bihar School of Yoga was the first institution that classified pranayama and published it. Pranayama creates three kinds of states in the mind. One group of pranayama stimulates the body, mind, prana and the senses. It intensifies the sensations and the body experiences stimulation. The body is stimulated in kapalbhathi pranayama and bhastrika pranayama, which generate heat in the body and increase blood pressure and the heartbeat. Therefore, it is called a stimulating pranayama.

The second group of pranayama cools the various parts of the body, relaxing them and giving them rest. This group is called tranquillizing pranayama, for it calms any stimulation in the body and of the senses. The third group of pranayama involves balancing the energies and senses.



Mudras

The fourth practice of hatha yoga is mudra. Mudras are used in the Indian tradition in many ways – dancers use hand mudras, eye mudras, face mudras, and the various mudras of the body are expressed in dance. Mudras are also used in yoga.

The purpose of mudra is to attain a state which is related to hatha yoga. Therefore, one has to be aware that it has a connection with the state of pranas. In the distal body parts, like the fingers, the top of the head or the feet, the energy is always dissipated away from these body parts.

Kirlian photography was developed by a Russian scientist, Dr Kirlian. In the 1970s, he developed a camera which takes pictures of the body parts. The parts of the body are not visible; rather the energy that is around it is visible.

With this machine we have done a study in a research institute in Australia. This machine has a great speciality. Whether it is a coin, a leaf, or the hand of a human being, it is kept on a plate, a light is flashed and it takes a picture of the hand, for example. However, in the picture, one would not

find a hand. Only a black outline was visible and around each finger different colours of energy could be seen, indicating the amount of energy emanating from these body parts.

When mudras, like jnana mudra, are practised, it was observed that the energy re-enters the body again. This means that the recycling of energy is taking place. The energy is not being wasted, rather the energy, the *prana shakti*, in our body is recycled. The benefit of using mudras is that energy previously wasted is reabsorbed and preserved.

Bandhas

The fifth component of hatha yoga is the practice of *bandhas*, locks, which stimulate the awakening of the various psychic centres. Bandhas are of three types: neck lock, *jalandhara bandha*, abdominal lock, *uddiyana bandha*, and the perineum lock, *moola bandha*.

These three bandhas have a physical factor. In various areas in the body there is a mass of nerves. The group of nerves is known as *kanda* in the language of yoga. One group of nerves is near the rectum, another group is behind the navel inside the abdomen, and a third group of nerves is in the neck region. All the nerves of the body come together in the neck region and go to the brain. The exchange of sensation between the brain and the senses, and between the brain and the mind takes place through these nerves.

Through these bandhas the sensations are reversed. When the sensations are reversed, the energy flow is limited to only one place. In *jalandhara bandha*, the neck is being locked and the obstruction of sensations takes place only in the neck region. In *uddiyana bandha* the abdomen is being locked as an obstruction is created in this particular area.

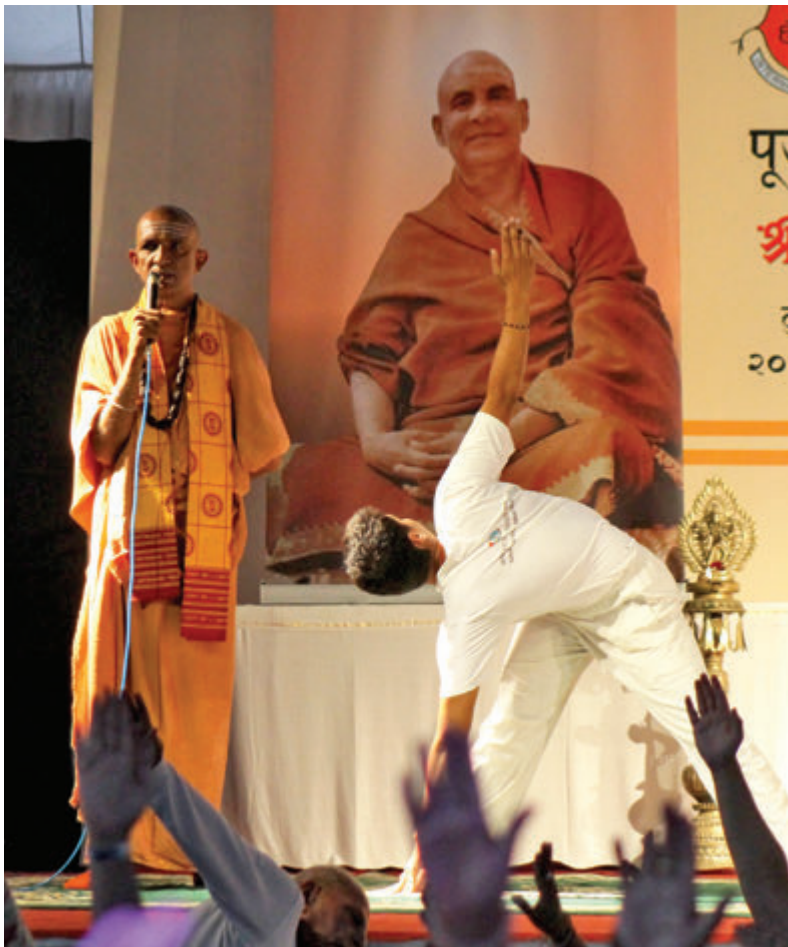
In this manner energy is produced by using different techniques to block the sensations in various parts of the body.

Here is an example: pressure comes when a running tap is closed. Gradually the pressure increases. Then when the tap is opened, the pipe throws the water swiftly through the tap, and the water pressure normalizes. Similarly, the use of

bandhas unites the energy by blocking it, then by releasing the bandha the energy is distributed.

These are the five components of hatha yoga. When one perfects hatha yoga, it harmonizes, reorganizes and balances the body, the physical structure, the energy system, and allows one to move into the dimension of the mind. By balancing and harmonizing the body and energy, one moves into the dimension of mind and raja yoga begins.

– 5 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Questions and Answers

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What is tantra?

Actually tantra is the *Om* of yoga. From tantra, yoga has emerged. Tantra and yoga are inseparable. Tantra goes side by side with the yogic practices. What we want in life can be achieved by tantra and by yoga. Tantra awakens the psychic body, the kundalini shakti. Tantra is a system by which one liberates or separates the two

aspects of consciousness and matter, Purusha and Prakriti, or Shiva and Shakti. Sometimes matter rules over consciousness and sometimes consciousness rules over matter. When consciousness rules over matter, there is spiritual vision. When matter rules over consciousness, there is creation.

These twin energies live and work together in total agreement with each other. As long as matter and consciousness are united, existence continues in a set pattern. However, by the practice of tantra, one can separate matter from consciousness, Prakriti from Purusha, or Shakti from Shiva, and awakening takes place.

What you are aware of within you is a combination of the two. You are aware of matter, the material body and mind, the 'I', the senses and the objects of perception. You are aware of all these sections at the same time.

By the practice of tantra the awareness is withdrawn from all sections and centred on one point - 'I'. That is the separation of Prakriti from Purusha and that is tantra. How do you practise it? There are many ways. The most important part of tantra is

mantra and next comes kriya. With the help of mantra and kriya yoga, you can awaken the dormant potential power known as *kundalini shakti*. This is the prime purpose, the ultimate reality in tantra and in human evolution.

Do you practise yoga all the time?

Yoga is a part of life. Swamis live a yogic life for the evolution of body, mind and consciousness. We do not practise yoga all day long. The hatha yoga and raja yoga sciences are meant for householders and not for renunciates. We do not need to practise them. Yoga practices are for people who are under stress and strain, who are facing emotional, psychological and physical problems in their lives.

Yoga practices are mainly for people who live in the world, who have a worldly mind. They accumulate a lot of problems within themselves and when they are unable to eliminate all those problems, they take the help of yogasanas, pranayama, meditation, and so on. For swamis, yoga is not a practice. We live a yogic life within ourselves and for us life is all fullness. In the ashram we work, perhaps more than a householder does. Most of us get up at 3 am and by 4 o'clock we are on duty.

Those sannyasins who work in the kitchen, office, printing press, report for work very early. For us, work is the most important thing in life, and the work we do brings us great peace and pleasure. We don't study or practise yoga for ourselves. Yoga practices are unnecessary for those who have accepted and understood the mind. Householders and people who live in the world have to practise yoga as a part of their daily routine in order to be able to face the situation of life, but once they are free from those situations, they don't really need yoga.

What does God mean to sannyasins?

We feel that God is within. God is the subtle or spirit body in everyone. When you have illumination within you, you do not seek it any more. God is a symbol for the beginner, but one who is illumined has found God within.



When you start school, you begin with the ABC. However, an older student who already knows the alphabet shouldn't be put into kindergarten. For a beginner the symbol, a cross, flower, lingam, and so on, is necessary, but when awareness is deep, grand and magnificent, what need is there for symbols?

Everything depends upon one's awareness. If you want to enter into the temple of God, in the beginning of course, you can do it externally, but that alone will not bring you to God. Visiting temples is like going to kindergarten. The high temple, Shiva's real dwelling, is only found within. The outer temples only symbolize what is found inside. The external holy places and shrines are built of brick and mortar on the basis of the envisioned model that people have experienced within themselves. A Shiva temple or any outer shrine is only an expression of what is found within.

It is important to know the way to the inner shrine. Only by entering the inner shrine can one know God, the deity dwelling there. Once you have had a vision of the deity within your temple, which is not material, not brick and mortar, why go to outer shrines? Temples and shrines are necessary in the beginning, but there is a period when one has to transcend them because they are symbols. As long as you are aware of them, you are within the boundaries of the mind. In order to experience reality, one has to transcend these boundaries, because God is beyond the limited, finite mind.

In order to know God, you have to transcend the mind. There are many techniques that lead to the point or brink where you have to jump over the mind, but I don't think that anyone can teach us how to make this jump. Up to this point the yoga practices given by your guru, or any spiritual practice, can help you. Beyond this point, however, there is no spiritual practice, no yoga practice that can help you and no book has been written on it.

People have tried using LSD and ganja, but that is not transcending the mind, that is not jumping over the mind, that is not spiritual evolution. That is just escaping from the mind for the time being. These drugs dull the mind and that is all. Most of the people who come to me have taken LSD and other drugs, but their minds are very dull.

Only one thing can help us to transcend the mind and that is grace. What is grace? Nobody knows. It is like a helicopter. All our spiritual pursuits and religious practices only take us to the edge of this boundary of material consciousness. Up to that point everybody can teach you, but to go beyond that point surpasses all human power. You alone must find the way.

– 21 February 1977,

Residence of Nancy Housner, Kathmandu, Nepal



Raja Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



People who say that raja yoga is meditation are incorrect. Raja yoga does not reflect any meditative state, rather it reflects an effort to balance and harmonize mental behaviour.

Mental behaviour

When one is born into this life, the mind comes endowed with certain characters and traits. These characters and traits make up an individual in the course of life. The traits that the mind comes with into this life are: *kama*, passions and desires; *krodha*, aggression and anger; *lobha*, greed; *moha*, infatuation, ego; *mada*, pride and arrogance; and *matsarya*, jealousy. These six traits of the mind manifest naturally during the course of life. These conditions of mind are recognized as *tamasic*, negative or conditioned. They do not allow the mind to develop and evolve. They contain and hold the mind in the world of senses and sense objects, giving birth to many desires and passions. They give birth to many behaviours of the mind, the hatred, jealousy, arrogance, greed and infatuation.

These emotions are expressed spontaneously, which is an indication that one's life is tamasic. One's life is not positive; it is always negative and destructive. Positivity in life has to be developed through the attainment of sattwa. The journey from tamas to sattwa defines the path of raja yoga. The movement or journey from the state of *tamoguna*, negativity, destructiveness and dissipation to purity, enlightenment and sattwa is the journey of raja yoga.

The root cause of tension

The difficulties, stress, tension, frustration, depression and elation that one faces in life, take their birth from the six characters of mind. When ambitions, desires and passions are unfulfilled, is the mind at peace? No. At that time, it is most disturbed; it is under tension.

When the tension comes from the workplace, then that is only a location where some part of tension is being triggered off. When the cause of tension is the family environment, then the family environment works as a trigger to release that experience of tension, stress and anxiety in life. However, the stress, tension, anxieties, frustrations, depression and elation are related to the fulfilment or unfulfilment of passions and desires. The corresponding behaviour comes when passions and desires are either fulfilled or not fulfilled. Elation comes when they are fulfilled. Depression and dejection comes when they are unfulfilled. They become the cause of stress, anxiety and tension on a day-to-day basis.

The workplace is blamed. One says, "There is a lot of tension at work." However, tension is created in the mind, not outside in the environment. This tension is created due to the behaviour of the mind.

Therefore, if one wants to deal with tension, stresses, the negative tendencies and destructive habits in life, then one should not deal with tension and stress at a superficial level; one should go to the cause, the root, which is passion, aggression, greed, infatuation, arrogance and jealousy. These





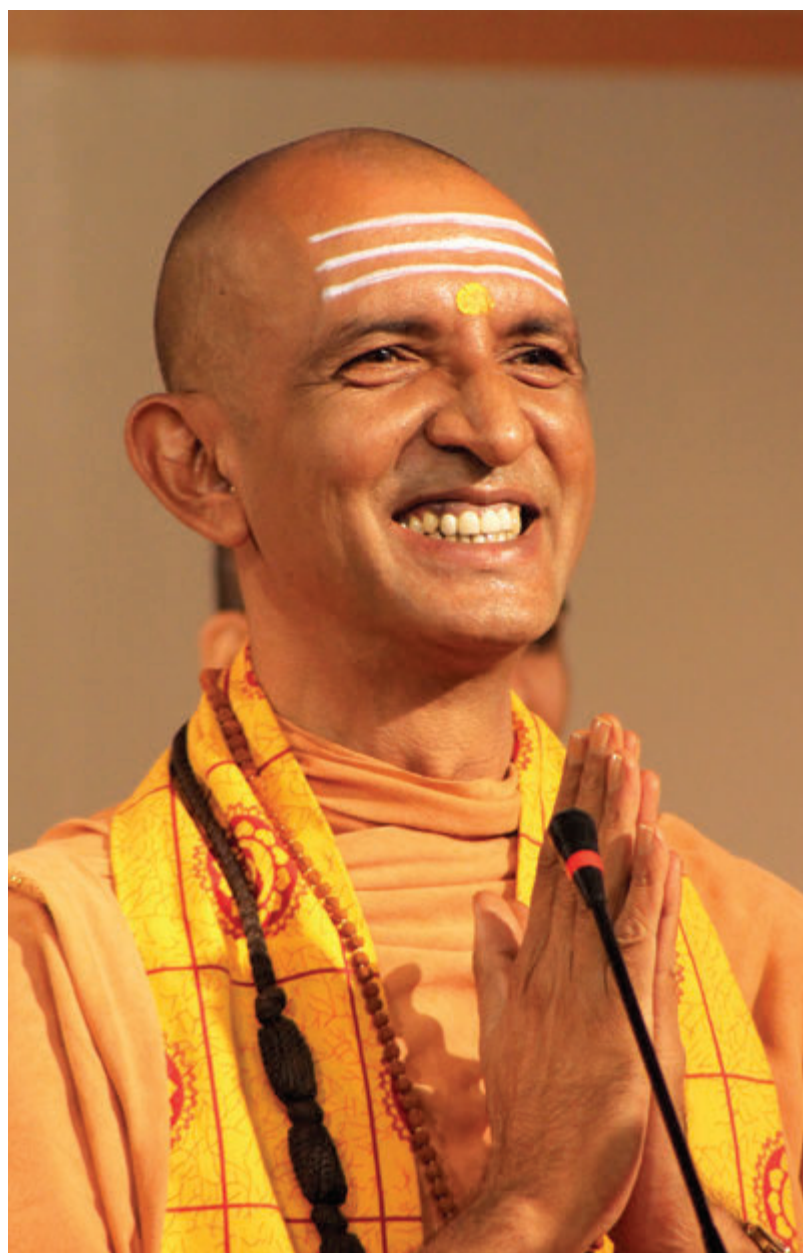












are the six main behaviours that one expresses throughout life. When they are being expressed, the mind is disturbed.

Raja yoga is a system to manage these conditions of the mind and harmonize the mental activity. This begins after hatha yoga, when the body and prana are balanced and organized.

Moving forward step by step

When people study the literature on raja yoga, they realize that it has eight stages: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. They say, "Raja yoga is meditation. Yama and niyama are not for me. They are ethics and morality being taught by yoga." This is the wrong concept. Yama and niyama are not teachings on ethics and morality of yoga. They are tools to improve the behaviour of the mind. When people ignore yama and niyama, believing them to be ethics and morality, and jump straight into meditation, it indicates that these people have no concept, no idea and no understanding of the process of raja yoga.

Meditation is the second last stage in raja yoga, the seventh stage. How can one jump straight into seventh class, without going through the first and second class? That is where people fail. Until today, despite trying to meditate, they have not been able to manage the behaviour of their mind. People who have practised meditation for the last thirty years cannot control their insecurities, fears and aggressions. What is the use of meditating for thirty years when one is not able to manage the basic behaviour of the mind? The flaw does not lie in the practice; rather in the understanding and approach to realizing oneself.

Introducing the process

The first two aspects of yama and niyama are meant to change the quality of the mind. The mind is conditioned, defined and subject to habits. The mind is controlled and governed by habits. Can one change a habit?

Let us look at the word 'habit', how do you spell it? H, A, B, I, T. How do you change this habit? The problem is that you cannot change a habit. If you remove H, 'a bit' always remains. If you remove A, 'bit' always remains. If you remove B, 'it' always remains; and if you remove I, 'T' remains, and tea is addictive and 'T' again creates habits.

There is no way one can escape or change habits. Meditation is not the means to change a habit, for the purpose of meditation is to focus the mind and reorganize the mind. To change the mental behaviour guided by passion and aggression, one has to follow the path of yama and niyama. One has to counteract the negative with the positive and create a balance. Yamas and niyamas represent an internal discipline.

When Sage Patanjali was writing his thesis on the subject of raja yoga, a question was put to him by his disciple, "What is yoga?" He said, "Yoga is a form of discipline." A second question was asked, "What is the attainment of this discipline?" He said, "With this discipline you can modify the behaviour of the mind." Then he was asked again, "What is the result of having modified the mind?" Sage Patanjali replied, "Then you will realize your true nature." These are the first three sutras, the first three sentences, of the *Yoga Sutras*, the raja yoga darshan:

Atha yogaanushaasanam.

Yogaschitta vritti nirodhah.

Tadaa drashtuh swaroope avasthaanam.

Purpose of yamas

Defining the mental arrangement and mental process, Sage Patanjali says that through discipline one modifies the behaviour of the mind which is guided by the six friends. To modify the negative traits of these six, one cultivates the positive aspects of one's life, which are the yamas and niyamas.

In yoga, there are forty yamas, out of which Patanjali selected five and placed them in raja yoga: ahimsa, satya,



asteya, aparigraha and brahmacharya. Similarly, there are fifty niyamas, yet out of fifty, Patanjali chose five: shaucha, santosha, tapas, swadhyaya and ishwara pranidhana. People say that these are ethics and morality taught by yoga. These principles are to compensate for the negative, limiting, confining and destructive aspect of the mind. The negative, limiting, confining state is the tamasic state. To transform the tamasic condition into a luminous state of life is the role of the yama: by cultivating truthfulness; by eradicating the violent nature of thought, behaviour and performance; by attaining harmony; by overcoming the desire to accumulate; by overcoming the desire to gain and rob; and by establishing one's nature in higher consciousness. This is the yama.

Brahmacharya does not mean celibacy. *Brahmacharya* means one who is established in the higher identity and knowledge. Brahmacharya means to establish oneself in the higher nature. Celibacy is part of it, yet it is not the definition of brahmacharya. The five yamas constitute an effort to transform the negative tendency of mind and cultivate the positivity of mind. By cultivating positivity, the effect, influence and attraction of one's passions, aggressions, desires, greed, ego, hatred and jealousies, are reduced and the mind finds peace. That is the purpose of yamas.

True meaning of niyama

The next disciplines to be followed are: *shaucha*, *santosha*, *tapas*, *swadhyaya*, *Ishwara pranidhana*. *Shaucha* means cleanliness, elimination, or purity. The uninitiated think *shaucha* means to take a bath and to remain clean physically, however, the initiates, people who know yoga, know that *shaucha* means purity of the senses, of thought, of intention, and of emotion. This purity becomes *shaucha* when the pure nature manifests.

When the pure nature manifests, it moves into the second *niyama*, *santosha*, contentment. Desires and passions are the cause of discontentment. When one is free from desires and passions or when one has transcended, overcome and regulated them, then one attains internal contentment and happiness, the sense of 'I am fulfilled'.

Tapas is not austerity, rather an effort to transform one's life. *Swadhaya* is not the study of scriptures, it is self-awareness, self-reflection, self-introspection and self-observation.

Ishwara pranidhana is having faith in a higher power. Everyone is controlled by some higher power; no one is controlling their own destiny. No one can control their own reactions and responses. No one can control their basic behaviour in life. So how can one say that one is the master of one's own life? There is someone else, there is some other power which is the cause of growth, development and evolution in life. No one is the cause of their own evolution. The undecaying, unchanging principle is *Ishwara*. The permanent principle is *Ishwara*, of which everyone is an integrated part.

Development of awareness and adherence to these disciplines improves the quality of life and of one's mental behaviour.

From asana to dharana

Asana is the third stage of *raja yoga*. The definitions of *asana* and *pranayama* by Patanjali are not the same as in *hatha yoga*.

Asana defined by Patanjali represents the posture which allows one to go inside; it is a meditative posture.

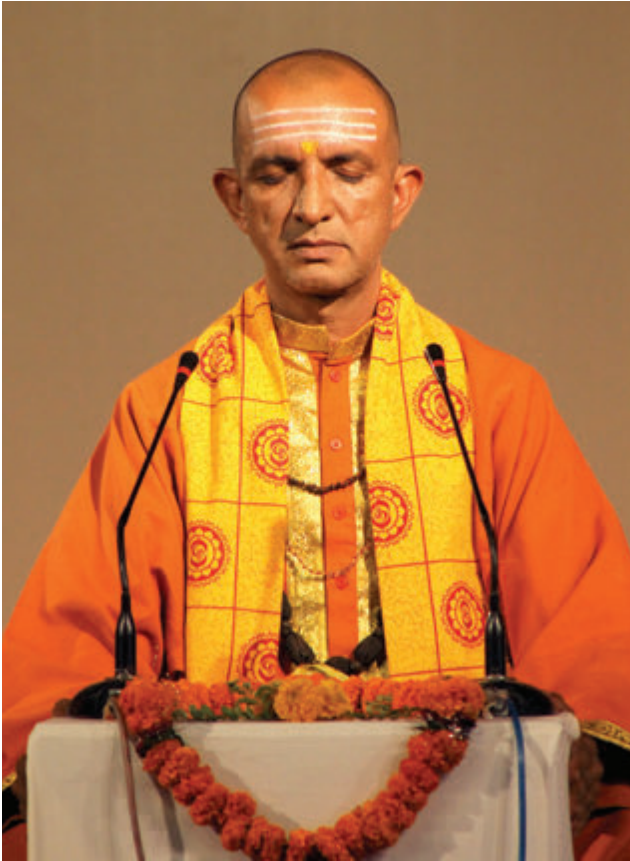
According to Sage Patanjali, asana is *sthiram sukham asanam*, 'a posture in which one is comfortable and steady for an extended period of time', thereby representing a meditative dimension. Similarly, there are the three pranayamas defined by Patanjali: inhalation is one, exhalation is one, and retention is the third pranayama. Patanjali does not speak of any other pranayama, except inhalation, exhalation and retention, representing the attainment of balance between the positive and negatives poles of life, or ida and pingala.

These first four steps of Patanjali – yama, niyama, asana and pranayama – represent the actual modification of human behaviour.

The next two stages, pratyahara and dharana, represent the effort to relax and bring the mind into a state of peace and harmony. Pratyahara begins with relaxation of the senses and mind. Yoga nidra is the first practice of pratyahara. There are many other practices of pratyahara, like *antar mouna*, inner silence, which involves the observance of thoughts, elimination of negative thoughts, and coming to a state of positive thinking; *ajapa japa*, gathering the dissipated energies and focusing them on a mantra and a particular point, to attain introspection and deepen one's meditative awareness.

In this way, pratyahara gradually prepares the mind and leads one to the state of *dharana*, which is unwavering concentration. Dharana is maintaining the one-pointed state of the mind. When concentration becomes unwavering and fixed, meditation begins. Meditation is not a practice; it is a state attained after the perfection of pratyahara and dharana. Deepening this meditative condition leads to samadhi, which is also a state of experience and not a practice.

Therefore, in Patanjali's ashtanga yoga, the practices are only six: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana. The remaining two stages, dhyana and samadhi, represent the attainment or the perfection of the first six.



Attainment of raja yoga

When the mind is completely absorbed in the one-pointed state of dharana, then *dhyana*, meditation, begins. Dhyana is not a sadhana, not a process or a practice that needs to be done. It is a state that one attains naturally. Nobody teaches dhyana. Whatever is being practised is limited to pratyahara and dharana, however, the results lead into dhyana, which leads into samadhi.

Samadhi is not the last stage. Even after samadhi the process of improving life continues. One has to keep improving and becoming better. Samadhi is not *moksha*, liberation, self-realization. Samadhi is a balanced and organized state of the

mind. In the philosophy of yoga it is clearly mentioned that there are different kinds of samadhi, such as savikalpa, nirbija and sabija. It is clear proof that samadhi is not moksha and not the state of self-realization, rather a calm, awakened and deeply absorbed state of mind. In this state one has absolutely no idea about place, time, condition, situation, and so on. Place, time, condition and situation do not bind. In the yogic scriptures it is stated that dhyana and samadhi are achievements, not sadhana.

Beginning the spiritual journey

When the state of dhyana is attained, one may conclude that the journey from the conditioned tamasic state to the luminous sattwic state has begun. As far as concentration is concerned, it is the most important aspect of raja yoga. How much does one concentrate? How long can one hold one's concentration? For little time. While practising mantra japa even for just one mala, one discovers that after ten or fifteen repetitions or beads, the mind goes somewhere else. Where is the concentration? Mechanically one moves the fingers and the mala beads, yet the mind is thinking of something else.

My guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, told me, "Niranjan, when you can practise one mala without breaking the concentration of your mind, you will know that you have attained the state of dharana." This means that for 108 repetitions the mind becomes fixed and does not waver. That is dharana. Concentration is the most difficult thing. It is not easy. If concentration is difficult, one can just imagine how difficult meditation would be.

Raja yoga is the yoga for developing and harmonizing the mind. It releases the stresses, caused by the six ingredients, which give the taste and colour to the mind. When with the practice of raja yoga one comes to a state of internal peace, fullness and internal harmony, then raja yoga is over and the spiritual journey begins.

– 5 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

What is Mantra?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Mantra is a sound vibration, used to free the mind from its obsessive nature. The definition of mantra is: *mananat trayate iti mantrah* – Through mantra one is able to manage the dissipations of the mind. This is the actual definition: through sound one is able to manage the distresses of the mind. This sound is vibration. Every vibration has a frequency. Sound can change the behaviour in animals. If one plays rock music, the behaviour of animals is different from when one plays classical music. The same is reflected in human beings. One form of sound vibration relaxes, another form of sound vibration stimulates. That is evident in music, for there are some types of music that bring peace and some that make the listener move and dance. This is the effect of sound.

Mantra is more subtle, for the sound vibrations of mantra work at the pranic level in the body. For example, if you use the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya*, from the religious perspective, *Om Namah Shivaya* means ‘I salute Shiva’. From the yogic perspective, *Om* is the seed mantra, *bija mantra*, of ajna chakra,

the sixth centre. *Na* is a sound of the fifth centre, vishuddhi chakra. *Ma* is also a sound of the fifth centre, in the throat. *Shi* and *Va* are sounds of the second centre, swadhisthana chakra. *Ya* is the sound of the heart, anahata chakra. These are the sounds or mantras, which correspond to the chakras in the body. In yoga, when you say *Om Namah Shivaya*, you are actually affecting and altering the behaviour of the shakti in these psychic centres, while the mind is focusing on whatever image is coming due to one's cultural beliefs.

Mantras are also given to people from the West where people do not know who Shiva is, they do not know who Rama is, they do not know who Devi is, yet they do the mantra practice. When they are doing their mantra, what are they concentrating on? They are not concentrating on the image of Shiva, Rama, Devi or Krishna. No; they are focusing on sound vibration. It is that sound vibration which is helping them. It is realigning, rebalancing their body and mind. When a mantra is given to people from the East, people associate it instantly with a religious figure: this is Shiva's mantra, this is Rama's, this is Devi's mantra. They bring their culture into the mantra.

When the same mantra is taught in the West, people do not have that impression, so they focus on the vibration, and it is this vibration which changes them. Therefore, the definition of the word mantra is 'liberating the mind from its obsessive involvement in tensions, worries and anxieties'.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Why is the mind based on fear and can fear be eradicated?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

There are the four basic instincts in human life. Fear, *bhaya*, is an instinct like *ahara*, craving, *nidra*, sleep, and *maithuna*, sexuality. Desire, anger, greed, attachment or infatuation, pride or arrogance, jealousy and envy, *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*, are behaviours of the mind, not instincts of the mind. Fear and insecurity are in everyone. There is nobody who is free from fear or insecurity. However, one has to realize the futility of fear.

Once I was travelling from South America to Central America, Mexico, and my plane landed in Panama. That day there was a military coup in Panama. All the passengers were taken out of the airplane and herded into a room. Our documents were taken away for verification. The passengers in the room were absolutely nervous, shaking, chain-smoking, fearful, insecure, wondering what would happen next. I was sitting in one corner, watching everybody and thinking, 'If one has to die, one will die, and if one has to survive, one will survive. Let us see the result. There is no need for me to be anxious. There is no need for me to be fearful or afraid, because whatever is going to happen, is out of my control'.

In that entire group I was the only peaceful one. The other people asked me, "Are you not afraid? Are you not fearful?" I said, "No, I am waiting for my documents to come back, then I can board the plane."

Awareness is the key

You have to know how much fear you can manage, and what you cannot manage. If you can manage, there is no cause of fear, as it is an instinctual response. The instant response to a

situation is called instinct, like when at night you see a rope on the road, and you instantly think it is a snake. The moment you shine the torch on it, you realize it is not a snake; it is only a rope. The fear factor comes in when you are not aware of the situation. When you are aware, there is no fear. Insecurity comes when there is no awareness.

As far as meditation is concerned, you should begin with the simple practice of breath awareness. When you inhale, make it long and deep, when you exhale, make it long and deep; do this for five minutes. After that, when you inhale, mentally repeat the mantra *So*, when you exhale mentally repeat the mantra *Ham*. This is known as ajapa japa meditation, in which the mind is engaged in breath awareness and in mantra awareness. This can be done for five minutes, it can be done for three minutes, or for thirty minutes. This practice helps in reducing the stress level and it builds self-confidence.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Fostering Integration



I was living in Nepal between 2005–2009. This period marked a height in both social disharmony and desire for national and personal recovery. During this time, Swami Ramdev was an accessible and popular yoga resource. A standard channel aired his morning show. Seeing people practise in the open and overhearing discussions in homes and cafes, it was clear people were tuning in.

I travelled through urban and rural Nepal and was also practising and teaching what I had learned from Bihar School of Yoga. Everyone I met, cosmopolitan businessman or sustenance farmer, wanted to know more about yoga. There was a hunger to learn yoga practices, especially for the possible benefits of reducing tension and slimming the body.

Curious to see what yoga references and guides were available to the public, I searched the places I visited and found very little. In Kathmandu, there were one or two books related to Swami Ramdev in standard book stores, and *APMB* in the esoteric or tourist book stores. In rural Nepal, there was only Swami Ramdev's TV show.

I give this background context to highlight the simplicity, efficiency and integrating effect of Bihar Yoga practices and

teaching style, which was exemplified by Swami Niranjan leading the asana session. The standing practices – tadasana, tiryak tadasana, kati chakrasana – were new for nearly everyone. Swamiji asked those familiar with the practices to help the participants. I moved through many rows of people, assisting when needed, and guessed they might get it by the last day. Yet, the next day, I had a very different perspective from the stage: there was complete synchronicity. I watched the crowd move in perfect unison as an integrated whole rather than individuals.

I was in Nepal during constant security checks, bombings, intense violence and prolonged mental and civil unrest. To personally witness an entire city coming together and moving in unison, acting in unison, made a very deep impression. Days three and four maintained that integrity.

Captivating young and old

I would like to share one more observation in regard to the evening satsangs. Swamiji introduced hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga over three evenings very systematically. Even though the content of the satsang was familiar to me, through being involved in the Bihar School of Yoga, I found myself listening with a fresh and engaged mind. Swamiji conveyed large, interconnected ideas with simplicity and lucidity, in a manner that was relevant and digestible for all.

This is significant considering a new generation of youth that is inculcated by media – twenty-four hour access to radio, TV and internet. Nepal has been sheltered for many hundreds of years and has been a largely self-sufficient country. It is agriculture based. When you visit the village, you meet family upon family who has never needed to leave for anything. They have spring water coming three metres from their kitchen and fruits and vegetables growing around the house. At a basic level, they have the necessities and have been content with that. With the influence of and exposure to the outside world, the population has shifted their attention externally.

And as happened in our house, a younger generation has emerged which no longer implicitly values or believes in the accumulated ideas and wisdom of previous generations.

Swamiji presented yoga and spiritual values, ideals and practices in a language that a new generation can accept and understand, right down to the scientific aspect. He spent much time talking about case studies of how yoga has helped people suffering from diabetes, asthma, tension, stress. This had everyone's attention, for in Kathmandu everyone is suffering from those ailments.

So the younger generation was completely captivated, and at the same, as Swamiji was speaking on spiritual ideas, which the older generation very deeply, innately knows, they were captivated as well. That in itself was unification. I felt it was a natural genius coming forth, and people responded; they wanted to be there. By the fourth day, there was considerable excitement when Swamiji announced he would be back every two years and there would be a centre in Nepal. People were already asking by the end of the program, after he had left, "So where is this centre? How can we get information?" I was at a loss. I didn't know what to say other than, "Come to BSY. I think Swamiji is only going to come back if he sees a sincere interest."

I expect to see a lot of Nepalese visiting Ganga Darshan in the near future.

– *Sannyasi Satchidananda, Nepal/USA*



Kundalini Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



From the yogic perspective, this external body is comprised of matter. Within this body is a subtle body which is comprised of energy, *prana*. Within the pranic body is another more subtle body known as the mind. Within the mental body is another body known as consciousness. Finally, within the body of consciousness there is another level of experience, which is spiritual. Yoga sees one body, the individual, as a combination of five experiences of matter, energy, mind, the interactive mind with the senses and the sense objects, consciousness, and spirit.

Kundalini relates to the subtle body of *prana*, the vital energy, the vital force. From the perspective of yogic philosophy, there are energy centres in the body and at present they are dormant and blocked. Kundalini is an experience of awakening these energy centres. Symbolically, I am using the word 'symbolically', kundalini is defined as a serpent. Of

course, when you look at your own body you will not find a serpent there. The serpent is only a symbolic representation of something that exists in the body. With the practice of kundalini yoga, which is comprised of asana, pranayama, concentration and visualization techniques put into one, you are able to activate these psychic centres in the body. As the psychic centres awaken, the corresponding centre in the brain also awakens. According to science, only one-tenth of the brain is active, in every human being at any one time, while the rest is in a state of dormancy.

Awakening the dormant centres

According to psychology, you interact with the world and your life through your conscious mind, which is only one-third of the mind. The subconscious is unknown and the unconscious is unknown. The yogic theory states that the awakening of these dormant centres, *chakras*, represents the awakening of the dormant brain centres and different states of mind. When these mind and brain centres open, the ability to perceive changes, and you may gain mastery over certain expressions of your mind too. People who have gone through this process of kundalini yoga speak about expanded faculties of the mind in the form of telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and so on.

For science these faculties are viewed as extrasensory perceptions, ESP, for they are not in tune with them at present. The point is that energy in the form of waves is everywhere. There are radio waves in the environment, however, no one is able to pick them without the right instrument. If one has a radio and tunes it, one can pick up the radio wave and listen to the station.

In the same manner, the body is vibrating with many levels of frequencies and responses of energy, for matter is nothing but compressed energy. The solidity that one sees is in reality not solid. It is perceived as solidity, though in reality it is a form of energy. Within the atom, the nucleus is a form of energy. If one looks at the body through a super-microscope,

into bones, into muscles, at the atomic structure, one will see the pulsation of energy, the nucleus. Each pulsation creates frequency and amplitude. The chakras represent that frequency and amplitude.

With the awakening of these dormant centres the mind becomes more awakened. For people who are not at that level, these things can be seen as powers or *siddhis*, yet for people who are at that level, it is not a power; it is just a natural expression of their mind.

Meditation is preliminary to the practice of kundalini yoga. Meditation forms part of the mental process of raja yoga. Kundalini yoga is one of the higher yogas. It is an advanced yoga that allows one to discover one's creativity and access the dormant centres of the brain and mind.

Science of life

Swami Satyananda and Swami Sivananda, whose tradition we follow, have brought yoga from a spiritual dimension to a more practical and applicable dimension. It is up to the aspirants to choose whether they want to acquire excellence in life, or whether they want to have spiritual experiences. After all what is a spiritual experience? The journey in life is from *tamas* to *sattwa*. *Tamas* means the negative, dissipated, destructive, uncontrolled behaviour, and *sattwa* is the state of mind that is pure, peaceful, harmonious and balanced. Once one is able to acquire this peaceful state of



mind, the distractions and dissipations are gone, and one can become a better human being. That is spirituality.

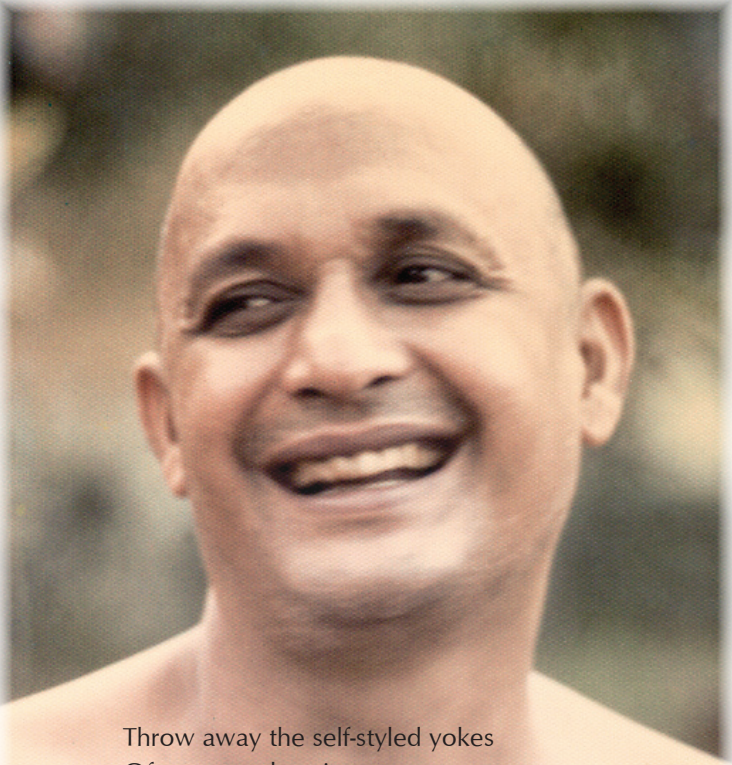
Spirituality is not awareness of God. I have not seen God, you have not seen God, nobody has seen God, and those who have seen God cannot define what God is. However, if one thinks of God as an experience of one's higher nature, in which limitations of the mind are removed and the expanded awareness is attained, then that leads one to a spiritual realization where one connects with the better qualities of one's life and begins to express them. Instead of jealousy, aggression or hatred, one begins to express cooperation, compassion, love, support and sympathy. In this way one comes to a better and positive state of mind, which is the sattwic state. The journey of yoga is not from materialism to spirituality. It is the movement from the limiting and confining conditions of life into expanded and unlimited creativity in life.

Therefore, yoga is seen by us as a science of life and not as a spiritual science. It has been the principle and philosophy that the Bihar School of Yoga has followed for the last fifty years. The classical teachings of yoga are being given by the Bihar School of Yoga. While there are many forms of yoga, many people teach only the physical form of hatha yoga, many people teach the emotional form or religious bhakti. However, in reality yoga is a process of self-transformation and self-improvement to become qualitatively better in life.

This journey for the betterment of society has to start with our children, for they can be groomed, educated and given the right samskaras to become responsible citizens of our society. Grown-ups have their own set of problems and they are trying to deal with those problems, however, children can be given the opportunity to develop their own creativity. Therefore our work, apart from yoga teaching and yoga propagation, has been with children, as they represent the upcoming generation of our society.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

Life's Divine Sport



Throw away the self-styled yokes
Of worry and anxiety.
Everything takes its own course.

Life is a divine sport.
Let us play it accordingly.

Life is a wonderful display
Of sorrow and elation.

When everything has been said,
Then life is nothing
But a product of our own minds.

Merge the mind in its source.
This is the way to real happiness.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Another Door, Another Shore

Hari Om,



This is the story of the Yoga Association Kurdistan. If you want to learn about any science or art of life, you need more energy in the beginning to apply it. To start the institution in Kurdistan was not easy. Nobody knew about yoga, but God helped every time and we succeeded.

In 1999, Kurdistan was part of Iraq. Two of my friends, one a student of veterinary and the other of computer science, and I, a student of nursing, started the three-year process of creating a yoga association. In the environment of fanatic religion, many difficulties had to be overcome. People thought yoga was a religion like Hinduism, or a philosophy like Buddhism. The authorities were not willing to give permission. We persevered and wrote articles for the local newspaper and magazine, we gave interviews and talks on television and on radio, and at the university we conducted seminars and a one-month course with daily classes for doctorates and the administration. The topic was always to present yoga as a science. We wanted to bring clarity in regard to yoga. It took three years, but now the government makes no problems and we are free to carry out our activities.

Current activities

Today the association has many activities:

- Satsang anywhere in Kurdistan
- Writing articles
- Writing a book on the benefits of yoga for beginners
- Translation of yoga books from English, Persian and Arabic into Kurdish
- Three-monthly magazine on yoga
- Twice a week TV show, once for the local television, and once some time on satellite
- Radio show for Q&A
- In winter, distribution of clothes
- Yearly planting of three to four hundred trees
- Yearly clean-up of one neighbourhood of the city
- Creation of website: kurdistanyoga.com or kurdistanyoga.net

During those fifteen years, eighty courses were conducted. Each course was of three months duration with three weekly classes of three hours each. Between twenty to fifty people participated in each course. In the beginning, the classes were separate for ladies and men, but now the Association can hold mixed classes.

We planted three thousand trees in the city of Suleymani, a city of one million inhabitants.



Introducing yoga nidra

Yoga nidra was introduced with the help of CDs at the Centre of Psychotherapy, a centre for victims of war trauma. At the local psychiatric hospital, yoga nidra CDs were given to one

hundred patients. These were the observations made by the doctors and hospital staff: aggressive, schizophrenic and hyperactive patients became calm; patients addicted to heroin or medication could drastically reduce their intake; patients suffering from anxiety could reduce their stress level.

Yoga nidra is now fully integrated in both places, after only two weeks of trial period. The hospital administration is happy as the cost for medication has been reduced. Instead of one hundred dollars per patient, a CD worth one dollar can be used to help.

Yoga for orphans

We conduct yoga classes for thirty war orphans who live in a government orphanage. They come every year for one month to learn yoga; their age is from six to nine.

Future activities

- More translations of BSY books, especially *APMB* and *Yoga Nidra*
- Introduce yoga in private schools which charge high fees
- Introduce yoga in other health centres
- Introduce yoga in prisons.

—*Jignasu Jnanananda, Kurdistan,*
Diploma Course student 2014–15



Guruji's Words

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and after them the sannyasins of our tradition believe that we all have one aim in our lives: peace, plenty and prosperity; happiness in our individual life, plenty in the family life and peace in society. This is possible to attain through yoga. It is considered an important part of this spiritual tradition. It is not in the form of religious belief or practice, instead in the form of a practical education of life, where a person can awaken *atmabhava*, a feeling of oneness within, and gradually diminish the nature of selfishness.

When atma bhava is experienced by everyone, we will be able to create a beautiful new community. As long as we do not experience this feeling of oneness within, there will always be disorder and disturbance in our society and our world. No one can find a solution for that. There is no theory, religion or politics that can eradicate it.

A person can eradicate disturbance and disorder only through his own strength and effort. To remove this chaos and restlessness, it is important to bring about a change in one's internal thoughts. Until one's thoughts change, no one is able to do anything.

When you become sick, you surely take medicines or the help of other forms of therapies, or you may even practise yoga for prevention. However, the effort for prevention is external and superficial.

Allow change into your life

If you want to make a real effort for the prevention of any disease, you have to listen to the words of Sri Swamiji. One day he told me, "Niranjan, mark my words. For yoga, nothing is impossible. However, there is one condition: the rules of yoga have to be followed word by word. You want to cure yourself without changing anything in your life. If you have diabetes, you take insulin. The sugar level will be brought down but you do not want to free yourself from the attachment to sweets. You still would like to have sweets. You do not want to change your life, the environment of your life, the negative aspects and shortcomings of your life. You want to live your life the way you are living it right now; you want to be the way you are right now. You want an instant solution and fix for the problems and illnesses, by any method. Without changing your lifestyle, this is not possible. As long as changes are not allowed into your life, neither good health nor peace will be attained."

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Yoga Publications Trust

SWAN Meditation: Theory & Practice

Swami Satyadhama


39 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-93-84753-06-1

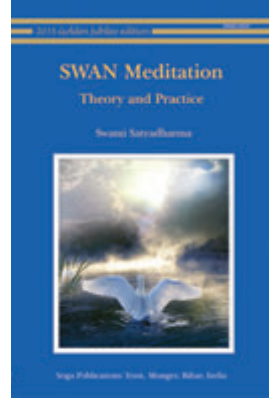
SWAN meditation is an important method evolved by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati to help us discover our personality and improve its expression in everyday life.

SWAN is an acronym for the four principles that influence our personality and direction in life: strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, and needs. The interaction of these four qualities makes us what we are. By understanding their unique expression in our life, a creative, dynamic and clear mind results.

For an order form and comprehensive publications price list please contact:

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New

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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Ganga Darshan Events & Courses 2015

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| <i>Jun 1-Jul 25</i> | 2-month Orientation in Yogic Science & Lifestyle (Hindi) |
| <i>Jul 27-30</i> | Guru Poornima Satsang & Aradhana |
| <i>Jul 31</i> | Guru Paduka Poojan |
| <i>Aug-May 2016</i> | 1-year Diploma in Yogic Studies (English) |
| <i>Aug 1-30</i> | Yoga Instructor's Course (English) |
| <i>Sep 8</i> | Swami Sivananda Janmotsava |
| <i>Sep 12</i> | Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas |
| <i>Oct 1-30</i> | Bihar Yoga Training for Satyananda Yoga Teachers (English) |
| <i>Oct 1-Jan 25</i> | 4-month Yogic Studies Course (English) |
| <i>Oct 3-20</i> | Yoga HMC*: Diabetes (Hindi) |
| <i>Nov 1-7</i> | Yoga Sadhana & Swadhyaya Week with Swami Niranjanananda |
| <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 & 6th</i> | Commemoration of Sri Swami Satyananda's Mahasamadhi |
| <i>Every 12th</i> | Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamanas |

Please be aware that mobile phones are NOT permitted in the ashram.
Ensure that you do not bring your mobile with you.

For more information on the above events contact:

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Tel: +91-06344-222430, 09304799615, 06344-228603, Fax: +91-06344-220169
Website: www.biharyoga.net

A self-addressed, stamped envelope must be sent along with enquiries to ensure a response to your request