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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Song of Govinda

Rama Krishna Govinda
Radhe Krishna Govinda
Gopala Krishna Govinda
Krishna Krishna Govinda
God is truth Govinda
God is bliss Govinda
God is peace Govinda
God is knowledge Govinda
God is love Govinda,
God is light Govinda
Control the mind Govinda
Control the senses Govinda
Realize the Self Govinda
This is the teaching Govinda
Of all the Vedas Govinda
Of all the scriptures Govinda
Goal of life Govinda
Is God-realization Govinda
Never forget this Govinda.

—Swami Sivananda

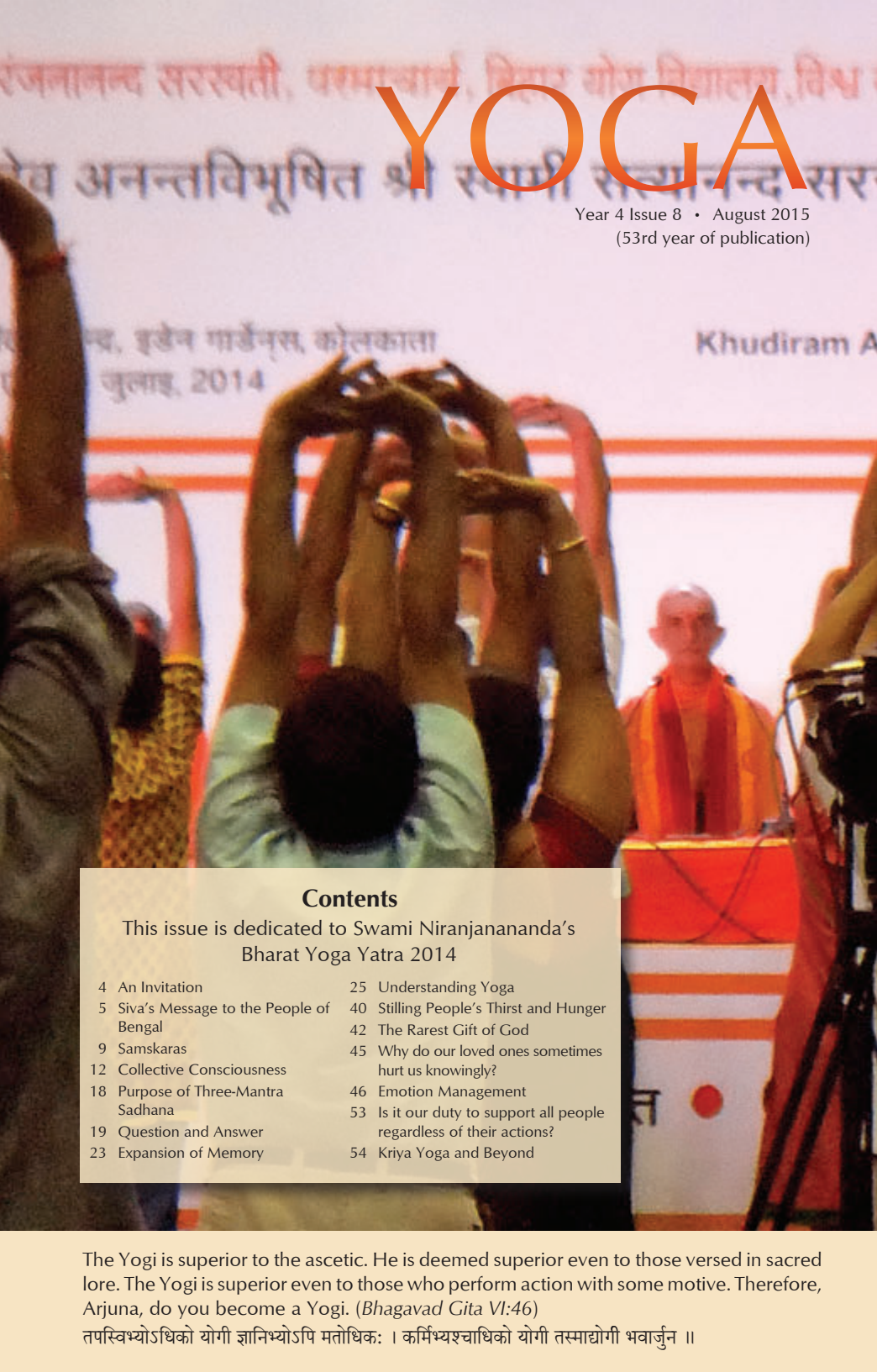
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Bharat Yoga Yatra 2014

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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 ॥

An Invitation

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



My work is to guide you so that you find the solution by yourself. During this week in Salt Lake City and at the Netaji Subhash Stadium, I had the opportunity to talk to you about the principles of yogic philosophy in my tradition.

I do not talk about yoga, but about the teachings of yoga given in our tradition. I am not a guru. I have a guru whose teachings I propagate. This is not my research. This is the direction and path, process and method given by my guru which I am putting in front of you. Therefore, always see me as a disciple. I am what I am irrespective of what you want me to be. I have my identity and that identity is my life. Who am I? I am a disciple.

Being a disciple, we are co-travellers on the spiritual path. Everyone is travelling together. Someone is sitting in a train coach which is moving behind, and someone is sitting in a coach which is moving ahead. Not everyone can enter and be accommodated in the same coach. The fact is each one of us wants to reach the goal of our life. Then why not march forward on this path with zeal, with joy, and holding hands together. Actually this is my wish.

I pay my tribute and regards to the way you have shown cooperation and have contributed to this program. I invite you all to experience my tradition and the teachings of my guru at least once.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India

Siva's Message to the People of Bengal

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

24th September 1950

Blessed immortal self, my loving adorations to you all. My joyous greetings to you all. You are direct heirs to the divine wisdom of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was the embodiment of the Vedas. You are heirs to the treasure of bliss of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You are direct recipients of the inspired message of Swami Vivekananda. Bengal is indeed a fortunate land ever vitalized by perennial founts of inspirations from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharishi Devendranath, Vijay Goswami, Keshab Chandra Sen, Pandit Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore and others.

To me Bengal has always been synonymous with high idealism, sterling patriotism and a lofty conception of duty. Bengal is synonymous with aggressive renascent Hinduism. Bengal has flashed forth the light of Vedanta upon the dark firmament of occidental materialism. May you strive ceaselessly to enlighten all humanity with the brilliance of the vedantic jyoti.





Realize your birthright

More than ever the world needs this light today. It is groping in darkness. Man has lost his faith in his inner self. Abject dependence on and slavery to external things have reduced him to a pitiable state. But the true Indian stands unshaken in his perfect allegiance to the atman. To the true Hindu this world, nay, the entire universe, is less than straw. To

him the atman alone is real. Greater treasure than the atman he recognizes not. This great and sublime idea is to be practically lived and demonstrated to the world by one and all of you.

Make Vedanta practical. Liberally give it to the practical-minded West. For this task qualify yourself unto perfection. Show them the shining pathway chalked out by the wisdom of the ancients. The perfect life is the one dedicated to the imperishable self. Attain this by developing right discrimination between the real and the unreal. Between the *paramartha vastu* (eternal truth) and the *anitya jagat* (transient world). This right viveka and vichara will give rise to vairagya and tyaga.

Develop a sublime character. Lead a perfect, virtuous life; sense-control, mental tranquillity, pratyahara, fortitude, faith and love of truth will lead to the awakening of atmashakti. You will all be inspired and enlightened beings. Generate a strong and intense yearning to achieve the highest goal of life.

Children of immortality, assert this, realize your birthright. I see in Bengal the promise of contributing substantially towards the shaping of New India. You are to provide inspiring ideals to tomorrow's Hind. Here of all places in India it was witnessed the miracle of conquest of hatred through love. The miracle of unity in diversity.

You all recall the noble way in which the Hindu and Muslim brethren of Calcutta gave up hatred and violence, and joined hands in a mutual declaration of love and brotherhood. I allude to the beautiful change of heart brought about here at the call of that great messenger of peace, Mahatma Gandhiji. Such is religion in practice. It is indeed knowledge of Vedanta, the vision of the one Self in all beings that enables man to rise above petty discord and difference and feel the whole world as his own self.

Let me remind you of the majestic message of Vedanta. There should be perfect union and brotherhood of all beings. Vedanta is the only life-giving, courage-infusing philosophy. It is the supreme religion that has no quarrel with any other. It is a grand reconciliation of all faiths and creeds. It can light

up the luminous lamp of wisdom, truth and justice. Vedanta enables you to be real helpers of humanity.

Know your real divine nature. Come out of this earthly rut. You are lions, not sheep. You are real emperors, not beggars. You are children of God, *amrita putra*, not weaklings tied to this perishable earth. Roar always: 'I am perfect, imperishable.' Nothing can affect you. Fear not. You are the source of strength. You are a magazine of power. You are the ocean of knowledge. You are the light of the world. Feel this. Realize this. No sorrow can touch you now. Freedom is yours.

Therefore, blessed self, lead the life of supreme renunciation, sublime dedication, unselfishness and devotion. Have noble aspiration. You may live in the world, but be not worldly. Let your life be a sacred act of *Ishwararpan* (surrender to God). Repeat *Ishavasyam idam sarvam* (God pervades everything). *Sarvam khalu idam Brahman* (Verily all is Brahman). Repeat also *Ajaroham, amaraham, anandoham, nityamuktasvarupoham* (I am imperishable, I am immortal, I am bliss, I am eternally free). Be courageous warriors in the battlefield of inner life. Be firmly established in truth even as the divine hero Sri Rama. Be unshaken in all conditions as shown through the life of Sita, Draupadi and Kunti Devi. They were the real Vedantins. Align yourself always on the side of dharma. Draw inspiration from the noble Pandavas. *Satyameva jayate na anritam* (Truth alone triumphs not untruth).

This is what the sages, saints and spiritual giants have declared unmistakably. Develop *atmabal*, the strength born out of dharma, satya and *atma nishta* (self-confidence). Become a *dheera*, courageous, the hope of *svatantra Bharata* (independent India) and the world at large. The grace of the Almighty is upon you all. May you realize the inner bliss of true independence. Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih. Peace unto all beings.

– From Sivananda's Lectures, during All-India and Ceylon Tour – 1950, *Chronicler Swami Venkatesananda*

Samskaras

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



A guardian or a parent should provide the right opportunities and conditions for the development, growth and education of children. There is no need to go overboard, yet there is no reason for the child to become an underachiever. The problem is when parents impose their ambitions on the child. There is no ambition in the life of a child. The child wants to play, jump and spend time with friends. It is the parents who say, "You become this when you grow up." A doctor says, "You become a doctor when you grow up, it will be good. I have opened a clinic; you will be able to run it." An engineer says to his child, "Become an engineer when you grow up. I can help you out." A parent wants to motivate the child to follow in the field of his own profession, forgetting that there is also the destiny of the child. The duty of the parent is only for the child's education and samskaras, providing the right opportunities and conditions.

Samskaras versus education

Every child comes with his or her future. You impose your ambitions on your children, and to achieve your ambitions push them and put pressure on them. This way the creativity of the child does not awaken. You want to mould the child according to your preset standards instead of letting the child grow into the form it has come with. This is the first point.

You have made an arrangement for the child's education. The child goes to school, then to college. You have money for the child, a college fund and everything else, yet have you made any provision for the development of the child's samskaras? This is where parents fail. Everyone says, "I gave you an education, sent you to America, England, Russia. You got a degree but you returned a spoilt person." Why? You did not give samskaras; nor did the child acquire them in school or among friends. Here the parents fail in their duties. They think that education is sufficient and there is no need for samskaras.

Without samskaras even the person with the highest education behaves like an animal, whereas the one who is uneducated yet has samskaras in his life behaves in a cultured manner.

I do not have a degree from education; I have the degree of samskaras. I do not have a PhD in any subject, nor have I done a masters or bachelor degree in any subject. Yet on the basis of samskaras I can stand on my own two feet today and bring a smile to your faces. Had these samskaras not been there, and had there been only education, I might have become entangled in my ambitions and lost my way.

The point I am trying to make is only one. If you want a system in society and the nation, if you want peace in the family, you will have to make an effort to give samskaras to children along with education. Right now your growth is lopsided. The scales are getting heavier on one side and empty on the other side. The other side also needs to be filled.

Samskaras of Bengal

It is only on the basis of samskaras that the culture of India is alive. There is no need to lecture on samskaras in Bengal. Bengal has been an important centre and continues to be so today. Various revolutions, not only political and social, but also the revolution of bhakti started from Bengal. The revolution of higher knowledge, led by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Pandit Rabindranath Tagore, also started from here, and has influenced the whole world. There have been social revolutions, political revolutions and cultural revolutions here. This is an alert place, but right now the Bengali people are sleeping. When Hanuman slept, Jamawant was required to awaken him. You too have the strength and energy of Hanuman.

When the people of Bengal sleep they require Swami Nirajan to tell them that to change the culture and samskaras in their life the next generation will have to be given opportunities. It will not work with only education; every parent will have to do this work. This is not the work of any sadhu, sannyasin or government. This is the responsibility of every parent.

Otherwise you give birth to an incomplete personality, believing your child to be your bright future. If you wish for a bright future for yourself, for your nation and your society, give your children samskaras along with education.

– 27 July 2014, Swabhoomi Rangamanch, Kolkata, India



Collective Consciousness

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There was a question: Will the entire human civilization be united into one consciousness once the individual ego disappears? There are many theories. It has been said that after some time when evolution has taken place the human consciousness will become one collective cosmic consciousness. This idea has been mooted by many prophets and many siddhas of our time including Sri Aurobindo.

Kaala chakra

Looking at the history of humanity this may happen for humanity is evolving at a conscious level. In each generation there is some development in the behaviour of the brain and in the behaviour of the mind. Whether this development is positive or negative is for the future to tell. Every generation breaks one barrier which exists in the brain and mind. Therefore, the idea of evolution is true. However, evolution is not uniform, it is varied.

By the time one becomes ripe another seed is being planted, by the time that seed becomes a tree and ripens another seed has been planted. This is the continuity of *kaala chakra*, the wheel of time. If one wants everybody to be the same then kaala chakra will have to stop at some time to allow everybody to come to the same point of evolution. This is not possible. According to physics, leave alone spirituality, time, space and object are the eternal elements that cannot be altered.

With the idea of kaala chakra, time and the continuation and transformation of matter, there is evolution, growth and development, yet it is individual and not collective development. Collective development happens in society due to the social structure, while spiritual development happens individually, as everybody has a different evolution of mind and is at a different level of expression and sentiment.

Stages of growth

According to the yogic perspective the journey of evolution is an onward process. The concept of kundalini yoga and the chakras states that human consciousness is stable at mooladhara chakra, which is the lowest centre, though it is the highest centre or the sahasrara of the animal kingdom. That is the theory of kundalini yoga.

There are seven psychic centres in the human dimension, beyond the human dimension there are seven lokas, and below the human dimension there are the seven patalas. In total there are twenty-one stages of growth, development and evolution.

When an individual is in the lower stages, the chakras are known as *patala*. Patala is not something subterranean and underground. Just as chakra represents a dimension of human existence, patala represents the dimension of an instinctive life experience, not human, more like the life of an animal. Animals are not intellectuals; they are instinctive beings and their range of evolution is from the first level of patala to the seventh level of patala. The highest level of patala, of the lower

centres, is the mooladhara chakra, which is like sahasrara for animals.

The intellectual journey, the *manushi* or human journey begins when one comes to the mooladhara level. Here the intellect opens up, and one realizes that 'I exist', 'this is me', 'this is my body', 'this is my identity'. The individual becomes grounded in the world, grounded in identity. Then there is evolution from mooladhara to swadhithana to manipura to anahata and the other chakras which represent the various behaviours of mind.

Towards becoming a siddha

Sri Swami Satyananda said that in Swami Sivananda he saw the effulgence of two qualities: love and compassion. "I have never seen Christ, but seeing Swami Sivananda, my guru, and what he represents, what he expresses, I can believe that Christ did exist, for Christ also represents the qualities of love and compassion."

If the qualities of love and compassion are seen effulgent in the lives of siddhas, it means that their anahata chakra is unconditionally opened. It means that a yogi has the ability to transcend the lower chakras and establish himself in the higher chakras where the higher qualities of life can be expressed more spontaneously.

Similarly, there are other siddhas who establish themselves in higher centres. It is a state of consciousness, an altered state of consciousness, where the perspective of life and the world changes and a new appreciation emerges.

Once sahasrara is attained, there are seven more levels above. When one reaches sahasrara one becomes a siddha. The journey to deva tattwa starts at that point. In the *manushi*, or the human dimension, one can reach up to the level of a siddha. The scriptures have defined three aspects of human growth or human evolution: the first is mastery over the senses, the second is mastery over the intellect, and the third is mastery over the emotions.

Mastery over two levels

When a child is born, the baby spends the first few years of life learning how to master the senses. The baby begins to crawl, the baby begins to hold something, the baby begins to identify something, the baby begins to like something, the baby begins to respond to stimulation.

The first thing that happens in life is mastery over the senses. From knowing nothing one becomes master of the senses and that is a natural spontaneous process. One does not have to learn it. Parents nowadays may aid that process by giving a chair with wheels so that the child can sit on it or walk around without falling. However, the first mastery in human life is mastery over the senses. When mastery over the senses is attained, then the process of acquiring knowledge, acquiring experience and developing intellectually begins.

In modern society, when the child knows how to walk he is put in pre-kinder, kindergarten and school. Gradually the child is prepared to develop the aspect of intellect and through education, *shiksha*, the intellect is developed. Human evolution has come to these two levels of mastery.

The dictate of vasanas

The third level, the emotions, has not been mastered yet. The day that human beings learn how to master emotions is the day when the purpose in this human life is complete. The mastery of emotions is critical for the evolution and growth of consciousness. After all, the emotions that people express in life are guided by restrictive conditions known as *vasanas*. Vasanas are restrictive conditions which colour the mind, which give a different identity to the mind. If a negative vasana is there a saint can become a sinner, and if a positive vasana is there a sinner can become a saint.

Vasana means the drive to gain something, to achieve something, to become something. It is the *iccha*, the desire, the need to be recognized, the need to be identified as somebody special who can do something, who has an identity. The aspects

of self-respect and self-esteem represent the human vasana. Vasana is not only limited to prosperity, wealth and beauty. This is only an external aspect of vasana, whereas the inner aspect of vasana is the creation and generation of the idea, 'I need, I desire'. Is there an actual need and desire? Or is that a vasana for self-gratification?

Vasanas colour the sentiments and emotions and therefore one expresses the negative traits in life such as competitiveness, aggression, violence, disrespect, disorder, pulling the leg of somebody to rise to the top, envy, jealousy, greed. These negative traits are the results of vasanas affecting the emotions. Everyone lives by the dictate of these vasanas. It does not take long for a person to become jealous of somebody, or to have the feeling of competitiveness with somebody, or to be irritated and angry. These are the natural conditions that colour everyone's emotions.

Challenge of the twenty-first century

The management of emotions is the third aspect of human life according to the scriptures. Before the beginning of this century, Sri Swami Satyananda proclaimed that the twenty-first century will be the century of bhakti. This bhakti is not devotion; it is the transformation, the sublimation of the gross human emotions into something pure, transcendental and pious. He said, "We have worked to develop our IQ, and a system has been created for learning and education. There is an awareness of where education is lacking and what is needed to fill that vacuum. In the same manner this awareness will come in regard to emotions."

Emotional management will become the subject of this century, not mind management. Mind management was the subject of the last century. Systems of education developed as many experiments took place over the last one hundred years. Many systems of education were changed from time to time to suit the needs of society. Even today the system of education is continuously evolving and more specialization and specific

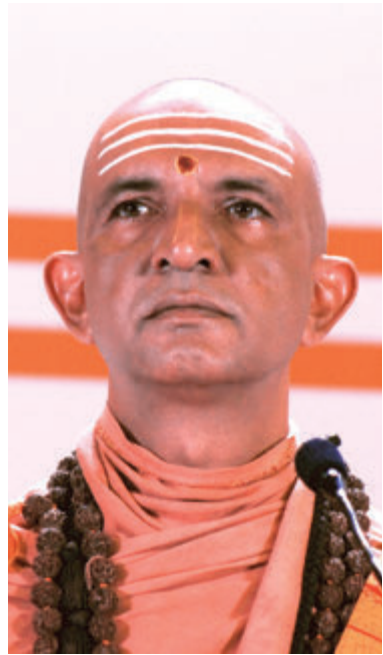
understanding of a subject take place. There is an emphasis and a growth in the intellectual understanding and interaction in regard to knowledge and society. A human being interacts with knowledge and a human being interacts with society. Just as this trend and stage has evolved over a period of time, now in this century human beings will work with their emotions.

Scientists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists and thinkers of today are saying that the disruptions in human life, the social and family life, happen due to emotional incompatibility. There can be intellectual incompatibility, yet if there is no emotional compatibility relationships fail.

This is the trend for society now: manage, sublimate, transform and qualitatively improve human emotions. This century is the age of emotions, the age of bhakti, not in the form of devotion but in the form of sublimating the gross, destructive and restrictive emotions into better human emotions, not demonic emotions.

What people say about collective consciousness is science fiction that can only be seen in films like *Star Trek*. As human beings we have to live our own independent and individual destiny. In society there will be collective development and growth, whereas in each individual it will be individual growth. Therefore, to imagine that we shall all be the same in the future is quite a distant reality, at least today.

– 27 July 2014, Swabhoomi Rangamanch, Kolkata, India



Purpose of Three-Mantra Sadhana

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The sadhana of chanting the Mahamrityunjaya and Gayatri mantras eleven times and the 32-names of Durga three times is an important practice in our tradition.

When you wake up early in the morning when the mind is quiet, before it becomes restless and connects with the external world, you must do japa of these three mantras with a sankalpa in mind.

When one plants a sankalpa, a positive thought or resolution in the subconscious mind, then over a period of time it begins to develop and alter one's personality, traits, perceptions, understanding and interaction with life and society.

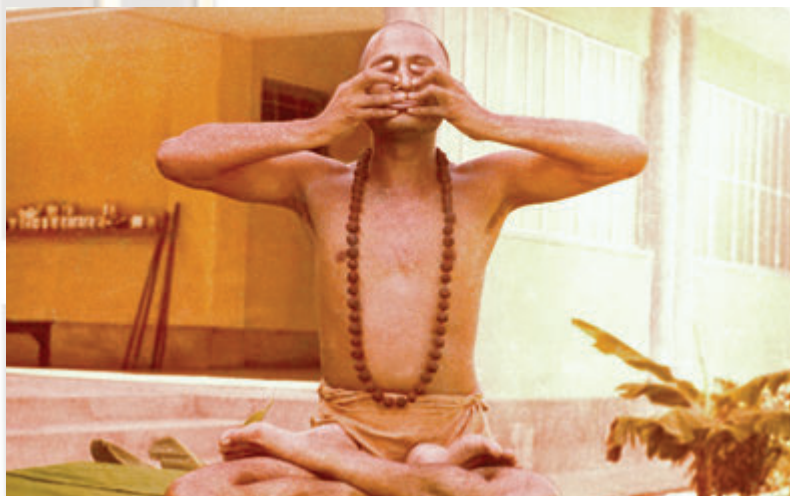
This sadhana makes you more alert and aware of your various states of mind, moods and ambitions. When a sankalpa strikes the subconscious mind, it modifies its behaviour, and thereby you attain self-confidence, fearlessness, energy and power.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India



Question and Answer

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Swamiji, in practising meditation or concentration, I not only get dullness, lethargy and sleepiness, but the joints of the body are very stiff. What can be done about this?

In raja yoga, concentration is the sixth of the eight steps: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi. Sometimes you are not prepared for the sixth step. You listen to others saying, "Concentration is very good, you must do it." So you jump immediately to the sixth step, without preparing your mind, body, philosophy and lifestyle. Concentration is not an abstract practice. When you concentrate, changes also happen in the physical body as biochemical changes.

It has been found by scientists that during any practice of yoga, and especially during the concentration practices, biochemical changes take place in the body. This means that prior to that you must fulfil other requirements, such as pranayama and pratyahara.

When you concentrate, there is invariably depression in the nervous system. On account of this depression, sometimes you feel pain in your spine. This depression can take place sometimes in the sympathetic nervous system and sometimes in the parasympathetic nervous system. Therefore, before you attempt to practise concentration, you must purify your body with the help of pranayama and hatha yoga.

Preparing for concentration

In raja yoga there are eight steps and the first two steps are yama and niyama. *Yama* means discipline. *Niyama* means routine. What is discipline? Satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya, asteya, aparigraha. These are five disciplines according to your grihastha ashram or according to your sannyasa ashram. If you are a householder, a sannyasin, a student or a vanaprasthashrami you have to practise these five yamas accordingly.

Then come five niyamas: *shaucha*, purification. Purification means hatha yoga: neti, dhauti, basti, kapalbhati, trataka, nauli. They have to be practised; you should not be in a hurry to earn the benefits of concentration. Nowadays many books are printed on concentration. We also do it and we praise concentration very much. It is right, but preparations have to be there. Shaucha is hatha yoga. These six kriyas of hatha yoga are purificatory practices. So yama and niyama must be practised according to your ashrama. If you are a sannyasin or if you are a householder, you must practise accordingly.

Influence of swara

When you sit for the practices of concentration the swara changes. The breath, which flows through the left and right nostril alternately, changes. Sometimes when you are practising concentration, the ida nadi is flowing and you will feel a lot of pain in the body and sleep. There is dullness because ida nadi creates depression in the system, and as a result you feel pain. If you are practising concentration when the pingala nadi is flowing, you will find no matter what you do, your mind

continues to jump. Pingala nadi is surya nadi and ida nadi is chandra nadi. Pingala nadi has vitality, *prana*. Ida nadi has mental energy. Actually before you practise concentration, you should try to awaken your sushumna by pranayama. This does not happen all at once. It takes quite some time, quite a few years.

If you are practising advanced concentration, for one hour or half an hour, you must look after your diet also. If you take any item of food which is difficult to digest, it will cause lethargy, indolence and sleep. It will create tamasic vrittis. If you take onions, then they will deposit uric acid in the joints. Onions create uric acid in the system and during concentration, this uric acid is deposited in the joints and you feel pain. So you should keep this properly in your mind.

Can a person, who is preoccupied with household life, spend his time in the pursuit of yoga? Is it worth his while to do so?

You see there is no such thing as a householder. You must use the proper terms, pravritti and nivritti. *Pravritti* means involvement. *Nivritti* means retirement from involvement. All of you are on the pravritti marg. You are involved in responsibilities and duties. Many sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission or at Sivanandashram are also on the pravritti marg. They are not nivritti. They have not become free from involvement. That is also pravritti. This pravritti marga is explained in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

There are people who are involved, but they are detached. This is pravritti with nivritti. That is the life of a householder, *grihastha*. Nivritti with pravritti is the life of a sannyasin. Many times, the disciples of Buddha, Shankaracharya, Swami Sivananda, Swami Vivekananda and many others are leading the life of nivritti with pravritti, and householders are leading the life of pravritti with nivritti.

Therefore, the life of householders should not be underestimated. Many times there are certain affairs, certain

items in the life of householders on account of which they feel that they may not be fit for yoga, because he marries, he has relationships with the family, wife or husband. He has children, he goes to work, and tells lies. Sometimes he is dishonest, sometimes he is selfish.

Many householders encounter this during their life and as a result they feel that they may not be fit to practise yoga. In my opinion, this is the view of puritans.

Yoga is for householders, just as medicine is for sick people. Medicine is not for healthy people. Yoga is not for yogis. For yogis it is jnana. For householders it is yoga. Therefore, the path of yoga is especially designed for the people who are following the path of pravritti.

– 18 July 1983, Calcutta Ashram, India



Expansion of Memory

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



For people who are in the process of learning and education it is important to improve their memory, concentration and power of attention. Among the yogasanas the best practice is the headstand. When the blood comes to the head and the cells of the brain are oxygenated, there is a sensation of freshness. Other asanas such as surya namaskara are also recommended.

In pranayama the best practice is bhramari, as it will reduce the agitations of the mind and bring about deeper concentration.

Then the memory aspect of the subconscious is tackled through the practice of trataka. *Trataka* or candle gazing, one of the shatkarmas of hatha yoga, can improve the memory and has improved the memory of many people. Ten minutes of trataka are recommended. This is what you can do at home.

When under stress

When you are in the classroom and when you are under pressure, at that time regulate your breath. While you are studying or writing take at least five minutes of slow and deep breaths even as you continue your performance. The breath regulates the nervous system; slow and deep breathing helps regulate the brain waves so that there is less nervousness, anxiety, fear and forgetfulness. A few minutes of breath awareness, making the breath long and deep.

While you are doing that, use the free hand to press the middle point of the thumb. You have to keep the arm straight. Just pressing the middle point of the thumb will also de-stress the mind.

Memory is blocked only when there are stresses in the mind; otherwise memory is the natural behaviour of the mind. It is memory which determines how you will act the next second.

– 27 July 2014, Swabhoomi Rangamanch, Kolkata, India



Concentration is a permanent aid to success in every sphere of life and paves the way to intuitional flashes of discovery in various fields of knowledge.

–Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Understanding Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



I am simply another disciple of my guru and I have surrendered my whole life to him and towards fulfilling his mission. I want to do my guru's work and it is his teachings that I am imparting. Therefore, my relationship with people is the relationship of yoga. It is not a family relationship or a relationship of attachment. It is not a relationship of jealousy, hatred, love or compassion; it is a relationship of yoga and spirituality. This relationship of yoga and spirituality bestows energy in our lives, and this is the truth.

In other relationships people look upon someone as a friend, well-wisher or family member. These are worldly relationships, which give neither peace of mind nor do they further one's spiritual growth. Instead one becomes involved in the problems of other people. This is the result of ordinary relationships. When one forms spiritual relationships there is nothing that ties one down. In such relationships one makes an attempt to evolve, find happiness, peace and joy. One is no longer worried about solving some problem or about getting rid of a stomach ache, a headache, or the lack of peace in the family. These are all momentary experiences and situations in life; they do not have a permanent presence in one's life. Happiness and sorrow come and go in life. Sometimes happiness knocks on the door and sometimes sorrow. People look upon this happiness and sorrow as the only motive of their lives.

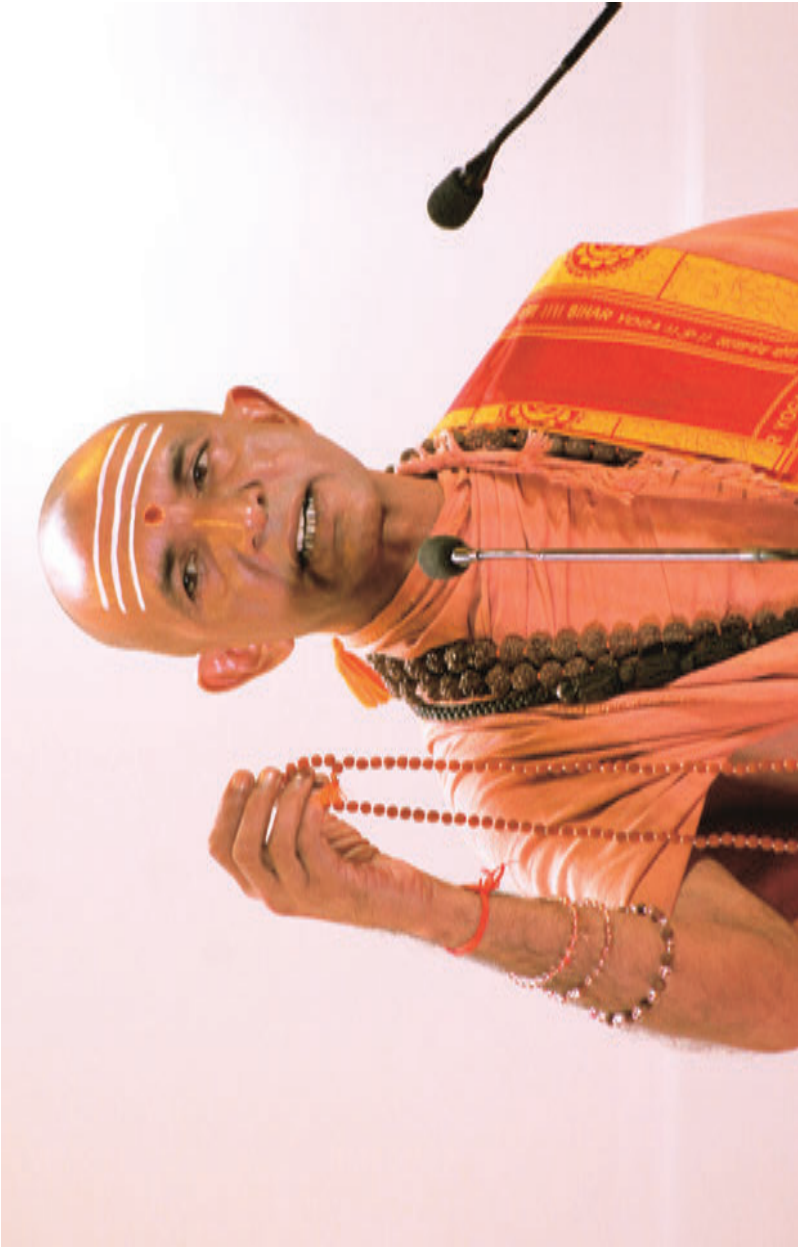
Arjuna's depression

If there is sorrow, one should get out of it and try to find happiness. A householder and a sadhu both seek freedom from sorrow and they desire to find happiness. The relationships one forms are based on happiness and sorrow. If there is no sorrow in one's life one will not be looking for happiness. If there is only happiness in life, one's talents and capabilities do not have a chance to develop. There has to be a balance between the two for development and progress. Evolution takes place due to the effort one makes in dealing with and combating trying circumstances.

It is during the experience of sickness that the science of healing was born. Without sickness there is no need for a science of healing. When a person falls ill the activity of finding a cure begins, and development takes place. When a person faces sorrow in life he makes an effort to relieve that sorrow and searches for a path towards happiness.

This is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The first chapter is not on hatha yoga or raja yoga; it is the yoga of depression. 'Yoga of depression' means the attempt to understand sorrow.







नुशीलन केन्द्र, इडे.
29 एवं 30 जुलाई, 20

गोलकाता



Depression is depression and sorrow is sorrow, but the word added here is yoga:

Arjunavishaada yagonaamah prathamodhyaayah.

Arjuna's depression is the name of the yoga of the first chapter.

Vishada is sorrow, depression, anxiety, frustration and conflict. The word 'yoga' has been used for the simple reason that until one faces sorrow in life one does not make an attempt to seek happiness. Unless a person is ill, health has no meaning. Unless one experiences stress and strife, one will not know what peace means.

Everyone has to come to this understanding in life. This situation was not made by people, it was created by God. The sorrow and happiness in life is a gift from God. Through this gift from God one becomes aware of a direction in life, one gains knowledge about it and makes the effort to embark on that path. It is at that time that one experiences evolution in life, progress takes place and one finds peace and happiness.

Three types of suffering

One should not try to avoid sorrow or remove sorrow from one's life. When sorrow comes, one should accept it and make an effort to overcome it. When one is able to do this, one will be able to understand yoga. The sorrow one faces is worldly, emotional, mental and spiritual. In the Indian tradition of philosophy, struggles, troubles, strife and sorrow have been categorized into three groups.

One category is *adhidaivika* which roughly translates as that which is destined; sorrows or suffering written in one's destiny which comes from *prarabdha*, past karmas. No one is able to be free from this suffering. That which is in one's destiny is *adhidaivika*.

The second category of sorrow is the result of the external environment, of natural and climatic conditions. It is called

adhibhautika, suffering or sorrow experienced as a result of external, natural circumstances.

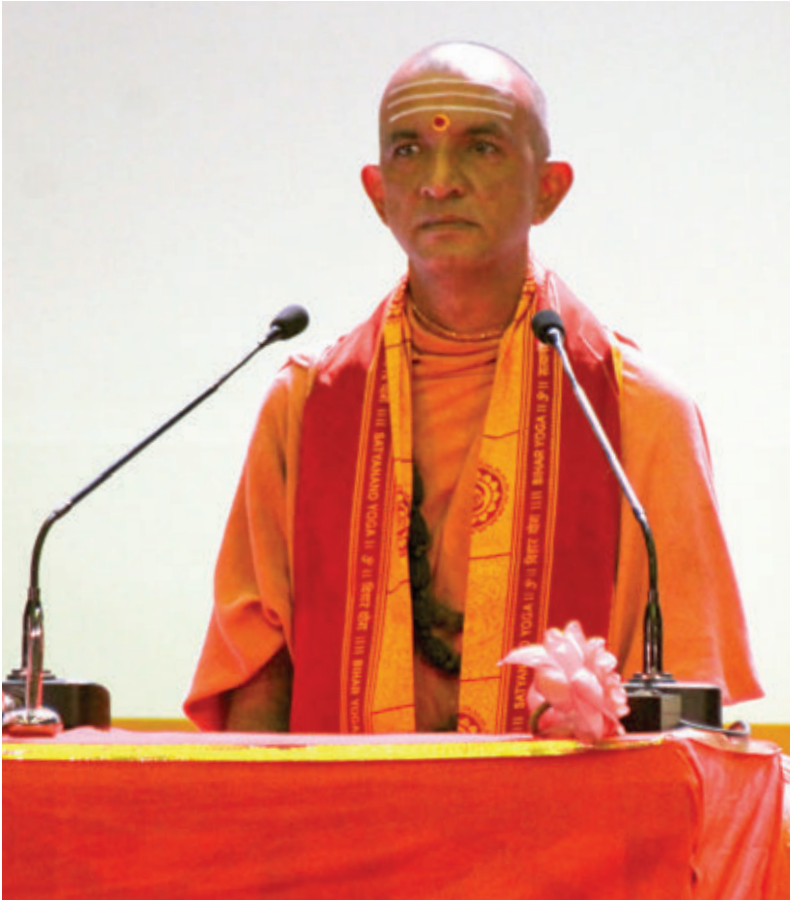
The third category of sorrow is self-generated, *adhyatmika*. Adhyatmika does not refer to spiritual matters but to those issues that emanate from within and are self-generated. These self-generated problems and sorrows create depression in one's life. One can make an effort to free oneself from the problems faced and understood as being a result of circumstances. The self-generated problems are the ones that become the cause of anxiety and depression in one's life.

Need for restraint

Why are self-generated problems created? According to yoga there is a lack of restraint in one's life and therefore one finds oneself surrounded by problems. Restraint is absolutely essential in life. When one initiates this process of restraint in one's life then the possibility of change begins. Acquiring this restraint is the purpose and goal of yoga.

People think that the goal of yoga is samadhi as stated by Rishi Patanjali. People ask if yoga should be practised for self-knowledge. It is necessary to understand the goal of yoga. Yoga is practised today so that one can bring some restraint and discipline into one's life. In earlier times yoga was practised for self-knowledge; today the need is not for that, however, there is a great need for restraint. Therefore, one has to redefine the purpose of yoga to suit the times.

In the beginning, rishis and munis tried to discover themselves through their yoga sadhana and it was not difficult for them to have spiritual and internal experiences. Their lifestyle was different, the circumstances were different, teaching and discipline was different. People exercised much more restraint in their lives; their thoughts, behaviour and diet was carefully calibrated and balanced. When one leads a balanced life then the need to struggle with oneself is not experienced. It is easier to embark on internal quests and gain self-knowledge. When the senses are over-stimulated, the



mind is overactive, and at such times the goal of yoga cannot be self-knowledge. The goal has to be to acquire some peace and to arrive at a state where there are fewer thoughts.

Buddha and Swami Sivananda

Buddha did not say that the goal or purpose of spiritual practices was self-knowledge. He spoke about nirvana which was the sadhana, the system, the philosophy. He did not talk about self-knowledge. He said that through sadhana you should attempt to arrive at the state of nirvana. He defined nirvana as a state where you can calm the mind, make it

peaceful and attain the state of *shoonya* or nothingness. *Nirvana* means attaining the mental state of *shoonya* where the mind is not agitated or too active. The mind is still and calm. During the time of Mahatma Buddha the definition of spirituality changed from self-knowledge to nirvana: internal peace and stillness, freedom from agitation.

In today's times the situations and circumstances have changed and so has the definition and goal of yoga. Our paramguru Swami Sivananda said in the 1940s that in the coming age the goal of yoga would not be self-knowledge, samadhi, nirvana, moksha or God-realization. The goal of yoga and the need for yoga would be to acquire balance and discipline in life so that one's creative potential could be fully expressed and one could progress in life.

When he explained the purpose of yoga and spoke on the philosophy of yoga according to the needs of the times, he put forward only three aims: with the practice of yoga cultivate the creative faculties of head, heart and hands. This is the goal of yoga.

With the practise of yoga you develop the creative and positive expression of the head, meaning intelligence; heart, meaning emotions; and hands, meaning action. If you are able to achieve this in your life, life will progress and take you towards peace and happiness.

Becoming a brave person

Swami Sivananda clarified this idea through an illustrative story. He said that a blind person wishes to see the sun. This is his ambition, not his requirement. His need is to acquire the faculty of sight, to be able to see. Once he acquires this ability, he can see the entire creation, not just the sun. He can delight in the whole of creation, and being able to see the sun will be just one small aspect of the complete experience.

In the same manner, if one aspires for God-realization, self-knowledge or *moksha*, liberation, and makes that the goal of one's life, it will be like the blind man wishing to see the

sun. Moksha can never be the goal of one's life. There are so many desires, so much attachment, it is so difficult to change even one little habit. How can one aspire for moksha?

If an alcoholic is told not to have a drink for a month, he will not be able to do it. If a terrorist is told not to terrorize anyone he will not be able to stop. If people are asked to sustain a feeling of happiness for just twenty-four hours without feeling sad, without changing the mood, just smiling for twenty-four hours, it will be close to impossible for them to do such an easy task. Therefore, this is my challenge: the person who can maintain a happy mood for one hour is a truly brave person.

One's moods change every moment. One's needs, ambitions, requirements change every hour. Every hour a new desire is born and at such a time how can one aspire for moksha? Who will be able to make an effort to attain it? People are just fooling themselves by this thought. They do not have moksha in their destiny, they do not have God-realization in their destiny, and they do not have self-knowledge in their destiny.

The aim of human life

What people do have in their destiny is a specific discipline that they can acquire to balance life, to find joy in all circumstances, mental peace and at a spiritual level to fill life with spiritual awareness and consciousness. These are the words of Sri Swami Satyananda.

Once someone asked him about the goal of human life and he replied in a single sentence: acquiring spiritual awareness is the goal of human life. Cultivating spiritual awareness is the aim of human life. Awareness is *sajagta*. This spiritual awareness is to be acquired through the union of the three aspects of head, heart and hands. There has to be understanding and balance of the faculties of head, heart and hands. This understanding and balance is called yoga.

– 25 July 2014, Swabhoomi Rangamanch, Kolkata, India

Stilling People's Thirst and Hunger

It is a treat to be travelling with Swamiji because every moment he is teaching something; the way he conducts himself, the way he lives, the way he talks, behaves, sits, eats – everything is a learning. Throughout the program Swamiji maintained his enthusiasm and love and never stopped inspiring everyone who came into his presence.



When we reached the venue at Swabhoomi Rangamanch in Salt Lake City, the hall was so packed that instead of having the yoga mats spread out, each participant had to fold their yoga mats back into the asana size and people were sitting. It was a huge hall and even then it was jam-packed before the starting time. People were sitting all over the stage. During each session, there was pin drop silence. Nobody left the hall halfway through or five minutes early; everybody waited until Swamiji went out. That was a discipline I have never ever seen in any of the other programs I attended. If a program goes a little beyond time or comes to the end, people start leaving to reach their offices, their workplaces and they start leaving, but in Kolkata nobody left. With rapt attention, whether in the morning session or evening session, people were completely attentive for two hours. Psychologists say that the attention span of a person is not more than one hour; usually it is forty-five minutes. Then people start moving, fanning themselves, looking here and there. In Kolkata everybody was fully focused on Swamiji's presence on the dais.

All felt that they were receiving something really big. It is not easy to keep lecturing; it is demanding on one's prana. At the end of one hour of talking, one feels drained for everybody is looking and somehow taking one's prana. However, Swamiji kept going with a thousand people, and not only for two hours. Many sessions lasted for three hours or even longer. The last question and answer session started ninety minutes before the scheduled time. Swamiji would just go on continuously with such a beautiful flow.

One theme ran through most of Swamiji's talks: yoga as experience and expression. The two aspects are necessary to have complete yoga in one's life. Swamiji looked at this theme from many angles so that it became clear and applicable for all. It was beautiful to have Swamiji teach the morning class and watch him 'get back to basics' with such simplicity and clarity.

The question and answer sessions covered the whole world. People are thirsty, hungry; they are starving and then suddenly they meet somebody like Swamiji. In this program more than eighty percent were new faces. To have such a strong, positive and dedicated response from new people, the credit goes to the speaker, to the main person who holds them and binds them together.

– Swami Nirmalananda, Ganga Darshan



The Rarest Gift of God

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



22nd September 1950

Siva addressed the students of Calcutta University. The following is an extract:

You are all heirs to immortal life, eternal bliss and infinite light, power and wisdom. Your real inner nature is in fact absolute knowledge and bliss. I have come to remind you all of this glorious state.

The Creator has endowed you with the most precious gift of all, namely, this rare human body with its distinctive faculty of intelligent reasoning, discrimination and pure will. This rarest of rare things, the human birth, should be lived in a worthy manner. To live merely for the collection of a number of earthly things, a motor car, a bungalow, some silk suits and fashionable hats, ties and shoes, a wrist watch, a radio and some silver teacups, is but a low and childish ideal. These things of the dust soon vanish away like a passing dream. All objects on earth are coated with the varnish of sure destruction.

Even a person of ordinary intelligence prefers to have things that are more lasting. You are familiar with the question asked at the shop, "Is this German made or merely Japanese?" because you want to purchase that which is more durable, not that which will be spoiled quickly. How much more necessary is it then to apply this wise maxim for the more important task of living your life?

Blessed youths, dedicate your lives to enduring ideals. Live your life for lasting attainments. The idea of becoming

a something or someone here upon this earth is not the sole purpose. So long as you live, you have to be engaged in some sort of activity, no doubt, but underneath it all, there must be inwardly a constant aspiration and ceaseless striving for the attainment of the great, sublime ideal of human life, i.e. the attainment of perfection.

You are born for perfection, not to live a half-life of weaknesses, defects, limitations and imperfections. Perfection is gradually attained by cultivating a pure character through the diligent practice of *sadachar*, right conduct. Purity of conduct and a high moral character are the real marks of a man. A man of loose character is worse than a dog or goat, for character alone raises man above the level of the beast. It is not human form alone that bestows upon us the status of a man. It is purity, moral courage and heroism that go to make up true manliness.

Such lofty virtues are visible expressions of your inner divine nature. The more you strive to manifest these great qualities, the more you become embodiments of these virtues, the more you grow in the consciousness of your essential, glorious nature. To develop purity, to practise truth, selflessness, motiveless love, generosity, sincerity, forgiving and peaceful nature, and simplicity, is not an easy thing. If you are determined to assert your manliness instead of remaining an abject slave to your senses, then these virtues will quickly come to you. Courage and determination are the first steps to any attainment.

Tarry not, friend!

Give up all selfishness and serve all with heart and soul. Give up all shyness, timidity and effeminate nature and be courageous and bold in readily embracing this high ideal of self-perfection and exerting for it. Selflessness is the greatest purifier. Courage is your real friend. Do not be afraid of criticism. Critics will come to your feet when you achieve the real glory of character and practical idealism.



Remember, yours is the duty to know that you are perfection, light, power and bliss in essence. Do not delay in fulfilling this duty. Tarry not, friend! Your college career is a wonderful training ground for preparing yourself for this high attainment. Here you have to develop the great qualities of self-control, purity, obedience, courtesy, nobility, forgiveness, friendliness, goodness, helpfulness, industry, regularity, perfect truthfulness and idealism. Take full advantage of your college days. When you step out of it you must be shining examples of ideal men.

But, above all, never forget even for a single second that all your life's activity is ultimately meant to lead you to self-perfection. It is to give you the lofty consciousness that you are beyond body and mind; that you are immortal souls without disease, decay or death. You are divinities on earth. Assert this. Feel this. Realize this. You will become blessed and will bless others. May God bestow illumination and immortality upon you all, my beloved youths! Be up and doing from this moment.

– *From Sivananda's Lectures, during All-India and Ceylon Tour - 1950, Chronicler Swami Venkatesananda*

Why do our loved ones sometimes hurt us knowingly?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Sometimes your near and dear ones give you the most pain. Your enemies give you a hard time, yet it hurts more when your own relatives give you a hard time. This is due to expectation. If a person from whom you expect nothing abuses you, you can ignore him, yet you cannot accept abuse from those to whom you are attached. You want to see your desires realized in their life. You want the shortcomings, deficiencies and unfulfilled desires of your life to be fulfilled in the other person's life.

The fault is not with the others who hurt you; the fault is yours, as you want the other to be like you. You forget that others have their own destiny, fate and accumulated karmas. The direction of life and occupation of your family members and relatives may be just the opposite of yours. Every individual has his own destiny. The reason for unhappiness and conflict is that you do not accept the destiny of others, instead you try to force your will on them, whether friend or enemy.

Arjuna fought against many kings. In the Rajasooya Yajna he defeated every other king. Arjuna never repented the annihilation of those kingdoms. So, what happened to his valour when he saw his own loved ones standing against him in the Mahabharata war? He forgot his duty and dharma due to deep attachment and infatuation.

This happens when there is expectation and attachment. Through meditation you can try to free yourself from the hold of expectation, attachment and maya. In that way the impact of hurt and pain will be less.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India

Emotion Management

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Emotion is energy in motion. When energy attains movement and motion, it expresses itself in the form of emotion. Sri Swami Satyananda said that emotion has no colour. It is totally clear. As water has no colour, it is transparent. If the colour of the stones at the bottom of the river is green, a green colour will be seen in the water. If the colour of the pebbles and stones is red, a red colour will be seen. In a swimming pool, the colour of the tiles will be seen in the colour of the water.

Colour of connection

If a crystal stone is put on a particular colour, one will see that colour in the crystal. Similarly, emotion is just crystal clear energy, crystal clear shakti. When this *shakti* or energy is attached to material objects, to an experience, to a person, to desire or pleasure, then it expresses itself in that form.

Similarly, depending on the connection of the emotion, the colour and form is seen in the emotion. This emotion is of one type only, it can neither be said to be worldly nor spiritual. Is the body worldly or spiritual? The body is the body and it has its use. Emotion is emotion and it has its use.

There is no such *bhavana*, emotion, that is called spiritual and there is no such *bhavana* that is called material. It is just the association of *bhavana* that gives birth to an understanding and experience of the emotion. The linking of the *bhavana* to a sense object gives birth to feeling and emotion. Sri Swamiji said that when one sees a child, the emotion of affection is expressed automatically. It comes from the emotion which was already inside. Until one sees the child, the emotion of affection is not expressed. The moment one sees the child, emotion becomes connected with the child and the emotion of affection is expressed. If one sees a bundle of cash, the emotion of greed arises automatically. There will be no greed before one sees that bundle of cash. The moment one sees it, one will be attracted towards it. If one sees a competitor, the emotion of jealousy will be expressed, with questions such as: How did he become successful? Why am I lagging behind?

Whenever emotion comes in contact with a sensorial object, a situation or person, the emotion expresses itself in that form. When the same emotion is attached to the chosen deity, one's *aradhya* or *ishta*, then the emotion, which previously expressed itself as desire, anger, greed, infatuation and jealousy, is expressed as *bhakti*, surrender, love and compassion. These are unconditional expressions of the mind and the person. Emotion related to the world is conditioned and emotion related to *bhakti* is unconditioned. There is no expectation in

bhakti, only surrender. There is no desire in bhakti, in fact, in bhakti one may also fight, neglect and argue with God.

The saint who did not want a boon

A saint performed austerities to have darshan of his Lord. Seeing his intense austerities God appeared before him. Whenever God appears his first sentence is, "Make a wish." When God appeared the saint felt disturbed and opened his eyes. God asked, "What do you want?"

The saint became angry and said, "What do you mean by 'What do you want?' I perform austerity out of devotion for you and to have your darshan. You have fulfilled this wish and now I am relaxed. If you are asking me what I need then you are not all-knowing. It means that you are a false God. So, please go away."

God felt uneasy and realized that the saint had said the right thing, and he wondered, 'What should I do now? Whenever I come down to this earth, it is to fulfil someone's selfish purpose. So I have developed a habit not to waste my time and I ask people what they want right away and I clear the matter before talking about anything else'.

God realized that he had to rectify his mental set-up, "This saint is not asking for anything even though I am insisting. What should I do now, I am in a fix. If I do not give anything then people will say, "God does not give anything." If I give something then that would dishonour the saint for he does not want anything.'

Then God asked once again, "My son, you can think once more whether you need anything." The saint became really angry. He said, "O God, you have asked me this already two times which means that you are definitely not all-knowing. So I am leaving."

He turned and moved on. God was thinking, "This is the first person who calls me a fraud. So I need to do something. I will bless his shadow so that wherever it falls, greenery follows." The saint had no idea about this. After blessing the saint's shadow God went back to heaven. The saint kept

moving and miracles followed his shadow. A tree without any life became full of green leaves and fruit, a blind man gained vision, the lame started walking and running, and the dead became alive. The saint had no idea that it was his shadow doing all the wonders in the form of God's blessings.

When you do not expect or desire anything, unknowingly you receive everything. When you have a desire then you receive only that which you have desired. When you leave everything to God, then you receive all the treasures. Therefore, you need to maintain your relationship with God, make it better and regulate your emotions.

Towards bhakti

Emotional management is the subject of bhakti yoga. Bhakti yoga means this only. Emotion directed into worldly matters gives rise to distortion and disorder. When one is free from that distortion, then faith, *shraddha*, and the relationship with God develops; that is called bhakti.

The last stage in bhakti is jnana bhakti. The first stage of bhakti is *karma kanda bhakti*, rituals, which can regulate one's life and routine. In the morning, one has various tasks and chores. To regulate and discipline one's life, one should connect oneself with one's chosen deity. With even five minutes daily, karma kanda bhakti comes into play. Next comes *upasana bhakti*, a mental practice such as mantra japa, remembering God and one's chosen deity.

The question is how to remember. Imagine that your son goes to another city to live or to study. Can your mind be separated from your son? In some corner of your mind, the image, care and remembrance of your son always exist. When it is time to take food or to go to bed, you ask yourself whether he has taken food or not, or whether he has gone to bed or not. At the time of his interview, you remember him and wonder whether he has gone for the interview or not. You are engaged and living in another city, yet your memory keeps you connected with your son.

Similarly, bhaktas connect with God. While performing their duties and responsibilities, they do not waste time sitting for twenty-four hours in front of a statue of God and crying. Those who do are not bhaktas, not karma kandi, nor upasana margi, followers of upasana, nor jnana margi, following the path of jnana, but dukkha margi, followers of sorrow. They only express their *duhkha*, their sorrow and pain.

Upasana means to come near; and one comes near through memory and remembrance. For remembrance mantra becomes the medium. While walking, the mantras *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, *Om Dum Durgaya Namah*, *Om Kam Kalikaya Namah* can be chanted, irrespective of the number of rounds. If one remembers the mantra even once while sitting in a vehicle, in the same way one remembers the children living in America, it remains in one's memory. This is called upasana. The three forms of bhakti performed in upasana bhakti are: remembrance of God, *smriti*; rituals, ceremonies, pooja, prayer, *aradhana* or worship; and *archana*, adoration.

The last stage of bhakti is jnana kanda. This is the best path, for here the bhakta merges with the chosen deity.

Jnana bhakti

In chapter twelve of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the definition of the *bhakta*, the devotee, and *bhakti*, devotion, has been given by Sri Krishna. He describes the devotee who is closest to Him (12:13-14):

*Adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam maitrah karuna eva cha;
Nirmamo nirahankaarah samaduhkhasukhah kshamee.
Santushtah satatam yogee yataatmaa dridhanishchayah;
Mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa me priyah.*

Sri Krishna says that devotion is a state of mind where the sense of duality has come to an end, and the devotee has established himself in the experience of his chosen deity. Therefore, the first expression of his life is *adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam*, the

bhakta has no sense of duality. He does not move around with the feeling of 'you' and 'I'. This is the first quality of a devotee according to Sri Krishna.

Generally devotees move around with the sense of duality: you and me, I, mine and my Lord. This devotion of duality is limited to karma kanda, rituals, and upasana, remembrance. However, the devotion of non-duality and the devotion of knowledge begin with *adweshtaa sarva-bhootaanaam* - no sense of duality with anyone or anything; to see divinity in all; to see the same element in every living being.



Maitrah karuna eva cha means to connect the mind with compassion and friendliness. The bhakta is the one who is full of harmony and does not dislike anybody; who does not compete; who is not jealous of anyone; who is a friend to all, full of compassion and without aggression. *Santushtahsatatam yogee yataatmaa dridhanishchayah* - "This is the bhakta who is content; who constantly lives as a yogi; who is active, energetic and strong in conviction."

The qualities and character of a bhakta which Sri Krishna mentions are practical. This is not a concept of devotion. Jnana bhakti it is an experience of oneness with one's deity through internal purity.

Changing the association

Bhakti is an emotion. Its first form and expression is to merge this bhakti bhav with the remembrance of God. To attain this union one has to practise mantra sadhana. With mantra sadhana bhakti yoga begins.

The cultivation of bhakti bhava for spiritual aspirants and householders begins with karma kanda, the performance of rituals, as a medium to fulfil their respective desires. The culmination of karma kanda is upasana.

A yogi cultivates bhakti bhava through upasana, remembrance of God in a personalized way of worship. The culmination of upasana is jnana. This is the sequence of developing bhakti bhava as described in our scriptures.

Energy in motion is known as emotion. It is just crystal clear energy, crystal clear shakti. The body is the body, bhavana is bhavana. There is no bhavana which can be called spiritual and there is no bhavana which can be called material. Linking bhavana with a sense object gives birth to a feeling, an emotion. This association of the bhavana with an object gives birth to an understanding and an experience of emotion.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India



Is it our duty to support all people regardless of their actions?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

People need to analyze individually and independently whether their intentions and aspirations in life match their behaviour and actions. An effort has to be made to bring intention and action closer together, no matter how distant they are at present. If your philosophy and intention are something different from how you act, then that is known as having a split personality. You think one thing but you are forced to act in a different manner.

You can analyze the traits of a person, and if you find justification in supporting the positive traits then do it. You can respect and honour the effort the other person is making to live life in the best manner possible. You can also guide and inspire the person to become better. That can be your role. You can motivate the person to recognize that actions and intentions can come together with the right understanding and the right approach to life.

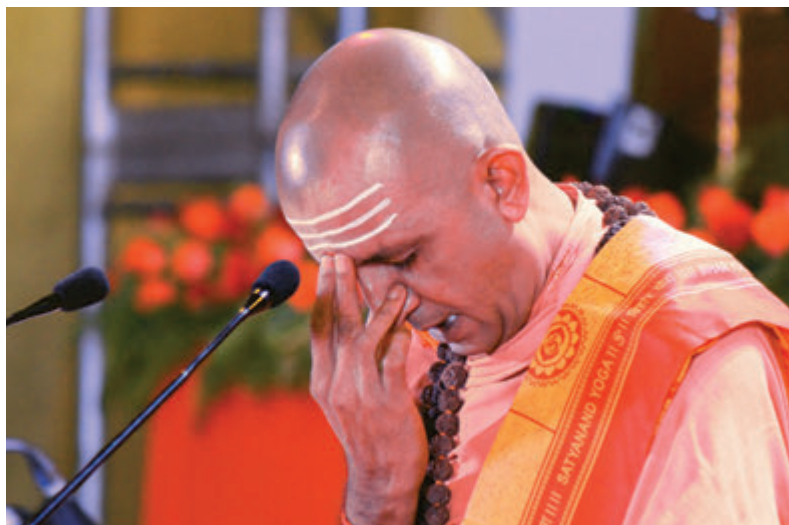
However, you will have to answer this question yourself as it depends on who you associate with and the reason for your association: whether it be a family member or a stranger, whether it be your guru or just anybody in this world you happen to meet.

You should use your judgment in deciding how far you become involved in the actions and intentions of another person. Your role should be to inspire and encourage them to become better in life.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India

Kriya Yoga and Beyond

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In our tradition, we move from hatha yoga to raja yoga and from raja yoga to kriya yoga. Kriya yoga is a path for the development of pranic force and spiritual upliftment. Kriya yoga is related to the chakras and kundalini shakti inside the human body.

The process of churning

Butter, yoghurt and many other products are hidden in milk, although they cannot be seen in the milk. To take these products out the milk needs to be churned. The milk has to go through a process of transformation. There has to be a process of separation.

Similarly according to yogic philosophy, five different experiences in our life are hidden inside the human body: the physical body, *pranic* or energy body, the mental body, the psychic body, and the body of bliss.

The physical body is called *annamaya kosha* as it is made up of *anna*, grains. *Pranamaya kosha* is the body of energy, *shakti*, *prana*. *Manomaya kosha*, the mental dimension, is subtle and refined. *Vijnanamaya kosha*, the dimension of intuitive wisdom, is where the chakras and kundalini are experienced. With the help of yoga sadhana these experiences are separated. Cream and butter are separated and can be extracted by churning the milk.

Similarly, physical, pranic, mental, chakra-related, soul-related experiences can be expressed. Through the process of churning and splitting, hidden elements are expressed. Sadhana helps to express the hidden element of your life.

Hatha yoga practices are for *annamaya kosha*, the physical body. Raja yoga practices are for *manomaya kosha*. For *pranamaya kosha* both hatha yoga and raja yoga practices are useful. *Vijnanamaya kosha*, the seat of the chakras and kundalini, is related to kriya yoga. Some people consider it to be a process through which they can access the areas that are beyond the senses and mind and express the energies in life.

Descent of energy

According to yogic philosophy this body contains seven transformers. The purpose of these transformers is to regulate the energy. Where electricity is generated, it is produced in the scale of 10,000 kilowatt amperes. When that electricity is sent for general use, the transformers reduce 10,000 kilowatt amperes to 440, then again it is stepped down to 220, and it can be stepped down to 110. With the help of the transformer energy has been adapted for general use. This is the principle of kriya yoga.

The energy within us is cosmic energy. This cosmic energy manifests in life as physical energy, called *prana* or vital energy. It has taken itself through various transformers in order to manifest as physical energy in the chakras. The pure source of energy is sahasrara, where Shiva and Shakti, consciousness and energy, are in harmony, equally powerful, equally potent.

At the time of creation, the same energy transforms itself into the cosmic mind, *ajna chakra*. This cosmic mind divides

itself into elements: *akasha* or space at vishuddhi chakra; *vayu* or air at anahata chakra; *agni* or fire at manipura chakra; *jala* or water at swadhsthana chakra; and *prithvi* or earth at mooladhara chakra.

Human beings have established themselves in the earth element. Consciousness and energy are in mooladhara and have become stagnant. Energy and consciousness have to be taken back, in the upward direction. This return journey is kriya yoga.

Mooladhara chakra represents the material mentality, which looks for security, satisfaction and comfort in society. Prana shakti or maha prana is sleeping in mooladhara chakra as kundalini shakti in the form of a serpent.

The serpent

The serpent is a symbol. In the Bible, Adam and Eve lived with God in heaven, in the Garden of Eden. One day, a serpent gives an apple to Adam and Eve and tells them to eat it. When Adam and Eve eat the apple they realize the difference between right and wrong. This means that their consciousness entered their intellect. Earlier their consciousness was one with the atman, where there were no restrictions, only oneness with the deity, with God.

When the feeling of duality enters their life after eating the apple, they know that they are the body and the Supreme Being is separate from them. The new judgment is based on what is true or untrue, right or wrong, and the intellect. With the knowledge of right and wrong Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden.

The serpent is considered the vehicle of right and wrong knowledge. It is considered the vehicle of duality and that is kundalini shakti in mooladhara in a dormant state. As long as it is dormant in mooladhara, there is the feeling of duality. There is a feeling of duality between you and God. There is a feeling of duality between you and the world, you and your family. This feeling of duality is a representation and symbol of the pranic energy which is absorbed in the world.

This energy has to be freed, made active and again raised towards sahasrara. This process is called kriya yoga. When you are able to refine your energies once again, you are able to define its subtle power and experiences. You are able to experience it and use it for your development in life.

Expression of seva

After kriya yoga, Sri Swami Satyananda brought forth another method of growth. It is the sadhana of expression. Expression of the individual takes place in society and the world. People are indebted to society and the world, therefore, a contribution should be made to the development of society and the world.

When you connect with the feeling of seva, you are able to bring happiness and peace into the lives of people. As long as you do not connect with the feeling of seva, how can you help others? You will not be able to help yourself. Through yoga you attain a state of mind where you are able to cross the limited and narrow mentality. You will spend life embracing and accepting an expanded vision. That expanded vision is called atmabhava, the essence of Vedanta. Atmabhava is not limited to philosophy. It is the expression of life. It is a path to awaken and evolve people. It is the final teaching of Vedanta.

Sri Swami Satyananda gave a concrete form to atmabhava in Rikhiapeeth, where he made seva the medium for the awakening and evolution of humankind.

Break the shackles of selfishness

The sankalpa of rishis and munis has been that their righteousness had only one purpose: to provide a solution for the removal of suffering. Suffering and affliction will not be eradicated, yet they can be reduced from one hundred percent to eighty percent. If they are reduced to eighty percent you will witness the establishment of a stronger society. This is the philosophy of Vedanta.

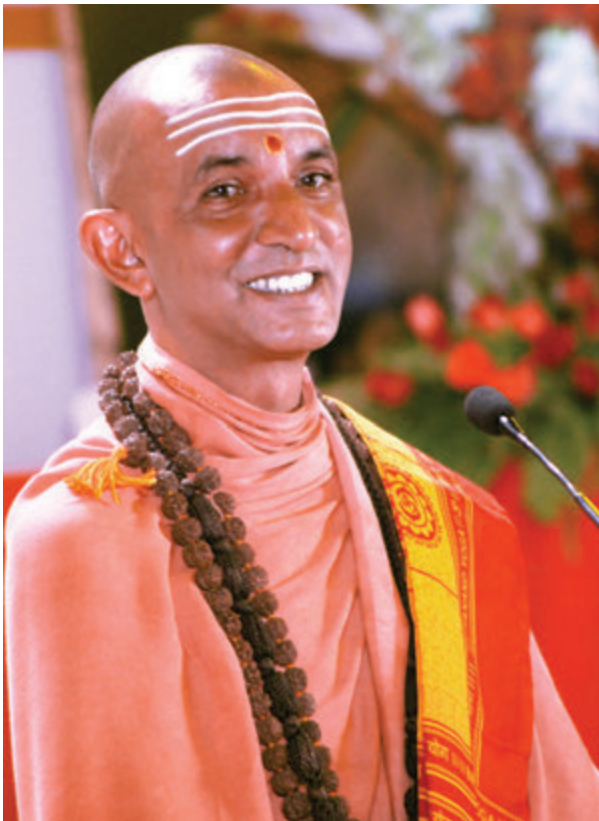
When human beings break the shackles of selfishness and see the whole of humanity as one, without any difference,

it is the culmination of life in this world. Samadhi is not the culmination of human life. Samadhi is the last expression of selfishness. 'I have attained samadhi' expresses my selfishness. Samadhi is an achievement of personal selfishness.

Encouraging and uplifting everyone is an achievement of *paramartha bhava*, the feeling to serve others. This is the purpose of life as told by sages and Sri Swamiji. It is also the resolve of our tradition.

I invite you to come to Munger and Rikhia. Try to assimilate the resolve, the sadhana, the vibration of the surroundings there into your life.

– 30 July 2014, Netaji Subhash Stadium, Kolkata, India





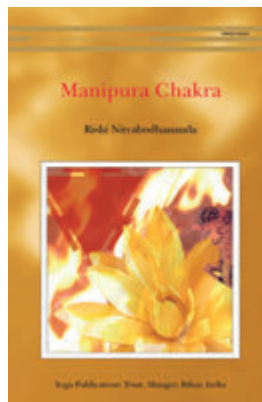
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