

YOGA

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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Song of Consecration

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, O Lord, to thee.
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.
Take my moments and my days
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my king.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages for thee.
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.
Take my will and make it thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own,
It shall be thy royal throne.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour,
At thy feet its treasures store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

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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 ॥

Outer Yoga – Inner Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When Sri Swamiji established the Bihar School of Yoga, he developed a system of outer and inner yoga. The external yoga is known as *bahiranga* yoga, and the internal yoga as *antaranga* yoga.

External yoga is done to improve the quality of the body and mind, and the expression of the senses and behaviour. It is the effort that one makes. Internal yoga is the attitude that one cultivates and the change one brings into one's ideas and perceptions. This change is based on one's experience, understanding and one's own practice.

In the outer expression of yoga one is preparing, reconditioning and fine-tuning oneself. Once the outer expression has been managed, discipline of the body and

mind has been attained, and once the emotions have been harmonized through a series of sustained practices, the mind experiences a new understanding.

With this new understanding one begins to live a harmonious, peaceful and creative life. The moment this happens, one's inner self becomes soft. It begins to experience a change in its radical behaviour in the realm of the senses and realizes its pure nature in the realm of the spirit.

The outer yoga allows one to attain the discipline of the koshas and to move from the physical to the mental and then to the spiritual dimension. Sri Swami Satyananda defined these three as bahiranga yogas: hatha yoga for body and prana, raja yoga for mind, and kriya yoga to go through the various awakenings in one's own consciousness – to experience ultimately the luminosity of the self from consciousness to spirit.

Hatha yoga is for annamaya kosha and pranamaya kosha. Raja yoga is for manomaya kosha, and kriya yoga for vijñanamaya and anandamaya kosha. These three yogas constitute the discipline which transforms human nature, the human personality and the human identity. Even if one lives these three yogas without thinking about jñana, karma or bhakti yoga, if one lives these three yogas in one's home and day-to-day life, it is enough. The appropriate, correct and sustained practice is enough. Hatha yoga, raja yoga and kriya yoga take one from point A to point E, from annamaya to anandamaya.

Once this sanyam which is external, physical, psychological and emotional has been attained in one's life, the behaviour of the mind changes. Then the natural attitude becomes purer and untainted. That natural expression of one's inner, enlightened behaviour is known as bhakti yoga, jñana yoga and karma yoga.

Therefore one has to identify with the naturalness of yoga and the naturalness of life.

– 20 December 2013, Ganga Darshan, Munger, India

Teacher, Adviser and Inspirer

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



People hold peculiar ideas about the guru since they see guru as the enlightened one. Guru is a title given by students to their master, their teacher. However, a guru is and always sees himself as a disciple. Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda were called gurus by everyone, yet they lived as disciples. There has been no clear understanding of what the concept of guru actually is and it has become distorted. In the sannyasa tradition, the guru is seen in three ways: first as a teacher, second as an adviser and third as inspirer. These are the three definitions of the word guru.

The teacher

As a teacher he teaches the student a subject, a topic and a technique. As a teacher he creates the foundation to understand a subject and a topic. As a teacher he gives the basic building blocks and teaches how to build with these blocks. Gurus do not give the building, instead they teach one how to construct it.

They are not condo developers. They do not make the building so that one can simply rent it, lease it or buy it and live in it. No, one has to construct one's own life, one's own nature, one's own personality and character.

The guru can only point the way and beyond that there is no other role. It is one's own limitation, inability and perception if one cannot follow the instructions or not.

The adviser

In his second role, the guru becomes an adviser. When the student has understood the basic concepts, the teacher advises on the sequence and progression of the student's effort and sadhana.

The adviser does not provide one with solutions to life's problems, such as material, social, economic or personal problems. That is not the role of the adviser. He is not a social or psychological adviser. He is a spiritual sadhana adviser, nothing more than that.

The role of the adviser is to help one reconstruct one's own nature and personality in the best manner possible. However, one has to be responsible for one's own limitations, disabilities and understanding. One has to have the discrimination to know the intent of the adviser without superimposing one's own idiosyncrasies on the intent and instruction of the adviser.

The inspirer

The third aspect of guru is the inspirer. After one has gained the skills to create one's own picture and house, the guru becomes an inspirer who keeps the aspirant motivated to walk the right path.

The inspirer is not the person who provides solutions to problems. The guru does not interfere in other people's lives; he does not tell them what to do with their lives. The guru has nothing to do with one's personal life. He does not dictate how one has to live in one's home, what to eat, or when to sleep. This has to be based on one's own commonsense, routine and daily activity.

The guru's role

The guru is not a social consultant or a problem solver. He does not take responsibility and charge of the student's life and actions, rather the guru inspires aspirants to become responsible for their own efforts and motivate themselves to fulfil their aim in life in a positive manner.

The guru only provides the teaching, the advice on how to build one's own nature and personality, and the inspiration. This concept has to be translated into day-to-day activity, without which one cannot live any spiritual discipline or cultivate understanding.

The guru is a person who has to be objective and detached from everything else. His role is to empower one to take responsibility for one's own self with wisdom, clarity and understanding. The guru's role is also to ensure that



one follows the path of one's dharma and to guide one on it, provided one is willing to walk the path of dharma.

The guru gives the right tools and inspiration to deal with one's own self, yet how to use these tools depends on every individual. Just as a knife can be used to harm or to save a person, the tools are not responsible. It is the action of the person who uses the tool that decides the proper or improper application.

– 21 December 2013, Ganga Darshan, Munger, India

If you made a mistake, face it coolly. If you did something right, face it boldly.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

My Golden Opportunity



Respected Swamiji, people of the ashram, foreigners, followers of Swamiji, and ladies and gentlemen.

I am very glad today that I got a golden opportunity to say a few lines for Swamiji. I am here with my father, my sisters and my brothers, but I am feeling that I am here with my entire family. My father and my family are related to Swamiji for a long time. Our serene relationship is based only on humanity, love and generosity. With

these feelings, our relationship has reached that position which is unimaginable. Subhan'Allah from starting to the present not a single moment has taken place to bring any type of disturbance, nor has any destructive wall come within our relationship.

And Insha'Allah this will never happen. Nowadays, if I, my sisters or my brothers are at any position, any rank, then it is only due to the distribution and blessings of Swamiji. I used to explain it like this: I am standing on land and the shade upon me is not made by a roof but by Swamiji. The courage, the excitement to stand upon land and to do something better is only granted to us by Swamiji.

I want to state the most dreadful event for me and my family's life which took place on 23rd September 2012. On that day some of the worst people of our community had drawn us into a dreadful situation on a baseless issue. This dreadful event was caused by these people only because of jealousy. That day was very alarming for us but the night was much more alarming. That night Swamiji was so much worried and tense - more than our blood relations. He did not sleep before he was not fully confirmed that we had slept with relief. This

touching moment is unforgettable to us even after death. When we remember this moment our eyes just fill with tears and our heart just prays to Allah, that please Allah allow all the people of the world to meet this type of person so that they can realize your creation.

If anybody has given us the love of mother, care of father, attachment of society it is only the one most honourable man, Swami Niranjanananda. We are very thankful and happy that when we reached Rikhia we got the same love, care and hospitality from Bade Swamiji too. He too loves us so much. I hope Insh'Allah in future our serene relationship will be the most memorable example for not only Bihar, India, but for the entire world.

Now I say sorry to Swamiji and to all of you for any mistake in my speech. And please bless me that I can speak and write things more nicely and fluently and for my career too. So that I can shine the name of Swamiji, my father, my family and yours also. And thanking most to Swamiji and all of you for granting me your precious time.

—*Rabia Syeda (15 years), 11 December 2014, Ganga Darshan*



Reflections on Guru-Bhakti

From *Guru-Bhakti Yoga* by Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The transformation of consciousness of a disciple through the influence of the guru is both a subjective and an objective process. Mind is an objectified stress in the universal consciousness and is like a ripple therein. The guru as well as the disciple are such consciousness-stresses differing only in the degree of subtlety and expansiveness of their condition. Each higher, subtler and more expansive condition is more potent and inclusive than the lower.

The guru is a *Brahmanishtha*, one rooted in the Infinite Truth. The mind of the guru, being nearest to the absolute condition of changeless Existence, possesses limitless powers beyond imagination. The initiation of the disciple by the guru is a process of infusion by the guru of this supernormal force of spiritual consciousness into the grosser state of the disciple's mind which results in dispelling darkness and enlightening the mind of the latter. The length of time taken by the process

of the disciple's spiritual illumination is directly proportional to the receptive capacity of the disciple and the consciousness-force of the guru. No action or event is completely subjective or completely objective.

The truth is midway between the two. Effort and grace are the subjective and the objective forces simultaneously working and depending on each other. The external and the internal are the two complementary faces of the one whole being. There is no purpose served when there is only the eye or when there is only the external luminous object. The contact of the two effects the perception of light. If entire subjectivity were the truth, the whole world would have vanished when the first person attained Self-realization. If entire objectivity were the truth, no person could have attained liberation, until the entire universe was exalted to the consciousness of the unconditioned absolute. None of these is the complete truth.

The subject and the object have equal shares in the transformation of an individual. The one is a copy of the other. The world is the materialization of the collective totality of the thoughts of all the beings constituting it, and, hence, the dissolution of the mind of one being among them requires a reshuffling in the thoughts of the others. The sustenance of the world henceforth is the work of only the remaining ones.

Thus the occurring of an event is through blending together of both the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective powers of the Pure Being. The guru's unlimited consciousness invades the dark corner of the disciple who is able to bear it through the strength of truth and purity, and who receives it to the extent his mind is purged of rajas and tamas. The help which is derived from the guru cannot be estimated by the faculty of thinking, for the guru is identical with Existence Itself.



To Become a Medium

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



If there is an electrical junction in your room, you take a nylon rope and connect it with the positive and the negative. Connect it to your room and attach a bulb to that. Switch it on and do you know what will happen? Nothing. So you go to an electrician and tell him, “The electricity is not flowing, there is something wrong with the junction; there is something wrong with the meter; there is something wrong with the transformer, because I have connected the lines all right.”

So the electrician comes and he says, “Where is the connection? This is not correct. This nylon is a non-conductor of electricity. Put a copper wire.” So you purchase a copper wire, connect the positive and negative to the main switch, switch it on and there is the light. Well, that is how it should happen between guru and disciple.

Laying down the arms

There must be some form of conduction between the two. If the disciple is resisting, if he is full of doubts and apprehension, and afraid of his guru, he is a non-conductor. There is no use saying, "My guru is not working through me." Between two individuals there is a cord. In ordinary life it is an emotional cord. The same emotion can be sublimated and then it becomes faith and devotion. This devotion is an invisible link between guru and disciple.

It is true that the guru has to be the powerhouse, but the disciple has to be a good conductor. In order to be a good conductor, a disciple has to lay down his arms of resistance. He has to make himself empty, for only then can the music flow. That is how a disciple is also made. The art is emptying oneself. I do not mean that a disciple has to become like an idiot. A disciple keeps his own mind, his own personality and his own ego and individuality. However, as far as he and the guru are concerned, when he is empty and receptive, then only can the disciple act as a channel for guru's power.

Constant awareness

The word for disciple is *shishya*; this means he is a medium. In order to be a perfect channel for the guru's transmission, in addition to meditation, one has to become one with him on the spiritual plane. It is difficult to explain how to become one on the spiritual plane. One has to understand. How does a mother feel oneness with her child? How does a friend feel closeness with a friend? It is in the realm of awareness.

The realm of awareness has to be permeated. All the time the mother is aware of her son. The awareness of her son is totally in her mind. If someone has lost his dearest friend, what is the state of his awareness? That is called total awareness. He is always on your mind. The awareness is constant. You eat and sleep, you talk and walk, but the awareness is constant. Constant and consistent awareness is important between guru and disciple.

This can only happen if there is devotion. If there is no devotion, there cannot be constant and consistent awareness. It has to be like a greedy man who always thinks about money, or of a passionate man who always thinks about a woman. In the same way, the awareness of the guru has to be constant.

Towards the light

Therefore, the main quality is devotion. You are not attached to his body, his knowledge, position or his worldly qualities. Still you are attached to him. You do not know what it is; if you analyze devotion, it is like this. I am attached to an object and I have passion for it. I can explain it, but in the case of guru, you do not know why you are aware of him.

You are not attached to his body, his money, his wisdom, but still you are aware of him. This is one explanation of devotion.

When devotion comes within the range of the mind, it consumes all forms of thinking. For the moment, there are no distractions, the disciple forgets himself, and at that time he can see the light. He can see that there is no darkness. The experience is a kind of bliss within. The disciple, therefore, should first of all develop devotion.

– 2 September 1980, Chamarande, France





Where the Guru is Needed

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

It has to be understood clearly that there are two aspects to yoga: yoga as a practice and yoga as a lifestyle. Yoga as a practice is limited to the techniques of asana, pranayama, mudras, bandhas, shatkarmas, raja yoga and kriya yoga. This practical side of yoga you can do, no matter where you are: at home, while travelling, in a five star hotel or a retreat, in a jungle or in the ashram. This group of practices anybody can do at any time for any purpose or reason.

For yoga practice you do not need a guru. You need a competent teacher, who can teach you the way to practise pawanmuktasana, prayanama, yoga nidra, meditation, raja yoga, or kriya yoga. A teacher teaches you the yoga practice purely on an instructional basis. You do not need a guru to learn pawanmuktasana, surya namaskara, yoga nidra, antar mouna and japa. You need a competent teacher.

The realm of yama and niyama

The other aspect of yoga is the yogic lifestyle. After having gone through the yoga practices, if you are inclined to pursue a spiritual path and bring some qualitative and positive transformation into your lifestyle, your mind, behaviour and thoughts, then a guru is needed. When you want to tweak your personality, at that time the guru comes in, not before.



As long as yoga is practised you can put a cross on the guru, it is not needed. However, when you want to modify your life, behaviour, attitude and nature, the guru is needed, and that is part of lifestyle.

The yamas and niyamas belong to the realm of the guru not to the realm of the yoga teacher. You have been practising yoga here at Ganga Darshan and you practise yoga in other centres as well. Does anybody teach you yama and niyama from day one? They may tell you about it, yet do you practise it? Is it even necessary to practise yama and niyama while you are doing yoga as a practice?

Yama and niyama cannot be practised as long as yoga remains a practice, for when yoga is a practice, there is no self-awareness. There is only perceived need, requirement of the body, mind, sentiments and emotions.

Today many people are receiving their certificate of yoga instructor. They are teachers and not gurus. They will teach how to practise pawanmuktasana, yoga nidra, concentration yet they will not be gurus. They can develop into competent teachers in the course of time, yet they can never become gurus, for the focus of spirituality is not there.

Towards spiritual awareness

With yoga practices you deal with the vrittis of your mind, whereas in spiritual life you do not deal with the vrittis of your mind. The moment you become aware of your spiritual self, your spiritual need, your spiritual requirement, your spiritual

personality, the gross vrittis have to subside. A new vritti has to develop, the *Brahma vritti* which is the spiritual vritti. The gross vrittis give you pain and pleasure; they connect you with your senses, the sense objects and the world. As long as the vrittis, the senses, mind, sentiments and emotions are connected with the world, your needs, ego and desires, how can you ever discover the state of peace, balance and harmony? You cannot.

In the practice aspect of hatha yoga you do the physical practices of asana, prayanama and mudras to organize the body. To learn how to relax, de-stress, focus, concentrate and meditate you use the tools of mantra and yantra. Through these practices the mind is pacified, and the gross vrittis lessen their power and intensity. After that, the spiritual vritti has to develop.

Sri Swami Satyananda said that 'to cultivate spiritual awareness is the destiny of every person, not God-realization. How far you cultivate it is up to you.'

Look at the rose, not at the thorns

Yamas and niyamas are not part of the basic yoga training and teaching. People can talk about it as a theory, never as a practice. It is not possible to practise yama and niyama, for the inclination and the mind are not geared in that direction. If there is anything that is the cause of everybody's downfall, it is the mind. That is the reality of life. The positivity, the negativity, the likes and dislikes are rampant even though people know it should not happen. Why do people get angry when they know they should not be angry? Why do they react to somebody when they know that it is not their call? Why do they become negative when they know they are spiritual aspirants and should try to maintain optimism, positivity and happiness?

People prefer to spend twelve hours, or twenty-four hours with a grouchy face, rather than look at themselves. If their mood goes off, for a week it will be off and they do not want

to see the person with whom they have fought. Hatred and anger will be there. Where is their sadhana? There is no effort to express their optimism, happiness, creativity and joy.

People should have the wisdom, drive and motivation to connect with the beauty that life has to offer and not with the thorns that prick from time to time. The rose bush is full of thorns but it has one flower which is more attractive than all the thorns on the stem. The rose is so attractive that people can cut themselves and hold the thorns to admire the beauty of the rose.

Understand the difference

In yoga practice you are concerned with techniques and that is what you have to focus on. In yoga lifestyle you are concerned with personality and you have to focus on that. In practice you do not need a guru, you need a competent teacher. In lifestyle you do not need a competent teacher, you need a guru. In practice you do not need to practise yama and niyama, but when it comes to modifying the lifestyle, yama and niyama become the basis, the foundation stones to bring about internal change.

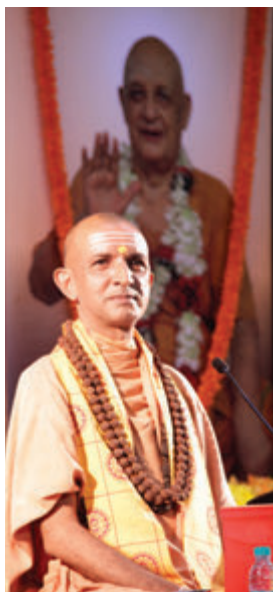
There are people who are practising yoga for decades and never move to the spiritual side. That is perfectly all right. There are people who will never need to practise the physical aspect and who simply want to move to the spiritual side. That is also okay. However, the difference has to be understood by all.

If this logic and difference is understood, then a lot of confusion in relation to yoga, as to where to learn, how to teach, whom to learn from and who to teach, will disappear. Is this person the right guru? Is this person the right yoga teacher? That confusion can be removed with the right understanding of yoga as practice and as lifestyle.

*– Satsang to students of the one-month Yoga Instructor's Course,
29 March 2015, Ganga Darshan*

Communicating with the Guru

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



No disciple is capable enough to establish internal contact or connection with the guru. If you are thinking that the guru is saying something in your mind, that is your delusion. What is your relation with the guru? Have you surrendered yourself? Do you follow his teachings one hundred percent?

You are only connected with the guru so that he can save you while you are drowning. There is no true relationship if the guru is there only to remove the distresses and difficulties from your life. When these distresses and difficulties are gone from your life, you bow down to the guru and move on.

Faith and surrender

Are the people, who take mantra diksha and other forms of diksha, connected completely with the energy of the guru? No, they only close their eyes and think about their problems. Then they start believing that their words and thoughts are reaching the guru and their own answer is the answer of the guru. Many people ask me how to communicate with the guru. I clearly say that the consciousness of human beings is not sensitive enough to establish an internal contact and connection with the guru.

Even a sannyasin disciple cannot have an internal dialogue with the guru, although he lives with the guru and practises sadhana under his guidance. The reason is that the person whom you call your guru is the essence of the Supreme Being, the *paramtattwa*. To connect with the paramtattwa you need

shraddha, faith. You need total surrender so that the guru becomes everything for you. If your faith is strong enough, you can receive commands from the guru. If you have surrendered yourself, and that surrender is total, the connection with the guru is forever. When you connect with the guru, there is no difference between the two.

Towards union

In the life of a disciple there are three stages. Once Hanuman was asked, "What is your relationship with Sri Rama?" Hanuman replied, "If you see me as my body, then I am his servant. To be a servant is my duty, my work and my dharma. If Sri Rama says go to Lanka, I will go there. If Sri Rama says sweep the palace, I will do that. If Sri Rama tells me to prepare food, I will cook. Therefore, physically I am his servant and in this manner we are connected to each other at the physical level. However, if you see us at the mental level, then the *bhava*, the feeling, is of friendship, and if you look at the level of the soul, then we are one."

When a disciple can see his guru within himself, a direct connection can be established. Until then a disciple sees his guru as a means to serve his own ambitions, higher aspirations and desires, and there is and will be no reflection of the guru in his life. Whatever the disciple thinks is his own illusion.

The relationship between guru and disciple is pure, and in that relationship there is no place for *ahamkara*, self-centred ego, and desire.

When *atmabhava*, the feeling of oneness, comes, then the guru and disciple become one. Until that moment you can establish a link or a relationship with the guru with the help of faith and surrender. Ultimately, there is *atmabhava* and *devabhava*, seeing oneself and seeing divinity in the guru, where everything culminates into one and there is nothing else. This is the state of Advaita.

– 18 September 2014, Tyagaraj Sports Stadium, Delhi, India

Sharanam

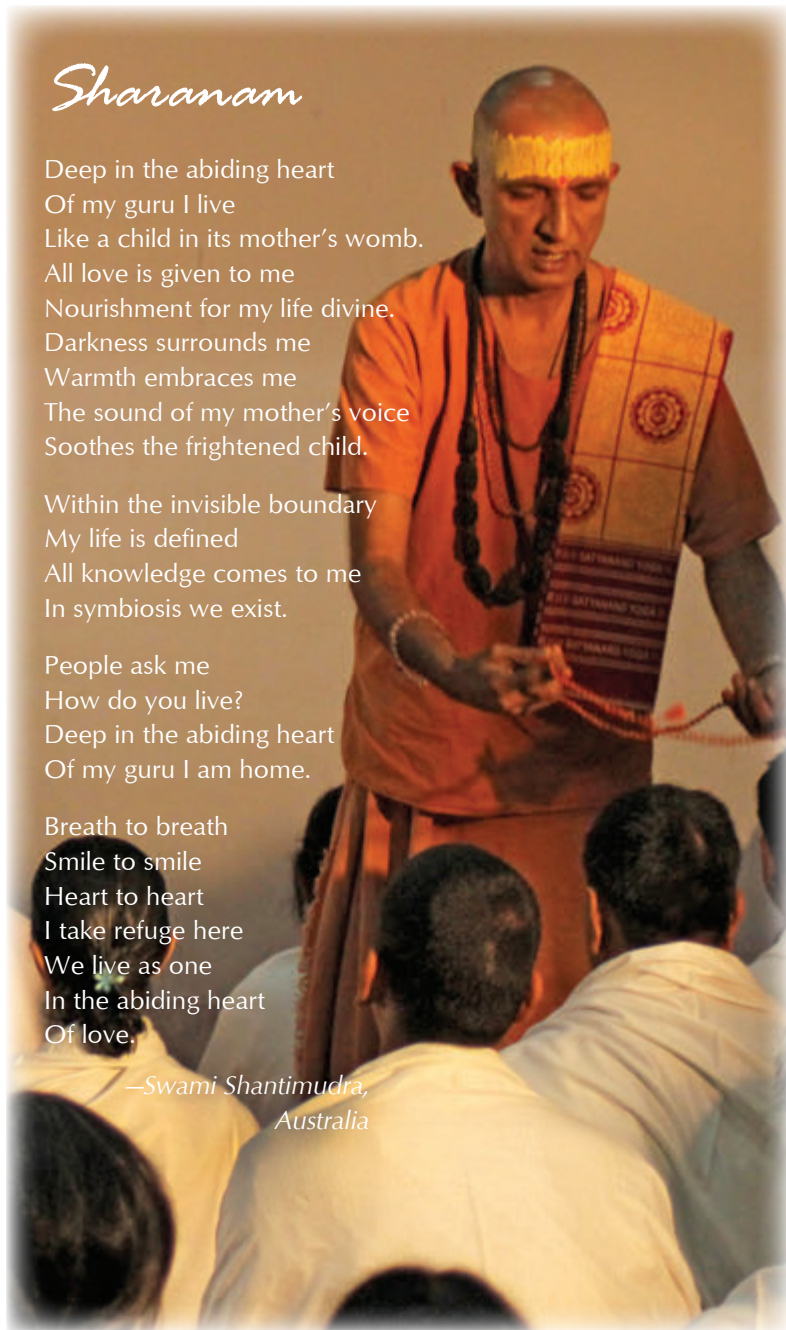
Deep in the abiding heart
Of my guru I live
Like a child in its mother's womb.
All love is given to me
Nourishment for my life divine.
Darkness surrounds me
Warmth embraces me
The sound of my mother's voice
Soothes the frightened child.

Within the invisible boundary
My life is defined
All knowledge comes to me
In symbiosis we exist.

People ask me
How do you live?
Deep in the abiding heart
Of my guru I am home.

Breath to breath
Smile to smile
Heart to heart
I take refuge here
We live as one
In the abiding heart
Of love.

—Swami Shantimudra,
Australia



Awakening the Inner Guru

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Many people speak of inner guru. It is a correct idea. Inner guru is an awareness. When people say, "Oh, we don't need a guru; we all have an inner guru," I answer, "Then you don't need a wife or husband; they are also inside. They are inner wife and inner husband."

Why this hypocrisy that the inner guru is enough? Why can't you say, "Inner husband is there, so I don't need to marry. Inner wife is there, so I don't need to get married."

People who think like that reject the idea of the outer guru and the discipline of the outer guru. The outer guru will discipline you, not your inner guru. It is the outer guru who says, "Sit down for one hour without moving and practise this." Your inner guru will not tell you to do that; instead, you will make your inner guru follow your own mental whims.

Renunciates and householders

There is a need of a guru, as much as there is a need of a bed, food, a shower, children, happiness, prosperity, wife and husband. However, after renunciation there comes a time when one can identify with the external guru in a different manner. After the departure of that external guru, a power comes alive within, and that becomes the internal guru.

For Swami Satyananda, Swami Sivananda was always alive and with him; they could talk. My guru is always alive. If I want, I can talk to him. If he wants, he can speak to me. This is not my mental imagination, for this link is beyond the mind. There is no confusion whether it is my own creation or my guru saying something. In your mind there can be confusion, "Is it my mind saying this, or is the guru speaking?"



For householders the idea of inner guru does not apply. For them it is a wrong concept. The concept of inner guru only applies to renunciates, who have developed a spiritual bond with their guru. Householders have not developed any spiritual bond with the guru, so how can they look for an inner guru?

If you want to wear new clothes, you have to remove the old clothes. You do not put new clothes over the old. Why don't you apply the common principles of life in relation to guru and disciple? Why do you think it is always beyond your approach? That is where everybody makes a mistake.

A guru is a human being and also an aspirant. He may be your guru, yet he is also a disciple. Gurus have to live that dharma too. For householders living in society, the inner guru has no meaning at all; it is only intellectual gymnastics leading nowhere.

Faith and trust

The world is a box, where you have everything, not only misery, but also a lot of beauty. Life is full of opportunities. People are caught in a straight vision. They see the doors of opportunity closed and do not want to look for other doors which are opening.

Since creation people have lived life in the same manner. Your ancestors have faced the same problems that future generations will face. You should not think of life as misery, instead connect with the beauty that life has to offer to everyone to be happy. You have a glimpse of the beauty that life has to offer when you are in touch with a guru.

*Bhavaaneeshankarau vande shraddhaavishwaasroopinau;
Yaabhyaam vinaa na pashyanti siddhaah svaantasthameshwaram.*

I bow down to Parvati and Shiva,
Who are embodiments of faith and trust.
Without them, even the adept cannot perceive God,
Although He dwells within all alike.

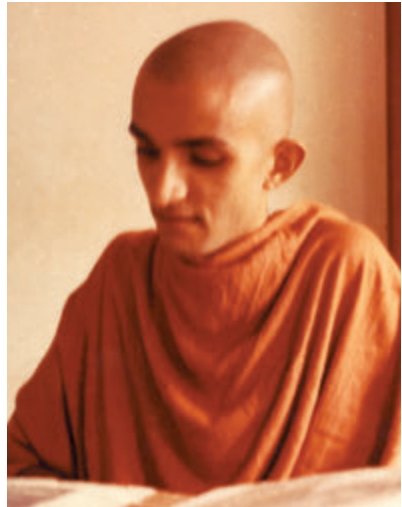
This is the opening sloka of the *Ramacharitamanas*. It says that without the two qualities of faith and trust even siddhas cannot perceive the divinity within them. Trust and faith are qualities of mind. Trust means knowing that this person is not going to lead me in the wrong direction. Faith means that the journey that I have embarked upon will take me to my destination.

They are not religious qualities or religious behaviour, rather they are strengths and qualities of the mind. You have an intellectual faculty, and in the same manner faith and trust are faculties of the mind. It is the cultivation of these two qualities which helps to build the bridge and connect with the guru.

Sri Swamiji sent me out at the age of eleven, and I returned at the age of twenty-three. For twelve years I did not even see my guru. In those days there were no mobiles, and letters used to take three months to reach anywhere. Making a phone call used to be a Herculean effort: trunk dialling, lightning call, trunk call, write down the number, make enquiries. A letter from India used to go to England, from England to America, and from America to South America. It used to take three months.

In that time of no communication and total isolation, how did I survive? Faith and trust kept me connected. He is my guru and I am his chela. For me there is nothing else in my life.

– 10 April 2014, Worli,
Mumbai, India



Inner Guru – Outer Guru

From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



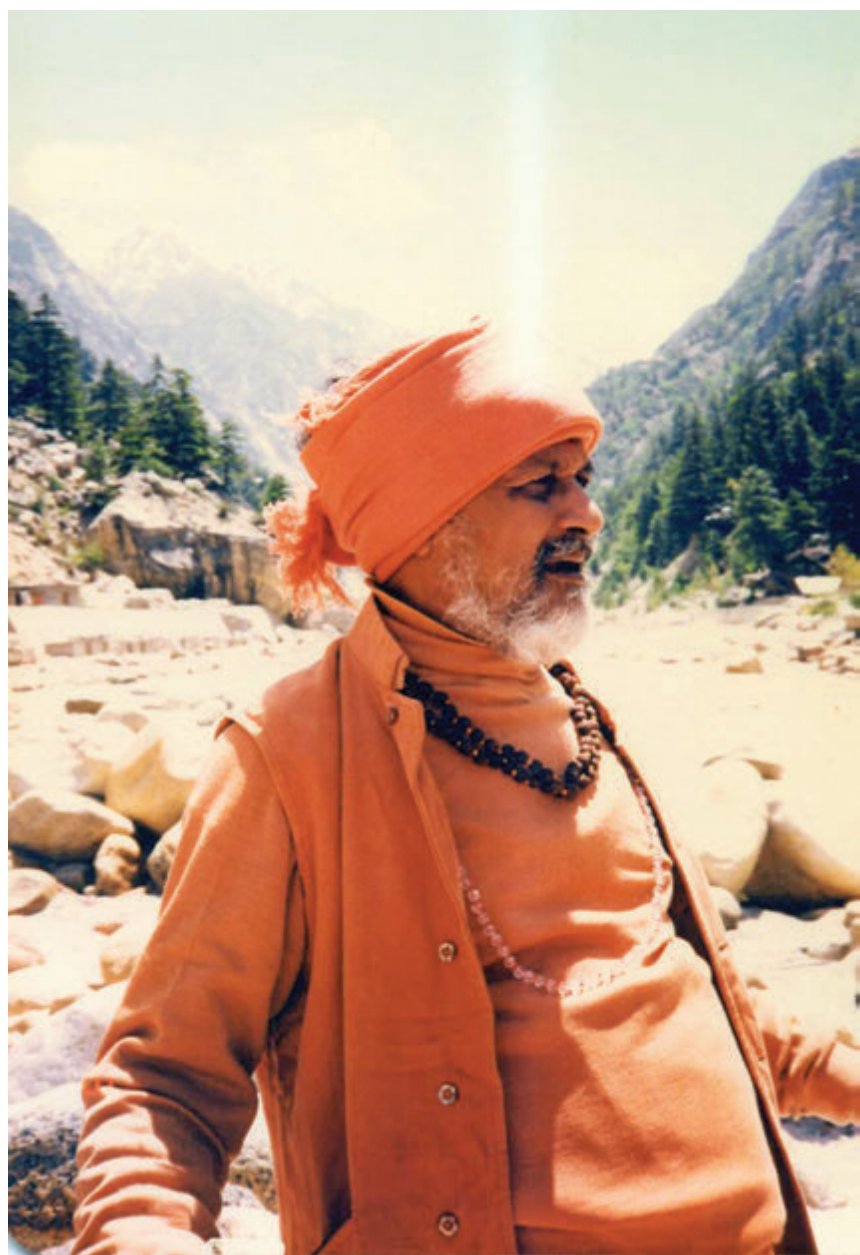
For spiritual experience, a living guru is essential. It is through the living guru that spiritual potential can be exploded.

The guru is within everyone. It is easy to say that everyone has an inner guru, but one can't feel him or hear him, one can't link oneself with him. One can't even be sure whether he is the inner guru or one's own mind. The mind can also mislead. So in order to manifest the inner guru, an outer guru, an external living guru, is needed.

Many people do not accept the need for and the value of the external guru, but a detonator, an external guru, is needed to whom one's emotions flow, who is able to create an impression in one's mind, to whom one's devotion goes. He becomes the detonator and through him this inner guru becomes visible and manifests.

















Everyone needs a guru. Without the guru, life is incomplete. In order to experience fulfilment, the heart or the spirit has to have another base, which is the base of guru and disciple. This relationship completely transcends the physical, emotional and mental planes. It is nothing like the love that one has felt for anyone else. Guru and disciple do not consider physical or emotional factors; they only consider that which is deep and transcendental.

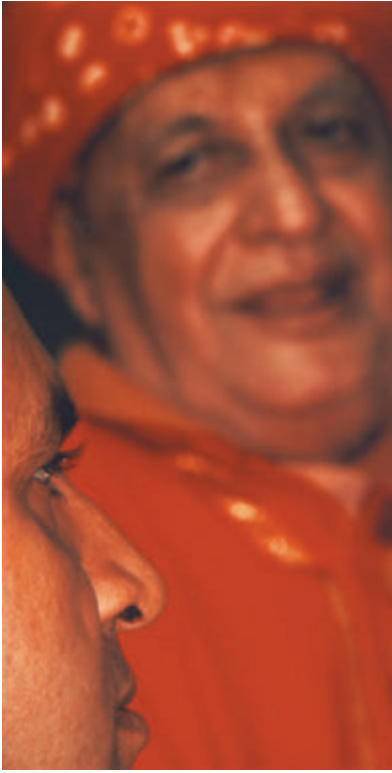
Towards jnana

The external guru has to be capable of helping the aspirant to light the inner lamp. Just as subtle microbes can only be seen through a microscope, not with the naked eye, the inner eye has to be opened. If the inner eye is opened, one can see the glory of one's inner light.

There are so many emotional difficulties in life. Even if one is emotionally and intellectually full, even financially full, still one is incomplete unless the inner awareness is handled and grasped. A person may have a beautiful body, good health, a brilliant, obedient, lovable husband or wife, eminence, fame and a lot of money in the bank, but if he has not known the glory of guru and his role in life, these things are not going to make him complete.

Every flower has honey, but if a person wants honey on his toast, he will not take it from a flower, but from a jar of honey that the bees have collected from the flower. In the same way, everyone has a guru inside, but they cannot use him, or hear him. They know he is there, but they cannot feel him. His language is not their language. The language of that guru is beyond language.

To understand the language of the inner guru, first one has to find an outer guru. The external guru speaks one's ideas and he can be understood. When one is in communication with this guru, one can awaken that inner guru. The external guru is the detonator of the internal guru. The inner guru is to be exploded with the help of the outer guru. The invisible



guru within is known as the *sadguru*. The *sadguru* is the highest force in everybody. He is the light of the divine within one. The inner guru should be approached by means of the outer guru. When one has realized the inner guru, one approaches the higher God or Divine Being. This is the approach that has to be made.

Do not be confused by idealism. Practise reality. There are only a few people in this world who don't need an external guru, because they are evolved souls. Even the divine incarnations who came down upon this earth had a guru. Even the

strongest saints and seers had gurus. Even great people who had a lot of wisdom and power had a guru. But when there is a lot of egoism, a person says he does not want a guru. Then his egoism is his guru.

To be free from ego, therefore, it is safer to have a guru. Practise devotion to him, practise faith in him, practise innocence. Become a child before him. One will then grow and be able to hear the voice of the inner guru. When the voice of the inner guru can be heard, then follow him. When the inner guru is the guide, there is no doubt – one is so sure!

Many people say that they have heard the inner guru, and ask me if they were right. I tell them that was not their inner guru but their mind. A person who has developed and awakened his inner guru has no doubt at all, because the inner guru is an authority. When he wakes up, one has knowledge, *jnana*.

The Blessed Land of Kutchch

Raindrops sprinkle blessings –
Blessings of Paramahamsaji-
Wherever Paramahamsaji went
It would rain as auspicious blessings.

It was August and September was approaching. We were looking forward to Swami Sivanandaji's birthday and Paramahamsaji's sannyasa day, and the grace of Guru to bless us.

It was 6th of September 2011. On this day the dawn never seemed to rise. Dark black clouds filled the sky, and it started raining heavily. Clouds burst pouring heavy rain, hours passed with no sign of stopping. Water rolled down the hill, the check dams and streams overflowed. The flowing water spread wide, it uprooted everything that came its way. The water was flowing towards the lake in the town.

We were standing in Mahat, the building facing the hill, we only saw water pouring heavily from the sky. The heavy downpour of water from the hill flowed directly towards this land. Before the water reached this land, just a few metres away, the gushing stream divided into two and flowed on either sides of this land.

What was there which was dividing and driving away the water? We were watching the stream of water divide and flow away. There was only stillness and thoughtlessness, and in this state hours passed. It was 6th, the Mahasamadhi day of Paramahamsaji, and his energy was protecting this land. After all, how can the element of water harm this blessed land of his, the land of Paramahamsaji's energy.

It was only in the late afternoon that the rain stopped. The water that flowed on both sides of this land had eroded the land forming a trench.

News came that roads were damaged, bridges were broken, vehicles drowned and the lake was overflowing above the danger level. Water had entered the ground floors of most houses in town.

It was unbelievable, not even a plant was affected on this land. It was Paramahamsaji's grace and energy which divided and pushed away the water, protecting this land. When this land was selected by Swamiji, out of many other plots of land, he called this plot 'gowmuki' – full of spiritual vibrations. For a layman it was only a land filled with thorny bushes. Today it is clear what Swamiji saw long before: Any sadhaka who happens to come to this land is just mesmerized by the energy of this land.

–Sannyasi Premmani, Sivananda Balakashram, Kutchch, Gujarat



First Deserve, Then Desire

From the Autobiography of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



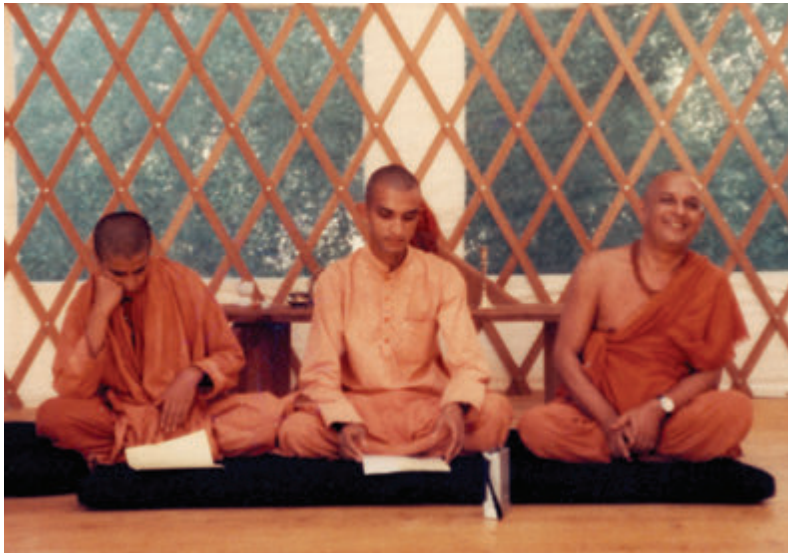
To find a guru who may sincerely look after the interests of his pupils is a difficult task in this world. It is quite true. But to find disciples who will act sincerely according to the instructions of their guru is also a very difficult task. As disciples are arrogant, disobedient and self-willed in these days, no senior man on the spiritual path wishes to accept disciples for training. They bring only troubles to the guru. They do not want to carry out the instructions of the guru. They become gurus themselves in a few days.

This problem of guru and disciples is indeed an embarrassing one. If you cannot find a first class type of guru, at least try to find one who has been treading the path for some years, who is compassionate and selfless and who will take a special interest in your welfare and progress. Realized souls are not rare. Ignorant, worldly-minded persons cannot easily recognize them. Only a few persons who are pure and have all virtues can understand realized souls. They alone will be benefited in their company.

There is no use in running hither and thither in search of realized people. Even if Lord Krishna remains with you, He cannot do anything for you, unless you are fit to receive Him. To serve God and mammon at the same time is impossible. You will have to sacrifice the one or the other. You cannot have light and darkness at the same time. If you want to enjoy spiritual bliss, you will have to renounce sensual pleasures.

Even if one of my disciples lifts up his head from the quagmire of samsara, I have justified my existence. The greatest service that I can do to humanity is training and moulding aspirants. Every student, when purified and elevated, becomes a centre of spirituality. He will draw to himself, through his magnetic aura, thousands of baby souls for spiritual transformation and regeneration.

Students who are in the world with responsibilities, need not wait for obtaining a guru. They should select their own ishta devata, a mantra suitable to their taste and do sadhana and prayers. However, it is better to receive the mantra from a guru, for it has a mysterious influence. At the proper time, a guru will appear to them.



How I Met My Guru

One morning, reading my daily paper, I came across an advertisement stating that the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, will be having a program with Swami Niranjanananda on 25th, 26th and 27th July 2014 at Swabhoomi, Salt Lake. Now this rings a bell! Is it the same school where I and my daughter had done a short yoga course with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in the same stadium some sixteen years back in 1999? I rummaged through my file of certificates, and sure enough it is the same Bihar School of Yoga. It had been a learning experience for me then; the techniques taught by the teachers had left a deep impression.

I had bought the book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* by Swami Satyananda Saraswati with illustrations. Any question on yoga, right posture, you name it and it was there. I would solve a lot of yoga queries by consulting the book which became a bible for me and all answers were authentic and correct.

A feeling of belonging

With this previous experience in mind, I decided to attend the program out of plain curiosity on 25th, 26th and 27th July 2014 at Swabhoomi, Salt Lake. Swabhoomi is a beautiful place. We were asked to assemble in the hall at 5.45 am every morning and in the evening at 6 pm. I was very keen to see Swami Niranjanananda. In the evening all the guests, participants, assembled in the hall with abated breath and there appears Swamiji in geru attire. A stately, regal, dignified personality with a majestic walk enters. He looks like a prince from the epics. My imagination takes me to Lord Vishnu.

I am simply awed, and when he starts his discourse, I realize he is an excellent orator. His English is immaculate, clear diction, and wonderful pronunciation like a foreigner. Though to be very honest some of his sayings were beyond my



comprehension, and went above my head, as they were high spiritual thoughts unknown to me. But in between he came up with jokes, anecdotes, stories, which I enjoyed thoroughly, as he undoubtedly had the gift of the gab.

The best part that I found in him were his deep eyes which seemed to look at each and every member in the hall. In between he would address an old devotee and ask him for some detail, some information or enquire about his welfare in the most casual, intimate, informal manner, unbecoming I thought for a Swamiji of such high competence, recognition and royalty.

Yes! And that is when I got a strong feeling of belonging; this was someone who was approachable, simple, yet had dynamism and magnetism in him.

Finally, at last - diksha

The next day an announcement was made that those who were interested in taking diksha from Swamiji should fill in a form and be present on Sunday the 27th in the morning. I was thrilled! The excitement I cannot put into words. At last, finally at the age of 65, I have found my 'guru'. Among Hindus it is

said, 'You don't choose your guru, you are destined, and your guru chooses you.' I really don't know how far this is true or a fact, but the very thought made me happy.

Those who were to take 'diksha' were seated on the ground and were asked to sit in sukhasana. We were sitting at a distance from each other with a white silk stole in front of us, which was later put on us. The whole 'diksha ceremony' was very solemn. Finally we were asked to close our eyes and meditate. Then Swamiji, as I came to know later, put the rudraksha japa mala over our heads and the mantra initiation booklet, with the diksha mantra written on it and also the date of initiation, beside us. The booklet had a photograph of Swamiji's guru, Paramahansa Satyananda, and his guru Swami Sivananda Saraswati, and our mantra sadhana.

I have had experience of a few organizations where we have been asked to donate or contribute something for the organization, but here to my utter surprise we were given gifts in the form of 'prasadam' every day in the evening. This was a new revelation; here was an organization totally in contrast with any organization known to me. This is the most memorable experience of my life - having a guru.

PS: Eight months after this encounter, I have come to Ganga Darshan. I am as awed and inspired as I was then in Kolkata.

—Jignasu Kalikripa, Kolkata



Influence of Mantras

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Mantras are a combination of varna and akshara. *Varna* means colour, *a* means no and *kshara* means destruction. *Akshara* means imperishable, and every akshara has a varna. Varna does not mean alphabet.

These akshara, these letters, have colour, frequency and a particular element as the presiding deity. They have a form and this is important. You may not understand this but I know, because I give mantra to illiterate devotees. If I tell you to recite *Om Namah Shivaya* you cannot go further, because you have certain ideas about *Om Namah Shivaya*. You have a base, whether it is Hindi, English, Gujarati or Urdu. You can only imagine on the basis of that. You cannot imagine *Om Namah Shivaya* as a pure sound, because there is an obstacle which you have created for yourself.

An illiterate person has no conditions. He does not know the form of *Om*. I know, but he does not. He imagines the sound,

as every sound has form. Even musicians do not know it. You cannot throw off the form you have given to a particular sound.

Every sound has a form, it has a frequency, it has colour and length. When you practise the letters of the mantra you are practising the combination of a few - *Aim, Hreem, Kreem* for instance. When you bring the combination together, the effect is on the basis of the content of those letters.

Aum has three sounds, *Namah Shivaya* has five sounds, *Rama* two. Some mantras have five, some seven, eight or nine. They are combined letters and the effect is based on the combination.

Ocean of consciousness

When you are practising the mantra, the effect is like a quiet pond, and you take a pebble and throw it in. The ripples go out in a circular pattern. If you take four pebbles and throw, what happens? Or if you take a rock instead of a pebble it will create big waves.

In the same way the mind is like an ocean. It is an ocean of consciousness. If you throw a sound like *Om* in that consciousness, it immediately creates vibrations. These waves or vibrations are known as sound waves. Sometimes the effect is temporary, but if you go on reflecting on it again and again then you can maintain the continuity of the waves. Then these waves go deeper and influence other areas of the mind, because the mind is in layers which are called conscious, subconscious, unconscious, and in yoga *sthula, sukshma* and *karana*, the gross, subtle or astral mind, and causal mind. The different depths of your consciousness are affected.

If the mantra is chanted in the night it goes very deep. It influences the subconscious and unconscious dimensions. If the mantra is practised in the morning it affects the external areas of the mind, the conscious mind.

This is how we talk about the effect of the mind on the body, senses and one's own personality.

– 3 November 1981, Mumbai, India

Mantra Diksha

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Mantra diksha is given to you to develop a connection with your higher nature. God has given you twenty-four hours during the day, in which you should spend twenty-three hours for the family, for society, for your profession, ambitions and desires. The remaining one hour should be devoted to yoga, to guru, and the discovery of divinity within you. If you say that there is no time, then you should not seek peace and happiness in life.

How can you say there is no time? You are willing to sleep ten hours but you are not willing to give half an hour to your yoga practice? Sleep for nine hours! It will not kill you.

The one hour that you devote to your sadhana, your worship, for Guru and God should be spent doing yoga and mantra japa. This is the sadhana for everyone. The practice of yoga and mantra chanting should be regular and disciplined, punctual and systematic.

Without it interfering in the daily routine, you should devote that one hour of sleep for your personal development, your personal upliftment, and the connection with your inner nature.

– 7 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

It Will Break or Make One's Life

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Jignasu and karma sannyasa diksha are the diksha of lifestyle. Many times people think that by wearing a particular dress they become different and better than others. Greatness, however, does not come through changing one's clothes. Greatness comes through one's effort and achievements in life. Therefore, if the donkey wears the skin of a tiger it does not mean that the donkey has become a tiger. One day the donkey will definitely bray for it will never be able to roar.

By doing two or four asanas one does not become spiritual. One does not become spiritual by going to two or four satsangs, by wearing geru and getting the head shaved. Until one's sadhana gives a feeling of completeness and wholeness, one does not become spiritual.

When a person thinks that by wearing geru he has become a great soul, then there is no greater hypocrite than him. He does not know or see himself, instead he creates a particular form for the exploitation of the world. People have made spirituality the medium of their selfishness.

It is important to know that the achievement of sadhana either makes one's life or breaks one's life. It will break one's life if the sadhana is associated with selfishness. It will make one's life when sadhana is done for the cultivation of creativity and other faculties. The decision lies with the sadhaka. This rule applies to everyone, whether sannyasin or householder sadhaka, whether one practises meditation or yogasana.

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

Experiencing the Diploma Course



In these ten months at the ashram living the gurukul life, I had a great experience. This stay gave a new direction to my life. Apart from classes, ashram life was the main area to learn from. In class we learnt asana and meditation, but the most important thing we learnt in the rest of the time during seva: how to make our life happy, balanced and peaceful by applying the yogic style in daily life. This course was a golden time in my life.

– *Chaitanyananda, Patna*

What I particularly liked about BSY is that it is the only place in the whole of India where yoga does not mean hatha yoga, nor does yoga mean stuffing the brain with a lot of philosophies and theories which remain undigested and create havoc in one's mind. Instead of talking, lecturing, preaching or discussing yoga, we practise yoga. For us yoga is a lifestyle, which we live. Ganga Darshan is the only place where we can proudly say that we live yoga or at least we try to live yoga. This year in the ashram has been the best time until now in my life.

– *Prabhakar, Jharkhand*

An important lesson for me was the 'Niranjan Challenge' – I learnt from Swamiji how to change my life, change the negative to positive or rajas to sattwa. All it takes is to smile for some time in my daily life, increase this time to one full day and share this happiness among all people in my daily work.



The evening sadhana was a special moment for me. I felt happiness, growth and the desire to become more aware. The vibration of the kirtan and chanting was contained within me for the whole night and next day. Due to the vibration of the kirtan and chanting, there was no room for any more feeling.

– Gyanananda, Kurdistan

Being a student of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Nepal, I was able to easily adapt to the concept of integral yoga taught at Ganga Darshan.

The experience of teaching practice was vital in helping me build confidence. It helped me believe that I can now pass on the knowledge gained in the diploma course to other aspirants in the proper manner.

During the course I came to understand many secrets of yoga which our ancestors wished to pass on to future generations. I have learnt how to be contented and at peace with myself.

– Prem, Nepal

I used to love dancing as well as choreographing when I was younger but as I grew older I somehow lost touch with it. But by Guru's grace I had the opportunity to choreograph dances for the Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal and Yuva Yoga Mitra Mandal students, which got me in tune with that part of me.



Swamiji gave us the opportunity to have teacher training in the last month of our course. This has completely turned the table round and is giving me deeper insight into practising asana, pranayama, meditation and into teaching any practice.

I must say this whole experience was like adding a cherry on the cream.

– *Abbha, Mumbai*

The utmost thing I enjoyed here was karma yoga. It revealed many things to me. I would like to share my experience as a Toilet Cleaner. Initially I enjoyed cleaning toilets, but slowly there was some sort of mental conditioning that this job was ugly. I decided to break this condition. Since I was the coordinator in the kitchen, I decided to do this toilet cleaning job for one month continuously. It so happened that I started to enjoy it within a few days. Toilet cleaning was like worship to me. It gave me the understanding that there is nothing such as ugly and beautiful. It is all mental conditioning.

– *Maruthi, Karnataka*

On our first day, we had a class on THE 'Philosophy of Yoga'. When it stopped I was disappointed, but after some time, I came to know by myself that there is no worth IN theoretical knowledge compared to practical knowledge through karma yoga or seva. Even karma yoga is a medium through which we can live a healthy life full of contentment. Practical karma yoga is the real yoga for me.

I am very lucky to enjoy every moment of ashram life here in Munger. I will definitely adopt yoga as my lifestyle, so that I can live a prosperous and happy life.

– *Raj Kumar, Himachal Pradesh*

These ten months are like the mountain above the surface; with intent and practice it will reveal the enormous possibility that is under the surface. I am grateful for being provided with such a foundation and I will be grateful when I experience what I will experience or what I am supposed to experience. With all the teachings I feel I am certain to enjoy the uncertainty of life.



All that I need to do now is surround my life with people, things, situations and behaviour that is helpful for this lifestyle and do away with the stimuli that are distracting.

– Rakesh, Deoghar

The purpose of coming to the ashram was to become disciplined, equip myself with tools which could help me manage my life and gain a sense of balance.

The bhakti yoga helped me a great deal to open myself, release my pent up emotions and gain strength through the power of mantra. When the chanters read the whole Sundarkand Path I used to wonder whether I would ever be able to chant like that. After a few weeks I was told to be one of the chanters, and that became another opportunity which made me very confident.

– Rashi, Bhopal

Living in the ashram environment, I realized that yogic studies cannot take place in another environment. The ashram discipline and lifestyle, the satsang, yoga classes, karma yoga, chanting mantras and kirtan gradually gave me





an experience of witnessing for the first time in my life what awareness is.

It was a precious and unique opportunity for a yoga practitioner to give classes in the ashram environment and to experience how it might be to

become gradually a channel of transmission of Guru's energy to one's students.

I feel blessed, happy and lucky for having attended this course. I don't know if I have become spiritual, but I feel I am a slightly better person than I was before.

– *Tushtibhav, Greece*

I feel the whole ashram is like a divine temple of yoga and Swamiji is our God or Aradhya who is guiding us through our experiences. Everything is so blissful, nice and full of joy that I could live forever in the ashram. There is a saying that 'every good thing comes to an end', however I feel that this wide range of experiences shall be our guiding force in our sweet memories. I feel that these sweet memories and experiences of the course will not only inspire me in my future life, but I shall be able to inspire others also to lead a yogic life for their overall development.

– *Krishnaprem, Mumbai*



First Guru

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



It is said that the mother is the first guru. You receive your samskaras, your mind and the traits of the mind from your mother. From your father, you only receive the body, from the mother you receive the mind and emotions. You are expressing this all the time in your life. Therefore, the mother is considered to be the first guru for she teaches you the lessons of *samvedhan sheelta*, sensitivity towards every other person.

I sometimes wonder if mothers of today qualify to be the first guru or not. The mothers of today were children of yesterday who lived without samskaras. It is not practical or possible to say that every person is endowed with the right samskara. There is possibility of growth on any land, however you have to take care of what you plant. You cannot throw the seed on the ground and say, "This will grow now." You have

to take care of what you are planting and you have to nurture it. This has to be the effort of every father and every mother.

It is important that you look after your behaviour first. If your behaviour is right and proper, then your children will imbibe it from you and that is your responsibility. When parents misbehave in front of their children, children lose the trust in their parents. In this situation, how can the mother or father be the guru of a child? What does it mean when you say 'mother is the guru', 'father is the guru', or 'guru is the guru'? Guru is the person who has the ability to show the right path.

It is the duty of the mother to show the right path for the child to grow. It is the duty of the father to show the right path for the child to develop, and it is the duty of the sannyasi guru to show people the right path so that they can evolve and progress.

Showing the right path can only happen if you are a better person yourself. Parents want their child to be like Krishna or Rama, yet first of all, to have such a child they have to become like Dasharatha.

– 20 September 2014, Tyagaraj Sports Stadium, Delhi, India



The Real Spirituality of Life

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Spirituality and expression in life are not different from each other. The person who considers them to be different is going against spirituality and against society. Spirituality, personal behaviour and conduct are complementary to each other. In the autobiographies of saints and sages it is written that even after attaining enlightenment, they continued to do their work in the form of seva in the world. Even as enlightened people they did not show magic, rather they kept working hard to serve humankind and to spread happiness.

Understanding righteousness

Looking at the lives of saints one understands that spirituality has a strong relation with one's expression in life. Spirituality expresses the goodness and creativity of life. It does not make a person isolate himself from the world. A system which makes a person isolate himself from the world can never be of benefit to society.

Sannyasa is the tradition of detachment, yet in sannyasa it is also said that a sannyasin ignites the light within him. Then he stands at the crossroads so that people coming from all sides can receive some light. Sadhus have not been told to go to the Himalayan caves and do sadhana. Those who do not understand righteousness, think that achievement is in renunciation and going to the Himalayas. However, those who understand righteousness awaken their spiritual vritti by living in the world.

Towards humanity

This is the law of God and *prakriti*, nature, and it is the truth. It is like light which ignites and burning itself gives illumination to others. This is the sadhana of yoga: to burn

oneself so that the light which is within shines brightly and gives light to others searching for their path in the dark. The journey of yoga starts with the physical body and then connects one human being to another human being. When this happens divinity becomes visible and there is no need to search for the divine.

Sri Swami Satyananda said that Sita and Lakshmi are sweeping the road. They cook in the kitchen. Nobody worships them, yet everyone is ready to worship stones in the temple. No one cares for the living gods and goddesses who are serving society.

Humanity in people will only awaken when people are able to see the pure divine element in other beings. As long as people are unable to see the divine element in others, they can never be human beings. They can stay alive, yet never as human beings. They are merely living beings, creatures of this world. The fate of human beings will be to live and die like insects and flies without progress or evolution of humanity.

Message of the saints

According to Indian thought and philosophy, the journey starts with the sankalpa of healing and wellbeing, continues with the sankalpa of peace, and ends with the effort to see the existence of divinity in all living beings. Only then will humanity awaken, otherwise not.

After having said everything, studied the holy texts, and written the Vedas and shastras the saints of India said: We have written what we had to write; we have said what we had to say; we have taught what we had to teach. Now this is your responsibility: *atma deepo bhava* – In your life, become a light and shine.

This will lead to the creation of culture, *sanskriti*, and samskara in your life. The meaning of *sanskriti* is '*samyak kriten iti sanskriti*'. When all the expressions of human life start happening in an integrated and harmonious way, it

is called *sanskriti*. *Sanskriti* is neither dance, music nor any other art. It is an expression of life. Music, art and science are expressions of life. The expression which helps to further the progress of life and which brings *samyakta*, perfect balance, equanimity, integrity and harmony in life, is called *sanskriti*.

Sri Swami Satyananda declared fifty years ago that yoga is the *sanskriti*, 'the culture of tomorrow'. Today after fifty years it can be said that yoga can become the culture of everyone's life.

The sankalpas

The work of sadhus and sages is not limited to teaching and preaching dharma and philosophy. They should also provide support for the upliftment of people. There are many institutions and ashrams of sages in India. Many sages and sadhus open a hospital and provide *seva*, or they open a school and work in the field of education. The work which Sri Swami Satyananda inspired is connected to *seva*. Nobody expects any remuneration, neither *sannyasins* nor supporters. All are united with the feeling to provide *seva*.

Sri Swami Satyananda said, "I do not want *moksha*, *nirvana*, *bhagawat darshan* or *samadhi*. In my life I have only one desire, one wish, one longing; that God make me a *sannyasin* and send me on this earth again. May I be born again and again. May the purpose of my birth always be to wipe the tears of pain from the eyes of people. The purpose of my life is only this." Then he added, "My *sannyasins* should also have only this purpose."

This was his command: A *sannyasin* does not work for his *moksha* but to awaken the divine element in society. The attainment of divinity is not possible through religion, yet it can be achieved through experience and action. Sri Swamiji expressed this vision through the three *sankalpas* of *Yogapeeth* and *Sannyasa* or *Samskara Peeth* in *Munger*, and *Rikhiapeeth* in *Rikhia*.



Be thou a yogi

If you give this vision of Sri Swamiji a small place in your life, you can surely hope for a bright future for this world. Otherwise the fire of disturbance, disorder and scarcity which is burning in society will burn your air-conditioned houses. You sit inside your air-conditioned house and think that it is protected from the fire raging outside. The fire which is spreading in society will not spare your air-conditioned house.

Some day the fire will engulf it and burn your house to ashes. What effort do you make to pacify the fire? You should not be hiding inside your air-conditioned house, but make an effort to play the role of a fireman.

The person who controls and pacifies the fire which is raging in society by playing the role of a fireman becomes a yogi. The one who plays the role of a sweeper and clears the mess and dirt of society becomes a yogi. Therefore, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna said to Arjuna again and again: *Tasmāt yogi bhavah Arjuna* –“Therefore, O Arjuna, be thou a yogi.”

I am saying this not with the feeling that you become liberated from this world, rather with the feeling that you make your world beautiful. This is the real spirituality of your life. Spirituality is the effort which makes your world, your society, your family beautiful. To realize *satyam*, truth, and *shivam*, consciousness, you must make an effort. This effort is the real spirituality of life.

– 27 July 2014, Swabhoomi Rangamanch, Kolkata, India



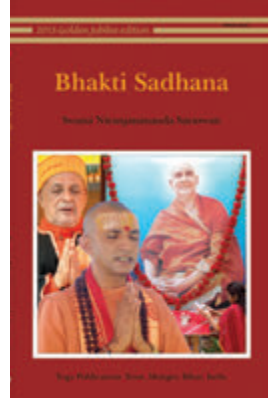
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