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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Song of a Sannyasin

Chidananda roopa, Shivoham Shivoham
I am sannyasin bold, King of kings,
Emperor of emperors, Shah of shahs,
Lord of lords, Maharaja of maharajas.
Brahman is one, without a name,
Without a form or colour.
He is eternal, He is free,
He is pure and perfect.
All life is one, the world is my home,
I include all
All is Brahman, all is Atma,
All is my own self.
Chidananda roopa, Shivoham Shivoham
I am bodiless, I am sexless,
I am all-pervading Soul.
I am birthless, I am deathless,
I am immortal Atman.
I am above caste, creed, cult, race
And all distinctions.
I am above love, hate, pleasure pain,
All good and bad.
The Self is all in all, none else exists,
I am That I am, I am That I am,
I am That I am, I am That I am.
Chidananda roopa, Shivoham Shivoham.

—Swami Sivananda

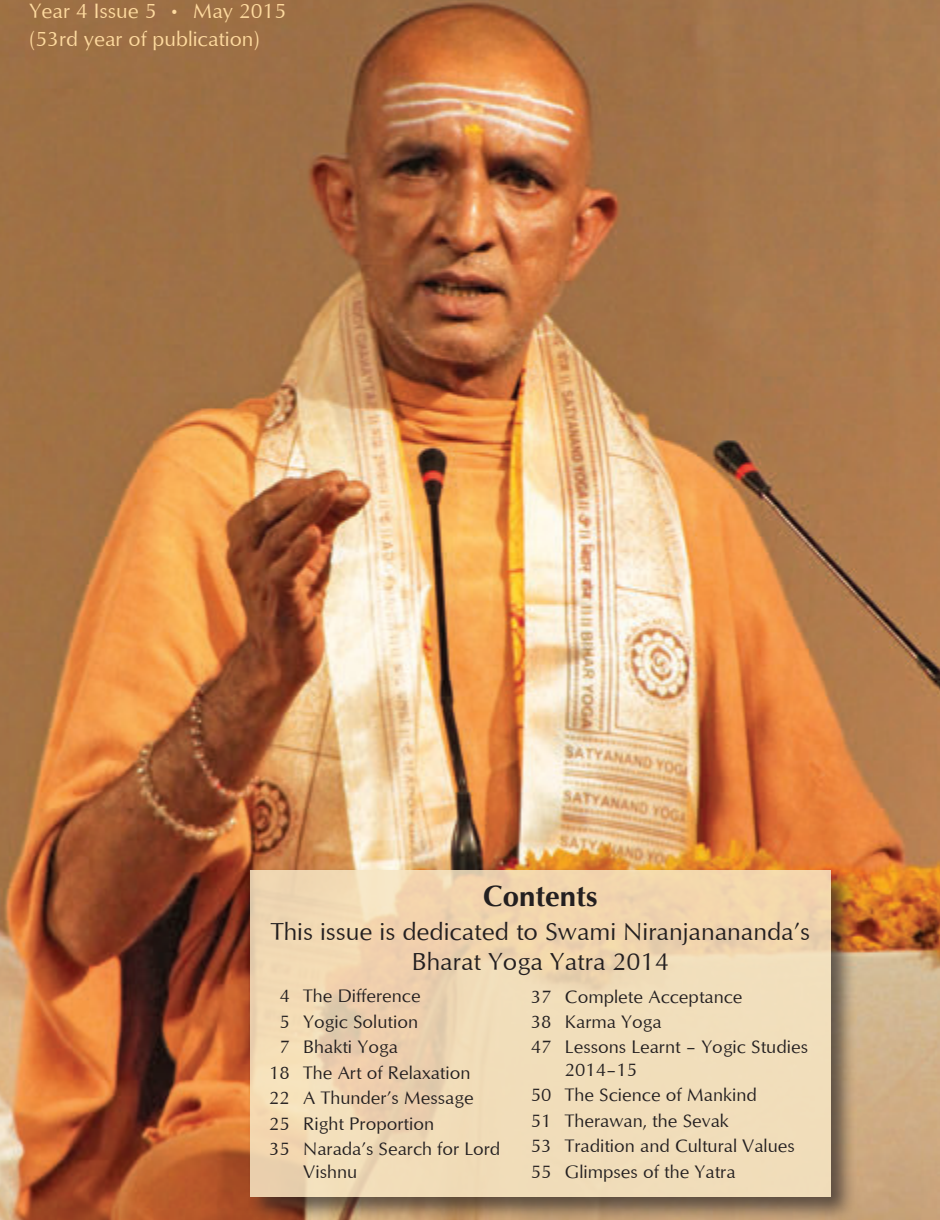
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

The Difference

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There is a world of difference between the yoga of the Bihar School of Yoga and the yoga taught by others. I do not accept the commonly taught yoga where only asana, pranayama and hatha yoga are given.

If a doctor practises only orthopaedics, how can he call it a complete medical science? Similarly, for some people hatha yoga is the complete yoga. However, they do not even practise hatha yoga completely, for there so many aspects of hatha yoga that are not implemented. Only asana and pranayama are known. In hatha yoga, along with asana and pranayama there are other processes of purification, the shatkarmas.

The program of the Bihar School of Yoga includes body, mind, emotions and spirit. It does not focus only on physical exercises. Today all other organizations in India are based on asana and pranayama. This is what is being given to society. There is no focus on mental development and spiritual upliftment. However, this has been the focus of the Bihar School of Yoga, and this is the difference.

– 3 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

Yogic Solution

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

When I was young I didn't know anything about yoga. During my student life I was always healthy. I have never had any physical, mental or emotional problems. After completing my formal education I went to Swami Sivananda, my guru, in Rishikesh. I didn't go to him in order to learn yoga. All I wanted was a more complete life. I had a philosophy and a religion of my own. I had definite views about life and I didn't want to be in the same category as my parents. I wanted to be different from them. I asked my father, "Are you happy with your way of life?" He said, "No." So I asked, "Then why do you want me to live like that? Let me make a different life for myself."



Problem and solution

I went to my guru to live a monastic life, to evolve my personality and my whole being. I lived with him for twelve years and after that I lived a homeless life as a *parivrajaka*, a wandering mendicant, for nine years. During my period of wandering, I went all over India and I came to Nepal several times, not as a preacher, but as a beggar. I also went to Afghanistan, Burma and Ceylon. I travelled by foot, bullock cart, elephant, train and plane. While I was wandering, I realized how much man was suffering. Wherever I went, people came to me with their problems and I had no answer for them.

In 1956, I came to Munger and decided to find a solution for people. I had a solution for myself and I didn't need hatha yoga,

raja yoga or karma yoga. However, humanity was suffering and I felt that yogic techniques could definitely provide a solution for them. What about medical science, psychiatry and prosperity? People have those methods and still they are suffering which means that they are not the solution. The answer had to be found somewhere else.

I stayed in Munger on and off from 1956 to 1963. In 1963 I found the answer: yoga. Munger is a backward place and the property which was given to me there for founding an ashram was small, but I stayed because Munger is the place where I found a solution for the suffering of humanity.

Self-discovery

I am not opposed to any other system of physical exercise. I have studied almost all of them, including judo and karate, but I know that they are limited. The contribution of yoga to humanity is far greater as a messenger of peace. We need yoga practices such as yoga nidra, prana vidya, neti and dhauti. Guru Gorakhnath, one of the most important exponents of hatha yoga, has explained in his book *Goraksha Samhita* what hatha yoga is. When you have mastered hatha yoga, you can go on to the practice of meditation.

Meditation is not necessarily concentration on God, but it is realization of the inner dimension of your personality. You have much more within than you know. Man is infinite. His mind is powerful and capable, but he has not realized this yet. The individual awareness is potentially cosmic. Therefore, it is important that everybody should devote ten minutes each day to its discovery.

With meditation, *dhyana yoga*, you start a new chapter in your life. Once you are involved in dhyana yoga, doing your practices in the correct way, your experiences and personality will become steady and lasting. Your attitude towards yourself and your life will be fantastic.

– 23 February 1977, Lion's Club, Kathmandu, Nepal

Bhakti Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Bhakti is a state of mind. One definition of *bhakti* is 'that which unites you with the divine', and the second definition is 'that which makes your emotions tender, chaste and pure'. Religion adopted bhakti in the form of worship to the divine, and yoga adopted bhakti in the form of emotional purification.

The crystal stone

Sri Swami Satyananda used to ask, "What is the colour of a crystal stone?" It does not have a colour. It is transparent and clear. However, if one keeps that crystal stone on a colourful cloth, the colour of the cloth can be seen in the crystal. If one keeps that crystal on a red cloth, one will see red in it. If one keeps the crystal on a black cloth, one will see black in the crystal. Whichever colour one keeps behind the crystal will be visible in the crystal. It does not mean the colour of the stone is that. The crystal stone always remains clear and transparent, yet, it reflects within itself the colour and form of whatever it comes in contact with.



The same condition arises in your lives with your emotion. It is also transparent like a crystal stone. It is clear. When your emotion comes in contact with sensorial objects, the colour of the sensorial object is visible within the emotion. If you see a bundle of currency notes on the road while walking, then greed will develop in your mind. The thought arising in the mind that 'a bundle of currency notes is there' affects your emotions. Through emotion, greed manifests and instigates you to pick up the bundle of notes and take it with you.

Similarly, when you see your child then affection arises in your emotion. When you see your enemy, hostility arises in your emotion. When you see someone more successful than you, jealousy manifests in your emotion. Thoughts are produced and they strengthen the emotions, which then influence the thoughts even more.

Sri Swamiji used to say that when the emotion of the heart flows towards the world and its sensorial objects, and connects with them, at that time greed, hatred, dislike, and so on, are manifested in the emotions. When the same emotion is disconnected from the world and is directed towards the inner soul, its form is that of bhakti. As long as the emotion is flowing towards the external world, its form is that of worldliness, yet when the emotion starts to flow towards the inner soul, when its diversion takes place its form is that of bhakti. Therefore, the meaning of bhakti is to redirect the emotions from the material world and direct them towards the inner soul. That is bhakti.

Sri Krishna's teaching

The two definitions of bhakti have been categorized into religious worship and inner purification. According to religion, bhakti is to unite oneself with God. Yoga says bhakti is a state of inner purification. There is a difference between the two. Despite the difference, both are the same.

When Sri Krishna defines and explains bhakti in the *Bhagavad Gita*, what does he say in chapter twelve? In the twelfth chapter there are twenty verses. From the thirteenth

until the twentieth verse Sri Krishna defines and explains bhakti. He says that the inner soul is free from the sensorial objects of the world and also from the influence of the material world, and within there is tranquillity and equanimity.

It is beautiful and it has been discussed in the eight verses. The first trait of a bhakta that Sri Krishna talks about is: 'not the one who sings God's name, not the one who does chanting, not the one who does kirtan, not the one who only contemplates about Me'. That is one stream of thought in the commentary of Sri Krishna. When Krishna comments on bhakti and bhakta, he clearly says: "*Adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam* - 'The one who sees divinity in all; the one who sees only one soul in everyone'. Are you able to see the divine in all beings? The answer is: no. *Maitrah karuna eva cha* - 'The one who is a friend, who is friendly and compassionate to all'. The one who is free from attachment, egoism and the idea of 'I, me and mine'; the one who is free from selfishness; the one who does not have hypocrisy and arrogance; the one who is always balanced in pleasure and pain, who does not feel happy or sad at the time of pleasure and pain, but is always balanced in both states; and finally, the one in whose life mercy is expressed in behaviour and character - such a being, such a devotee, is dear to Me."

In this manner in these eight verses, Sri Krishna explains how bhakti should be. Worshipping God is a form of bhakti in the religious tradition. The state of inner purification is also true, for only through it one can direct the emotions towards the soul and the divine that is within.

When you read such a description of bhakti in the *Bhagavad Gita*, listening to Sri Krishna's voice, you get the idea that bhakti is not singing and praising the name of God. Rather it is the process of *atmashuddhi*, inner purification, and of balancing emotions. This is the significance of bhakti in yoga.

Atmabhav

There are various kinds of sadhana for bhakti yoga. The best sadhana in bhakti yoga is atmabhava. *Atmabhava* means the

divinity that is within me is the one I see in others. It is a feeling of oneness. For example, your son is travelling with some of his friends. He is driving a car and an accident takes place. Your son is admitted to hospital with his other friends. You get a phone call from the hospital to tell you that your son and his friends had an accident and are hospitalized. You run to the hospital thinking only about your son. It could be that your son just bruised himself and his friend fractured a leg. You are worried about the bruise on your child's body. You are not worried about the one who has fractured his leg, for you see yourself in your child. You see your inner self in your child.

There is an emotional connection that is formed with your child. For the other person who is more seriously wounded than your son, you do not experience any pain. A little bit of sympathy is there and you think, 'Poor thing', yet you are not sad. The extent of pain or sadness you feel for your son you will never feel for the other person, for you are unable to see yourself in the other person. You are able to see yourself only in your near and dear ones.

You have a feeling of mine-ness and attachment towards them. 'This is mine; he is mine; she is mine.' As far as the relation of 'mine' is concerned, you feel atmabhava. When the relation of mine-ness is only limited to your family, the mine-ness takes the form of selfishness. When this mine-ness spreads from the family and unites with others, the selfishness of mine-ness takes the form of selflessness.

Sri Swami Satyananda said that the final goal of life is the attainment of atmabhava. It is the culmination of yoga. Samadhi is not the culmination of yoga. Liberation is not the goal of yoga. The objective of yoga is atmabhava, for through the attainment of atmabhava one is able to connect with one's society, world, family and deity. The deity is seen in every human being.

People say God is within every being, yet have they ever respected the God residing in others? They go and bow in front

of a stone, yet have they ever paid respect to the living God that is sitting in front of them? If not, then they should not say that God is within all beings. This is the fault of their principle and philosophy. It is their fault to limit this philosophy only to themselves.

You may spend ten thousand rupees to buy a pair of shoes for yourself while you hesitate to give ten rupees to feed a poor person, saying that he is suffering his own destiny. Is this the humanity within you? Is this the bhakti within you? You want all the happiness to gratify your selfishness, yet you do not make an effort even for a few moments to eradicate the suffering of others? When a man is hungry, just think that the God residing within him is also hungry. When a man is sad, just think that the God within him is also sad. If a man is in pain, just think that the God within him is also in pain. If you have bhakti within you, then you offer your love to the divinity within the other being, that has given life to him. You also cater to the evolution of that being. This is the real form of bhakti yoga, atmabhava.

The life of saints

Swami Sivananda used to say that even if you attain *moksha*, liberation, and samadhi through yoga and reach the kingdom of God, God will tell you that you cannot enter. You might say, "God, I have done a lot of sadhana; I have worked really hard to receive your grace." God will say, "You have certainly worked hard, but that is for your own selfishness. You want to be free, you want to attain moksha, you want your own welfare; that is your selfishness. If you are my true bhakta and servant, go back and serve others, and make an effort to remove their pain." He will send you away when selfishness exists even at the time of moksha. He will not let you enter the kingdom of heaven.

This can be seen in the lives of saints who say: I don't want kingdom, wealth, name or fame; I just have one wish - that I continue to serve God in this world.

Sri Swami Satyananda used to say, “I took sannyasa not for my liberation and welfare. I took sannyasa with a sankalpa to eradicate sorrow and suffering from the life of people. I want to be born again and again so that I can wipe the tears of sorrow from the eyes of people. When every person in this world becomes happy, I will believe that I have been able to fulfil the purpose of my life in the right manner. It will be the accomplishment of my life. Moksha is not the achievement of my life.”

This is the thought of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda. This is bhakti, for through this bhakti the inner soul purifies and becomes free from selfishness. When the emotions purify and become free from selfishness, a beautiful balance forms between the emotions and the intellect, and the result is seen in one’s behaviour and actions.

Sadhana of bhakti yoga

There are two types of sadhana in bhakti yoga. One is *antaranga*, internal, and the other is *bahiranga*, external. The sadhana of bhakti yoga starts with antaranga sadhana. The base of antaranga sadhana is mantra, japa, kirtan. The principle of antaranga sadhana is always holding on to the positive thoughts and keeping the negative thoughts away.

At the time of mantra chanting the restlessness of the mind is calmed at the psychological level, and focused on the chosen deity. When the mantra is chanted at a religious level the connection is made with the deity. Japa is the process of redirecting emotions internally. As long as a mantra is chanted, such as *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, the mind is connected to that deity. A bridge is built between the bhakta and the chosen deity. By climbing that bridge one is able to reach the beloved God. This is the result of mantra, japa, ritual, kirtan. Antaranga sadhana in religious bhakti is considered coming closer to God.

In the bahiranga practice, the first step of bhakti yoga is to serve. The second step is to love, and the third is to give.

Through these three one attains internal purification. Swami Sivananda used to say: serve, love, give and purify. Then, when one is purified one becomes good; when one becomes good, the performance is good and one does good.

Swami Sivananda's bhakti yoga

Our great guru Swami Sivananda says that the first step in bhakti is to serve in the external world. When you serve others, it is not out of compassion for anybody. Rather by seeing the divinity in the other being you are serving the divine within them. You are working to make the divine, who is residing within that being, happy. Service or *seva* is incomplete without love. If you serve without love, it is not service, instead only an action or *karma*. Service is when love unites with action.

At home the mother serves the child and family members at the time of sickness, difficulties and distress. The mother is unable to sleep when the child is sick. She sits next to the child and throughout the night soothes and pacifies him. It is service and has love within it. Without love it would not be possible for her to sit next to the child the whole night to soothe him. Therefore, service and love go together. Wherever there is love, there is sacrifice, and that sacrifice means to give. Through service, love and giving the soul purifies. This is the external expression of bhakti. When your heart purifies, there is no kind of malignity within, and you do not see any negative traits in others. Rather you consider everyone as part of yourself and of your family. That is the time when the birth of goodness and positive traits takes place in a person's life. In life the negative traits develop by themselves, yet not the positive ones.



The garden of one's labour

For example, a farmer buys an acre of land, and at that time it is barren. The farmer with hard work, energy, labour, service and love ploughs the land and plants the seeds. The seeds develop with his effort and the labour that he put into working on the land. The land that was barren earlier is now beautifully cultivated due to his labour and continuous effort. Through his hard work he has transformed the barren land into a beautiful garden. Lovely flowers and fruits grow in that garden. The garden becomes famous throughout the country. Many people and travellers come to see the beauty of the garden, and feel blissful.

One day a pandit comes to see the garden, and says, "This is such a wonderful creation of God. He has made such a beautiful garden!" So the gardener says, "Panditji, forgive me, this garden is not created by God. As long as this land was under God, nothing grew here. As long as God was the owner of this place nothing blossomed here. The day I became the owner of this place, this land was transformed into a beautiful garden through my labour and effort. This is my hard work and effort." This is what yogis and students also say.

Right from birth you have expressed only your negativities, passions, anger, jealousy, pride, greed, dislikes and hatred. When you bring positivity into your life, when you sow the seeds of positive qualities and they manifest in your life, the negativities automatically perish.

Need for hard work

People say that this happens by the grace of God. The God residing within the gardener was the one to inspire him to do the work that he did not do himself. The God within showed that a gardener is capable of turning barren land into a beautiful garden. God has given everyone this body, mind and emotions, yet everyone has the responsibility to take care of them. One should not say that God does everything or the government does everything. The government provides electricity and

water to your home, however, is the government also going to cook the food without anyone making any effort, sitting at home quietly and idly?

Everyone's responsibility and duty has been given. One has to follow and take care of one's duty. If a man lies down under a tree with his mouth open, thinking that the fruit from the tree will directly fall in his mouth, he will remain there like that for the rest of his time. The fruit from the tree will not fall in his mouth, but beside him. He will have to make an effort to move his hands to take the fruit and bring it closer to the mouth.

Similarly, without effort and labour the life of an individual is incomplete. Only hard work, effort and sadhana help to progress in life. Hard work is what makes a person's life complete and peaceful.

Antaranga sadhana

Bhakti yoga is channelling emotions. One must do antaranga sadhana. The three mantras are to be done early in the morning after one wakes up. Chanting the Mahamrityunjaya mantra, Gayatri mantra and the 32 Names of Durga is the antaranga form of bhakti. It is to purify the mind, to make it peaceful, and to unite it with a sense of control.

Bhajan and kirtan is also a sadhana for bhakti yoga. During the time of singing and chanting one removes the mind from the sense objects of the outer world and merges it with a blissful experience. One feels peace and happiness in that experience. The purpose of antaranga sadhana in bhakti yoga is to awaken the heart, so that one may become aware, experience and feel the reflection of God within oneself as well as within all beings. When this feeling comes, it is known as atmabhava.

Rikhia

Sri Swami Satyananda said that atmabhava is the ultimate aim of life. He has given an example for this. After completing the work of yoga, he renounced all the achievements of the

ashram and left as a wandering ascetic. As an ordinary and unknown saint he travelled to the great pilgrimage places. During that time he did not travel by plane or car. He came by bus for Pashupatinath's darshan and went back by bus just like an ordinary person.

He used to say that whatever work he had done, he accomplished according to the command of his guru, according to the command of God, "Now that the work has been done, I don't have any connection with that position, institution and mission. I was a sadhu in the past, and I am still a sadhu in the present." After wandering to the holy pilgrimage places of India and Nepal, he settled in one of the tribal areas of Bihar where a neglected community lived, with no avail to even the basic necessities of life.

One day when Sri Swamiji was doing his sadhana, he heard a voice from his inner soul saying, "Swami Satyananda, whatever facilities I have provided you, provide the same to others, to your neighbours." When Sri Swamiji heard this internal command, he called the sannyasins and said, "I have got such a command, yet I have renounced everything. I don't have even a penny with me. I don't even have a dhoti. I am just wearing a small piece of cloth. Therefore, I am giving the responsibility to you all to fulfil this command of God."

He told them the path by which they can cater to the upliftment of the community: through service, love and giving. Yoga has a limitation. It is limited to the individual. You do yoga to purify yourself, and to energize your life. However, when you want to bring yoga training into your behaviour, you have to merge yourself with action.

Through the strength of inspiration Sri Swamiji brought forward to the sannyasins that through seva they are able to take care of 80,000 poor families in India. Every month, every year each family is provided for with food, clothing, blankets and other basic amenities. Facilities are made for the education of children. Opportunities are created to employ the youth. Shops are made available for the handicapped. A pension is



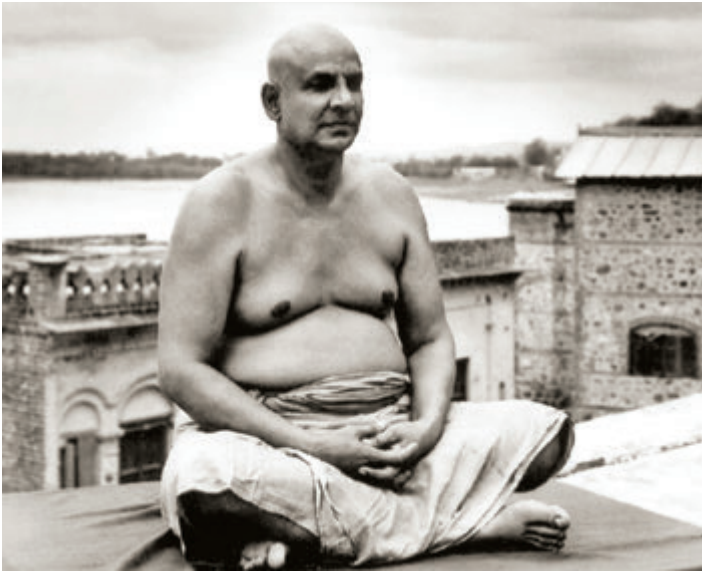
provided to the old people for their living. Farmers are given support for their crops. Medical facilities are made available for the health of the family.

The work is going on due to the inspiration of Swami Satyananda. This bhakti yoga is beyond comparison in the whole world. This is the practical form of bhakti yoga. You know the form that can be performed as sadhana, however, the practical form is service. That is how bhakti yoga makes the emotions of the heart tender and pure. When emotions become light and pure through service, love and giving, then transformation takes place in your reactions. It brings about balance and equanimity in your actions.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

The Art of Relaxation

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Life has become complex these days. The struggle for existence is acute and keen. There is unhealthy competition in every walk of life. Food is very scarce. There is unemployment everywhere. Only those who are brilliant and have extraordinary ability get a job. Therefore, a great deal of continuous mental and physical strain is imposed on modern humanity by its deadening daily work and unhealthy mode of life.

Being relaxed is not being lazy

Action produces movements and these in turn cause habits. Man has acquired many artificial habits. He has violated the laws of Nature. He has brought tension to many of the muscles and nerves through incorrect posture. He has forgotten the first principles of relaxation. He will have to learn lessons from the cat, the dog and the infant about the science of relaxation.

If you practise relaxation regularly, no energy will be wasted. You will be active and energetic. During relaxation, the muscles and nerves are at rest. The *prana* or energy is stored up and conserved. The vast majority have no adequate understanding of this grand science of relaxation. They simply waste their energy by creating unnecessary movements and putting the muscles and nerves under great strain.

Some persons shake their legs unnecessarily while sitting. Some strum their fingers on the table while their minds are idle or vacant. Some whistle. Some shake their heads. Some tap their chests or abdomen with their fingers. Energy is thus dissipated through all these unnecessary movements, on account of lack of knowledge of the elementary principles of the science of relaxation.

Do not mistake laziness for relaxation. A lazy man is inactive. He has no inclination to work. He is full of lethargy and inertia. He is dull, but the man who practises relaxation takes rest only. He has vigour, strength, vitality and endurance. He never allows even a small amount of energy to trickle away. He accomplishes a great deal of work gracefully in a minimum amount of time.

Mental relaxation

Just as you relax your muscles after having practised your asanas and physical exercises, so also you will have to relax the mind after concentration and meditation, and after the practice of memory training and will-culture. Relaxation of the muscles brings repose to the body, and relaxation of the mind brings repose to the body. The body and mind are intimately linked. The body is a mould prepared by the mind for its enjoyment.

The mind gathers experiences through the body and works in conjunction with the *prana*, senses and body. The mind has influence over the body. If you are cheerful, the body will also be healthy and strong. When you feel depressed, the body cannot work. Conversely, the body has some influence over the mind. If the body is healthy and strong, the mind also will

be happy, cheerful and strong. If there is a little stomach ache, the mind cannot work well. Thought manifests as action, and action reacts on the mind. The mind acts on the body and the body reacts on the mind. Removal of tension in the muscles brings repose and calmness to the mind.

By relaxing you give rest to the mind, to the tired nerves and the overworked muscles. You get immense peace of mind, strength and vigour. When you practise relaxation of either the body or the mind, the brain should not be occupied with various kinds of irrelevant, extraneous thoughts. Anger, envy, disappointment, failure, indisposition, misery, sorrow and quarrels cause internal mental strain. The practice of relaxing the mind will remove this internal mental strain and fill the mind with new mental energy. It will make you cheerful and happy.

How to do it?

Mental poise and calmness may be brought about by eradication of worry and anger. In truth, fear really underlies both worry and anger. Nothing is gained by worry and anger; on the contrary, much energy is wasted by these two lower emotions. Be careful and thoughtful. All unnecessary concern should be avoided. Expel fear, worry and anger. Think of courage, joy, bliss, peace and cheerfulness. Sit for fifteen minutes in a relaxed state in an easy, comfortable position. You can sit in an easy chair. Close your eyes. Withdraw the mind from all outer objects. Still the mind and silence the bubbling thoughts.

Here is another way to relax the mind. Close the eyes. Think of anything that is pleasant. This will relax the mind in a wonderful manner. Think of the mighty Himalayas, the sacred river Ganges, any impressive scenery in Kashmir, the Taj Mahal, the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, a lovely sunset, the vast expanse of ocean, the infinite blue sky. Imagine that the whole world and your body are floating like a straw in this vast ocean of Spirit. Feel that you are in touch with the Supreme Being. Feel that the life of the whole world is

pulsating, vibrating and throbbing through you. Feel that Lord Hiranyagarbha, the ocean of life, is gently rocking you on His vast bosom. Then open your eyes. You will experience great mental peace, mental vigour and mental strength. Practise and feel this power within.

During your daily activity, stop your work for a few minutes and think of the peace of God. Feel His peace and serenity all around you, and that it fills your entire being from head to foot. May peace and bliss ever fill your being!



In yoga nidra, the mind is so engaged that it becomes completely steady in the experience and that is when one achieves the state of relaxation. If one is lying down and the mind is travelling all over the world, one will not experience relaxation. However, in yoga nidra even if there is external commotion, it does not disturb that state until the disturbance crosses the threshold of the state of relaxation.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

A Thunder's Message

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

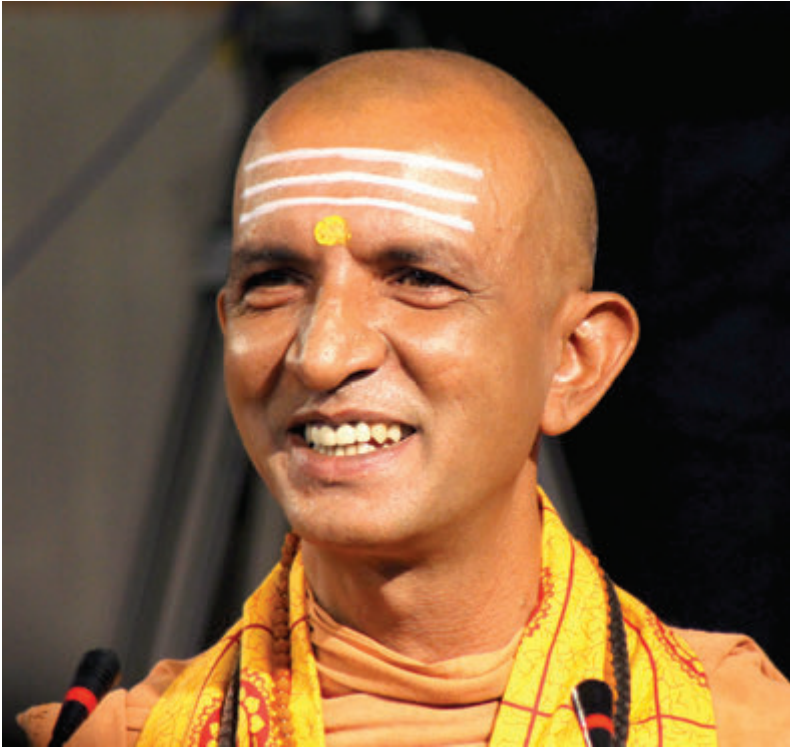
There is a story in the Upanishads. When this whole creation came into existence, three types of sentient beings existed: *devata* or divine beings, human beings, and *danava* or demons. These three had no idea about the goal of their lives. So they planned to meet Brahma and ask him what the aim of their lives should be. While travelling, the three representatives of the three sects encountered heavy rains with lightening and thunder. Between the roaring sound of the thunder a message was heard. After hearing the message, the representatives went back to their respective societies without having met Brahma.

Message for the devatas

When the representative of the devata is asked about the goal of life, he tells his people that the message he received was, '*Damadhvam, damadhvam, damadhvam*', which means 'control, control, control'. Control the sense organs and sensorial attraction.

The devatas live in heaven, where a five-star culture prevails and as long as you have the credit of your good deeds, you can stay there. The moment the credit of good deeds or your karma comes to an end, you are thrown out of five-star heaven. This sort of arrangement is also followed in hotels. If you do not pay the bills and your pocket is empty, you will be thrown out of the hotel unceremoniously. Similarly, in heaven, the moment the balance of good deeds is zero, you are thrown out.

In heaven, the prevailing nature is of sensorial gratification or pleasure. Generally, one reads that after being intoxicated, the devatas enjoy themselves with dancing angels or celestial damsels. They love playfulness and enjoyment. Therefore, for these sensualists, God's commandment was to keep their senses and mind under control.



Message for human beings

When the representative of the human beings was asked about God's commandment, he replied, '*Danadhvam, danadhvam, danadhvam*', which means 'give, give and give'. What is the nature of human beings? To aggregate, to hoard, to collect. Humans collect everything and do not want to give anything. In their house they will have a collection of hundreds of pairs of shoes, yet will never give even their old pair of shoes to their servant. Hundreds of clothes in the closet, some of them used only once or twice. However, they do not give these clothes to anyone who is in great need. Therefore, God's order for the human beings was to 'give, give and give', so that they can balance the shortcomings and deficits in other people's lives. Thus they can motivate them to march forward in life by raising their standard and quality of life.

Suppose you have two children. If you go to the market to purchase clothes for your family and children, then buy three sets of clothes: two sets for your kids and one for the unknown child. This unknown child has nothing and if you give him something, he will feel blessed. If every capable citizen of our country does this, there will be no poverty prevailing in this country. Every citizen will have resources and facilities provided by others assisting and helping them in the spirit of cooperation. This is the process and practice of donation – to give. Free of the tendency of hoarding and selfishness, and with no expectation of any return you become a helping hand. For human beings this was God’s order: to give.

Message to the devils

For the devils, the order in the form of a message was, ‘*Dayadhvam, dayadhvam, dayadhvam*’, meaning ‘have mercy, have mercy, have mercy’. The nature of devils is to have a cruel and violent mentality. They derive pleasure from taking away the happiness of others, by bringing troubles and problems in their lives, by seeing tears in their eyes. That is the devilish tendency of the mind. Therefore, God’s order for the devils was that there should be no tears in anyone’s eyes due to their karma of thoughts, words and deeds. Mercy means to bring happiness and joy into people’s lives through one’s karma or action.

Three orders have been given to make human life fulfilled and complete: to restrain and control sensual attachments and attractions; to overcome greed and selfishness; and to show mercy by being sensitive towards others. These are the orders from God for the human, the divine and the devilish civilization. These three civilizations are inside you. The practice and process by which they can be managed is yoga: raja yoga for intelligence, hatha yoga for the physical body, and bhakti yoga for the purification of emotions.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

Right Proportion

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



With the practices of yoga, harmony is established in the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. This has been the belief system of our paramguru Swami Sivananda. He said to his disciples that when one cooks vegetables, one does not put one litre of water and one kg of salt and one kg of spices in one kg of vegetables. If one does, one will not be able to eat that vegetable. If the vegetable is to be made delicious, it should be cooked according to the right proportion. Vegetable, water, salt, spices, oil, cumin – everything has to be in the correct proportion. The quantity is fixed.

Similarly, in the practice of yoga also the duration and sequence of every practice is fixed. Swami Sivananda used to say that the work of yoga in a person's life is his development. Yoga awakens one's genius, therefore it should not be restricted to one particular dimension only. Even though one becomes

healthy physically by doing asanas, one remains distant from one's talents and far removed from peace of mind and the wisdom of the mind. If one works only at the level of the mind, then the mind remains unbalanced, and the senses keep running after sense objects.

Asana and pranayama should be performed by an aspirant every day according to the right proportion, frequency, duration and sequence. This proportion was determined by Sri Swami Satyananda, along with other methods developed to cook the vegetables.

So, the basic theory was given by Swami Sivananda, but the development of that theory was done by Sri Swami Satyananda.

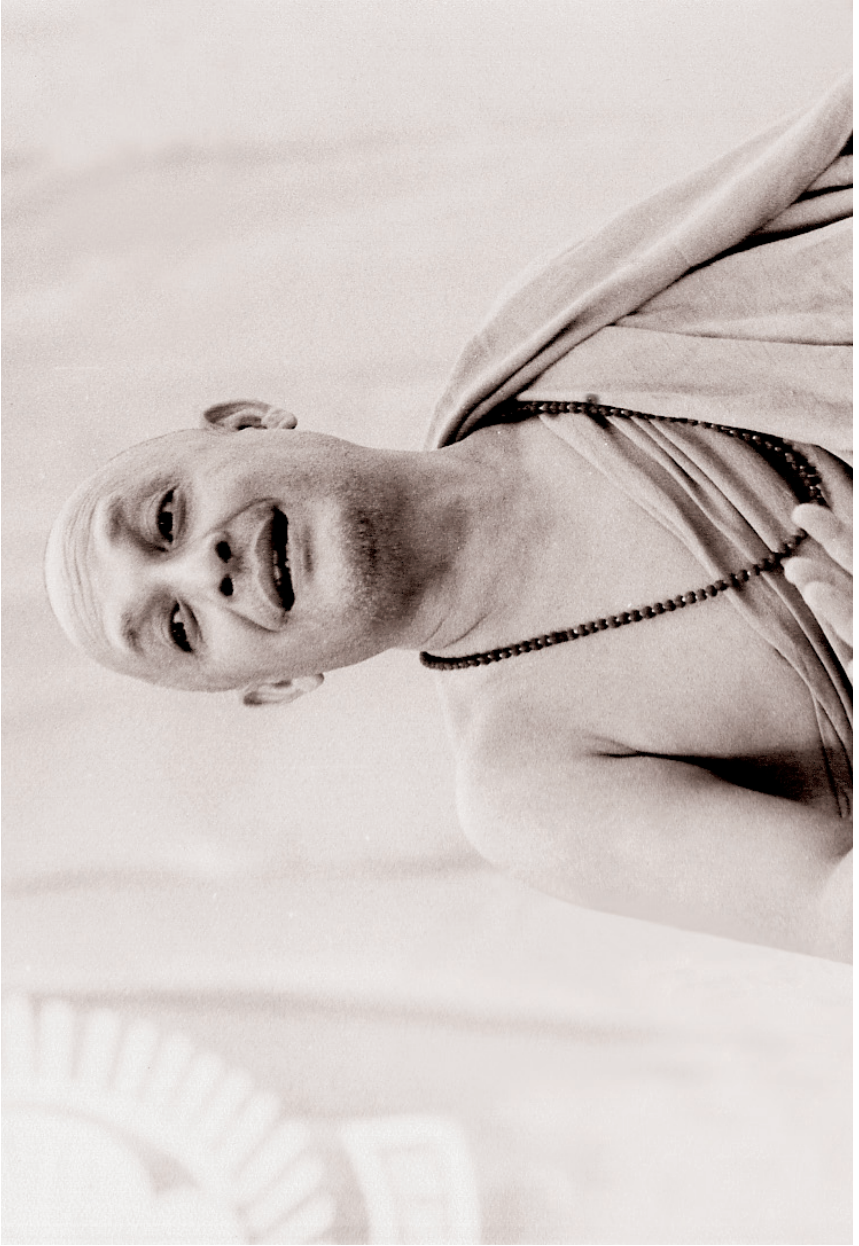
– 4 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



What Swami Niranjanananda offers is a most extraordinary exposition of yoga, covering the entire scope of theoretical and practical aspects – the ‘total package’. Through this Bharat Yoga Yatra, Swamiji is providing a great opportunity by guiding and assisting us in expanding our understanding and horizons of yoga. In order to keep up and play an active role in the Satyananda Yoga–Bihar Yoga movement and in the dissemination of yoga in its true form, we have to be willing and able to take the next step.

–Swami Krishnapriya, Ganga Darshan





शस्वती परमाचार्य विश्व योगपीठ, मुंगेर,

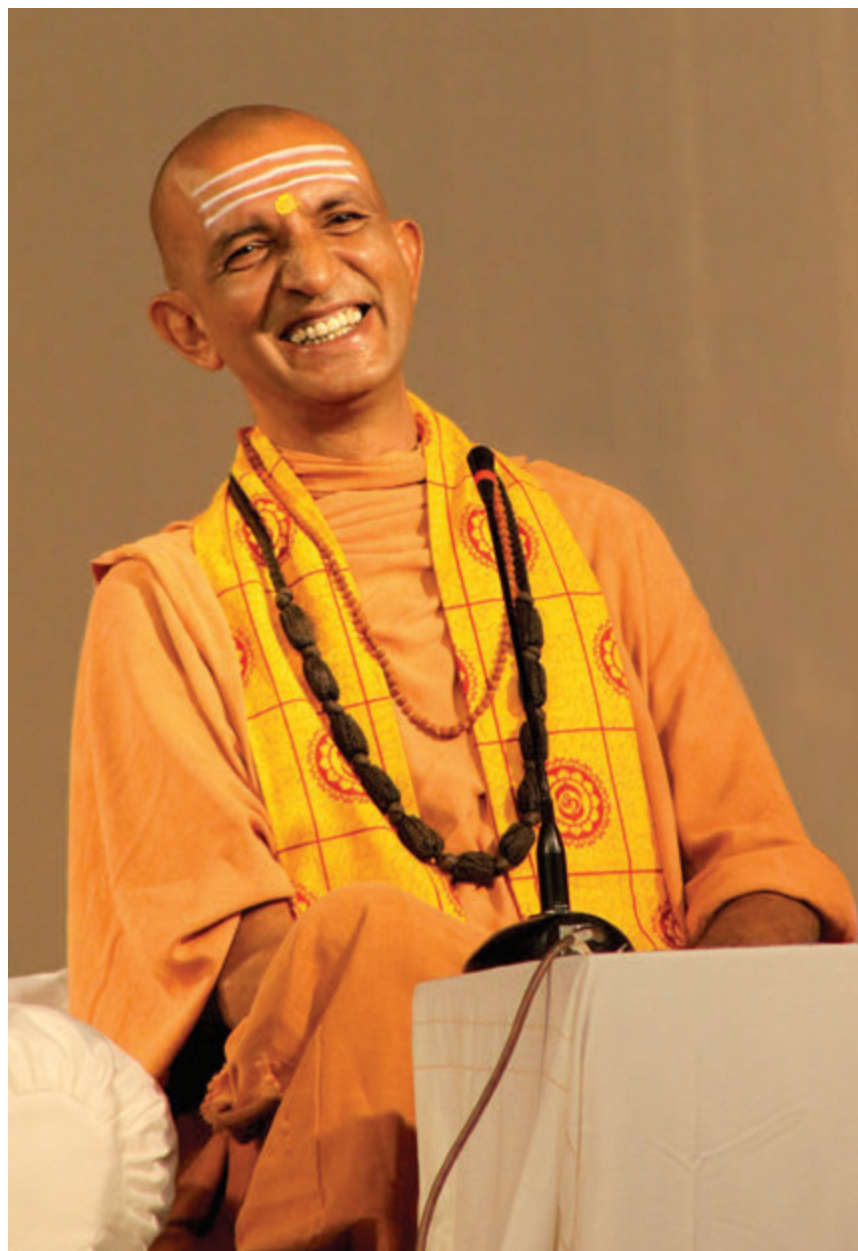












Narada's Search for Lord Vishnu

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

When people are totally absorbed and participate in kirtan, they clap their hands in complete joy. The flow of blood that courses through their hearts takes away cardiac ailments. This is why one should do kirtan with an open heart, and if that proves difficult, then one should at least participate with an open mouth.

Sage Narada was the celestial press reporter. Once he went to Vaikuntha to interview Lord Vishnu. He wanted to find out what plans Lord Vishnu had for the future of the world, so that the news could be reported in the press. On arrival, Lord Vishnu was not to be seen anywhere around his divine abode. Sage Narada went looking for him in the Ocean of Milk, *Kshirasagar*, thinking that the Lord might be vacationing in his summer palace, yet the Lord was not there either. The Lord has two residences – the summer palace which is *Kshirasagar* and the winter palace in Vaikuntha.

Narada's interview attempts were in vain as the Lord was not found in either place. That day Narada could not claim any expenses since there was no news to report. Waking the following day with a hungry stomach, he set off in search of Lord Vishnu again. Somewhere along the way, he bumped into the Lord and promptly complained that on account of his unavailability the previous day, he had to go hungry. He couldn't cash his daily wage as there was no news that he could file.

"Where were you yesterday?" he asked. "I really need this interview." When the Lord replied that he had been right there, Narada said that couldn't possibly be true since he had looked in Vaikuntha as well as *Kshirasagar*, where the Lord was not

to be seen. He had searched high and low yet there was no trace of the Lord. It was then that the Lord said to Narada:

*Naa hum vaasaami Vaikunthe.
Yoginaam hridayena cha,
Madbhaktaah yatra gaayanti
Tatra tishthami Narada.*

He said, “Narada, pay heed to what I say to you. I do not reside in Vaikuntha, nor am I to be found in the hearts of yogis. I am always present wherever my devotees remember me and sing my name, I am always found in such company.”

Whenever you sing kirtan and remember the Lord’s name, it is an irrefutable truth that the Lord is ever present. Therefore, open your heart and mouth, and participate wholeheartedly in kirtan.

– 6 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Complete Acceptance

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Whenever the word 'yoga' is heard, the mind becomes calm and quiet, and we have hope of illumining the darkness. Yoga will not eliminate the need for doctors, but it will help greatly to solve and reduce many medical problems. First, hatha yoga helps the body to maintain health. Then the practices of sensory withdrawal, concentration and

meditation, *pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana*, help to realize the deeper nature of yourself, to unite with your own atman.

Do you know who you are and what you are? How can you even think about it with a mind that is confused? How can you imagine your real wealth, your true nature, with this mind so full of conflicts, cobwebs and schizophrenia? Your mind must be properly purified and when the slate is clean, you can close your eyes and contemplate your real nature.

Yoga begins with hatha yoga and ends with union between the lower consciousness and the higher consciousness, *jivatma* and *Paramatma*. Yoga means complete equanimity within yourself and with everybody else, with the vast nature and the whole cosmos.

Yoga is complete acceptance of anything in life, whether pain or pleasure, defeat or victory, disease or death. Yoga brings about a complete understanding of the whole process of creation.

– 22 February 1977, Indian Embassy, Kathmandu, Nepal

Karma Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



This body is just an instrument, a machine, a medium through which one is able to perform actions and fulfil one's duties, just like a harmonium. A harmonium is a machine, a musical instrument. It does not produce a sound or tune by itself. However, when a player plays the harmonium, it produces beautiful melodies and tunes. If there is no player to play the harmonium, the tune is not produced by itself.

Similarly, the body is like a harmonium. It is a medium through which the melody of life is produced and through which a tune is produced in one's life. It unfolds sweetness, happiness and bliss. The energy that is used to keep this body functioning is the energy of the mind and emotions. To keep this instrument in good condition, healthy and energetic, one has to practise hatha yoga. To keep this instrument functioning, there is raja yoga for the mind and bhakti yoga for emotions.

Purpose of action

The next stage is *karma*, action, and human behaviour. Only through action and behaviour do disturbance and disorder arise in one's life. However, one can also free oneself from one's

suffering through actions and behaviour. On the one hand, action and behaviour become the cause of bondage, and on the other hand they become the cause of liberation. Therefore, it is important to explain and understand action in yoga.

Right from the beginning, from when you are born until your death you perform action. The actions that you perform bind you to selfishness, to the world, illusion or *maya*, to infatuation, attraction and attachment. When action and behaviour bind you with infatuation, illusion and attachment, then your actions do not become the cause of your evolution, progress and growth. You come into bondage, for you are bound by limitation and restriction. The action that ties you to limitation becomes the cause of your pain. The behaviour that limits you becomes the cause of your suffering.

Sri Krishna has given this definition of karma in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He says that yogis perform action to free themselves from attachment and bondage and to attain *atmashuddhi*, purification of the self. When God has given this definition for karma, then what definition can human beings give? People do not have the right to define karma in another manner. People do not have the intellect to explain karma in another way. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said (5:11): *Yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyakatoa atmashuddhayae* – ‘Perform actions for the purification of the self’ (by renouncing infatuation, *moha*, attachment, *asakti*, and illusion, *maya*).

Two levels of action

This is the direction for life. Whatever actions you have performed until now have been performed with attachment. According to the words of God, yoga and Sri Krishna, you have to perform action to free yourself from attachment and to attain *atmashuddhi*. This is transformation of vision. It is modification of thoughts. It is the change in a person’s thinking and intellect. As long as there is no transformation in the thinking pattern, thoughts and intellect, action can never become a medium of *atmashuddhi*.

The question that arises is how to perform action? Some people say to keep performing actions, though without the expectation of the fruits of action. This has also been said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (2:47): *Karmanyaiivadhikaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana* – ‘Your right is to work only, but never to its fruits’. This means that one should keep performing actions without expecting the fruits or results of the action.

This explanation of karma that people discuss is the primary school class of explanation. The primary school definition is: perform action but without any expectations of the fruits. The college level explanation is atmashuddhi: perform action for the purification of the self.

There is a difference in the approach of the primary class and the approach of the college level. Sri Krishna has explained both approaches in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Aspirations are not needs

According to psychology, there are four types of mental states in a human being. One state of mind comprises desires, wishes and fantasies which are the ambitions and aspiration of life. Ambition is one form of expression of the mind. Ambition guides one’s actions, and actions are performed to fulfil ambitions. In another state of mind one becomes aware of one’s needs.

What are the needs? Physical need, mental need, emotional need, spiritual need. What is the requirement of the physical body? To be healthy. What is the requirement of the mind? To have sharpness of understanding and to be peaceful. What is the requirement of the emotions? To be balanced and to express the positive, and not the negative qualities. The need of action is to be able to connect oneself to the world through the medium of action. In that connection one does not fall into the hands of illusion and the grip of attachment. The need of action is to be united and perform one’s duties, yet remain distant from illusion and attachment.

Desires are opposite to needs. Desires say, “Let me become a doctor or a famous and rich person.” However, do you really

possess that ability, capacity and strength to fulfil your desires? Therefore, first and foremost you have to give priority to the fulfilment of your needs. Only when your needs have been met, can you look towards your desires. The mistake takes place when you give priority to your aspiration and do not look at your needs. This is also where your effort, labour and hard work fail. You do not want to fulfil your needs, only your high aspirations. Therefore, it is important to bring about a change in your perception, thoughts and thinking pattern.

When you write down your aspirations, ambitions, motivations and desires on one sheet of paper and on another paper your needs to live and spend a happy life, you can compare both lists, and decide what to do first. If you take the decision to fulfil your needs first, your actions will correspond by themselves. If you think that your aspirations should be fulfilled first and not your needs, your actions will take place correspondingly. Therefore, take the help of your intellect and pay heed to your needs first, and later pay attention to your aspirations.

Knowing one's SWAN

When the desires, ambitions and needs are seen clearly, then one must see how much strength one possesses for their fulfilment and attainment: mental strength, financial strength and social strength. One must also see where one fails. What is the limitation that manifests as a weakness in one's life? Here is an example: when a person goes for an interview, he becomes fearful and his mental clarity becomes vague. When he is asked a question he becomes so nervous that he is unable to answer properly. Nervousness is the weakness of the mind and brain. If one feels inferior in front of any person, and becomes depressed, at that time the inferiority complex that one experiences is a weakness in one's life, which is created by the mind.

In this manner one can make a list of what in English is called the SWAN principle. S means strength, W means weakness, A

means ambition, and N means need. Everyone lives life with strength, weakness, ambition and need.

The life that one lives every day in the community, at home and in one's profession is influenced by these four states of strength, weakness, ambition and need. Actions are executed through them only, and even one's behaviour reflects them. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, *Yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktva atmashuddhaye* - "Renouncing attachment to attain purification of the self." To renounce attachment it is necessary to become aware of one's strengths, weaknesses, ambitions and needs. Without being aware of them one will not be able to free oneself from attachment. One will not be able to go towards the purification of the self, atmashuddhi. This is the principle of karma yoga.



Karma yoga

Karma means your normal, day-to-day work in your life. To make your mind immune and free from the impact and effect of this karma is karma yoga. If you follow and make use of it in your daily life then you can achieve your aim and be successful. These are the words of Sri Swami Satyananda.

When I came to the ashram I was only four years old and I lived with my guru in the ashram. At the age of eleven I received diksha and was given sannyasa formally. He told me that I was born a sannyasin, yet for the world I had to be initiated officially.

One week after giving me diksha, Sri Swamiji told me to spread yoga throughout the world alone, without him. I went to the western world alone and for twelve years, from the age of eleven to twenty-three, I travelled the whole world conducting programs, spreading yoga, establishing yoga centres. The experiences I had were not from the domain of knowledge, rather from the domain of karma, doing righteous action.

I understood that whatever our gurus, our ancestors and our sages said was actually true: knowledge originates from inside human beings. It cannot be attained from the outside. Today we have information and knowledge; nonetheless when this entire universe was created, from where did knowledge come at that time? Human beings received knowledge, whether of art or science, from inside. Everything originated in the human mind; everything has been cultivated and brought out in the human mind. There is a saying: 'There is nothing new under the sun, everything comes from within'. This is true.

From tamas to sattwa

In life, the state of separation and union of Shiva and Shakti is called yoga. This union of Shiva and Shakti is not only an idea, a philosophy, religious belief or concept; it is a practical truth of life. The mind, intellect, emotion, action and body have to be balanced, managed, organized and controlled. Anybody who starts the journey on this path will one day attain the state of self-purification within and realize the nature of illumination, which is sattwaguna.

In Samkhya philosophy, tamoguna has been called *sthitishheelatva*, the firm, standing, immobile, definite, measured quality; rajoguna is called *kriyashheelatva*, the quality of action or the active quality; and sattwaguna is called *prakashsheelatva*, the quality of illumination or the illuminated quality.

Tamoguna indicates a state, for example, a building, a pandal or temple, which have a shape, a limitation, a frame, a posture and are fixed and firm in that state. Tamoguna has acquired a place and a definite, constant frame. When this

fixed state or limitation breaks, then whatever was inside is liberated. Like the mind and soul, which are inside the body, are liberated after the death of the body.

What is the form of the mind and soul? It is of illumination, *sattwaguna*. As long as the soul is in bondage with the body, it is confined to the body, conditioned and contained. The inner soul is not free from the bondage of the body, and that is *tamas*.

Rajoguna is called *kriyasheelatva* as it indicates action, *kriya*. According to Tantra, Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta and our tradition, the journey of life is from *tamoguna* to *sattwaguna*. Philosophers say that the journey of life is the union of the individual soul with the supreme soul. People do not know and have never experienced either soul or supreme soul yet they moved forward with this belief that there exists a soul inside that is an inseparable part of the supreme soul. There is no experience, only belief. To transform this belief into reality a practical path is required.

The path is by deep thinking and ensuring that the journey must be from the state of *tamoguna* to *sattwaguna*. This journey towards *sattwaguna* requires the helping hand of *rajoguna*. Returning to Munger from Kathmandu, a vehicle for transportation is required. This vehicle of transportation is *rajoguna* where action is taking place, be it an airplane, a four-wheeler, a bus. The journey is from one point, the starting point, to another point, the ending point, which is the goal, aim and destination.

The starting point is *tamoguna* and the ending point for life is *sattwaguna*, and in between one takes the help of *rajoguna*. *Rajoguna* has a relation with human beings for it introduces action. The effort one makes, the tools one adopts, be they in the form of spiritual practice or of action in the material world, can be a medium to take one from *tamoguna* to *sattwaguna*. The person who lives in this world without duplicity and deception, who is simple, natural and light-hearted, can attain *sattwaguna* quite easily.

A bucket with holes

About forty years ago, when I was ten years old, I was travelling with my guru. At that time there were no water bottles. One had to fetch water from the well. It was summer, and we were trying hard to find a well for water. Finally, we located one. The vehicle stopped and I ran towards the well. A bucket and rope were there. I lowered the bucket into the well and pulled it up, however it was empty. Again I put the bucket into the well, made sure that it was down in the water and then pulled it outside, again it was empty. There was a hole in the bucket and by the time it came up, every drop of water had escaped through that hole. I went to my Guruji, told the whole story and asked for another bucket. With the help of the other bucket we drank water and moved ahead. The story ends here.

Some time later my guru asked me to tell another person something that he would have to do. The other person did not follow the order. He did not believe that it was the guru's order, and instead thought that I was saying it without guru's instruction. I was young in age and status at that time. I came back to Guruji and explained that the other person was not listening to me, "He does not believe that it was your order." Guruji replied, "It is because his mind has a hole."

At that time I did not understand what he meant, yet now it is crystal clear. You read a lot, you know a lot, yet do you follow that? At the time of the Mahabharata war, Sri Krishna went to Hastinapur with a proposal for a peace treaty and tried hard to convince Duryodhana. Duryodhana replied, "I know *dharma*, righteous action, well; however, I do not have any intention to follow it. I also know *adharma*, unrighteous action, well and I cannot free myself from that *adharma*."

You too have gone through lots of scriptures, literature, holy texts, and modern education. You have read, known, and understood. Despite that, when the right time comes in your life, do you follow those teachings? Probably not, for you have no faith in yourself to succeed. Why do you have no faith? There is a hole in your mind. The same has been mentioned by Sri Rama.

The people who have holes in their mind cannot assimilate any teaching, ideal or tradition. Such a life is always empty.

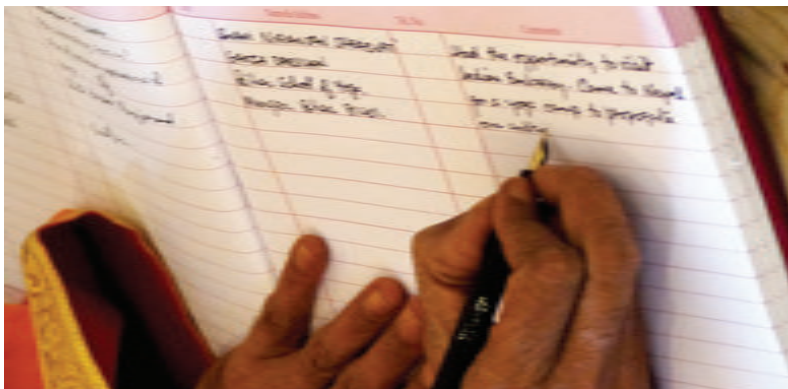
Duty and karma

The first requirement is that those holes in the mind and in life must be closed and rectified. Then whatever one is imbibing will remain in the mind and not flow out. Karma is not only working and performing action through the external senses. It involves whatever one does for internal transformation, to balance oneself, and for purification. Whatever one does externally is a duty. Externally performed action is duty related to family, world, and so on, something which one must do.

You say, "I am doing my karma." Actually you are performing your duties. Until today you have not done your karma. If you want to do karma, then start the process of inner transformation that will lead to self-purification, control and balance. Do your duties outside and perform karma inside. This yoga is called karma yoga, an explanation given by our sages, saints and gurus.

When you combine hatha yoga, raja yoga and bhakti yoga with karma yoga you can make your life beautiful and you are able to rise to a higher dimension in your life. This is the process of complete yoga.

– 7 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Lessons Learnt – Yogic Studies 2014–15



I learnt that awareness is the key to taking appropriate action and managing the thought process. I understood that yoga is a lifestyle, and I learnt how to maintain focus and energy while doing my seva.

I loved the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* on New Year's Day. It brought me peace and energy.

– Veer Abhinav, Jharkhand



I have realized that I can live peacefully without mobile, newspaper, TV or internet. The world is doing fine and I too have got a lot of time for myself now.

– Sudhir Madhav Rao, Andhra Pradesh



The best experiences are all the moments when I felt some sort of peace, understanding and hope and when I could open up a little to be more myself.

Now I can see a delicate, tiny little spark in me. I will try humbly to just keep it glowing softly and not try too hard. I will not be harsh on myself even if I lose it but just pick myself up again.

Thank you for everything Swamiji! You've been an inspiration.

– Annamaria Gurung, Darjeeling

I learnt that in meditation there is a structure and a system one can follow to reach a certain state of balance in life. I learnt how a daily sadhana should look like, and I learnt to level my own anger, the cold weather and constant discipline.

– Lena, Germany

My most valuable lesson was to learn not to be afraid of the unexpected and try to control everything because strength lies within me. As long as I practise my sadhana everyday I can ground myself and find my way back to positive thinking.

The best moment was on 24th December when I heard the Christmas choir sing in Jyoti Mandir. It represented everything I used to love about the Catholic religion, and I felt I was reconnecting with my roots once more.

– Luisa Santa Maria, Colombia



I learnt that to be aware is the beginning. I learnt to begin living from inside and not from outside; to understand myself better; to be 100% in what I am doing whatever it is; to live in the present moment; to experience first and to hope to understand later; to improve the quality of the mind, the way of thinking and the quality of life.

It was the dream of my life for many years to come here for this four-month course; it was a deep calling. I did it. I am leaving this place satisfied. I have discovered a new world: internally, the ashram tradition and spirituality. I found new inner strength and faith in me. I have so many beautiful memories.

– *Pauline, France*



The best moments are too many to mention. The experience has been incredible and valuable. I can only express love and gratitude for the teachings, the many blessings we have received, the wonderful group we have been fortunate to have. I will continue to apply simplicity and discipline in my life and encourage others to live the same.

– *Vrat, Ireland*

WINDOW TO THE PAST

The Science of Mankind

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga is a vast subject. It encompasses the entire dimension of human existence, the body and all of its components as well as the spirit, which is beyond the body.

Yoga is a system that was discovered by the wise rishis and munis thousands of years ago. It was the cultural heritage for the whole of mankind, not only of Indians. However, in India the science of yoga was preserved in spite of the historical accidents and the ravages of time, whereas most cultures, tribes and nations all over the world were unable to preserve their own heritage.

Therefore, yoga is not a Hindu science. It is the science of mankind.

– 22 February 1977, Indian Embassy, Kathmandu, Nepal



Therawan, the Sevak

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Karmas are related to the mind, feelings and behavioural expressions of life, not only the senses. Positive karma is a form of seva, responsibility and duty.

When Alexander the Great came to India, he fought with Pauras beside the river Saraswati. One day in the evening, he saw deeply injured and wounded soldiers of both sides lying helplessly on the ground and a big man from India approaching every hurt soldier irrespective of the warring side, whether Indian or Greek, providing proper treatment. When Alexander saw him he called him and asked, "Why are you offering treatment to your enemy?" Then the man replied that he was a therapist and nobody was either his friend or his enemy. He said, "Anyone who is hurt is suffering and it is my duty to provide the required and proper treatment. Let

him be anybody.” Alexander asked his name and the reply was, “Therawan.” Alexander told the man, “Your good and honest deed has changed my heart and from today onwards treatment in my country will be named after you.”

Therawan was known as Therapeous in Greece and the treatment, the art of healing, was named ‘therapy’. The name was coined after this medical practitioner.

Had he treated his own soldiers and let the injured enemy soldiers die, his name would not have been famous throughout the world as ‘therapy’. It was the result of his kind and selfless action that the heart of a cruel king was transformed. Finally, he was honoured and rewarded by the cruel king although he was completely unknown to the king. This is a result of great karma.

The vedic and yogic traditions say that you should always channel your karma in such a way that it helps, supports, elevates, brings welfare and good fortune, is beneficial and favourable to others. The bad karmas that hurt others take you towards downfall and hell, yet the karma that benefits you and others takes you towards the divine.

– 7 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Tradition and Cultural Values

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



From my experience of this four-day program it seems that the citizens of Nepal are progressive in the area of tradition and culture. When tradition and culture of any society cease to exist, the destruction of that civilization takes place. Western history and world history are witness and proof that those civilizations whose traditional values have been wiped out are not on this earth anymore. They have vanished. Those civilizations, where the tradition and cultural values still exist, are able to maintain their identity in spite of facing difficult situations and combating the obstacles that come their way. Civilizations that are able to maintain their culture and society are victorious at the end. In your life in Nepal there is tradition and cultural values. Through this strength you will succeed and your country will receive happiness, peace, prosperity and God's grace.

To make the tradition and the cultural values stronger one must make an effort. The effort that one has to make is internal not external. To make an effort within, one has to take the support of yoga. In today's time, the knowledge of yoga is required to organize people's mind, emotions and actions. The need for yogic knowledge is for the purification of thoughts, actions and behaviour, not for *moksha*, liberation or self-realization.

No power in the world can shake you as long as yoga is the foundation of your tradition and cultural values. This was also the inspiration of our gurus, Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda.

I am bringing forth their ideas to you so that you may accept these thoughts, and by awakening the power of sankalpa, you may protect your traditional and cultural values. Then your society and nation will move forward on the path of evolution, and remain safe and protected.

– 7 June 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal



Glimpses of the Yatra



Preparing a program for Swami Niranjan is always a great undertaking. Everything has to be planned, organized and put in place. Of course, there are times of tension, time pressure, stress and doubts. 'Will we be ready, will everything be alright, will there be enough people to fill the pandal?'

These questions arise among the hustle and bustle of meetings, teaching, propagating and promoting. These thoughts remain until the last moment. When Swamiji arrived, everything changed. He was like the sun that appears and dispels the clouds. It seemed that even the planets found their places and settled again with harmony and balance in the sky. This is beautifully described in the *Ramacharitamanas* (Balakanda, doha 255, chau 4):

*Rabi mamdala dhekata laghu laga,
Udaya tasu tibhuvana tama bhaga.*

The orb of the sun is so small to look at, but the moment it rises the darkness of all the three worlds disappears.

Protection on four sides

The pandal for the program in Tundi Khel was in the heart of Kathmandu, and it was protected from all sides. To the east of the pandal is the Bhadrakali temple, of the benevolent, kind Kali Ma who watches over the proceedings. Behind the temple stands the Simha Darbar, the parliament building, strong and determined like a lion.

To the west rises the Bhimsen Stambha, a nine-storey tall pillar. It was built by Bhimsen Thapa, the first prime minister of Nepal who served for thirty-two years under three kings. From there the whole area could be surveyed. Originally it was dedicated to the Queen Lalita Tripurasundari. The National Sports Stadium, known as Dasharatha Rangashala, is to the south of the pandal, and to the north the royal palace, Narayana Hiti, is situated. Narayana is the temple of Vishnu and 'hiti' means a tap or water source, and the palace was built near that water source. Behind the palace the majestic mountain range of the Himalayas rises high into the sky.

Honouring the eternal

On the first day, as per our parampara, Swami Niranjana lit the deepak in front of the pictures of Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda, and the mountains looked over his shoulders, witness to the pooja. This was followed by a welcome pooja for Swamiji by the pancha kanyas who according to Nepalese tradition represent Ahilya, Mandodari, Tara, Kunti and Draupadi, the five wives of Rishi Gautam, Ravana, the demon King of Lanka, King Bali, Pandu and the five Pandavas, respectively.

After the pooja, Swamiji turned around and in front of him he beheld a breathtaking view: a sea of people framed by the magnificent snowcapped mountains.

Little Star

The pandal was draped in white and blue and looked like a lotus flower. The name of the pandal manager was 'Little Star'. His mother attended the program to see Swamiji and told me that she was happy at what had happened to her son. Brought up in a traditional Buddhist family, he was a non-believer and took no interest in anything spiritual or religious. He believed in nothing, and all attempts of the family to instill some sense of faith in him had failed.

For the whole duration of the program Little Star had to spend his time in the pandal as it was part of his job. Witnessing the yatra and being in the presence of Swamiji, he experienced a turn of heart and took mantra diksha on the last day. The mother said she never thought this would happen to her son.

Conqueror of hearts

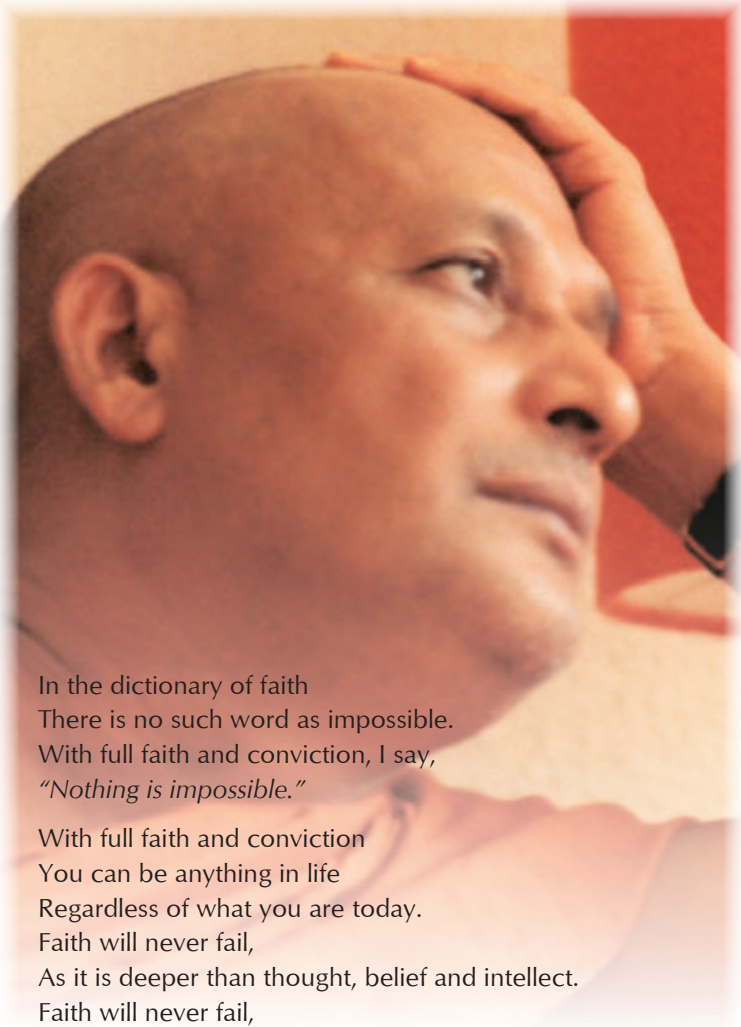
Many times in Rikhia, Sri Swami Satyananda said that he was not a conqueror of lands, but that all over the world he had conquered people's hearts. Therefore, as an emperor of hearts he could conduct the Rajasooya Yajna.

At that time I did understand but I did not experience what he meant. How could one conquer people's hearts? Being present at Swami Niranjan's Yoga Yatra in Kathmandu, I finally experienced what Sri Swami Satyananda must have done. Every day more and more people attended the program. On the last day, half of the participants had to be accommodated outside of the pandal. When it started raining, Swamiji immediately invited everyone inside and even on to the stage. People were sitting around Swamiji beaming with joy and pride. It was quite a sight!

In Nepal, people came in great numbers and full of hope. They were inspired, grateful and open to Swamiji who became the conqueror of their hearts.

– Swami Alakhshakti, Ganga Darshan

No Greater Power than Faith



In the dictionary of faith
There is no such word as impossible.
With full faith and conviction, I say,
"Nothing is impossible."

With full faith and conviction
You can be anything in life
Regardless of what you are today.
Faith will never fail,
As it is deeper than thought, belief and intellect.
Faith will never fail,
As it is an expression of the inner spirit.

Once you realize faith,
You realize God.
So tell me, what is impossible?

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



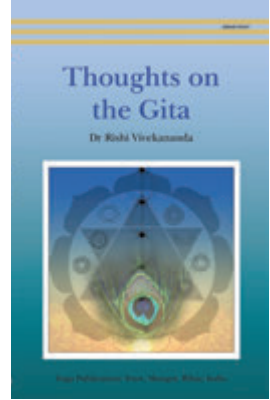
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Dr Rishi Vivekananda

159 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-93-84753-16-0

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<i>Oct 1-Jan 25 2016</i>	4-month Yogic Studies Course (English)
<i>Oct 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: Diabetes (Hindi)
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