

YOGA

Year 4 Issue 10

October 2015

Membership postage: Rs. 100



Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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YOGA is a monthly magazine. Late subscriptions include issues from January to December.

Published by Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar – 811201.

Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd., Haryana – 121007

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Membership is held on a yearly basis. Please send your requests for application and all correspondence to:

Bihar School of Yoga
Ganga Darshan
Fort, Munger, 811201
Bihar, India

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

Total no. of pages: 58 (including cover pages)

Front cover: Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, Delhi, 2014

Plates: 1-4: Swami Niranjanananda's Delhi Yatra, 2014



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Song for the Little Ones

Two little eyes
to look to God

Two little ears
to hear His words

Two little feet
to walk His way

Two little lips
to sing His praise

Two little hands
to do His will

And one little heart
to love Him still.

—Swami Sivananda

Published and printed by Swami Gyanbhikshu Saraswati on behalf of Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger – 811201, Bihar

Printed at Thomson Press India (Ltd), 18/35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Rd., Faridabad, Haryana.

Owned by Bihar School of Yoga **Editor:** Swami Shaktimitrananda Saraswati



Know You YOGA

Year 4 Issue 10 • October 2015
(53rd year of publication)

ग विद्यालय, विश्वविद्यालय, मुंगेर, बिहार
तत्यानंद सरस्वती के श्रीचरणों



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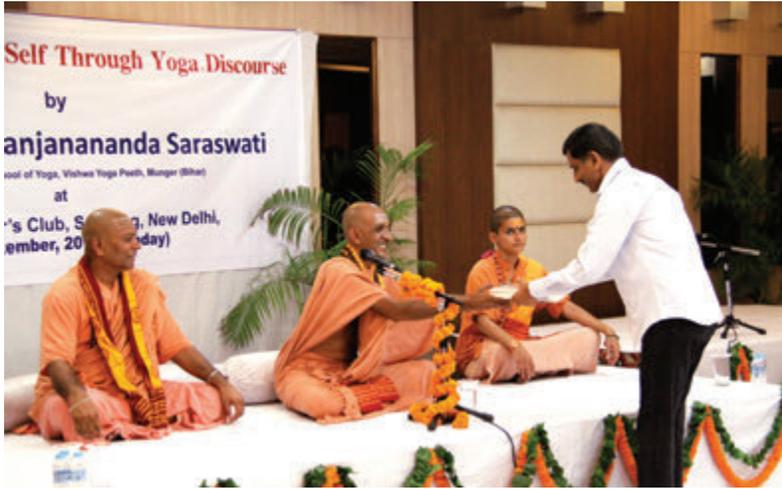
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

Yoga is Vidya

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Often people ask, “Is yoga a religion?” Yoga has to be seen not from the religious perspective but as knowledge. The purpose of knowledge is the upliftment of human life. People argue that the purpose of religion is the same. In the Indian tradition the word ‘yoga’ has not been used in relation to religion, always in relation to *vidya*, knowledge, as *yoga vidya*, yogic knowledge.

The purpose of *vidya* is to express righteousness and positive qualities in life. If your thoughts and thought processes are correct, if your behaviour and actions are proper, then these are considered to be in accordance with yoga. The purpose of yoga is the development of one’s personality.

What is religion?

People link yoga with religion because they do not understand religion. They think that sannyasins are propagators of religion. I am not a propagator of religion, I am not a pandit or priest, I am not Shankaracharya. I do not have any religious institution.

I am a sannyasin. A sannyasin renounces all religions, belief systems, faiths, and surrenders himself to Guru and God. A sannyasin is not a follower of any religion. I am neither a Hindu, nor a Christian, nor a Muslim. A religion is a narrow mentality and a limited philosophy. Religions are made by limiting the omnipresence of God and defining it in a few words. That is not possible. What people take to be a religion is only a social code of conduct, not religion.

Sanskriti shashtra, kala viheen sakshat pashu pooch vishaan heen.

That person who lives without any culture, the person who does not have any knowledge, the person who has no idea about music and art, his condition is just like an animal without a tail.

The beauty of an animal lies in its tail. With the tail chopped will the animal still look beautiful? Similarly, if vidya is cut from a person's life, darkness enters. When a person's life is connected with knowledge, then development, upliftment and progress begin.

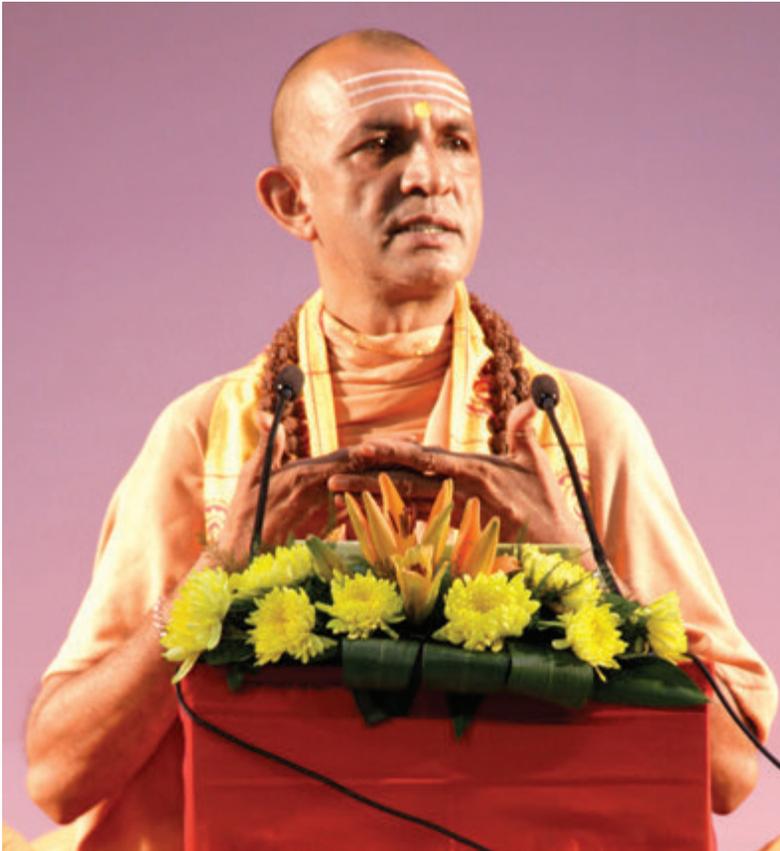
The sages never accepted yoga as a religion. Bhagawat religion kept its separate identity. Shaiva religion kept its distinct identity. The great sages and sannyasins kept yoga safe in the form of sadhana and vidya. They never connected yoga with any religion. Be it Vasishtha, Vishwamitra, Pantanjali or Gheranda, be it Swami Sivananda or Swami Satyananda, in whichever age they have come, they have propagated vidya and not religion.

Who makes religions?

When Lord Buddha came, he spread knowledge. Fifty years after his death, Buddha's ideas became a religion, not at the time of Buddha. When Jesus Christ came he never talked about establishing a religion; he talked about spiritual life. Christianity developed not in Jerusalem, but in Rome fifty years later.

People form religions, not sages. Each and every sage and sannyasin only gives teachings; if you follow these you will become better and blessings will be showered on you. No sage talks about either a religion or establishing a religion. Religion has been developed by the people of society who connect a tradition to a belief. When tradition and belief unite a religion is formed. When tradition is separated, then it is a culture. When the belief system is separated, then it is vidya or knowledge. When tradition and belief unite and mix, they become a religion.

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



Universality of Religion

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Siva Speaks to the Nation on All India Radio



"Blessed Immortal Selves!

May the joy of oneness and the peace of God-will infill you all! In this world of phenomenon, the general rule is that the subtle is veiled or covered over by the gross. The truth or the inner essence of anything is hidden by its outward appearance. The tattwa is hidden by the *nama*, name, and *roopa*, form.

To perceive the inner truth, the underlying essence, you will have to combine observation with discrimination and impartial enquiry. If you fail to do this, you will get but a superficial glimpse of things and miss the substance thereof.

Religion is no exception to this rule. The real import is not properly understood by a great many, precisely



because of the above-mentioned reason. A sincere enquiry into the true implication of religion is conspicuous by its absence. Thus religion, from being rightly understood in its true light as the greatest common factor and universally unifying force in the world, has come to be misunderstood and misconstrued as a disruptive element that is at the bottom of many a quarrel, conflict and warfare, too.

Many would readily quote history, remote as well as recent, to support this opinion. The term universality with reference to religion will perhaps evoke a sceptic smile in many. I would laugh at such scepticism, for they err in the same way as a man seeing a coloured Diwali lamp takes the external coloured glass to be the real lamp and fails to perceive the pure light.

The same inner process

Universality is the greatest characteristic of true religion. This fact is not affected by the vote or opinion of the non-discriminating men. When I say 'true religion', I mean religion in its pure essentials and not its conventional conceptions. The universality of religion does not lie in the rituals, external marks or traditional observances, nor in the personal apparel and social customs adopted by followers of particular aspects of religious life. These are but its ever changeable surface appearances.

A little reflection and enquiry will reveal to us the unmistakable truth that religion is the root impulse in the heart of every human being. Religious sense is one that is common to the entire mankind, because this religious sense or religious feeling springs out of the very fact of your being a

man. At its basis religion constitutes the primal spiritual 'urge to self-awareness' of the eternal principle in man. This principle throbs in the heart of all.

All religions and faiths that ever existed and exist today are but slightly varying processes for the development and consummation of this fundamental universal urge towards the one infinite source and origin of all life. It is, therefore, the one fundamental aspect of human consciousness.

All the other aspects of man's consciousness, such as that of sex, age, caste, parentage, pedigree and power, religious group or political party, are acquired by the individual later on in life as he grows up and develops individuality and becomes an adult. These aspects depend upon factors external to him. They change when things change. They also change when the individual alters his thoughts, mode of living, or his philosophy and view of life.

A Hindu youth falls in love with and marries a Christian girl. He begins to live and move like a Christian. An Indonesian lady marries a Hindu and begins to feel entirely like a Hindu lady. A Japanese professor domiciled in America voluntarily becomes a citizen of the USA. After some years he becomes oblivious of his previous political consciousness. Count Leo Tolstoy, the high nobleman, completely transformed himself into a peasant. We see how these outer layers or *upadhis* (as the Sanskrit term goes) are easily shed by man as they are later acquired from this world. But you cannot shake off your soul-consciousness, as this matter springs from the depths of your nature within.

Real religion is the method of awakening and making manifest this soul-consciousness. At different times in human history divinely inspired beings, prophets and world teachers appear and present their selfsame method of inward awakening and attainment in a form peculiarly suited to the need of the people of that time. But always the aim and the inner process has been, is now, and will forever be, the same to all mankind everywhere and at all times.

The spiritual being of man is the atman. This atman is sat-chit-ananda. It is also ineffable peace. *Aayam atma shanto, Shivam Shubham, Sundaram, Shantam, Advaitam* – Peaceful, auspicious, the best, beauty, radiance, non-dual: such is the nature of the atmic experience. To manifest these is, therefore, the essence of true religion. It is the concern of religion to eliminate the evil in man's personality and to develop in him all that is sublime, good, auspicious and beautiful.

Religion does this by first laying down upon the seeker the practice of a perfect good life. All religion is based on the foundation of *sadachar*. Moral rectitude and ethical perfection form the universal basis of every religion the world has seen so far. Be good, do good, be kind, be pure, be compassionate, be tolerant, serve, love, give, form its prime principles. One important aspect of universality is thus found in the starting rungs of its practical ascent. The beautiful anecdote of Abu-ben-Adam, the moving story of Ranti Deva, the biblical narrative of the good Samaritan and the sublime depiction of Gautama the Buddha at the sacrifice of King Bimbisara, serve to bring out most beautifully and effectively the universal nature of the true essential religious consciousness.

The unvarying insistence upon the practical acquirement of the *daivi sampat* or godly traits like purity, truth, compassion, universal love, forbearance, humility, absence of anger, spirit of brotherhood, self-denial, selfless service and sacrifice, forms yet another beautiful golden bond of universalism in practical religious life. The conquest of brute passions, of passion and sensuality, control of the senses and the renunciation of greed, covetousness, attachments, desires, pride and egoism, which go to form the indispensable part of practical religion, are further aspects of universal prevalence in the true religious life.

Self-expression

Real religion awakens man to the consciousness of the unity of all existence and a perception of one spiritual essence that pervades everywhere and indwells every being. To bestow



the highest perfection, the highest knowledge and the highest bliss of self-experience is the meaning of life. The craving for knowledge, for undiminishing joy and abiding peace is inherent in every human being. The unceasing struggle, consciously or otherwise, to attain the above state is part and parcel of life.

To bestow the bliss of this attainment is the main concern of religion. Thus its universality is seen in the fact of its being the root urge throbbing in the heart of all human kind and of human life being the active expression of this urge. Its universality further lies in the fact that in its fundamentals the round-up of world religions reveals but a single, simple pathway to blissful unity, the pathway to peace, here and hereafter, to brotherhood and universal self-hood. *Isa vasyam idam sarvām; Sarvām brahma mayam* are expressions of this experience.

The religious sense, therefore, makes all mankind kin. It enfolds all mankind in a warm embrace of spiritual oneness. Such unification alone could be vital, effective and abiding; for, through religion you link up man to man at the deepest abiding and essential root part of his spiritual personality. This consciousness interpenetrates the entire humanity like a beautiful golden thread running silently through all the numerous gems of variegated hue that go to make a necklace. No conflict or divergence in any superficial part of man has any power to mar this sweet spiritual unity, if only you wake up to a full appreciation of this fundamental fact.

When religion is thus perceived in its true essence, the Christian, the Muslim, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Jain and the Parsee will feel themselves not as any particular religionists but as brother-souls proceeding together in perfect harmony along the pathway to perfection and bliss. They will feel their identity of aspirations, of the inner sadhana and the identity of their spiritual aim. The right view of religion will unfailingly make it into a powerful unifying factor by making the entire mankind feel as one through perfect identity of aspiration, endeavour and ultimate attainment.

Blessed self, understand, therefore, the true import of religion. Know religion in its proper light. Let not personal bias, force of conventions, or opinions of fanatic or dogmatic persons, blind your vision into a narrow view of religion. Embrace, therefore, this religion of heart that helps to link you with the one common source and origin of all existence. Religion is one for all human beings. It is one, universal and eternal. May peace, oneness and bliss be yours. May the One God, the Supreme Being, lead us all from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from mortality to immortality."

– 6 November 1950, Delhi,

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

Bhakti and Bhakti Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When people hear 'bhakti yoga' they automatically presume that one is going to talk about pooja or rituals of worship. This is not so at all.

There are two words: bhakti and bhakti yoga. Bhakti is devotion. When one goes to a temple or bows the head before the pictures and statues on one's altar at home one is expressing devotion. Bhakti yoga is quite different from this.

When the word 'yoga' is added to bhakti it refers to the management of human emotions. Just as the purpose of hatha yoga is to manage the physical condition and the purpose of raja yoga is the management of mental behaviour, bhakti yoga means equalizing and rebalancing the human emotions. Unbalanced emotions create disturbance and disruption in a person's life.

Restrain the riot

Emotions find expression not only in the form of bhakti but also in the form of envy, hate, greed, infatuation, arrogance

and jealousy. It is these emotions which make one's mood swing endlessly all day long. The fashions of Mumbai and the moods of a person change so fast it is hard to keep track!

People are not aware of how and when their moods change. Suddenly they are angry, the next minute they feel jealous, all of a sudden they become happy and in the next moment they feel bad – no one has any control over their moods and their emotions. When these emotions manifest within they destroy inner balance and equanimity. One becomes internally and emotionally fraught.

No matter what happens, everything is perceived as something negative and sad. If one's child disobeys, it becomes a reason for sadness. If someone speaks rudely, it makes one feel bad. Under such circumstances there is no restraint or balance in one's life, behaviour and emotions. Without restraint or balance one cannot experience any peace. Even if there is some stillness or calm within the mind, one cannot exercise any restraint since the emotions are running riot. Though the mind is still, focused and calm, the emotions of envy, anger, disgust, fear, insecurity, attachment, love, infatuation and arrogance keep expressing themselves.

Fear not

It is these obstacles that prevent one from moving ahead in life. The appropriate management of these emotions is bhakti yoga. Bhakti refers to pooja, worship and rituals and bhakti yoga refers to disciplining emotions and trying to bring about a balance in one's emotions and their expression.

So if you hear the word bhakti yoga, do not be afraid. You may well go ahead and be frightened of bhakti, but do not be frightened of bhakti yoga. Bhakti yoga is related to your essential inner self. Bhakti yoga is an experience, a change, and this change is easy, simple and beautiful indeed.

– 21 September 2014, The Railway Officers Club, Delhi, India

Depending on Fate or Faith

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are two types of people. One is called the fatalist who is dependent on destiny and has expectations from fate. If things do not work out he starts accusing his fate, saying that neither destiny nor God wanted the good thing to happen. These thoughts create a negative frame of mind. People with a negative mentality are known as fatalist.

People who connect with a positive mentality are endowed with faith. A person who has *shraddha*, faith, moves forward in life. The same can be seen in society. In the life of one who is dependent on fate distress and difficulties will always prevail. The person who moves forward with *shraddha* remains happy in every situation.

Connecting to *shraddha* does not allow negativity to enter the mind. *Shraddha* is so powerful that it shuts the door of the mind in the face of negative elements. They cannot enter at all.

So, you have to decide whether you want to become a person endowed with faith or not.

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

WINDOW TO THE PAST

Awakening a Greater Potential (Part 2)

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



At this point comes what we call tantra. What an abused word tantra is! Expansion of mind and liberation of energy are in the word tantra. What is expansion of mind and what is liberation of energy? This is the subject of tantra and the subject of yoga.

Beyond time and space

Our mind should be able to expand beyond time and space. Time and space are the boundaries. Mind consciousness is within time and space and is not able to transcend beyond

that. If you render the mind timeless, if you render the mind spaceless, then mind cannot exist. There is a point where the mind ceases. There is a point where awareness comes to a point of cessation. Beyond that the knowledge of the mind, beyond that the knowledge through the mind does not function.

Does it mean that with the disintegration of mind, cessation of knowledge takes place? No, we do not agree with this. We believe that even when the mind disintegrates, even when the mind does not exist, even when there is no mind, still knowledge takes place. Without senses, indriyas, action can take place. Without mind knowledge can take place and experience can take place, but how? That is the topic of yoga and tantra.

Shiva and Shakti

This liberation of energy is a very important matter. Shiva and Shakti are the two aspects that constitute the whole existence, the whole creation. Shiva plus Shakti is all and when we say 'all' we mean whole, we mean life, we mean you, we mean everybody. And who is this Shiva and Shakti? Are they man and woman? No! They are eternal forces that are interacting with each other, with the existence of man, with the existence of creation.

It has been accepted that the concept of tantra yoga is not union; yoga is separation. What happens in physics? You take an atom and disintegrate it, separate its elements and what remains in the end is nuclear energy. The same thing happens in yoga: the material forces have to be eliminated. Samskaras have to be eliminated, thoughts have to be eliminated and the quantum of mind has to be eliminated. What remains at the end is called Shakti.

In the cosmic dance Shiva and Shakti are embracing each other exclusively for union on this particular plane. In yoga Shiva and Shakti are separated and this separation is between the individual and energy. In hatha yoga you are removing the dross and allowing the energy to be released.

It is the same when you sit for meditation, one problem is eliminated, a second thought comes and you eliminate it. All the sensory experiences are being eliminated. So this is how in yoga, a creative intelligence is brought into operation. A greater intelligence is brought to function. One should not be contented with this particular quantum of mind that one has inherited with this physical evolution.

Metamorphosis is possible

If one is satisfied with this mind, with its limitations, then one is doomed to spiritual destruction. That is the fundamental difference between the Indian way of thinking and the rest of the world.

The fundamental difference is here. In India we believe that evolution is constant and there is no point where you can lay your finger and say here is the gap. Other thinkers say that mind is ultimate and that mind cannot undergo a process of metamorphosis, but we say yes, the entire structure of the mind can be completely changed. It can undergo complete metamorphosis, and a time can come when there could be a limited difference between the mind operating here and the universal mind. The difference could be simulated between the mind of Buddha and Mahavira and the mind of Sri Aurobindo. Is there a direct difference? There is a difference in experience and structure of knowledge and a difference in spiritual concepts.

Understanding the awakening

So let us understand yoga with the awakening of a greater potential in man. When kundalini awakens you do not go crazy, or maybe, how can you say that you are not crazy? Maybe we are crazy today.

Once I went to a mental hospital. All the mental patients thought that I was a mental patient. In fact, I had gone there to teach them yoga and make them better. They thought I was a mental patient and they came up to me and said, "What mental

problem do you have?" I said, "Yoga is my problem." In the same way people think that the people who have awakened kundalini may be crazy, or maybe we are crazy and they are better. This is the joke that has been going around in the last many years. The illiterate mind of the masses of the country has not been able to understand with this mind the process of awakening. When we go to Indian villages, people can very well understand the awakening and they know that it is possible for a man to apprehend the divine soul with a different mind.

How can we comprehend this awakening? The whole system is known as yoga and comprises bhakti, jnana, karma and raja yoga. If you like jnana yoga or if you want bhakti yoga or karma yoga, you must remember just one thing, that all these forms of yoga must be integrated. You do not just have love for one aspect of yoga. I practise hatha yoga but do not believe in meditation or this or that. That is absolutely an incomplete approach to life. All the yogas include the dynamic, emotional and psychic and rational structure of man.

You are not only psychic. You are not only emotional, you are not only physical or rational. You are a combination of all the four. You must practise yoga in such a way that all the aspects are properly developed in your personality. Not lopsided, one-sided or limited development of the mind, body or emotions. So the practice of asana and pranayama on the one hand and the practice of mudra, bandha followed by the practice of jnana yoga, dhyana and then kriya yoga.

Kriya yoga

Kriya yoga is kundalini yoga and kriya yoga is tantra and kriya yoga is the ultimate aim of all the forms of yoga. Whichever way you go through, either by karma, bhakti or jnana, there is a point where you have to come to kriya yoga. After having controlled the mind and body, after having brought your mind to a point of saturation and concentration, there comes a time

when the mind has to be left completely free and you do not deal with the mind.

In the ordinary situation of sadhana you are dealing with the mind. Every day when you do japa, when you do ajapa japa, when you do concentration, with whom are you dealing? You are dealing with your mind. And the mind is dealing with the mind. One vritti is dealing with another vritti of the mind. In kriya yoga, the mind has to be left out.

Kriya yoga is a set of practices which can be found in the tantric texts. When you practise them, an elevation of consciousness is taking place, a beautiful way of feeling. What is that?

Ignore the mind

If you travel in the morning at two or three o' clock and you pass through a village, all the dogs in the street start barking at you. They are watching you. You take stones and throw them at the dogs. When you go they follow you again. Again you stop and throw stones at them and again they follow you and this is how it happens, until the day breaks.

This is how you deal with the mind. Every time you meditate, your mind tells you 'no' and there is a very strong fight. You say 'ok', then you go again and again the mind chases you. How long will you allow yourself to be chased by the mind? Is it not possible to completely ignore all the idiosyncrasies of the mind? Is it not possible to forget the mind? Let it do what it wants.

I am talking to you and I don't care what is happening outside. Why should I worry about things that are taking place outside the auditorium if I am interested in talking to you? In most of us it cannot happen because we are so much tormented by the existence of the mind. We have become over-conscious about the mind's functions. We think too much. Everybody says that when they meditate their mind becomes too restless. How do they know it? They say that they know it, so I say they have become over-conscious. Ignore the mind

and you will see the difference. The only sutra that can be told in kriya yoga is 'ignore the mind' and when you ignore the mind transcendence takes place.

Kriya yoga is a set of twenty-one kriyas, very simple ones. In half the kriyas you should keep your eyes open. In the other half you close your eyes and in all the kriyas you change your asanas. You do not remain in the same posture for one and a half hours, but every ten minutes you change the posture. But all the time the mind has to be ignored. You don't care what the mind does. By the end of the kriya you sit down quietly, finally to forget yourself. It is not samadhi. It is total awareness. It is an inner gauge of a higher consciousness. Keeping this point of view, let us practise yoga.

Purpose of yoga

I do agree that we are sick and that we have many ailments in this physical body. I accept that there are limitations, but at the same time I know that yoga should be practised not only to alleviate physical problems. The purpose of yoga is to evolve the individual. This physical body is one. There are more invisible bodies. There are many levels of human consciousness. This is human existence. We have to discover them one by one because that is the purpose of human life.

Man's advent is not to fulfil the dissatisfied animal but it is to discover another man. Man's advent is to discover man behind the man, mind behind the mind, consciousness beyond the consciousness, until he comes to the point of what is called universal evolution and then he is out of it.

When you come to a point of evolution, at one point you go out of that circle, and maybe you become one of them. When you get out of that circle, then you become what we call the junior God.

– 27 April 1980, Constitution Hall, Delhi, India

Himalayan Blunder

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Satsang at Gita Hall: At 8 am Siva was at the Gita Hall in the Birla Mandir. Siva began to sing the *Mahamantra* and then followed it up by *Mahavakya Kirtan*, *Gita Kirtan*, and then the *Song of Admonition*:

Can you expect real shanti
If you waste your time
In scandal, backbiting?

“Generally people do not go about performing their own duties, ever intent on their own self-culture and cultivation of divine virtues; but they always poke their nose in others’ business. This is a serious mistake, a Himalayan blunder.



You must constantly engage yourself in sadhana, selfless service and study. You should constantly reflect: ‘How can I regenerate myself? How can I cultivate divine virtues?’ You must go on rotating japa, kirtan, swadhyaya, meditation and service. Then there will be no time for scandal and backbiting and looking into the affairs of other people.”

– 7 November 1950, Delhi,
From Sivananda’s Lectures,
during All-India and Ceylon
Tour - 1950, *Chronicler Swami*
Venkatesananda

The Pit of Worry

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Parents worry about their small children, their teenagers and their adult children who have become parents themselves and maybe grandparents.

Worry is something that is in human genes. When you are born, you are born because of the transfer of genes. In the same manner worry is also transferred in the genes, for worry is the outcome of unfulfilled desire. Worry is the outcome of unfulfilled expectation. Worry is the outcome of unfulfilled action. Therefore, it is natural to worry, for worry is the outcome of attachment.

In the family, it is the attachment which is our bonding. If there is no attachment in the family nobody will care for the other family member. When you are not attached to your neighbour, you are not concerned with what happens in his

house. If your son has a house and he is your neighbour then whatever happens in his house will always concern you, for you are seeking the happiness of somebody who is your own. Therefore, worry is common.

Don't transfer

There is another aspect. Worrying is not bad, but imposing your fears on other people is bad, for it limits their self-esteem and restricts their creativity. Therefore, if you are worried, remain worried, do not transfer your worry to the other person. The moment you transfer your worry to another person and you talk about it to the other person, you are dragging that person down from a state of confidence and happiness to your state of worry and anxiety. That state of worry and anxiety is much lower than the state of confidence and happiness.

When you are worried you are in the pits. Why do you want to drag somebody who is enjoying his life into the depth of your pit of anxiety and frustration? Rather you should take inspiration from that happiness and say to yourself, "I am worried now, but I should make the effort to become joyful and happy and to gain my peace of mind again."

Make the right choice

Just as you avoid a snake on the road for the fear of being bitten, you should avoid worries in life for they will always restrict your creative growth. The understanding should be, "Fair enough, I am worried, but there are also solutions. I have to find the right solution and for that my choice has to be correct."

One of the main reasons for frustration in life is that people identify with their worries and are unable to find solutions. This is an incorrect idea. My guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, told me a sentence which has inspired me all my life: "There are no simple solutions in life, only intelligent choices."

Therefore, say to yourself, "This is possible, this is possible, this is possible, this is possible. Out of these four methods this one is more appropriate for me and that has to be my choice."

Discover what choices you have and do not worry about the solution which you are never going to find. When you are looking for a solution you are thinking along one track, however if there are four roads, you can always choose one and bypass the others. The ability to make the right choice should be developed with wisdom, understanding, compassion and love.

This should be everyone's effort, for today you are children, and tomorrow you will be parents and the day after tomorrow you will be grandparents. That continuity will always be maintained, yet you should not maintain the continuity of worry.

In a negative environment, there is no solution and no correct choice. To maintain the continuity of discovering the choices in life, the thoughts and ideas in the family have to be clear and positive.

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



Come Outside the Room of Worry

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



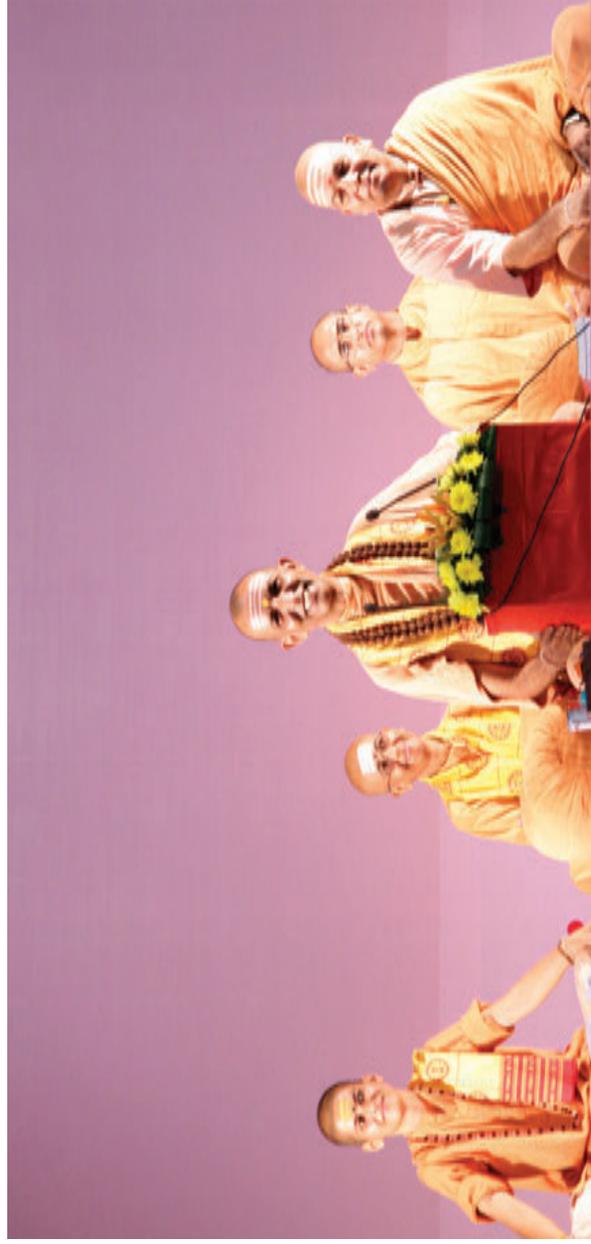
If you sit in a room and complain that you do not receive sunlight, then what is the solution? Nobody can bring the sunlight inside the room for you.

If you want to sit in the sunlight then leave the room and go outside. If you want to leave tension then leave the room of tension. If you want to leave worry then leave the room of worry. Once you leave worry and tension and come outside, there is another light, another room, another experience.

Once your desires, your worries and tensions are gone, the mind becomes carefree. The one who does not need anything is the real king and emperor.

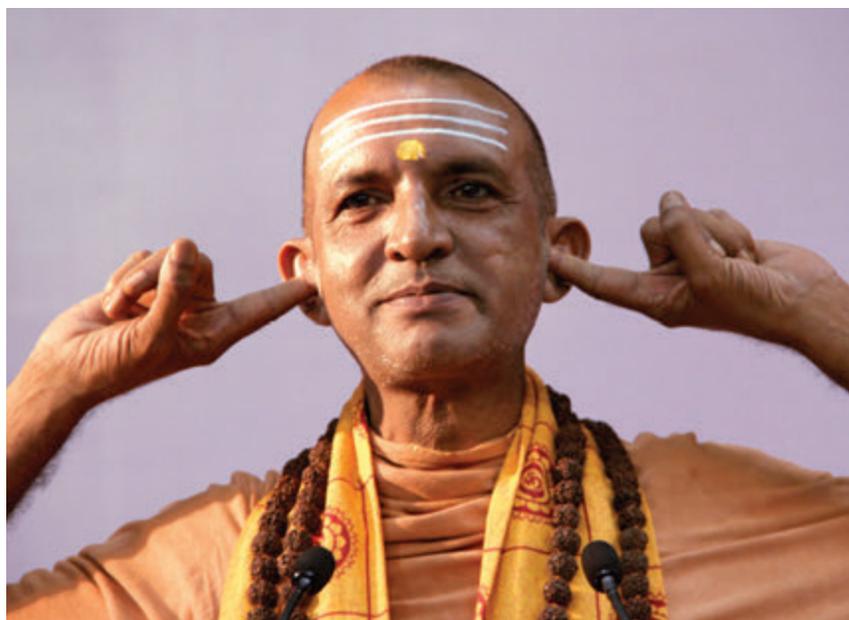
Worries and tension creep in when you need everything, however the person who does not need anything has no reason to worry, become tense or anxious.

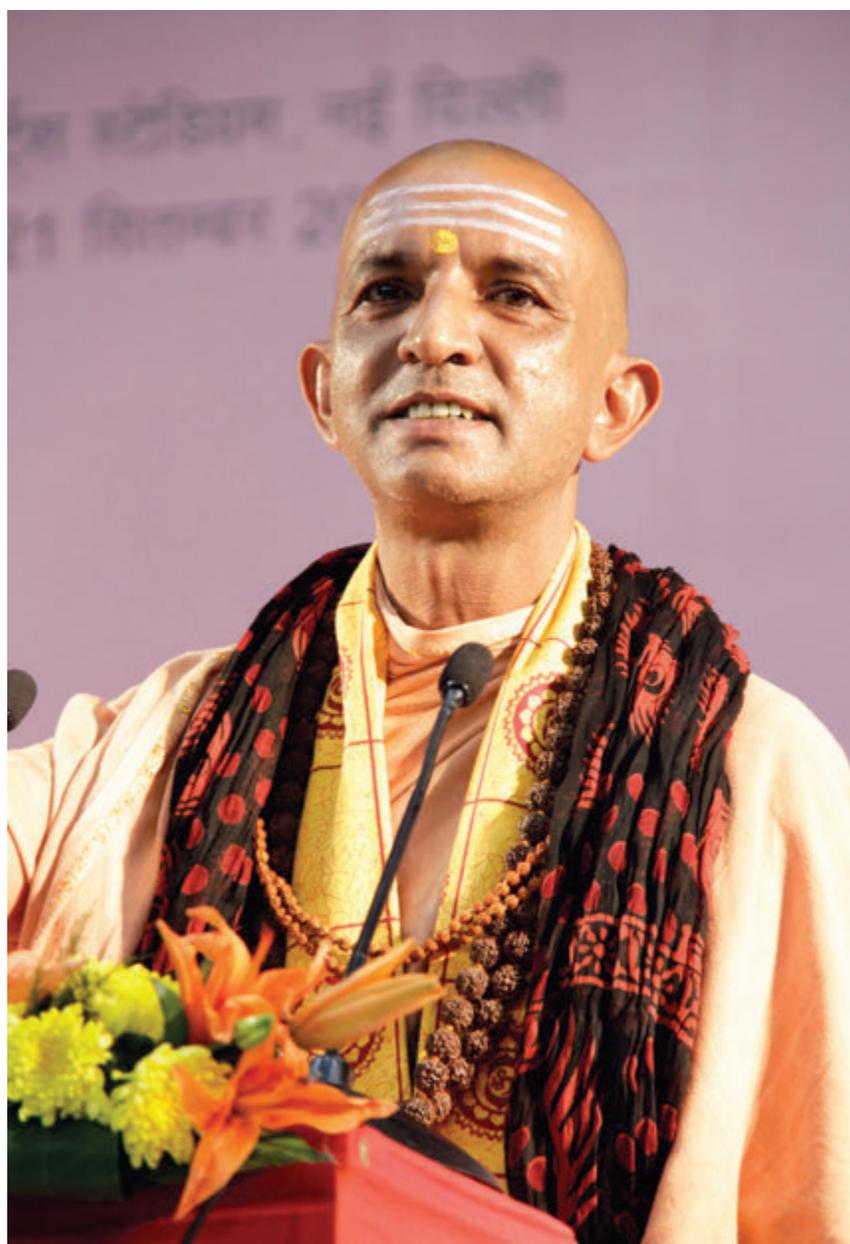
– 20 September 2014, Tyagaraj Sports Stadium, Delhi, India



ार के अधिवासियों तथा बिहारयोग वि







What to do about my asthma?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



According to yoga, if you are able to keep your physical posture right, you can get rid of asthma. Therefore, the secret is: keep your physical posture right.

When you have asthma the chest constricts, the shoulders droop forward, the body bends forward. There is constriction

in the lungs and difficulty in breathing. People use an inhaler, take steam with the purpose of opening the constriction a little.

According to yoga, if you suffer from asthma, regardless of your age, no matter if you are an old person or a child, you have to do only one thing: expand the chest, so that once the lungs are open it is easier to breathe. The appropriate practices to open up the chest are bhujangasana, dhanurasana, ushtrasana. These practices expand the chest. They must be performed not only once but you should remain in one posture for at least two to three minutes, according to your comfort level. Do not perform the asana mechanically.

For example, if you perform bhujangasana, do not come down immediately. Remain in that state for two minutes, or as long as possible, by taking normal breaths and then come down. If you perform dhanurasana, hold the posture for as long as possible and slowly prepare such a condition, such a state in your body that your chest and your lungs never constrict.

When people come to yoga for the treatment of asthma they are taught backward bending postures and with that alone they are benefitted. Therefore, these three yogasana, bhujangasana, dhanurasana and ushtrasana, must be practised. For anyone who has difficulty in breathing, whether it is bronchitis, asthma or eosinophilia, the backward bending postures are successful in removing every condition related to the lungs.

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



Watering the Seeds of Harmony and Happiness



Arriving in Delhi the day before the program we went to see the venue and lend a hand with preparations. It was a huge sports stadium ready for teams of muscular athletes to proudly display their skill while fighting it out for the prize. But the only team in sight was the cleaning team, mopping the floor before the stage could be built. It was an empty shell, waiting for a soul.

The back rooms were a hive of activity. Truckloads of books, tee shirts, angavastras and other prasada items were being unpacked and organized. We spent a few hours sorting tee shirt sizes and colours then left the Bharat Yatra karma yogis to work through the night.

Next morning we arrived with Swamiji for the 6.30–8.30 am yoga class. A kirtan group was singing and the floor of that great stadium was quickly being covered with yoga mats, blankets, pieces of cloth – anything that defined enough space for a body. The people of Delhi and surrounding areas had risen early, ready for an asana session to kick start their day, and no doubt curious about this visiting yoga guru from far away Bihar. It was Swamiji's first visit to Delhi in almost ten years. For those who knew him, it had been a long wait and their faces lit up as he entered. The tiredness dropped from the limbs of the karma yogis and the sports stadium became a sadhana hall. Its moving spirit had entered.

Seated on the stage, Swamiji looked out at the crowd, still streaming in, being guided to their places, carpeting the hall with people. The kirtan ended and Swamiji began. Those waiting for asanas had to keep waiting as Swamiji taught the three morning mantras and then gave a talk about sadhana, explaining that hatha yoga comes first, then raja yoga. After concluding that a non-transcendental mind cannot experience the transcendence of self-realization, it was time to begin at the beginning, with pawanmuktasana part one. Everyone took their awareness to their toes, and followed the instructions of the master, all the way up to their necks. A rest in shavasana was followed by some pranayama, and then yoga nidra.

Each morning Swamiji followed this pattern of mantras, satsang, asana, pranayama and yoga nidra, building on the previous day's teaching. A range of standing postures, including surya namaskara was taught, followed by nadi shodhana and tranquilizing pranayamas. Swamiji mentioned that these pranayamas are the need, as everyone is so stimulated, especially in a metropolis the size of Delhi. In yoga nidra, he focused on sankalpa, body rotation and the breath. As the days went by, the numbers grew to capacity, with more than 1,000 people practising morning sadhana before going about their daily lives.

Q&A

During mid-morning and evening sessions Swamiji answered many questions, giving him the opportunity to convey a broad picture of yoga and spiritual life. The most memorable of these was for a group of children who are attending yoga classes. With their teachers they sat at the very front, just below the stage, where Swamiji could really engage with them. They had prepared a set of questions, as interesting to the adults as to the kids: What do you do in your spare time? Did you go to school? What career would you have chosen if you hadn't been a yoga guru? When you were our age did you know you would be a famous sannyasin? The final questions were from mothers: Why is it said that the mother is the first guru? Why do mothers worry so much about their children even when they have grown up? In closing, Swamiji gave a parting message to the children: laugh every day, love every day and live properly.

In-depth satsang

Every evening Swamiji spoke for at least two hours. These satsangs went into astonishing depth as Swamiji covered a huge amount of material whilst brilliantly interpreting the traditional teachings with his genius and flare for original thinking. Every night the numbers grew, until at least 1,500 people were squeezed in.

Swamiji took them on a journey through time by tracing the origins of yoga from Shiva's teachings to Parvati, gradually climbing through the ages, elaborating on the development of the various branches of yoga by great sages, until finally arriving in the modern era with a flourish of science, synthesized yoga systems and the spread of yoga into society. He gave his recipes for yoga sabji (the correct amount of each ingredient gives it a fine flavour) and the spiritual journey, which is the movement from tamas to sattwa.

To illustrate the transit from tamas to sattwa he gave a simple example that can be practised by everyone every day:

when you see the goodness in others, harshness is converted into gentleness, converting *tamas* into *sattwa* and mundane life into spiritual experience. On this journey, the chakras must be traversed. From *mooladhara* to *vishuddhi* they are concerned with worldly life, while *ajna* is the doorway between the world and spirit. Travelling the path, there are four levels of consciousness upon which light must be shed: the conscious mind is illumined by the sun; the sub-conscious by the moon; the unconscious by the stars; and the superconscious by *atma*.

Guru prasad

Swamiji also gave satsang to several organisations elsewhere in Delhi and gave diksha to three hundred people. He taught for up to eight hours a day, meeting people in between those teaching sessions. His tireless energy for giving inspired the city of Delhi, as attendees went home laden with books, CDs and magazines, ensuring that they will continue to grow as they nurture the seeds that were sown in their hearts and minds by one who waters the happiness and harmony that lie dormant in the soil of human nature.

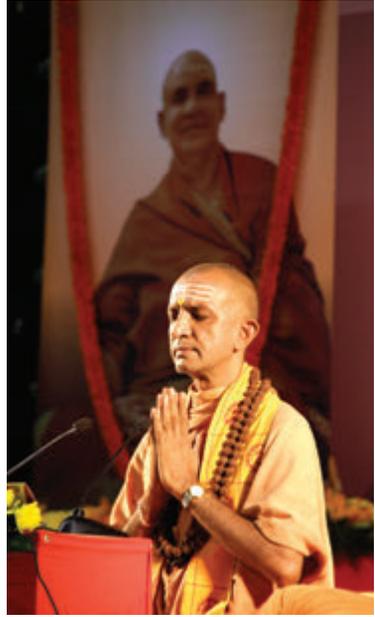
– Swami Ahimsadhara, Australia



Our Tradition

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Our tradition begins with Swami Sivananda. Being a doctor he knew the science of the human body, human anatomy and psychology. He knew about environmental conditions and the problems that people face in society. These points are important for there are so many sadhus and mahatmas who have no idea about society or what it needs; they just talk. Swami Sivananda understood the needs of society and tried to fulfil those needs. He kept his own philosophy and knowledge in the background.



Vedanta and yoga

The tradition of sannyasins is Vedanta and not yoga. The philosophy of sannyasins is the philosophy of Vedanta. According to Swami Sivananda, Vedanta is all right as a personal experience but one cannot teach it. When a person falls sick and one tells that person, "You are not this body and you are not this mind, you are a pure everlasting conscious soul," he will not listen. Instead he will reject it and say, "I am suffering. I have asthma, I feel the pain of injections and you are trying to tell me that I am not this body!"

Vedanta is not for people of society who are engrossed in the material world. Until one renounces society and adopts a new idea, thought or lifestyle, one should not propagate

Vedanta. If a person is interested in propagation, then it is yoga that should be propagated for through yoga one will be able to improve people's personality. Swami Sivananda used to say that one should apply yoga to develop the quality and capacity of the mind, emotions and actions; for the purpose of yoga is not realization or a vision of the divine. The purpose of yoga is to develop the faculties of one's life.

Necessity in life

One can aspire for self-realization, *moksha* or liberation, however this is not a necessity in life. So what is? The need is to allow the strength and potential of life to express itself. In that process one gives meaning to one's life, one attains peace, connects with one's inner being or soul, and one acquires a vision and purpose in life.

All sadhus say that the purpose of life is *moksha*. Once someone asked Sri Swami Satyananda if the purpose of all spiritual knowledge and discipline was the vision of the divine or *ishwar darshan*. He replied that it was not. When the person said that the scriptures say so, he said that it might be written but it is not necessary.

No doubt it is written in the scriptures yet it is not a necessity, for people do not have the capacity to know the transcendental reality. God is transcendental reality yet people's minds are not transcendental. They are not transcendental and their senses are not transcendental. Therefore, people who do not possess this capacity, how can they attempt to know what is transcendental? When he was asked what one can do about this, Swamiji replied that one can develop this capacity. One's nature is tamasic yet it can be changed to being more sattvic.

One has to sort out the problems, difficulties and distresses in life. If one tries to find out the reason for the disturbance and restlessness in one's life, then it is not difficult to attain peace. The human condition is such that one can fine-tune one's life and one can always adjust. When a human being has no idea

about the reason for the prevailing restlessness yet continues to search for peace, there is a problem. The moment one realizes the reason for the problems, one does not need to search for peace. One can find the solution oneself. Once the cause of the problem is known, it is easy to look for a solution.

This non-transcendental mind cannot experience the transcendental reality. Sri Swami Satyananda suggests that one can work on creating a suitable or capable mind by removing the impurities of the mind to end the limitations of the mind and activate its energy. In this way one can try to understand the supreme reality.

Tackle life

In our tradition, the teachings of our paramguru Swami Sivananda and our guru Swami Satyananda make it clear that the purpose of yoga is connected with life. The purpose of yoga is to activate one's inner faculties. If in this process one experiences peace, prosperity or the supreme reality then that is a bonus. However, the focus should remain on the management of body, mind and life.

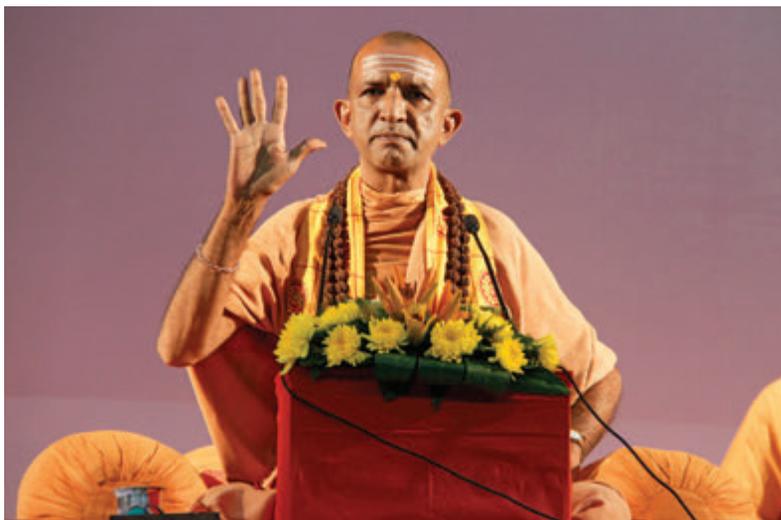
To achieve this goal one should prepare a suitable personal program or sadhana that can address the needs of one's body, the needs of the mind and that can transform one's karma into a creative karma. The teaching of yoga which the Bihar School of Yoga propagates has this purpose – to deal with situations, problems, difficulties, illness, psychological and spiritual limitations through yogic practices. We have to tackle them, we have to address them.

*– 21 September 2014, The
Railway Officers Club,
Delhi, India*



Chitta Vritti Nirodhah

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali it is written that the patterns of consciousness, *chitta vritti*, must be blocked, *nirodhah*, through yoga.

The patterns or modifications of the mind are fivefold, and they are painful, *klishta*, or not painful, *aklishta*. The five vrittis are: *pramana*, right knowledge; *viparyaya*, wrong knowledge; *vikalpa*, imagination; *nidra*, sleep; and *smriti*, memory.

Four vrittis

Pramana means confirmation. Confirmation is required by the intellect, which unlike faith does not require confirmation. Logic requires confirmation, intuition does not require confirmation. Pramana is the process of confirming a situation, an idea or an event.

In vikalpa there is conflict and duality: this is appropriate, that is inappropriate, this should be done, that should not be

done. A person is not able to understand. In vikalpa there are two paths, and one does not know which path to take.

Viparyaya is wrong knowledge or delusion. There are three people, two of them look at each other and smile, and the third person thinks that they are mocking him, and he becomes sad. This is called delusion, *bhranti*. It is something that does not exist, yet one imposes it on oneself. Sorrow is the result of wrong knowledge. Delusion gives rise to sorrow.

Nidra means disconnection. When the pressure of the senses, the pressure of the world becomes too much for the mind and brain, one feels the need to disconnect for a while. If one remains in a noisy place for a while, after some time one wants to have peace, sit quietly, be alone and away from people. There is a need for relaxation. The state of sleep is the same: withdrawing the mind from worldly objects, so that the mind can have some peace.

The fifth vritti is called *smriti*, memory. Memory is something that has its grasp on every individual, and no one can free himself from memory. Memory always has a connection with the past. Whenever a memory surges up in one's conscious awareness, one's consciousness moves into the past, ties itself there, and does not look ahead.

Chitta and smriti

In the statement of the *Yoga Sutras*, *Chitta vritti nirodhah* - "Blocking the patters of consciousness", there is no reference to blocking the *buddhi vritti*, the vritti of the intellect, or the *manas vritti*, the vritti of the mind, or the *ahamkara vritti*, the vritti of the ego. The reference is to the blocking of chitta vritti.

In the *Yoga Sutras* it is said that there are four expressions of the mind: *buddhi*, *manas*, *chitta*, *ahamkara*. The meaning of mind is that which thinks, reflects, contemplates. The mind only makes an effort to know, beyond that there is no work for the mind. To reflect, to reason, to think, to understand, to know, this is the work of the mind.

There is no need to explain ahamkara. No individual is free of ahamkara. Whoever has a mind also has ahamkara. Chitta is the centre of the mind, where past memories are stored. Chitta is the storehouse of the memories of countless births.

When one thinks of one's near and dear ones, childhood comes to mind, and with the recollection of childhood the mind goes into the past and becomes absorbed with it. When the mind links with the past, it forgets the present.

The memories of the past are good as well as bad. Many people are not able to carefully preserve good memories. They easily hold on to bad ones. People always remember the moments of sorrow in their lives and are quick to forget the moments of joy. The person, who is able to remember the moments of joy and forget the moments of sorrow, is always happy in life. The person, who forgets the moments of joy and ties himself to the moments of sorrow, lives and moves in the world. Memory is spoken of as a vritti, which originates from the chitta.

The sixth vritti

Sage Patanjali says that it is these chitta vrittis that should be blocked, for they disturb the mind. However, once one has blocked the vrittis, can one remain without vritti in this world? Never! The presence of vritti is necessary, and one cannot manage life in the absence of vrittis.

A sixth vritti must emerge, the brahmi vritti. The meaning of *brahmi vritti* is excellence, perfection, the perfect state, the attainment of perfection. With the brahmi vritti one becomes free from the happiness and sorrow of the world and is established in the realm of peace.

Through yoga sadhana and intense spiritual discipline the chitta vrittis are blocked. The vrittis, responsible for creating turbulence and restlessness in the mind, come to an end, and the brahmi vritti emerges which is responsible for the evolution of the mind.

This brahmi vrittis is a sattvic vritti. The vrittis which Patanjali referred to as painful and not painful are worldly vrittis. According to Sri Swami Satyananda, the cessation of worldly vrittis and the attainment of the spiritual vritti, a spiritual mentality, is the purpose of yoga. According to the shastras, to acquire the spiritual vritti, one has to practise meditation, recite mantras, practise yoga sadhana, observe yamas and niyamas and engage in rigorous spiritual discipline. There should be only one focus: how to attain excellence in life, and for this the observation of yama and niyama is necessary.

Towards a new mentality

For blocking the chitta vrittis it is absolutely necessary to take the help of yamas and niyamas. Without applying the yamas and niyamas the vrittis cannot be controlled. One may perform asana, do pranayama, meditate, recite mantras, do japa, do pooja and recite prayers. There are many types of personal effort one can make, yet there will be no control over the restless chitta vrittis.

With the observance of the yamas and niyamas one finds the way to dissolve the chitta vrittis, and the mind will immediately become peaceful. Sri Swami Satyananda used to say that in life there can never be trouble for there is a solution for every problem.

People say, "I am in such and such situation. I can't understand how to get out of it. I can't find the solution." Every problem has a solution and there is a way out of every situation.

Once this is understood and experienced, the path becomes simple and free of obstacles. The yamas and niyamas are for the blocking of chitta vrittis and subsequently for the ascent of energy. In this process one acquires a new mentality. One is reborn in this world in the form of a yogi.

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

A World without Existence

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Address at the YMCA: Precisely at 5.45 pm, Siva was at the Massey Hall to address the members of the YMCA. Deputy Food Minister of India presided over the function.

Siva gave the cream of the capital's intelligentsia a practical method of wiping the world out of their mind. He related to them his visit to Mahatmaji's Sabarmati Ashram and the austerities that the inmates practised there.

He said, "They go inside a room and seclude themselves for twenty days. They never come out. Food is sent inside. There they do anushthana for those twenty days. Just remain like that for twenty days with no contact with the outside world and at the same time devote all your time to sadhana for self-realization. You will see that the world loses its attraction for you and you begin to enjoy the atmic bliss. Then you will know that the world has no existence in reality.

Give up reading newspapers. The newspapers bring the whole world before you all the time. They disturb your mind. They destroy your tranquillity. No doubt, the newspapers give you knowledge of politics and so many other things; but there is nothing in them which gives you peace. Give up newspaper reading: the world will gradually recede from you, and in the course of time you will realize that the world has no essential existence."

– 7 November 1950, Delhi,

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

Mission of a Servant

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



I have definitely gone through the different stages of spiritual life, there is no doubt about it. At the same time, I have not chosen a mission of my own. I have been given a duty by my guru who had a realization of his own, and he found that I was a very efficient channel for the fulfilment of his awareness and his knowledge. I exist as an instrument or a tool. I don't do very much of thinking or planning myself.

Things come and I participate. I have never led a life of ambition. As they come, I attend to them, because I myself have gone through the experiences in my childhood, and later when I lived with my guru for a long time and then when I moved throughout India and outside, just as a beggar, a mendicant, not as a preacher.

I moved right up to Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan, nothing doing, like an ordinary sadhu. But, in 1963, on 13th July, when I was staying in Munger, I received a very clear instruction, and since then I have been receiving instructions. It is as clear as I am talking to you; it is not a hallucination or a dream, a vision or a whispering, I don't know when it happens to me. I don't know how to get in touch with it, it just happens.

Then, after that I said, "Okay," and I stayed in Munger. I did not even know that the work would grow so much, that yoga awareness would become worldwide. So I found myself a very little and very inadequate place, because it was for me and not for a mission. But within a year or so, it was such a tremendous thing that people came from about seventy countries without invitation. I don't know. Someone said, "We received your instructions," or "We received your call," or "You called us in a dream." I was surprised because I did not know them. They came from different countries and they lived with me for nine months or a year.

Then they invited me all over the world, and to that I said, "I am not going anywhere, abroad or elsewhere. As a mendicant I can go with a jola, a shoulder bag." But when I went for the first time, there was no organization; there was no planning; there was no secretary. You understand, a man of very limited resources and with very limited goals. I went to Singapore, that is all. I went to Hong-Kong, Australia, America, South America and to different places. Everywhere it seemed those people had received the news already. I don't know how.

This confirmed me to think there is something which has to be done and I am only a participant, just a servant. And since then I have been doing things.

So, I have a mission of a servant, not the mission of a great man, you see. That mission belongs to saints.

– 27 February 1981, Delhi, India

Spiritual Journey

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The material journey is from the top to the bottom through the chakras and the spiritual journey is the ascent from the bottom back to the top. On this spiritual journey divinity is experienced only when consciousness and energy unite. Many people think of yoga as an atheistic doctrine or system as there is no concept of God or deity in yoga. In yoga the name of Rama, Krishna, Devi or of any other god or goddess does not arise. In yoga the universal soul, *Paramatma*, has been referred to by only one name, Ishwara.

Nashwara and Ishwara

There are two words, one is Ishwara, the other is nashwara. Both words have shwa, one is prefixed with 'i', the other with 'na'. *Shwa* signifies time, whether the past or future time.

Nashwara means, that which was not in the past, is not in the present and will not be in the future. *Nashwara* means human beings, for they change every day; each day the state of mind changes. Every six hours the cells divide. The person who was six hours ago is no longer the same person six hours later; there is a new body. In this constant change there is no permanent state, and that is called nashwara.

Ishwara means the energy, the tattwa, which existed in the past, exists in the present and will exist in the future. That which is unchanging, permanent and eternal, is called Ishwara. According to the *Yoga Sutras*, it is beyond the experience of joy and the experience of sorrow. What is beyond the experience of joy and sorrow is called Paramtattwa. Whatever experiences joy and sorrow is not called Paramatma but *Jivatma*, the individual soul. By attaining this body, and through the medium of this body, one experiences pleasure as well as pain. Neither pleasure nor pain is permanent.

When Shiva and Shakti unite in sahasrara one experiences divinity, one realizes the eternal nature of one's life. Then one can say with full faith, 'I am unchanging and immortal, in any age I am not destroyed'. The soul exists in the three periods of past, present and future. Time cannot cause the disappearance and destruction of the Self.

Sri Krishna imparted this knowledge to Arjuna on the battlefield. He said, "What are you worried about? You are worried about the body, but the body is perpetually changing; and that which changes is also eventually destroyed, and subject to birth. Why are you infatuated with that material form? Why are you ensnared by that material form? Keep yourself free." The message Sri Krishna gave to Arjuna explains the impermanence of life.

The power of union

Ishwara is endowed with special qualities. When *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* become one, there is no difference between them. When no distinction remains, the three *gunas* united as one are expressed in the form of an unbelievable energy and power. A branch can be easily snapped with one's hands, two are more difficult to break, and it is a still greater challenge to break three branches. The more branches are gathered together, the more difficult it is to break them, for there is strength in union. Nobody can break that unity. In the same way, when the three *gunas* unite in that ultimate, *param*, state, the energy of the ultimate is realized in the form of Ishwara.

The identity of Ishwara takes name and form according to one's wishes, and is expressed with a set of attributes. According to one's emotions and intelligence, one is able to see the essence, *tattwa*, in different forms. According to one's feelings one sees the form of one's deity.

There is a beautiful episode in the *Ramacharitamanas*. When Rama arrived to break the bow at the swayamvar of Sita, he entered the royal gathering: the yogis saw him in the form of light; the other contenders saw him in the form of a mighty warrior; the young women saw him in the form of their beloved; mothers saw him in the form of their child.

All the people present saw Rama according to their own feeling. This suggests that people try to see their deity in the form that is in accordance with their feelings. According to the feeling, the deity takes either the manifest or the unmanifest form. As long as emotion is absent, the formless can never take form, and that which is with form can never become formless.

Param tattwa

The ultimate, divine essence, *param tattwa*, has a place in life. Some people say that Ishwara resides in the heart of human beings in the form of light. In the Upanishads it is said that Ishwara resides in each human being in the form of a light the size of the thumb. This is a way of saying that one has a gross

material form and the essence within, the primal essence, is small and subtle. One is free to express this in whichever form and with whatever name one wishes to.

No matter what name is given, what description is chosen, one creates it out of feeling, knowledge and faith. It is one's expression. However, the primal essence has no name, form, attributes or qualities.

Every individual is surrounded by that essence, as a fish is surrounded by water, yet it is not aware that it lives in water. Similarly, each person exists in Ishwara, yet is not aware that he resides in Ishwara. People think, Ishwara is distinct from them. They wish to search for Him, they wish to attain Him, and live in the world.

In the fortieth Samhita of the *Yajur Veda* there is a mantra:

Om Ishavasyamidam sarvam, yatkincha jagatyaam jagat.

This entire universe is the residence of Ishwara.

Therefore, where Ishawara resides, there one resides, and that which is given to enjoy, should be taken as divine prasad and enjoyed as such. This is the first mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*.

Like fire and wood

This is not philosophy, belief or an ideology. Sages have tried to convey that one's entire life is steeped in God, steeped in that primal essence. One has emerged from that primal essence or param tattwa. In the end, one has to dissolve back into that primal essence. So where is difference, where is separation?

Fire is hidden in wood. If the wood becomes wet and one lights the fire, the wet wood will still burn. There may be more smoke, yet the wood will certainly burn. If one lights a match to dry wood, it will burn. Whatever the condition of the wood, whether wet or dry, the *agni tattwa*, fire element, is present in a hidden state. The agni tattwa is present not only in one portion of the wood; it is everywhere, and the whole



log of wood burns. However, nobody sees the agni tattwa in wood. Until the time the wood is set on fire, no one is able to experience the agni tattwa inside the wood.

In the same way, in this life the individual is always permeated with that Ishwariya tattwa. No one is able to experience it, for no one knows how to ignite the fire within. This is done by means of spiritual practice, *sadhana*, rigorous spiritual effort, *tapasya*, and by changing one's expression and behaviour in life. Only then is one able to discover that essence within. This is the aim and purpose of spiritual practice, intense spiritual effort, kundalini and raja yoga. It is the aim of all yogas.

To set oneself on fire means to take one's circumstances and transform them; to take the mentality with which one exists and change it; to undo one's earlier state and form and create a new form.

When one assumes a new form, the earlier form is given up, is finished and dies. The limitation that a person experiences in life is burnt. The tamasic nature that a person experiences comes to an end and one tries to establish oneself in a state of sattwa.

The aim of sattwaguna

People often wonder about the meaning of spirituality: is it having the vision of God or the realization of the Self? There is a simple way to explain the word spirituality. You have seen a scale, haven't you, a ruler which is marked in inches. On one end of the scale is sattwaguna, on the other end is tamoguna, and the journey from tamoguna to sattwaguna is the spiritual journey. The journey from materialism to the divine is not called a spiritual journey; that is called *Bhagavat Yatra*, the search for God. When one starts moving from tamoguna to sattwaguna, it is spiritual, and the meaning of spiritual is to awaken the inner experience.

This is the distinction between religion and spirituality. Religion is not only spiritual, it is also material. Spirituality is not material, it is only spiritual. The identity of spirituality is singular and the identity of religion is multiple, and here lies the difference between religion and spirituality. Religion says, 'unite yourself with your deity', and spirituality says, 'travel from tamas to sattwa'. There is a point where the experience of religion and spirituality becomes the same once the intellect is transformed. Then one no longer perceives religion in the limited manner, rather one begins to experience its universality. When one experiences the universality of religion, then one enters the state of luminosity. This state of luminosity, sattwaguna, is where religion and spirituality converge at their final point. Until that final point is reached, the two do not meet.

A person may be of religious disposition yet in spite of his religious disposition, the spiritual bent may be lacking in his life. When the spiritual vritti has awakened in a person's mind, he becomes righteous or *dharmic* on his own.

It is important to know and understand the difference between the path and process of spirituality and religion. Spirituality links a person with himself, and religion links a person with a belief. Spirituality links a person with his inner self, religion links a person with an ideology, a creed and a doctrine.

Yoga speaks of spirituality, not of religion. When it refers to spirituality, it is necessary to reject all the masks of religion. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (18:66):

*Sarvadharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja;
Aham twaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah.*

Renounce all dharmas means give up your earlier, fixed thoughts and ideologies, then you will know the all-pervasiveness of Ishwara, and you will actually gain an understanding of that essence or tattwa.

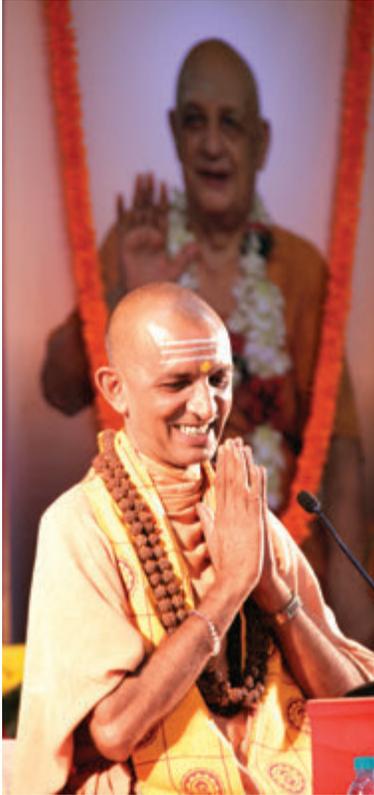
Religion does not speak of the universality and all-pervasiveness of the divine principle. It points to the limited state of divinity. In that limited state, a person's work and teaching takes the form of a religious movement which people follow. In spirituality, one follows a practice and sadhana to transform oneself and to awaken oneself. This is the purpose of yoga.

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



Thank You, Delhi

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are many questions I did not answer, therefore I have a request: meditate at night before going to sleep and imagine that you are sitting under a *Kalpa Taru*, wish-fulfilling tree. Imagine that you are receiving peace and happiness under that tree. When you start experiencing peace and happiness then whatever questions you had and which were not answered, ask those questions to yourself. Under that *Kalpa Taru* you will surely get the answer to your question. This is my assurance.

It is important for the mind to be peaceful, happy and blissful. So, first of all in the state of meditation colour your mind, emotion and soul with peace and happiness. Once your inner personality is coloured with the feeling of peace and happiness you will receive the answer to all your problems by yourself. With this thought I say *Hari Om Tat Sat*.

It is my prayer to God to give us another opportunity so that we can meet soon and again have the chance to share our love. And I thank the people of Delhi for opening their hearts.

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



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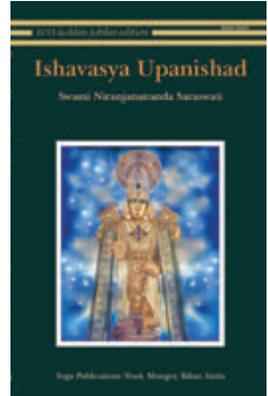
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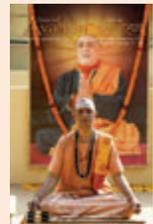


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Under No. HR/FBD/297/13-15
Office of posting: BPC Faridabad
Date of posting: 1st-7th of every month
- Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers, India
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issn 0972-5717

bar code

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<i>Dec 25</i>	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
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<i>Feb 1-May 25</i>	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (Hindi)
<i>Feb 9-12</i>	Sri Yantra Aradhana
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<i>Apr 24-30</i>	Yoga Capsule: Digestive (Hindi)
<i>Jul 15-18</i>	Guru Purnima Satsang Program
<i>Jul 19</i>	Guru Paduka Poojan
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