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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

OBSTACLES TO SADHANA

Doubt

Doubt seriously torments and disturbs one's peace of mind. An aspirant begins to doubt the existence of God and whether he will succeed in his God-realization.

Whenever doubt becomes overpowering one should at once take recourse in the company of saintly and wise people and remain with them for some time. The mind is maya. It misleads people through doubts and forgetfulness, and the doubting mind deludes the aspirant. Lack of faith is a dangerous obstacle on the spiritual path.

—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 ॥

Ritual and Remembrance

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



People often ask how to maintain regularity in their practice of mantra japa. There are two aspects of mantra. The first aspect is sadhana and the second aspect is remembrance.

Until today, you only think of your mantra as sadhana: when you have to sit, hold your mala, do one mala, two malas, three malas, whatever is prescribed, and you become obsessed with a ritual. Sadhana becomes a ritual.

Every morning you get up thinking, 'This is what I do', every night before you go to sleep, 'This is what I do', every day during the day, 'This is what I do'. Everything has become a ritual, even mantra japa has become a ritual. When a sadhana becomes a ritual, there are times when the mind will break away from it. Therefore, in yoga two ideas have been given: sadhana and remembrance.

You are given a mantra and you are told to do one mala, two malas, three malas, five malas every day. You are told to

fix a space, a time, a location and do your sadhana. So you do that. Then there are times when due to circumstances, work or other engagements you miss your sadhana, the ritual. One day, two, three, four days, one month, six months, one year. Sometimes you come back when there is time and when you remember, 'Oh! I've not done my sadhana for months.' If you think of anything as a sadhana, a ritual, then the mind may be cut due to circumstances.

However, when you think of mantra not as sadhana but as remembrance, then even when you are walking you can repeat a mantra with every step; five minutes, seven minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes. If you are walking, repeat your mantra and you will be surprised, for you are doing five malas while walking without even realizing that you have done five malas. With each step, one hundred steps, one hundred mantras, five hundred steps, five hundred mantras, one thousand steps, one thousand mantras.

In this manner you are actually doing more mantra japa than what you would do as your sadhana.

In sadhana you are doing two malas, you feel compelled and you want to finish quickly. You are moving your beads fast without focus, attention or concentration. The ten minutes it takes to complete two malas you try to finish in five. Therefore, your sadhana is not sincere. The effort you are making is not a sincere effort. You are trying to do the practice quickly so that you can be free of your obligation.

If you walk five hundred steps, you could do in one walk five malas of mantra repetition.

This is known as remembrance, which is spontaneous, simple and does not involve any force or obligation. It is natural. If done as remembrance, every day brings a new opportunity to begin your sankalpa of regularity in mantra japa afresh.

– 15 March 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Who is Happy?

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



A sage is happy. A yogi is happy. The person who has controlled the mind is happy.

Happiness comes from peace of mind. Peace of mind comes from a state of mind where there are no desires, no *moha*, infatuation, no *vishaya* or worldly pleasures, no thoughts of objects. You should forget all ideas of pleasure before you enter the domain of peace.

When there is a desire in the mind, the mind is filled with *rajas*. It is in an agitated condition. It is restless and unpeaceful. It will be restless until the desired object is attained. When the object is attained and enjoyed, when the desire is gratified, the mind moves towards the inner soul. It ceases functioning. It is filled with *sattwa*. All thoughts subside for a split second; the mind rests in the soul within. The soul's bliss is reflected in the intellect. The ignorant person thinks that he is receiving the happiness from the object; just as the dog which is biting a dry bone imagines that it is getting the pleasure from the blood

oozing from the bone, whereas in reality, the blood comes from its own palate.

Towards ananda

Spiritual bliss is the highest bliss. Spiritual bliss is bliss of one's own soul. It is *ananda*, transcendental bliss, independent of objects. It is continuous, uniform and eternal. It is enjoyed only by the sage.

Sensual pleasure comes out of emotion, but bliss of the soul is self-delight. It is the innate nature of the atman. Pleasure is temporary and fleeting, bliss is everlasting. Pleasure is mixed with pain, bliss is unalloyed happiness. Pleasure depends upon nerves, mind and objects, bliss is independent and self-existent. There is effort in attaining sensual pleasures, but there is no striving in experiencing the bliss of the soul. The drop joins the ocean, and the *jiva*, the individual soul, floats in the ocean of bliss.

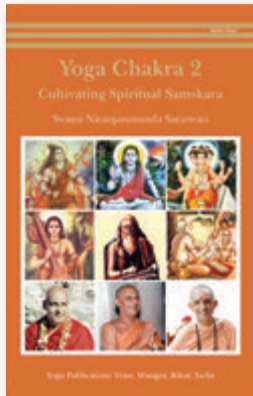
Purify the mind by japa, satsang, charity, control of mind, self-restraint, selfless service, study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Upanishads and *Yoga Vasishtha*, practise - yama and niyama, pranayama, vairagya and tyaga. You will then get a proper instrument for meditation, a calm, sharp, subtle, one-pointed mind. Start meditation with the help of this instrument in the morning and at night. You will be convinced of a supersensuous spiritual bliss. You will have to feel this spiritual ananda yourself. Can you explain the happiness of sugar candy to a boy who has never tasted the same? No, you cannot. The boy himself must eat sugar candy. He must, when he has grown up, taste carnal pleasure. A new kind of indescribable ananda will dawn in you.

In order to laugh you do not have to look for a joke book. Just look at the limitations of your thoughts and mind and laugh. That laughter will be the most natural, spontaneous and uplifting.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Happiness: The First Yogic Yama

From Yoga Chakra 2: Cultivating Spiritual Samskara, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Many thousands of years ago, Parvati asked Shiva, her consort and guru, “In this creation, this manifest dimension, this world, this nature, everything is transient, nothing is permanent. There is so much pain, suffering, anxiety and frustration here. What can one do?” Shiva replied, “There are methods and practices by which one can overcome pain or suffering, recognize the causes of pain or suffering in a particular moment and overcome them. However, the best way to manage any pain or suffering is to remain happy. Therefore, always be happy.” In this way, happiness became the first yama.

Any negative state of mind can be managed by being happy, by smiling and laughing. Even depression can be managed by being happy. You may wonder, ‘If I am unhappy, if I am suffering and depressed, how can I be happy?’ Yes, you can be – because happiness is your natural state of being. It is a limited understanding of happiness when you think that you need a cause or a trigger to be happy or that if the circumstances are difficult you cannot be happy.

This can be understood when you look at children. They also cry, become angry, don’t want to eat this or that food, but this state does not last. Immediately afterwards they are laughing with an innate happiness; the circumstances are superficial and irrelevant to their happiness. Think of the

laughter of children. Why does it sound so beautiful? Because it is natural, and not a result of any circumstance or joke.

That happiness, which children express, continues to be a part of you. However, adult life makes you forget it. With the onset of teenage years, grumpiness comes. It may be a result of hormones, technically speaking, but this is when you begin to move in a different direction. Your awareness connects more and more with external circumstances, and they buffet you. To be spiritual is to move back into that natural state, which is happy without cause. That is what you have to learn to connect with, experience and express.

Happy without a cause

As long as you are dependent on a cause to make you happy, the absence of that cause will make you unhappy. For example, you sing a very nice kirtan, everyone praises you and you feel very happy. The next day you don't sing well, someone else sings much better than you and receives all the praise, and you feel dejected and unhappy. Therefore, if you depend on external circumstances to make you happy, you will always be swinging between happiness and unhappiness. This is samsara. To develop samskara, to maintain equipoise between the opposites and become a yogi, you have to tap into the positivity without cause, which exists within.

If you can learn to consciously move into that natural experience of happiness, which is not dependent on any cause, then you will be able to change your mood, the behaviour of your mind, your character, traits and the whole personality. Your anxiety, tension, depression and frustration will disappear.

That is also the Niranjan challenge. Be happy for twelve hours of your waking time. If you can do that, I will write down in your diary that you have attained peace in life. If you can't, then you will have to come back again and again, not only to the ashram but also to this life, until you find your peace.

Some Preliminary Ideas for Research into Attention

From Yoga Research Publication: Volume One, Swami Yogabhakti Saraswati (Micheline Flak) PhD (Sorbonne), Founder and President of RYE

(Part 2, continued from YOGA – January 2015)

The lucid dream – research into double attention

Lucid dreaming is one type of inner state double attention that is well researched and for which people can be trained. The term lucid dream was first used by Van Eeden in 1913.⁷ Since then a variety of researchers, such as Garfield⁸, La Berge⁹, and Tart¹⁰ have observed that while paying attention to the content of dreams, certain subjects have faculties of attention normally characteristic of waking consciousness. These faculties are correct orientation in time and space (the middle of the night at home in bed), memory of waking life plans and intentions (recall of experiments planned for the night's dreams), perceptual vividness in any or all of the sensory modalities, and the ability to think logically and to choose consciously one's course of action as the dream story unfolds.

Prior to the availability of empirical evidence in the 1980s, research speculation favoured either 'micro-awakenings' or transition from Stage 1 REM to Stage 4 sleep as the psychophysiological basis of lucid dreams.¹¹ However, in 1980 La Berge and his colleagues at Stanford University arranged for alleged lucid dreamers to signal their realization of dreaming by means of dream actions with polygraphically observable correlates (i.e. eye movements and fist clenches). Thirty-five lucid dreams from 5 subjects were reported subsequent to spontaneous awakening from REM sleep (32 times), NREM Stage 1 (twice), and the transition from NREM Stage 2 to REM (once). All 30 signalled lucid dreams were found to

occur during periods of unambiguous REM sleep, and scored according to the conventional criteria.¹² A replication of the study with two additional subjects and twenty more lucid dreams produced identical results.¹³

As recorded by Evans-Wentz in his classic work on Tibetan yoga¹⁴, training in this form of inner double attention has been a traditional part of many meditative systems. The method of the contemporary Rajneesh requires trainee lucid dreamers to ask themselves during the day, "Is this a dream?" for three weeks continuously.¹⁵ This idea of carrying a question habituated in the waking state into the dreaming state has also been used in the research of Tholey.¹⁶ Other techniques for training dream/waking attention include meditation¹⁷, autosuggestion – where from only four lucid dreams experienced in the first nine months, the number goes up to four or five per month after 5 years¹⁸ – and tactile or auditory stimuli to remind a subject that he or she is dreaming.¹⁹ Lastly, a tape recording of the phrase 'this is a dream' is played at gradually increasing volume 5 to 10 minutes after the beginning of each REM period. When the tape is heard or the subjects realize they are dreaming, they signal by means of a pair of left and right eye movements.²⁰

La Berge, noting the positive correlation between lucid dreaming and high overall dream recall, educates subjects to classify the anomalies occurring in the content of their dreams to develop the skill of recognizing them as dreams.²¹ Castaneda, in like fashion, details the method of resolving to carry out a particular activity in a dream in *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan*.²² Malamud recommends the keeping of a dream diary and underlining all the unrealistic or dreamlike happenings as a means for a subject to increase the realization that he or she is dreaming, through the recognition of bizarre occurrences.²³ Pre-sleep negative emotions (for women only) and high level activity (for men only)²⁴, as well as sexual intercourse in the middle of the night²⁵, have all been proposed as stimulants to lucid dreams. This leads La Berge to comment, "The diversity of the proposed activities suggests that it is not

the particular activity, but the alert wakefulness that facilitates lucid dreaming during subsequent sleep."²⁶

The yogic concept of attention

The yogic training for meditation bears many similarities to the subjects described above preparing themselves for lucid dreaming. The philosophy of yoga may thus provide a rich source of hypotheses about and techniques for the education of double attention. The terms customarily distinguished from attention are vigilance (the level of consciousness manifested as neural activity in the reticular activating system of the brainstem and measurable in clinical medicine by tests such as pupil size and cold calories) and awareness, the subjective sense of witnessing, the totality of attention at any particular moment.

In yoga philosophy, however, more detail is given. According to Samkhya philosophy, the mind is heterogeneous, made up of twenty-five, some say twenty-four parts amongst which are the senses. The common yogic analogy of the mind as a charioteer holding the reins of five wild horses, the senses, should not be seen as endorsing a mind-body duality. The act of training the attention in relation to the sense of hearing, for example, is not so much a process of educating the ears as of disciplining the subtle components of mind, *tattwas*, which utilize the ears primarily, but can use other channels as well. These *tattwas* may explain the anecdotal reports of highly trained musicians or deaf people learning to use their head or their whole body to receive sound. Likewise I am aware of an experiment currently being carried out in France on a subject who claims to 'see' colours through her hand. She has published a book entitled *Non-Visible Colours*.

Yoga philosophy goes even further and defines that quality of mind which is able to collect information from the senses as *manas*. The faculty of mind which then makes sense of the data, comparing it with previous stores and evaluating it, is termed *buddhi*. The aspect of mind that relates data and evaluates

their impact on a proposed self is called *ahamkara*. Without buddhi, attention would accumulate information in the mind in telephone book form, that is, uncritically. Without ahamkara we would be innocent and naive and, indeed, the lessening of ahamkara is a major part of many religious systems. Chitta is all mental contents: senses, manas, buddhi and ahamkara, except for the *atma*, the soul or sense of spiritual being. With ahamkara operating but not atma, we would strive to avoid being run down by a bus but would have no aspiration towards discovering or experiencing any higher purpose to life or exalted state of existence.

In yogic terms, atma is awareness or the witness that utilizes the components of chitta (senses, manas, buddhi and ahamkara) to experience the material world. Lucid dreaming may therefore involve a lessening of the attachment of atma with particular components of chitta, possibly explaining why it customarily occurs in the early morning hours (4 to 6 am) traditionally specified for meditation.²⁷

Some yogic practices for training the attention

All yoga practices aim, in different ways, at training the attention. The need for variation arises primarily from the diversity of personality amongst practitioners. The following are illustrative examples.

In the tantric practice of kriya yoga, attention is initially allowed contact with the external environment in the form of open eyes. Then unmani mudra is incorporated – gazeless vision where the eyes go up and down without seeing anything. The eye is paying attention to everything, yet nothing in particular, like the eyes of Buddha, half in the void and half in the external world. Conjointly, the attention is brought to psychic pathways within the body and to visualization where each stage prepares the attention for the next, more subtle stage.

The attention is trained in a similar fashion in bhoochari mudra. The palm is brought level with the bridge of the



nose and the practitioner stares at the little finger. The hand is then removed and attention brought to the space that the little finger used to occupy. Attention on the now vanished shape is gradually transformed to an objectless attention on the field.

A practice such as antar mouna is very beneficial in the training of external and internal double attention. First I teach students to pay attention to far away sounds, then sounds directly around, such as voices around the house, the rustling oak trees, the sizzling of crepe suzette from the kitchen. Then I make tiny sounds in the room itself: turning pages, rubbing clothing. Finally, they listen to the sound of the breath in the nose. Having listened to all the sounds in turn, the students are asked to listen to them all together, then in different ways, with one ear or the other, with both ears, or even with one side of the body.



Finally, the yogic master Swami Satyananda Saraswati taught that the development of attention in the outside world is of great assistance in the development of inner attention. He instructed his students not to be vague or empty-headed in their outward dealings. "When you are outside, count the stars!" he exhorted, and once at a yoga convention at Chamarande, south of Paris, I saw him merely glance at a passing goods train yet have total recall of its number of carriages.

Proposals for future research with the Yoga Research Foundation

RYE has recently become associated with Dr Antonio Remond, Director of Research at the CNRS, Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique. My intention is to correlate the practices of yoga with the different categories of attention already examined by this neurophysiologist. The pathology of attention (dispersion, hypervigilance) will be studied, as well as ways to enhance attention with better learning. The Yoga Research Foundation can greatly assist us with this work and I look forward to the completion of plans for joint or parallel experimental protocols in this area.

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(The author prepared this paper while visiting the Yoga Research Foundation as a Research Fellow in December 1989.)

The Mind and Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Speech given at Tokyo University in 1968



I am on a world tour. The purpose of the tour is to disseminate yoga throughout the world, because it seems that in recent times yoga has become very popular and the intellectual class of people have been asking more about it.

The question can be raised as to what has an ordinary man to do with yoga? It has been heard often that yoga is walking over fire and water, sleeping on a bed of nails and remaining underground for hours. This is a misconception of yoga.

Now people have discovered that in spite of the prosperity and technological advancements made by the different countries, there is something which has occurred in recent years; they have found that mental diseases have greatly increased and have gone beyond the control of the modern medical science.

I do not want to go into great detail about yoga, but I can tell you, yoga means just one simple thing: to give complete rest to body, mind, and your entire being so that it is given enough time to relax and be able to work again the next day and for months and years to come.

Recharge the battery

The mind is like a battery. Sometimes, it gets discharged due to over-action, due to over-activity. When you do not charge the mind with proper exercises then it fails to help you in your daily life. As such, you will find many people whose brains do not work properly and whose mind is not able to concentrate. The moment they start their studies or their work, they find themselves completely incapable, because their mental battery has been discharged.

You must have seen a lot of people, who finally go somewhat insane and abnormal due to a lot of mental labour for days on end. Their mind does not retain that much power after constant work for months, without rest.

Therefore, we need some method by which we are able to use the inherent capacities of the brain and yet continue our work over the whole lifetime, without any disturbance whatsoever.

When the mind becomes concentrated, it gains power, and when the mind is dissipated on different thoughts, it becomes weak. Therefore, the primary hypothesis of yoga is to concentrate, to bring the mind to one point, one object, one thought, continuously and for as long as possible. When this power of concentration is achieved, and when your mind becomes capable of retaining one object or one form for a very long time without disturbance, then it becomes strong.

Conversely, if your mind is unable to retain one thought and keeps on dissipating itself among many hundreds of thoughts at the same time, being crowded by thoughts, it becomes weak.

You know, a weak mind cannot work very well whilst a strong mind can work very efficiently.

Psychic errors

The hypothesis of modern psychology is that the human personality is undergoing a state of suppression. There are inhibitions, complexes, obsessions, neuroses and they are all buried underneath, unseen and unknown. Through the method of psychoanalysis, it is possible to know the errors that are lying underground.

After we have a fundamental knowledge about the psychic errors embedded deep in our personality, we can exhaust them, we can rationalize them, we can express them in a proper manner.

Thus, we can get rid of complexes, inhibitions, phobias, and so on; it is then and then alone that our personality that has been suppressed can be fully expressed. This state of personality in psychology is called an integrated personality.

Now what is the method of exploding those suppressions? How to take off the cover from the top of our personality? It is a very difficult question.

In modern psychology, different methods have been prescribed, but those methods are beyond the reach of the common person. You know, there is not one person who is free from psychological complexes; everybody has them and as a result, our memory is dimmed. Our mental faculties do not manifest themselves. We do not have confidence. We lack willpower. For example, there are many boys and girls who cannot face their superiors with strength. They stammer, they stutter, they cannot express their ideas clearly. They think that this is one of the defects of the articulatory system. But it is not.

What about memory? People think that by studying a number of passages in a book, they can remember it well. But memory is a faculty. That memory-faculty is completely clouded by so many complexes of our life. As such, if we want our faculties to manifest, we will have to do something positive to remove these complexes.

Preparing for meditation

In yoga, we have a wonderfully effective method. It is called the yoga of meditation, or *dhyana yoga*. By using this method, we go deep into ourselves. This is point one. Point two, we see within ourselves. Point three, we are able to know and identify our obsessions and the mental aberrations within ourselves. Point four, we are then able to attain sufficient concentration of the mind to develop the inherent faculties within.

Meditation should be learnt and practised by everyone for at least half an hour in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening. It is a powerful method of cleaning and at the same time sharpening the mind. Meditation will not only give you what we call mental relaxation, but will gradually enable you to develop your mental faculties and your brainpower. This is true of everyone, whether student, professor, technician or whatever. It will help you to make decisions quickly and correctly.

Before you start meditation, however, you must know a few more things. It is not the first stage in yoga, but the last. As such, you must perform some preliminary exercises that give mental tranquillity and relaxation. These are practical exercises that relax not only your mind, but also your senses and your body. After their completion, you should start meditation.

There are various practices of relaxation, too many for me to explain now. However, I will tell you one important exercise, which you can start practising tonight. This exercise should be performed in the evening and in the morning after your bath. Sit in a comfortable posture, in a particular asana, such as *vajrasana* or *padmasana*, the lotus pose in which Buddha is normally depicted. Ensure that your spinal cord is erect and then close your eyes. Concentrate on your breath for about fifteen minutes, counting each respiration very carefully. If performed with concentration, this exercise will produce a remarkable degree of relaxation.

There are, however, certain tensions which this method of relaxation cannot remove. Those tensions are caused by excessive carbon-dioxide in the brain. This carbon-dioxide can be effectively removed by practising a yoga method called pranayama. This is a method of breathing in a certain manner and thereby recharging the brain. When the brain is tired, it becomes faulty and clouded. Pranayama brings about an awakening of the brain and so is a wonderful method of removing tensions in people who are dull and unable to think clearly.

For the clash with life

Before I finish my speech, I would like to impress upon you that yoga begins with the practice of asanas, the yoga of physical exercises. Everyone should start their yogic career with asanas. Meditation should not be taken up in the beginning; for if your blood is impure, if your system is not good then meditation will not give concrete results. Thus, asanas should be practised first, to purify your body, to rectify any faulty secretions of your endocrinal glands, and so on.

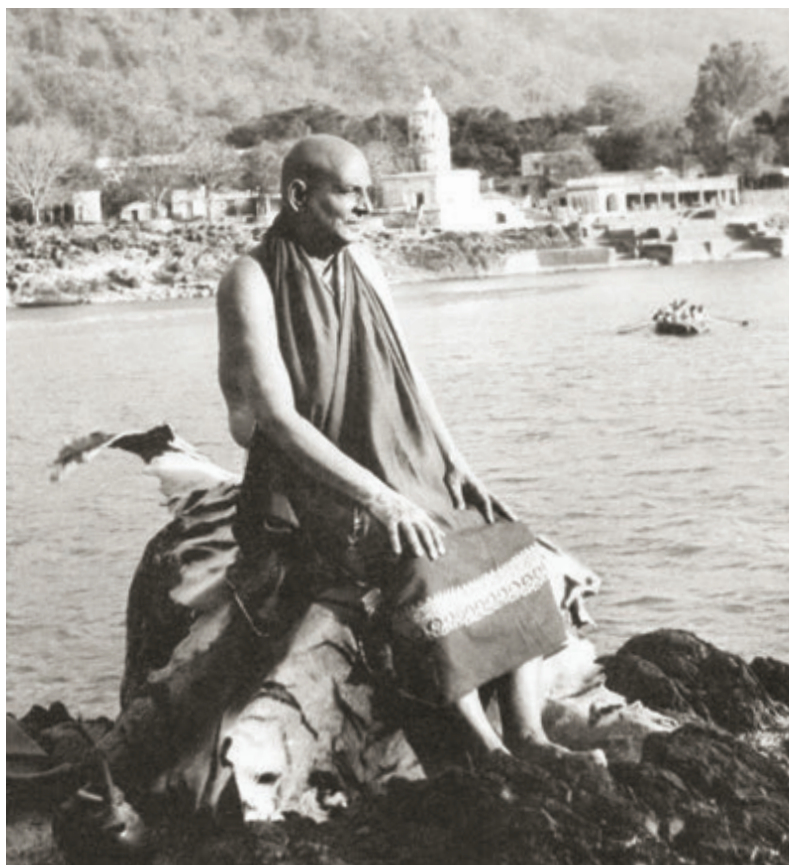
After learning and performing a few asanas, you should practise pranayama. Finally, after you have practised these two stages of yoga for a few months, you should start the practice of relaxation or *pratyahara*. When you have attained reasonable proficiency in this technique, you should start meditation. In this way, you will gradually develop your personality.

Remember that yoga is not for old people, but it is for youngsters; yoga is not for those who have renounced life, but it is for those who are actively involved in life. Lastly, bear in mind, that yoga is not for those people who are without problems, like myself, but for those who have difficulties and tensions and who have to clash with life constantly, yet at the same time maintain mental equilibrium.

– Printed in YOGA, September 1972 & November 1973

Pratyahara

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Mental abstraction takes place when the mind is disconnected from the indriyas. When the indriyas give up the objects, they take the form of the mind-stuff. They are drawn into the mind. This is termed *pratyahara* or abstraction. When the indriyas are withdrawn from their respective objects, it is *indriya-pratyahara*.

Pratyahara is a general, broad term which includes *dama*. The effect of *dama*, restraint of indriyas, is *pratyahara*. If you can

practise consciously pratyahara at will, consciously attaching and detaching the mind to and from the senses, you have gained really a great control over the mind. You can check at any time the outgoing tendencies or outgoing forces of the mind. Pratyahara is the stepping-stone to inner spiritual life. He who has succeeded in pratyahara can concentrate his mind quite readily for a very long time. Dharana and dhyana come automatically if pratyahara is perfected.

An aspirant has to struggle hard to have mastery over pratyahara. Perfect vairagya is indispensable for success. You can succeed after strenuous and incessant struggle for some years. It is said in the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali (2:55):

Tatah parama vasyatendriyanam.

There is highest mastery over the sense organs (by pratyahara).

Do's and don'ts

If pratyahara is perfected, all the organs are under perfect control. During the period of sadhana, do not mix much; do not talk much; do not walk much; do not eat much; do not sleep much. Observe carefully the five 'do-nots'.

Mixing will cause disturbances in the mind. Talking much will cause distraction of the mind. Walking much causes exhaustion and weakness. Eating much induces *alasya* and *tandri*, laziness and sleepiness.

If you have the reins of the horses under your control, you can have a safe journey. The indriyas are the horses. If you have the senses under your efficient control, you can have a safe journey on the path of moksha. Indriyas cannot do anything without the help of the mind, their master and commander.

Control of the indriyas means control of the mind only. Control of thoughts leads to the control of the mind and indriyas. It leads to the attainment of infinite bliss and eternal life. Therefore, control of thought is indispensable.

Psychoanalysis and Yoga



I would like to share some thoughts related to psychoanalysis and yoga, two different paths of self-study, self-awareness and self-involvement.

Personality-analysis

In psychoanalysis you explore yourself, understand the thoughts of the mind, and throw light on different aspects of your personality. Rooted in the mind, the psychology of Freud is for many people the chosen way of understanding themselves. As Swami Satyananda says, "Our generation is suffering from infirmity of understanding. It talks about spiritual things but it is rooted in matter, we are rooted in matter and sensuality. We are rooted in the mind. It was precisely because of this that the psychology of Freud could become international. Only a civilization which is suffering the poverty of intellect can talk about Freudian psychology." (*Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume VI*)

As a patient, in the process of classical Freudian psychotherapy using the mind, I explored my conscious and unconscious fears, faced the traumas of early childhood, understood the roots of my behaviour and the formation of my personality.

This can be a hard and painful process, which gradually can lead to a deep understanding and strengthening of the mind. However, it has nothing to do with the psychic aspect of one's being. Therefore, I would say that it is personality-analysis rather than psycho-analysis, as it is called.

Need for the drashta

Yoga, on the other hand, deals with the personality aspects, with recognition and acceptance of the self, but is more than that. Yoga evolves all of a person's potential, the physical, vital, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual qualities. In yoga one gets in touch with all levels of the mind.

In yoga one becomes familiar with the sense of awareness, witnesses one's awareness and evolves the drashta attitude of the mind. The torch of awareness is a tool that is used in psychoanalysis, however, it is used in a more critical and egocentric way.

Being the witness of one's awareness, the *drashta*, and the attitude of non-identification with the mind does not exist in the process of psychoanalysis, because in psychoanalysis there is no spiritual aspect.

The process in yoga is that first you let your feelings and your reactions out, while at the same time witnessing and observing them. In a second stage you witness them before they come out. Finally, you can transform the pattern of your mind which is working on many levels.

In the process of psychoanalysis, you are all the time identified with your mind, your thoughts, your emotions, your ego. You are trying to understand 'the movie of your life' by being involved in it. You remain stuck to your ego; even though your ego is psychoanalyzed and purified, in a way, you are still that ego. This identification does not lead you to inner freedom, cannot give you the delight of simple joy.

Example: anger

By using psychoanalytical methods, you may realize that your anger comes from emotional fear, from not having received maternal love and care during your childhood. As soon as you realize this 'game' of the mind, which is a false attitude of protection, you understand one aspect of your emotional personality. However, even after this understanding and acceptance, you still identify with this aspect of your being. It

is yourself. Anger is still you. On this path of psychoanalysis you are the body, you are the anger, you are your 'angry' mind and heart. To be aware of it is really important, but it is not liberating!

Yoga moves further. On the path of yoga, you are not the mind; you try not to identify with the doer, the performer. You have to learn to be a spectator of the movie of your life, thoughts and behaviour. From the yogic aspect, through practices such as antar mouna or SWAN meditation, you can understand the type and source of your anger, but you are learning to recognize yourself as an observer, a witness, detached from anger.

Swami Niranjanananda described a nice way of understanding the state of drashta: Imagine that your mind has two faces, the front or outside face is the doer, the performer, and the inside face is the state of the drashta, your spiritual nature.

Wings to fly

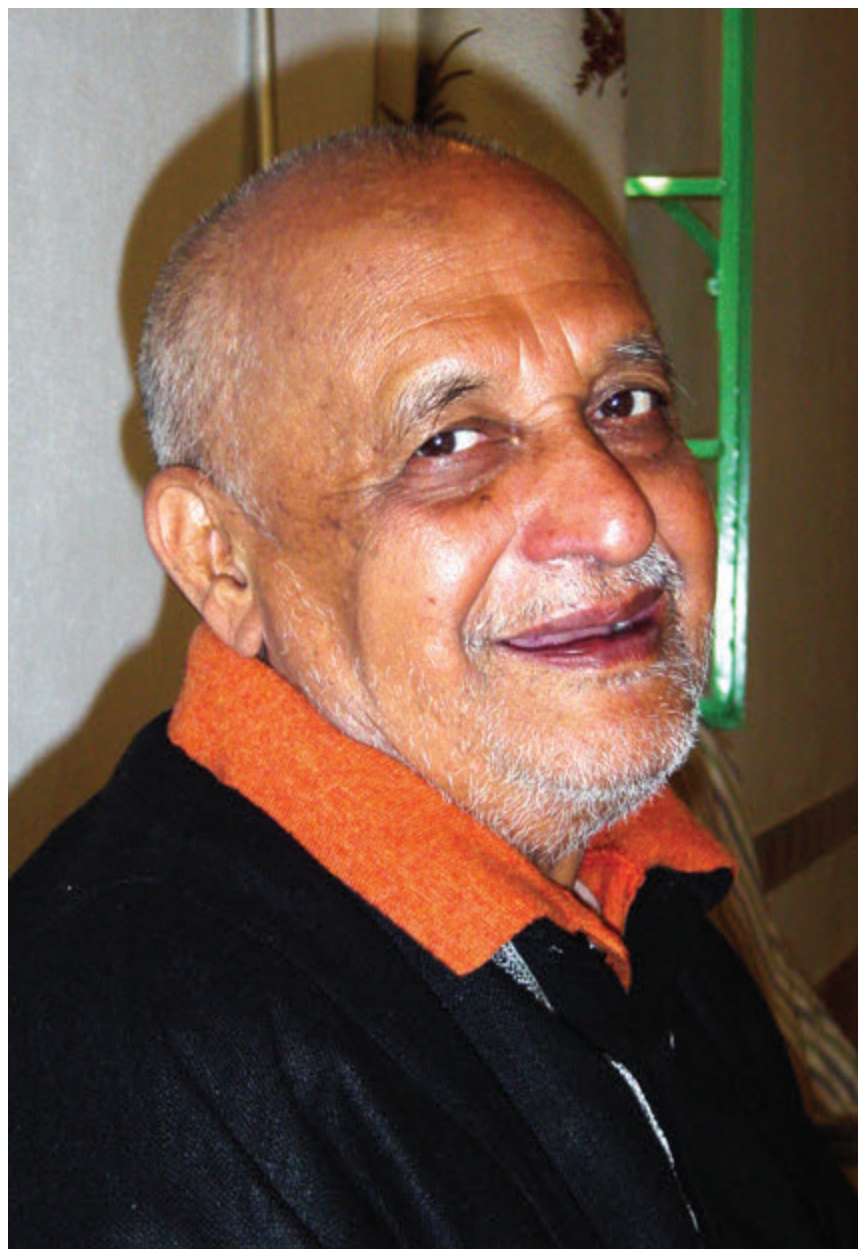
According to my understanding and experience, psychoanalysis has one limitation which is identification with the mind. You feel like you have wings, but you cannot fly!

In yoga, the drashta attitude is the first step towards connecting with joy, freedom and light for it propels you out of your ego! Developing the drashta you focus on yourself with an attitude of non-attachment, you stop being the centre of your thoughts and observe yourself by keeping a distance. You are like a good loving friend to your mind, a friend who is always there but does not intervene.

To be an observer and at the same time able to control the mind in the way you want can be a path to the freedom of the soul. The drashta attitude is part of the mechanics for using your wings to fly!

– Jignasu Tushtibhav, Greece











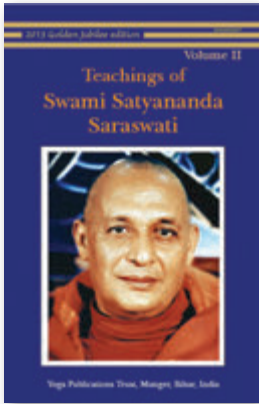






Satsang and Psychotherapy

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II



Swami Satyananda discusses the psychological and spiritual significance of the guru-disciple relationship, the practice of satsang and the yogic lifestyle. Recorded in a satsang at Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain, in September 1980.

The psychotherapist and the guru both have important roles to play. Where the work of the psychotherapist finishes, the work of the guru begins. So instead of comparing the two, let us connect them.

The guru is not a psychotherapist, that is not his primary motive. A psychotherapist is a person who helps you through a particular crisis in your life, but in the relationship with the guru, psychotherapy is spontaneous and ongoing. The guru's relationship with the disciple, his own personal life experience and his knowledge of the nature of the mind are such that he is then able to give him a spiritual direction in life.

That is why, right from the beginning, certain rules and regulations have been fixed. Not everybody can become a guru. In order to become a guru you must first have had a perfect discipleship. How can you become a lecturer or a professor in a university unless you have been a student? If you have only read some of the yoga sutras and yoga books and attended a few seminars here and there, you should not think that you are a qualified guru.

If a psychotherapist treats someone's mind, and then leave him at that point, he will continue to have problems. Of course, at a certain level, sickness of the mind has to be treated, but there is no end to it. In my opinion, it has to be transcended rather than treated. The mind is a composition

of the three gunas, which keep on assaulting it all the time. Therefore, a disciple should develop new tools of knowledge and experience with which to deal with the problems of the mind.

In the company of truth

Similarly, we cannot really equate satsang with group therapy, even though we often try to explain satsang in these terms. The Sanskrit root *sat* means reality, divinity and purity; it represents the self or God. Satsang does not mean being in the company of many people; that is known as *sangha*, which means company or association. *Satsang* is being in the company of truth.

There are various types of satsang. You can close your eyes and practise satsang all alone. When you are reading a spiritual book which deals with the topics of reality, that is also a form of satsang. Satsang happens when you are with a group and listening to the glory of divine being or the ways of purity and self-evolution. Hearing about the lives of those people who have suffered or lived for the divine experience is also satsang.

In satsang you may practise kirtan or meditation, but these are not satsang, they are only ways of conducting satsang. In satsang the most important thing is the constant movement of ideas related to the ultimate reality, divinity or highest being.

There are certain groups which I have come across in recent years in which people join together to do some practices and to help each other. There is a very simple, scientific explanation for this. If you put a grandfather clock with many other small clocks, you will find that initially, the movement of their pendulums does not coincide, but after some time all the clocks will be following the grandfather clock. This experiment has been repeated many times. Similarly, when you play a violin, all the other violins in the room begin to resonate. If you listen carefully, you will find that the vibrations from the first violin are being transmitted through the inactive violins. The same

thing also happens in a group when people get together to help each other.

Beyond therapy

In India, there is not much need for these group sessions because the social situation is still very well organized. If a group of people live together in a joint family or in an ashram situation, they begin to understand the nature of human psychology. They have an opportunity to see where they stand with one another. They are able to assess their own minds, their limitations and their faults, which is a great change from the modern culture.

In the West, particularly in the twentieth century, group therapy has become an important phenomenon. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the situation was different. There was a more compact and well-knit family and community life. But in the last one hundred and fifty years, the social structure has deteriorated bit by bit, and henceforth the need for group therapy has arisen.

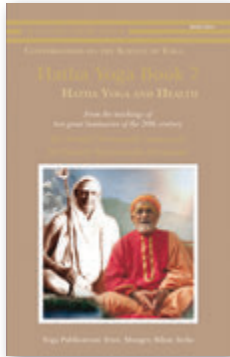
However, we must remember that mind is not the ultimate reality; there is something beyond the mind. We only talk in terms of the mind because the mind seems to be a barrier for many people. Actually, whatever we do in spiritual life is not done for the sake of the mind, but for the discovery of the universal spirit. Therefore, the path of psychotherapy can only be followed up to a certain extent; then there comes a point where it must be left behind. Psychoanalysis can definitely be of great use at a certain stage of development, but eventually it becomes a barrier and then you have to transcend it.

The yogic process of mind management is more effective and powerful than any modern psychotherapy because yogic psychotherapy deals with the totality of mind. The process of pratyahara and dharana is the best form of psychotherapy in the world today.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Yoga and Severe Mental Illness

From Hatha Yoga Book 7, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Can mad, out of control states be classified as states of mind? According to yogic belief, the mind has its centres of gravity to which it is spontaneously and naturally attracted in the normal state, but it can come out of those centres. In some cases, when the mind is highly sensitive, it tends to identify with a particular event, situation, thought, emotion or feeling and become obsessed with that. When the obsession becomes so acute that the mind is not able to project its natural state, the result is known as imbalance or madness; it is given labels, depending on the intensity. In respect to yogic therapy, some understanding in this area has been developed.

Activating pingala nadi

The drugs that are generally used are stimulants which create momentary hyperactivity in the brain so that the concentration or the obsession is diverted to another area. When the effect of the drug wears off, one again reverts to the same obsession. In the USA, some yoga therapy work was done with people living in mental institutions and halfway homes.

Yoga therapy was given to catatonic patients and other groups for three months. Catatonics have practically no control over their external physiological expression or movement; if one of their arms is up, it will remain like that for hours – someone else has to bring the hand down. Then again it will go up. It is a depressive nervous state in which there is absolutely no control over the functions of the nervous system, no control

over the muscular system, nor any interaction taking place between the brain and various parts of the body. The brain's commands are not recognized by the body, and the body does not send any stimulation to the brain.

These patients were given their normal medication before doing yoga, so that they would be a bit more externalized and receptive in order to understand the interaction that was happening with the therapist. After medication, pranayama was practised. They could not do asanas.

It was decided to teach them pranayama, but how to teach it? One of the first practices was activation of pingala nadi; breathing in and out only through the right nostril by blocking the left nostril with cotton or wax. Their left nostril was plugged with wax and left like that for a couple of hours so that pingala would begin to flow. Day in and day out this practice was done, where only pingala would flow. Gradually this change stimulated their nervous system and they became more active. Every day the wax was put in place. That was all that could be done, as there was absolutely no way of teaching them anything.

Birth of recognition

After a few days of this the patients began to respond to instructions which were being given to them and became more active. Once they began to respond, other pranayamas were incorporated. The teacher would hold their noses so that they could inhale through the left and exhale through the right. They were then asked to copy. It was like a game which children play, seeing the mirror image. Over a period of time they became used to the practices and would be waiting for the teacher to come. This meant that a certain expectation, a certain improvement had started within them. When the teacher came, they would give a nice smile of recognition as if some friend had come. After about one month we began to see the result of pingala activity and an incredible change came over them later on.

This work continued for three months, then the therapists of the institution were taught the practices so that they could

take over the work. In those three months the catatonic patients showed a thirty percent improvement from a chronic depressive catatonic state to being able to recognize, move and be in control of their body. The end result of the practice was that they were eventually able to look after their own needs, relate to the instructions that were being given to them and recognize the situations and environment of the external world. In this way it was discovered that practices which vitalize the pranic system in the body are beneficial in externalizing mental activity.

Month by month

Simultaneously other patients suffering from schizophrenia, neurosis, deep emotional problems, childhood trauma and shock were worked with. The sessions always began with pranayama and after one month asana could gradually be introduced in the form of a game. By teaching pranayama first, their nervous systems were regulated and their brains activated. After that, with the practice of asana, the physical body could be worked on. In the first month, only pranayama was taught; in the second month, asana and pranayama; in the third month, bandha and shatkarma, neti and kunjaj. In some cases, even laghoo shankhprakashana was taught, so they would be forced to run to the toilet at least eight to ten times in the day. That purging process had an activating and grounding effect, and made them aware of the necessities and realities of life.

The third month was always the most fulfilling. Along with neti, kunjaj, and in some cases laghoo shankhprakashana, bandhas were introduced, because bandhas act on the three main energy centres: mooladhara, manipura and vishuddhi. These three energy centres are the three areas of blockage in the body which can be felt at any time. For example, when there is tension in the head, the tightening of the neck muscles is felt, closing off or blocking the mid-brain region.

In this way, yoga can definitely help relieve severe mental illness. One has to adopt different methods.

How to Manage Jetlag

From Yoga Sadhana Panorama, Volume Five, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



These days the airlines provide guidelines on how to manage jetlag, which include the practices of pawanmuktasana part one. These are very beneficial exercises that you can do sitting in your economy or business class seat. When you do the pawanmuktasana one exercises, you are stimulating the nerves and nadis. Activating the nadis will help to harmonize the pranas, remove the blocks from your posture and also allow a free flow of vital energy. There is a sensation of lightness and increased energy when you practise pawanmuktasana after feeling stiff.

Yogic breathing helps a lot with jetlag. Breathing is one of the most important functions of the human body and yet we do not know how to breathe correctly. Usually, we breathe in for two seconds and then out instantly for two seconds or so. The general theory is that if you breathe in for one second, you breathe out for one or two seconds, and that ratio keeps on increasing. So, if you normally make the attempt to breathe in for five seconds, you will breathe out for six. If you breathe

in for two seconds, you will breathe out for three, and so on. Expiration is always longer by a second.

If you inhale deeply, you fill the alveoli, the air pockets in the lungs, with more air. However, only about ten to fifteen percent of the air actually goes into the alveoli. There the oxygen is separated from the air and mixed with the blood. There is an oxygen deprivation in the cells of the body. However, if you are able to raise the level of oxygen in your cells and increase the intake and absorption of oxygen into your blood, it is easier to manage jetlag.

Research has shown that with *pranayama*, breathing techniques, the intake of oxygen and the level of oxygen in the blood remains the same as in normal breathing. However, there is greater assimilation and absorption of oxygen during pranayama than in normal breathing. In slow, deep yogic breathing, we fill up more of the lower area of the lungs with air and hold it there for a longer time before exhalation. Absorption of oxygen happens in a smoother and easier manner without a lot of strain and effort by the body.

Research has also shown that the output of carbon dioxide and toxins from the body doubles when one practises pranayama. If, for example, the normal intake of oxygen per breath is three milligrams, then even with a pranayama practice of deep, slow and regulated breathing, the intake will still be three milligrams, but there will be less effort from the body to assimilate, absorb and use that oxygen. If the output of carbon per breath is normally 2.4 milligrams, then with pranayama it will become 4.8 or 5 milligrams. Pranayama eliminates gases and toxins from the body more than the intake of oxygen. The increase in vitality and in blood oxygen levels will help manage jetlag better.

So to help manage jetlag try pawanmuktasana part one and nadi shodhana pranayama with deep abdominal yoga breathing.

– 2005, Satyanandashram Hellas, Greece,

Parkinson's Disease: A Case Report

My experiences with Parkinson's disease, ulcerative colitis and Satyananda Yoga (Extract)

ABSTRACT: From the moment I started regular yoga practice, I experienced an arrest of the Parkinson's disease, which lasted for some time. In this article, I offer an unexplainable glimpse of the potentiality of Satyananda Yoga in getting rid of the disease.

Onset and deterioration

At the age of forty I started having neurological symptoms simulating sciatica. The following year, I underwent various neurological consultations. The problem was progressive until Parkinson's disease was diagnosed. Medication started and I felt well for about one year.

After about one year which passed in a normal manner with medication, deterioration started. The condition, which I had developed at an unusually early age, was now deteriorating fast.

Contact with yoga

In a harassed state I wrote to Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati. Very kindly he permitted me to stay at Ganga Darshan, Munger, for fifteen days where I learned the yogic practices prescribed.

Within three months of sincere and regular practice I noticed a change in my condition.

The time, usually 24 hours, needed for the main drug to be effective reduced. I was able to get up from bed without any medication. I could walk one to two kilometres in the morning and perform my daily morning pursuits. I did this without medication and thus the need for drugs shifted from before getting out of bed to after breakfast. My sleep improved

and I could again drive my scooter to work. The days passed energetically and cheerfully.

Emotional hurt

About six months later, after a quarrel at home, I felt an intense shock and emotional hurt. Again, deterioration started. I lost the strength for the special yoga practices and had to continue with routine, simple practices. However, I could remember the level of progress I had reached before.

I remembered a similar family quarrel which occurred six months prior to the development of the disease. I had felt intense shock and emotional hurt then as well. At that time I had remained in a depressive mood for two to three months and had lost the feeling of joy, laughter, zeal and inner energy. My activities became mechanical and then I developed the condition of Parkinson's disease.

Gastric upset, loss of appetite, constipation alternating with diarrhea, and sleep disturbance were associated with the development of my neurological problem. However, a third intense emotional hurt triggered blood-stained defecation which continued for months. Lower GIT endoscopy and biopsy diagnosed my gut problem as ulcerative colitis. In spite of continuous treatment, remissions and relapses continued for years.

Enter lifestyle

In modern medicine ulcerative colitis is considered to be a psychosomatic problem. I therefore had to admit that something was wrong in my emotional and psychic makeup and lifestyle. The solution was to analyze and to know the factors involved.

Parkinson's disease had already restricted my activities and the association of ulcerative colitis made me almost homebound. Now there was abundant time to think and analyze. The teachings of Paramahansa Swami Satyananda Saraswati and Swami Nirajanananda Saraswati helped me a lot to think in the right direction

I saw my past, my craving for money, professional jealousy, undue emotional attachment with my beloved and excessive expectations towards each other. There was no fulfilment of expected desires which led to anger, irritability, useless quarrels, an over-indulgence in sex and more professional jealousy.

I noticed a lack of synchronization between my thoughts and deeds, such as undisciplined thoughts covered by apparently disciplined acts. All these factors created a lot of tension, lack of relaxation and a dual personality.

Factors which aggravated my Parkinson's problem

- Excessive mental or physical work;
- Continuous thinking of particular problems;
- Disappointment and negative feelings in the modern, competitive life;
- Indulgence in sex;
- Heavy meals or over-eating;
- Sleeplessness;
- Exposure to cloudy or cold weather.

Factors which alleviated my problem

- Regular yoga practice;
- Proper sleep and relaxation;
- Light and easily digestible meals;
- Sexual abstinence.

The help of Satyananda Yoga

The best available drug treatment kept me alive but could not help me to live life. I suspected that suppressed irritability and anger in my subconscious had expressed itself in the form of ulcerative colitis.

Firstly I tried to express my emotions physically, but that made my wife vulnerable. Immediately I stopped and began regular practice of antar mouna, asanas with breath synchronization, nadi shodhana pranayama, japa, and yoga nidra. I tried to fit my lifestyle into a yogic pattern. Frequent

short ashram visits to Munger and the Satyananda ashram in Rajnandgaon helped. An appreciable positive change in my health ensued. The progress of my Parkinson's disease was arrested and ulcerative colitis slowly came under control.

I have not taken any medication for ulcerative colitis in the last three to four years. I only take medication for Parkinson's disease.

Passive pawanmuktasana

The real benefit is the combination of all the yoga practices along with a change in one's thought process and lifestyle. Pawanmuktasana, surya namaskar, relaxation, yoga nidra, nadi shodhana pranayama with antar kumbhaka, japa and meditation are mandatory practices.

Muscle stiffness and tremors sometimes restrict me from doing yoga practice. At such times, I have applied the following technique with immediate positive effect. Another person who knows the yoga technique moves the joints and limbs of the patient while the patient is sitting on a bed. This gives appreciable relief.

My present status

I find myself as a backbencher disciple. At an early stage I experienced the benefits of yoga practices. However, during periods when practices were irregular the disease progressed.

The boon of yoga has kept my body responsive to the same dose of medicine even though I have had Parkinson's for nineteen years. With some adjustment I am able to perform my job and earn a livelihood. Apart from allopathic medication I am definitely in the position to give credit to Satyananda Yoga for my better working fitness. The only requirement is full devotion and regularity of the practices under the guidance of the guru.

– *Sannyasi Vedant Murti (Dr Namdev G.R.),
Rajnandgaon, India (2007)*

Overcoming Boredom in the Ashram

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Imagine that you are at home and everyday you have to do the same job. Do you get bored? You make your breakfast, you make your lunch and dinner, you stay alone at home, you clean your home and you live there for many months, many years. Sometimes friends come and sometimes friends do not come, sometimes the wife comes and sometimes she does not come, sometimes the children come and sometimes they do not come. You live in this house and you do your work, day in and day out. Do you get bored? The answer is 'No'.

So, why at home where you are alone and doing your work are you not getting bored but, in another place, if you are told to do something, after some time you feel bored? This leads to one condition of mind, one analysis of mind that if there is a feeling of belonging, you do not get bored, but if there is a feeling that you do not belong, no matter how good or important the job is, you will get bored. If you feel bored, it indicates a clear split between you and your action.

You are not one with the action, you are not identifying with it. You are the doer and the action is separate, and therefore you are free to look at the merit and the demerit of the action. Looking at the merit and demerit of the action happens when there is no belongingness. With the feeling of belonging the action is not seen as merit or demerit, rather as a *kartavya*, a duty, that has to be accomplished. It is the accomplishment of action which becomes your guide, your inspiration, your strength.

This understanding begins through observation, reflection and maintaining a point of balance. If that point of balance, belonging and clarity is there, there is no moment in life which can be considered boring. However, if that point of balance is not there and you are looking at merit and demerit, loss and gain, then the mind will be put off by it very fast. The mind works only from two areas of perception, loss and gain: If I do this, this is my gain, so I should do it. If I do this, this is my loss, so I should avoid it. Everybody across the board in this world thinks of everything from the perspective of loss and gain.

Beyond this loss and gain perspective there is another perspective: Do I belong and am I putting my sincere efforts into the task or not? Am I giving my 100% or not? If you are giving your 100%, there won't be any question and no boredom. Questions only arise when there is no 100% for then you do not identify with your karma and dharma.

– 14 March 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Flexibility and Stamina

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



A few years ago, we were training a group of recruits in an army unit. There were two groups: One group was going through the army routine, the push-ups and the barbells, the hard exercises. The other group was the yoga group, practising pawanmuktasana.

The yoga group was, of course, the object of ridicule by the army group; while they were doing their push-ups and hard exercises, the yoga group was doing their pawanmuktasana. However, in that training each asana had to be done thirty to forty or fifty times. The trainees were closing and opening their fist forty times, fifty times. The muscles become tired as they are being used and moved. The recruits were sustaining a process of developing flexibility and stamina.

When the final test in flexibility and stamina was done for the two groups, the yoga group was clearly ahead. In the group that followed the army routine thirteen recruits failed and in the yoga group only three recruits failed.

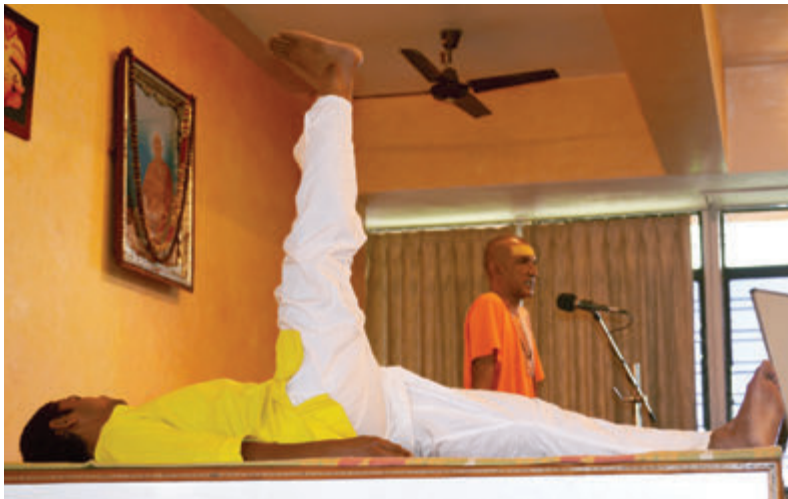
The yoga group could actually win the competition of stamina due to the ability to sustain the practice, not five times,

not ten times but fifty times. Each practice was done fifty times, every day. Therefore, every day the recruits were giving their bodies a bit more stamina and a bit more flexibility.

The increase of stamina was further proved at the time of war. The yoga unit was sent to the front, and observers were monitoring their performance. It was found that while the other members of the unit, the non-yogic army group, had to rest and recover for one-hour periods, the yoga group was able to recover in twenty minutes. They would recline against a tree, do breath regulation, yoga nidra, control their pulse, heart beat, and be ready to move. The physical control over the autonomic functions was seen in this yoga group, as they were able to manage their stress levels, physical tiredness and fatigue in a shorter span than the regular army personnel.

Yoga should not be practised for three, four or five hours just to feel good in the body, but to sustain each practice for a minimum of ten movements. With regular practice, the body will actually become stronger and stronger. One will not put on muscle and mass, yet whatever is in the body becomes alive and active, so that fatigue and tiredness will lessen.

– 22 October 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Nanoyoga



Recent advances in science have led us from gross to subtle. Nano has become a keyword in the twenty-first century. *Nano* is actually the smallest measurable unit. Any technology that deals with extremely small particles is called nanotechnology.

Scientists discovered during the course of evolution of nanotechnology that a substance exhibits different properties when it is in a gross state and when in the nano state. For example, gold in the

nano state can be used as a catalyst but in the form of ornaments it gets readily affected by air.

This simile can also be applied to the body and mind. Our ancient sages since thousands of years have emphasized the various pathways to discover oneself in the most subtle manner. This is nothing but yoga in the nanoyoga form. If one wishes to reach the most microscopic level of Brahma, one has to undertake this inner journey.

Ancient scriptures like Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Upanishads have clearly demonstrated this ultramicroscopic level of thought. When Sage Patanjali says (2:47):

Prayatnashaitilyaanantasamaapattibhyaam.

By loosening of effort and by meditation on the serpent anant, asana is mastered.

he means a level which one cannot reach easily. This nano level of sadhana is expected to be achieved in the final stage of yogasana.

In another example while highlighting the benefits of pranayama, Sage Patanjali says (2:52),

Tatah khiyatay prakaashvarnam.

Thereby (by the practice of pranayama) the covering of light disappears.

This is perhaps the best example of nanoyoga. Efforts should be made to remove all the external coverings to reveal the innermost core which is none other than Brahma itself in its subtlest form.

Some other examples depicting the nanoyoga features include:

Te pratiprasavaheyaaha sookshmaaha. (2:10)

Those kleshas are reducible by involution when they are subtle.

Suukshmaavishayatvam chaalingaparyavasaanamam. (1:45)

The stages of samadhi in respect to subtle objects extend up to prakriti.

Paramaanu paramahattoaanto'sya vashiikaaraha. (1:40)

So the yogi is given mastery over all objects for meditation ranging from the smallest atom to the infinitely large.

According to Adi Shankaracharya what you cannot see is the mind and beyond it are buddhi, ahamkara and chitta which are also smaller and smaller expressions taking us to a nano level.

The Upanishads have described the pancha kosha concept which embodies a journey from the gross annamaya kosha to the most subtle form of bliss or anandamaya kosha. The pranic

energy which one cannot see can be visualized after the finest level of sadhana.

The Upanishads have also described the turiya state which falls in the nano category. The concept of nadis, chakras and kundalini is also a form of nanoyoga. The awakening of kundalini cannot be observed in the superficial level of sadhana. One will have to penetrate the deepest levels to reach the nano state to obtain a divine experience. The concept of *anahad nada*, the unstruck sound, also exemplifies a similar concept of nano.

Social relevance

The principal means of making yoga practical is by making it socially relevant. This is achieved through Nano-Bio-Psycho Technology: the application of nanotechnology to influence the body (bio) and mind (psycho). Most of the biological and metabolic processes in the body, like the endocrine systems, DNA coding, cellular structure, regeneration and homeostatic mechanisms, are at the most subtle or nano level. Every small change in hormone secretion brings about huge changes at the body level of organ functioning, e.g. stress produces adrenaline in very small concentration that induces the fight or flight response. However, the effects of natural adrenaline and injected adrenaline are different due to different cellular response to these two.

This concept of nanoyoga should be used to bring about the smallest changes in our behavioural patterns. Over a long period this will produce the desired gross change.

In the twentieth century, Einstein put forth the unified field theory: There is one common principle in all the cosmic phenomena. This was the underlying basics of this theory. If you extend this concept to all of us then we are also basically the same and linked with each other. We have the same core of bliss or consciousness. We are all searching for this bliss or *ananda*. This search helps to bring about favourable changes in personality.

Paramahansa Swami Satyananda Saraswati gave us the concept of yoga nidra which is also an example of yoga at nano level.

Many other stalwarts like Dr Larry Dossey, Dr Dean Ornish and Dr Deepak Chopra have used TM (Transcendental Meditation), making use of quantum healing principles at nano level for healing of diseases.

SVYASA at Bangalore have devised various techniques at nano level, such as a pranic energization technique, and have achieved good results even in cancer patients.

At Ghantali Mitra Mandal, Thane, we have done similar applications of nanoyoga in pregnant patients using omkara sadhana and nada yoga.

Using colour Doppler sonography it was conclusively proved that regular omkara chanting improves foetal blood flow, increases weight and keeps pregnancy induced blood pressure to a minimum. Similar applications were carried out in school children to improve memory and in jail inmates, for personality transformation.

Consciousness exists in all forms of life and each one is affected by the other. Prayers sung by one can be healing to other sick people. This is the new branch of medicine called non-local medicine. Similarly, a new branch of healing is spiritual healing which includes distance healing, or pranic healing. Some of the results in research papers on these topics are astonishing. There is a growing need for health professionals to adopt some of these techniques as supplementary to existing procedures.

In short, the subtleness of yoga in the form of nanoyoga is a powerful tool of transformation for the distorted mind or body.

If you imbibe this nano level of sadhana it will truly bring about transformation. Wishing you all the best for your voyage towards complete makeover using nanoyoga.

*– Dr Ulka Natu, Research Director, Prajnana Yoga
Anusandhana Kendra, Ghantali Mitar Mandal, Thane, India*

Churning the Milk

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

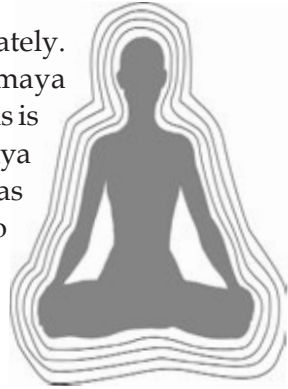


You have milk; do you see the butter in the milk, do you see the yogurt in the milk? You do not, yet butter, yogurt and other products are extracts of milk and are made from milk itself.

In the same manner, life is one, however, in life there is the experience of matter, solidity, the body, *annamaya kosha*. There is the experience of 'I am', awareness and interaction, needs, requirements and desires. That is the experience of mind, *manomaya kosha*. In life there is strength, stamina, energy, vitality and dynamism. That is the expression of *pranayama kosha*. *Vijnanamaya kosha* is the deep subconscious field where samskaras and karmas coexist. Koshas are the integrated aspects of your nature.

Invisible koshas

It is not possible to see the koshas separately. You cannot say, “This is my pranamaya kosha, this is my vijnanamaya kosha, this is my manomaya kosha, this is my annamaya kosha.” It will be wrong to do that, just as one cannot separate butter from milk. So many things are in milk, yet you cannot see them until the milk is put through a process to extract the other products contained in it.



Life is like milk, and the milk has to be put through a process to extract the awareness and experience of annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya koshas. That process of extraction is known as sadhana. Without sadhana it is not possible to understand the koshas. They cannot be understood intellectually. Can you define what pranamaya kosha is? No, it is an integrated aspect of life. Can one define vijnanamaya kosha? No, it is an integrated aspect of life, which you can experience after you put yourself through a process of purification and extract the beauty that life has to offer. If you are not able to do that, do not look for the experience of manomaya kosha, for you will not be able to have that mental experience.

You can only be aware of your thoughts; you cannot manage your mind. Are you able to manage your manomaya kosha when it goes through a conflict or crisis? No, you are not. When you cannot manage your manomaya kosha, how do you expect to manage something which is beyond and more subtle than manomaya?

Hearing or reading about butter is not enough to extract butter from milk. Without sadhana, without putting the milk through a process of churning, it is not possible to extract the products contained in the milk.

– 8 February 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Brahma Experience

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



God is not desireless: *Ekoham bahusyaam* – “I am one, let me be many.” The only god who is desireless is *nirakara*, the unmanifest god. Manifestation of some idea, energy or thought always indicates desire.

God is not a static energy. God is an evolving energy, known in Sanskrit by the word ‘Brahma’. It is translated as creator, but the root, *brhinna* means ‘the evolving, expanding nature’. Brahma here does not mean god, it is the expanding, evolving nature.

This is an indication that god is never a static experience rather it is a continuous, progressive and evolving experience. If there is an evolving experience there must be conditions that have to be transcended. If the conditions cannot be transcended, it cannot be an evolving experience. It becomes a static experience and god is not static.

In the process of development and evolution, the change that you feel is what you perceive as pain and suffering. You are conditioned to a state of comfort and control, however change breaks down that level of comfort and control. If there is too much comfort and control at one stage then it is static.

In this process of change when control and comfort are being transcended, you are struggling with your pain and you are developing a new thought, a new idea to achieve something.

You are working at two levels: negation of what you had and cultivation of what you do not have. That whole experience is known as the 'god-experience', the changing experience, or the Brahman experience.

– 27 July 2015, Paduka Darshan, Munger





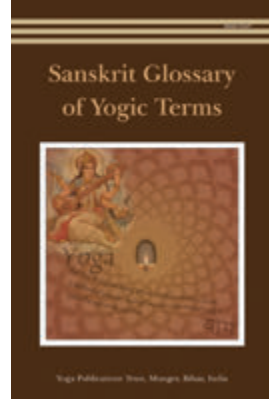
Yoga Publications Trust

Sanskrit Glossary of Yogic Terms

289 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-81-86336-31-1

This Sanskrit glossary contains a wealth of definitions of yoga and its related topics, including philosophies, yogic traditions and concepts. It is designed to aid yoga practitioners who seek the deeper meaning of yoga's symbols and metaphoric language. It may be utilized as a guide for understanding the precision and subtle associations of Sanskrit words found in yoga publications.

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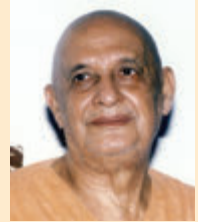


www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga. Includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust catalogues.

www.rikhiapeeth.in

The Rikhiapeeth website is a sanctuary for all spiritual seekers so they can stay connected to the cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda, 'Serve, Love, Give', that are practised and lived at Rikhiapeeth. Includes inspiring satsangs, information about Rikhiapeeth, upcoming events, courses and more.



www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/

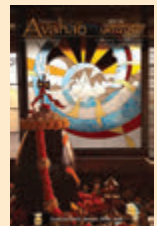
Dedicated to the vision and mission of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, the spiritual successor of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, it contains news and articles.

www.yogamag.net

The official website of Yoga magazine contains an archive of over 30 years of the magazine. This archive is fully searchable and ever expanding.

www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/

Provides online access to *Satyaka Avahan*, the bi-monthly magazine of Sannyasa Peeth, which contains the higher teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.



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Yoga Peeth Events & Training 2016

Feb 2-May 29	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (Hindi)
Feb 9-12	Sri Yantra Aradhana
Feb 13	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Feb 21-27	Yoga Capsule: Respiratory (Hindi)
Mar 20-Apr 3	Yoga Capsule: Total Health (Hindi)
Apr 24-30	Yoga Capsule: Digestive (Hindi)
Jul 15-18	Guru Poornima Satsang Program (Hindi/English)
Jul 19	Guru Paduka Poojan (Hindi/English)
Aug 1-30	Yoga Instructors Course (Hindi/English - for nationals)
Sep 24-30	* Hatha Yoga: Shatkarma Intensive (Hindi/English)
Oct 1-30	* Progressive Training for Satyananda Yoga Teachers (English)
Oct 3-Jan 29	* Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (English)
Oct 22-28	* Raja Yoga: Asana & Pranayama Intensive (Hindi/English)
Nov 5-11	* Kriya Yoga: Preparatory (Hindi/English)
Dec 19-23	Yoga Chakra Series III (Hindi/English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poornima	Sundarkand Path
Every 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamanas

* Indicates courses available in English language for Overseas participants

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

For more information on the above events contact:

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