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Hari Om

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2: Sri Swami Satyananda



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

OBSTACLES TO SADHANA

Grief and Depression

Every aspirant on the spiritual path becomes a victim to the mood of depression at the beginning of the sadhana period. This mood has to be overcome through discrimination, reflection, enquiry, prayer and singing God's name vigorously.

Grief is a mental creation, which appears when the mind is attached to the body and illusory connections. One has to treat and remove the cause by taking a long, brisk walk, running in the open air, singing divine songs and reading elevating texts and scriptures. To save the soul from sinking into helpless despondency, the utterances of the world's realized souls are truly magical.

—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 ॥

No Paradox

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Here is a nice, interesting question: “In the beginning, the instructions of BSY are to intensify body awareness while the other disciplines aim to transcend body consciousness. Vedanta says, ‘I am not the body.’ Explain the paradox?”

Actually this is not a paradox for Vedanta is Vedanta. It has its own philosophy. Yoga is yoga and it has its own philosophy. There is no Vedanta in yoga, there is more of Samkhya. Vedanta can say anything it likes. What Vedanta says is practical at one level, but not practical at a realistic level.

If somebody is suffering from asthma, a respiratory disorder, and you say to him, "Think that you are not this body," you are not helping that person in any manner. Rather, you are irritating that person who will ask, "What do you mean I am not this body?"

The suffering is there, the experience is real. Therefore, Vedanta won't work there. Vedanta only works with healthy people and people who have followed the path of ashramas in their life: brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sannyasa. Vedanta is a philosophy which you adhere to when you distance yourself from your involvement in the world of senses for the mindset is different.

As an individual you think differently and as a professional person, doctor or policeman, you think differently. Each profession evolves a particular style of thought. Your thoughts at home are free thoughts. They are not thoughts of engineering; they are not thoughts of medicine; they are not thoughts of thieves and robbers. However, when you go to the office and you adopt that specific role, your thoughts change and you cannot bring your home thoughts to your office for they will be incompatible.

Similarly, in yoga and Vedanta, the thought patterns are different. Just as you don't mix your professional and human behaviour, rather you keep them separate, in the same manner the yogic and the vedantic behaviour have to be kept separate.

If yoga says 'become aware', it is to expand the awareness. Only after expanding the awareness can you retract it, and in meditation retraction happens. In pratyahara, extension and retraction both happen. What you do in yoga nidra, what you do in other practices of pratyahara, is both extension and retraction.

Vedanta is not yoga, yoga is not Vedanta. They are just two different branches and two different systems. Therefore, you cannot say it is a paradox.

– 25 September 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Vipassana Meditation

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Vipassana is a meditation belonging to a specific tradition just as yoga represents a specific tradition. There are people who can mix sweet and salt together and enjoy the taste, and there are people who keep sweet and salt separate and enjoy the taste. As far as the path and the system of teaching of these two traditions is concerned, they are different paths altogether.

The same thing

Vipassana or vipashyana is an old yogic practice used by Buddha to attain silence in the mind. Vipassana becomes part of *tapasya*, austerity. In the process of tapasya and meditation, there is no interaction with people, there is limited food, limited speech or talk and for sometime one is isolated from the normal modes of communication. People just live in silence observing their mind and nature. For some people, it can be confronting as silence is not the natural tendency of an individual. Speech is the natural tendency of people, and when they have to practise silence, it is a new experience.

Some people enjoy it and say, "I don't have to talk to anybody. I can just be silent and look at myself." That is how people are looking at Vipassana today. When Buddha used the practice of Vipassana, he was using it as a practice of yoga, as in the pratyahara practice of antar mouna. Vipassana is a practice of pratyahara, not dharana or dhyana.

The language at the time of Buddha was not Sanskrit, it was Pali, and the script was different. Antar mouna was translated in Pali as Vipashyana. The meaning of Vipashyana is *pashya*, to see, to observe, and *vi*, specific. Therefore, it is specific observation. Antar mouna is also specific observation, observation of thought, stopping of thought, entering the zone of no-thought. Antar mouna and Vipassana are the same thing.

Practice and application

Different teachers teach according to their own belief, understanding and experience. Vipassana taught today is like a retreat for one week or ten days. People go, live in isolation, don't talk to other people, don't do anything. They just keep quiet. People consider this as a retreat, yet retreat is not meditation.

Meditation is a practice which one can practise anywhere in the world, even in the isolation of one's room. In a retreat, a group looks after the proper organization and arrangements. Therefore, retreats are much more intensive and of short-term duration. However, once the basic principles of Vipassana are learnt, one has to incorporate them in one's daily practice. That is the advanced antar mouna.

As far as the practice is concerned there is no difference between Vipassana and yogic pratyahara. However, in regard to tradition and application, there is a difference for Buddhists use Vipassana or the advanced antar mouna to experience the no-thought state, *shoonyata*, by stopping all inner activity, all inner thinking, and just experience the state of silence.

Disconnection and transcendence

That state of silence, nothingness, shoonyata is a precursor, a precondition, to experience luminosity, *prakasha*. Sri Swami Satyananda said many times in his satsangs and lectures that shoonyata and prakasha, nothingness and luminosity, are two different conditions of consciousness.

In shoonyata, there is disconnection with everything sensorial. There is no pull of the mind towards anything. The mind is static and that static nature of mind has been defined by Buddha as *nirvana* where nothing is seen, where everything is just still. Beyond that state of shoonyata, nirvana, or nothingness where the disconnection has taken place, there is the transcendental nature.

Yoga takes the aspirant one step further to the realization of the transcendental nature. Sri Swami Satyananda explained that Buddhism takes one to the finality of disconnection with the senses and sense objects so that one experiences nothingness, however, beyond nothingness, one has to connect with the transcendental for this nothingness represents one's gross self, not the connection with one's higher self. Therefore, the connection with the higher self is the luminosity and disconnection with the lower self is nirvana.

The Buddhist tradition speaks of moving up to disconnection with the lower self when one experiences peace and nothing more. The yogic tradition takes one further by saying that beyond that nothingness and disconnection is the existence of the transcendental reality, the super-self, the super-consciousness and the need is to connect with that.

Zen

Zen meditations are abstract meditations, which do not link one with some definite expression and behaviour of consciousness. They make one aware of different impressions and visualizations. Zen meditations are used not for the attainment of enlightenment, but for the management of one's stressors in life. That is the purpose of Zen meditations.

Once one has gone through the process, maybe in that state of silence, stillness and oneness, one can experience the unity intertwining the globe. Until then Zen meditation is becoming aware of various visualizations, ideas and concepts and connecting and identifying with them.

Not all meditations take the practitioner to the same point and destination. Each meditation works on a specific area of human expression and behaviour. There is no complete system of meditation for in all traditions, whether it be Buddhist, Chinese, Shaivite, Vaishnavite, Christian or Islamic, the focus is moving from the active state of mind to a peaceful state of mind.

One's effort and sadhana is to acquire the state of pratyahara and dharana: concentration, focus, withdrawal and disconnection, not dhyana. That is the training that one requires, and once the training is acquired and perfected, meditation is experienced automatically, spontaneously, naturally.

– 18 October 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Thought Creates the World

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Everything in the material universe about us had its origin first in thought. From this, it took its form. Every castle, every statue, every painting, every piece of mechanism, in short, everything, had its birth, its origin, first in the mind of the one who formed it before it received its material expression or embodiment.

Mind has got various preoccupations. When an artist begins to draw a picture on the canvas, he draws the picture out of the material preconceived by the mind. After all, the world is merely an idea or thought. Just as a seed begins to germinate at its proper time and place, so also the seer, the knower, appears as the visible through the sankalpa of the mind. When the mind ceases to think, the world vanishes and there is bliss indescribable. When the mind begins to think, immediately the world reappears and there is suffering.

The cosmic mind

One single, organized thought of the Cosmic Mind or *Hiranyagarbha* has materialized as the seeming universe. This phenomenal universe is but an outcome of the Divine Will, seeming to be real through the workings of the mind.

Before you write out a drama, you have a vivid mental picture of the whole drama in your mind. Then you write it out in succession in four acts. When it is staged, it is acted in succession, part by part. Similarly, the universe with its movements is a vivid mental picture in the Cosmic Mind, in the mind of Ishwara.

There is neither past nor future for Him. Everything is present for Him. There is neither near nor far for Him. Every place is here. Every time is now. The events come out in succession on the stage of the long world-drama as time rolls on. Atoms rotate continuously. Old becomes new and new becomes old. In reality there is no such thing as old; there is no such thing as single. The jivas with individual minds are witnessing the events in succession.

Ishwara knows all events at one sweep. He is *sarvajna*, all-knowing, and *sarvavit*, all-understanding. He knows every detail of His creation.

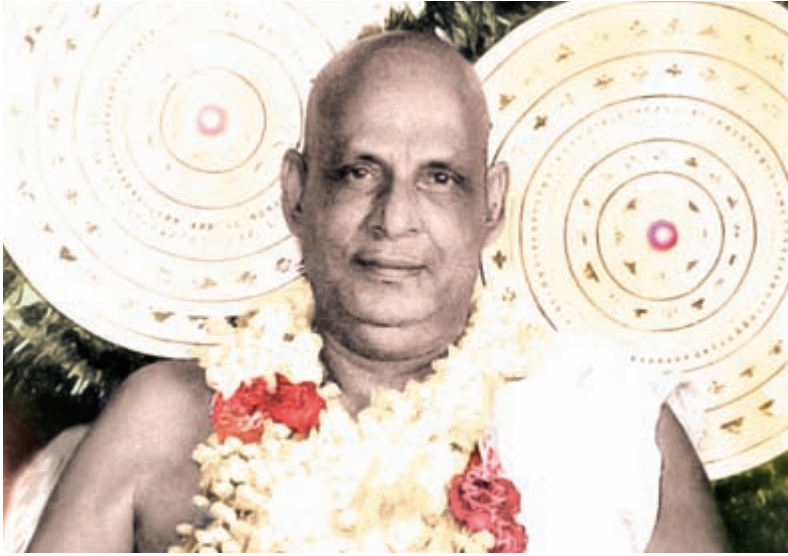
The mind creates

The whole world is a combination of five elements. Analyze, realize the illusory nature of all objects and abandon all false objects. When you begin to analyze, the whole world vanishes and with it the notion, sound and objects also. The happiness and misery experienced in this world are caused by the working of the mind. All the hosts of pains and pleasures arise from the mind only. They will perish if the mind perishes through stainless discrimination and spiritual sadhana.

The three worlds are created for the pleasures and pains of the mind. Suspension of the mental activity will cause the three worlds to disappear with their misery. With the destruction of the mind, all the three periods of time vanish into nothing. If the mind is not controlled, all else becomes useless and painful. Therefore, the mind should be annihilated.

Mind always functions within the categories of time, space and causation. These three categories are mental creations only. A coconut tree is not really twenty feet high. The height is only a mental interpretation. There are vibrations only outside. It is the mind that creates length, breadth, height, thickness, dimensions, void, square, etc.

A distance of two miles comes out of feeling only. You actually feel that you have walked so much distance. When you transcend the mind, all these categories vanish entirely.



Nothing but maya

The non-existence of the world or its destruction does not mean the annihilation of mountains, lakes, trees and rivers. When your determination that this world is unreal, illusory becomes stronger and stronger and when you are well established in this idea that this world is illusory like a mirage, this alone is destruction of the world.

You cannot destroy a mountain, but you can destroy the idea of a mountain. Just as there is the image in the mirror, this world is a big image in the mind-mirror. The mind is like a big *chaddar*, a thick cloth, painted with various pictures. There is neither painter nor canvas nor any material for painting such as brush, dish, oil or powder. The picture of the universe appears depicted on the spotless knowledge-space. The play of the mind arising out of pure consciousness constitutes this universe.

Mind is maya. Maya is mind. The workings of the mind are nothing but the workings of maya itself. Attraction or attachment in the mind towards forms is maya. Identification of one's own self with the mind is maya.

Do We Create Our Thoughts?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Thought is definitely created by you, there is no question about it. Thoughts represent your involvement, participation, response and reaction to a given person, moment, situation or circumstance. Thought is your creation. Thought does not come from anywhere else, and what comes from anywhere else does not stay with you. You are only expressing yourself.

Thoughts are your creations and are the outcome of the natural responses of your mind, emotions and senses in relation to the outside world and to your own desires and needs.

Therefore, the spiritual traditions have always spoken about maintaining a positive mind, a positive thinking pattern to overcome self-generated and self-oriented thoughts. You have to eliminate them to bring in new thoughts with which you can live.

Despite having a wealth of guidelines and instructions, you are unable to change yourself due to your own nature. That is an indication that everything is self-generated. In yoga, there is the concept of *pratipaksha bhavana*, to counteract a negative expression with a positive one.

– 9 August 2015,
Ganga Darshan, Munger



Yoga and Present-Day Living

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga is the common heritage of mankind, though it was protected, kept secret, and carefully guarded on the Indian soil by rishis and mahatmas. There have been people throughout the world, who were great yogis, but unfortunately, this science was not preserved by any race, by any nation or by any religion, except in India and yoga. This is because the Indian people have respect for higher life and a spiritual life, and it is also because Indians look upon those who practise and preach yoga with great respect. As such, the rishis, the saints and sages of India were protected and patronized for centuries and centuries.

Need for a brake

We have to note one important thing about yoga: that it is a method by which we can control the anarchical tendencies of our mind. Please remember this. Also, please remember, yoga is not for suppressing the mind. No, yoga is not an act of suppression. To illustrate this: as we control the waters of a river, through the method of channelization, and use those channels for the constructive purposes of irrigation in agriculture, in the same manner, the mental energy which gets dissipated and distorted in emotional breakdowns, in worries, in jealousy and hostility, in pride and egoism, in passion, anger and greed, all that mental energy must be channelled in the proper way or one will suffer dire mental problems.

Who can say that a car doesn't need a brake? It may not be necessary to use a brake when the traffic is clear, but then still the car must have a brake. In the same manner, we have a mind, and the mind has its instincts. Mind has its own inhibitions, and mind has its own anarchical behaviour. Not all people are calm, peaceful and compassionate; not all people have a good mind. People are filled with lower thoughts, lower tendencies, and if no brake is applied, one can have an accident at any time. Therefore, yoga is a brake and by this brake, we are able to control ourselves. How you may ask?

Coronary thrombosis is an ailment which is affecting millions of people all over the world. Why is this so? Coronary thrombosis is a disease of those people who are involved in competitive lives. It is not a physical disease; it is an act of the emotional human mind. Please go through the manuals of modern psychology and find out what psychosomatic diseases mean. Then you will understand that many of the prevalent diseases belonging to the heart and brain have their origin in competition. I get success, I want more, and when I want more success, naturally, I have a competitor. I must work day and night. This kind of anxiety, neurosis and this kind of life ultimately ends in what is called thrombosis.

Power of thought

Yoga brings us a message that there is a way out of this situation. Of course, medical science has got its own cure, but yoga gives prevention, and prevention is always better than cure. Understand one fact; there is no harm in working in the world. There is definitely nothing wrong with accomplishing something, but we must have a balanced way of looking at things. How will it come? It will not come in one day. You may read philosophy, scriptures; you may read a lot about bhakti and attachment and detachment, but nothing will work because you cannot control the inflexible cerebrum, the thinking mind. Man thinks. That thinking is an action, thinking is a reflection of the human cerebrum, the thinking mind.

The brain of man keeps on moving. Those tiny cells in the brain keep on working with the influxes of the blood: and our thoughts control these influxes of blood. Neurons in the brain, are controlled by thoughts (this has been proved by scientific experiments). A particular thought can bring about a heart attack. A particular thought can increase the blood pressure immediately. Asthma and similar diseases have their origin in emotional upsets. Now what are these emotional upsets, about which we have no training at all? You have been trained to get emotionally upset, through pictures, through books, through training from birth. Who can withstand emotional crises here? Nobody can withstand them; it is very difficult.

Emotions are part of human life. You must have love, you must have sympathy, you must give love, you must take love. When someone dies in the family, naturally you must feel sad. However, you must also have control, otherwise what happens is that people develop suicidal tendencies.

When this suicidal tendency becomes sufficiently strong, they commit suicide. But suppose they do not kill themselves? If I have a suicidal tendency and I do not commit suicide, that gets stored up in the unconscious mind and that brings about abnormal behaviour in the future and I become pessimistic

in my outlook on life. I lose interest in life and then I turn to alcohol, to tranquillizers, and to so many other diversions of life.

It is therefore necessary that, since we have a mind, we must know how to control it. Yoga practices are very effective methods by which the mind can be controlled. The mind cannot be tamed by philosophy, not by reading a lot of books on this subject, not even by leading a religious life. Only by a yogic life can one control the mind, can one control the physical brain, can one control the physical heart, can one control the physical and psychological aspects of the brain.

Exercising the mind

When you take drugs, ganja or LSD, for example, you immediately see the effect. Some people experience a greater effect, and others less. In the same manner, in our society there are people who can develop their equilibrium, mental peace, mental calmness to a great extent; but there are those people who have absolutely no mental peace; they don't even have a fraction of equilibrium.

Why talk of big things in life, when even the little things upset us. If I know that someone has been talking about me on the street, I don't get sleep at night. Don't you think it is the lack of yoga in me? Yes, it is yoga. Yoga means mental control. Please go through the eighteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It talks about control, it does not talk about renouncing life; it does not talk about renouncing your wife and children, property and accomplishments. It says, "Have everything with you, but have perfect control over the reactions, over the effects of the actions of the mind."

You do your karma, you do your duty, but they should not affect you, they should not bring about a crisis in your life. This is the fundamental teaching of yoga according to the *Bhagavad Gita*. Another scripture, the *Yoga Sutras* of Rishi Patanjali, which is the most important one in yoga, says in the beginning: "What is yoga? To have automatic control, to have

voluntary control, to have spontaneous control over the mind, its tendencies, its fluctuations, its dispassions, is yoga.”

When your mind is happy, you must have the capacity to hold that happiness. If your mind is calm, you must have the capacity to hold it there. If the mind is taking you along the wrong path, you must say “No, I don’t want it,” and you must bring it back. You must be like a trained horseman. You must be like a good driver with a car, so that when your car is going at full speed, and the traffic is according to your wish, you should be relaxed but still in control. You should use your car by all means; it does not mean that you should keep your car in the garage as an ornament and then go on foot.

The message of yoga is to exercise the mind every day, just a little, so that you have conscious control over the reactions of the brain. This method is known as *dhyana*. It is known as concentration and meditation, and can be done by each and everyone. It is not necessary nor is it right to say that only *sannyasins*, saints, monks and *mahatmas* can practise it. Everyone can and should do it.

Transcending the outer space

There is one widespread misunderstanding about *dhyana* which is that those who want *moksha*, salvation or liberation, can do *dhyana*, but those who are worldly people, given to the human needs of life, should not do *dhyana*. This is an unscientific and untenable statement. *Dhyana* is for those who want to have control over their mental tendencies whenever they need it, whether they have strong or weak minds.

Now, this meditation or *dhyana* is very difficult as far as the practice is concerned. There are a large number of techniques. The first important aim in those techniques is to be able to transcend the outer space or the environment. This is the first practice in meditation, you must be able to transcend the outer space, so that you forget what is taking place outside.

Any practice that can bring you to that particular point is called the practice of tranquillity. This space, this outer

space about which you are aware all the twenty-four hours of the day, should be transcended for a few minutes every day, and when you have transcended the outer space or the outer consciousness, you develop peace and tranquillity within you. The blood pressure throughout the body is completely adjusted, and not only that, the carbon-dioxide, the toxins, the tensions in the cerebrum, in the cardiac region, everywhere slowly disappear. This practice of relaxation, this practice of tranquillity is so difficult that one has to study a little about it.



Many methods

There are numerous methods according to the Indian tradition. One method is nada yoga, the method of tranquilizing the mind with the help of sound. In nada yoga, you have two methods. One is the method of simple sound, another is the method of music.

Music is also a part of nada yoga; it is not a recreation, it is not an enjoyment, not a sense of enjoyment; it is a method in yoga in which the mind is helped, is assisted to transcend the outer space. So this nada yoga is one method.

The second method is japa yoga, that is to coordinate a mantra with your natural breath. A third method is trataka, to look at the flame of a candle or to concentrate on some point.

There are other practices also, such as the practice of kundalini yoga, in which the mind has to concentrate on the psychic centres in the body. These psychic centres are

situated in the spinal cord, right from the bottom to the top. There are seven psychic centres. They are called chakras. You have to meditate on one of the chakras according to your temperament, inclination and also your evolution. Some people meditate on the navel centre, others meditate on the heart centre, yet others meditate on the centre between the two eyebrows, but all this will have to be decided after a lot of study by the individual.

You do not have to practise everything. If you know the right practice, fifteen minutes will be sufficient time to transcend the outer space. You don't need years and years to develop the technique. However, if you are practising the wrong technique, I mean the technique which does not suit your personality, then it will take years and years.

One important practice, which is useful for all people is to close the eyes and follow all the thoughts that come into your mind. Do not suppress anything. That should be done for about ten or fifteen minutes daily. Do nothing, sit down quietly and ask yourself, "What am I thinking?" Thinking about business? family? relations? future? past? Useful, useless, negative thoughts? Good thoughts? Anything; let them come. You just remain a seer. You just remain a witness.

Don't be attached and don't be detached; just look at them impartially. After ten or fifteen minutes repeat your mantra. The tranquillity will come within twenty minutes. Then you must have a point or an image or a form for concentration. You must have! You can have a star, a flame of light, you can have a flower, you can have a deity, it's all the same. You must have some image or form on which you are able to concentrate your mind.

Fusing of personalities

We people need a strong mind and this mental strength can come by doing yoga. A little yoga practice will save you from emotional crises. If there are conflicts in your personality, you can do something about them. Not just by a few days practice

of yoga, but with time you can become free from conflicts. These are very difficult to remove, but it is true that by the practices of yoga, you can bring about harmony between your two personalities.

Bhoga means suppression and yoga means union. When two things become one, that is called yoga. Now what are those two things that become one in yoga? Well, the philosophers have been telling us that the individual self and the cosmic self became one. The bhaktas tell us that they became one with God.

What I feel is, of course as a student of psychology, that there are two personalities in every man, the ego and the superego, and they are always in conflict with each other. Every man has two personalities, the subconscious personality and the higher personality. You are something to yourself and something else to me. This schizophrenia is an attitude; it can be called a split personality.

Man has two personalities, we are two personalities, and the two personalities should be fused into one, and that is the ultimate aim of yoga, so that what you are inside, that you are outside. And what you are outside that you are inside. If I am a good man, I am a good man to me, I am good to all.

This particular fusion of the split personality into one, it is called yoga. It is not possible in one day; it takes time; but remember, according to the science of psychology and according to the science of yoga, as long as there is a struggle between these two personalities, the ego and the superego, your behaviour will not remain the same. You will always remain abnormal in some way. Your thoughts will be clouded, your decisions will never be true.

Surviving this phase

Therefore, in order to succeed in life, and in order to be happy along with success, it is necessary that everyone practises yoga. You know that man has wanted success and he has been working for it, but even after having achieved success,

he doesn't achieve happiness. There are some people who are successful, but unhappy, and yet there are some people who are happy but unsuccessful.

– YOGA Vol. 11, No. 1 (January 1973)



The yogic vision of personality is not limited to the day-to-day experiences of body, mind and emotions. It integrates the manifest with the unmanifest experience, fully recognizing that the aspect of life with which one identifies is only external and superficial.

–Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Yoga in the Office

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

I am an executive in a very large enterprise, where without calling it yoga I have introduced some asanas and a few stages of antar mouna. I can already see the effect in the quality of the meetings, the spirit, and the ideas. I am not sure how much more I should introduce. What would you advise?

When people sit on chairs certain practices for the reduction of cerebral and nervous tension are very useful for executives and workers whose work is table-oriented. You approach them for the reduction of cerebral and nervous tension, not physical and mental tension.

If people sit and, for five minutes, observe the breath and develop sound awareness, not of the mantra *So Ham*, just the sound of breathing, that will reduce cerebral and nervous tension. If there is too much pressure from work, then bhramari pranayama will stimulate melatonin which will reduce tension. People will feel more relaxed and peaceful thanks to the release of melatonin.



When somebody is sick at home and you are at work with half of your mind at home it creates intellectual or emotional pressures. For such a situation you can take the businesspeople through visualizations of sceneries which give peace and tranquillity such as a beach, a sunset or a mountain. They don't have to worry about the breath, they don't have to worry about anything.



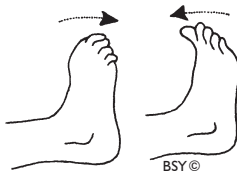
Nadi shodhana, alternate nostril breathing, is also useful. They don't have to use the

hand, they can just mentally visualize it: imagine that you are breathing in, breathing out. Breathing in, breathing out. Breathing in, breathing out. It is a mental activity, not a physical one.

At the time of anxiety, stress and tension, there are three areas of the body which become tight: the perineum, the abdomen and the neck and shoulders. Therefore, when you are sitting on a chair, you should become aware of these three areas and consciously release all the muscles which are tight. If you are unable to release the tension in any of these areas, then you have to go into deep abdominal breathing mode: expansion, breathe in, relaxing, breathe out.

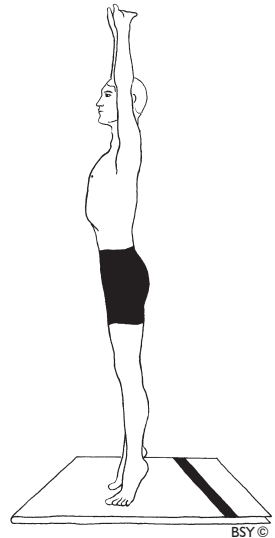


There are other practices for computer database managers which they can do while sitting on a chair. These are the head, finger and hand exercises from the pawanmuktasana series 1. This will increase their productivity as their fingers will become more relaxed. The tightness and the micro-movement will change. Definitely for people working with computers, the hand and head movements are very good.



When exercising the toes as in pawanmuktasana 1, they only have to remove their shoes. There is no need to take off the socks. If some people would like to stretch, then tadasana will help release the pressure from the spine as sitting affects the lower back and the circulation.

– 21 February 2016, Satsang with Swami Yogabhakti and the group from France, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Emotional Dependence

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Why do people want to keep in contact with the departed? You have to live your life independently and individually, regardless of whether you are together or separate. If your children go to another country to study, live or work, they have departed from your home yet you maintain the feeling of affection and love for them.

The feeling is always happy when you think of your children for you know that wherever they are, they are happy, doing what they want to do, living how they want to live, succeeding in the manner that they want to succeed. There is a sense of happiness for your children. The need of keeping in touch comes due to emotional dependence.

Desire and intention

Emotional dependence is based on *kamana*, *iccha*, desire. That dependence makes you feel connected, that somebody is there to look after you when you need support, health, assistance. Everybody is seeking security; everybody is seeking to overcome the fear of isolation, inability and incapacity.

To overcome this fear, there is always latching on to somebody emotionally and that is the beginning of a relationship. It is not bad, it is not good. That is the life we all live in this world right from Stone Age until now.

This has been stated by Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Sage Vasishtha and other rishis.

Emotional dependence is a fact and reality of life. This emotional association becomes restrictive when it is connected with selfish, self-oriented, self-fulfilling *kamanas*. There it takes the form of *asakti*, attachment, *mamata*, deep emotional entanglement, *moha*, infatuation. However, the same association can be maintained in a positive manner. Then it becomes a virtuous giving in which two kindred spirits recognize, respect and honour each other. They do not extract anything from each other. This can be seen in the lives of rishis, and in the life of Sharada Ma and Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

They were husband and wife, in the truest sense of the world. People think of the husband and wife relationship in a physical and material sense. The relationship may not be as extreme and detached as between Sri Ramakrishna and Sharada Ma, yet even five percent on this side of the scale will give a better understanding and perception with a detached objectivity about the other person. It will lead to greater understanding and cooperation if the intentions are right.

When the intention is right, there is always release from emotions and the mind. The associations of a lifetime are seen as mutual support, which have nurtured and nourished one's own spirit. That is known as the sadhu life. Sadhu life does not mean a renunciate's life, but a life of goodness.









Sense of isolation

In one part of society, this emotional association has taken the shape of dependency, attachment, infatuation and deep emotional entanglement. In that state, one is incapable of standing on one's own feet without support and confirmation from the partner. A close communication between partners develops when they share all aspirations, hopes and frustrations. They are open to each other.

You feel totally alone and isolated due to lack of reflection and understanding of the roll of the atma in life and due to the absence of somebody in your life.

That loneliness and isolation cannot be filled by your children, no matter how good they are, for they came later into your life. The first person who came into your life was the wife or husband. The children have their own aspirations and have made their own choices. The person who supported your choices was the partner.

Despite children being good and over-devoted to the parent, the sense of emptiness and isolation still continues in the mind and heart of the person who has lost a partner. When that loneliness becomes deep, the question does come into the mind of how to communicate with the other person who has been a friend, a partner for so many years of your life.

Two categories

If by God's grace, communication does happen between the spirit of the departed person and the person here, what will be the talk? "How are you? How are the children?" – "Please protect the children and keep an eye on everybody here. You know, since you have gone, I have been missing you, I have been suffering, I hope you are all right."

Does that talk, that communication, actually fill the gap, the absence and the vacuum in the heart? To some people, maybe just hearing the words of solace which they believe come from the other side is enough. It is a mindset which finds comfort and solace in that, and that is one category of people.

Another category is people who let go and find comfort and solace in thinking that 'I have been very fortunate in this life to have had a companion who has understood me, who has supported me and who has nurtured me and I am thankful and grateful to God for giving me such a happy life'. They are thankful for that and release it. They pray to God, 'If there is a next life, again may I enjoy the same beauty which I have enjoyed in this life'.

That can be the attitude of the sadhu, the person who is good and virtuous and who has released attachment. A person who has released is not bound by emotional strings anymore. Once the bird is free and the string of attachment is broken, the bird can fly anywhere and need not ever come back to your finger again. That is the reality of life.

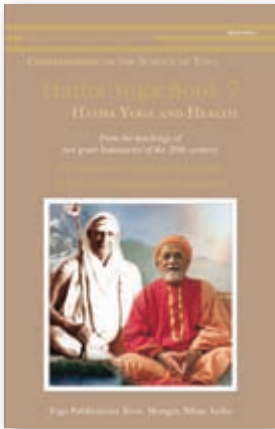
To find your own inner solace when feeling the absence of a loved person you can repeat the guru mantra while visualizing the image of that person or while doing trataka on a photo of that person. This will fill the emotional vacuum and bring peace into your life.

– 2 August 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Yogic Definition of Disease

From Hatha Yoga Book 7, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga has a beneficial effect on most disease states; but first, disease has to be defined properly. Yoga has its own definition. Disease manifests in the body but does not originate in the body; disease originates from a state of imbalance. There may be disharmony between the nervous systems or an imbalance in the hormonal secretions, or in the digestive processes. As such, disease is defined in a subtle manner, and treated according to its nature.

For example, yoga does not treat diabetes as a digestive disorder. It is known to be a deficiency in insulin, there is no doubt about it. It is also known that the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are controlled by higher centres, and when these centres fail to activate the nervous system properly, a deficiency of hormones in a particular area results. When yoga treats a diabetic patient it is not a treatment for a deficiency of insulin; he is not treated for the disease he is apparently suffering from. Yoga recognizes that it is stress and strain that are responsible, so the treatment is for that.

When a mental health patient suffering from psychosis, neurosis or a nervous breakdown is treated, yoga takes him as a personality, a human being, an individual who can think and feel. Yoga takes him deeper into his own mind through the practices of concentration and meditation, bringing him to the root of his illness.

If a person is suffering from high anxiety, the prescription is not for practices that induce an immediate state of tranquillity. Rather, yoga tries to explode that person's personality, to

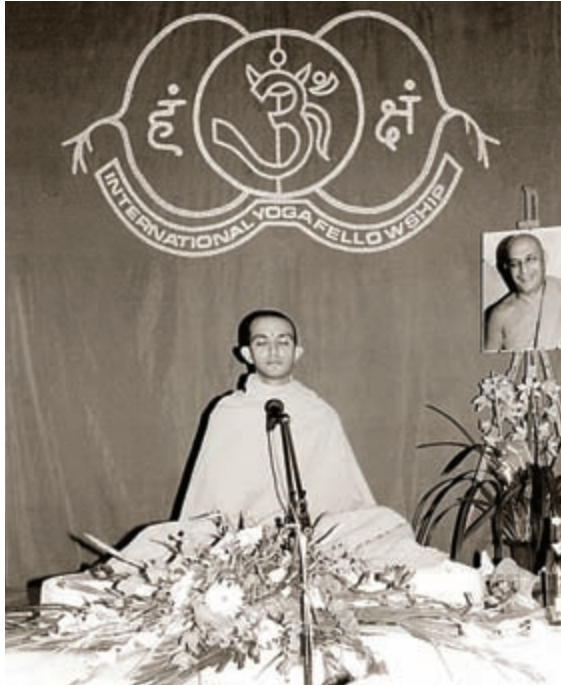
express what remains dormant in the back of his mind. This is possible with the practice of concentration, such as mantra, which is part of yoga. As a scientific principle, mantra is a powerful instrument. Through the practice of mantra, one tries to explode the deeper phases of the consciousness. When the inner states of mind are exploded then one comes face to face with all the thoughts, distractions, passions and repressions that lie deep within.

The physical body is influenced by the human mind. It is the sentiments, the emotions, feelings and objectives, passions, fears, anxieties and worries in the mind which create physiological changes in the body. The adrenal, thyroid and pituitary secretions have a natural flow and order. A thought can and does influence the working of the physical body. Fear, psychosis or anxiety influence the endocrine glands and change the mode of brainwaves.



Mantras with Purpose

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The mantras *ham* and *tham* of hatha yoga are related to the hatha yogic process, not to the awakening of ajna chakra. *Ham* and *ksham* are the mantras for ajna chakra.

Shabda and spandan

It is said in the science of vibration by Abhinav Gupta of the Kashmir Shaivite tradition that every sound, every word, every consonant, every vowel is known as akshara. *Akshara* means something which does not decay, which does not die.

What is that? It is the first evolute in space, sound or *shabda*. *Shabda* was also the evolute during the Big Bang. Without the *shabda*, the Bang would not have come into existence. Without

the shabda, without the creation of vibrations which spread in all directions, the Bang would not have happened. Shabda is the first evolute in space, in science and in spiritual traditions.

This shabda creates *tarang*, waves, when a stone is thrown in the middle of a pond, from the point where the stone falls, one will see round ripples spread in all directions homogeneously, simultaneously. That is the *spandan*, vibration, of the shabda. Shabda was the rock, something which fell, something which was uttered, something which one was able to utter, and from there sound creates the vibration, spandan.

In Sanskrit these spandans are categorized as dental, lingual or palatal according to where the sound is created.

If there is a dental sound in a mantra, the effect of the mantra will be in a certain way. If there is guttural sound in a mantra, the effect of the mantra will be different. If there is a lingual sound in the mantra, the effect of the mantra will again be different. From each category, a different set of vibrations is being generated. That is known as spandan. In the image of a chakra, one will find the *bija mantra*, the primary category of the spandan, and the sub-mantras, representing a spectrum of vibrations which affect, stimulate, awaken and activate that particular region.

Journey and destination

The word hatha and the mantras *ham* and *ksham* correspond to each other, but they are not the same. According to certain grammatical principles depending where the first or second consonant and the vowels are put, any letter can change its pronunciation. For example the word *shatkone* is pronounced also as *khatkone*. Both are correct.

Each mantra has two levels. One which helps one become the gross dimension, and another which stabilizes one in becoming the subtle dimension.

Tham is a hard mantra, it is a dynamic, strong mantra: *tham tham tham tham tham*. It is like a hammer banging a gong: bang bang bang, *tham tham tham*.

Hatha yoga indicates a process of physical transcendence, coming to ajna chakra, however, it is still the process of physical transcendence. In the mantra *hatha*, one is dealing with the chakras from mooladhara to vishuddhi. The moment one reaches ajna chakra, *tham* changes into *ksham*.

This is the difference: banging one gong with a hammer, creating the bang is *tham*, and dropping one drop of water on a hot plate is *ksham*.

The mantra *ksham* is now the mantra of ajna chakra, it is no longer *tham*. *Tham* is the journey from mooladhara to ajna, indicating that the process of hatha yoga leads one to ajna chakra. *Ham* and *tham* do not mean that they are the mantras of ajna chakra. The mantra of ajna chakra is *ksham*, the drop falling on the hot plate and just going poof!

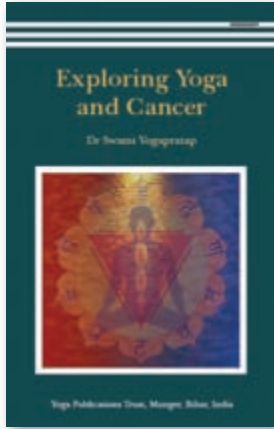
That is the subtle aspect for from here, ida, pingala and sushumna go as one. They merge and become one. There is no distinction, there is no duality. Therefore, the mantra for ajna chakra is *ksham* in the subtle body, in the subtle dimension. Whereas the mantra for hatha yoga is *tham* in the physical gross dimension.

– 28 February 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Yogic Cancer Management

From Exploring Yoga and Cancer, Dr Swami Yogapratap



With an expansion of our understanding of the human being from the physical level to higher levels, comes the realization that the causative factors of cancer are not limited to the body but go beyond this dimension. The logical step from here is that our definition of cure needs to widen its horizons to include these levels also. For even if the disease process has not yet manifested in the physical body but is present in the mental or pranic or causal body, it is just a matter of time before it is experienced in the physical body. Hence, we will now look at how to restore normality to the physical, mental, pranic and causal dimensions.

Various causes

Cancer is caused by the presence of some unbalancing forces, be they physical carcinogens, repressed thoughts with a strong emotional content or chronic mental and emotional stress. When the mind plays and replays thoughts over and over again, it results in stimulation of the same patterns of neuropeptides which, over a period of time and due to their cumulative effect, lead to pranic blockages and pranic depletion in corresponding areas.

It is postulated that this aggravates immune suppression and a generalized debility of the entire psychoneuroimmune apparatus. In this state the body is denied the protective shield which mops up the errant cancerous transformations under normal circumstances. The continued presence of these factors

allows mutational damage of the genetic structure (stimulation of oncogenes and suppression of cancer suppressor genes) to flourish.

Thoughts, emotional content and stressors can originate externally or internally. Internally, they can arise a) from the conscious mind due to brooding over certain recent or past instances, desires and ambitions or b) from the subconscious or even the unconscious mind from the distant past or c) even from the collective unconscious including from past lives. These processes collectively prepare the substratum or the field for cancer to strike.

It then takes only a small trigger in the form of carcinogens from the diet or other physical carcinogens to cause the advent of cancer. The lesion may then be maintained and fostered by the thought processes mentioned above, causing the cancer to become aggressive in its spread, resistant to treatment and, of vital significance, creating the basis for relapses of the cancer.

Carcinogens can either be physical or mental in nature. They create a strong impression in the cellular memory and over a period of time may result in mutational changes in the DNA of the cells which, if the circumstances are favourable to them, can escape the DNA repair mechanisms and the immune surveillance and become a part of the genetic material of the affected cells. These mutations are then carried forward in progressive cell divisions and may either progress or be rectified. If these oncogenic mutations survive and progress, they can lead to cancer. Under such circumstances progression to cancer may occur.

Yogic cancer management

Yogic cancer management aims to:

- Block the action of one or more of these carcinogenic activities at various levels, thereby preventing a build up of the cancerous transformative processes so that they remain below the critical threshold level. This prevents translation of cancer predisposing conditions into cancerous conditions.

- Bring about harmony amongst all the various dimensions so that there is a smooth flow of energy and the stress faced by the individual becomes a 'eustress' rather than a 'distress.' This prevents the immune system from being overloaded with signals towards which the immune system has to direct its energies. Thus, the immune apparatus has a better chance of attending to the cellular disturbances in the form of microtumours and destroying them before they can cause permanent damage.
- Boost the performance of all the systems, most notably the circulatory and the psychoneuroimmune systems through a variety of mechanisms. This improves their functioning and increases the chance of the system preventing occurrence of the disease. If the disease is already present, these systems are better able to manage the disease.
- Introduce positive healing factors which not only neutralise the disrupting effect of the carcinogens (physical, mental, emotional and causal) but actively boost the psychoneuroimmune apparatus thereby causing reversal of the cancerous process.

The koshas

In the annamaya kosha (the physical level), there needs to be an optimization and balance in the various organs and systems like the digestive, respiratory, cardio-vascular, haematopoietic, neuro-endocrinal, genito-urinary and others. This can be achieved by a set of asanas, shatkarmas and yogic dietary habits.

In the pranamaya kosha (the pranic level), pranic blockages need to be removed, deficiency of prana needs to be attended to and a smooth, unhampered flow of prana all over the body needs to be attained. This can be achieved by various practices of pranayama and the practices of prana vidya and prana nidra.

In the manomaya kosha (the mental-emotional level), the thought patterns need to be managed, the emotions need to be channelled and given a constructive outlet, and a harmonious

blending of these two aspects needs to be attained. This can be achieved by relaxation and the premeditative practices of pratyahara, dharana and the integration of the principles of the yamas and niyamas in our day-to-day lives.

In the vijnanamaya and anandamaya koshas (the subconscious, unconscious and the collective unconscious), we need to tune in to the various impulses that originate there, propelling our thought processes, ambitions and drives.

You are invincible

Every difficulty is an opportunity
To develop your will and to grow strong.
Difficulties strengthen your will,
Augment your power of endurance
And turn your mind towards God.

Face them with a smile.
In your weakness lies your real strength.
You are invincible.
Nothing can harm you.
Conquer the difficulties one by one.

This is the beginning of a new life,
A life of expansion, glory and divine splendour.
Realize, not from tomorrow or the day after,
But right now from this very second.
Rely on your own Self, on your inner spiritual strength.
Stand on your own feet.

—Swami Sivananda

The Gunas

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna speaks of three qualities or *gunas*: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa*. All mental states and expressions of life are governed by *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa*. There is no thought and no action which is free from the influence of these *gunas*. Therefore, you have to know the *gunas* before you understand any other concept of yoga.

There is no use defining *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya*, desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy, unless they are seen in relation to the *gunas*.

An example is the knife, is it good or bad? The goodness or badness of the knife is determined by its use. The knife itself does not have a quality.

One can see that the quality of the knife is to cut. That is an action of the knife, yet the action is guided and controlled by the three *gunas*. If the tamasic *guna* pushes the knife into somebody's heart and kills that person, it is the tamasic act in which the knife became an instrument to fulfil it. The knife is not tamasic. It became a medium to fulfil a tamasic act.

Similarly, if you use the knife to chop vegetables, prepare your meal to sustain yourself, the knife is being used in a rajasic manner. The same knife in order to save the life of somebody is being used in a sattwic manner. Knife is a word, but its actions are guided by the *gunas*.

Krodha, anger, becomes positive when associated with *sattwa* *guna*. *Krodha* becomes negative when associated with *tamoguna*. *Krodha* becomes corrective when associated with *rajoguna*. The six enemies *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya* are only words, nothing more than that. They become something when in association with a particular *guna*.

– 18 October 2015, *Ganga Darshan*, Munger

Much More Than Breath

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When you are chanting, you can only do it while breathing out. However, you can whisper, during inhalation, exhalation and retention. You can whisper at any point of the breath. There are two movements: one is the breath movement, the other is the pranic movement. The awareness has to shift from the breath to the pranic movement. In the whispering mode, it is the pranic movement which is becoming more active.

There are people like Swami Nadabrahmananda, who have mastered the science of pranayama. He could hold his breath for one hour without breathing and have normal body functions, as verified by scientific research.

The pranic movement is a totally different dimension and therefore in yoga there is the pranamaya kosha, existence in the pranic dimension.

Nadi shodhana

The only practice which can lead one there is nadi shodhana pranayama, nothing more. Not surya bheda, not chandra bheda, not kapalbhata, not bhastrika. The only practice that will take one from the awareness of annamaya kosha to pranamaya kosha is the perfection of the stages of nadi shodhana. The other pranayama practices are activating or internalizing, like sheetali and sheetkari. The only balancing one which one can sustain for a long time is nadi shodhana. There is no end to the practice. One can keep increasing the ratio and the capacity of the lungs.

In nadi shodhana, the first thing that one needs to do is equalize the flow, the in and out going flow. There has to be equal mastery of the process of breathing. When one is exhaling and acting, moving, working, the prana shakti is more in harmony with one's actions and performance. It becomes part and parcel of it. When one is inhaling, the prana shakti is held back from expressing itself.

This was proved by a research study in schools. When children are inhaling the instruction should be given at that moment they are absorbing. The teacher should be silent and not say anything when the children are breathing out. The researchers regulated the children's breathing with the movement of a pendulum of a grandfather clock. When the pendulum swung to one side, the children breathed in, and when the pendulum swung to the other side, they breathed out.

The teacher would give instructions according to the swing of the pendulum, whether it was math, history, geography or any other subject. They found that retention and memory of information improved considerably. When you are breathing in you are absorbing. When you are breathing out you are expressing. When you are holding the breath, you are enforcing whatever is there. Holding the breath, especially the in-breath, will give you the feeling of solidity from inside, of being well packed from the inside.

Cosmic breath

Adi Shankaracharya said, "Breathing in, I am Brahman. Breathing out, all the rest is maya." This is the concept of anuloma viloma, breathing in and breathing out. This idea of breathing in and breathing out and the reference that with each breath of Brahma, creation and dissolution take place can be found in the scriptures. When the universe is expanding, it is the outgoing breath. When the universe is collapsing, contracting, it is the inward breath. That is the breath of Brahma.

You are breathing in Brahma, for duality is dissolving and you are coming back into singularity, merging everything, dissolving everything, *vilaya*. From *laya* has come the word *loma*, as in anuloma viloma. When you are breathing in, there is contraction of space. When you are breathing out, there is separation, expansion of space. And that is maya.

This world and every activity is a reflection of activity happening at the cosmic, universal level. The experiences which you have in your body also happen in the universal dimension. If a star glows, if a planet dies, it is not an isolated incident. The impact of it is felt everywhere.

A mosquito bite on your little toe is felt in your body, but your hands act on it either to scratch or to swat. The mosquito has bitten you on your toe, the pain is there, but the action is in the hands. The mosquito bite is not an isolated incident.

Cosmic Unified Field Theory

From this has come the Unified Field Theory. Just as you experience the mosquito bite in your body, the cosmos, the universe experiences it, however, at a different level and to a different degree.

Are you able to understand what the ultimate in pain for an ant is? Are you able to understand what the ultimate in pain for a gazelle is that is being chased and hunted down by a hungry lion and who sees itself being dismembered and dying a slow death?

There are different levels. People are too caught up in their own head-trips, to even know the vast spectrum of an experience that can begin from a minute and miniscule thing and turn into something which is an experience beyond compare.

In the vedic thought process the universe is alive, it is not a dead place. If a star system goes out in some galaxy, the impact of that will be felt everywhere. If a sun dies, the impact of that will be felt throughout its zone of influence.

That is the Cosmic Unified Field Theory. According to the vedic concept, birth, emergence, decay, death, the tattwas, the life forms, the material and the sentient form part of a universal blue print. Today science is coming to the same conclusion. Science is not merely looking at planets, stars and galaxies, to ascertain whether there are gases, water, carbon, methane or oxygen, whether life is possible or not. Now science is looking beyond all that.

The sap of life

Decay and sustenance go hand in hand. The Vishnu tattwa and Shiva tattwa are the most active tattwas in life. Cells begin to decay, the moment they are born. The moment birth takes place, the cells are in the grip of death. The grip of death is decay. The strength to survive for a period of time, the life time of that particular thing is the Vishnu element. Just as a twig can lose its greenness and remain brown for some time, without falling off the tree, in the same manner, one can also lose touch with the senses. The greenness can go and the dry brownness will remain. The *rasa*, the sap, which will dry out, is the *vishaya vritti*, known in yoga as raga and dwesha as stated in Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (2:7 and 8):

Sukhanushayi ragah.

Dukhanushayi dweshah.

Raga is the liking accompanying pleasure.

Dwesha is the repulsion accompanying pain.

That is the sap of life – pleasure in attachment and pain in detachment. Seeking security, comfort, care, protection, these manifestations are emerging from the mind, as a result of the cosmic raga and dwesha.

Due to cosmic raga and dwesha, creation has taken place. The separation of elements is dwesha, which will lead to pain. The coming together of elements is raga, attraction and attachment.

– 16 January 2016, Paduka Darshan, Munger



One-Year Diploma Course 2015–2016



If there is a will, there is a way. This sentence became alive for me, when I stepped in the Ganga Darshan ashram for the one-year diploma course.

I didn't come here to learn yoga only but somewhere I wished to have an experience of yogic life and I had the desire to assimilate yogic sadhana in my own life. I came here to filter my whole personality.

The whole ashram life was like a mirror for me, in which I could see my own shortcomings and conditions and I also learnt to overcome them through different yoga techniques which are taught here.

– *Sannyasi Sukirti, Rajnandgaon, India*

This place is like a mother's womb for me, where I stayed for ten months and took a new birth with the help of each and everyone. I too struggled a lot like a baby does inside the womb.

Swami Niranjan was the main person who took care of my each and every breath and kept nourishing me with his satsang, his love, his acceptance and by tolerating my odds.

Whatever good or bad situation we faced, was because of our deeds, expectations, luxury and dissatisfaction.

– *Bidula Ghosh, Kolkata, India*



I am Bandana Thapa from Kathmandu, Nepal. I can still feel the cosmic energy of Swamiji in the land of Nepal when he came to Kathmandu two years ago. From the first glance I was fascinated with the scientific and practical, balanced and overall concepts of Satyananda Yoga. I took mantra diksha in Nepal from Swamiji as well, then my curiosity led me towards Munger and Ganga Darshan ashram.

Doing my regular karma yoga I could feel very relaxed and I could observe myself. During such work I could feel irritation with bad speech, but I did not get angry nor did I say back any words. Instead, I saw myself and I saw my anger, my jealousy, greed, and so on very clearly. I give thanks to all who made me see my anger, jealousy, greed hidden within me.

– *Jignasu Moun Vilas, Nepal*



Sunday Satsang

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What is the difference between sadhana and tapasya?

There are two concepts in yoga, the concept of sadhana and the concept of tapasya. The concept of sadhana is for having a grip over the mind and the concept of tapasya is for self-purification. Sadhana does not lead to self-purification. It only leads to mental dominance, victory and mastery over the mind.

When gold is put in fire and melted, the impurities are separated and can be extracted from the purity of the gold. At each level, the gold can be purified more and more. That is *shuddhi* and the purpose of tapasya, whereas sadhana leads to control over the mental behaviour.

People are failures in sadhana, and therefore they cannot conceive of how they can do tapasya. If initiates cannot do their one mala of mantra at night, then what kind of sadhana will they be able to do in the future? If that simple sadhana which takes ten minutes cannot be sustained or maintained by an initiate, how can an initiate have any spiritual aspiration? Why does that break in sadhana happen? It happens due to the mind, saying 'Oh I'm exhausted', 'Oh I'm tired', 'Oh I'm this', 'Oh I'm that'.

The purpose of sadhana is to allow you control over the mind. In sadhana you have to bypass the mind, and be regular

in it. If you follow the whims of the mind, forget it. The mind is always anti-discipline. The mind's behaviour can never be pro-discipline. Mental behaviour is always anti-discipline. Therefore, the sadhana component is only used for correcting this mental deficiency.

Doing one mala of mantra every day is a sadhana, doing one's yoga practice every morning is a sadhana. Maintaining positivity of mind every moment is a sadhana, for it can be broken at any given moment by a whim of one's own creation.

Even if you fall asleep during your mantra japa, you will say, "Oh, I did my mantra." You are not going to say, "I slept in my mantra practice," but you will say, "I did my mantra." Such hypocritical behaviour of your mind in relation to yourself is mental imbalance, and that imbalance has to be corrected.

Tapasya is a totally different thing. In *tapasya* or austerity, if the mind is not controlled, one cannot do it.

How can we cultivate sakshi bhava in daily life? Even the slightest attention to something like breath seems to modify it, and thereby is moving us away from being a witness? Are there any practices that we can bring into our daily routine?

Once you become a witness, the correction process begins. You cannot be a witness and not begin a correction process. The moment you begin to witness your breath, the correction of breathing will begin. If the correction in breathing is not happening, you are not a witness. Awareness and correction form part of the witnessing aspect.

That is the essence of drashta. If you are observing your thoughts, you are also managing and correcting your thoughts. You are eliminating, accepting and analyzing your thoughts; it is not just watching them. This is one difficulty when the concept of drashta is not clear to people. They think of drashta as simply observing.

Some people suggest that you should watch yourself as you watch a movie, yet a movie is not you. That is not a

correct idea. With a movie you can be objective. It does not reflect your involvement and participation. When you are watching yourself, when you are watching your thoughts and your mind, you are involved and you are already in that state. If negative thoughts come to your mind, you are already involved in negativity. How can you maintain your objectivity?

If you are to maintain your objectivity, negative thoughts should not even come. When you are doing that to yourself, you are already in a state of experience, which you begin to observe. You are not detached from that experience, you are in that experience.

If I see two people fighting, they are separate. I can observe them fight. However, if I am seeing myself fighting with someone, I am involved. I cannot be separate as a drashta at that time. I can observe, yet I cannot be the true drashta. I am involved, I am in it. Therefore, I have to manage where I am. If I am in the lake, I have to swim in the lake. If I am on the land, I have to walk on the land. I have to change my responses depending on the situation I am in.

Development of objectivity is not as simple as saying, 'Okay, I am a drashta. I am objective and I am watching everything.' Drashta is an indication of being aware of your responses and correcting them. That is the meaning of the word drashta.

If you begin to observe your breath, and the breath corrects itself without you interfering, just by the act of your observation, that is okay. However, if you begin to purposely interfere to regulate your breath, that is not drashta, then it becomes pranayama.

Just watching the breath, you find you are breathing incorrectly and it rectifies itself, this is well and good. The drashta ability has brought your breathing to a correct state and level. Awareness and correctness form part of becoming the drashta.

– 20 March 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Bridge of Thoughts

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Thought is the greatest force on earth. It is the most powerful weapon in the armour of a yogi. Constructive thought transforms, renews and builds. Thought is the primal force behind creation.

Think good of all and always do good actions. Serve, love, give and make others happy. Live to serve others, then you will reap happiness.

Each thought is a link in an endless chain of causes and effects, each effect becoming a cause and each cause having been an effect. Each link in the endless chain is welded out of desire, thought and activity. A desire stimulates a thought; a thought embodies itself as an act. The act constitutes the web of destiny.

Your destiny is mapped out by your thoughts. The limit of your thought is the limit of your possibilities. Your circumstances and environments are the materialization of your thoughts. Whatever thought you cherish will be ultimately realized.

As you think, so you become. As are your thoughts, so must be your life. Better thoughts bring better actions. Be careful of your thoughts. Whatever you send out of your mind comes back to you. If you hate another, hate will come back to you. If you love others, love will come back to you.

The world around you is only what you believe it to be. Pierce through the steel armour of biased thoughts and try to see the divinity in every object. Thought is a bridge that connects the human with the Divine. Send out a steady stream of thought and goodwill to all creation.



Turn the Gaze Inwards

I was never born
Nor shall I die;
We must stand by the real truth
And breathe vairagya through every pore.

All emotions are self-created.
Mental love is air.
Worldly love is skin deep.
Spiritual union is yet very far.

Bliss born of body begets disease.
Bliss born of money creates restlessness.
Bliss born of power and position fattens the ajnana.
Bliss born of attachment causes endless pain.

Only that bliss which is experienced
After all other forms of bliss
Have been fried in the fire of vairagya
Is real and abiding.

We must stand by the real truth
Which this body and mind are not.
About turn,
Change the emotions, ideals, ambitions.

Turn the gaze inward and still the mind.
Become sthira, steady and motionless
As Buddha did, as Shankara did
And as the ever shining Atma is.

Absolute departure, total withdrawal
Rebirth into the spiritual dimension.
Outer life remains the same;
Inner life is totally changed.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



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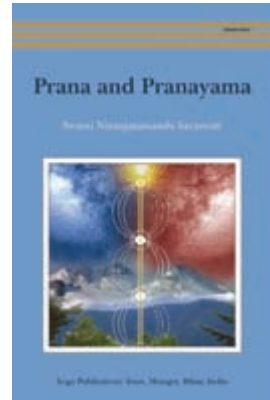
Prana and Pranayama

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

362 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-81-86336-79-3

Prana and Pranayama is a comprehensive text on the classical philosophy of *prana*, life force, and *pranayama*, the expansion and control of the life force. It provides a complete description of the science of pranayama as presented in the classical texts and as taught in the Satyananda Yoga tradition by Bihar School of Yoga.

The first part of the book explores the theory of prana and its related yogic concepts: koshas, chakras, nadis and mantras. Secondly, it expands upon respiratory physiology and current research undertaken by science on pranayama. In the practical section, specific guidelines for practising pranayama are given, using detailed instructions and illustrations. Throughout the text, scriptural sources further enhance the reader's understanding, bringing to light the original essence and intent of these classical teachings.



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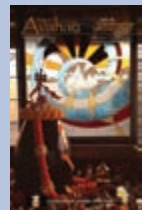
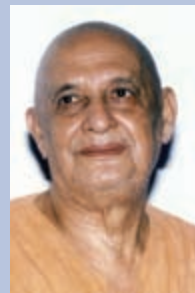
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Avahan Online

www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/ provides online access to *Satya ka 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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Jul 15-18	Guru Poornima Satsang Program (Hindi/English)
Jul 19	Guru Paduka Poojan (Hindi/English)
Sep 24-30	* Hatha Yoga: Shatkarma Intensive (Hindi/English)
Oct 3-30	* Progressive Yoga Vidya Training (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)
Nov 7-Feb 7 2017	* Yoga Lifestyle Experience
Dec 19-23	Yoga Chakra Series (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 training & courses available in English language for Overseas participants

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For more information on the above events contact:

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