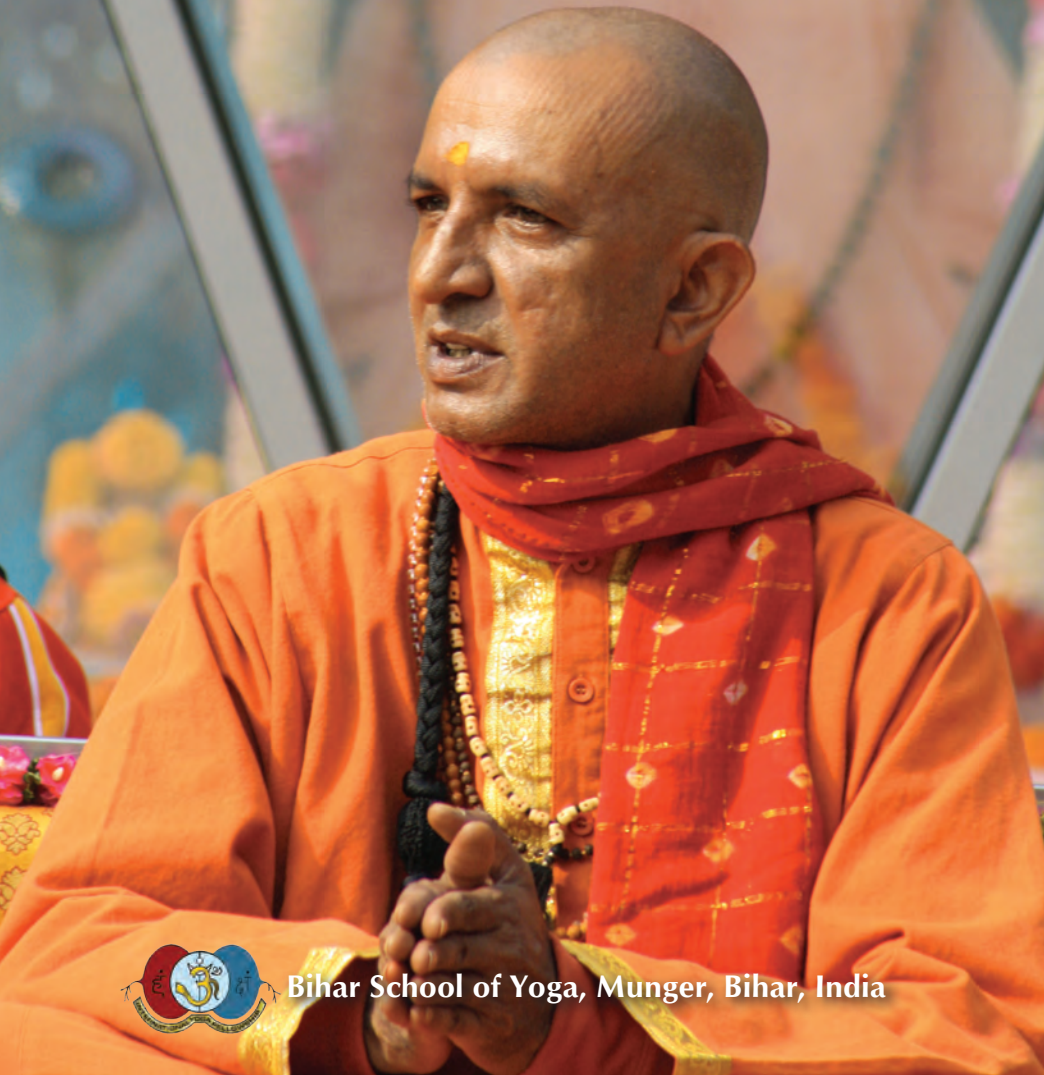


# YOGA

Year 6 Issue 8

August 2017

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



## Hari Om

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

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

### Beyond opposites

He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me.

—*Bhagavad Gita 12:15*

The devotee never injures any creature in thought, word and deed. He gives security of life to all creatures. Therefore, no creature is afraid of him. He feels that the world is his body, his own Self, so how can he be afraid of the world? He never hurts others and is not hurt by the words or deeds of others.

The mental modifications of joy, envy, fear, anxiety leave the devotee of their own accord, just as the beasts and birds leave the forest when it is on fire.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

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# YOGA

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

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

# Yoga

*From Essence of Yoga, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



Yoga is a perfect practical system of self-culture. Yoga is an exact science. It aims at the harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul. Yoga is the turning away of the senses from the objective universe and the concentration of the mind within. Yoga is eternal life in the soul or spirit. Yoga aims at controlling the mind and its modifications. The path of yoga is an inner path whose gateway is your heart.

Yoga is the discipline of the mind, senses and physical body. Yoga helps in the coordination and control of the subtle forces within the body. Yoga brings in perfection, peace and everlasting happiness. Yoga can help you in your business and in your daily life. You can have calmness of mind at all times by the practice of yoga. You can have restful sleep. You can have increased energy, vigour, vitality, longevity and a high standard of health. Yoga transmutes the animal nature into divine nature and raises you to the pinnacle of divine glory and splendour.

The practice of yoga will help you to control the emotions and passions and will give you power to resist temptations

and to remove the disturbing elements from the mind. It will enable you to keep a balanced mind always and remove fatigue. It will confer on you serenity, calmness and wonderful concentration. It will enable you to hold communion with the Lord and thus attain the summum bonum of existence.

## **Yogasanas**

Health is wealth. Health is indeed a covetable possession. Good health is a valuable asset to one and all. It can be achieved by the regular practice of yogasanas.

The practice of asanas controls the emotions, produces mental peace, distributes prana evenly throughout the body and different systems, helps in maintaining healthy functioning of the internal organs, gives internal massage to the various abdominal organs. Physical exercises draw the *prana*, energy out but the asanas send the prana in. The practice of asana cures many diseases and awakens kundalini shakti. These are the chief advantages in the yogic system of exercises which no other systems have.

Practise a few asanas daily at least for a period of fifteen minutes. You will possess wonderful health. Be regular in your practice, regularity is of paramount importance. Practise bhujangasana, shalabhasana, dhanurasana, sarvangasana, halasana and paschimottanasana. Bhujangasana, shalabhasana and dhanurasana will remove constipation and muscular pain of the back. Sirshasana, sarvangasana and halasana will help you in maintaining Brahmacharya, rendering the spine elastic, and curing all diseases. Paschimottanasana will reduce fat in the belly and help digestion. Relax all muscles in shavasana at the end.

Asanas should be done on an empty stomach in the morning or at least three hours after food. Morning time is best for doing asanas. Do not wear spectacles when you do asanas. Be moderate in your diet. Answer the calls of nature before you start the practice. Start with minimum time for each asana and then gradually increase the period.

# Yogasana

*From Dynamics of Yoga, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Yoga, as a science of living, is accepted in theory by quite a large number of thinking individuals. If we look closely at the development of the yogic movement in various parts of the world we will find that its application is largely confined to the physical aspects, viz. training in various asanas and pranayamas. This is indeed desirable as the physical wellbeing of an individual is essential for further spiritual development.

The first condition of human happiness is the possession of a sound body. A healthy body is an asset to enable man to work his way in everyday life. It is common knowledge that a sound mind, or a healthy mental condition, prevails in a healthy body. The yogasanas thus form the backbone of applied yoga.

The principal asanas are said to be eighty-four in number. A preliminary study, even theoretical, of the different postures will reveal that they are intended to serve the various parts of the body. Current systems of physical exercise help to build muscles and make an individual muscular. However, it is an everyday experience that even a muscular man is unable to stand the strain and stress of life for a long time. It follows,

therefore, that there is a constant and inescapable action of the mind on the body which the physical exercises are unable to tackle. Herein lies the main difference between asanas and physical exercise.

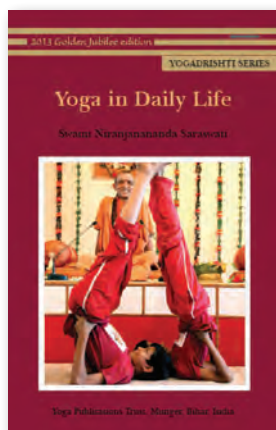
The asanas are not only aids to keeping the physical system healthy and strong but they also help in an imperceptible way, with the assistance of their counterpart, pranayama, to build up a mental resistance to disease. They take into account various parts of the body and joints, and form in themselves a complete nerve toning system. The entire physical organism is dependent upon the nervous system, and unless the nerves are kept fit and nourished, the mere building up of muscles will not be of any use. Furthermore, the regular practice of asanas in daily life does not entail great strain upon the physical energy and time of an individual. A person with a weak constitution can also be admitted into an asana course, under proper guidance.

It may be of interest to note that many asanas are named after birds or animals, for example, *mayurasana* (the peacock pose), *shashankasana* (hare pose), *bhujangasana* (cobra pose). If we try to understand the implications of the asanas they might give an interesting clue. After a day's work the body is fatigued, and our common belief is that it will be rested by assuming the horizontal position in which we sleep. How do birds and animals rest? Nature has deprived them of the comfort of a horizontal position and yet they do rest. Therefore, the poses in which they stand or rest give the clue to the asanas. As mentioned before, asanas are not strenuous exercises but are recreational poses which refresh a tired body and give it the necessary energy to carry on the day's labour with comfort and ease.

It may be necessary to explain here that asanas do not entail exertion as other physical exercises do, nor do they require rich food to make the body healthy. As a matter of fact, the entire concept behind asanas is to keep the human body fit and active as long as it lasts.

# Hatha Yoga: Maintaining the Body

From Yoga in Daily Life, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What is it that you face in your body to begin with? In the realm of the senses, you face illness and disease. The word 'disease' is composed of two different words: 'disturbed' and 'ease'. When the ease of the body is disturbed, when the level of comfort in the body is disturbed, when the harmony of the body is disturbed, then it is dis-ease. The meaning of the word 'disease' is 'disturbed ease of the body'. To manage that, yogis formulated ways in which this body can be influenced, and the internal systems and organs of the body can be brought into balance. In order to deal with the body, they came up with the system of hatha yoga so that internal disturbances could be removed, and comfort, ease, stamina and health regained.

Contrary to the popular belief that hatha yoga is only the practice of physical asana and nothing more, it is an important aspect of yoga. Hatha yoga is like the primary class to which you get yourself admitted before you can continue your study in higher classes. Admission to yoga takes place through hatha yoga; it does not take place through *dhyana* or meditation. Admittance in the yogic journey does not happen through kriya yoga or kundalini yoga. You are admitted in yoga education when you begin hatha yoga, something with which you can physically identify. The body is something gross, physical, material with which you can identify. You can see it; you use it to fulfil your aspirations and ambitions.



The wellbeing of this physical structure was a concern for the yogis. If the body is sick, how will you do the other practices? Try practising meditation while having an asthma attack, not possible. Try awakening your kundalini when you have a hernia or an abdominal ulcer, not possible. Your mind will be diverted to your problem rather than the practice. It is impractical for anybody to practise yoga if they are not well. Therefore, the welfare of the body was thought of by the yogis, and to manage the disturbed conditions of the body they developed the science and the subject of hatha yoga. Hatha yoga contains many different practices such as asana, pranayama, shatkarmas, mudras and bandhas. Their purpose is to realign the energy flow within the body and the mind.

The purpose and the destination of hatha yoga is perceived, recognized and known when you understand the word 'hatha'. Hatha is a combination of two mantras which are of ajna chakra. If you look at the image of *ajna chakra*, the third eye, the two petals have *ham* and *tham* written on them. *Tham* can be substituted by *ksham*. The mantra *ham* represents the flow of the solar energy, the prana shakti, the pingala channel. The mantra *tham* represents the flow of the lunar energy, chitta shakti, the mental power, through the ida channel. Balance of ida and pingala, balance between the pranic and the mental energies, is the purpose of hatha yoga.

When you sit for an extended period of time in any posture, blood and prana circulation to certain parts of the body slows down. If you sit cross-legged without having any practice, without being



proficient in the practice, after twenty minutes, half an hour, one hour when you try to get up, you will discover that your legs have gone to sleep. Often when you sleep in a different posture at night, in the morning your arms have gone to sleep and you can't even move them because circulation has slowed and it takes a few moments or minutes for the circulation to restart and for the movement to resume. Blood circulation becomes a factor which can inhibit the movement of a physical organ. In the same way, pranic circulation is also a factor in the maintenance of the health of a physical organ. Diseases and illnesses occur when there is lack of prana in that particular organ. That is the yogic understanding.

### **Balancing Shakti**

Why do digestive problems occur? It is because prana is not flowing into the digestive system. It is not active there, therefore constipation is experienced. Digestion is affected, therefore gastric problems occur. Digestion does not take place, therefore you experience acidity. Once digestion begins to function properly, constipation ceases, gastric problems cease, as do problems with acidity.

Each organ needs to have a certain amount of pranic energy in order to function, just as in the outer life each electrical instrument uses certain volts of electric power to function. Power is available either through the socket in the wall or through a battery depending on what power is required. In the same manner, different organs of the body also need power. The brain needs power to function, and energy in your life is depleted on a daily basis. When this pranic *urja*, energy, is depleted you feel tired, and through rest this pranic *urja* is restored, pranic shakti is restored and you feel fresh again.

Similarly, when chitta shakti, the mental power, through which you think, contemplate, understand sensory inputs and act, is blocked, the mind becomes dull. You have experienced this. Often, after a hard day's work when somebody asks you

something, you reply “Not now. I’m tired.” This is chitta shakti. If it flows properly, you would be able to answer promptly. You would never need to say, “Later. I am resting now.”

The postures of hatha yoga, asana, and pranayama, which are of a dynamic nature, help to rectify the imbalances in the flow of prana shakti into the body and the flow of prana shakti into the mind. That is the purpose of hatha yoga.

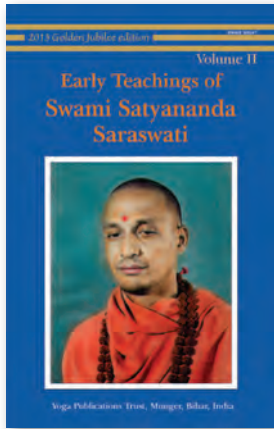
As the balance is being restored in your body and the imbalances are removed, the problems become less. There is an improvement in asthmatic respiratory conditions, in the cardiovascular system and in the functions of the digestive system. In this manner, through gradual practice of hatha yoga, the body achieves a state of wellbeing. This harmony of pranas allows them to focus on the management of the mind, as after hatha yoga follows raja yoga.

– 20 August 2011, Ganga Darshan, Munger



# Chaturtha Pranayama – A Handy Pranayama

From Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II



**Is there a pranayama which can be practised in front of someone else without being noticed?**

There are many breathing exercises or pranayamas expounded in yogic literature. All of them are beneficial in so far as they energize the lungs, stimulate the digestive fire, regulate the breathing system and calm the mind, but they are not handy in the sense that they cannot be practised at any place or time, or in front of anyone.

For instance, one would certainly feel awkward practising bhastrika, kapalbhati, sheetalī or sheetskari while travelling in a train. Hence we need a handy pranayama which is practicable at any place, or even in front of a person without being noticed.

Let me acquaint you with a handy edition of pranayama called rhythmic pranayama, technically known as chaturtha pranayama. The beauty and speciality about this pranayama is that it can be practised throughout the day at any place and unobtrusively, yet it bestows mental peace and elevation much quicker than any other pranayama. The practice is simple: inhalation, pooraka, and exhalation, rechaka, with equal duration. If you inhale for five pulse beats, exhale for the same time span, making the duration of pooraka equal to that of rechaka. Gradually, the duration must be prolonged and stabilized by inhaling slowly and exhaling for the same duration.



In the beginning, practise inhalation and exhalation through alternate nostrils: inhale through the left nostril, exhale through the right. The next time, inhale through the right and exhale through the left. Thus, continue inhaling from the nostril through which you exhaled a moment before and continue exhaling through the other. After you have perfected this practice, introduce a rhythm according

to your capacity. If you inhale for five seconds through the right, exhale for the same duration through the left, and vice versa.

### **Can you suggest some counting methods?**

Counting must be done mentally, while you practise this pranayama. You can count numerically, or if you like, the best way of counting is through the repetition of any simple mantra such as *Om*, *Ram* or *Om Namah Shivaya*, exhaling for as many repetitions of the mantra as you have inhaled. Then proceed to practise through both the nostrils, applying the same method of inhalation and exhalation. You can also practise this pranayama in the position of shavasana which will give you absolute peace and sound sleep.

### **Does japa with chaturtha pranayama make the practice more effective?**

Japa done with this pranayama becomes very effective within a short period and works as a medium of introversion more effectively than the mala. There are some sadhakas who split their mantra in two and set them with the inhalation and exhalation. If they repeat *So* while inhaling, they repeat *Ham*

while exhaling, or if they repeat *O . . .* while inhaling they repeat *Mm . . .* while exhaling which is a good technique for the beginner. Some others do not split their mantra but repeat *Om Namah Shivaya* twice or thrice or as many times as they are able to do while inhaling and while exhaling, they repeat the same mantra the same number of times. This is a powerful method of japa sahita pranayama. I have even come across such sadhakas who inhaled for one hundred *Oms* and exhaled to the same extent. However, a beginner is not advised to attempt such a high level of pranayama.

### **Can one practise telepathy by using chaturtha pranayama?**

Those sadhakas attempting telepathy during inhalation and exhalation count the number of pulse beats on the right wrist, feeling it by pressing it with the four fingers of the left hand. However, the rule of equal breath in and equal breath out is always maintained. First, they press the pulse with the right thumb and feel its beat with attention. Then they mentally repeat by counting on the pulse beats, one, two, three, four, five, and so on, simultaneously inhaling the breath until they have filled the lungs. After the inhalation is complete, they exhale, simultaneously counting out on the pulse beat to the same count and duration as the inhalation. Thus, they continue for hours together until they are able to handle the first technique of wireless telepathy.

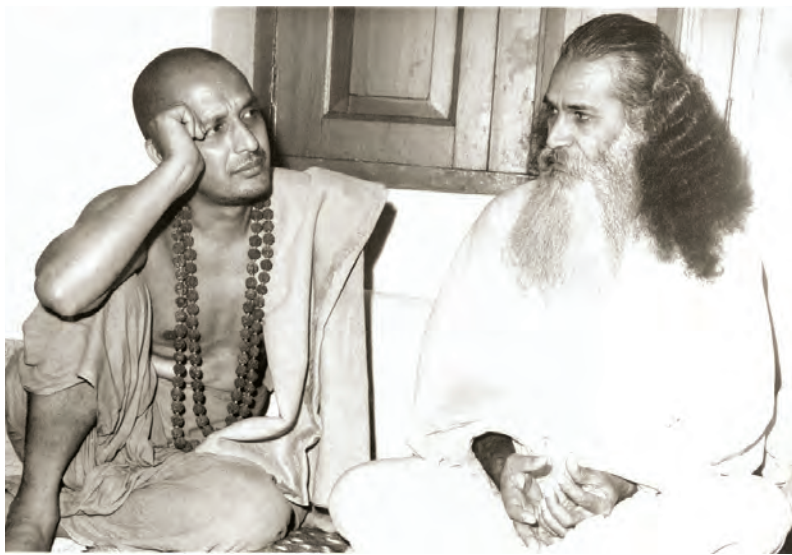
### **What are the effects of practising chaturtha pranayama?**

This pranayama becomes prolonged as well as subtle after considerable practice, culminating in sudden introversion of the chitta. If there is tamoguna in the practitioner, chaturtha pranayama will induce sound sleep. If there is rajoguna in the sadhaka it will induce dreams. If there is a combination of all the gunas in the sadhaka, it will first induce dreams and later on, sound sleep.

When there is an abundance of sattwa holding sway over rajas and tamas, chaturtha pranayama will bring about true

visions and dreams and then sleep. In the case of pure sattwa prevailing, chaturtha pranayama will culminate in samprajnata samadhi or viveka khyati, a state that is neither dream nor sleep. If a sadhaka is above the three gunas and there is an abundance of true vairagya in him, chaturtha pranayama will establish him in his real swarupa. Full-time sadhakas can practise chaturtha pranayama throughout the day without any harm or bringing about heat, unconsciousness, dryness, or pressure on the heart, etc. Of course, the golden rule is always that one should proceed gradually, taking into consideration one's physical as well as mental limitations.

– *Fifth International Yoga Convention, Raigarh, November 1968*



Chaturtha pranayama is an independent pranayama, separate from the three varieties of higher esoteric pranayamas like the fusion of a) prana into apana; b) apana into prana and c) prana into prana. As it is kept in serial order after the aforesaid three pranayamas, it is termed chaturtha – fourth.

–*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

# Swamiji, we have some questions . . .

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

**Student:** Swamiji, what does the word yoga mean?

**Swamiji:** That is the number one question. *Yoga* in Sanskrit means 'to come together', 'to join', 'to unite'. This word has been taken in a religious sense, the coming together of the individual soul with the higher soul, atma with Paramatma. But that idea of atma the individual soul uniting with Paramatma, the supreme soul, is way beyond our understanding so my guru defined the word 'yoga' in a very modern manner, modern way.

He asked, "What is the meaning of the word 'science' and who is a scientist? "So, the word science indicates a process of investigation and of knowing the fact and separating the fact from fiction through analysis, through investigation. This idea of science can be applied to any aspect of life from geology to anthropomorphic to history to nature to everything. Same is the meaning of the word 'yoga', investigation, but of oneself.

One aspect of science is to know about the material world and the other aspect of science is to know about the individual, personal self, "Who am I? What happens to me later on? What is the nature of this body? How do I stop becoming sick? How can I be more healthy? How can I be more efficient and creative?" and in this manner to investigate oneself and improve oneself. So it is an individual's investigation within oneself and science is the investigation outside oneself.

One of the meanings of yoga is bringing together the best qualities of life to become a better human being; and that is the union, bringing together all the best that you have in life. Join them together and be the best human being: happy,



successful, useful, creative, knowledgeable. At all levels excel in everything that you do. Yoga is bringing together all the good qualities of life, uniting them together.

**Student:** Swamiji, is there any difference between yoga and yoga darshan?

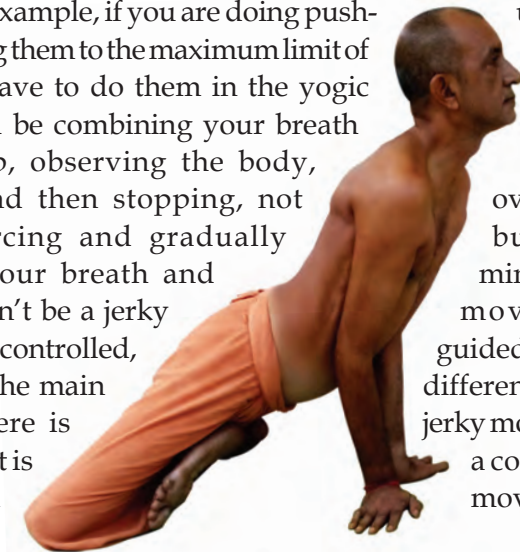
**Swamiji:** *Yoga darshan* means philosophy of yoga and yoga generally means the practice of yoga. Yoga abhyasa and yoga darshan are the two names that are used commonly, but they are two separate legs of *yoga vidya*, the complete knowledge of yoga.

The complete knowledge of yoga is in two parts: theory and practice. The practice is known as yoga or yoga abhyasa and the theory is known as yoga darshan, that is the difference.

**Student:** Swamiji, how is yoga different from exercise?

**Swamiji:** When you are doing an exercise you are not aware of the body or the mental state but at the time of yoga practice you are aware of the body and the mental state. Yogic asanas are not like aerobic or gymnastic exercises to build the body but they are exercises to improve the condition of the body.

For example, if you are doing push-ups and you are doing them to the maximum limit of your body, if you have to do them in the yogic manner you will be combining your breath with each push-up, observing the body, going to its limit and then stopping, not overextending and forcing and gradually building up, using your breath and mind together, so it won't be a jerky movement. It will be a controlled, guided movement. That is the main difference. In exercises there is jerky movement and in yoga it is a controlled and guided movement.



**Student:** Swamiji, is yoga a way of life or physical exercise?

**Swamiji:** Very good. Yoga is a way of life. It is not physical exercise. Physical exercise is just some percent of yoga. You see there are many different kinds of yogas. The yoga that deals with body is known as hatha yoga and asanas are part of hatha yoga. The yoga that deals with the mind is known as raja yoga and there are no asana in that. The yoga that deals with spiritual awakening is known as kriya yoga and there is no asana practice in that. Asana is just a very tiny part of hatha yoga.

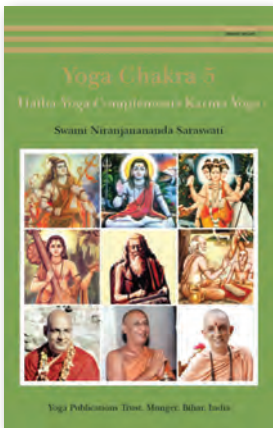
Yoga is a lifestyle so that physically you remain healthy, mentally you remain peaceful, relaxed and creative, socially you remain connected with everybody, spiritually you remain aware of the goodness in everyone. From that perspective yoga is a way of life.

*– 19 December 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger  
Meeting with students of DAV School, Munger*



# Karma Yoga and Hatha Yoga

*From Yoga Chakra 5, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



20 December 2016

Sri Swami Satyananda developed six branches of yoga. Although he spoke on many other yogic subjects and taught practices; in general while teaching to people leading a regular householder social life, he gave six yogas. These yogas were the basis to develop and cultivate a spiritual discipline and awareness even while being involved in the world with family and profession, and performing all duties. In his public teachings, the yoga classes, he explained the way to practise these six yogas, and in his private teachings the intent and purpose of choosing these yogas became evident. Beyond this, the teaching of other yogas was given to specific individuals and was relevant for those to whom it was given. A group can be taught only up to a point, whereas the individual aspect of yoga is taught to the competent and qualified sadhakas who are guided into higher yogas.

When Sri Swamiji received the mandate from Sri Swami Sivananda to propagate yoga from 'door to door and shore to shore' and left the Rishikesh ashram, he did not arrive at a particular place and say, "I have received this order from my guru, therefore I am going to run a yoga centre. You contribute to it. You do this or you do that." Unlike most people who go to others and say, "I have been instructed by my guru to do this and therefore I am collecting resources," Swami Satyananda followed a different path.

He travelled for nine years without teaching yoga, after receiving the mandate from his guru. For all this time he

observed the needs of society and contemplated, 'Which yoga would be most appropriate?' keeping in mind the guidelines of Swami Sivananda: yoga for head, heart and hands – intellect, emotions and performance. In the course of this process, he realized that the needs of people are threefold: physical, psychological and spiritual. In order to address these three needs, he chose six yogas.

These six yogas have been the hallmark of Bihar Yoga and Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth. They are hatha yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga. The first three constitute the sadhana or the practice aspect: to change and transform, to cultivate a better nature, to attain mental peace and clarity. These are the yogas that one needs to perfect in life, and they move progressively from body to the psychological dimension to the spiritual dimension. Then he gave three more yogas: karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga, as the expressive aspect of yoga.

### **Evolving through karmas**

The aim of karma yoga is to use *karma*, action, for conscious evolution. The phrase 'conscious evolution' refers to an inner state of mind and consciousness, an inner state of awareness, attention and observation. Although an action is being performed by the senses, the body and the mind, the effect is psychological.

In order to attain this inner state through karmas, one needs to develop a certain attitude. This attitude of a karma yogi is based on six ideas:

1. Know every action as an opportunity to learn and to grow.
2. Follow the dharma in karma, not the desire.
3. Do your best, bringing out your own creativity, without competitiveness. Competitiveness takes place when people are self-centred. 'How can another person do better than me?' and you try to outdo the other person. That attitude is anti-yoga as it gives rise to jealousy and aggression. When you are competitive towards somebody, you are jealous

of the achievement of the other person. So, bring out your creativity without the feeling of competitiveness. Just do your duty to the best of your ability.

4. Non-expectation. Do the right thing as your duty. If the right result comes, it is a bonus, but do not have any expectations of the result. Usually you focus on the result and expect the right result, and in the process lose sight of applying the appropriate method. The karma yogi reverses this attitude.
5. Be a non-doer. Have the feeling that 'I'm not doing this for my gratification. I'm doing it as my dharma. I am only an instrument.'
6. And last, always be happy while doing anything.

These are the six attitudes that a karma yogi must cultivate. Are you able to do it?

Many of you say you do karma yoga, so ask yourself which of these six attitudes you have been able to apply in life. The reality is that for most people karma yoga remains a philosophy. To have that clarity where you can see your dharma in every situation and remain within the *maryada*, the appropriateness, to have that conviction that whatever you are doing is an opportunity to learn and grow, to have that drive where you give your best without holding back yet allow room for others, to have that objectivity where there is no expectation, not even for a pat on the back, to have that humility where you are not involving your ego at all and not thinking 'I am doing it', to have that optimism where you can maintain your happiness no matter the nature of the action - all this is not easy.



However, this is the path to peace and contentment in life, and that is why our rishis and sages have emphasized the importance of karma yoga.

22 December 2016

### **Second level of hatha yoga**

The second level of hatha yoga is balance of ida and pingala. It involves the application of asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha to awaken and activate the pranas, to regulate the pranas, to enhance the force, flow and potency of the pranas, and to ensure that all the pathways of prana shakti are clear.

When prana shakti controls the personality, you become extroverted. When the subtle component of prana shakti, which is known as chitta shakti, assumes prominence, then there is introversion. In extroversion there is conscious perception and connection. In introversion, there is rejection of the conscious perceptions and withdrawal from them. These two conditions are due to two forces known as *prana shakti*, the vital force, and *chitta shakti*, the mental force. One is the external force: the gross, the physical, and the other is the internal force: the mental, the subtle.



Prana is a whole subject in itself. After all, what is energy? Is the magnetic energy found in the cosmos different from the magnetic energy that you are able to recreate on Earth in a lab or is it the same? Is the electricity in cosmic clouds different from electricity in storms on Earth or Jupiter? No, they are made of the same *tattwas*, the same elements. Some may be bigger, some smaller, some may be more potent, some less potent, but the *tattwas* are the same in every place, and therefore the physical or manifest response of those elements is recognized as the same. Lightning will always be lightning whether it is on Earth or Jupiter or in some far distant nebulae. Water molecules will be the same whether they are on Earth or Mars or floating in a comet. They are the same elements; it is the different permutations and combinations that cause differences in the nature. Some water molecules may be sweeter, some more saline, some acidic and poisonous, but the basic formula is the same.

This energy, which is responsible for every action, is an act of *Prakriti*, Nature, creation, and is known as prana shakti. It is found in all the *tattwas*, and in the subtle aspect it is experienced as mental power, mental cognition, the emergence of *buddhi* or logic. Therefore it is also identified as chitta shakti. In the human body, these energies are controlled by two switches: ida and pingala. Both the macrocosmic and the microcosmic prana shakti and chitta shakti are controlled by pingala and ida.

Pingala represents the pranic energy; ida represents the mental energy. In physical terms they have been associated with the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous systems, the sensory and the motor cortex. The state of awareness in prana shakti and the state of consciousness in chitta shakti are different. Prana shakti is *chetan*, conscious, *jagrit*, waking. All the other states of consciousness are governed by chitta shakti, including *swapna*, dream, *nidra*, sleep, *turiya*, transcendence, and *samadhi*, superconsciousness. Therefore, chitta shakti is subtle and has many levels, whereas

prana shakti is more material. The whole realm of energy is known as *mahaprana*, the great vital force-field, in which we all live.

If prana shakti is twenty-five percent of your consciousness, comprising the conscious and the sensorial levels, chitta shakti is seventy-five percent, comprising the subconscious, unconscious and turiya levels. This is the reason that so much emphasis is given to the mind in yoga. In the raja yoga sutras of Patanjali, the second sutra is: *Yogashchitta vritti nirodhah*. It refers to the subtle level, not to the physical. Chitta vritti and chitta shakti are synonymous terms, as chitta shakti is a pranic force, but a subtle one. Chitta vritti is the manifestation of this subtle prana, creating a condition and a mood. Therefore the focus of yoga has been on management of chitta shakti and chitta vritti, as they cover a larger area of human personality and experience of life.

Hatha yoga seeks a balance between prana shakti and chitta shakti in the second stage. When these two are balanced, in harmony and in tune with each other, there is neither extroversion nor introversion; you are in a state of peaceful and blissful observation. I am not using the word contemplation; I am using the word 'observation'. This is where the *drashta* component, the witness component becomes active, and *sushumna*, the third force, which is the balanced prana, begins to flow. Sushumna is a condition of drashta. Through the balanced prana of sushumna, you arrive at the drashta level and here you begin to disconnect and disassociate from your involvements and attachments.

What are you doing in the practice of pratyahara when you observe your thoughts, feelings, events and situations? What are you doing at that time? You are a witness, that's all. You are not participating, you are not involving yourself; you are separate from the thoughts, feelings or events, and observing them. When the pranas are balanced and sushumna begins to flow, there is a natural separation or detachment.



# Yoga Capsule – Total Health 2017

## IMPRESSIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

As destiny had already decided I landed at BSY with a blank mind. Here people and my course mates were discussing the schedule of the ashram which was very disturbing and a Herculean task – but to me it was normal. For the past thirteen years the military service has taught me a lot of discipline and lead to many circumstances where basic amenities were also a luxury.

My initial days of stay at BSY made me aware of one experience that was related to discipline. I have been disciplined in the past because of some external factors or an arrangement to survive, but here discipline was coming naturally with no arrangement with external forces or a system. Such was the effect of positive energy around the ashram. I have done a number of courses earlier but for the first time I experienced that there was no competition among the course mates and all of them were helping each other to attain the goal. They were very positive and eager to help each other to achieve happiness which was entirely comforting to the soul.

I always considered myself fit. Some looked at simple exercises called pawanmuktasana parts 1, 2, 3 as of no use. They were taught in the initial two or three days of asana class, but slowly it had such a soothing effect on my body that various pains below my waist just vanished away. I had never felt such calmness in my lower part for a very long time or years. These exercises were not new to me, as they are also included in my PT classes, but their importance was felt for the first time in my life.

The kind of comfort offered to my nerves with the simple asana taught here left me speechless. For the first time I felt

the breath going into the body and moving out and a kind of soothing effect it had on my body and mind. I understood and experienced goodness and comfort with every movement made by the body which was indeed spectacular. The effect of this yoga capsule course made me want to undergo more small courses of hatha yoga here and I have already mentally prepared myself and made a clear-cut program which will become part of my life once I leave this campus.

– *Rishi Kumar, Bihar*

My association with the ashram has been for over two decades. Until the time I decided to come for this ten-day capsule, my longest span to date, my ideas were a bit different. I thought the ashram is the ultimate place for happiness, contentment and peace. But was this a fanciful thought?

What I found here initially jolted my fantasy. Strict discipline, lifestyle, physical labour, limited choice of food, a lot of walking up and down. Two days were of disillusionment and then I discovered peace and a pattern in this ‘chaotic and hectic’ lifestyle.

Daily up and down the steep path were times of deep breathing and pranayama. The blaring loudspeakers outside which did not let me sleep were now my test-stones to try to meditate even in a not so favourable environment.

The limited choice of food helped me relish the dishes to the optimum level. It taught me contentment. It corrected my erratic bowel movement.

Karma yoga was the time when I tested the limitations of my physical body, teaching myself in the process to respect the body which God has granted me.

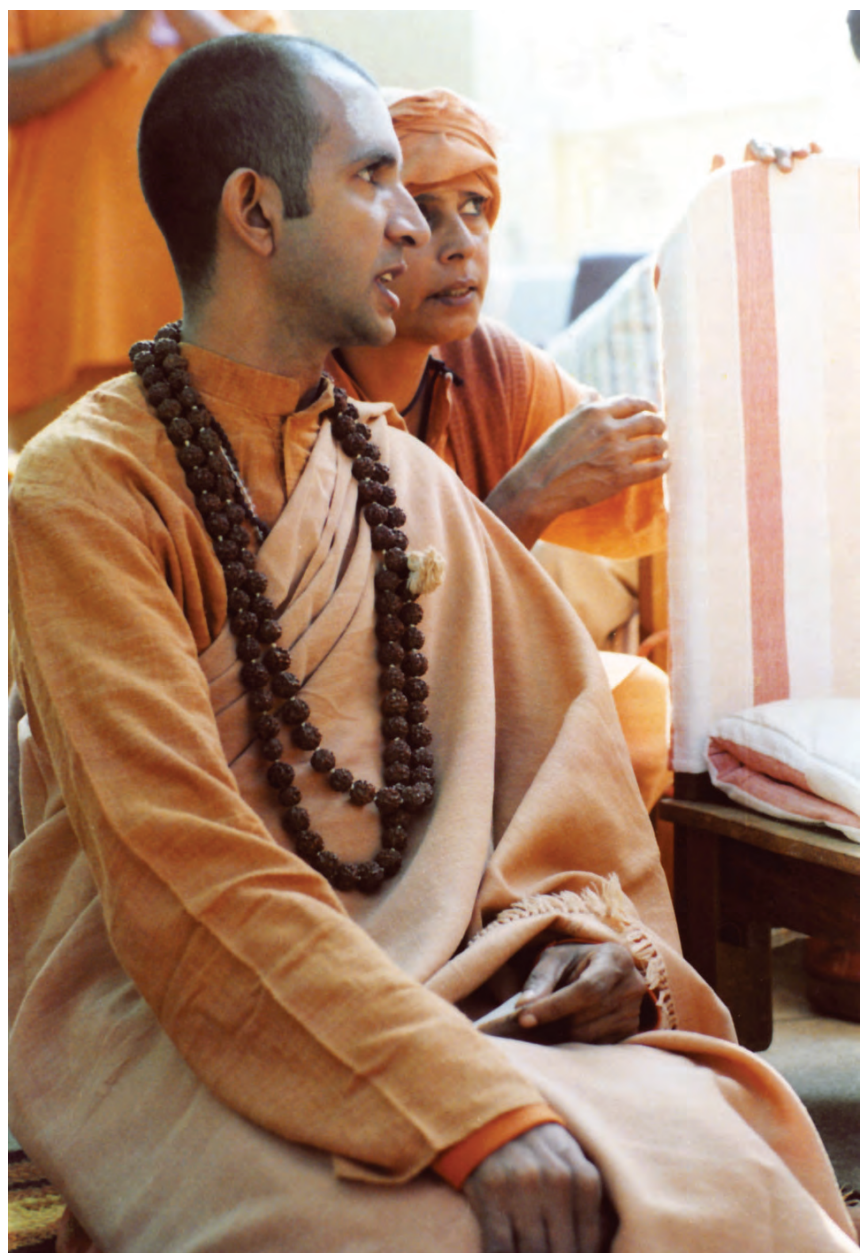
Mouna was the time when I thought and pondered over my internal strengths.

Not meeting my Master, Sri Swamiji, was very saddening initially and then I realized that if I meditated regularly I would feel the presence of my master guiding and blessing me constantly. Physical proximity was not that important.









Thus this was a time of complete conversion for me, both mentally and spiritually.

– Neena Kumar, Delhi

It is never too late to begin life with yoga. For me, the decision to attend yoga training for Total Health at Bihar School of Yoga proved that some decisions are always right whenever they are taken.

I joined the training with the mere expectation of learning a few asanas, pranayamas and relaxation practices but the school has been generous in imparting lessons which help in leading life fully. The busy schedules of yogic practices, bhakti and sadhana sessions, karma yoga *karyas* or activities have all left an indelible impression on my mind and soul, what to say about the physical body.

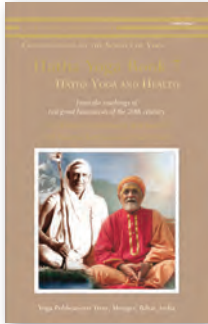
I have bags full of learning, emotions, gratitude, memories, reverberations of chanting and many more such gifts which will accompany me for the rest of my life. It has been a divine and spiritual experience staying at BSY. Heartfelt gratitude to revered Swamiji and all my teachers.

– Rajesh Ranjan, Maharashtra



# Not in the Dictionary of Yogis

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Hatha Yoga Book 7: Hatha Yoga and Health



**Many people become exhausted by life – how can hatha yoga solve this problem?**

*Swami Niranjanananda:* In order to make the body and mind free from disease and disorders, purification is important. *Shodhanam*, which means purification, is listed in *Gheranda Samhita* as the first of the sadhanas necessary for a sadhaka.

Generally, people pursue physical pleasure or follow thought processes through which they seek to advance themselves. Due to the effort they put into it, they naturally come to expect success. When failure comes instead, disappointment follows. In normal life a person then feels tired, physically, mentally and emotionally, but a yogi does not feel tired. Here tiredness does not mean the way the body feels after physical labour. It means *virakti*, disinterest.

Many people say that they are tired of fighting with life. There is no interest in doing anything; the mind does not like anything, as if there is no desire left. Sometimes this state of tiredness is so deep that there is no interest in the family, eating, reading, writing and so on. Lack of interest is evident in every field of life. There is depression. However, there is no such lack of interest in the dictionary of yogis.

These deep feelings of exhaustion and disinterest are created when the past keeps revolving in the mind side by side with concern about the future. When the past is related with the future and not with the present, a state of *virakti*, indifference, disinterest, is created.



# Shaucha – Niyama of Raja Yoga

*Shaucha* means cleanliness. A yogi has always something to clean, throughout his life. Cleaning from the outside, cleaning from the inside. Swami Sivananda says that there are two kinds of purity – internal and external. Purity of body, clothes, surrounding, environment, house and its neighbourhood constitute external purity. External purity generates pure thoughts. When there is purity of the surroundings, the element of sattwa predominates, and tamas cannot stick in the corners of your mind. When your room is untidy, unclean there cannot be a creative working atmosphere.

You need to clean yourself, your environment and look after the broader environment as well, nature. Do not leave behind any dirt – physical, mental, pranic. An untidy and unclean environment attracts lethargy, tamas and dullness. It is like a cobweb in the attics. In your environment as few objects as possible should be placed in an orderly fashion. It is not a vastu science, but a simple prerequisite for a pure mind and mental peace.

We need to take clean, pure, sattvic food that can be digested and eliminated in maximum three hours. We need also to be careful what we take in through our other senses: what we hear, listen to, watch, smell and also what we think, through the sixth sense – the mind. According to yoga the mind is made of food, meaning not only the food we eat but whatever we consume through our senses.

The purity in raja yoga is more mental in nature. Negative thinking, worry, gossip, painful memories, obsessive thinking, self-pity, self-justification, stuff of a low mind should be checked. Anger, jealousy, pride, envy is inner dirt, dross.

Swami Sivananda says that freedom from *raga* and *dwesha*, attraction and rejection, purity of intentions, purity of motives and purity of *bhava*, sentiment, constitute internal purity. Internal purity is more important than external purity. Purity of mind bestows calmness, cheerfulness, joy, strength, harmony, poise, happiness, one-pointedness, victory over the senses. It makes us fit to attain God-realization. The mind must be purified by the practice of virtues, self-control, *sanyam*, and devotion to God.

A pure mind becomes your friend because it has come out of the shell of the lower mind, the ego, which obscures and covers the Truth. A pure mind enables us to realize this Truth. Swami Sivananda describes the importance of purity:

Purity of the heart, of the sentiments is the gateway to God. It is the antechamber to the presence of the Lord. It is the key by which the door of intuition that leads to the abode of supreme peace is opened. Purity is the passport to the land of eternal bliss. What greater understanding lies before you than purifying your life of all enmity, impurity, hatred, passion and filling it with love, goodness, peace and purity? Therefore, attain purity at all costs.

### **Sattwa - the state of purity**

Swami Niranjan says that intuition comes by engaging the mind and holding the mind in the state of purity. If the mind is not affected and influenced by outer inputs, it is able to express its own creativity and that is intuitiveness. Asana and pranayama will not give us connection with purity. There has to be a sustained effort to purify the mind.

Our mind is not engaged in purity at present. It thinks every negative thought under the sun. That mind is experiencing envy, jealousy, greed, anger, lethargy and other tamasic conditions. A tamasic mind cannot tap into its own source. It has to be free from the effects of *tamas*. One cannot live in

tamas and believe one is living a spiritual life. Swamiji says, "Just as you cannot take a shower without wetting your body, in the same manner, without going into sattwa you cannot clean yourself."

All the thoughts that are revolving around self - me, mine, and I - are tamasic in nature. Negative thoughts, such as, 'I am bad, I am not good, I am impure . . .' are tamasic and detrimental. Thinking all the time 'I am angry, I am envious, I am jealous' makes you that. Thinking negative all the time makes one impure.

Pure thoughts will make your mind sattwic and your heart pure. A pure heart will be an inviting home for God to come and stay. When sattwa is generated and the heart is pure, godliness is naturally achieved.

### **Practice**

Cleanliness on all levels; for mental purification: trataka, antar mouna, mouna.

### **Outcome**

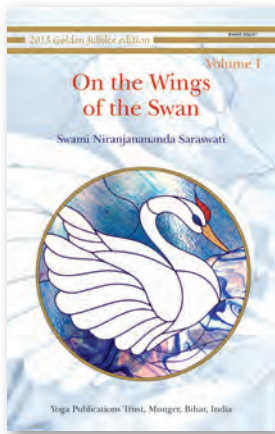
A balanced, harmonious, focused and one-pointed personality.

*– Swami Omgyanam, Serbia*



# The Light of Your Confidence

From *On the Wings of the Swan, Volume I*, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



**The journey looks difficult and lonesome, the goal very far away; what do we do at times like this?**

There should be only one principle in life. Anything and everything may look difficult at times, but you should never lose confidence in yourself and feel that you have no motivation and drive. As long as you are confident of your own abilities to achieve what you wish in life, I do not think that you will ever feel lonely.

We are constantly under the sway of our mind, performing and desiring according to our likes and dislikes, but we should realize that our likes and dislikes are not the final destination in the journey of life. Many times we have to go against the current of our likes and dislikes. This is known as the awakening of *viveka*, the ability to discriminate between what is just, proper and correct, and what is wrong. If we have this power of discrimination, and if we are confident of our own abilities, then that tiny spark will eventually become a torch. There is a song:

When the day is dark and dreary  
and the way is hard to find,  
don't let your heart be weary,  
just keep this thought in mind:  
'It is better to light one little candle  
than to stumble in the dark;  
it is better to light one little candle,  
all you need is a tiny spark.

When we are confronted by darkness, we get nervous and tense, not realizing that the spark can be produced by many methods. We can use a lighter, match, flint, wood, anything, because everything which surrounds us in this universe has the power to assist us in our evolution. Every situation, every circumstance, no matter how difficult it may seem, can help in the growth of the individual. What is essential is confidence in one's self.

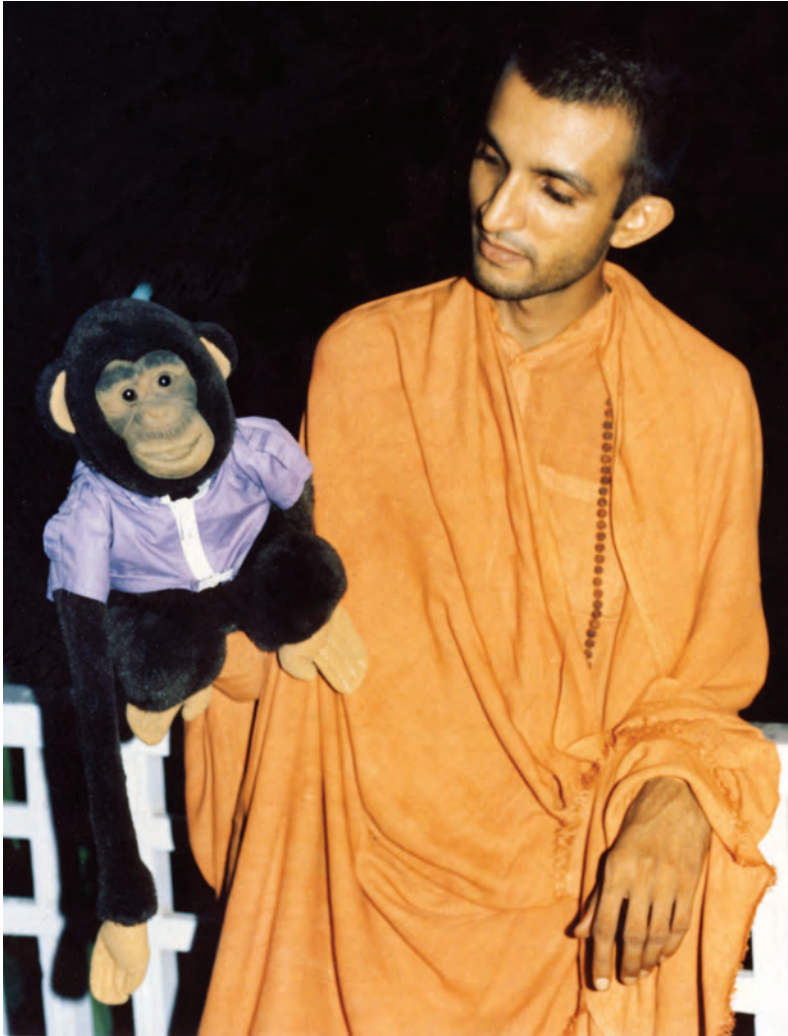
### **Can yoga change our destiny?**

It definitely can. First, we have to understand what our destiny is and what we mean by destiny. If we know ourselves, our mind, our personality, behaviour, actions and reactions; if we direct our actions and transform our negative tendencies into positive ones by having a clear mind, inner tranquillity and inner vitality; if we go beyond the normal frame of mind, emotions and behaviour and develop a better perspective, then we can definitely direct our own lives and thus create a certain change in our destiny.

There are two paths: one is the path of ignorance; the other is the path of knowledge. Usually human beings live in the area of ignorance. When I say ignorance I mean a lack of total knowledge. We may be sharp intellectually, we may be brilliant in our career, but we do not know our mind, we do not know our personality, we do not really know anything about ourselves. One can be a scientist, a great mathematician or a great philosopher, but when it comes to the human personality there is a lack of understanding. We do not know what we think, what we believe, what we experience or how to understand these experiences, and we do not know what to rationalize and what not to rationalize. There are so many things which we can and cannot understand.

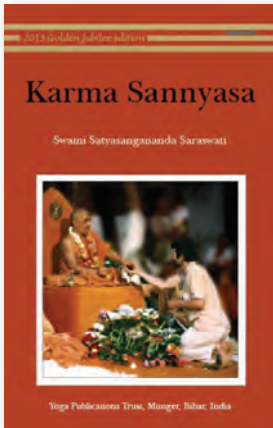
When we walk the path of knowledge, our awareness and our consciousness bloom fully. We see everything clearly. We develop a different perspective altogether. It is like sitting in a room which is in total darkness and looking around, and

then sitting in a room filled with bright light and looking around. There are two viewpoints here. When we are in the lit up room we can see every detail; when we are in the dark room we cannot see much. So definitely, through the growth of awareness, the development of consciousness, and the awakening of our inner faculties, we can reconstruct our life and personality.



# Life has to be Lived

*From Karma Sannyasa, Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati*



From the moment you are born into this world, you are compelled to act. If you had no desire to act, you would not take birth, but as the architect of your own life, you have to make a firm decision regarding the kind of life you are going to create for yourself. Remember that you are the sole creator of the heaven or hell in which you live.

The life you have been born into is the medium for you to express your higher faculties and dormant potential.

Life is a treasure trove full of opportunities, but by the time you realize its importance, most of your life has been spent. The secrets, the mysteries, the bliss, the heaven, are all within your grasp in this very life, but you miss out on them due to your lack of discrimination.

I will tell you a story which illustrates this. One morning before sunrise a fisherman went to the river. Near the bank he felt something hard under his feet. He picked it up and, fumbling in the darkness, concluded that it must be a bag of stones. He was waiting for daylight to break in order to start the day's work. Immersed in thoughts and anxieties, he absentmindedly picked up a stone from the bag and threw it into the water. Plop! came the sound. He mused over it and threw in another stone. In this way, to amuse himself he started to toss away all the stones, one by one.

Slowly the sun rose and by the time it was light, the fisherman had flung away all of the stones. Only one was remaining in his hand. His heart almost failed him when he looked down and saw there, shining in all its lustre, was a beautiful diamond. He

cursed himself many times over when he realized that in the darkness, lost in his sorrows, he had thrown away many rare gems. Full of remorse, he sobbed, cried and went almost out of his mind with grief. Accidentally he had encountered a mass of wealth which could have enriched his life many times over, but in the darkness, unknowingly, he had flung it all away.

For most of us, too, there is darkness all around. Time ebbs away, and the sun never rises. So we throw away the gems of life without ever realizing their value. Life is a bag of precious gems, but in ignorance and darkness we take it for granted that life is nothing but a collection of worthless stones. If you have a mind to see, you will find there is a lot of good in life. In every situation, there is a mine of riches and wealth, but you regard it as worthless stones simply to be thrown away.

Throughout life you are moulded by the way you think. Ultimately it is your attitude towards each event and situation in life which makes or mars you. It changes and shapes your life and helps you to awaken your soul. Your attitude towards life influences the path of your further evolution. When you realize that your attitude towards life will mould you for the future, you may immediately try to change your way of thinking. You may begin to view life from a completely different standpoint.

The problem does not lie in your husband or wife, your child, your parents, your home, your wealth, your happy or unhappy circumstances; it lies within yourself. Change yourself and automatically your whole life changes. Just as the whole world is bathed in light when the sun rises, in the same way, you can brighten your life with the intense flames of discrimination and proper understanding. To adore life is the greatest sadhana.







Karma yoga can be classified as the true psychological aspect of yoga, as in this process of dynamic meditation one has to become aware of the subtle areas of the personality. This dynamic aspect of meditation involves the awakening of latent mental faculties as well as new dimensions of awareness. A caterpillar lives at ground level and cannot fly, but it leaves the ground and begins to fly when it becomes a butterfly. The body of a caterpillar represents bondage, but when the time comes for it to undergo transformation, it builds a cocoon around itself. It goes through a period of trauma and transformation and emerges as a beautiful butterfly. That is the principle of karma yoga.

This caterpillar represents the individual identity, known as *jiva*, which is subject to the limitation and bondage of karma. Human beings are like caterpillars, living at ground level all the time. In order to become free from karma, to exhaust karma, to become a butterfly, one has to withdraw into oneself, into one's own personality. This withdrawal can be compared to the state in which the caterpillar builds a cocoon around itself. Within that cocoon, it changes itself, its body and abilities, so that when it leaves the cocoon, instead of crawling, it begins to fly. The state in which one finds oneself right now is the state of bondage, represented by the caterpillar. By the practice of karma yoga one goes through a state of transformation, and with persistence and understanding of the present state, one eventually breaks down the old body and adopts a new one, which becomes the means of attaining light and freedom.

The aim of karma yoga is harmonizing the actions of the individual self and attaining union with the higher self. When karma yoga is looked upon as meditation, it becomes a process of awareness, concentrated action and mental one-pointedness. Dissipation of energies and consciousness is controlled by karma yoga, and this eventually brings about a state of purity and transcendence. Karma yoga and meditation are processes of rediscovering oneself, and the meditative experience is applied externally in behaviour and



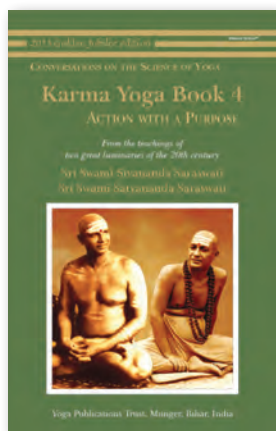
actions. Karma yoga is a way of developing immunity from the influences of life.

Meditative awareness completely changes and transforms the whole nature of life when applied to an external action. Karma yoga means performing action with meditative awareness from moment to moment. The actions must not only be performed consciously, the attitude towards the actions must also be observed. Actions are performed by everyone and are motivated by a desire for self-satisfaction or gain. The motto of karma yoga is 'give, give, give', not 'take, take, take'. This attitude and awareness related to an external action changes the outlook and the vision broadens.

While performing an action on the physical level, there has to be total meditative awareness. By being aware at the time of performing action or karma, one is initially trying to see how the action is performed. Once awareness has been developed, one can see which reactions can be experienced from a particular type of karma. It is here that karma yoga stops being a physical process and becomes a meditative process. By adding the component of awareness and the will to act with the proper attitude, intention and mentality, karma yoga becomes a process of natural and spontaneous meditation.

# Sri Krishna's Teaching

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Karma Yoga Book 4:  
Action with a Purpose



## Is involvement through karma yoga the way to go deeper into spiritual life?

*Swami Satyananda:* In the pursuit of day-to-day life, the attitude towards karma has become purely materialistic. Every time one thinks about spiritual life, it is in terms of renouncing karma. However, it is a mistake to separate spiritual life from active life. Sri Aurobindo said, "It is an error to think that spirituality is divorced from life."

The moment an aspirant wants to become spiritual, he wants to slowly renounce his participation and involvement in dynamic life, and that is a serious mistake. It is important for people to understand the necessity of karma, of experiencing a dynamic life of physical work and spiritual realization. Yogis who shy away from karma are ignorant and their efforts will not bear fruit. This is a fact.

Karma is the essence of life and *moksha*, liberation, is based on karma. Yoga should be able to compensate for the negative effects of karma: the fears about the after-effects of karma, the worries, physical fatigue, reactions of frustration and disappointment, the pains and pangs of old-age, leading to issues such as senility and disability – it should all become inconsequential and redundant. Arjuna wanted to shun karma, but throughout the eighteen chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna counselled, exhorted and prepared him to fight. He enlightened him on the precepts of yoga and *Brahma vidya*, transcendental knowledge.



Karma yoga is a dynamic expression of existence, and it is in keeping with the laws of nature. It must be remembered that karma is the law of each and everything in this life. Everything is moving: the sun is moving, the stars are moving, the earth is moving, the cosmos is moving, the galaxies are moving and the air is moving twenty-four hours a day. It has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Yoga Vasishtha* that karma yoga is the way to realization. The central theme of these texts is that everyone must work physically and mentally, and not try to retreat from work that is lying at hand.

No one can live without action. One keeps creating karma as long as one is alive. Karma yoga is a necessary part of life. It is as necessary as eating, talking or walking. Nature has created karma as a scheme for a person's evolution, an aid towards knowing the behaviour and deeper stages of the mind, and through the mind to achieve spiritual awareness.

Cessation of the turmoil in the realms of consciousness and establishment of a state of balance is yoga. But how can this balance be achieved? Can one be relieved of confusion by doing nothing and sitting idly? Can one get rid of samskaras by the cessation of action? No, it is not possible. It is essential

that whatever life one lives, in whatever form one lives, that way of life must be used as a means to achieve spiritual life and gain spiritual knowledge. Whatever action is done under the influence of one's destiny, desires and circumstances guides one's future life and destiny, which eventually create one's consciousness and samskaras after rebirth. Based on this principle and procedure, one must know how and why to do karma. Karma yoga is the starting point in order to know the various dimensions of life.

### **Can the various actions of life aid spiritual evolution?**

*Swami Satyananda:* The action one is committed to in this life helps in the discovery of consciousness. While eating, drinking, sleeping, yawning, laughing, joking, smelling and doing the physical, sensual, mental and emotional activities of life, one can maintain constant awareness of the inner luminous spirit. Whether one accepts it or not, the spirit is within. The centre of human consciousness, of human existence and of existence everywhere is the *atma*, the self, and one is that self!

Sri Krishna says that it is possible for a householder, an army commander or a farmer to awaken the spiritual self and have the vision of the eternal being, the experience of samadhi or of great tranquillity. Arjuna asked, "How is it possible? The whole day one has to work for one's family, and one has passions and emotional obligations. A human being has so many personal, social and economic obligations. Is it possible to make spiritual progress and attain the supreme state of life with all of this?" Krishna replied point blank, "Yes, it is possible, irrespective of the external life in society, which changes from time to time."

Five hundred years ago the situations were different to today. Five thousand years ago the social, cultural and economic conditions were different, the demands and expectations of a human being were different. But whatever the situations may be regarding education, profession or marriage,

they do not pose any problem to one's spiritual growth. Even if one has to go through various experiences in life in order to fulfil psychological, physical and emotional demands, one can go ahead with it. Every stage of life is part of the great evolution.

No phase of life should be condemned as they are all phases of consciousness and not devoid of consciousness. Anyone who condemns the life of another, whether a householder's life, a sannyasin's or even a drunkard's life, is creating a sickness in the mind. Sri Krishna says that whether one is sick, great or helpless, all are different points of evolution, different corners of the great picture. This is the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. One may live anywhere and do anything, but one should be sincere in one's aspiration for spiritual life, that's all.



# Destiny

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There is a great connection between a person and destiny. If you know destiny which you don't, then you have the same enlightenment as the enlightenment of God.

What is destiny? A sequence of events over which an individual has no control and no power, just as there is no control over the decay of the body from birth to old age. It happens, and it is not something that happens sporadically, but it happens continuously. It is an everyday event yet we are unable to stop it from happening. It is an inevitable sequence of events which shapes our physical body, which affects our intelligence, maturity, which decides our nature, interactions in life, our *swabhava*, our nature. It decides the predominance of the guna. It decides how far we are going to travel in life. It is the controlling factor of life.



Human beings do not control or create destiny. What destiny can be materially, socially, spiritually, in terms of global consciousness, in terms of universal consciousness, in terms of individual consciousness different? It can also be perceived differently.

### **Lord of destiny**

The ruler of destiny, the Lord of destiny, is somebody with whom we have the closest relationship. That kind of relationship we don't have with any other being. The Lord of destiny controls the body, the function and performance of the various organs of the body, the nature, the gunas, the karmas, the evolution, the samskaras, the maturity of mind, the maturity of emotion. Even the process of enlightenment is subject to the control of the Lord of destiny.

It is the Lord of destiny who in other stages of its expression is recognized as some other power. It can be recognized as spiritual power, as a social transformative power. It is a force that guides each and everybody's life from birth to death and possibly even beyond. It is not only limited to this dimension, to this space, to this time. In infinity that power exists. Just as there is destiny of finite beings, there is also a destiny of infinity and destiny determines its nature and role. After all, what is the role of infinity? What is the nature of infinity? The moment you define, the moment you decide that infinity is like this, it is not infinite. Whether you call it swabhava or whether you call it nature, *prakriti*, whether you call it spiritual shakti, the masculine or feminine aspect of the transcendental nature, what determines the role of every individual in creation is destiny.

Therefore, we have the closest relationship with the Lord of destiny. We may not have a close relationship with the Lord of love, the one who becomes the object of our love, faith and devotion. We try to learn how to develop that connection or relationship with the Lord of our affection and devotion. However, we live our intimate relationship with the Lord of

our destiny. This is a very intricate and subtle link: two strands which entwine each other and become a string, that is life and that is existence after death – existence in life and existence in death.

### **Your house**

Destiny cannot be transformed by *purushartha* or effort. Destiny can only be transformed by grace. Purushartha or effort can make you more alert, cautious and aware of how you live your life. It can ensure that you don't become entangled in the negative dimensions and expressions of life, and ensure that you remain positive and optimistic until the end of your journey.

When you buy a house, it is totally bare. You are free to decorate it inside according to your choice. As you decorate the house to please yourself and others, so that your house becomes an example of beauty – that is *purushartha*. The destiny was the ceiling, four walls and floor that you had when you first entered the house.

– 23 December 2000, Ganga Darshan, Munger



# Life and Meditation

*From May I Answer That, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

## **How are life and meditation intermingled?**

There is no man in the world who is not divine by nature. The divinity in man differs only in degree, but not in kind. The so-called atheist has got a ray of divinity in him. No man is devoid of the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, in varying proportions. Whether one is a skeptic or an atheist or a nihilist or some other, that portion of sattwa that abides in man helps him do some virtuous actions, which result in further actions of like nature, either in this birth or in some future births. While he does actions of rajas and tamas, he also does sattwic actions according to the degree of purity and sattwa in him.

No man in the world be he a robber, a thief, a pirate or some other commits vicious actions alone. Every man commits both virtuous actions and vicious actions in life. That is, he is prone to do mixed actions so long as he is under the grip of Prakriti. When virtuous actions are done, his mind naturally turns towards the divine, however slightly. He experiences a sense of inner joy, though he may not be able to express why. Meditation is essentially the quality of sattwa. When life is made ennobling, the man is sure to think of God.

In this connection, the point worthy of remembrance is that sattwic actions themselves are to be considered as worship or meditation. Meditation need not necessarily mean sitting in a lonely corner or sequestered spot and thinking of Rama, Krishna, Jesus or Mohammed, or pouring forth verbal or mental prayers. Actions that tend to purify the grossness of the individual are to be collectively treated as meditation.

Life is thus meditation coupled with *ajnana*, ignorance, to an immeasurable degree in the case of an ordinary individual. If meditation is deliberately taken up on the instructions of a guru who ought necessarily to be a more evolved soul, man

cannot but perform good and selfless actions with the bhavas of *akartritva*, non-doership, and *abhoktritva*, non-enjoyership, to make and feel his life more and more cheerful, more and more enlightening, more and more attractive. In the latter course which is but a deliberate step, man evolves more quickly with the speed of lightning, while in the former course man moves forward with the pace of a snail. Thus, life and meditation are intertwined.



# My Chitta Vritti of Pranama

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Today is the seventh year since Sri Swamiji was put in the lap of mother Earth and flowers were placed on top of the spot where he was sitting in meditation. Remembering those moments and being here present in Ganga Darshan, brings to mind many *chitta vrittis* of *pramana*, memories which have been lived, seen, experienced of the times when my guru used to live in Ganga Darshan in Munger and walk around the property.

When he came here there was nothing and the place grew in front of him. He was the witness of every brick being laid and every tree being planted. Swami Shankarananda and Swami Kaivalyananda and other people of the old times who are here today do have those memories. Whether they remember them or not, I do remember them, for this place grew up in front of him, brick by brick, from a big hole to a towering building. He lived in many of the buildings, in many of the rooms as they were being constructed, he did not only stay in one place but he moved from building to building and room to room.

He used to have a bamboo hut, a platform on stilts, under a tree, on different terraces of the ashram where he would sit to have his meals, overlooking the work happening in the garden and in the construction. I remember the pathways where he walked. He would look across to Ganga, flowing north, at the beauty of the sunset with a mysterious smile on his face. I remember the places where he sat and had tea, spoke to people, gave satsangs, instructed and guided people. Today those memories are my *chitta vrittis* of *pramana*, for I have seen, lived and experienced those moments. Thinking about those moments all I can see was happiness, joy, contentment, hope, optimism radiating from him as he watched the ashram grow.



### **A vision come alive**

He was happy that it was happening. Why was he happy? Because it was a place where he had envisioned yoga coming alive – yoga in the truest sense, not as a yoga centre or as a yoga studio but as a place of yogic tradition, where yoga could be lived by people to attain peace, creativity, contentment and happiness. This was the outcome that he envisioned for people who came here to practise yoga.

He was also happy because here he felt that the sannyasins who were coming would have independent, individual rooms, which until then was never possible in the old BSY because there were not enough rooms there. We used to sleep under the staircase, in the veranda, under the tree, we did not know what a private room was until 1983–84 when people came from the old BSY to Ganga Darshan and entered a space called ‘room’, twelve by twelve, fourteen by fourteen which was to be their own.

For sannyasins he had envisioned that they would be able to excel in the spiritual as well as the material world. If they can excel in administration they can excel in meditation also. If they can excel in finding their own balance and peace, they can excel also in following the discipline and maintaining the optimism of belonging. For this place he always visualized and envisioned the best of yoga and the best of sannyasa.

*– 6 December 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger*



## Yoga Publications Trust

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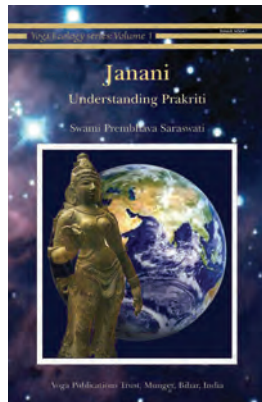
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*YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines are also now available as a free app for IOS devices. The app can be downloaded from:

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The app is being offered by Bihar School of Yoga as prasad for all yoga aspirants.

### Avahan Online

[www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/](http://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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## Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2017

Oct 1-30	* Progressive Yoga Vidya Training (English)
Oct 2-Jan 28	* Yogic Studies, 4 months (English)
Oct 16-20	* Kriya Yoga – Module 1 (English)
Oct 16-20	* Kriya Yoga – Module 2 & Tattwa Shuddhi (English)
Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga – Module 1: Shatkarma Intensive (English)
Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga – Module 2: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Nov 1-Jan 30 2018	* Yoga Lifestyle Experience (for overseas participants)
Dec 11-15	Yoga Chakra Series (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga – Module 1: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga – Module 2: Pratyahara Intensive (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 Ramacharitamans

\* Indicates training for overseas participants

Please be aware that mobile phones are NOT permitted in the ashram.  
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### **For more information on the above events contact:**

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