

YOGA

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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Shutting out all external contacts and fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalizing the outgoing and incoming breaths moving within the nostrils.

—*Bhagavad Gita 5:27*

If you fix the gaze between the eyebrows the eyeballs remain fixed and steady. You will have to make the breath rhythmical. The mind becomes steady when the breath becomes rhythmical. When the breath becomes rhythmical there is perfect harmony in the mind and the whole system.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

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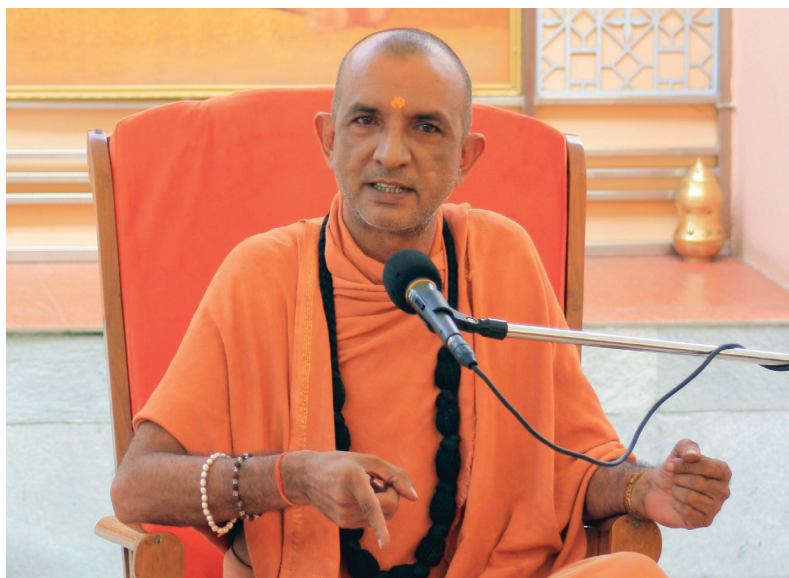
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

For Those Who Dare

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The purpose of raja yoga is *chitta vritti nirodhah*, not samadhi. People think of samadhi as the goal of yoga, not *chitta vritti nirodhah*. Anybody who delves into yoga will study Patanjali, but they will always say, “Can I experience samadhi?” Nobody will say, “How do I control my mental behaviour?” Everybody will say, “How do I experience samadhi?” Nobody wants to recognize the shortcomings in their life. Even the most incompetent person who is able to close the eyes for ten minutes will believe they have become a yogi, just by virtue of closing the eyes. There is no working with oneself, whereas the purpose of sadhana is to work with oneself. That is the beginning of the yogic experience, the path that we have embarked upon.

Every yoga has defined a goal. What is the goal of hatha yoga? Has anybody experienced it, despite practising yoga in front of full-length mirrors in studios, despite going to retreats

and ashrams? Has anybody experienced what hatha yoga tries to develop in the individual? No. They have not experienced it as they have treated hatha yoga as physical exercise. People think hatha yoga means 'get your body moving, get your body shaking'. That is the common understanding of hatha yoga. However, the real meaning of hatha yoga is ingrained in the term itself, which is made up of the two mantras *Ham* and *Tham*. How many people have experienced a balance between *Ham* and *Tham*, between the solar and lunar energies in their practice?

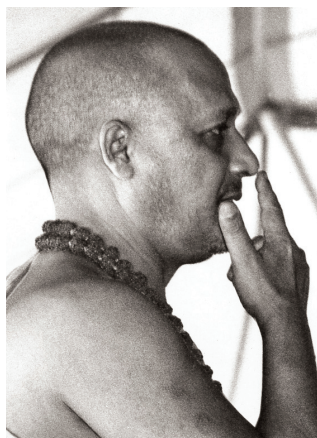
Similarly, the purpose of raja yoga is *chitta vritti nirodhah*, yet nobody cares about that. Everybody wants to meditate without paying heed to their *chitta vritis*, therefore meditation is not successful. It creates another distraction in the mind that is already in a distracted state. You are distracted by the world, by stresses, anxieties, worries, problems, finances, family, society. You close your eyes, drop everything, and then what do you do? You try to feel peace, but you don't observe the mind, you don't work with your *chitta vritis*, you don't work with your own reactive nature. You always point the finger at somebody else for their reactive nature; you never look at your own self. You are always the pure one who never makes any mistake and does nothing wrong. It is all attributed to everyone else; others are responsible for creating imbalance, disturbance, dissatisfaction and anxiety, and you are flawless. That is the attitude of people, even yogis, and therefore there is no yogic attainment in anybody's life, despite so many people practising yoga. There may be exceptions, but this is the case in general.

Given this scenario, the training at the Bihar School of Yoga now is not for learning, but rather for experiencing yoga. Be the brave one. Who are the brave people? They are willing to take on challenges and discover new things.

– 21 October 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger,
Raja Yoga Training – Module 1 (Extract)

Hatha and Raja Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Hatha yoga is a part of raja yoga. Now, let me explain the term hatha yoga. *Hatha* means 'vital', referring both to prana and mind, *manas*. *Yoga* means union and harmony. Hatha yoga means mind and vital energy.

This body is composed of physical energy or prana and mental energy or mind. There must be a complete balance and harmony between these twin forces within the body. In hatha yoga balance is maintained between the vital and mental forces. If the vital energy is predominant, one becomes very aggressive and violent, and if the mental forces supersede the vital forces, then there is a lot of impractical thinking, a lot of day dreaming, and people go crazy. They become 'loony'. The balance between the two is very important. Therefore, I personally do not consider hatha yoga to be merely physical.

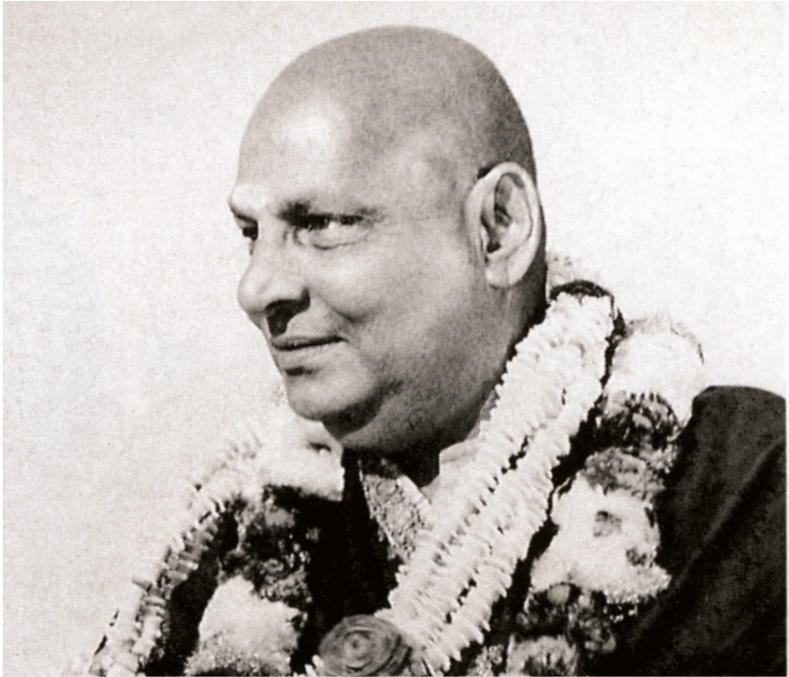
Our awareness lives in the physical body and we are aware of the physical body first. Therefore, we have to start with physical awareness. But if you are not particularly aware of the physical body, if you have evolved to the mental body, you must start from there.

Hatha yoga concerns itself with the perfection or purification of the different portions of the physical body, while raja yoga pertains to the mind. Remember that if you just sit for meditation with an impure body, a vacillating mind and an imbalanced nervous system, you will not really progress spiritually. So hatha yoga is a part of raja yoga.

– 1977

Raja Yoga

From Essence of Yoga, Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Raja yoga is an exact science. It aims at controlling all thought-waves or mental modifications. It is concerned with the mind, its purification and control. Hence it is called raja yoga, i.e. king of all yogas. It is otherwise known as ashtanga yoga, i.e. yoga with eight limbs.

The eight limbs of ashtanga yoga are: *yama*, self-restraint, *niyama*, religious observances, *asana*, posture, *pranayama*, restraint of breath, *pratyahara*, abstraction of senses, *dharana*, concentration, *dhyana*, meditation, and *samadhi*, super-conscious state.

Yama is the practice of *ahimsa*, non-injury, *satya*, truthfulness, *asteya*, non-stealing, *brahmacharya*, *celibacy*, and *aparigraha*,

non-covetousness in thought, word and deed. This is the foundation of the niyamas: *shaucha*, internal and external purity, *santosha*, contentment, *tapas*, austerity, *swadhyaya*, study of religious books and repetition of mantras, and *Ishwara pranidhana*, worship of God and self-surrender.

Cultivate *maitri*, friendship with equals, *karuna*, mercy towards inferiors, *mudita*, complaisancy towards superiors, and *upeksha*, indifference towards wicked people. You can eradicate jealousy and hatred and attain peace of mind. Ascend the ladder of yoga patiently through its different rungs and attain the highest summit of the ladder, i.e. asamprajnata samadhi, wherein all *samskaras*, impressions, which bring about successive births are absolutely fried up.

The way to the goal

If you really aspire to unfold the lurking divinity within, if you really want to get rid of the meshes of this samsara, you must know the technique of thought-control which is embodied in the system of raja yoga. You must know the ways of right living, right thinking, right speaking and right acting. You must practise the five rules of yama or right conduct or *sadachara*. You must know how to withdraw the mind from external objects and fix it on one point. You must know the right method of concentration and meditation. Then alone you can be really happy.

Then and then alone, you will have power, independence and suzerainty. Then and then alone, you will attain immortality, freedom and perfection. Knowledge of the ways and habits of the mind, its operations, the laws of the mind and the methods of mind-control and mental discipline is very necessary if you want to enjoy real happiness and peace of an unruffled and abiding nature.

Practise raja yoga, control the thoughts, discipline the mind, meditate regularly and attain independence, immortality, freedom and perfection.

Towards Pratyahara

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Hatha yoga begins with the practices of purification, *shatkarma*, to detoxify the body. After the purification, you move into the practices of asana, then into pranayama. The asanas of hatha yoga are dynamic and the pranayamas of hatha yoga develop control over the breath and respiration. Mudras and bandhas are also part of hatha yoga, through which you develop the skills to direct the energy flow. This is followed by practices of concentration to focus the mind. All this constitutes hatha yoga.

When this much is perfected, you come to raja yoga. It is like finishing primary school before entering secondary school. Just as there are several classes in primary school, there are several steps in hatha yoga. If a student of the first class says, "I want to join the secondary school", will the teacher allow it? No. However, the hypocrites in spiritual life do allow it. So those who are sincere in spiritual life must understand that hatha yoga has to be perfected first and then one can move into raja yoga.

In hatha yoga you start with shatkarma to purify the body, then go through a progressive sequence of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, and specific concentration and meditation techniques. You prepare one dimension of your existence: the annamaya and pranamaya koshas. In raja yoga you deal with manomaya and vijñanamaya koshas, and therefore raja yoga begins with yama and niyama. The first step of raja yoga is not asana, as everybody thinks. It is yama and niyama.

Yama and niyama are practices for harmonizing manomaya and vijñanamaya koshas, not annamaya or pranamaya. They are for the mind, they change the mood of the mind. Yamas create a positive conditioning, a mood, and the niyamas enforce those conditions. People ignore yama and niyama, and that is the major flaw when trying to attain mental discipline. For example, when you meditate, you try to empty out your mind, you try to remove anything that is bugging the mind. Then what? You open your eyes. The meditation is over when the mind has been emptied. The problem is, the moment you open your eyes the mind again gets filled with things that had disturbed you, which indicates that you did not create a mental condition in your meditation that could sustain when the eyes are open. You emptied the mind but you did not fill it with something positive when it was empty, therefore the result of meditation is never experienced. You only say, "Oh, I feel good, I feel relaxed, I feel peaceful, I feel quiet." Beyond these fleeting feelings, there is no deeper experience in meditation.

When you are dealing with the mind, after you remove the dross you need to put in the positive. When there is a vacuum inside, when you have emptied the mental pot of anxiety, stress, worry, distractions and dissipations, you need to fill it with some positive content that can remain with you for some time. This is where yamas and niyamas come in. When you focus on a yama in the state of meditation, your mind gets coloured with that yama, and in the course of time it becomes a natural expression. It becomes a condition of mind, not imposed ethics or morality. Yoga does not speak about ethics and morality; it takes you into states of perception, purification, experience and expression in the most positive sense.

The focus of raja yoga is to create a positive state in the mind. The asanas and pranayamas of raja yoga are also for deepening the meditative state, the state of mental one-pointedness. When you practise asana, your priority is to find *sthirata*, stability in the posture. In hatha yoga you develop that *sthirata*. When you come to raja yoga, that stability should already be there. Therefore, when raja yogis define asana they say that asana is a posture in which you are already firm, stable and comfortable. You are not seeking stability in raja yoga, you have to gain that in hatha yoga. In raja yoga you simply continue that state of stability and comfort to deepen your mental experience, not the physical.

The asanas are defined in raja yoga as *sthiram* and *sukham*. *Sthiram* means stable, fixed, and *sukham* means comfortable. Comfort is an offshoot of the happy state of mind. If you are not happy you will not be comfortable. It is not just a physical state; mental happiness and physical stability come together to create the experience of comfort. The mind has to always be positive to come to that point of comfort. Therefore the raja yoga asanas are static postures that help internalize the mind.

It is the same with pranayama. Hatha yoga describes many different types of pranayama, while Patanjali says, "Inhale, exhale, hold - that is pranayama." This description of pranayama is often quoted by people. While they practise

hatha yoga pranayama, they speak of the raja yogic concept of pranayama. Yoga teachers will teach bhastrika or kapalbhati to their students, and then say, “Sage Patanjali says pranayama is inhaling, exhaling and retaining the breath.” That is not a raja yoga pranayama, it is a pranayama practised for a different purpose.

Whether it be yama, niyama, or raja yoga asanas and pranayamas, to come to the point of *chitta vritti nirodhah*, controlling the inner modifications, an important stage of raja yoga has to be attained: pratyahara. Therefore keep in mind *chitta vritti nirodhah* and pratyahara. These two are the directions of raja yoga.

Pratyahara begins with the understanding that ‘I am going to work with my mind, I am going to see myself, I am going to de-stress myself, I am going to observe the chatter that goes on in my mind in the form of thoughts, visions and experiences’. Pratyahara is the condition that you have to achieve when you practise raja yoga, not dharana, not dhyana, not samadhi. The entire subject of raja yoga revolves around pratyahara.

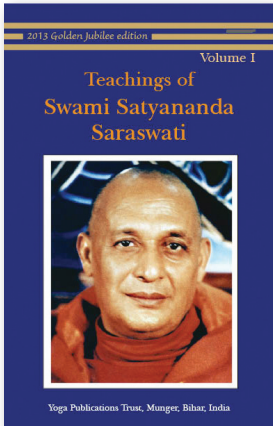
– 22 October 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger, Raja Yoga Training – Module 1 (Extract)



The Mind

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume I

What is the mind and how does one become aware of it?



Let us call the mind 'consciousness'. Through this instrument we are aware of time, space and objects. This form of awareness is a composition of various elements, including the five elements of nature, five functions of prana, five sense organs and five motor organs. When these come together, the consciousness begins to function. Both modern psychology and Indian philosophy agree on this.

The deep-rooted archetypes in human consciousness, which number in the billions, are ultimately responsible for man's experiences. How can we reach these archetypes and expose them to the conscious area of the mind? Nature, of course, lifts them into the subconscious mind or to the bottom of the conscious mind by developing visions or dreams. But if you can stimulate this level of the mind through sound or in other ways, you can realize more and more of these archetypes. This is an important subject in yoga, often ignored by those who teach. The science of archetypes is just as important as the study of the elements in the physical body. We have analyzed the body extensively in terms of flesh, bones and blood, but if we agree that man is more than just this, we must investigate further.

Disease is an experience, either on the mental or physical level. A headache, cold, cough, tuberculosis, cancer or whatever is simply an experience. Even multiple sclerosis is an experience. If you go to your lawn and uproot every blade of grass, the grass will come up again a few days later because

the seeds are still there. In the same way, experiences in this life are all retained in symbolic form in the consciousness of man. And these experiences come out in the form of life, events, activities, disease, dreams, visions and sometimes insanity.

If we can find a way to bring these *samskaras* or archetypes to the surface, many problems, fears and phobias could be eradicated overnight. Specific yoga practices, especially yoga nidra, make this experience possible.

Is awareness something that happens very gradually, or do you suddenly wake up one day?

Awareness can grow gradually and it can also explode suddenly. However, it is better if it grows gradually, as people cannot always cope with the experience of a sudden explosion.

How does the awareness function?

In tantra and vedanta, we have four tools of awareness: *manas*, thinking and counter-thinking; *buddhi*, decisions, discrimination, discernment; *chitta*, awareness, remembering, feeling; and *ahamkara*, ego or id. These four divisions belong to the area of the mind which is known. They also process material coming down from the subtler areas of the mind which are unknown.

The areas of the mind which are known, we call manomaya kosha. The unknown areas consist of vijnanamaya kosha, the psychic ranges of consciousness, and anandamaya kosha, the dynamic consciousness where all manifestations exist in the potential state. This is the subterranean area of consciousness and man will never be able to know it. Sometimes when you enter into deep meditation, you pass through anandamaya kosha where there is homogeneity but no awareness. Anandamaya kosha can be reached through laya yoga.

Manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya koshas have their equivalents in western psychology. Manomaya kosha is equated with the conscious mind, vijnanamaya kosha with the subconscious and anandamaya kosha with the unconscious.



Is everything we see and feel only a projection of our own mind?

Everybody sees only himself in others. I see you as a very nice person because I am a nice person. You are only a stimulating factor for the love and hatred that are within me. The whole attitude of a human being is an expression of his own personality. Therefore, it is said in the Upanishads: "Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear to you, but for your own sake. Not for the sake of the friend is the friend dear to you, but for your own sake."

The Upanishads cite many similar examples which finally conclude that everything is centred in one's own self. In Buddhism we also find the same theory. All experiences and perceptions originate within the individual; the knowledge gathered from outside takes place within the mind. This means the whole universe you are cognizing is not outside but within you. If the entire time and space could be within you, why not your love and your hatred, your pride and your prejudice?

So, it seems that the human being is experiencing a great hallucination. A magician can cast a spell and you see a beautiful garden or a radiant damsel, then another spell and there is nothing. What happened? You saw it. Where did it come from and where did it go? The magician is just exposing your self; the nature is expressing your self; you are projecting your self outside. In the ultimate analysis, this is the truth.

How can the mind can create matter?

For most of us the mind is a thinking vehicle, a tool for the thinking process, but in yoga the mind is more than that. When the mind is in a state of dissipation, it creates problems for itself and when it is in a state of unhappiness, it creates disasters for itself. But when the same mind is tamed through the practice of yoga, it becomes a solid creator. Even as in its dissipated state it created unhappiness and disaster, in this higher state it can create matter; it can create objects.

In yoga the mind is not only a tool for thinking, it is homogeneous consciousness. When the mind is unified and brought to a state of concentration, it becomes powerful. When you take matter and disintegrate it, eventually nuclear energy is produced. In the same way, when the mind is purified through meditation, and when all that remains is the mind and not the worldly desires and associations, then the mind becomes potential shakti or power. That is how the mind becomes creative.

There is a saying: 'The mind is above the body, the thoughts are above the mind and the shakti is above the thoughts.'
Would you please explain this?

This can be expressed in another way; the mind is more powerful than the body, the thoughts are more powerful than the mind, and the shakti is more powerful than the thoughts. It can also be expressed as: the mind is subtler than the body, the thoughts are subtler than the mind and the shakti is subtler than the thoughts. This expression can also be reversed: shakti

controls the thoughts, by controlling the thoughts the mind is controlled, and by controlling the mind the body is controlled.

How does one train the mind?

Just as you train a small child. You don't commence a child's education by teaching him mathematics or geography. His mind has to be trained gradually and systematically. Whatever you teach him is a preparation for the next stage. Like this, the whole syllabus of yoga is intended to train the mind in a very systematic and thorough way.

Is imagination a good thing?

Yes, I believe it is. Imagination and fantasy form the basis of human creativity. The people who are able to fantasize and imagine strive to achieve a part of that imagination and they become the creators, the inventors, musicians and artists. A person without imagination, *kalpana shakti*, is just like an animal in human form.

What is the role of the intellect?

Well, to answer this question, I will quote the words of Sri Aurobindo: "Intellect was the helper. Now it is the barrier". At one stage you have to accept and utilize the intellect, but at the final stage you have to transcend it in order to develop your inner spiritual awareness, which will carry you to the higher stages of illumination.

What is intuition?

Intuition is a type of cognition. It is a form of knowledge, but it does not have any evidence or source. When you perceive through the eyes, nose or ears, it is called sensory knowledge. When perception takes place through a process of logic, it is called intellectual knowledge. And when knowledge takes place independently of all these, it is called intuitive knowledge. Intuition develops through the process of meditation and other spiritual practices.

How Can I Manage Desires?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Managing desire is the 12th class. You have not passed through your 11th or 10th or 9th or 8th or 7th or 6th or 5th or 4th class. Managing desires will happen only when you come to the 12th class.

Desires are managed only by people who are involved in raja yoga, not by people who practise hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, kriya yoga or kundalini yoga. Each yoga has its focus and the focus of raja yoga is the mind and everything concerned with the mind.

How do you know what type of desire you have? Are you aware of your conscious desires? Are you aware of your subconscious desires? Are you aware of your unconscious desires? Or do you only become aware of those that come to the surface of your mind? If you are aware of those that come to the surface of the mind, it is only a fragment, not the whole desire. It is what you perceive to be your desire.

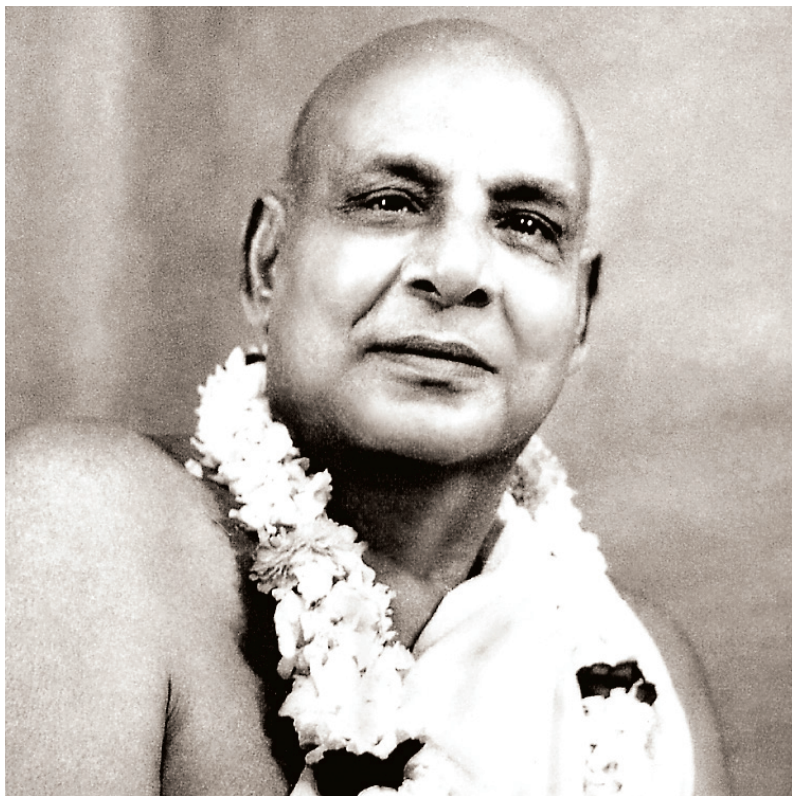
To be desireless is not the subject that you have to follow now. You have to first come to that class to understand the components of the desire and the methods to manage them.

Until then just try to be happy, try to be optimistic, try to be helpful and try to discipline yourself. Begin your journey with that, rather than trying to control desires and being beaten by them.

– 27 March 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Plan of Yogic Science

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The mind works in mysterious ways yet we can analyze some important broad aspects of this mind process. What is the mind of a person? What is it made up of? What are the grooves that are in the mind? The mind is a product of previous experiences. In exactly what way is it a product of experience? We shall take one instance and multiply it ad infinitum. The experience may be in the form of a perception. We smell something, touch something, taste something or experience something – a combination of so many things may happen

and immediately, just as a groove is created in a gramophone plate, an impression is made in the mind. This impression is called a *samskara*, an impression in the mind coming out of an experience of perception.

What is the nature of *samskaras*? Is it like a furrow made on the ground or the grooves in the gramophone record? No, it is dynamic, and a number of such experiences making grooves upon the human mind make that impression a vital impression. It becomes active, it begins to be a factor in one's life. It becomes a dynamic tendency in the person's character. In fact, when it comes to this stage, the repeated taking in of a particular impression makes it take the form of a vital or living force in the person's character. It becomes a *vasana*, a craving, and the sum total of *vasanas* always keeps the mind in a state of agitation. They always go on starting ripples in the mind-lake, and these constant ripples create *vruttis*, modifications.

In an ordinary mind, so many *vruttis* are rising and sinking. We begin to desire the experience that formed the *samskara* which is the cause for the rise of the *vrutti*. Even at this stage of desire, *iccha*, there is no great harm, but when the play of ego, the 'I' in each one of us, identifies itself with that desire, then all trouble starts. Instead of 'want', it is 'I want', and at this point the individual is in the grip of the mind.

Inner battle

Whether you reside in a cave or in a city, when 'I' joins in, you may be doing meditation, but when you have a desire for a particular object, meditation becomes secondary. Then the mind has two aspects. When a desire comes, the mind thinks, "Should I fulfil this desire? Or should I continue my meditation?" If the *shuddha manas*, pure mind, gets the upper hand, it says, "No" and pushes off the desire and continues meditation. If on the other hand, the mind gives way to *ashuddha manas*, impure mind, the desire gets the upper hand. Then the *iccha* becomes a strong impelling urge. The person immediately strives to fulfil the desire and falls from yoga.

Yoga not only means the experience of nirvikalpa samadhi. Yoga should function every moment. If an impure thought comes and you are not able to put it down, you have failed in yoga. In every thought, in every action, you have to assert your mastery over your vrittis – then yoga is fulfilled and divine life is lived. What is the time taken for this process? Within a split second a decision is made and the long process of the samskara which crystallized the impulse is subdued, the higher mind achieves a resounding victory over the lower mind.

The process of the mind is such that from experience you get samskara, from samskara you get vasana, from vasana you get vritti. The imagination makes the vritti into a desire. Then ego attaches itself to the desire and it becomes an urge, a *trishna*. Then you are forced to do *cheshta* or effort to fulfil the desire.

Scientists are trying to find a perpetual motion machinery which never stops but is always in motion. That perpetual motion machinery is in you now. It is the mind. You have to deal with the mind, the vasanas and samskaras. Those which you have formed are already there, you cannot help it, but at least you can do one thing. You can prevent the formation of new samskaras and stop past samskaras becoming further strengthened by fresh ones. How is this possible?

Prevention of new samskaras – burn them

Daily you receive new experiences, daily you perceive so many things with the five organs of senses. So how can you prevent these experiences making impressions upon the mind? Is there any technique? If the ego is not there, the object does not go deep into the mind. If the mind is engaged in some other thought, a particular impression brought by the senses will not produce any effect, but if the 'I' is there, it will easily take these perceptions and create in you a desire for objects.

There is only one fire to burn all desires. Nachiketa had that fire. So many attractive and alluring things were offered to him. He was offered money, beauty, strength, power, kingdoms, all vidyas and tempting objects for the senses, but Nachiketa

reduced all impressions into ashes, because he had that one fire, and that was *mumukshutva*, spiritual aspiration. Aspiration is a positive fire in which desires and cravings are reduced to ashes. This is the fire that should characterize all sadhakas.

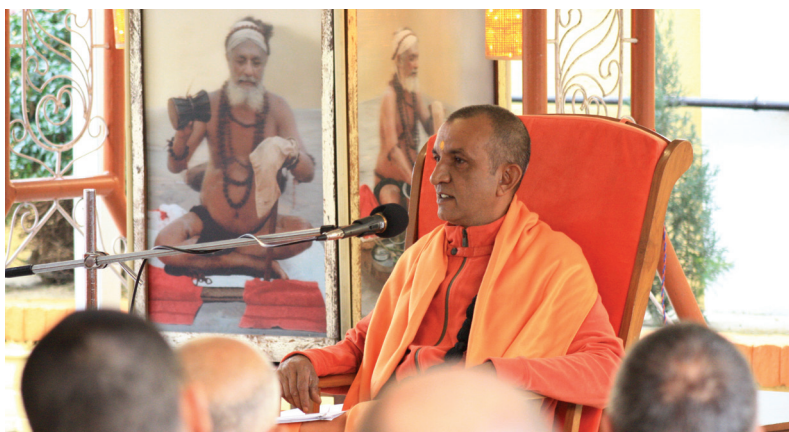
If you want to lead the divine life, your inner heart should be a place of aspiration, a fire of yoga should burn in you always. This blaze should be maintained. You cannot completely change the outward mode of life, but inwardly there should be aspiration. This fire should burn day and night: when you are awake, when you are sleeping, when you are alone, when you are among others, when you are in meditation, when you are engaged in work. This fire should not be put out.

This aspiration should always form an integral part of your being. Then you are living the divine life. If this fire is there, you need not worry what work you are doing or in which place you are living, because you will be leading a divine life. You cannot be a victim of sense pleasure, but if, in spite of your vigilance, an impression of a sense object goes to the inner consciousness, know how to burn it through aspiration. Before it enters the outer threshold, you have to burn it.

Extract from Water the Roots



Yoga Chakra 2016



During the Yoga Chakra program, Swami Niranjanananda expounded on the subject of karma yoga. As one of the spokes of the *yoga chakra*, the wheel of yoga that has been given by Sri Swami Satyananda, karma yoga is an inherent part of the Bihar Yoga tradition.

Swamiji explained that when Sri Swamiji received the mandate from Sri Swami Sivananda to spread yoga from 'door to door and shore to shore', he began to observe the needs of people. After nine years of travelling the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent he realized that the needs of people that must be addressed through yoga are physical, psychological, and spiritual. He chose six yogas for this purpose, which have since become the hallmark of Bihar Yoga. The six yogas are hatha yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga (constituting the practice aspect), karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga (constituting the behavioural aspect). Together they make the yoga chakra, the six-spoked wheel of yoga.

Swamiji also stated that in the second chapter of the Bihar School of Yoga, which has commenced after the golden jubilee of the institution, the focus is no longer on propagating yoga but on

experiencing the depth of yoga. In the process of experiencing this depth, the practical aspects and the behavioural aspects both have to come together. Therefore, there is a need to understand the six yogas from a different perspective.

Swamiji explained how hatha yoga and karma yoga complement each other in the yoga chakra, and have parallel goals. There are three aims of hatha yoga: one, *shuddhi*, or purification, through the practices of shatkarma; two, the experience of balance between *ida* and *pingala*, the lunar and solar energies in the body; three, the experience of *laghavam*, lightness, which follows naturally from attaining the first two goals. Similarly, there are three aims of karma yoga defined by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: *atmashuddhi*, or purification of the self; *akarta bhava*, finding a balance between doing one's best yet feeling like a non-doer; *naishkarmya siddhi*, the state where one does not feel the weight of any karma, attained when the first two stages are perfected.

To understand how these three goals may be reached, Swamiji said that we have to simply look at the life of Sri Swamiji. In his guru's ashram in Rishikesh he worked ceaselessly, through which he attained atmashuddhi. When he built the monument of yoga in Munger, the attitude that he maintained was that of akarta bhava; it was an offering to his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda. During his life in Rikhia, he attained naishkarmya siddhi, when everything happened around him without his involvement in any karma.

Swamiji said that the primary reason we are not able to practise karma yoga is that we are propelled by our desires and do not recognize our dharma in a given situation. Karma is based in desire but karma yoga is based in dharma. It is a way to use karma for conscious evolution and requires moment-to-moment awareness of one's attitude towards a karma and then refining that attitude. This can be done through a six-pronged approach:

1. Knowing every action as an opportunity to learn and to grow.

2. Following one's dharma in karma, not desire.
3. Doing one's best, bringing out one's creativity, but without competitiveness.
4. Non-expectation.
5. Being a non-doer.
6. Being happy while doing anything.

The practical sadhana of karma yoga, therefore, is Review of the Day, through which one can maintain awareness of one's responses and make a conscious effort to change and improve the actions the next day, for example by applying pratipaksha bhavana. Swamiji gave examples of how two different results are obtained when one associates with one's attachments and desires or with the dharma inherent in an action.

Swamiji further said that in order to come to the state of akarta bhava, the feeling that 'I am not the doer', one has to recognize who the doer is, which is Prakriti, the energy that acts on any action through a particular guna. Therefore, here one has to be able to recognize the activity of the gunas, and make the effort to connect with the energy of sattwa. Through this the negative ego reduces and one becomes established in the identity of the non-doer even while acting. To attain this state, in any action:

1. Identify how you perceive it: as a burden or as dharma.
2. Identify your level of sincerity, seriousness and commitment in it.
3. Recognize your identification with it and your intention behind it.
4. Identify the steps you need to take to excel in it.
5. Feel happy doing it and allow the higher energy to flow through you when you perform the action.
6. Dedicate the action to God or guru, and in the process release all identification with it.

If one can come this far, then one attains naishkarmya siddhi, which is a state of mind where action and inaction are the same. This is when one is able to see the *param tattwa*, the essence, the that-ness, in everything. Now whether one does something

or not, one does not feel the weight of the action. At the same time, one's actions become useful for everyone. One becomes the creator of karma; one is no longer subject to karma.

Impressions by participants

From the satsangs in the Yoga Chakra program, what has made the deepest impression is learning that there are the teachings and the practices, and then there is the task of bringing these into everyday life if I am to change those negative, tamasic aspects of myself. This is not a small task, but rather one that requires ongoing effort, commitment, dedication, and moment-to-moment awareness. It is not something I can pick up when time permits or the mood of my mind allows, but rather it is something which I need to develop into a continuous thread of awareness in order for conscious evolution to occur.

I can observe my mind and see whether I am approaching something as a burden or dharma or desire; I can observe which guna is predominant; I can be aware of attachment and work to reduce it and I can cultivate the attitude of non-doer. I can, upon finishing the task, dedicate it to guru or the Divine. And I can aim to see the 'that-ness' in everything and everyone.

– Sannyasi Chintamani, New Zealand

The way karma yoga was introduced to us, profoundly and yet explained in an understandable way, makes me feel "Yes, I can and will live this in the life that I have been given." It is such an inspiration. It is more than inspiration. I feel as if I am infused with spiritual awareness.

During the satsangs, when Swamiji was speaking and all 150 of us were sitting totally still, I wondered, 'Are we breathing as one?' It was like an awakened awareness in the air that you could almost touch. We are blessed indeed.

– Sannyasi Jayatma, Sweden

In the current world of commercial yoga, dogma and bhoga, words come short to thank and appreciate Swamiji for









maintaining and protecting the purity and sanctity of the science of yoga, for exploring and sharing the deeper knowledge and understanding of yoga vidya, of which the Yoga Chakra program is a part.

I respect Swamiji as the sole 'crusader' to hold up the vision and mission of yoga as revealed by the rishis and updated for the generations to come. And I offer my gratitude to him for clarifying that yoga should not just be 'practised' on the mat, but 'experienced' off the mat through a yogic lifestyle and application of yogic principles in our daily lives, with an updated GPS (Guru Positioning System)!

– *Sannyasi Garuda Chaitanya, Bulgaria*

Yoga vidya, in the literal sense of the word, is what I received in my first visit to BSY. I am taking back with me experiences and knowledge that I will continue to imbibe in the future.

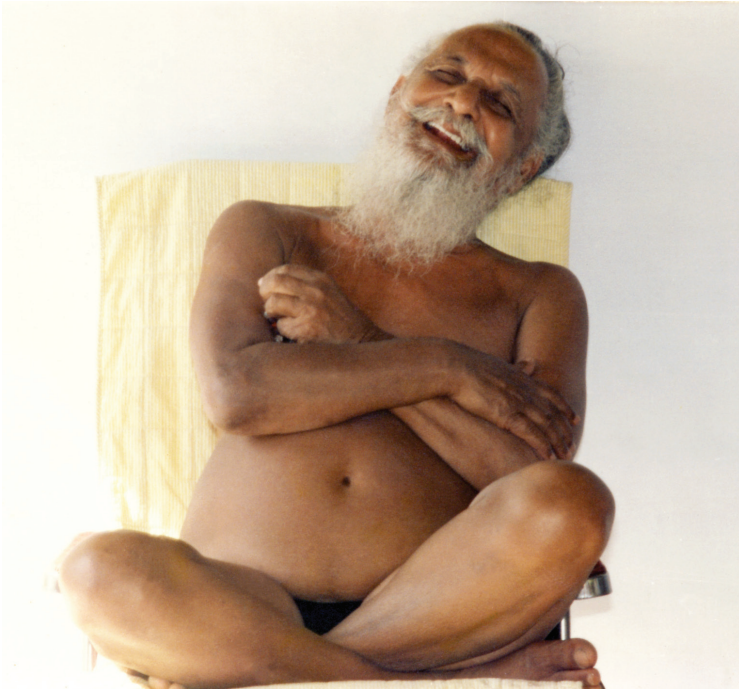
Ashram life taught me a lot. How to achieve happiness by living the simplest life yet the most meaningful one. Little did I give during my stay but so much I am taking with me: seva, satsang, sattwa, smiles, shanti paths, serenity, simplicity, happiness and peace. And knowing that I have to just go into myself to find it all right there.

Heartfelt thanks to BSY for helping us find the path to enter into a new world of serving, loving and giving.

– *Ranjana Pradhan, Nepal*



Inner Peace



Live this life. Do not withdraw from life. Fulfil your respective duties and inner peace will come to you when you accept whatever happens to you, when everything in life becomes impersonal. That is the secret.

Is peace of mind the highest level of evolution or is there something beyond it?

Peace of mind is not the ultimate state. The ultimate is to realize your real being, the supreme consciousness. Inner peace or happiness is only a means to an end.

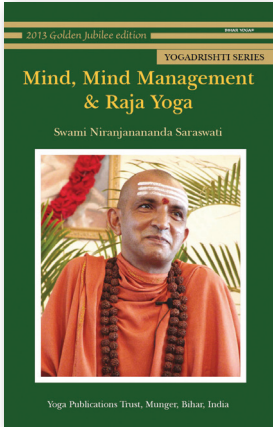
Is it possible to attain peace of mind on Earth?

Where else is it possible? Not on Mars or Jupiter or anywhere else. It is only possible here. This is certain. Many people have had the vision and many more will have it, more and more.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Abhyasa

From Mind Management and Raja Yoga, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Abhyasa means practice. What kind of practice? To regulate the mind. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (2:58):

*Yadaa samharate chaayam kurmon-
gaaneeva sarvashaha;
Indriyaaneendriyaarthebhyastasya
prajnaa pratisthithaa.*

Like a turtle which draws its limbs from all directions into its shell, a person should also withdraw all the senses from sense objects. Only then will the mind become steady.

This is the practice to be undertaken to harness the mental faculties. Sri Krishna says that the mind is connected to sense objects. It follows the senses wherever they go. Therefore, withdraw the mind from following the senses. If the eyes look at something pleasant, recognize it. At the same time, say, “Yes, it is beautiful, I appreciate it”, and stop there. Acknowledge it, accept it and stop there. Don’t crave it. Don’t be obsessed by it. The moment you begin to crave, you are obsessed by the need to possess something. If the ears hear something nice, acknowledge it, appreciate it, but don’t be attached to it. If the nose smells something nice, acknowledge it, appreciate it, but don’t hanker after it. In this way, you will gradually withdraw the mind from following the senses and creating more desires and expectations.

Right now, your mind is a slave to the senses. When the mind becomes a slave to the senses, the senses also become a

slave to the mind. Both fuse into one. There is no distinction between a sense experience and a mental experience because at one point they come together and merge into one. If you look at something delicious to eat, your mind is desiring it. Your mind has merged with the desire, the vision, the expectation, the hunger, the taste, everything.

Remember, the mind and the senses are not two separate things, although they are spoken of as such. They are gross and subtle behaviours of the same *shakti*, the same power. The senses are the gross behaviour and the mind is the subtle behaviour of the same cosmic power. When the senses are active, the mind fuses with the senses and follows the senses all around. When the mind disassociates from the senses, as happens during sleep at night, it establishes itself independently of the sense experiences. The mind continues to exist, but the senses don't exist.

In sleep, smells don't bother you, visions don't bother you, different sensations don't bother you until and unless they become extreme. Only when they become extreme do they draw the mind out from its self-identification and into the outer gross dimension. At night you hear many sounds, but you are not disturbed by them. However, if the telephone rings you will be disturbed, as that extreme sound will draw the mind out from its own identification with deep sleep. Several mosquitoes can bite you while you are asleep and you will not even be aware of it until a delicate spot is touched, and then you will be forced to open your eyes and make yourself comfortable.

When the mind is established in its own identity, the senses have to become more powerful than the mind in order to draw it out. This is what happens during the sleep state. In the normal waking state, the senses and the mind act and function as one entity, one power, one experience. If the senses are withdrawn from the sense objects in the waking state as well, the mind will become still and established in itself. Sri Krishna has used the term *prajna* in this context, not *manah*.

He says (2:58:2):

Tasya prajnaa pratishthitaa.

One (whose senses are withdrawn) is established in prajna.

Sri Krishna is indicating a specific faculty of the mind. *Prajna* is higher intelligence. It relates to the faculty of *buddhi* with which one decides upon joy OR sorrow, and which thus becomes the cause of agitation of the senses.

Objects of enjoyment will always exist. At the beginning of creation when life had not manifested, something existed. Human beings were not there, but objects were there. When human beings cease to exist and creation remains, objects will continue to exist. Creation is made of object and subject, while life is formed out of prana and relates to living beings. Even when there are no living beings, the objects and subjects of enjoyment will remain. Living beings come into creation to enjoy them, and when the time period for which they were meant to enjoy is over, they depart. Therefore, Sri Krishna's words signify that sense objects will always exist, but you have to make the effort to withdraw the senses from them. Just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs, withdraw the mind. This is the abhyasa or practice that needs to be undertaken. The sequence indicated in the *Bhagavad Gita* is the sequence of raja yoga, which is expounded in the *Yoga Sutras*.



Three Practices of Pratyahara

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Yoga nidra

Yoga nidra means psychic sleep. What is your understanding of the meaning of the phrase 'psychic sleep'? Some people say psychic sleep is sleepless sleep. Some people say it is conscious sleeping. Some people say shutting off the mind and losing it is the definition of psychic sleep. However, all these ideas relate to manomaya kosha, and manomaya kosha is not psychic; it is vijnanamaya kosha which is psychic. This means yoga nidra is a practice that connects you to your vijnanamaya kosha. The psychic awareness of vijnanamaya kosha is not of the outer consciousness but of the total consciousness, and the total

consciousness involves all the levels of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara.

In yoga nidra you keep yourself active all the time and create stimulation of different senses. For example, you create your own inner visual stimulation when you visualize different objects or scenes. That is due to the memories of what you have seen in your life. You can also imagine what you have not seen as a result of these memories. I have never seen a purple cloud, but I can visualize a purple cloud as I know what clouds are and I know what the colour purple is. So I can put those two together: the image of the cloud and the colour. In this way, you can see anything, even a rabbit with wings.

When unrealistic images come together, images that are not compatible in reality, it is a different experience from the coming together of compatible images. The incompatible images become fantasy. Many people lose their path in pratyahara when they go on such a flight of fancy, as two totally un-associated impressions are trying to create a third impression. You are creating more *pratyayas*, impressions, by going into flights of fancy, that is why visuals in yoga nidra are restricted to specific things. It is not that you can say anything under the sun and make up any story according to your liking, desire and whim. If you have done that, it is wrong, so come back to basics. Understand the visualization stage in yoga nidra from the perspective that the visuals have to first bring out memories that are soft in nature, not the hard ones that disturb you or destroy the peace and balance of mind.

In yoga nidra, when you begin to go into the pratyaya level, you begin with the soft memories. If I say, "Visualize a lake", you search in your memory for a lake that you have seen, whether in the morning, afternoon or evening. It is an image that impressed you, an image that you liked and retained. If somebody said "Visualize a lake" to me, the lake that I naturally used to visualize was a place I liked: the scenery, the water, the surroundings, the trees, the snow-capped mountains, the Ozarks in America. It would always be that lake, which had

made a deep impression. However, it is possible for another memory to overpower the previous one. If today somebody says visualize a lake, the image of the Ozarks will not come, instead the image of Manasarovar will come as that is a better impression and has more feeling associated with it. It has overpowered the memory of the Ozarks lake and now my deepest impression has become the Manasarovar lake. Now that visualization is natural, as it is stronger than the previous one.

You begin to practise visualization with such things: lakes, rivers, mountains, flowers, a garden, forest walk, moon, sun, star, something that you see on an everyday basis. Yoga nidra stops there, with visuals. The last stage of yoga nidra is visualization.

In the preceding stage of yoga nidra, experiencing opposites, the sensations that are used are also limited. They are related with bringing up memories that might disturb the peace of mind and then harmonizing those memories. Therefore, the sensation of heaviness comes first, before the sensation of lightness. If you change the order, it is not yoga nidra as it will not explode the pratyayas in a balanced way. If you explode a heavy pratyaya, you have to replace it with a light one. If you explode a painful pratyaya, you have to replace it with happiness. You may think that to begin with pain or heaviness is abrupt, but this order is necessary. The feeling of heaviness first, then the feeling of lightness. The feeling of pain first, then bring up the memory of pleasure. You are always changing the negative into a positive, not the other way around.

Every stage of yoga nidra has a specific purpose and therefore it is done in a particular way, which has been given by Sri Swami Satyananda. Even if you are an experienced teacher, check your practice to make sure you have not lost the track.

Antar mouna

After yoga nidra you move into another practice, antar mouna, the second rung of the ladder. The same thing is being

done, but this time you are using thought as the medium to internalize yourself. Thought is an activity of the manas level. How do you control your manas? How do you observe your manas? What are the strings of manas? The strings of manas are the thoughts. In yoga nidra, you relaxed and cleared the impressions, recent or old. Then you go into antar mouna and begin to work with manas. The subsequent meditations lead you from manas to buddhi to chitta to ahamkara. That is the sequence that Sri Swamiji has defined.

In antar mouna, you look at the strands of mind and see them come. The only problem is that these strands of mind, the thoughts, are an unconscious activity and not a conscious activity. Therefore, when you begin to observe your thoughts, you suddenly find that they are not coming. Thinking is an unconscious activity. It cannot become a conscious activity, you cannot consciously think. You can brood over something. You can pick up a thought or an idea and brood over it, but that is not thinking. It is brooding, which means circling around an idea.

In order to observe your thoughts in antar mouna, you have to withdraw your attention a little bit. That will allow them to come again. As long as you are 100 percent externalized, the thoughts won't come. You have to go in 50 percent in your awareness, then they will again start trickling in. The moment you again intensify your awareness, they will stop. Therefore, the state of mind in antar mouna should be 50 percent awareness.

In 100 percent awareness, you struggle with yourself, 'The thoughts are not coming, now what do I do? I have to think about something. I have to bring them back.' You create more stress in your antar mouna here. In 50 percent awareness you can see the strands of thought moving. Without intensifying your attention, you can look at them without obstructing them. When you are able to do this, it indicates the resilience of awareness and mind. It is like the strength of the body. If you have to pick up a book, the strength is used in a specific

manner. If you have to pick up a bucket of water, the strength is used differently. Resilience has to develop in antar mouna before you progress into the next meditative technique.

The seven stages of the practice develop resilience and the skill to be with your manas from every possible angle. See the thoughts, stop them. Call them, stop them. Create them, stop them. You are controlling and developing your manas. You are not learning concentration, you are not meditating; you are becoming aware of and observing your manas. You are silencing the chatter of thoughts, and silencing the chatter of thoughts is known as inner silence, *antar mouna*.

The thought process is also connected to pratyayas. Every thought has a link somewhere in the past. A thought is like a weed: on the surface you see only seven centimetres, but when you start digging you find that the weed goes down seven feet. That is the nature of a thought also. What you see is only the seven-centimetre growth, but it is linked with your ahamkara and buddhi, with your ambitions and desires. All the traits of the personality reflect themselves on your thoughts. Can you pick up the different traits of your personality in one thought? Can you observe them? Can you change them? This is the learning of antar mouna.

Ajapa japa

The third practice of pratyahara is ajapa japa. When the mind is still and you are able to observe your own thoughts, then there is a need to channel the mind and prana, to bring together prana and mind and merge them. Therefore, after antar mouna comes ajapa japa. From yoga nidra to antar mouna you are working with the upper 25 per cent of the consciousness, the manas level. In yoga nidra you do go deep into your consciousness, into vijnanamaya kosha, but you bring the matter up to the surface, to the manas level. Then in antar mouna you deal with everything at that level. Once this is done, you have to merge manas with prana, and that is done through ajapa japa.

In ajapa japa, the breath, prana and mind work in unison. The training is to visualize the movement of mind and prana in different areas: in the frontal passage, the nasal passage, the spinal passage, the circular passage, the lateral passage, the vertical passage, the inverted passage. These passages denote a movement of mind and prana shakti through different *nadis*, energy channels, and *chakras*, energy centres.

With the intensification of ajapa japa, the chakras can be awakened and an altered state of mind achieved. The poet yogi Kabir has spoken of ajapa japa as the ultimate meditative practice. In the vedic literature too, the only meditation recommended is ajapa japa. In fact, it has been considered so important that there is a separate Upanishad dealing with the subject, called *Hamsa Upanishad*. The mantras *Ham* and *So*, *So-Ham* or *Hamsa* is the subject of the *Hamsa Upanishad*, and it provides the methods, varieties, systems, techniques and attainments of ajapa japa. The reason the ajapa practice has been given such a prominent place in the meditative techniques of yoga and spirituality is that it merges mind and prana together.

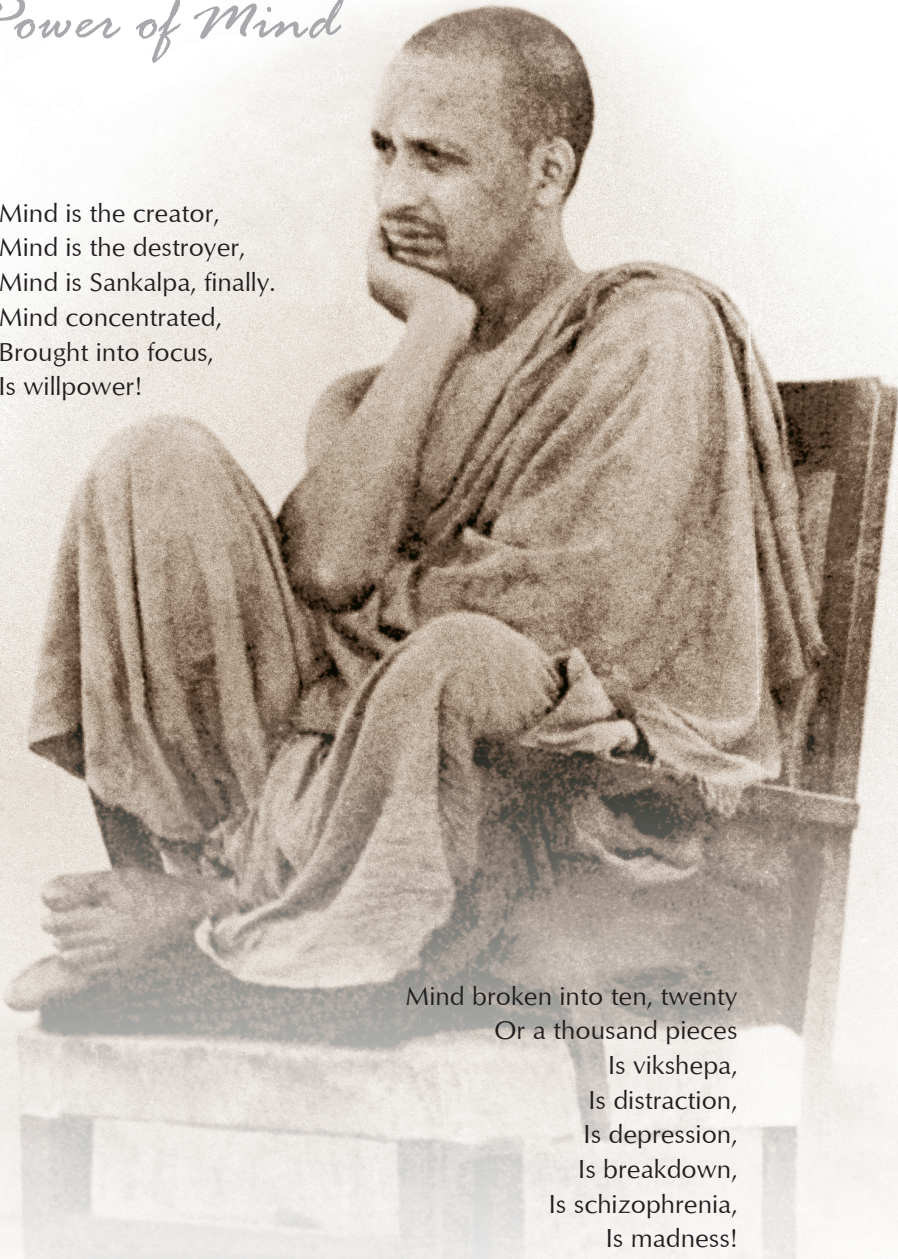
With the three practices of yoga nidra, antar mouna and ajapa japa, the first level of pratyahara is complete.

– 25 October 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger,
Raja Yoga Training – Module 1 (Extract)



Power of Mind

Mind is the creator,
Mind is the destroyer,
Mind is Sankalpa, finally.
Mind concentrated,
Brought into focus,
Is willpower!



Mind broken into ten, twenty
Or a thousand pieces
Is vikshepa,
Is distraction,
Is depression,
Is breakdown,
Is schizophrenia,
Is madness!

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Vijnanamaya Kosha

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

How do we know if we have reached vijnanamaya kosha? What are the signals or symptoms?

It is difficult to know, as there are no boundaries or defined borders. There are different shades of grey, different gradients of awareness. Just as there is a colour gradient from white to dark, in the same way there is a gradient of consciousness. It begins with *tamas*, which is dark, and as you continue, it becomes white. In this gradient change, how can one define which is *anandamaya*, which is *vijnanamaya*, which is *pranamaya*, and which is *manomaya*? Ultimately, the experience of consciousness is combined in *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahamkara*. If you have the experience of consciousness at any of these four levels, then you also feel the presence of conscious awareness at the other levels. Your mind is active, your *buddhi* is active, your *chitta* is active, and your ego is active. How do you decipher which is your *manas*, which is your *buddhi*, which is your *chitta*, which is your *ahamkara*? In the same way, how do you decipher which is your *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* or *anandamaya*? Theoretically you can, but practically it is next to impossible to have clear dividing lines between them. Yet, certain indications have been given.

In the higher stages of meditation, symbols do appear which indicate that a shift in consciousness has taken place. You have to observe the play of consciousness. When you are in *manomaya*, then the experience of *shanti*, peace, stilling of every activity which is in relation to the world, will indicate *manomaya* balance. Whenever you are not at peace, it is the disturbance of *manomaya*. At night, when you cannot sleep and a continuous train of thought is going on, that is *manomaya* activity. When that train of thought stops and you go to sleep, that is also a *manomaya* experience. The *manomaya* kosha

covers the gross expressions of buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. Vijnanamaya kosha also covers manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara, but not the gross expressions. It is the realm of what has been carried forward, that which is not a part of your current environment but what you have brought with you as samskara and karma.

Many people think that if they develop the ability to astral travel it will indicate that they are in vijnanamaya kosha. That is only a way to convince themselves or others that they are in a higher state of mind. Astral travel is not an aspect of vijnanamaya kosha. The experience of vijnanamaya kosha is luminosity, the effulgence of consciousness. When you identify with the element of Shiva in you, when the duality of the world has stopped and you are endowed with a singular awareness, which we call Shiva: the auspicious, balanced, harmonious, centred nature, that is the experience of vijnanamaya kosha. After that point it is only the experience and expression of bliss.

There is the story of Archimedes and his famous exclamation of 'Eureka!' He was taking a bath, thinking about a mathematical problem, and when the realization hit him he forgot everything. He ran naked from his bathroom to court. Where was his body awareness at that time? Where was the social awareness at that time? He ran through the middle of the road, straight into the king's court. That is vijnanamaya kosha, when you are so taken by your realization that you forget the outer environment and the body. There is a term in yoga, *dehadhyas*. It means awareness of the body. When you transcend the awareness of the body, you are in vijnanamaya kosha, which is only one step away from anandamaya, bliss.



– 28 October 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger,
Raja Yoga Training – Module 1 (Extract)

Rigidity and Acceptance

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When there is resistance in the mind, rigidity, arrogance and stiffness, it is hard to accept anything. Even if it is the right thing, you will rebel against the right thing. Even if it is the just thing, you will rebel against it due to the rigidity of the mind.

Therefore, you have to learn to deal with the rigidity of the mind. The less rigid you are, the more accepting you become, and the more rigid you are the less accepting you are. This rigidity is an offshoot of ego, arrogance, self-image, self-prestige, self-identity, which exist in a deep and strong form.

At the conscious level, you can allow yourself to accept something but at an unconscious level there will be rejection. The aspects which are associated with *ahamkara*, ego or arrogance, have to be observed and lessened in order to improve the ability to accept.

Acceptance is not a practice. It is a condition of mind.

– 26 June 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Behavioural Raja Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Raja yoga is not only practice and experience. You can practise yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, and hope to experience dhyana and samadhi. However, after practising them, what is the result? Is meditation and samadhi the result or is improvement of mind the result? Meditation and samadhi cannot be the result as people think. In fact, you should remove the word 'meditation' from your vocabulary, as you give a wrong understanding of the idea.

When you look at the system of raja yoga, you see techniques and the possible experiences, and the outcome of those techniques and experiences is balance of mind. That is the aim of raja yoga. Therefore, let us aim to experience this goal. If we can do that, then we become yogis. *Chitta vritti nirodhah* is the objective, and the medium are the six angas: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara and dharana. They are practices leading to the last two angas: dhyana and samadhi, which are experiences. The deepening of that experience is modification in behaviour: as you connect with harmony and happiness, then everything changes in your interactions and relationships. This is the behavioural outcome of raja yoga as stated in the *Yoga Sutras* (1:33):

*Maitreekarunaamuditopekshaanaam
sukhaduhkhopunyaapunyaavishayaanaam
Bhaavanaatashchittaprasaadanam.*

In relation to happiness, misery, virtue and vice, by cultivating the attitudes of friendliness, compassion, gladness and indifference respectively, the mind becomes purified and peaceful.

Four ideas are given here. The first is: friendliness towards those who are happy. When you encounter or see somebody happy, you are automatically attracted to them, "Oh that person is really happy, I like that person." Although you have not spoken to the person, their happiness has motivated you to say good things about them. If the person had a frown on the face, you would say, "Oh, that person is frowning. I don't think I want to talk to that person." There is a natural tendency to appreciate happiness and also to become part of it. That is the statement in this sutra: *sukha* and *maitri*, happiness and friendliness, go together.

The second idea is recognition of suffering, *dukha*, and the mental behaviour or attitude towards suffering, that of compassion. This attitude will motivate you to act in a manner that will help the other person. It is not sympathy where you are saying "Oh, you poor little thing." It is not even empathy. Compassion is different from sympathy or empathy. Compassion means you are involved with helping the other person overcome their difficulties. You are not just doing lip-service, "Oh, you poor little thing." Lip-service is sympathy. If you feel the pain of another person, people call it empathy. However, that is transference of a condition to another person. Someone's feeling of pain is transferred to you, and you also begin to feel the pain. Someone's suffering is transferred to you, and you also begin to feel the suffering. How do you clear that? How do you clear those impressions? Very difficult.

For this reason, yoga does not use any word denoting sympathy or empathy. The word used is *karuna*, and *karuna*, in the bigger sense, is your participation in the alleviation of someone else's problem. Whether that is objective or subjective is up to you and your own head-trips. If it is your child, you will become subjective; if it is somebody else, you will remain objective. Nevertheless, the quality that has to be cultivated is compassion.

The third idea is: be happy on seeing someone virtuous. To become bubbly and happy on seeing somebody virtuous,



pious and good is an expression of the positive nature. There is also a natural magnetic energy around the virtuous. When people used to go to Swami Sivananda, before they even entered the ashram they would start bubbling over. That was the influence. They would begin to feel a change in their mental and emotional states, and suddenly feel uplifted, although they were not in front of him. When people used to come for darshan of Sri Swamiji, their heart would begin to beat fast: boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, and they were all bubbly. No expectation, but anticipation. This is the combination of *punya* and *mudita*, goodness and joy; the result of the goodness is inner joy.

The fourth idea is to ignore the wicked. Some people have a moral conflict with this statement. "How can we ignore the crooked? We should try to help them. We should try to improve them." They talk like reformists. Yoga does not believe in reforming the outer world; yoga believes in managing the inner world. If you wish to reform somebody, that is your inclination, but be clear that yoga does not seek to reform anybody.

The nature of a barking dog is to bark. The postman goes to deliver letters and the dog goes on barking. The postman takes precautions and ignores the dog. That is what is meant here. When dogs bark at you, ignore them. Buddha used to ignore them. All masters have ignored people who barked at them. There is a saying in Hindi: *Hathi chale bazaar, kutta bhounke hazaar* - "When an elephant walks to the market, a thousand dogs will bark but the elephant will not bother." The elephant will ignore them all. Only another dog will recognize what is being said, as that is dog language. If a dog barks and you react, it means you are also a dog who can understand the barking. *Khag jaane khag ki bhasha*. Only birds know the language of birds. Only dogs know the language of dogs.

If you react to the wicked, you will be disturbed. Your intention may be good, but the other person's intentions are not good. You may want to give butter, but the other person has a knife that can easily cut through butter. Your softness is nothing compared to the hardness of the other person. Your gentleness, sympathy or compassion is not strong enough to deal with the hardness of the wicked.

If you want to control an elephant, you have to apply a strength which is greater than the elephant's. If you want to control a horse, you have to apply a strength which is greater than the horse's strength. If you want to control a dog, you have to apply a strength which is greater than the dog's strength. Therefore, if you want to modify the wicked, you have to be ten times stronger than the wicked to influence them in a positive manner. If you are at the same level, you won't have a chance. They have the sword and you have the flower. Who will win? The sword will win, unless you are ten times stronger.

The idea is that to counter a force, you need to have a stronger force. This strength can be cultivated with positive inputs. The sutra is indicative of that. If you can cultivate and strengthen a positive state of mind and being, then outer behaviour need not be worried about; the appropriate expression will take place naturally. If you see a scorpion while walking at night, you will



definitely give a wide berth to it. If you see a snake, you will give a wide berth to it. If you see a terrorist, you will give a wide berth to him. In any kind of damaging or destructive environment, it is the natural tendency to give a wide berth to the danger to be safe.

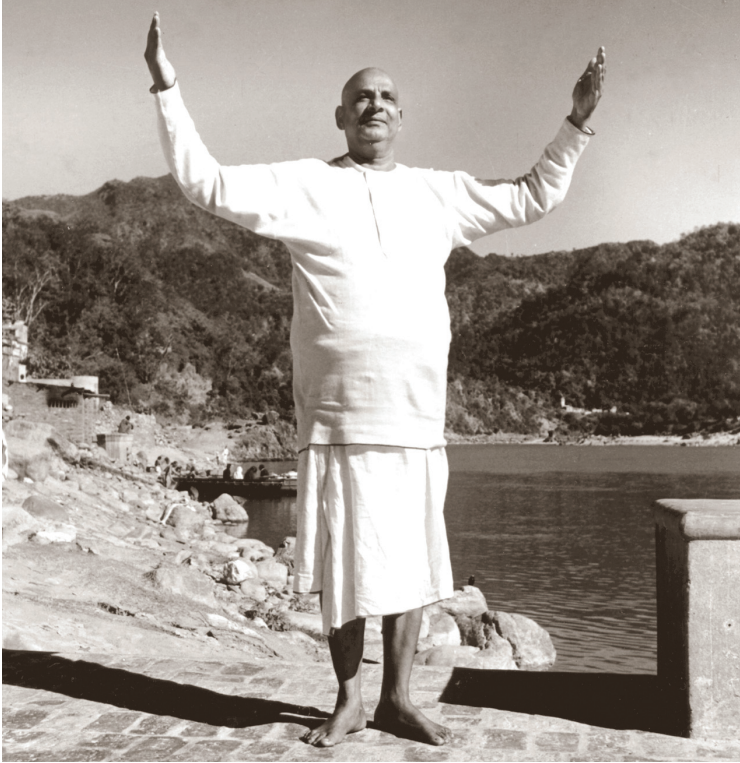
People think that in order to be spiritual they have to help everybody, and common sense is thrown to the wind. The wicked are as dangerous as the snake or the scorpion in the grass, and you don't have the strength to counter that negative force. Therefore,

avoid it. Would you go running and bash your head against a wall? No. You know that nothing will happen to the wall but you will crack your head. There is an awareness of what is hard and what is soft.

Wickedness represents the hardness of life, not the human softness. It is like the raw potato, which you cannot eat. In order to eat that hard potato, you have to boil it and make it soft, then you can enjoy it and swallow it. Similarly, there is no use trying to melt the mental hardness, for you are not strong enough to deal with the negatives of the mind. You cannot even deal with the hardness of your own mind, the negativity of your own mind, forget another person. Therefore, just focus on cultivating the positive within yourself; maintain your balance, be the observer, and hold the mind in control. That is raja yoga.

*– 26 October 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger,
Raja Yoga Training – Module 1 (Extract)*

Aspiration



Aspiration is the earnest longing or the earnest wish for that which is above one's present reach or attainment, especially for what is noble, pure and spiritual.

To aspire is to rise or reach upward. To aspire is to have an earnest desire for something high and good, not yet attained, and usually accompanied by endeavour to attain it.

By spiritual sadhana an entirely new mind is formed with new feelings, new nerve channels, new avenues and grooves in the brain for the mind to move and walk about. You will think not about self-aggrandisement and self-exaltation, but for the wellbeing of the world. You will think, feel and work in terms of unity.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Aspiration of Raja Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

There is a word in Sanskrit: vibhu. *Vibhu* means interconnectedness. This interconnectedness is the quality that true yogis desire. Interconnectedness and bliss are the two things that yogis crave when they are involved in their sadhana, whether in the Himalayan caves in their isolation or amid people in a community. They await the experience of vibhu and ananda.

At the end of the *Saundarya Lahari* we chant four mantras:

Namaste namaste vibho vishwamurte

Namaste namaste chidaanandamurte

Namaste namaste tapoyogagamyā

Namaste namaste shrutijnaanagamyā.

These four lines indicate the aspiration of raja yoga. First it is acknowledging, 'I surrender'. *Namaste, Namaste* – "I surrender, I surrender", not "I salute." I surrender to what? To *vibho-vishwamurte* – that cosmic form which is interconnected. This is not a philosophical concept, on the contrary, it is a down-to-earth practical experience that everybody has.

An example: when you seek love, what are you seeking? Connection. When you love, it is interconnection. As long as that love is pure, there is upliftment, but you change that love with your tamasic and rajasic qualities. Therefore initially there is happiness but later on discontentment comes in. The initial effort was of connection, and everybody wants to be connected. However, the connection that you seek with your friends and family members is not the spiritual connection; it is a gross, material, selfish connection, based on desires, expectations and individual perceptions.

If you forget that self-oriented connection, and experience your connection to be the appropriate, the true and the pure one, without the influence of tamas and rajas, then can you

imagine the state of happiness that will be all around, the state of fulfilment that will be all around? That will be the state of vibhu.

Sri Swami Satyananda spoke of *atmabhava*, the state of mind where you are able to see yourself in others, and it is part of the vibhu awareness. It allows you to connect even with strangers. Through *atmabhava* you connect not only with those who fulfil your needs and whims, but also with those whose needs you need to fulfil. Ultimately, that is the connection of *atmabhava*. That cosmic self or higher self represents the connection with each and every thing. Therefore, the first acknowledgement is of that cosmic nature: *Namaste, namaste, vibhovishwamurte*.

That interconnected, universal nature is also identified in the second line: *chidanandamurte*, representing the total consciousness and bliss in consciousness. Not a single part, fraction or percentage of the consciousness is devoid of that whole experience; it is *chidanandamurte*.

The way to attain this interconnectedness and bliss is given in the third and fourth lines. You can experience that vibhu and *chidananda* state through *tapas*, austerity, and *yoga*, practice, discipline. You can experience it through *shruti*, listening and imbibing, not inferring your own ideas, but imbibing and trying to understand; through *jnana*, knowing. These are the four components to come to that level.

Yoga is not just a simple comfortable practice; it is also a *tapas*. If you do it in the right spirit, in the correct manner, with the appropriate awareness, it becomes a *tapas*. *Tapas* means to purify and bring out the pure from within. When you put gold in fire and heat it, all the fluff of the gold comes to the surface and can be removed. Heating of gold is *tapas*. Heating of the hard potato is *tapas*. After all, the potato goes through *tapas* boiling in hot water, in order to become soft.

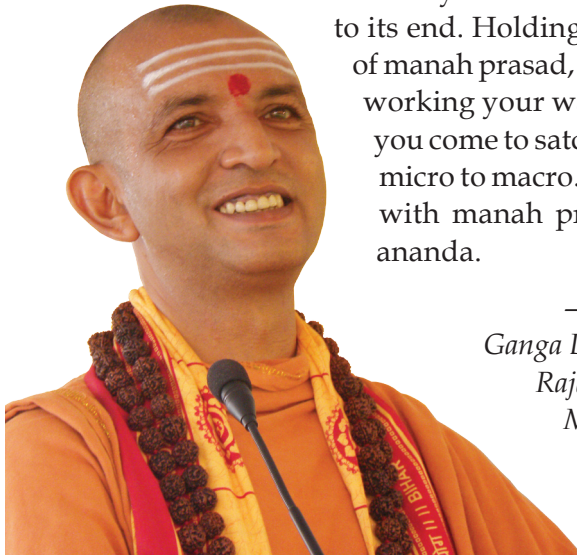
People want experience without effort, and that is human nature. Humans are the species that wants to have everything without any effort. They shy away from effort, and to avoid

effort they create a false image of themselves. If you compare all humans on a scale of intelligence, you will find that nobody is equal, yet everybody wants to prove that they are better than the other person. You are always trying to project what you are not. That is the tamasic ahamkara.

To transcend the tamasic ahamkara and experience ananda, a process has to be followed, and it is a simple one. The most important thing, which people do not realize, is that if the goal is ananda then you have to begin with happiness. That is why the first yoga yama is *manah prasad*, happiness. That is the beginning of the string that will take you to its end at ananda.

If you have to enter a dark cave and somebody gives you a string, you hold on to the string and find your way through the cave. You catch hold of the beginning of the string, and gradually inch your way through the darkness with its help, until you reach the other side. The part of the string you were

given to hold at the beginning is one extreme and you have to gradually come to its end. Holding on to the string of *manah prasad*, you have to start working your way forward until you come to satchitananda; from micro to macro. Therefore begin with *manah prasad* and go to ananda.



– 27 October 2016,
Ganga Darshan, Munger,
Raja Yoga Training –
Module 1 (Extract)



Yoga Publications Trust

Yoga Chakra 4: Cultivating Sadgunas


Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

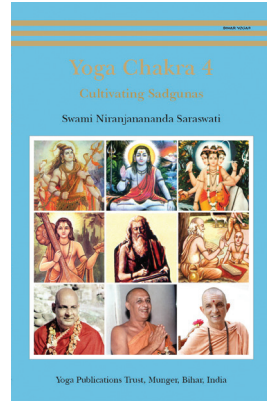
110 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-93-84753-58-0

From 5th to 13th July 2016, Swami Niranjanananda gave a series of satsangs during the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra held at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth. The theme of the satsangs from the previous Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra was carried forward this year, as Swamiji took the participants deeper into the experience of *yamas* and *niyamas*, the positive attributes of life.

Swamiji delved into two *yamas* and their corresponding *niyamas*: *danti* and *indriya nigraha*, mental restraint and sensorial restraint; and *adweshtha* and *maitri*, being without hatred and goodwill towards all. He did not speak of these as mere concepts but laid out the map through which the qualities can be truly experienced and expressed in life.

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New



www.biharyoga.net

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



Websites

YOGA & YOGAVIDYA Online

Bihar School of Yoga is happy to announce that the YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines are now available on line at:
<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/yoga-magazines/>
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Avahan Online

www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/ provides online access to *Saty 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

Feb 1	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
Feb 6-May 28	Yogic Studies, 4 months (Hindi)
Feb 12-18	Yoga Capsule - Respiratory (Hindi)
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Feb 26-Mar 4	Yoga Capsule - Digestive (Hindi)
Mar 19-25	Yoga Capsule - Arthritis & Rheumatism (Hindi)
Apr 9-19	Total Health Capsule (Hindi)
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 Ramacharitamanas

* Indicates training for overseas participants

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

For more information on the above events contact:

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