

YOGA

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Hari Om

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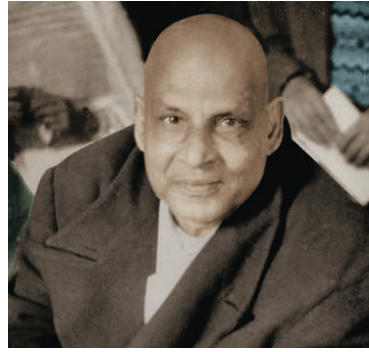
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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Write mantra a little, meditate a little

The benefits of mantra writing or likhit japa cannot be adequately described. Besides bringing about purity of heart and concentration of mind, it gives you control of asana or posture, control of the indriyas or senses, particularly those of eyes and the tongue, and fills you with the power of endurance. You attain peace of mind quickly.

There are many benefits of meditation. They are peace, contentment, fearlessness, spiritual bliss, unruffled state of mind in worldly difficulties, steadiness, inspiration, intuitive perception, sattvic qualities and absence of anger, egoism and likes and dislikes. If you can meditate for half an hour, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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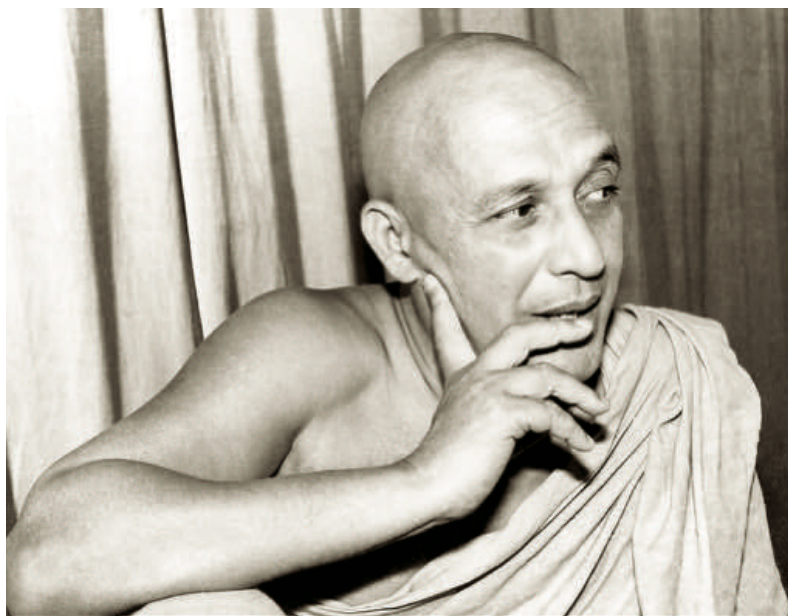
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

Relaxation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



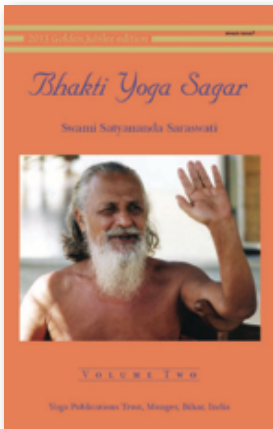
For the man in the world who is continually being subjected to the wear and tear of tension, frustration and disappointment, who is living under continual pressure, yoga should bring about equilibrium and balance of mind.

There are three important categories of relaxation. Asanas and pranayamas belong to one category of relaxation, trataka and yoga nidra belong to another category of relaxation, bhakti and raja yoga belong to the third category of relaxation.

Karma yoga and jnana yoga are common to all the categories of relaxation. Through karma yoga you integrate your body, through bhakti you purify your emotions. Through raja yoga mental capacities are awakened, and by jnana yoga the intellect is trained and there is complete rationalization and understanding.

Facing Dilemmas in Life

From *Bhakti Yoga Sagar*, Volume Two, *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



When you cannot decide a path for yourself, you should surrender completely to God. When you are indecisive, you should not depend on your mind. At such times you have to depend on a higher reality. It is my personal experience that when you pray and ask God to give you direction, He gives it. Of course, you have to be innocent. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (18:16), Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: “Renouncing all duties, take refuge in Me. I will liberate you from all sins, grieve not.”

When you are unable to decide the next step in a difficult situation, then merely depending on reason or on your mind is not sufficient. You can easily make an erroneous decision. It has been said in the *Ramacharitamanas*:

Avidya can never take possession of the Lord’s servant. Impelled by the Lord, vidya takes the place of avidya. The servant is never destroyed by ignorance and doubt. Along with knowledge, his devotion continues to develop.

I have never had any problems in my life. If I have taken decisions, they were in compliance with His wishes. I have always followed His command, not my own. On a very few occasions, probably once or twice, I have asked myself, “What shall I do?”, and His reply came promptly. The first command I received was long ago, when I was eighteen years old. The second command I received was prior to coming to Rikhia. One is not mature at the age of eighteen, but I had a pure mind

and needed a decision. Though I longed to leave home, there were a number of obstacles which prevented me from doing so. It was not that I had any opposition from my parents, but I had my own problems. Despite that, the urge to leave home was still strong, so a tussle went on in my mind.

My family owned a large estate comprised of one thousand acres of agricultural land, fifteen hundred acres of forest land, five hundred sheep, many dogs, asses, mules and bulls, one hundred servants and many other things, which I had managed from the age of eight. I was quite occupied with this work and I enjoyed it. I was not interested in studying. I liked this work as it paid well and was a profitable business. It was not so easy to leave such a vast empire. My parents were not much interested in household affairs. They were the type of people who prefer to stay in the city with a job rather than live in a rural area looking after a property. But I had developed an interest in it and found it difficult to give up.

On the other hand, the urge to adopt sannyasa was equally strong and I felt like renouncing materialistic life. I was in two minds and both choices carried equal weight, so I left the decision to God. Then the order came: "Quit as soon as possible." It was the best thing for me. If I had not adopted sannyasa and not renounced, I would have gone mad. A person who has strange, abstract ideas and who is not satisfied with his life will easily fall prey to insanity. I was not satisfied with my life. I wanted something more, about which I had no idea at that time. I wanted a transcendental experience, so I prayed. I left everything to Him and said, "Whatever you instruct me to do, I will do." He said, "Just leave as quickly as possible." So I went.

The same thing happened to me when I left Munger. In Munger I was a very busy man. Day and night I used to read, write and conduct all kinds of meetings. Then suddenly I became unemployed; I had nothing to do. It was a total vacuum. So I spent one year somehow going from this place to that, that place to this. I did a round of India, but ultimately



I had to decide where to stay and what to do. There were two things that I could have done. Firstly, I could have devoted myself totally to spiritual life and, secondly, I could have taken up some other work because I had finished my karma with yoga.

I will tell you about my yoga work because that is a very interesting story. Quite frankly, I do not know much about yoga. I have written a lot of books on yoga and they were all published in my name, but I do not know much about yoga. It is neither my tradition, nor my parampara. However, I was given a special vidya by a tantric yogini from Nepal, whom I met when I was eighteen and she was thirty-six. That vidya enabled me to invoke any departed soul, so that he could live and work through me. One day I used it, and for twenty years the soul of a great learned saint was in me, doing all these things. The body, speech and mind belonged to Swami Satyananda, but the knowledge did not belong to me. Even now when I read my books I am sometimes startled. I think, "What is this?", because that was his work, not mine.

I received the knowledge from the tantric yogini when she was departing from my life. She taught me many fantastic

things and I am very thankful to her. She was living in Garhwal when she taught me this, and she died there a few years ago. So, in 1963, before coming to Munger, I invoked a higher soul in Tryambakeshwar, near Nasik. First I prayed, "O God, I want twenty years to establish a mission." Then I gave a *vachan*, a promise: "Once I accomplish it I will give up everything and come to you." Thirdly, I said, "I want to invoke a great saint to help me in my work." So, I invoked him and he came into me. That soul was with me for twenty years, but I did not know that he was here until he left me. He did leave me, but I had to go to Nasik to free him through invocation and then immersion in the Godavari River. When I was there I asked, "What am I to do next? I am quite capable of doing any work. I could start any movement even in the political system. I know everything that is happening in the world from day to day: province-wise, state-wise, world-wide, meetings, all the alliances, all the communities. Whatever is happening, I know about it." Then I left it up to Him. On 14th July I received the command from Him, "Just twenty-one thousand and six hundred mantra repetitions."

So, in the same way, when one is in a dilemma and does not know what to do, one should leave it to God, or go to a saint who has *divya drishti*, divine vision. Some saints are gifted with divine vision, but you will not find them on the streets. I was fortunate enough to come into contact with such great souls. They can foretell events, but they speak very little and stay away from society. They dissuaded me from coming closer to them because I would rob them of their earnings of many lives. They said, "You have come to enjoy the fruits that we have worked hard to earn, free of charge." You may look for such divine souls in big cities like Bombay, Delhi or Bangalore, but you will not find them.

Saints and great souls always renounce karma. They practise continuous, unbroken remembrance of God's name. This is one of their most important characteristics. They live far from karma and accomplishment, personal desires and

their fulfilment. They run away from popularity, which, like a fire burns all the earnings of a tapasvi to ashes. It is very difficult to trace such great souls because the holy and unholy live under the shade of the same tree. It is the job of a jeweller to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Only a jeweller can tell a diamond from glass. Without a jeweller you would throw diamonds into the water and collect glass in your bag.

It is not that this country is completely divested of saints and great souls. India is a very big nation. The trouble is that the new generation is running madly after the materialistic world. It is like a compulsion and people cannot do anything about it. Their condition is just like a buoy which bobs up and down at the mercy of the current; they have no choice. They cannot turn the tide of events because the whole society is going towards *artha* and *kama*, money and desire. People have forgotten *dharma* and *moksha*, duty and salvation.

Nowadays people look for saints and great souls in big cities like Delhi and Bombay and in established institutions. They do not make an earnest effort to search for a real saint. A thief struggles hard to locate a place and a prey. He goes out in the dark of night, taking a risk which may even cost him his life. Sincere seekers should at least be prepared to put that much effort into locating saints and great souls. Such people do exist, but it is difficult to track them down. They remain far away and do not want to be disturbed by society. I was told by such saints that if I approached I would deprive them of their earnings. When I assured them that I had come only for their darshan, I was told that even darshan would deplete their energy by half.

So if you are lucky enough to find such a divine soul, consider yourself to be blessed. What are the qualities of an evolved soul with divine vision? Study this aspect first. Sandal paste, tripundra, geru or matted hair are not definite indications. They may be sitting just as you are in a quiet place, satisfied with two rotis, remembering God and ready to leave if disturbed by others. Kabir Das has said:



An avadhoota is equal to a hundred yogis,
Whose garland is his mind
And whose waistband is his body.
He smears himself with ashes of fear
And is ever under the care of Lord Rama,
Who looks after his total welfare.

Always remember that in each and everyone there is a price-less gem. You may call him God, you may call him atma, paramatma or anything else. There is a very great prize within you, but it is so deep. Kabir Das says again:

Those who dived deep into the water found Him,
Those who feared to dive waited and waited on the shore.

Satsang with Yoga Teachers

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swamiji, would you like to suggest some codes of conduct for us while teaching yoga or treating patients, that could help us?

Well, I think everybody has common sense. I do not like to preach a code of conduct, ethics and morality, because I am not a moral preceptor. I know yoga, I teach yoga. I don't even teach God because that is not my training. I don't teach morality, ethics, whether you drink, don't drink, whether you don't eat meat, or you eat it once or twice. Whether you are monogamous or polygamous, that is your business. But you must think yourself as to what is good for you, your body, your mind, your emotions and finally for your community. Which type of life will be important for you to improve the quality of your willpower, that is left of you.

Improving lifestyle

I would just like to tell you one thing. You must teach yoga to people, first to improve the quality of their physical health. Then you should also teach yoga to them so that they can have something to do every morning in the family. Otherwise you get up in the morning, keep on yawning and then you put on soap, and you go on shaving, reading the newspaper, listening to the radio and yelling at the children. I mean, that is how you are going to spend the whole day.

I think you should get up in the morning, have a bath, sit down quietly, do a few exercises and then you do your japa and meditation and then you come out and shave yourself, speak nicely, with your children and with your neighbours. 'Hey, how are you? How are your children?' The whole day you spend like that. In the same way, at night also, before sleep, put your head on the pillow, do a little japa, or something like that.

Otherwise what happens, the moment you put your head on the pillow, you go into fantasies, worries, anxieties. Sometimes you spend half the night, tranquilizers, composers, going to bathroom, cigarette, bidi. You must have a very scientific life, in such a way that it contributes to your health, to the quality of your mind.

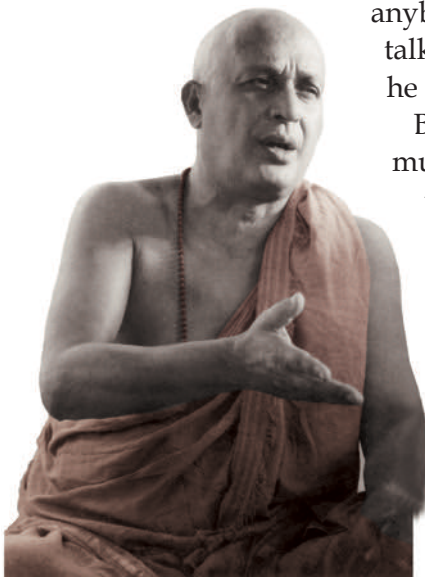
Yoga makes the difference

Not only that, when you meet the people, you should talk to them about yoga. Yoga is such a powerful system. Even if you go and teach yoga to a person suffering from cancer, who is about to die after five days, it may not cure his cancer – anyway he has to die – but the moment they begin to practise yoga, they come closer to peace and proper understanding. Now there is a difference therefore. He may die of cancer in agony, or he may die of cancer in peace. That makes a difference.

Yoga sometimes may not be able to change the quality of disease. It may not be able to treat the disease, but it will definitely create certain positive influences in your personality, in your way of thinking, in the quality of your philosophy. So

anybody you come across you must talk to about yoga in such a way that he is inspired.

But when you teach yoga, you must be very careful of one thing, that you do not destroy anybody's religious beliefs. Even in this twentieth century, where matter has been exploded and redefined, where the concept of energy and the concept of consciousness have also come following the ways of science, there are people who are very closed in their religious beliefs. You have to be



very careful. It is wrong to change anybody's religious belief. It is absolutely incorrect, it is absolutely wrong to say that, 'Your religious beliefs are not scientific'. Yes, he may be wrong, but he himself thinks he is right. The *Bhagavad Gita* (3:26) says:

Na buddhi bhedan . . . "

Those people who are ignorant, those people who are attached to the objects of the world, do not destroy their faith at all. Let them carry on.

So you should talk to them about yoga in such a way, so that they do not become sceptical about their own philosophy, which they had been adhering to for 35 to 40 years. You are destroying their entire structure. Whether someone is a Christian or a Hindu or a Muslim, he has constructed that structure for 35 years, and today because of your intelligence, because of your intellectual power, because of your hypnotic personality, you are destroying it - and that man will be without support. And this is what is happening throughout the world. People have lost their identity. They don't know what to identify with because the base on which they are standing, the base with which they were identifying, is completely lost.

To give respect

There are many Christians in India, they are completely baseless. They don't know what to do, what they are, whether they should marry like a Hindu, whether they should marry like a European. If you want to marry like a European, there are problems. And if they want to marry like a Hindu, they can't because a Hindu marriage is a fantastic marriage. You have to do like this, like that. And the European marriage is also hopeless. It is like a contract marriage - five-years contract. I mean nobody likes it, I would not like to have a contract with my wife. I want her to be with me as long as I live or as long as she lives, because love has nothing to do with contracts. It has something to do with the soul. When you marry, you

marry for the whole life time. It does not matter. Let him be a wretch. Let him be debauched, 'I don't care'.

This is the Hindu way of thinking. She's my wife, it doesn't matter whether she is paralytic, whether she is a leper. But she is my wife. In dharma, I have held her hand. If your child becomes paralytic are you going to throw him away, it is wrong. If you are going to throw her away, you are going to throw away another girl also, because maybe that is your nature and not her nature. So the Hindu way of thinking is different.

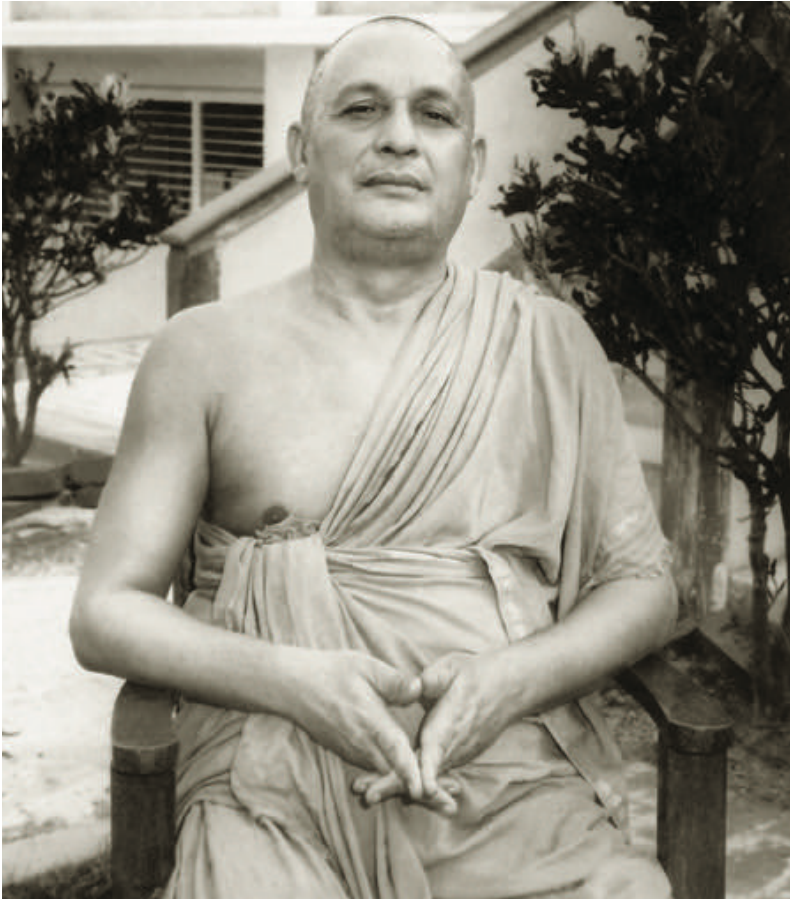
Christians have been fighting with each other. The same thing is happening everywhere. I have been to Indonesia; I have lived in Japan. I have lived in the South East Asian countries; I have lived in Greece. We should not destroy anyone's basic faith. That is the respect we have to give. And that is the first element, that is the first character, or that is the first personality, or I should say, that is the religion of Hinduism.

You should not try to convert anybody. You should not even try to change anybody; you should try to help. Even if he does not believe in God, if he is a communist, don't teach him yoga so that we may lose communism. Communism is also good - balanced philosophy, it is good. You understand, it is necessary to create a balance. Communism is an idea, sensuality is an idea, spirituality is an idea: you should have respect, as you have respect for poison, which is used in medicinal drugs.

Munger yoga

Finally, yoga means Munger. You see I'll tell you why. I know acupuncture. I don't teach anyone; I don't even speak a word about it. I know naturopathy; I don't speak a word about it. I know ayurveda. I have manufactured medicines for years together in Rishikesh, at the Ayurveda Pharmacy Health. But I don't speak even a word about it. Nothing. I just speak about one thing, yoga, because my guru said yoga, he hasn't told me anything else.

The institution in Munger now is devoted totally to the concept of yoga, but we are very careful people. For me an



institution is a base, it is not even the means, not to talk about the end. Point one clear. The institution is being created to facilitate the work of yoga. To me yoga is also not the end, it is the means. The means to man's inner light. His outer life, his relationship with day-to-day agonies and problems. Fights with his wife, fights with his children, the whole lot of difficulties he is undergoing. The money he's having, living a life in sensuality: that is the depth of life which every man is subjected to in some way or the other, positively or negatively. That life is the end. And the deeper man has to evolve in the realm of consciousness, in the realm of mind, in the realm of

buddhi, in the realm of common sense, so that we may be able to have a little better community of mankind. Not much better, I'm not very optimistic – of course I'm not a doomsday prophet – but I think a little better is always good. That is what you should keep in mind all the time when you talk yoga.

Entering another reality

Munger has to be in your mind all the time, and come to this place every now and then particularly please come in 1983, from November 1st to 7th. You are not going to see any posters; you are not going to see any invitation cards anywhere. I have told all my disciples, no poster will be printed, no pamphlets will be issued, no handbills will be distributed. No. First to seventh November is the period when there is going to be the meeting of all the yoga-minded people, not only from this continent but from all over the world, in thousands. It is going to be just a festival or a meeting; it will not be a philosophical one.

I am not going to have symposiums. I am not going to have subjects. You can sing, you can talk, you can see people. If you don't want to come to the conference, you can talk about whatever you like, but it is one glimpse of the glory of yoga, which Munger will provide in 1983 from November 1st to 7th.

And it is also very important because in 1923 I was born, in 1943 I renounced, and 1963 I started this work. In 1983 I will hand over my charge to people and let them look after it, so that I can dedicate myself to the cosmic institution, not a particular institution. I am not against this school or ashram, because I have created it, but there has to be some purpose, where I have to transcend the limitations of an institution, dedicate and devote myself to people, and not belong to any institution. The work for all that will start from 1983. This is clear and that will be the period November 1st to 7th, when I will start entering into another reality.

– 21 October 1982, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Universal Mind

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

The universal mind is created by an interaction between time, space and object with the help of the three gunas. The universal mind is very subtle. When we say universe we mean something which is much smaller than an atom. We think the universal mind means something very big. But in fact, the individual mind is much bigger, only it is completely dissipated in every experience.



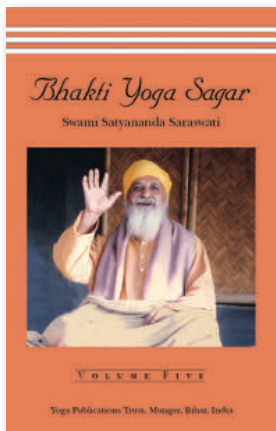
The universal mind is of the shape, nature, or structure of a point, which is called the *bindu*. It has the power of creativity and it creates the individual mind. When the universal mind begins to manifest, a process of solidification takes place. The universal mind is very subtle, subtler than space, much subtler than an atom. It is pure energy vibration.

There is a difference between creation and the universe, and many people make a mistake. "Oh, the whole universe," they say, "it means so many solar systems, so many planets!" That is creation. Creation is gross, creation is visible, creation is relative and creation is empirical like the sun and moon, the stars and solar systems and the ninety-six elements, so on and so forth. This is called the creation of the universe.

Universe is an inner substance, and that is why it is said in yoga, "The whole universe is in you." Another name for universe is cosmic mind. The mind which one is trying to control in yoga is not the universal mind, but the individual mind. When one is able to control the influxes of the individual mind, then one experiences the cosmic mind.

Suffering – the Salt of Life

From *Bhakti Yoga Sagar*, Volume Five, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What kind of people are we? We are unreasonable. We only want from God those things that we want. We don't want what he wants. That is why everybody is unhappy. What is the grace of God? If you go to hospital to see a surgeon, do you want him to use a rose or a knife to operate with? Tulsidas has clearly said in his *Ramayana* that even though a mother loves her child, when an operation is necessary she will agree to it because it will cure the child and make him healthy. Suffering makes a man strong; enjoyment makes him weak. That is why all the saints suffered.

Christ suffered throughout his life. I don't think he ever slept on a foam mattress! He must have slept on the floor with a rotten blanket. I don't think he had a comb or used bath oil and shampoo. Christ could perform miracles, but why didn't he do so on the cross? He had to suffer. You can say the same about many other saints. Analyze the life of Sri Rama, whom you call the incarnation of God, or Sitaji, whom millions of Indians consider to be the incarnation of the Goddess. Rama, an emperor's son, lived in his guru's ashram for twelve years, sleeping on the floor and tending the guru's cattle. When he returned home, instead of a coronation, he was exiled to the forest. If your mother-in-law threw you out of your home, how would you feel? Then, just one year before his period of exile was over, a powerful emperor kidnapped his wife. Is that not a tragedy?

Even these men with miraculous powers, who could control the elements, who could control destinies, suffered because suffering is the salt of life. Why didn't Rama change

his own destiny? Why didn't Krishna change his own destiny? Krishna's life was out and out suffering. Before he was born he was on Kamsa's hit list and he faced many problems during his childhood. These great men were supposed to be prophets, sons of God or incarnations of God, yet they all suffered. Therefore, you must understand that suffering is the salt of life. "Suffering is the crucible into which nature throws a man whenever she wishes to mould him into a sublime superman."

Only when you enter the furnace can you become gold. Sorrow is not an enemy. Sorrow and suffering are my friends. Happiness comes to destroy me. I am telling you from the depth of my heart that spiritual seekers must understand that God is the only source. God is the only support. If he wants you to do sadhana, do it. If he wants you to enjoy life, enjoy it. If he wants you to suffer, suffer. Become his servant. You have no choice because a servant has no choice. After all, why did he send you here in human form? After evolving through so many incarnations, today you have become a human being. Yet, even after becoming a human being, you behave in the same way as an animal behaves.

Purpose of human evolution

What does an animal do? It eats and so do you, although of course from a plate. An animal sleeps and you also sleep, although of course in a cosy bed. An animal is insecure; you are also insecure, although of course you can lock the door. An animal has a sex life, you also have a sex life. Where is the difference? You behave exactly the same as an animal. *Ahara*, (food), *nidra* (sleep), *bhaya* (fear) and *maithuna* (sex) are the four basic instincts common to both man and animals. There is only one difference. Should I tell you the difference or can you work it out for yourself?

You may say we have a society, but animals also have a society. Fish, elephants, horses, foxes, ants and bees have solid social systems. They have rules and regulations. Many animals such as lions and tigers define the boundary of their

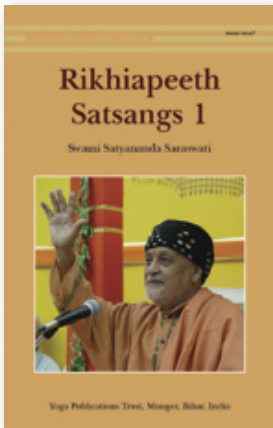


territory by urinating around it. They have property rights. They have their own languages. Animals have names. When a dog meets another dog, he will first smell its anus because a dog's nametag is its anus. Although tigers may all look the same to us, research scholars say that no two tigers have the same stripes. Monkeys have a very solid social system. They have a system of marriage, rules for intercourse and a divorce system. Animals have everything. You don't know much about it because you are more interested in your own neighbours. So, how is man different from other animals when we can see they have these characteristics in common? Is there anything that makes him different? Find out what it is.

– 30 November 1997, Rikhiapeeth

Intellect and Intuition

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 1, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



How do we find and maintain inspiration? Inspiration can be direct and inspiration can also be had through the intellect. After all, you want inspiration, and you are thinking through the intellect. Just like blood flows through the arteries, but can also flow through collateral veins, we can have inspiration directly without any involvement of the intellect and also through the intellect. The intellect does understand.

Practically speaking, there is not a big difference between the intellect and intuition, reasoning and experience. When I read the *Bhagavad Gita*, I place myself in the situation of Arjuna and place my higher self in the place of Krishna, and change the scene of the battlefield. It becomes the scene of my life: my family, office, shop, industry, wife, children, court case, politics. For me, the enemies that have to be subdued are not outside of me. So I am using and involving the intellect to find inspiration. The army I want to subdue does not consist of human beings; it consists of my instincts. I am the warrior. I am the commander-in-chief, Arjuna, and my higher self is Krishna. Now the question comes: is this way of thinking, which is intellectual, sufficient to progress in spiritual life?

Transcending intellect

We do not need to transform the intellect, as some people believe, but there comes a time when we need to transcend it. It is somewhat like this. You go from Rikhia to Delhi by train; your vehicle is the train. But you cannot use a train to

go from Delhi to Greece. You have to leave the train behind and now go by air. So there is a time in life when the intellect is a helper and there is a time when you have to transcend the intellect because it cannot go beyond a certain point. Intellect can go a very great distance. It can probe into anything without having had a direct experience. It can probe into God, into mysterious experiences, into the past, going back millions of years. However, there is a limit to intellect, and there comes a point when you have to transcend it. So, to expect that you will get inspiration intuitionally right now is not proper, because there is no airport at Rikhia! You have to take the train. You cannot handle intuition because you do not have intuition right now. Go through the intellect and after some time, when it is the right time, you will transcend it naturally. You will not have to think about it.

The meeting point

The West is primarily intellectual. There everything is tested through the intellect. But then what happens? The intellect probes into subjects, an objective perception is taken, and finally it comes round to the same point where intuition arrives.

It was with the help of the intellect that Darwin formed his theory of evolution. It was also said that earth will come to an end in 5000 years, but now nobody believes that. Now, another theory has been postulated, that life on earth came from some other planet during a meteoric explosion. Through genetic research it was found that the gene is older than the age of the earth. The earth is four and a half billion years old, but life is five billion years old. So it must have come from outside. All this was discovered through the intellect. The West proceeds through intellectual probing into a subject, going further and further, and arrives at the same point where you can arrive through intuition. There is a point where intellectual and intuitional achievements meet.

You must have faith in the intellect. People think that intellect is inferior; I have heard this particularly from Wester-

ners, who think that the intellect is materialistic. No, the intellect is an instrument that can help you probe into things, and which you have at your beck and call. Intuition is not at the beck and call of the ordinary person. Everybody cannot handle intuition because they cannot have it. Only a few people such as Christ, Buddha or Shankaracharya had access to intuition. Everyone, however, possesses intellect. It is an instrument that you have at hand to probe with.

You must also remember that jnana yoga is the yoga of intellect. Even Shankaracharya said that through the intellect you can go very far, even transcend the material perception. If the intellect becomes purified through spiritual processes, you can stay with intuition, there is no difference between intellect and intuition. Purified intellect is intuition. It is the same energy.

Be responsible for yourself

Every individual is responsible for himself, and we should all realize this. No one can change another person. This is a conclusion that I have come to. Every person is responsible for changing his own good or bad traits. I am the one who can correct myself; you cannot do it and the police cannot do it. All the sages have said that whatever is within you, whether joy, sorrow, alcoholism or any other bad habit, it is not possible for someone else to remove it from your life.

You should accept the good qualities through your own convictions and eliminate the undesirable qualities through your own convictions also. If you are convinced that you are right, then do it. And if you are convinced that you are wrong, give it up. I used to teach all over the world and when people would ask me if they should give up alcohol, I would reply, "If you want to drink, drink. I do not hold judgement on this." However, if you want to get rid of a negative trait, do not become obsessed with it; be indifferent to it. The more obsessive you are, the more strongly it will hold you in its clutches.

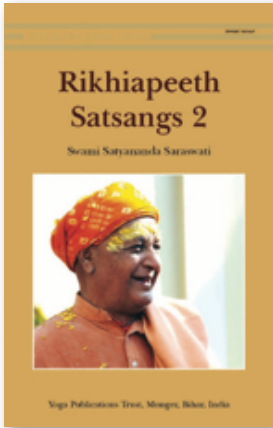


Hatha yoga is a solution to get rid of all impurities. It includes asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha. Do three or four asanas and one or two pranayamas every day. There are only three kinds of pranayama - inhalation, exhalation and retention. These three are modified in different ways in different practices. There are many mudras, pick two or three that you prefer. Bandha means to bind, to bind mooladhara, vishuddhi or manipura. So, practise asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha for half an hour or forty-five minutes, no more. Do not practise for two or three hours. And do not think that you are practising to get rid of your alcoholism. To give up alcohol is not the aim of your life. The aim of life is not to struggle to give up vices, because there is nothing called 'vice'. A vice is a shadow, just as a tree has a shadow. To remove the shadow, you will have to cut down the tree. There is not one negative quality that exists within you, there are many. They are all shadows, *maya*, unreal.

– 2000, Rikhiapeeth

Greatest Treatise on Life

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 2, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



War, death and destruction are pre-determined. They will happen. But you have to remain mentally unaffected by them. This is the central teaching of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. One of the greatest treatises on life was taught on the battlefield, amidst missiles flying in every direction. Krishna did not teach Arjuna the art of living in a serene, peaceful place, a temple or an ashram. He gave the sermon and explained all the dictums

when they were on the verge of one of the greatest wars in human history, the Mahabharata.

Two splendid armies were standing face to face, the war conches had been blown and Arjuna had a nervous breakdown. Mind you, Arjuna was not a coward. He was one of the most accomplished warriors ever to have been born on earth. His nervousness arose not out of fear, but out of ignorance and delusion. The opposite army standing in front of him consisted of all his kith and kin, uncles, grandfathers, brothers, friends, with whom he had played during his childhood. A false compassion arose in him and he was deluded. After all, it was these very uncles and brothers and elders who had meted out injustice and committed gross acts of adharma towards Arjuna, his brothers, wife and mother. It was Arjuna himself who had sworn a pledge to wage war on them and yet, when the time came for war, he had cold feet.

Of course, in today's system of war, this will never happen because everything is done by remote now. Even the person who is pressing the button does not realize the consequences

of his action. If he could comprehend or perceive the scene of hundreds and thousands of beings annihilated with the mere press of his button, he too would have cold feet like Arjuna. If he could imagine or visualize the hundreds and thousands of children who may become maimed, die or be orphaned, the hundreds and thousands of wives who would become widows, the old parents who would be left without anyone to take care of them, he too would have a nervous breakdown like Arjuna.

The question arose in Arjuna's mind because the whole scene of uncles and cousins and grandparents and friends with whom he had played, was before him. He began to see it all: the weeping widows, the pining and suffering children and old parents. That made him question the rationalization of this war and his mind began to doubt. However, even his questioning mind was not fully convinced that war is wrong. Had he been fully convinced, he would not have asked Krishna to clarify to him whether he was right or wrong in going to war. He would have simply walked off the battlefield.

In the very act of asking for Krishna's help in resolving the issue whether war is necessary or not, Arjuna is revealing his divided mind. Then, on the very same battlefield, in full view of all who were poised for war, Sri Krishna took Arjuna aside and explained to him the mysteries of life. Although Arjuna was impressed, he was not fully convinced and would still not pick up his bow and arrows, which he had thrown down from the chariot. Sri Krishna now granted Arjuna the divine vision, and he saw the death and destruction of those he was trying to save. He saw that he was only an instrument and that on account of their misdeeds, their death, at his hands, was already ordained.

Krishna told him, "You are not the doer, so why do you assume doership? It is when you assume doership that you become attached to the consequences of your actions and they leave a strong impact on you. If you perform actions, but are not attached to the consequences and your mind is not affected











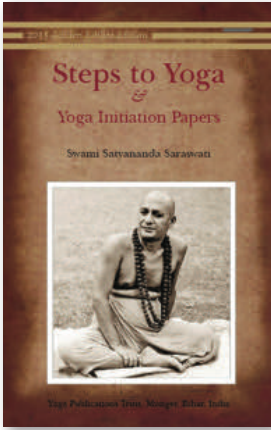
by them, then it is your sense of dharma, or duty, that guides you and also protects you.”

Now, you may wonder about it. That Krishna who was God incarnate is motivating Arjuna to fight and kill and go to war. But if you read the *Bhagavad Gita*, you will not at all question this because Krishna deftly explains the blueprint of life, from birth to death. He speaks not only of the dharma of protecting and saving people, but also of the dharma of destroying that which has become unrighteous and evil. If you have a cancer growing in your society, will you not want to destroy it, or will you sermonize about the necessity of allowing the cancer to grow because removing it could result in the death and destruction of some? This is the central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

– 18 February 2009, Rikhiapeeth

Badrinath

From Steps to Yoga & Yoga Initiation Papers, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



12 June 1958, *Badrinath Dham*

We have reached the city. When I saw it from the distant valleys I suddenly pictured the pure image of Sakya Muni. Did these valleys in some distant past hear the Trisharanam and Panchsheel of the Jagriti mantras, resounding from the courts of this temple? Did bhikshus, free from desires, clad in tatters with begging bowl in hand, following the path of the Aryans who spread themselves in all directions, chant the Maha-Buddhavani of Tripitaka from the banks of this Alaknanda?

This is the birthplace of the Aryans who gained victory over the world. The Kailash, Mansarovar and Pindari glaciers in the east, Haridwar in the south, the Yamunotri glacier in the west and Alkapuri and Gandhamadan mountain in the north; it is from these places that the Aryan civilization rose to glory. Those born to this peaceful, cool, white, great, resolute and invincible land became just like the land itself. In the past, against the backdrop of this beautiful land, 'Vrishvantu Vishwamaryam' propounded his philosophy which later became the foundation of the civilization, spreading all over the world.

Three miles north of Badrinath, near Mana, lived Parasara, Vyasa and Jaimini on the shores of Saraswati. It is here that Ved Vyasa edited the four Vedas. The *Badarayan Sutras* were also written here. Panini wrote his treatise on grammar here and Kashyap Muni first established his order here. In the later

period, Ramanuja and Madhavacharya lived here, and it is from here that they composed their opuses. While the perpetually snow-capped ranges behind Kedar are insurmountable, the backdrop of Badrinath is becoming the path of the attack and retreat of many civilizations. Thus, proving to be an easy and convenient path, it became the entry point for the military and cultural invasions of foreign tribes.

Badrikashram is the victory monument of Lord Badarayana. The chief sources of our culture, our religious texts, were composed by the revolutionary seer Sri Badari, who was the first historical pride and treasure of this place. On the banks of the Alaknanda, in a land without any grass or trees, in the shade of the high and immaculate peaks, the sentiments, poetry, stories, Vedas and Upanishads of our culture first emerged. Inspired by the brimming holiness of this divine worship, the peace-infused *Sama Veda* was created. This land was pristine and it nurtured the minds of great holy saints with its purity. There were no clubs here, no beautiful women, no cigarettes, no wine, no easy chairs and no gods of indolence. Due to this, even today, in spite of continual assaults from the storms of time, history and climate, it continues to initiate millions and millions of souls to the platform of purity.

Even the roads here seem to flow with pride and glory. "With great expectations I lie here, bearing the rain and sunshine, waiting for the day when Sita and Ram will again walk down my back." There is so much peace here, here where the vedic, brahmanic, upanishadic and Bhagavat eras and the culture of the glorious ages of the past are strewn all over. I feel that these mountains, which symbolize Nara-Narayana, have turned to stone watching the pitiful condition of our India, awaiting the arrival of a capable ruler.

The Alaknanda is infused into every river in the world. Its glory is reflected in Kaba, Kashi, mosques and churches. Whether it is the Bible or Koran, the Avesta or the Purana, they all have the strains of the song of the Himalayas in them. Whether a saint or a fakir, a maulavi or a priest, their soul has

the holy picture of Badrikashram imprinted on it. It is to convey its message that Mohammad and Jesus came, and to sing its glory that Kabir, Nanak, Namdev and many other great saints walked on earth. The blood of man is not merely white blood corpuscles and red blood corpuscles, but unblemished purity. It has the greenery of the Himalayas, the blue of its loving mantle; its skies beckon the flow of life, the eternal streams of the Alaknanda.

This is its eternal message to us. We should understand it. Millions of Indians have gone to the doorstep of this earthly god looking for a remedy for the darkness of ignorance, narrowness of emotions and the problems of life. This eternally beautiful city has extended a warm invitation to humanity over the ages, just so we may bathe in the Alaknanda, a symbol of the pure love between God and his devotee. However, is there anyone here who has gone to its courtyard with the sole purpose of making his virtuous life a holy pilgrimage by its mere touch? It is difficult to estimate the crowd that goes to the temple of this earthly god. There is a queue outside the whole day long. But its real temple is unpopulated. Who will go into that house and receive the love, affection and blessings of Narayana and who will give us the address of the home of that unmanifest Narayana? Only a rare few have reached there.

There is a bottomless well of wealth that the temple receives in the form of offerings and donations. There is also a number of people counting it, but O great devotees! How stingy you are. You only boasted about your love for your beloved. But you gave him false, artificial, perishable gifts of nickel; and to this world you gave your precious heart, your one and only soul, your everything. Surprising! Highly surprising! Narayana gave you the best life form, the life form of knowledge, and you are so low and dim-witted that instead of offering him the 'love of your soul', you give him worldly merchandise, and even then he has accepted you as a devotee.

Today, thousands of pilgrims visit this holy land of Narayana every year. They bring loads of devotion from their



homes. When they reach their destination, totally exhausted by the difficulties faced on the way and still believing that God and his devotees are two opposite poles, with the end purpose of the pilgrimage being to offer these cheap gifts, it seems that the hard work of the saints and rishis through the ages has been in vain. The penance of this hard-clement pilgrim path has been a waste, as instead of helping the devotee close in on the distance between God and himself, it maintains the distance and widens the gap.

Seeing the mountain of Nara-Naryana and recalling the story associated with it, the sadhaka sees the eternal dharma on the stage of his heart, and along with that he also sees one more demon in the form of the ego, which is well protected with a thousand armours, countless bad samskaras, vile lust and attachments. Where can you find peace and happiness in the reign of the ego? Who can liberate this internal demon? God, in the form of Nara-Narayana, gives him the assurance and faith that through penance, following the righteous path, by constantly fighting a war with the enemy which is the ego, with the grace of that Param Purusha, he can destroy its armours one by one and become Narayana.

This land is without a doubt the capital of philosophy, literature, knowledge, action, poetry, celebration and purity. There is also no doubt that in spite of changes in political capitals and the coming and going of kings, this has been the eternal capital (or land of the gods) of India, and the presiding deity of this land has been the constant ruler of millions of Indians.

O brother! Do not forget your God or the land of God. Mothers! Do not abandon faith and belief while on a pilgrimage. Dharmashakti! Continuously spread the good memories of your pilgrimage and the auspicious words of the rishis among the masses. This will be your dakshina to Satyam.

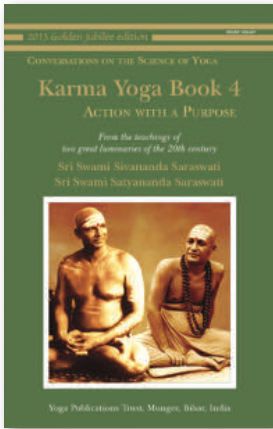


From time to time, forget your power and position and put aside your social, financial, intellectual or spiritual values. Go to ashrams, visit places of pilgrimage, or shrines, and change the pattern of your life completely. Remove all the prefixes and suffixes from your name, you know God didn't put them there. Just be as you are, a simple person. If you do this, in the course of time, you will become humble.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Ishavasya Upanishad

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



What does the Ishavasya Upanishad say about the need for involvement?

Swami Satyananda: The Ishavasya Upanishad consists of only eighteen verses, yet contains sublime and practical teachings. It clearly points out the importance, in fact the necessity, of performing one's duties. It emphasizes that a person must live in the external as well as the internal world. One without the other leads to delusion and away from the path to higher

knowledge. People who have spiritual aspirations are faced with a dilemma: whether to live in the world of action, or only practise meditation techniques. The *Ishavasya Upanishad* gives a clear answer. It says that both must be done simultaneously. One must be both extroverted and introverted. One must supplement and express one's inner experience with outer actions. This is stated in no uncertain terms (verse 9):

*Andham tamah pravishanti ye-avidyaamupaasate; Tato bhooya
iva te tamo ya u vidyaayaam rataah.*

Those who follow the path of avidya (ignorance) enter into darkness. More than that, those who are engrossed in vidya (knowledge) enter into still greater darkness.

It means that those who follow the path of action alone will surely enter the blinding darkness of ignorance. Furthermore, those who retreat from the world in order to seek knowledge through the constant practice of meditative techniques

similarly remain in the quagmire of ignorance. This is like the razor's edge. There must be a balance between excessive worldly interest and activity, and over-introspection.

One must try to integrate the paths of extroversion and introversion. Great yogis, saints and sages throughout history expressed themselves in the outside world. Even though they experienced and probably lived permanently in the infinity of enlightenment they still continued to express themselves in the outer world. This applies to Buddha, Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and others. They taught their disciples, travelled giving sermons and tried to help people who sought their guidance.

Each of these illumined people continued to act and express themselves in the outside world according to the natural dictates of their dharma. Some became hermits, others worked ceaselessly for the general welfare of humankind, such as Swami Sivananda and Mahatma Gandhi. None of them became a human vegetable. This does not only apply to those who live in and know the highest states of illumination – it applies to all. Everyone must strike a balance between external action and introspection.

The *Ishavasya Upanishad* further emphasizes this important point (verse 10):

*Anyadevaahuh vidyuayaa anyad aahuh avidyayaa;
Iti shushruma dheeraanaam ye nastad vichachakshire.*

The result of vidya, they say, is distinct and so is the result of avidya. Thus has it been explained to us by the wise.

It means that which is known through doing only external actions is different to that which is known through introversion. Total concern with the outside world leads to intellectual knowledge. Only understanding of the internal sphere of existence brings about deeper understanding of the material world around.

On the other hand, rejection of the worldly life and complete concern for meditation practices and the mind is also a block.



Without resolving and harmonizing one's outer life, one can never really know deeper states of knowledge. Higher states of awareness only occur when there is perfect balance both in the inner and outer worlds.

People who tend to reject their activities in the world still tend to have many unresolved problems. Rejection of the world does not remove the problems, and they merely lie dormant in the mind, acting as obstacles to success in meditation practices. Failure to clear up outer conflicts and concerns automatically prevents one gaining the highest benefits from introspection. Therefore, there must be a dual process of external activities combined with periods of trying to explore the mind. This applies mainly to the early stages of spiritual life, for eventually there ceases to be any difference between the inner and outer world.

This is what Ramana Maharshi meant when he said, "Setting apart time for meditation practices is only for beginners. A person who is advanced in the spiritual path will begin to enjoy deeper beatitude whether he is at work or not. While his hands are in society, he keeps his head cool in solitude."



White Swan

You have to mount a white swan
Make sure that you're balanced and firm.
If you sit in the right way
His feathers will feel warm and comfortable.
Then fly through the dark night of chidakash.

Thousands of light years ahead of you
Is a small light point
That is what you must fix your mind upon.
You will cross many oceans of samskaras,
Mountains of thoughts and valleys of depression.

The swan flies high and fast.
But if you look down and take interest in the things below
Your weight will slow him down.
When that happens the world becomes clearer.
On the surface of the ocean you will see people laughing,
Swimming, playing, waving their hands to you.
With promising smiles they will try to call you down.
If you get involved the swan will faint
And drop you into the water.

Some of the hilltops may look lovely from above
Trees laden with ripe fruits of many different kinds
Shady meadows and small brooks
Birds and butterflies playing amongst the flowers.
Everything looks beautiful and perfect.
But if these views light the candle of desire within you,
The swan will twist, turn and drop you down.

In the fields rich with golden harvest,
Young strong people working and laughing
Will point at you
And try to persuade you to come down.
If you yield, you'll be lost again.

But if you're firm with your thoughts and emotions,
Able to block the patterns of your mind,
The swan will fly high over oceans, mountains and valleys
The dark night will change its face many times.
Blue, black, red, yellow, countless colours will appear.
The moon and the stars will dance before you.

As the swan flies on, straight as an arrow shot from a bow,
The light point gradually grows bigger the closer you come.
One by one your clothes all fall off
The coverings of attachment, anger, greed, jealousy.
First you feel naked and cold until you discover
That the point of light is the rising sun.

Drawing nearer you are blinded by its rays
You try to hold back but find you cannot.
The light is too strong for your weak eyes
But the swan is obsessed by its magic power and flies on.
As he pierces through the nucleus of the sun
Drums start beating, voices start singing
Strong vibrations of different kinds surround you

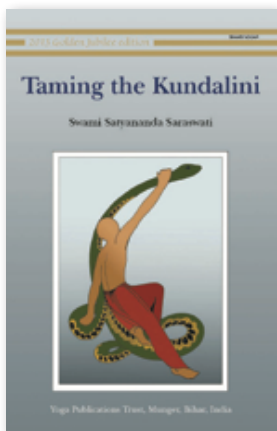
The light of the sun covers you with a shining mantle
Then you enter my kingdom
And meet the children of eternity.

Don't think this is just a fairytale or a dream
It is as true as the world or you and I.
For I have seen it with my own eyes.
These might appear as black words
Printed on a white paper
But they are pregnant with truth.
Everything is found within,
Nothing is impossible.
Understand this
And the way will be open to you.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Sadhana for a Yogini

From Taming the Kundalini, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



15 February 1961, Bombay

Intensity and absorption are very valuable and a spiritual aspirant should possess them. It is never possible that a sadhaka is totally free from ignorance. Ignorance persists in some measure, however small, until the final fulfilment is reached. But please remember, in spite of obstacles, you are progressing. If you do not give up this task you will attain perfection. Maya is mental illusion.

Maya assumes the form of thought processes and enters the mind, disturbing the inner urge of the sadhaka. Whatever the circumstances, therefore, do not lose your grip on the sadhana. The mind will continue to give good or bad indications.

1 March 1961, Ahmedabad

It is indeed a hopeful sign that in spite of the responsibilities of family life, you have commenced practices. Can one fulfil the mission of life rightly by remaining a professor, a principal or a member of an institution? All these are just expressions of gross desires. You should never believe that you are carrying the burden of the family or the society. Like the sparrow wishing to measure the heavens, there are people, not wanting, who suffer from such delusions. Sadhana will suffer as long as this disease is not cured.

This path of sadhana appears to be difficult at the outset, but later on it suddenly becomes easy. Sadhana becomes easy for those who have come to know its mysteries through a guru. People are told that a guru is not necessary, but great souls have



considered a guru to be indispensable on the path of yoga. You should, therefore, test your self-imagined conclusions on the touchstone of truth. It will not be proper to alter the technique of yoga to suit society's interests.

A sadhaka must always remember his sankalpa (determination). The test does not lie in how much sadhana you have practised but how alive you are to your sankalpa. Therefore, go on revising all your good resolutions. Take a bird's eye view of your last year's progress.

If difficulties distract the sadhana at times, let them come. Do not leave your efforts. If it is not possible to practise sadhana in one fixed posture, intensify the practice of inner silence or indwelling in any position. Intense concentration is at times achieved by doing sadhana at any odd hour. But endeavour to keep the time for sadhana fixed and steady.

Whatever your domestic and social responsibilities, let them be. Once again I awaken you to the supreme goal. To the exclusion of all social duty, realize your birthright and serve people by your attainments.

If you have faith in what I say, your family affairs will be settled satisfactorily. I say this to you in full confidence. I am leading you towards the study of yoga because I know what I am doing.

12 March 1961, Rajnandgaon

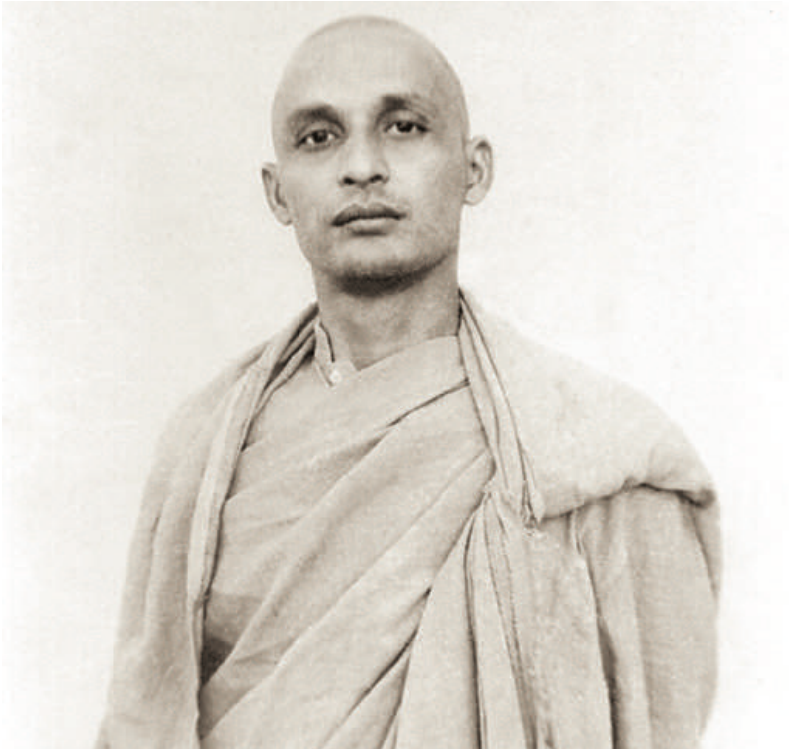
Sincerity and surrender are the greatest assets in sadhana. It will take some time before you go above the plane of sense consciousness. Incessant practice will be necessary. During the stage of suspension of sense consciousness sometimes one falls asleep. It is sometimes sleep resulting from *tamas* that troubles the seeker. A novice, however, finds it difficult to distinguish between the two. If, therefore, during meditation the form of the *ishta* becomes clear, then the path is correct. If the form begins to disappear, know that you are falling asleep.

Sometimes visions other than those of the *ishta* will come. This is the result of the predominance of impurities in the mind. Absence of a balanced mind in worldly life makes meditation difficult for the *sadhaka*. The mind suffers from distractions. It begins to wander during meditation and tries to keep away from the object of meditation. Meditation is comparatively easy if the mind is balanced. One's goal should always be kept in view, then even if your mind wanders, it will soon revert to meditation.

It is no use accepting defeat on the path of meditation. Those who travel this path certainly experience fatigue on the way, but the journey's end can only be reached by continuous motion. Constant practice in sadhana is necessary; so also is patience. If one does not miss his objective and dedicates himself completely to the fulfilment of his aim, he surely succeeds. A *sadhaka* should have love and obsessional desire.

Close the doors of the senses. Look within. Listen not to the promptings of the mind, and then see for yourself if the *ishta* manifests or not.

Form the habit of practising *japa* constantly. Do not forget the mantra even for a moment. Sit for meditation whenever you feel like doing so. Close the eyes. Submerge the mind in



experiencing the presence of your ishta deep within you. Make yourself alive to the divine spiritual waves and vibrations in the atmosphere ready to envelop you. Continue to lift up your aspirations until you lose all external awareness. When your mind is totally filled with these divine vibrations, fix your consciousness firmly on the form of your ishta. Meditate in this manner as often as you can during the day. However, the morning and evening meditation practices must go on as before, in accordance with the schedule.

Go forth with confidence within that your path is correct. Keep your battery always charged. It is necessary to begin the sadhana with a new direction and renewed enthusiasm. The time is now ripe. Divine spirits are helping you. You are being led on the path of sadhana. A new direction is being given to your life. Be you a yogini!

Plants and Trees

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II

Plants, animals and everything existing in this world are all a part of evolution. They are not just inert matter; they are sensitive beings. We may not be able to see their agonies or understand when they smile, but definitely they do. When a person approaches them, they understand and immediately shrink away or become glad. The secretions in their systems are highly reactive and are altered either positively or negatively in response to different kinds of people.

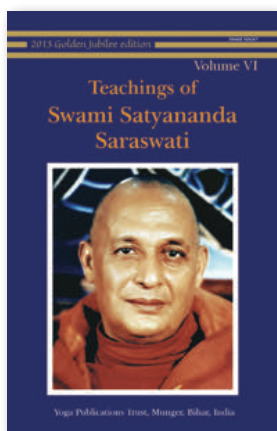
Trees and plants are greatly affected by the actions performed near them. They have a highly developed system of vision and recording. You may have killed someone and think that no one has seen, but the trees have witnessed it and they know all about it. They have memory membranes, and if you could develop plant interpreters and put them into the trees, they would tell us everything that has taken place nearby within the last week.

In India, many plants and trees are considered to be sacred, and a lot has been said about this in the Hindu religion. Hindus regard trees and plants as you would your brother or sister. Relating to this, there is an interesting custom which is still practised today in many Hindu families. When a Hindu girl is about to be married, her astrological chart is analyzed to see whether she is destined to become a widow early in life. If so, this is what they do. Before the actual wedding ceremony takes place, the girl is taken to a particular tree which is regarded as the devata, and is given in marriage to that tree. Thus, even if her husband dies, the girl is never widowed because of her first marriage to the tree devata. This is why we consider trees to be important members of the human family.

– 8 September 1980, Zinal, Switzerland.

To Find God Inside Us

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume VI



God is inside, God is outside and God is in your bones. In order to find God, it is necessary for everybody to sit down quietly every day within themselves. Then they should transform their philosophy of life, transform the purpose of their incarnation, then understand the relationship they have with everybody and then reflect upon the relationship between this external body and the inner being.

It is said that by true bhakti you can realize God, see God within you, but sometimes I find bhakti very difficult because we are emotionally bankrupt. All the emotion, all the devotion, all the love is squandered. You have the objects of the world which are so fanciful. You cry and scream and shout for these things which are so brief in life. Find out who you love day in and day out. Please find out how much love you can give to God. Do you love God as much as you love your son? Do you love God as much as you love your girlfriend? Do you feel for God or remember Him as much as you remember your bank balance? I can give you thousands of examples from your life where you have failed to spare even a little love for Him.

Our love for God is intellectual. Our love for the things of this world is actual. Why don't you change the picture? So hard! So hard! Then your love for the world becomes intellectual. Can you intellectually love your wife and husband? Can you have intellectual love for your children? Can you have intellectual love for your bank balance and property and poverty? Then it will take a twinkling of an eye



to get that experience. Otherwise, no matter how much I talk of religion, nothing will happen.

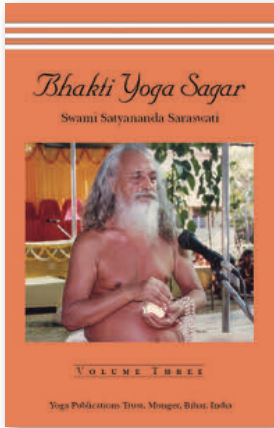
Once a disciple asked his guru, "How can I see God within?" The guru replied, "Why don't you cry out for Him?" The next day the disciple went to the *sanctum sanctorum* and started crying, "God I want you, I want you." He went on waiting and watching. The guru said, "Good drama my child," then he took the disciple on a journey. The guru and the disciple were travelling by boat. When the boat was halfway across the river he dropped the disciple into the water and then the disciple started crying and screaming and waving, "Oh, help!" The guru said, "Come on. Come out. Have you ever cried like that for God?"

The disciple understood, but you can do it better. You can do these things for the one you love, but how to love that formless God? Whether he's white or black or brown or yellow nobody knows. Guru tells us that he has all those symptoms. Books say he's very different, "Oh yes, that's it," but still experience does not happen. Therefore, it is better that everybody should try and awaken the self and this is the prime purpose of our incarnation on this planet. To eat, to sleep, seek security, to have sensual pleasure - these are also meant for animals. Man stands out first by one virtue; the moment he becomes aware he must think, "How can I see God in myself?" Then he should devote himself to the attainment of that experience.

- 4 October 1984, Athens, Greece

Jewel of Faith

From *Bhakti Yoga Sagar*, Volume Three, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In *Ramacharitamanas* it is said that the servant of Rama, the servant of God, is greater than God Himself. Knowledge of God is one aspect and faith in God is another. Knowledge of God does not necessarily bring you closer or guarantee communion with Him, but faith in God does. Through knowledge alone you may or may not develop communion; it is never a certainty. Therefore, faith is the greatest asset. It is a valuable gem, like a rare diamond, pearl or ruby. The most precious and valuable jewel is faith. If you can attain this jewel then your path becomes clear. You will travel at the highest speed, like a racing car on the super highway with no traffic lights or crossings in your way. All the obstacles that arise on this journey will disappear and that is the highest path of bhakti.

You may say that God is my father or God is my mother, but the best relationship of all is: You are the master and I am the servant. That is our true relationship with Him. I am not God although the Bible says, "My Father and I are one", and the Upanishads say, "Aham Brahmasmi". But if you feel that this is true, why are you unhappy? Why do you cry? Why are you in ignorance? Why are you in avidya? Why are you subject to tamas, rajas and sattwa? Finally, as far as I am concerned my position today is – I am Thy servant and I shall carry out all Thy wishes.

You will discover that bhakti brings spontaneity into your life. Even if you do not want to love God, you will love Him.

Even if you don't want to surrender, you will have to. Even if you don't want anything from Him, He will give you everything. Faith in God brings spontaneous blessings. You don't have to ask God for anything in a church, temple or prayer hall, because you are the servant. Your duty is not to ask, your duty is to serve. You are a servant so your duty is to act and not to ask. All disciples should live like servants, but they live like masters. They do what they want, not what I want, so there is no spontaneity of relationship. I have a spontaneous relationship with Swami Niranjan and I want to have this relationship with everyone. Similarly, God wants spontaneity in His relationship with us. When He gives you pain, accept it. When you are in pain you say it is due to a curse or to bad karma because you feel that only good things are the blessings of God. Pain is a curse as well as a blessing of God.

Faith in God is a glorious, wish-fulfilling jewel. If your heart is full of the valuable jewel of faith, then your mind and heart will always be radiant. Throughout the day and night there will be no darkness. This illumination does not depend on any lamp or candle. Even if you are poor, it doesn't matter. In fact, one who has faith is never poor, poverty never approaches. Remember that poverty has nothing to do with money. There are people without money who are very rich. There are very wealthy people who, in fact, are poor. That is real poverty. Poverty means ignorance, *avidya*. Faith dispels the overpowering gloom of ignorance like sunlight dispels the clouds. Vanity and ignorance automatically go away with the gem of faith. When faith and will develop, illumination arises from within, just as the sun rises and illumines the darkness.

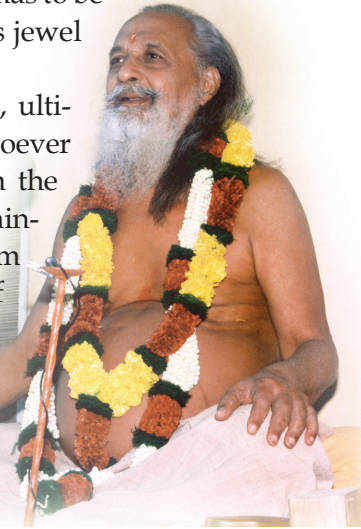
Those of you who are Christian by background know what faith means. Faith is the basis of Christian dharma. I am teaching this not through the Bible, but through the *Ramayana*. Faith is the basis of spiritual life and the only thing you have to cultivate in life is faith. Even propensities like lust, anger and greed will never approach if that gem resides in your heart. Poison is transformed into nectar and enemies become

friends. Those who are suffering from mental afflictions will find that their pain disappears. He in whose heart abides the jewel of faith in God cannot have suffering, even in dreams. Those who strive for that jewel are the wisest of people.

Of course, this jewel is manifest in the world, but no one can find it without the grace of God. There are easy ways to attain it, but luckless souls contemptuously reject it. The scriptures are like holy mountains, and the stories related to God in any form are like many glorious mines. The saints are the expert mineralogists and penetrating intellect is their pickaxe, while spiritual wisdom and detachment from worldly affairs are their penetrating eyes. Any creature who searches for Him with love finds the jewel. Faith is itself the mine of every blessing, of every benediction.

I have in my heart this conviction: the servant of God is greater than God. God is the ocean, and the good and the steadfast are the rain clouds. We have to be the rain clouds in order to fulfil him. Hari or God is the sandal tree and the saints are the winds which carry the perfume from this end to that. Firm faith in God is the reward of all spiritual efforts. Whatever you practise, whether asana, pranayama, kundalini yoga, raja yoga or rebirthing, the reward has to be faith. But nobody has ever acquired this jewel of faith without the help of saints.

So, no matter what sadhana you do, ultimately, you have to come to a saint. Whosoever bears this in mind and communes with the good finds devotion to God an easy attainment. It is the saints who bring this wisdom to people. That is faith which defends itself with the shield of continence and slays the enemies of pride, ignorance and greed through knowledge, and wins the victory. Therefore, the ultimate of life, of all our ambitions, of all our convictions, should be faith, or *shraddha*.



My Passion, My Joy

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

During the twelve years of my stay with Swami Sivananda, many times people from different parts of the country came to me and asked me, "What does this swami teach you?" Everybody knew that I was a scholar in Sanskrit and had a brilliant personality. They would ask me a question, "What does your guru teach you?" I said, "Nothing." "He does not teach you hatha yoga?" I said, "No. I type his letters." "Does he practise shaktipat on you?" I said, "I don't know what this shaktipat business is." Then someone asked me, "Has he given you some siddhi?" I said, "No."

Once a very powerful leader of Indian politics met me. He told me, "Look here, boy! You are wasting your time here. You are such a brilliant man. You are such a fine orator. Oh, you could influence the whole country. Come with me and I'll tell you what to do." I kept quiet and I thought in my mind, 'This is the test which my guru has thrown open to me'. That was



the greatest temptation because he wanted to make me the president of a political party, a leader of thousands of powerful people, but I did not accept that offer. I was sure that what Swamiji had told me would come true. He had said, "Work hard and purify yourself. The light is with you."

Frankly speaking, what I speak to you, all the books I have written, the hatha yoga I talk about, I don't know where it has come from. I have not read books, but things become very clear to me and definitely I am now an authority on hatha yoga, tantra and kundalini. You see, knowledge does not come from outside. It is an unfoldment of what is already inside oneself. That which is in me, is in you. The only thing was that I knew one watchword in life - 'Service to guru'. Without any motive, without expecting any result. For me it was a passion, it was my hysteria, it was my joy and it was my pleasure.

All Are My Gurus

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



I offer the flowers of good speech to all those who seek my advice. I never underestimate others. *All are my Gurus.* I love all faiths, all religions. I have a great sympathy for all those who are held as criminals and rogues. I love a rogue more than you love Sri Rama and Krishna.

A smoker is my best friend. One whom you call 'debauch' can become my personal attendant. Women are my secretaries. Gamblers can live with me even in my room. I keep drunkards as my door-keepers. Serpents lay in my verandah in perfect confidence.

And, all those, who have no approval of society, who are kicked by everyone, whom the temples also despise, can come to me, live and move with me.



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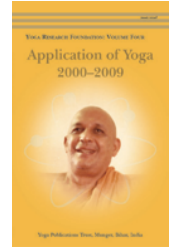
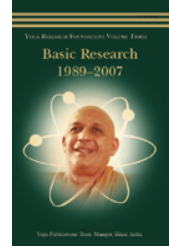
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Jan 27-29	Sri Yantra Aradhana
Jan 30	Basant Panchami Celebrations/BSY Foundation Day
Feb 9-13	Yoga Capsule - Respiratory (Hindi)
Feb 9-13	Yoga Capsule - Arthritis & Rheumatism (Hindi)
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Feb 23-27	Yoga Capsule - Digestive (Hindi)
Feb 23-29	Total Health Capsule (Hindi)
Feb-Mar	Yogic Studies, 2 months (Hindi)
Mar 14-20	Hatha Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Apr 1-30	Yoga Training, 1 month (Hindi)
Apr 4-8	Yoga Lifestyle Capsule (Hindi/English)
Apr 13-19	Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Sep 19-25	Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Oct 1-30	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 1 (English)
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Nov 2-8	Kriya Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Nov 21-27	Hatha Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Dec 2-6	Yoga Lifestyle Capsule (Hindi/English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
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