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Hari Om

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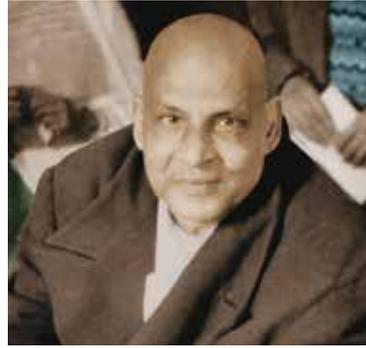
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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Serve a little

Through service egoism, hatred, jealousy, the idea of superiority and other negative qualities vanish. Humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance and mercy are developed. The sense of separateness is annihilated, and selfishness is eradicated. With a broad and liberal outlook on life, one begins to feel oneness and unity and realizes: 'One in all and all in One'. Life is not fully lived if one does not serve and love humanity. The aspirant should think how best his energy, intellect, education, wealth and strength can be used for the betterment of others.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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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 ॥

Two Questions

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What is the meaning of Sri Swamiji's statement: Real life is within?

Life is directed, guided and sustained by the mind. What you call life is nothing but an expression and experience of your own mind. How you live, how you think, how you desire, how you plan, how you act – everything is created by the mind and everything else follows the planning of the mind. This planning of the mind, when connected with

the senses, engages us in the outer dimension – senses, sense objects, likes, dislikes, attractions, repulsions – all the human behaviour is projected when the senses and mind are in sync with each other. This makes our nature and our perception extrovert. When our perceptions become extrovert, when our mind becomes extrovert, then dissipation and distractions take place.

When you close your eyes and disconnect from the outer experiences, when you shut down the senses and close the outer experiences, then you only remain aware of one entity and that is the mind. In meditation, this mind is being managed to create a different condition. The more harmonious and peaceful it becomes, the more joy, happiness and fulfilment you derive from life. It is leading you to contentment, satisfaction, and to separation of the fluff from the real, of desires from needs. When that aspect of your nature, the internal aspect of

our nature, becomes dominant in life, then there is continuous expression of peace and happiness.

If you look at the nature of Swami Sivananda, his whole personality radiated happiness and peace. If you look at the personality of Sri Swamiji, his whole personality reflected happiness and peace. How come few people are able to project that and others not? We are all connected with the senses and sense objects, our mind is connected to that and therefore the direction of expression is outwards. Through sustained effort, through sadhana, these people were able to balance and harmonize their own nature and mind and they were at peace with themselves. We are not at peace with ourselves but they were at peace with themselves.

Therefore, Sri Swamiji made the statement: Real life is within. It is not something that can be found in the dimension of the sense objects, or through the senses. It can be found by looking within, and by discovering that peace and harmony you can become different.

What is the mission of the yogic mission?

When you say mission from the Western perspective everybody thinks, "This is where I have to go, that is my mission'. So don't look at it from a Western perspective. The yogic mission is yogic living according to Swami Satyananda. Neither Swami Sivananda nor Swami Satyananda ever advocated yoga for self-realization. They have never done it. Swami Sivananda was clear when he said that the purpose of yoga is the integration of head, heart and hands. He did not mention God-realization or spiritual realization. In all his teachings and discourses Swami Satyananda spoke of wellbeing of body, mind and spirit, not of attaining self-realization. Our tradition of gurus has never advocated self-realization yet aspirants always think of self-realization as the aim and that is their folly. If you want self-realization go to some other place because for three generations nobody has spoken of self-realization in Swami Sivananda's tradition.

Swami Sivananda was a visionary and he knew that preparing the ground is much more important than trying to see the result. If you want flowers you have to focus on your garden, you have to focus on soil, water, compost, protection, care, so the process is different. However, the outcome, the flowers, is dependent on the process. Similarly, for a blind person wanting to see the sun the effort has to be in acquiring eyesight. One of the mistakes that people make is they tend to ignore the process and want to attain the result. They don't go through the effort, they simply sit and want to experience and see the flowers, yet they have not done anything to prepare the ground, or plant the seed. The effort has to be in the process and that is what was the intention and teaching of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda.

Effort is not losing oneself in some experience but to activate the process and go until the end. In this method, the yogic mission is experiencing the yogic lifestyle by deepening our experience of yoga. By deepening the experience of yoga, life changes. Just as by practising yoga, life changes, by teaching yoga, life changes, in the same way by experiencing yoga, life changes.

The mission is not propagation of yoga, the mission is to experience the depth of yoga and to become one with the yogic spirit, to improve the outer and internal conditions, and to experience harmony, peace and creativity. This understanding of yoga is not something that you will gain by teaching other people but through experimentation and your own personal efforts.

People generally try to teach others with the understanding, 'If I teach, I will be holier than thou'. That is an expression of their ego. If you want to become 'holier than thou' then you have to bring the change inside you. You have to go through that experience of what goodness can be, what transcendence can be, what peace and bliss can be, and then develop that experience more and more in your own life. That is the yogic mission: to go to the depth of yogic experience.

– 14 October 2018, Ganga Darshan, Munger

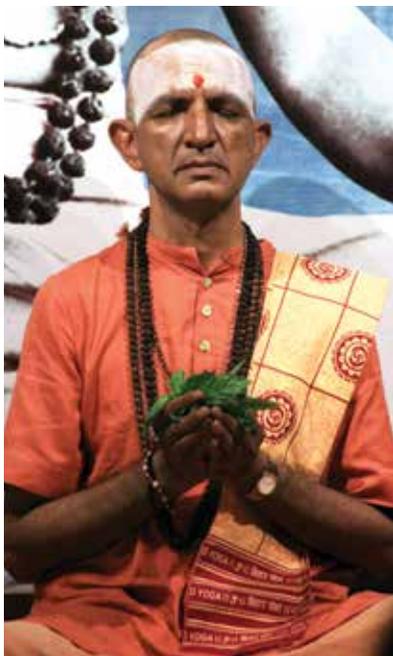
To be Friends with Your Mind

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

You can become friends of yourself and your mind if you are able to practise pratyahara. That is the procedure to discover your mind. If you follow the procedure of pratyahara, you will definitely come to know certain aspects of yourself, your nature, your mind, which you can attempt to change, improve and transform. The only way to become friends with oneself is by knowing oneself. You begin with everything that transpires within you by becoming the observer, the drashta from the Samkhya perspective. If you can become the observer, if you can become the drashta of everything that you do, think, desire, then you go a long way in discovering yourself and knowing yourself and your mind.

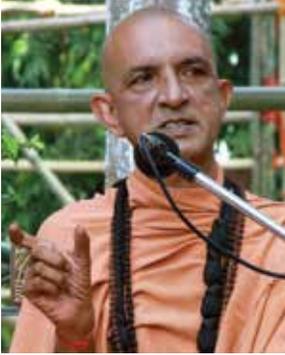
Pratyahara is a simple, progressive system which allows you to internalize and look at yourself from a different perspective. It is one of the best methods. Not meditation, not dharana, asana or pranayama, but the progressions of pratyahara will lead you a long way on this path.

– 6 October 2018, Ganga Darshan, Munger



The Drashta

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



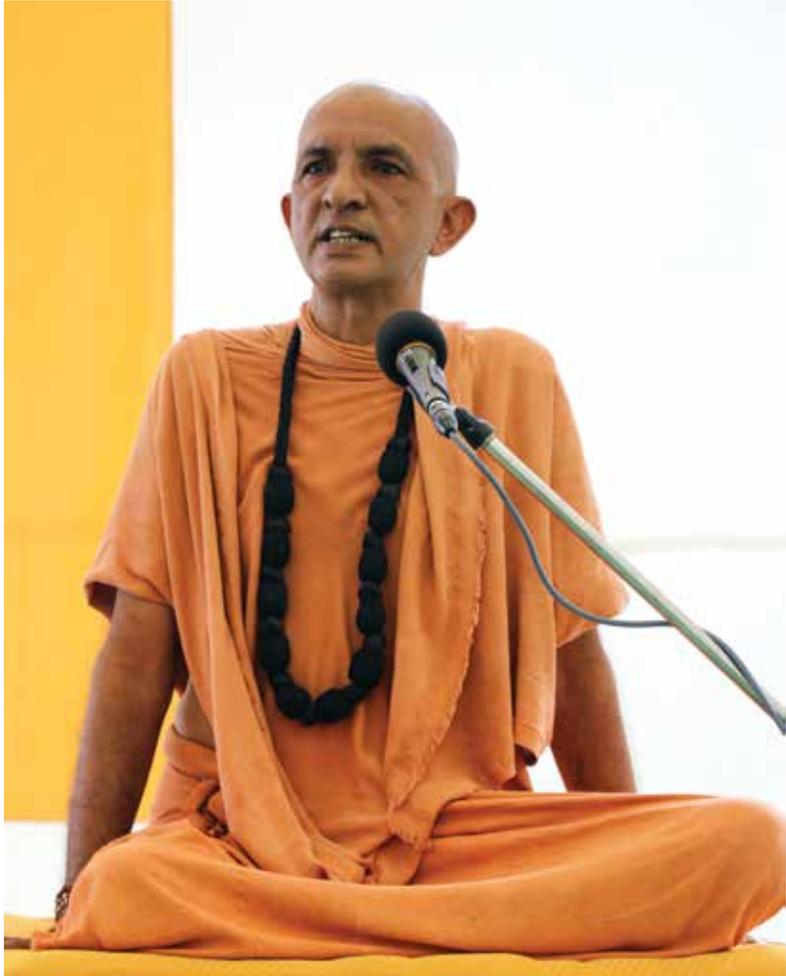
The understanding of drashta begins by developing or cultivating awareness. You can say that drashta is the ultimate form of having become aware of yourself. Generally, your awareness of the senses is uni-directional but drashta cannot be uni-directional, it has to be multi-dimensional, multi-directional. It has to be able to observe and see not one thing where your senses are keeping you focused, but go back and see the bigger picture. Although you start with developing awareness, the ultimate form of awareness, the awakened form of awareness, the total awareness, is the drashta. It is a progression from developing moment-to-moment awareness and then maintaining the twelve-hour awareness as a drashta, from the time you wake up in the morning until the time you go to sleep. It is the extension of awareness which makes you into a drashta.

There are two levels of drashta. The first level is becoming self-aware so you are going through a process of your awareness, of expanding the span of awareness, all the effort you are making – that is one level. But when you come into that stage, then all the efforts drop and there is a continuous uniformity of awareness. That stage is there but few people have gone into that level. Like the depth of the ocean is there but few people can scuba dive. Those who are able, they can go further and further and further, but those who can't scuba dive, they can only snorkel away. Right now everybody is snorkelling, floating on top and looking down. The second chapter of yoga is scuba diving.

– 30 September 2018, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Active Drashta

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The difference between the active drashta and the passive drashta is a simple idea. When you are not doing any physical activity and sitting with your eyes closed, then the only thing you can be aware of at that moment is what is happening

on your mental screen, and you can observe the colours, the shapes, the forms, the figures, the thoughts, the feelings, the sentiments, the emotions – whatever emerges without any physical, sensorial, intellectual, emotional input, you are simply observing it. You are only doing this for about ten to fifteen minutes. When the practice is over you are out of that state. That is the passive drashta: I simply observe. The active drashta is extension of the awareness in all directions.

Once there was a program in a yoga centre. Pots and pans and spoons were being laid out. People who were working in the kitchen were well experienced and were doing a good job. Suddenly in walks Sri Swamiji. As he is walking, he is seeing everything that is happening there. While walking as he is coming to the row of pots, he simply bends down, picks up a spoon and changes the position, for one spoon was jutting out and could hurt someone's leg. He simply turned the position of the spoon so it was out of the way, pointing to the other side. Nobody had noticed what he had done. It was not in the awareness of people, they were more concerned with what they had to do, not in the placement of things which could become a barrier, an obstacle or hurt another person. In his normal way of walking, he saw and he simply turned the spoon away.

Some people were watching his action. Those who were watching could understand why he had done it, but others did not even notice. In that state of Sri Swamiji when he is walking and active, he is also a drashta at that time, asking: What is the right way to keep this? What is the right way to do that? His mind had extended in all directions. One simple, little act indicated the level of awareness. That is an active drashta, when one is engaged in the world.

The same concept of witnessing has to come into our day-to-day activity also. We don't have to see what is happening around us to fix it and think, "Now I am becoming an active drashta because I am putting this and that in order." No. The active drashta has to become part of our nature, as most of the

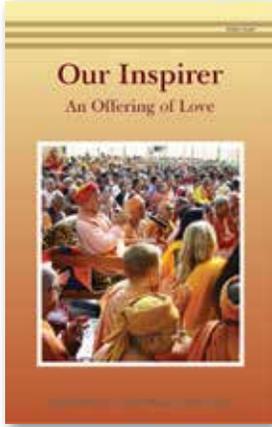
time we react. The drashta feeling has to come in the normal state of mind, in the normal state of wakefulness. Even when I am walking, I know I am walking; not only I know I am walking, but also how I am walking, where I am walking and what are the difficulties or ease that I feel in my walk. I am aware of the ground on which I am walking, the sensation, hardness, softness, the heat, the cold, the whole experience involved in walking becomes visible. You are like the AI, artificial intelligence, for the normal intelligence doesn't work. Normal intelligence doesn't work, so you have to become an artificial intelligence, AI, so that you are more attentive to what you are receiving and what you are giving out. In the normal state of 'I', we are not attentive to what we receive or how we respond, however that awareness has to percolate down into normal activity.

You can try every day by saying, "Today I will become the drashta of my actions for ten minutes." Start with that. From the morning you wake up, until you go to the bathroom and come out ready for breakfast, you remain a drashta of your activities, your mind, your performance and action. The next week increase the drashta to the time at the breakfast table, from morning until breakfast time. The third week increase the drashta component until you sit in the car to go to your office or work, extend ten minutes more. The rest of the day you don't have to be a drashta. If you gradually increase every week ten to fifteen minutes in your morning time, then let that time become a personal observational meditation: "I am observing myself while I am doing the normal activities, talking, cooking, cleaning, dressing, everything that I do. I am doing that without any break, but I am also maintaining the same awareness which I maintain in meditation to become the drashta." Once this awareness dawns, the extension will happen outwards. That is the active drashta.

– 22 August 2018, *Kriya Yoga Yatra 3*,
Paduka Darshan, Munger

The Active Drashta and More

From *Our Inspirer, An Offering of Love*



Swami Anandananda Saraswati: Thinking of Sri Swamiji, I find that it is not only the mind, awareness and knowledge but his total practicality. He could do everything and he knew how to do everything. Once in Munger we were shovelling, moving earth and he taught me how to hold the shovel and how to shovel. Other times, how to fold paper, how to count money. He knew everything. Any subject that was brought to him in satsang or even with

his close disciples, any argument, any topic, any subject, he knew exactly the answer, the situation, and he had his view.

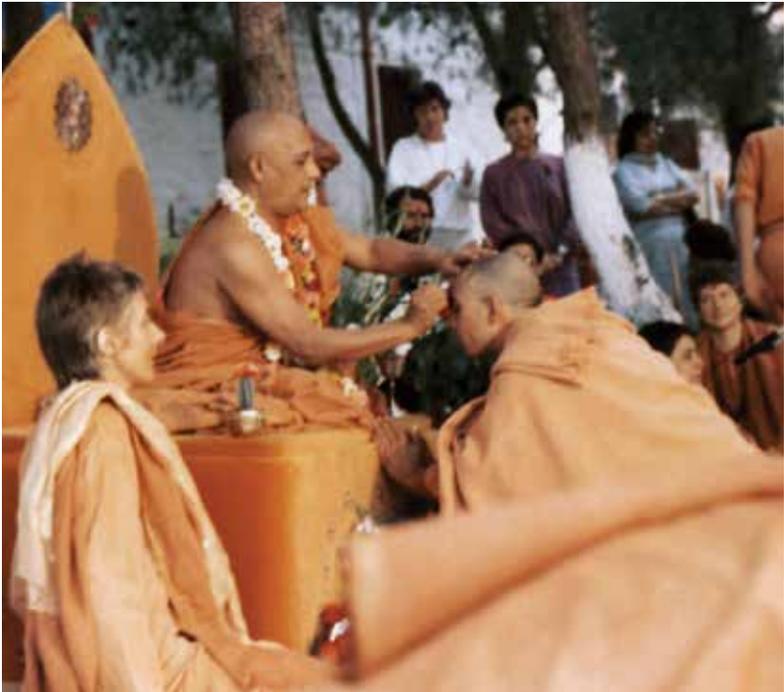
We disciples were full of different kinds of conditionings in the mind. He did not have any of those things. He was absolutely free, absolutely relaxed and he was constantly demonstrating that. His answer, behaviour, attitude was the absolutely correct one, not at all conditioned, not at all according to what our logic, reasoning or understanding would have been.

One program was held in a city in a big flat and after the satsang, there was going to be lunch for Sri Swamiji. Since after the satsang there was going to be food, we placed different pots and pans, plates, all the necessary utensils in the corridor, so that as soon as the satsang was over, we could serve lunch. There was a handle of one ladle sticking out towards the middle and we must have walked past that ladle hundreds of times.

Finally, Sri Swamiji arrived at the flat and he went through the corridor to get to the hall. He was right in front of us,

when he got to that ladle, he stopped and with one finger turned the spoon, put it in the right position and carried on. That is still fixed in my mind: with one finger he showed us that it would have taken one finger and five seconds to put it right, and he actually did it for us! He was a living example of what it is to be absolutely connected with the immediate reality, there was nothing that would escape his awareness, absolutely nothing.

I also felt that simultaneously he had a greater level of awareness, of consciousness, functioning at the same time. I saw Sri Swamiji giving mantra diksha and talking to people at the moment of diksha. People would come with different spiritual problems and whoever came in front of him, he would just close his eyes. Then he would open his eyes and say exactly what was appropriate, what was the right thing for this person.



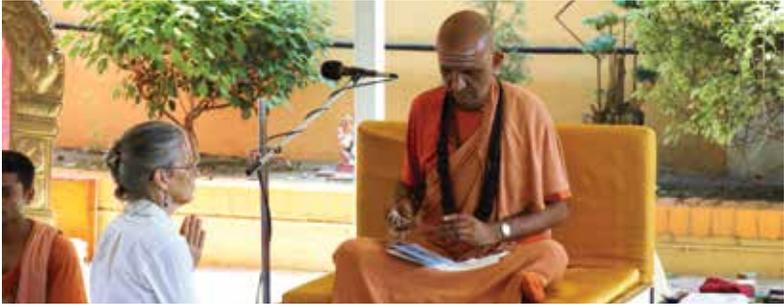
Mantra Diksha

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

People are only aware of the five yamas and five niyamas mentioned by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* but other scriptures speak of many more yamas and niyamas. These are not raja yoga yamas and niyamas. Every branch of yoga, including karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, hatha yoga, kriya yoga, has a set of yamas and niyamas, which many times are described as *bhumikas* meaning base line or the plateau where you reach.

There are different levels of yama and niyama. The first yama in the yogic tradition is manahprasad and the first niyama in the yogic tradition is japa. These two are important starting points. When people come to yoga, they are generally tense, uptight, stressed out, dejected, depressed, wanting some clarity, some direction. The mind is in a restrictive space, an unhappy and stressed space. Sri Swami Satyananda used to say that if you think you are sick, then you are sick. But if your body is sick and you think you are not sick, then you can manage the ills of the body more effectively as your mind is not identifying with the sickness, rather the mind is suggesting to itself, 'I am healthy'.

He used to say that, when people came to the ashram he used to tell them, "While you are in the ashram forget that you are sick and just live a natural, normal life." That was his attempt to bring them out of their mental whirlpool of identifying with the illness and sickness. Whenever he used to say that he used to imply manahprasad: extract your mind from the experience of suffering, don't identify with suffering. You may be suffering, there will be aches and pains, yet if one aspect of your mind observes the suffering, rather than getting caught in the suffering, one can analyze and detach from the suffering more easily. This was the first teaching:



detach yourself from your mental experience of pain, suffering, stress, anxiety, dejection, depression. When you overcome these conditions, then what is the state of mind? Contentment sets in, happiness sets in. The first yama of yoga is to become happy. Even in adverse situations, one should try to remain happy, knowing that resistance is futile.

Manahprasad is the first yama and the first niyama is japa. Japa is mantra. Why japa as the first niyama? In normal life we are engaged in the world 24/7/365. Our mind is identifying with it, our mind is thinking about it, our mind is craving things, our mind is expecting things, our mind is rejecting things. There is a continuous association with the outside world via the senses which connects us to different sense objects, from a watch, to food, to a poodle dog. Our mind is always extrovert. Even in sleep we are only reflecting subconsciously and unconsciously about our associations and connections. The mind is never detached from the world; the mind is never disconnected from the sense objects.

So in comes japa. Ten minutes you are asked to close your eyes, to pick up a mala, to move the beads, to repeat a mantra. In those ten minutes you disconnect from the world, from the sense objects, from the sense experience and you just focus on your mantra, on your japa. Those ten minutes become your disconnection from the senses and the world of the senses. This disconnection gives you inner peace, balances the ruffled feathers of the mind and connects you with your own inner strength. Therefore, japa is the first niyama.

How to practise japa? With a mantra. The only initiation in yoga is that of mantra diksha. There is no other yogic initiation. Jignasu and karma sannyasa are not yogic initiations, they are sannyasa initiations. Yogic initiation is only mantra. That mantra allows you to disconnect from the senses and the sense objects. It allows you to focus on your own inner self. A mantra everybody can have, there is no restriction in receiving a mantra.

The definition of the word mantra is also appropriate. The vibration, the power which disconnects the mind from its sensorial associations: *mananaat trayate iti mantraha*. From this perspective it is also appropriate to be the first niyama, as it indicates the baby steps that you take to disconnect yourself from the world. In twenty-four hours of association, you separate ten minutes and those ten minutes you are disconnected. That is the first niyama. The first yama and niyama are the most important ones for you to recognize your mental condition and to provide a direction to your efforts. Then other yamas and niyamas follow.

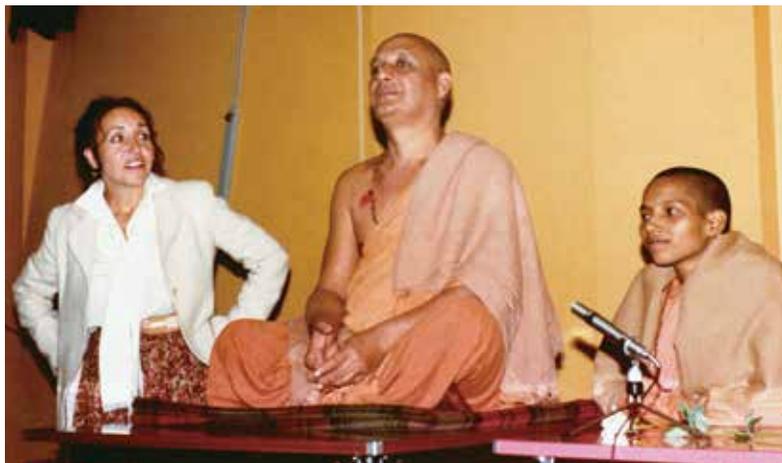
You can use different mantras too. Yogis would use specific yoga mantras. Religious people would use specific religious mantras. Whatever the mantra may be, the important thing is that it gives you the ability to disconnect yourself from your sensorial associations and to divert the mind inwards. Therefore, mantra has become an important practice of yoga.

In the Indian context, right since time immemorial, people believed that if they receive a mantra from somebody, that person becomes their guide and guru. However, that is only a projection of personal gratitude, for receiving a mantra from anybody does not make the giver the guru. It is only an aid, a tool to help you focus, meditate and go beyond the sensorial, material restrictions. By virtue of receiving a mantra you do not become a disciple. It is only a matter of personal sentiment for someone with whom you wish to remain connected. Otherwise a mantra is only a tool to discover your inner nature.

– 30 September 2018, Ganga Darshan, Munger

The Science of Mantra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



How does tantra expand and liberate the consciousness from its fetters and limitations? Tantra approaches the problem of mind from an absolutely scientific point of view, having no concern with dogmas, moralistic attitude and intellectual formulation. It is based on practice rather than theory or belief. Its practices lead directly to the expansion of consciousness beyond mundane levels of awareness. Tantra contains all the yoga practices, but the main aspect underlying tantric sadhana is mantra. Consciousness expands and energy is liberated through the vibration of mantra.

In tantric philosophy, mantra is a force which can be used for the awakening of our spiritual potential. There are thousands of mantras and they belong to different elements, temperaments, deities, planets, bodies, and systems. Mantras are not merely the names of gods and goddesses, they are transcendental sounds which influence the entire complex of the brain and nervous system. Mantra is the actual life of tantra.

The basis of mantra is sound, which ranges from gross to subtle. Throughout the cosmos there are slow, medium and fast sound waves. The medium waves are perceptible to us, but the slow and fast waves are not. When the sound of mantra is audible, it has a medium range of frequency which is known as perceptible or gross sound. But when the mantra is silently intoned, it has a faster rate of frequency and becomes imperceptible or subtle sound.

Therefore, a mantra works on the earthly plane and also on the higher planes. When you produce a sound and accelerate the frequency, it affects the inner realm of consciousness. Just as when you pick up a pebble and throw it into a calm, quiet lake, the impact creates ripples and the ripples form circles which expand wider and wider according to the force and weight of the pebble. In the same way, when you repeat a mantra, the sound hits the homogeneity of consciousness and creates ripples which help expand the mind.

Mantra and the mind

The mind has two ranges – individual and universal. In fact, in the whole universe there is only one mind, but this mind becomes individualized according to each separate circuit. For example, your mind and my mind are not two minds; our minds are different circuits of one mind. So the truth is that the individual mind is part of the homogeneous, universal mind. Therefore, the individual mind can always be connected with the universal mind if we know how to do it. We must remember this as a law, for it is of utmost importance in spiritual life.

When we begin to practise mantra, we create vibrations in the outer mind. As the mind becomes calm, quiet and concentrated, these vibrations are transferred to the universal area of the mind. Then the barrier between the individual and universal mind is broken. Because of this barrier, our minds are cut from one another; you don't know what I think and I don't know what you think. But when this barrier is broken, your mind and my mind become one mind.



We have always understood the mind as a process of thinking, but according to tantra mind is not thought. Thoughts and feelings are expressions of the mind, and not the mind itself. Just as the waves of the ocean are an expression, a manifestation of the ocean; they are not the ocean. Thought and emotion are the vrittis, patterns of the mind. Anger, passion, greed, jealousy, love, memory, judgement, are all patterns and not the mind.

Mind is homogeneous awareness. This awareness is twofold – external and internal. When you have sensual perceptions, then you know that the awareness is external. When you dissociate the mind from the senses, the awareness becomes internal. The mind can turn either way. When the mind becomes extrovert, it has the experience of form, sound, touch, taste and smell through the five different sense organs. The sensual experience is the game of the mind. If the mind is introverted, the senses are inert and lifeless. Then one does not hear, see, smell, speak or touch. This is called pratyahara. When the mind turns inwards, you approach the barrier and begin to see the cosmos, which is an infinite experience. It has no beginning and no end, no circumference and no centre.

We define awareness as external or internal; material or spiritual. The material awareness is an external experience of the mind. Spiritual awareness is an internal experience of the

mind. When the mind has a barrier, it is limited to material experience, but when the barrier is broken, then it has spiritual experience. In yogic philosophy, this barrier is known as *avidya*, ignorance, or *maya*, illusion. By the practice of mantra this barrier is broken.

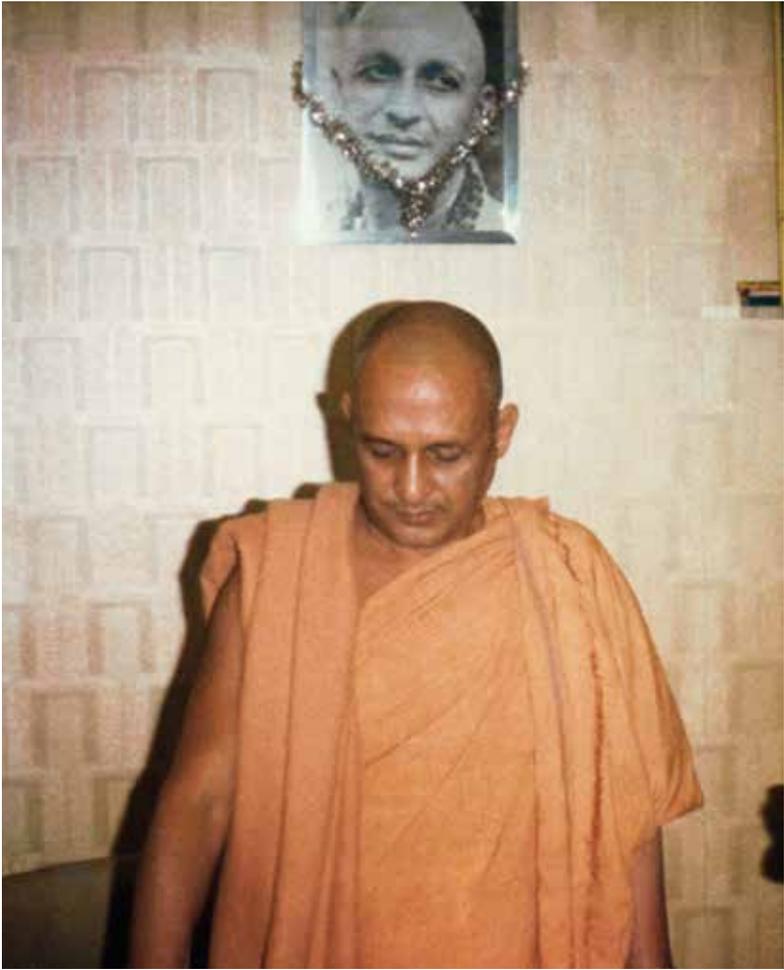
Mental purification

Every mantra has a specific sound. We do not know all the sounds, but we do know that there are certain sounds which are milder and others which are stronger. What happens when a sound is produced? Scientists have seen that the brainwave patterns are altered. Tantrics say that when a sound is produced, it alters the formation of mind.

The mind is not one unit. Just as water is formed by the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, the mind is a combination of numerous formations. In yoga and tantra, these formations are known as *samskaras*. They are the residue of individual experience through many incarnations.

The mind works like a camera. Whatever has been known and experienced through the senses remains imprinted in the subliminal part of the mind. These impressions or formations are so numerous that you may never be able to know them all, and it is not easy to classify them. Some are weak and insignificant, while others have a powerful influence on the character, habits and nature. Some are casual and periodical, while others accompany you all the time.

It is understood that powerful thoughts like anger, passion, jealousy or fear come into the mind from time to time, but during meditation many significant thoughts keep coming and going. This happens because we have not cleansed the formations of the mind. That is why the first prerequisite to meditation is *chitta shuddhi* or mental purification. This should not be understood as a religious affair. *Chitta shuddhi* means fixing the formations of the mind. Otherwise, when you sit for meditation so many little thoughts constantly come into the mind, causing restlessness and disturbance. The practice of



mantra is one of the best methods of fixing the formations of the mind, if it is done with awareness of all the thoughts that enter the mind as the mantra is being repeated.

The three mental formations

The formations of the mind have three ranges - *vikshepa*, distraction, *vikalpa*, one-pointedness, and *laya*, total dissolution. The first range occurs when the mind is continually jumping from one point to another and is never constant. For example,

when you are concentrating on the flame of a candle and a distracting thought passes through your mind, it is called vikshepa. This is one formation of the mind.

The second formation is called vikalpa. When you have established pratyahara, dissociated your mind from the senses, one-pointed awareness takes place. Then you begin to see visions. You may be concentrating on the flame of a lamp, but you begin to see the inner television! These psychic formations of the mind are called vikalpa, and they are extremely difficult to break. In meditation if a thought comes to your mind, you can definitely force it out by your own will. But when vikalpa comes, you are helpless. These are involuntary expressions of the psychic formations and you have no control over them. How are you going to destroy or fix these formations? Here the mantra will be very useful. Mantra is capable of destroying the psychic formations known as vikalpa.

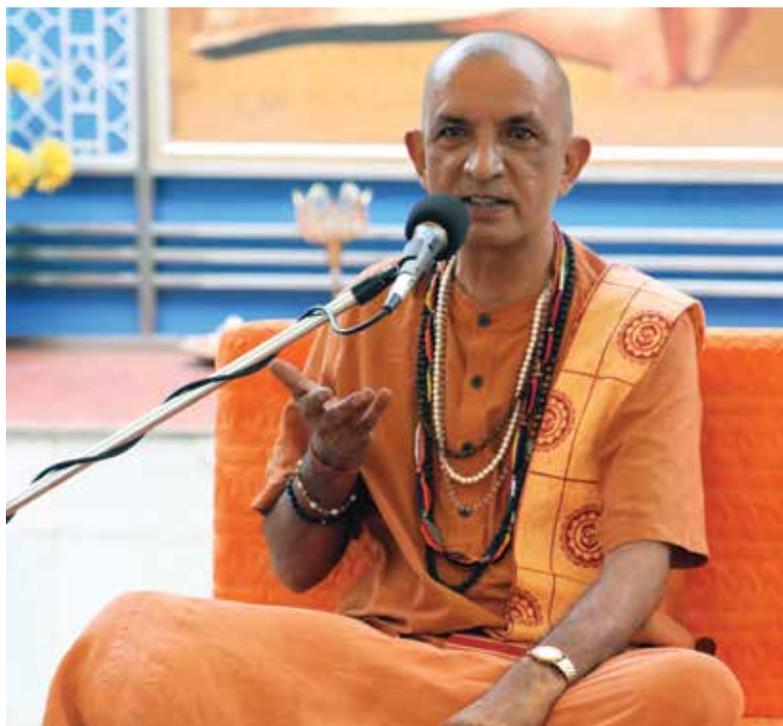
There is a third and powerful formation of the mind called laya which means dissolution, suspension. At that time the consciousness is completely eliminated and there is total *shoonya*, void. You have been concentrating on the flame of a lamp and suddenly everything is switched off; there is no flame, there is nothing, and you are totally helpless, lost. This is a very obstinate formation.

So there are three types of samskaras: distraction, psychic visions and suspension of consciousness. How are you going to free yourself from these formations? Mantra is a very valuable tool for this purpose. When you are practising mantra, it is absolutely necessary to use a mala. Mantra and mala together will fix the formations of the mind. For example, while practising *Om, Om, Om*, your mind suddenly drops and visions appear. The turning of the mala will interfere with the visions and revive your consciousness. It will reverse the process of mental awareness. This is the importance of mantra in relation to meditation and the awakening of spiritual consciousness.

– June 1980, Paris, France

Work with the Impediment

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



To practise yamas and niyamas, remove those blocks that stop you from following satya, ahimsa, asteya, aparigraha and brahmacharya. Don't think of satya, don't think of ahimsa, instead think of the block which stops you from satya and ahimsa. Which vritti is it? Which mental state it is? Then work on that block. If you are able to work on the block, then the result will be satya and ahimsa. Don't try to enhance or increase the yama or niyama, for nobody can. You have to go from the opposite side, you don't focus on satya, ahimsa, or brahmacharya, instead you focus on those blocks which stop you from becoming that.

Self-study is an integral part of that process and there are common factors. *Himsa*, violence, is due to what? It is due to aggression. So the sadhana capsule has to be for aggression, not for ahimsa. If you are able to reduce aggression, then ahimsa will be the result. *Asteya*, non-stealing, what is the cause of stealing? *Lobha*, greed. Therefore, work on your greed, then asteya will be automatic. You have to think in that manner. Not how to enhance the understanding of satya, because even God has not been able to do that. How can we become more ahimsa? You have to think of the opposite in order to enhance the positive.

Don't just go off on the philosophical debate of what is satya, and why people are not satya, not a philosophical debate on ahimsa, stating that Buddha said this, Mahavir said that, Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda said this, no. The impediment to ahimsa is aggression. The impediment to satya is falseness, false self-esteem, hiding from your own weaknesses and limitations. In that manner you will have to think. *Asteya* is because of greed, brahmacharya is because of bhoga, the *sangraha* vritti is aparigraha. If you work from that perspective, you remove the blocks, and the road is clear.

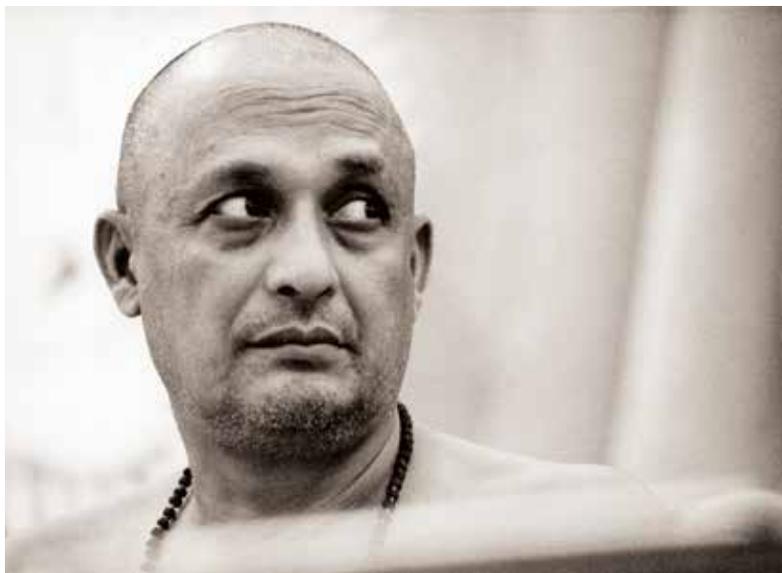
The impediments have to be removed. There is no use thinking of a high lofty ideal if the impediments continue to be there. If they are there, then no matter what you desire, it will never be attained. Always work on the opposite to come to the desired and you will get a clear flow of yamas. That is what Swami Sivananda mentions in his poem *Obstacles to Sadhana*. He is one of the only ones in the whole world who said, "Watch out for this pitfall and this pitfall and this pitfall. These are the barriers which won't allow you to succeed." He is clear on those things which are associated with bringing the positive yama into life.

Sri Swamiji gave a lecture in 1979 in England on 'Yama, Niyama and Hatha Yoga.'

– 3 June 2018, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Yama, Niyama and Hatha Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



It goes without saying that when one is raising a structure, one has to take into account all the possible sciences related to the building of the structure, such as the material.

When we start practising yoga and meditation, we try our best to prevent the dissipation of energy. Of course, it is not possible for everyone, but as far as possible the practice of yama and niyama has to be followed within the range of one's own possibility.

I have my own way of thinking about it. Somehow or other I have not been impressed by yama and niyama. I think we have to do something in our lives so that yama and niyama come to us. We don't develop them in us, but they develop in us.

The practice of hatha yoga, the six systems of purification of the body, and the practices of yama and niyama must be understood as one subject, as one topic in life. Many people attempt to practise yama and niyama and they force themselves into a very rigorous situation.

It is not bad to be truthful and non-violent, but sometimes we are not able to handle the psycho-emotional situation arising in our life through the practice of these dharmas. Therefore, in order to be able to handle the situation arising in our lives by the practice of this dharma, we have to purify the whole group of nadis.

The spadework

That is why in hatha yoga we have the system of purification of ida and pingala. Ida and pingala, the carriers of mental and pranic energy. When we are able to create harmony between the mental and pranic force in our system then these great dharmas, these great observances in the raja yoga of Patanjali become very natural.

What I am trying to say is that yama and niyama should become a natural and spontaneous expression of our being. The spadework which we have to do in order to create the spontaneity of this dharma is the practices of hatha yoga.

72,000 nadis which carry the computerized impulses throughout the body, and the six hatha yoga body purification techniques, create a psycho-biological harmony, and this harmony ultimately creates spontaneity of the positive dharma in us.

I am peaceful within and without, not because I am forcing myself to be, but on account of the great transformation that has taken place in the structure of my psycho-biological system. It has become my nature to be non-violent and full of love and understanding. I don't have to practise it; it is my nature. This is how a positive dharma has to be developed in the form of yama and niyama.

– 18 September 1979, Bharata Vidya Bhavan, London, UK



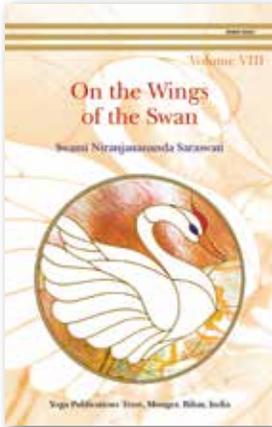






Four Foundations

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



There are four foundations for development, growth and success in life:

Conviction

The first is conviction. You have to know the nature of life and the nature of life is performance, *karma*. Life without karma, life without action is no life. Even in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says to Arjuna that the entire experience of life is an experience of action, right from our birth till our death. When we involve ourselves in action, our mind plays tricks, and when we fall prey to the tricks of the mind, we subject ourselves to the experiences of success and failure. Corresponding to that, a particular mood comes up of either happiness or dejection. They both represent a state of mind that is identifying with an experience. Happiness identifies with a pleasant experience and suffering indicates a negative experience. So happiness or success, suffering or failure, are the outcomes of identification with action and with the world: with our aspirations, expectations, motivations and desires.

The most important thing in all this is the conviction that 'I can achieve'. If one has that mentality and belief, it will lead to development and growth. People either become over-achievers or under-achievers, but most of the time people identify too much with their responses and expectations, and there is less identification with the process of achieving. The process of achieving is enforced with the conviction: 'I can'. Once you know that you can then nothing is impossible. How do you

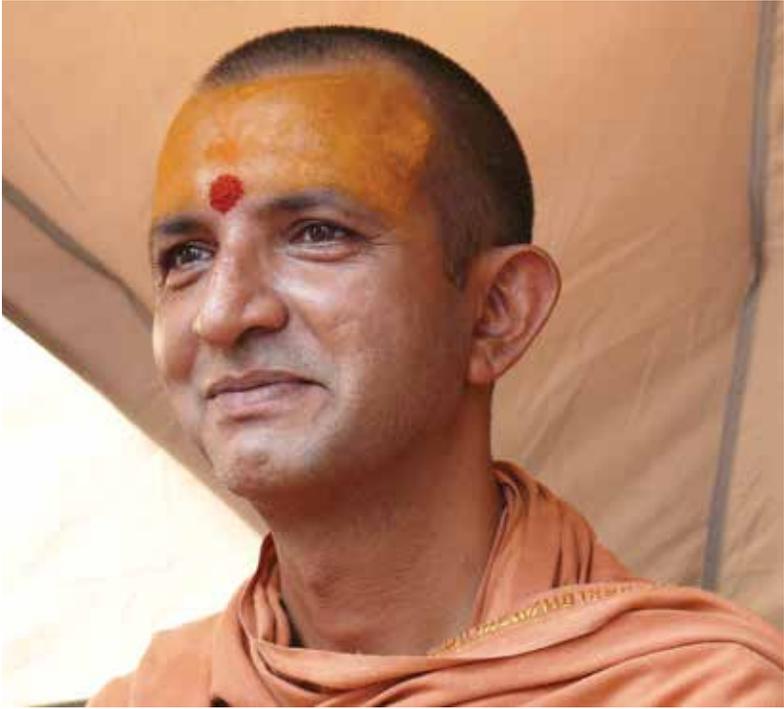
spell the word 'impossible?' I-M-possible, and a person with conviction knows that nothing is impossible. The only trick is that you have to connect with a positive frame of mind.

You can connect with a negative frame of mind with conviction, just as you can connect with a positive state of mind with conviction. If your conviction relates to a negative or destructive state of mind, then the outcome will be negative and destructive. On the other hand, if you associate conviction with the positive, then the outcome will be auspicious. Without wisdom, conviction can be detrimental. With wisdom, conviction becomes a force that transcends all human barriers. Therefore, conviction with positivity and with wisdom, the conviction that 'I can achieve', is the first quality, and this leads to the attainment of excellence and perfection in life.

Participation and involvement

The second foundation is participation and involvement, and this is in continuation with the first. If life is karma - if for material gain we have to perform karma, if for spiritual gain we have to perform karma, if for mental peace and harmony we have to perform karma - then our participation with karma has to be total. There cannot be rejection of karma of any kind, at any time, as karma is the nature of life. The more you participate with karma, the more you interact with life. The problem is that people do not see karma as a way to improve their own nature, skills and personality - but once this understanding comes then every action becomes a pleasurable action, even the most routine one.

Some people say they are tired of routines. People who say that have no inclination or understanding of what karma is or what karma yoga is. For them participation in life has become routine, and when something becomes routine it stagnates and you get bored. But if every moment, if every action is seen as a chance to improve one's skills, one's nature and one's personality, then no matter how many times you do something, the feeling will be that it is being done for the



first and last time, and that you are giving your best to it. Even though you may do the same thing every day for twenty years, each day will be a new day and each involvement will be as though it is the first and the last involvement. And if it is going to be the first and last, then give it your best shot. Why say, “I will do better tomorrow” or “I will deal with it next time”? That indicates separation from involvement and participation. If you put things off to the next time, that means you are not interested, and whatever the action is, it feels heavy, like a burden. Opportunities for growth, development and success come if there is absolute and total participation.

Trust

The third foundation is trust. Trust in what? In every person’s life there is someone who inspires them, who encourages them to discover something better, and trust has to be in

that person. It can be the guru, a friend, or a location where the environment is conducive and where you feel free. Any place or person in which you are able to feel that inspiration becomes the object in which you can place your trust. After all, even places become centres of energy, *tirthas*, where most of the internal desires can be attained. We place our trust in *tirthas*, in different images and forms of God, or in the form of the guru or some friend who inspires us, knowing that this person will not let us down. When we have that level of trust the flame of inspiration keeps burning all the time. With the loss of trust, this flame of inspiration and motivation dies down. Therefore, trust is another important ingredient: trust in those people who inspire us and who are models to be emulated.

It is said that everyone needs a hero in their life. We choose our hero according to our preferences, needs and mentality; but the ultimate hero in this world is not the Bollywood star or a person who lives in some ashram. The ultimate hero of this world is God, divinity – and the person through whom the force, the energy of God flows to illuminate our own dark, dull corners of mind is the person worthy of our trust. This trust has to be preserved and protected from other influences. When you have a piece of gold jewellery, you wear it occasionally. You do not wear it every day, showing off to everyone that you have this piece of golden jewellery. Rather, you protect it from prying eyes and hands. You safeguard it from theft by putting it in a safe, and you only use it when there is a need to wear it. In the same manner, this trust has to be protected from other influences. Many times, I have seen that disciples mistrust their guru more than they mistrust their associates. If that is the case, then why come here? Why do you say, “Guru is my everything,” and then distrust the guru?

Trust is something that should not be taken lightly. When you have doubts and questions, really they are not in relation to the guru or teacher, but in relation to yourself. You are reflecting your own inability to comprehend, grasp and advance. You are falling prey to your own weaknesses, and

as you are unable to understand your own weaknesses, you cast aspersions on other people. Distrust is the first breakdown that happens when life deviates from its original path and goal while trust is a power which comes alive in you with purity of intention and identification with the source of inspiration.

Faith

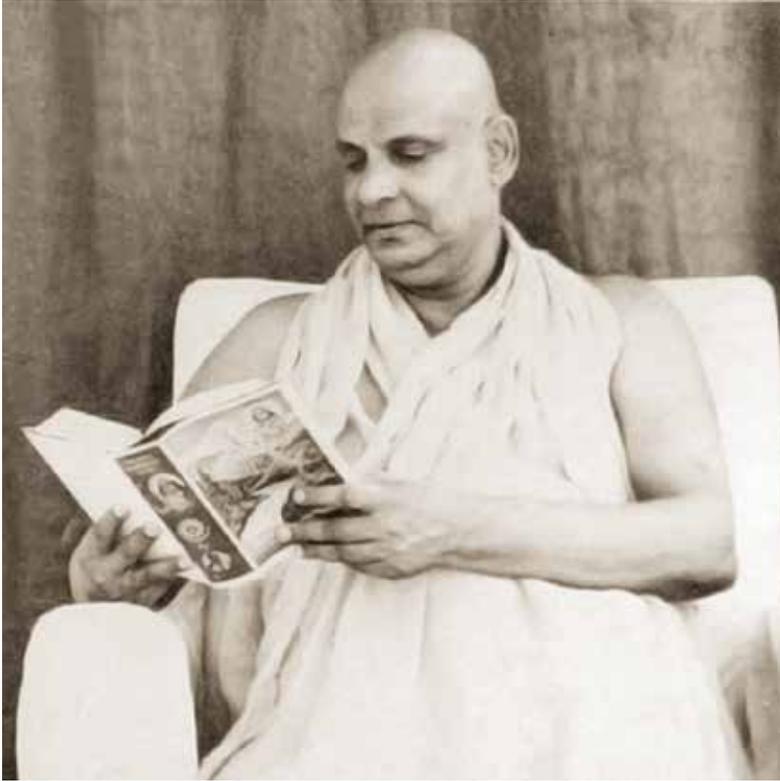
The fourth foundation is faith. Faith in the Divine Will, in the Cosmic Will. Identifying with faith and the feeling of 'Let Thy Will be done', rather than identifying with reactions and enjoyments and believing oneself to be the doer or the enjoyer. Learning to flow according to the Divine Will indicates the development of faith. Faith is not only an intellectual concept that 'I believe in this person, I have faith in this thing, I have surrendered myself to this power.' If you try to understand trust and faith with your intellect, one hundred percent failure is guaranteed, as these are not the expressions of intellect. Faith and trust are expressions of a pure and innocent heart.

Faith and trust, conviction and participation, these constitute the foundations for development and growth in life. Other things such as wisdom, awareness, discrimination and satsang, are incidental. They are like the coverings on the bed. The bed is supported by four legs: the conviction that you can excel, participation with the knowledge that this is the first and the last time that you are involving yourself in something, trust and faith. These are the legs of the bed on which you lie to have a peaceful rest. These are the four foundation stones of the house in which we live, where we can express our own strengths. The other qualities are only decorations in the rooms, nothing more than that. You can decorate your room in the way that you like with this virtue, with that quality, with this understanding, with that perception; that is your choice. However, the basic foundations are conviction, participation, trust and faith.

– 1 August 2008, Ganga Darshan, Munger

How to Become a Karma Yogi

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Karma yogins should have a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* always in their pocket. The *Gita* is the touchstone on which you should evaluate all your actions. The Lord Himself gives a beautiful definition of yoga: *Yogah karmasu kaushalam* – Yoga is efficiency in all actions. Karma yoga is an art. The greatest of karma yogin, Bhagavan Sri Krishna Himself, has taught you the art of karma yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

First you should understand the divine law. No embodied being can remain even for a second without performing some action or other. Therefore, the man who, merely restraining the organs of action, sits quiet, apparently doing nothing, is a hypocrite; mentally he is roaming about all over the world. This is not inaction; he has not attained that supreme state of absorption where all actions automatically drop off.

Law of cause and effect

Then you should understand the great law of cause and effect. Every action that you perform produces some effect at a future date. If it is a virtuous action, you get a pleasurable effect. If it is a vicious action, you reap a bitter harvest. But the fact remains that these actions perpetuate transmigration. Neither action, nor mere inaction is therefore karma yoga. What then is karma yoga? The Lord explains it in a conundrum— action in inaction, and inaction in action. It is puzzling, but the Lord has explained it beautifully in the *Gita*, *nimittamatram bhava*, says the Lord, ‘Be thou My instrument’.

It is the Lord’s power that is working through your body and mind. However, the illusory, self-arrogating principle in you, the little ‘I’, comes forward and says, ‘I have done this.’ The Lord smiles and says, “All right, if you have done this, then enjoy its fruits also!” The man is bound! He has got to enjoy the fruits of his actions, and therefore he has got to take birth again and again.

On the contrary, if you work sincerely with the *bhavana*, the feeling that ‘The Lord does everything, this body, this mind, even this ‘I’ – are all His instruments’, then karma has no vessel in which to accumulate. A bucket of water thrown over a wide flat surface will spread itself and disappear, but if it is poured into a vessel, the water will accumulate in it. When you have the attitude that the all-pervading Supreme Lord does everything, whom will those actions affect? There is not the ‘I’ crystal to which these actions could cling. Therefore, they get dissolved.

Egolessness – a requisite

Some people imagine that a man cannot be egoless and at the same time active. They think egolessness is synonymous with inertia or *tamas*. No, the egoless man is the most dynamic. The egoistic man is driven to action by his own petty individual will. The egoless man who works as an instrument in the hands of the Lord is prompted by the supreme will of God. The individual will work for individual happiness and pleasure. The divine will works for the welfare of the entire creation. How much more powerful, how much more dynamic should it be, then? How much more active will the real karma yogi be! Just imagine.

Surrender your ego at the lotus feet of the Lord. Do everything as your sacred duty. Work as an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Try this method even for a day. You will find a miraculous transformation in your entire nature. You will be an abode of virtues. The egoless karma yogi is full of divine qualities, for he is the representative on this earth of the Lord who is full of all auspicious qualities. You will enjoy peace, for God is peace. You will enjoy unalloyed bliss, for God is bliss. That is the fruit of karma yoga – perpetual peace and bliss.

The egoless man, working as His instrument, looks upon all work as sacred. There is no menial work for him. If someone asks him to carry a basket of earth, he will have to do so joyously. That is the test of a real karma yogi.

He will see God in every face. No contemptuous word, no vulgar word will escape from his lips. We have Major-General A.N. Sharma; he always calls his driver beta. Beta means son! Such is his divine attitude towards his own servants. Find out. Do you make differences between man and man?

Do not hoard money. One typhoid fever and all your wealth will cease to be yours. Share what you have with others. You will enjoy peace and bliss; you will get inexhaustible spiritual wealth.



Need for adaptability

A karma yogin should have adaptability. If you do not have adaptability, you think, 'My views must be heard. My instructions must be obeyed.' No, you should adapt, adjust and accommodate. Then only can presidents and secretaries of organizations do their work efficiently. You must live in the hearts of others. Buddha lived long ago; but he still lives in our hearts. He was selfless. He was the greatest karma yogin. You should all grow into such karma yogins. If you have a superiority complex, you cannot do real service. A real Vedantin, a real karma yogin, is one who is simple like a child. Then only can you do great service to the world. You should feel *vasudaiva kutumbakam* – The entire world is your family. If you see God in everyone, if you have cosmic love, if you have a generous heart, then and then alone can you do real service to the world. Then alone can you shine as a great karma yogin, as a great jivanmukta. May you all shine as jivanmuktas in this very birth.

– From Sivananda's Lectures, During All-India and Ceylon Tour – 1950, chronicler Swami Venkatesananda, address given on 27th October 1950, Lakshmi Bag, Mumbai

Karma Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There is a statement in the *Bhagavad Gita* (5:11): *Yoginah karma kuruanti sangam tyakvatatmashudhhaye* – “Yogis perform karmas by becoming detached, with the purpose of attaining self-purification.” The first condition of karma yoga is that you have to be detached from your performances, your activities. How does one detach oneself from the performances and activities?

There are two things which propel and inspire karma. One is *vasana*, desire, and one is *dharma*, the appropriateness. Vasana karma or the desire karma is always prominent in everybody’s head: I perform my karma to please myself and to show others that I am also capable of doing it. A list is made for the Symposium, as an example. Ten people are in this area, cleaning here, ten people are in that area, organizing things there, ten people are in that area, doing something else there. Now, in all these people who are working, all in their respective

areas, if somebody thinks, 'Oh this is very boring, I wish I had something more stimulating to do'. That is vasana karma. You are looking at your karma, at your participation with the lens of your desire, stimulation, 'This is too boring, I wish I could do something more exciting'. The second is the dharma karma: 'My name is on the list. The list fulfils a purpose, I am part of that purpose, let me do the best I can'.

Three levels of karma yoga

When you are happy and when you have accepted the situation and when you are expressing your creativity in that dimension, that is dharma karma. However, when you are doing something and you dislike it and you want to go away from there, and do something more exciting, that is vasana karma. It is this vasana karma which does not allow purification to take place. As long as the vasanas, expectations and desires are there, there won't be atmashuddhi. When you become part of the whole scene accept it and are free mentally from any thought and idea, then that karma will lead you to purification. You are in tune; you are in harmony with that particular action.

That is the first level of karma, according to the *Bhagavad Gita*: attainment of inner purification by involving oneself in action. That involvement of action is combined with dharma and not vasana, not desire. Having the ability to become part of a bigger whole, a bigger picture is one level of karma.

The second level of karma is balance, *naham karta* – I am not the doer. Recognizing that I am not the doer, I am only a medium through which my creativity is expressing itself to lead to its final conclusion. I am not the doer; I have not done it. I have done my best, and everything is left to the higher powers. The idea of non-doership is the second component of karma yoga. Self-purification was first, non-doership is the second.

The third is the *naishkarmya siddhi*, contentment with or without karma or action. In Sri Swamiji's life, we have seen all

the three stages. When he was in Rishikesh, he was involved, like all of us, in hard, physical work, which allowed him to experience atmashuddhi. When he came to Munger and did the yoga work, he dedicated it to his guru, it was not his achievement; non-doership, akarta bhava came here: I did it because you have commanded me; now that command is over, my obligation is over, *Hari Om Tat Sat*. How many people can do that? Can anybody just walk out from an institution and not look back?

He did it, for he had akarta bhava, the feeling of not being the doer: It was my guru's mandate, he inspired me, it was his strength and grace which allowed me to do this. It is his vision. I am dedicating this to him'. That is the akarta bhava, being the non-doer, the second stage of karma yoga. In Rikhia we see the third aspect of karma yoga, the naishkarmya siddhi, where he became free from the karmas. In Sri Swamiji's life we see all the three stages of karma yoga – effulgent.

This is something which you need to understand: the principle, theory and intent of karma yoga. Do not look at it as hard work, working in the sun, working in the cold, working in the rain, working in difficult conditions, or working in comfortable conditions, feeling happy, feeling elated, feeling dejected, feeling distracted. These are not the conditions which allow karma yoga to become real in life.

If you can think for one month that by doing this, whatever I do, I shall keep in my mind the attitude that I am going to purify myself, I am going to balance myself, I am going to organize myself, then whatever you do, keeping that focus, you will see that by the end of the month, you will have achieved what you have set out to achieve. You just have to try it for one month. Then next month pick up the second one. Third month pick up the third one. You may not be able to complete your hundred percent journey, but at least five percent glimpse you will have into what is the intent and the experience of karma yoga.

– 21 October 2018, Munger Yoga Symposium

Munger Yoga Symposium



Thank you Swamiji for giving us an opportunity to attend the Symposium.

In the ashram everything was magical, some unseen shakti was driving the events from Pre-Symposium to Post-Symposium.

Everyone was doing their assigned duties to the best of their ability. So much so that even the flowering plants were in full bloom, adding to the beauty with divine aroma.

Freshly painted trees looked beautiful in their white dress as if performing yogasana in a disciplined way.

The Chhaya Samadhi was surrounded by a beautiful pandal representing all types of disciples, wearing their respective coloured dresses: white, yellow and geru. The place was radiating with divine energy. The atmosphere was charged.

Both groups, the blue and the red, were lucky to be there witnessing the unfolding of a new chapter. Living yoga and not just practising yoga, living yoga with awareness from moment to moment.

There was so much happening from morning to evening that we were literally in a state of bliss. Like a butterfly moving from one flower to another collecting the nectar of knowledge from one program to another.

The akhand kirtan allowed all of us to express our gratitude towards you.

The Satyam Prasad was another attraction. Sharing the vidya free of cost with everyone. The greatest learning for all disciples – share the knowledge without claiming the credit. Give, give and give. Now everything is freely available on the net.

The Munger kanyas and kumars were excellent in creating a drama. The script, the concept, direction, the stage décor – all was superb. Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal at its best.

The speakers from different countries were sharing their experiences. Their success stories, their struggle, their dedication to the Guru – all was very inspiring.

To top it all, Swamiji, your satsang. I felt blessed to be part of this group. Thank you again for doing so much for us.

– Jignasu Nirmal Bhav, Mumbai

Thank You Swamiji

Thank you Swamiji for having me at the Symposium.

Thank you Swamiji for planting the seed of love in my heart.

I am taking care of it and hope it will sprout and grow.

Thank you Swamiji for destroying my ego.

Thank you Swamiji for helping me being aware.

Thank you Swamiji for the honour of greeting you every morning at the entrance of the Symposium with 'Hari Om' and wishing you a 'Happy Day'. Since then it has become my morning routine – wishing you a happy day every day.

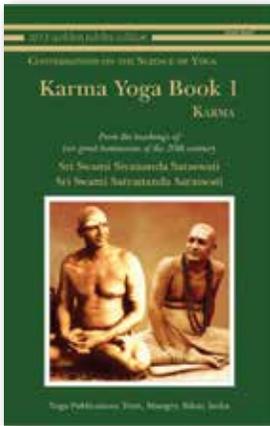
Thank you Swamiji for all you have given me during the Symposium and during this year.

Thank you Swamiji for being my guru.

– Bhaktitara, Switzerland

Samskaras

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Karma Yoga
Book 1, Karma



How do samskaras determine character?

Swami Sivananda: Actions produce samskaras, impressions or potencies, and these coalesce through repetition to form habits. The sum total of these tendencies in a person is his character. The karmas manufacture character, and character manufactures will. If the character is pure and strong, the will also will be pure and strong. If virtuous actions are done, the chitta

will contain good impressions, resulting in a good character. But if bad deeds are done, there will be negative impressions in the subconscious mind, resulting in a bad character. Good samskaras force a person to do good actions. If there is a great store of good samskaras, this asset will prevent any bad action from being done at all. Mara or Satan can have no influence upon such a person. Their good character is established.

How does the interaction of samskaras affect one's behaviour?

Swami Sivananda: Samskaras aid or inhibit one another, like forces. When a person who is seriously ill is seen, the feeling of mercy arises in one's heart. The samskaras of previous merciful actions coalesce, forcing one to serve and help that sick person. Similarly, the samskaras of charitable actions come to the surface of the conscious mind when someone in serious distress and dire circumstances is seen. These combined samskaras force one to help, and one begins to share one's physical possessions with that poor person.

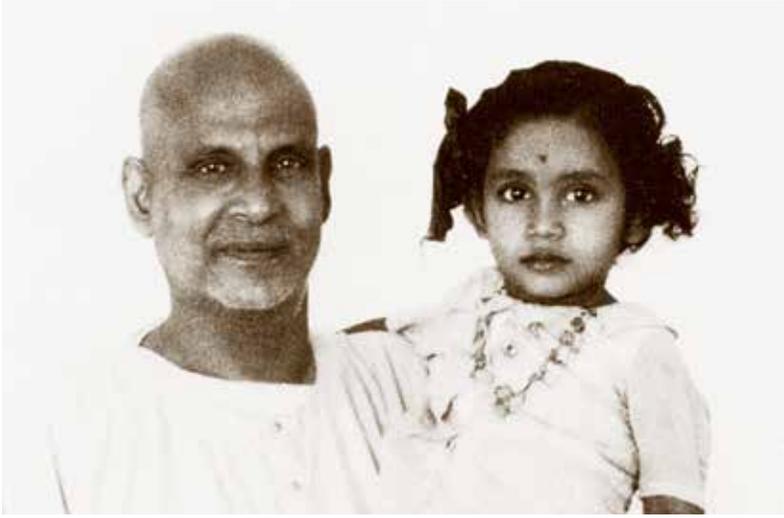


When a samskara or virtuous action comes into play, another samskara of dissimilar nature may also emerge and come in the way of its fulfilment, creating a fight between a virtuous and a vicious samskara. For example, at the very moment when the mind tries to fix itself on God and think of purity, all the evil thoughts and samskaras burst forth with violence and vengeance to fight against the good intention. This is termed the 'crowding of samskaras'.

Good samskaras can also crowd together and help drive out bad samskaras. The father of Sri Swami Advaitanandaji was a great bhakta of Chandi. At the time of his death, he was semi-conscious but began to repeat all the slokas of the Chandi Stotra, which he had learnt by heart while he was young. This is an example of the crowding of spiritual samskaras.

How can one remove samskaras?

Swami Sivananda: The ignorant person is an instrument in the hands of his samskaras and karmas, but by doing spiritual sadhana and by removing desires and egoism, he slowly gains strength by understanding his real essential nature.



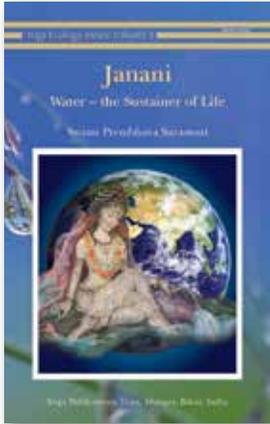
What is the life cycle of samskaras?

Swami Sivananda: The samskaras or impressions of previous births are embedded in the subconscious mind. Whatever a person does or thinks is lodged, printed or indelibly impressed in the layers of the subconscious mind. A person takes fresh births so long as there are samskaras. He will have to take birth again and again until all the samskaras are obliterated or fried up by the acquisition of brahmajnana. The impressions can be burnt or obliterated only by the dawn of the knowledge of *atman*, the supreme self. The death of the samskaras of the *karana sharira*, the causal body, leads to final moksha, the attainment of *brahmajnana*. When the samskaras are wiped out, brahmic knowledge shines by itself in its own glory.

Although this cycle of vritti and samskara is beginningless, it has an end when one attains that divine knowledge and liberation and it ceases to produce any effect on the jivanmukta. Only when the samskaras are burnt up by continuous samadhi will one be free from birth and death. Believe me, a person can obliterate his samskaras by *purushartha* or right exertion. He is not a creature of environment or circumstance. He is the master of his destiny.

Water – Connection and Lessons to Learn

From Janani: Water – the Sustainer of Life, Swami Prembhava Saraswati



Sanyam – saving water

There are many ways in which you can save water around your home, office and garden and practise *sanyam*, restraint. Every drop that you save counts, it helps the planet; and it conserves water for the future generations.

- Fix any leaking pipes or taps in your home.
- Adjust the flush of the toilet so it uses less water, dual flush systems use less water.
- Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth or shave.
- Take short showers, cleaning the body can be done in a few minutes and with little water.
- Wash clothes with less detergent and use less water. Fill the washing machine with full loads and wear clothes until they really need a wash.
- Maintaining a lawn uses lots of water, small plants, hedges and ground cover in a garden are good alternatives. A vegetable garden is a more efficient use of water than a lawn, as the vegetables then become your nutritious food.
- Use a bucket to wash your car instead of a hose.
- Use a cloth or broom to clean and sweep paths, not water.
- Try to use grey water on the garden, grey water is water from shower, hand washing, and clothes washing.
- Eat less meat and dairy. These products use enormous amounts of water in their production.



- Reduce the eating of processed foods. All steps required to process food require water. The less processed the food the less amount water used in its production.
- Drink water! All other forms of beverages such soft drinks, soda, juices use enormous amounts of water to produce. Water is nature's natural soft drink, perfect for body and mind.
- Everything you buy, use and consume has a water footprint. It took water to process and transport it. Being thoughtful about purchases, reusing and recycling what you can, reduces your water footprint. For example, eat and buy locally produced foods and goods. Food and other products that have travelled from far distant places utilize litres and litres of water.
- Be aware of everything you throw down the sink, drain and toilet. Many personal products like shampoo, washing detergents, soaps contain chemicals that are detrimental to our rivers and oceans. Try to use the natural products that are biodegradable.

CONNECT TO THE SPIRIT OF WATER

Aradhana means worship, invocation, and realization of the higher divine nature that is within all. When we can perform simple actions with this sentiment in daily life then our spiritual



awareness expands. Simple practices of aradhana awaken the spiritual awareness within us and connect to the spiritual and divine in the world around us. Aradhana helps us to break away from our normal mental activity and for a few minutes a day we connect to the divine within the elements around us, the trees, the fire, the air and water. In Yoga Ecology these are the practices that connect us to the divine in nature, and once we have reconnected then the communication begins. Life takes on a new meaning and the spiritual consciousness can be felt in the small things in life, for example the water we drink.

Apas Aradhana

Take a glass, clay or copper *kalash* or cup and fill with the drinking water you have available, tap or bottled water is fine. Place that cup of water on your puja table or a special place, light a deepak in front of it and chant the *Sama Veda Shanti Mantras* while waving incense at the container of water. Say a prayer of thanks and gratitude while placing your right hand on the glass. As you place your hand over the cup feel white light and peace filling the cup from your hand. This glass of water will now contain the purity of your intention and the peace of the mantras.

With a flower sprinkle some water on your head, your puja place, around the room, home and garden. You can drink this sacred water or offer it to your aradhana tree or the garden knowing that the water is a source of vitality, prana and life. Continue with this practice for some time and see the increased vitality and energy that comes. Also appreciate the connection that builds between you and water.

Aradhana of rivers



If the rivers in India are worshipped by millions of people daily, why are the rivers not happy and flourishing? This is because people do not perform aradhana for gratitude of the river, or for the health and wellbeing of the river, it is selfish worship or aradhana. The prayers are always asking for something: to bless the individual, to relieve the pain and suffering, or to liberate them from this world so they no longer suffer.

Along with the selfish intention of the worship, the acts performed around the rivers do not offer care or respect to the water. People worship the river and then defecate and dump rubbish in it. Is this really an act of purity or care for the river's health? It is the selfish human mind and activities that are killing the rivers. There is still a chance that the rivers can regain their health and vitality if we start to heal and protect them and pray for their health and wellbeing.



To perform aradhana to a river, lake, ocean or any water body stand by it and offer your prayers for the health and vitality of its waters and give gratitude for everything the waters give you. This simple prayer and sentiment will connect you to the spirit of the river and also purify the water element within you.

LIFE LESSONS FROM WATER

We can learn many things from Mother Nature and the elements. All we need to do is look and learn.

1. Fluidity in life

Life must flow like water. The nature of water is continually flowing and moving forward. Stagnant and still water becomes putrid in time. Water must flow to stay full of prana and vitality. Similarly, in our life we must continue to flow and keep moving, not allowing ourselves to become stuck and stagnant.

2. Water finds a way, always

Water will always find a way. It may cut through, circumvent, overflow, percolate, but it will always find a way. Water is one of the softest elements yet most persistent and therefore strongest elements. There is nothing it cannot wash away

and dissolve. Similarly, in life we must always find ways to overcome any barrier or problem in life, with flexibility and persistence everything is possible.

3. Form and adaptability

Water always takes the shape of the vessel it is poured into and gets coloured by hues mixed with it but essentially it remains the same. When we identify with the spiritual side of ourselves we can remain untouched by the different pains and problems of life. We become like the spirit who remains true to itself no matter what form it make take. Life's truth is the truth of the spirit.

4. Still waters run deep

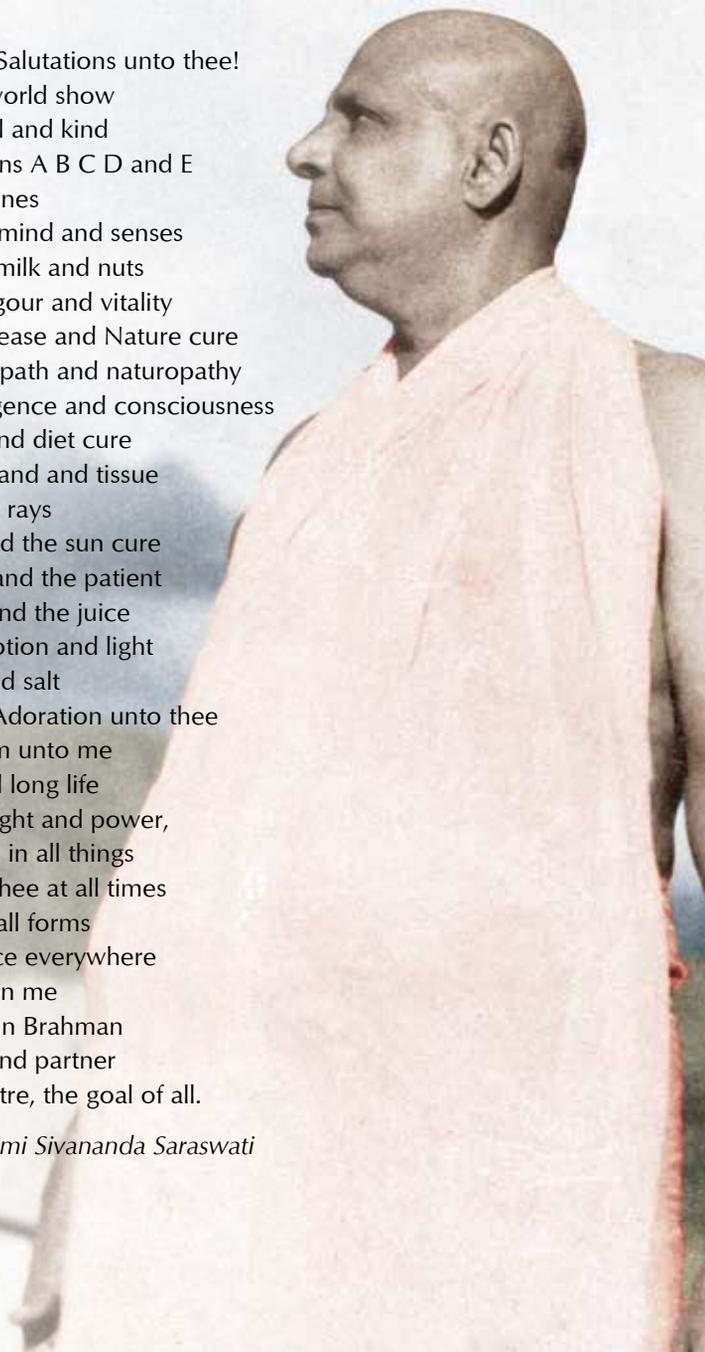
When a lake is still we can see to the depths of the lake and clearly see our reflection in the surface. Similarly, the depths of a busy distracted mind can only be fathomed in stillness. Within the silence, everything can be revealed. Through yoga and meditation, we can learn to still the turbulent mind and experience the depth of our being and see our full potential and possibilities. To immerse oneself in spiritual practice and truth purifies and awakens, clearing away the dirt of negativity of lifetimes.



Prayer to Mother Nature

O Mother Nature! Salutations unto thee!
Thou keepst the world show
Thou art all-merciful and kind
Thou art the Vitamins A B C D and E
Thou art the hormones
Thou art the body, mind and senses
Thou art the fruits, milk and nuts
Thou art energy, vigour and vitality
Thou art health, disease and Nature cure
Thou art the naturopath and naturopathy
Thou art life, intelligence and consciousness
Thou art the bath and diet cure
Thou art the cell, gland and tissue
Thou art ultra-violet rays
Thou art the sun and the sun cure
Thou art the curer and the patient
Thou art the herb and the juice
Thou art power, motion and light
Thou art mineral and salt
O Mother Divine! Adoration unto thee
Reveal thy true form unto me
Give me health and long life
Give me wisdom, light and power,
Let me behold thee in all things
Let me remember thee at all times
Let me see thee in all forms
Let me feel thy grace everywhere
Shower thy grace on me
Help me to merge in Brahman
Thy consort, Lord and partner
The refuge, the centre, the goal of all.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati





Yoga Publications Trust

Raja Yoga Yatra 1

Understanding Asana and Pratyahara

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

88 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-93-84753-43-6

At the World Yoga Convention held in 2013, Swami Niranjanananda announced: "The first chapter of yoga propagation is over. Now the second chapter begins, which is focused on consolidation of yoga and better application of yoga, with sincerity, seriousness and commitment."

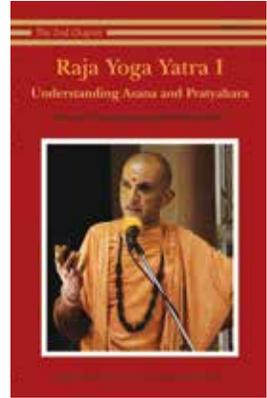
In writing the second chapter, a complete change in the training programs at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth has come about since 2016. Among these was Raja Yoga – Yatra 1: Asana-Pranayama Intensive during which the focus was on understanding the essence of raja yoga and practising asana and pranayama from the raja yoga perspective and style.

This book presents the satsangs given by Swami Niranjanananda during the program.

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Websites and Apps

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.

Satyam Yoga Prasad

Available at www.satyamyogaprasad.net and as apps for Android and iOS devices.

The collected publications of Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda are being presented online on the occasion of the Munger Yoga Symposium.

Bihar Yoga Wiki

www.yogawiki.org

An online encyclopaedia of the Bihar Yoga system was launched on the occasion of the Munger Yoga Symposium 2018 with an aim to make the yogic teachings available to all in an accessible and easily understood way.

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<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/yoga-magazines/>

<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/yogavidya/>

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Other Apps (for Android and iOS devices)

- *APMB*, the bestselling yoga book from Yoga Publications Trust, is now available as a convenient, easily browsable mobile app.
- The *Bihar Yoga App* brings to the user ancient and revived yogic knowledge in a modern medium.

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Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2019

May 13-19	Hatha Yoga Yatra 3, 4
Jun 2-6	Yoga Lifestyle Capsule (Hindi/English)
Aug 16-22	Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Aug 23-29	Raja Yoga Yatra 3, 4
Oct 1-30	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 1, 2 (English)
Oct 1-Jan 25	Yogic Studies, 4 months (English)
Nov 4-10	Kriya Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Nov 11-17	Kriya Yoga Yatra 3
Dec 18-22	Yoga Chakra Series
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poornima	Sundarkand Path
Every 4th, 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans

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Ensure that you do not bring your mobile with you.

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Website: www.biharyoga.net (applications for events and trainings available here)

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