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Hari Om

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3: Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, Munger; 4: Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, Rikhia



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Brahmacharya

This world is nothing but sex and ego. Ego is the chief thing. It is the basis. Sex hangs on the ego. The minds of people are filled with sexual thoughts. The world is all sexy and under tremendous sexual intoxication.

Sarvangasana is an important pose, which can help you assuredly in the practice of brahmacharya. The digestive, circulatory and nervous systems are at once toned in a mysterious manner by this practice. Practise and feel the beneficial influence yourself. There is a healthy glow in the eyes of the practitioner and a peculiar lustre, charm, beauty and magnetic aura in his face.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati, 1934

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Contents

- 4 Always the Play of the Gunas
- 5 Introducing Buddhi
- 8 Principles for Success
- 14 Mouna
- 16 Restraint - the Greatest Friend
- 19 Widening the Understanding
- 24 Knowing Your Stress
- 26 Awareness of Stress
- 35 Guardians of the Planet Earth
- 41 Understanding Lobha with
Jnana Yoga
- 44 Expand Your Horizons
- 46 Light Fire and Darkness
- 52 The Nucleus
- 53 Karma Yoga
- 54 Karma, Jnana and Sannyasa

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 ॥

Always the Play of the Gunas

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Although yoga is going to become a mighty force at the end of this century and during the next, this does not mean that man will not fall ill, that rivalry will not take place, and that everyone will love each other. It does not mean there will be no hatred in the world, and that everybody will become happy and free from problems and disease.

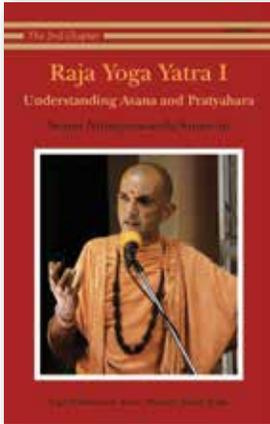
According to the sages, there is a very clear concept that the world is a play of the three gunas. The three gunas are *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa*, and if you combine these stages, they create millions of things on the mental plane. Whether yoga becomes a mighty culture or not, they will still exist; they always remain the same. Diversity is the nature of the world. Yoga cannot go against it. There will be diverse religions and sects. There will still be wars and there will still be love, hatred and massacres. There will also be people like Buddha and Christ coming from time to time. You cannot go beyond all this because the world is the play of the three gunas.

You may envision an idyllic lifestyle and universal peace and harmony, but how can that be? There will always be grass, thorny bushes and snakes, and there will still be floods, droughts and epidemics even if high blood pressure, cancer and rheumatism no longer exist.

However, one great change will be brought about through the power of yoga. Yoga will bring light to man's thinking processes and will improve the quality of his thoughts and perception. Thereby it will enable him to understand the necessity of his problems. And this is what we are expecting.

Introducing Buddhi

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



You have to understand the nature of buddhi. Manas is devoid of any guna. There is no guna in manas. It is only the emerging point, the volcano head from where the lava comes up. Manas is the emerging point of all the experiences of the mind. What you are doing in *manas pratyahara*, in *manas antar mouna*, is stopping all those emerging experiences which come to the surface of your awareness and cognition: that is the extent of antar mouna.

Anything that comes to the surface of your awareness and that you are able to recognize as being part of your expression and are able to identify with and act according to that, is the manas level. There the ideations come, the thoughts come, the plans are made, sequences are seen and implemented by thinking, by rationalizing, by thinking, by rationalizing, by thinking. It is colourless. It is only the emerging point of everything that is contained in the lower three strata of the volcano, the mental volcano. The next level, the next strata is buddhi. Buddhi has two predominant qualities: 60 percent predominance in buddhi is of rajas; 30 percent predominance in buddhi is of tamas, and 10 percent of buddhi is sattwa.

Buddhi becomes the agent for motivating and for creating motion in a state of inertia. That is the rajas component. This rajas component is also attached to and associated with the identity of 'me'. Without the awareness of 'me', rajas does not come up. This is the only link that buddhi has with ego, the 'me'. That 'me' in buddhi is always prominent; that 'I' in buddhi is always prominent. The prominence of 'I' in buddhi is seen as

selfishness, where I desire everything for myself. That is the prominence of ego in buddhi. Due to the preprominence of ego in buddhi, in the rajasic dimension, which is 60 percent, self-oriented awareness develops to a great extent. As soon as the self-oriented awareness develops, anything that is connected to the self becomes highlighted: image, prestige, esteem, you can add 'self' in front of all these different words to define different expressions of that ego in the rajas state in buddhi.

Due to this rajasic state, buddhi becomes an identification with 'I', buddhi also becomes a tool to manipulate the environment, the senses and the people. Chitta is not a tool to manipulate people, the environment or the senses, it is buddhi which becomes the tool to manipulate the environment, the senses and people. The prominent nature of buddhi is always rajasic.

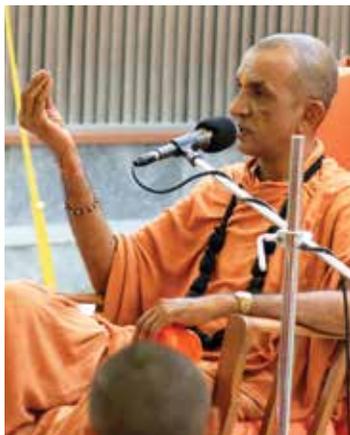
When due to the rajasic nature, the desire to control and manipulate and the 'I' are coming together, then what does one look for in another person? Either shortcomings or their weaknesses. Where is the Achilles' heel where I can shoot the arrow? That is the first thing that buddhi sees in everybody, the shortcoming. Buddhi knows that the shortcoming will become the failure of that person, and it can manipulate it for its own gains.

When we look at a person, we automatically question and observe, 'What are the flaws of character, of nature, of personality? What are the insecurities, what are the fears, what are the anxieties? Is that person an anxious person or a strong person, a determined person or changeable, pliable person?'

Friendship is always made with those who are pliable for the need to manipulate. Friendships are never made with those who are strong for you can't change their views, opinions or attitudes. If you see a gathering of people, all talking away in one corner, that is the weakness which is in all of them because that has brought them together. They are looking at the weaknesses of everyone, criticizing, complaining, instigating another person to say something which highlights another weakness, which highlights another flaw, which highlights

another fault. That is the rajasic buddhi.

Tamas kicks into this rajasic buddhi, when you know that you are able to control and manipulate the person, control and overpower the person. Then the relationship changes from friend to master and victim. It is the buddhi and rajas which create havoc in our interactions with other people, in our perception about ourselves, and that is where all the conflict lies.



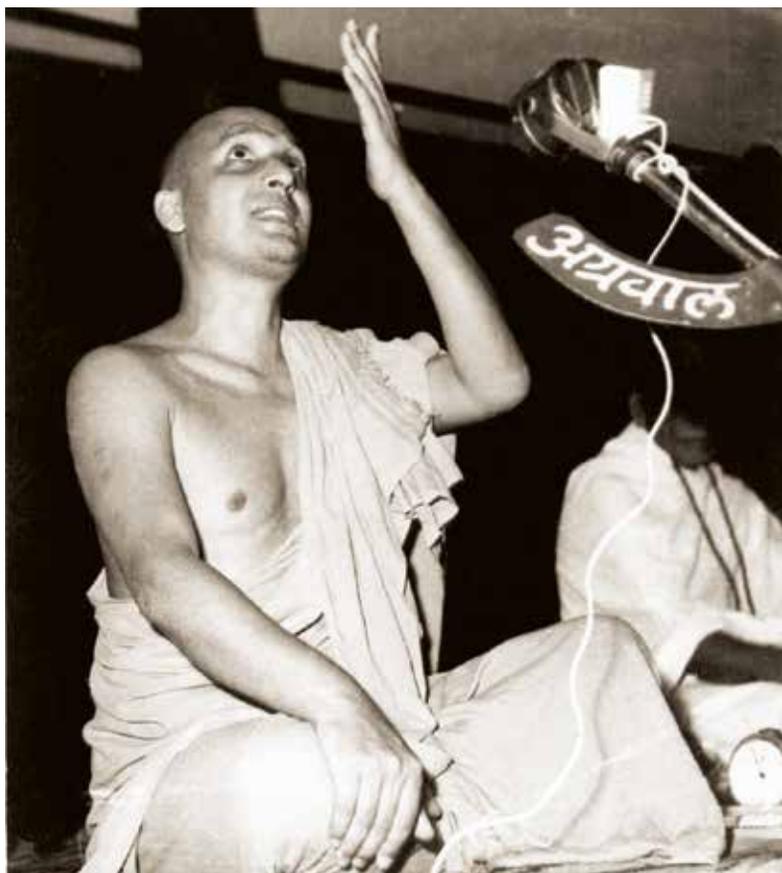
Buddhi is further supported by expectations and desires and deep-rooted cravings and instincts. When they appear, buddhi analyzes those instincts and cravings and gives them justification because they also support your nature, your being, your 'I-ness'. The negatives are always supported by buddhi as they are supporting the I-ness, whereas the positive is not actually acquirable by buddhi. It is easy to imbibe negative traits and negative habits; it is difficult to imbibe good traits and good habits. Even the basic restraint in life is not possible, knowing full well that something is not good for us, we still do it. Even that basic, simple restraint that can be a life-saver is not appreciated by the individual. And this kind of individual wants to be realized, illuminated? It is not practical nor possible.

What is possible is the management of the imbalances created by buddhi. Buddhi looks at four aspects of the personality defined as strength, weakness, ambition and need using the SWAN theory. SWAN is a practice of pratyahara. Initially SWAN was presented in a written form, not a meditative form. The same thing in a meditative form becomes a pratyahara practice for the buddhi dimension. Writing is a precursor to meditation, writing supports your meditation.

– *Published in Raja Yoga Yatra 2*

Principles for Success

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Real life is in religion, and religion is virtue. The irreligious or vicious person will have to face a fall; the religious or virtuous person will be saved even at the brink of every pitfall.

One might be worshipping, fasting, paying homage to gods or goddesses and saying beads, yet he might be a terrible rogue. You please rule out his name from the register of religious code.

One may not make a clownish demonstration of his religion yet he may be doing some sadhana, if he is sweet in speech, fair in his dealings, amicable with all, forgiving in nature, sacrificing in spirit and courageous, not violent at all in initiative and fair enterprises, please take it for truth that he is going to surpass all skills, excel all heads, overcome every obstacle that he has to tackle in his path.

You may just do only one thing in order to reform others – you have to effect the reforms in your own life first. Unless you do it, you are never going to reform others. This is a practical wisdom of sages.

Satyam speaks

Satyam has observed that there is no one either good or bad, but our feeling makes it so. Your conclusions are not quite unbiased, not totally free from prejudices, hence you perceive your own personality projected in the person whom you call either good or bad.

Satyam says, it is not too late, you are young, full of energy and future. You have infinite capacities. You can reform your entire life in a fashion which will give you a strong mind, a psychic personality and bring success in every good endeavour.

Why do you feel pessimistic? Why are you brooding over demoralisation? Believe me that morality is a rare commodity, it does not come merely by talking and brooding. To bring about the era of morality please train your mind and activities.

Satyam is quite aware where society stands today. Yet he has hope, hence he has been working without any stop. If everyone gives me his little bit of cooperation, I am bound to effect the evolution in society which will bring home peace, unity and a proper sense of understanding.

Satyam knows that men want *shanti* or peace very badly. What is this 'restlessness' due to? Restlessness is a psychological term which represents the physical errors and gross mistakes in our day-to-day life. Change your aspirations, refine and

refashion your speech. Evolve your ambitions. You are sure to annihilate this restlessness.

Need for principles

No man who has no principle can hope for peace and prosperity. Principles are of paramount importance to any householder. South Indians work upon certain principles, and you know, they are marvellously successful in any avocation they enter in. We have practically no principles which would successfully regulate our life movements. We eat whatever we want, speak whatever bombs forth, move wherever we like, meet every sundry we come across, sleep whenever we feel. We have no set principles at all.

To be a successful businessman one needs sweet and pleasant speech, a sacrificing and cooperating set of friends. Simplicity and nobility towards life, regularity and punctuality in one's daily routine, a balanced habit in diet, restraints in sexual matters, a timely program for yogasanas, freedom from 'chubbish' or rubbish. And most important of all sincere dynamism in discharging the business functions.

If you have plenty of leisure and if you are not working dynamically, if not the whole time then for eight hours at least, please do a bit of positive effort to counteract inertia and utilize the hours which have no engagement whatsoever. What is this effort I term as positive?

Free hours should be used in:

1. Studying life-inspiring books of Gandhi, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Sivananda, Aurobindo, publications of Kalyan (Gorakhpur) and journals of Bharitya Vidya Bhawan. Novels and newspapers not only waste time and money, they darken the future also by enveloping the will-power and dynamism of positive value.
2. Doing japa of your Ishta mantra, meditation on its hidden meaning and upasana of the deity directly connected with the mantra;



3. Making positive and concrete determination for the business you are handling;
4. Writing your Ishta mantra with love and concentration, so that your mind might get a proper focus of ideals. Mantra writing is a perfect practical science of 'mental culture'.
5. Reviewing your accomplishments and commitments which need a reform and refinement. This must be done simply, without any prejudice and partiality. Criticize, scrutinize and analyze your motives and intentions. Let holiness prevail.
6. Discussing matters not mundane and exciting with your family, and reading out a few passages from any great book and explaining them.

This will refill your leisure and lazy hours with positive dynamism and bestow upon you tranquillity of mind, richness of ideals, successful determination and a life full of hope and cheer, light and lightness.

The essential items of a person's program are:

1. Repetition of the Lord's name
2. Prayer; spontaneous, sincere and unselfish
3. Yogasanas

4. Meditation and upasana
5. Study of life-inspiring books
6. Mantra writing
7. Family discussions and instructions
8. Business transactions
9. Company of good and cultured friends
10. Meditation on day-to-day, already done and to be done accomplishments.

The non-essential, non-profiting and devastating programs of a person's life, as all greatly successful business magnets have said:

1. Being late in leaving the bed;
2. Idly gossiping with uncultured people;
3. Wasting time in horror comics and perilous literature;
4. Abusing, scolding, criticizing, condemning and avoiding others;
5. Wasting money, time, energy and talent on baubles;
6. Saying, 'It can't be done';
7. Excitement, passion, far-sightedness;
8. Argumentative, demolishing speech;
9. Meat eating, drinks, gambling, illegitimate connections and secret doctrines of fat and flesh;
10. Extravagancy and spend-thriftiness, showy standard of life, hypocritical personality through dress and other non-essential, unnecessary and extra-vital commitments just to satisfy the base, vice, corrupt and corruptible passion in us;
11. Carelessness in business dealing. Carelessness includes fraud also since fraud is a hotchpotch of dynamic carelessness while laziness is negative;
12. Taking the business as a means to earn just to 'lose' and considering it just a bundle of dishonesty, unfairness, fraudulence and a way to 'block the way'.

These twelve points which I have just reproduced, not for the first time, are mighty systems of regulation which deter-

mine the destiny of a failing businessman and give a fillip to an already established businessman and tremendous success to a flourishing businessman.

Then again you should try to meet at least once in a week under the influential environment of a holy congregation. Call outsiders too, those known to you and to your relatives as well. Have kirtan, bhajan, discourses and reading of healthy and interesting stories. All will cooperate in this holy initiative of yours. Later on this sacred and unbiased inauguration will culminate into an integral cooperation among you and your family members.



At the same time keep yourself in touch with great saints and sages. They are mighty spiritual personalities, their grace works wonders, they are very loving, they radiate real joy, impart real knowledge, and give wonderful direction to everyone. Their personality is powerful and guidance unflinching.

May the ever-present blessing of all saints and realized souls enlighten you.

May they give you strength to start the sadhana in right earnest.

May the teachers of mankind whose memories millions cherish in their hearts, whose blessings lead the stars of mankind, infuse blessings in you and your near and dear ones, and in the generations to come.

– Published in YOGA Vol. 5 No.7 (July 1967)

Mouna

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Mouna means to measure. *Mouna* is not silence. It means measurement. When you speak, speak measured speech. When you think, think measured thoughts. You have to measure everything, and to measure, you have to be silent for some time.

Christ measured himself for forty days and then the devil came, yet that measurement, that mouna of Christ was absolute, passionless, desireless, thoughtless, just absorbed in contemplation. Our mouna is more geared to speech as we don't know any other definition of it, or any other way to practise it. Mouna is a way of stilling the activity of the senses and the mind. When you are able to still the activities of the senses and mind, the mind becomes empty and the heart becomes full.

There is a new word in the west – mindfulness. According to yoga, yogic training and any spiritual tradition, be it Buddhist or Indian, the mind has to be emptied and not filled. No spiritual tradition speaks of mindfulness, but of mind emptiness and heart-fullness. In mindfulness and heart-emptiness, there is no *bhava*, no sentiment, no feeling, no emotion, no sensitivity – nothing; and the mind is just cluttered because it is full.

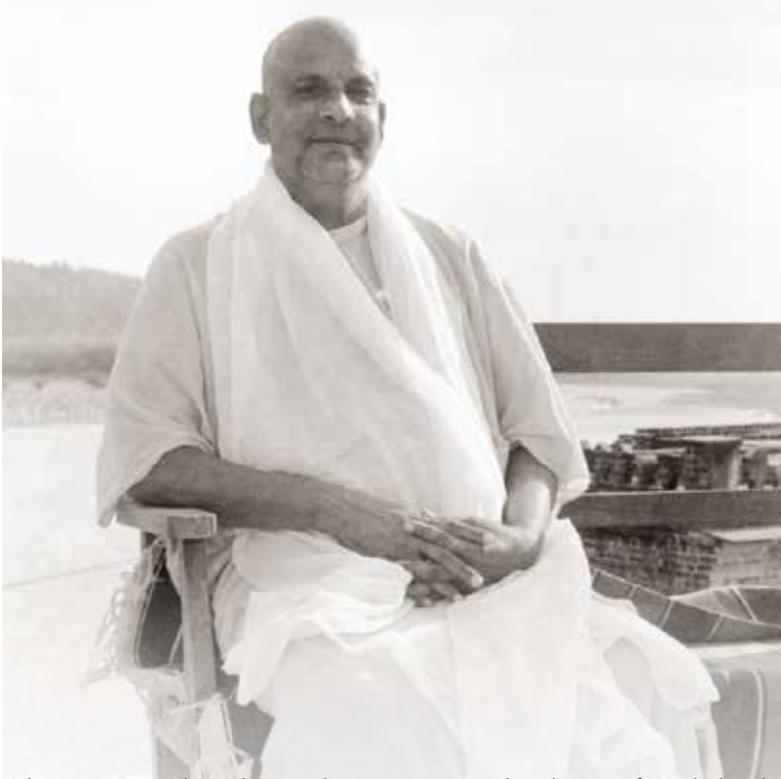
Mouna or silence leads to mind emptiness, and when the mind is empty, the heart is filled with the luminosity of spirit. Before the luminosity can become absolute, the baddies, the negatives, become nervous and try to entice you. It happened to Buddha and it happens to all of us every day. Nobody here is free from enticement. Buddha and Christ were free. They were living the state of mouna, the silence where their senses and mind were in absolute peace and harmony.

The process begins with speech and when speech is conquered then thoughts are conquered. When thoughts are conquered, then you will conquer the next and the next . . . There is a progression. To still the senses and the mind, you need to empty the mind and fill the heart. We should keep that as our target. Let us welcome the New Year with hope and faith. Let us derive the learnings from the year that has gone by and say farewell to it with love in the heart, for due to the experience of the last year, we are what we are today.

– 31 December 2019, Ganga Darshan

Restraint – the Greatest Friend

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



About 150 miles above the sannyasins' colony of Rishikesh, in the Himalayan interior, there is an outpost, Chaumali by name. Here they have built a sort of dam or barrier across the flow of the Ganga. One fine day something happened there, and the flow of the water was likely to get out of hand and burst out in an excessive flow. At once, wires began to hum. A telegram was sent to all the lower regions, warning them of a likely flood in the Ganga, and asking everyone to shift to higher up the Ganga bank.

Now the Ganga water is the very life and soul for the people living by the side of the Ganga bank. So what is this strange phenomenon that people are now fleeing away from its life-giving waters? So long as its flow was within limits, so long as its volume was restrained to a safe margin, it was most beneficial, and very desirable. When the self-same natural and legitimate function of the dam was exceeded, these same waters became dangerous and terrible. Thus excess rendered a blessing into a menace.

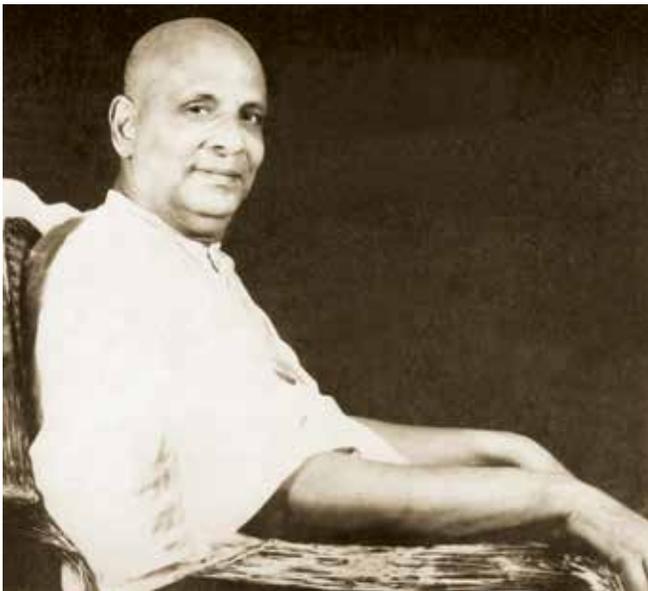
Now, consider a similar state of things in human life. The average person is a slave of the senses. For instance, sleeping is normal for all creatures. Animal and human, sinner and saint alike, all do it. But there is a limit within which it is a desirable and beneficial necessity. Too much sleeping makes you lazy, lethargic, dull and ultimately useless to both society and yourself. For the sadhaka, it is one of the most dangerous habits. Habitual oversleeping increases *tamas* and nullifies *sadhana*, retarding your progress.

Eating is recognized as an indispensable necessity so long as the physical sheath lasts. From the lowest vermin to the highest realized saint, all take food. But overdo it, then directly and indirectly it becomes wrong, improper, unethical and positively criminal. It is a wrong and harmful practice from a health and medical point of view. It is improper from the point of social etiquette, which regards gluttony with disapproval. It is unethical, for by overfeeding one becomes gross and sensual; and it is criminal from the economic point of view, for the wanton overfeeding of a section of people transgresses all canons of distribution and deprives the starving masses of their sorely needed food.

Now, it is precisely here that we perceive the vital role of restraint in giving the proper balance, proportion and direction to such functions. It is the presence or absence of self-control and restraint that makes the act of eating praiseworthy in one and blameworthy in another. Restraint provides the guarantee and insurance against overindulgence.

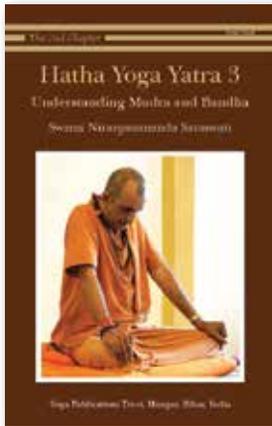
When the quality and nature of the things taken in through the senses is sattwic and does not excite, then this establishes a rhythm in the system. This state of harmony is of immense help in maintaining restraint, for restraint is dependent upon an inner strength; and the greater the sattwa, the greater the development of this inner force. Likewise, habitual adherence to the principle of moderation keeps the body and mind light and free of toxins. In such a state of health and purity all faculties are keen and alert, facilitating the exercise of *viveka* and *vichara*, discrimination and enquiry, upon which wise selection and restraint depend.

Thus restraint is the greatest friend. Restraint plays the important part of keeping the processes of consumption and indulgence within bounds. Make full use of this factor and you will reap a harvest of health, wellbeing, progress and spiritual attainment. Restraint makes life worth living. Be restrained and become a *Jitendriya Yogishwara*, Lord of Yoga by victory over the senses. Restraint makes you really the emperor of the three worlds. Restraint leads to realization of the Self.



Widening the Understanding

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are two aspects of energy: one is the material, the other is the subtle. In the material aspect the energy is used for therapeutic purposes and in the spiritual aspect the energy is used for opening the dormant psychic centres. The difference between the Indian and the Chinese traditions is that the Indian traditions have used both the spiritual and the therapeutic in relation to prana, and there is a whole group of practices dealing with prana shakti: pranayama, mudra, bandha, prana nidra, prana vidya. In the Chinese system, prana is used more for therapeutic purposes: to remove imbalances from the channels and overcome specific conditions, whether headache, sinusitis, or something else.

Similarly, there are trends that have come from Japan. A few years ago Reiki became a big hit. Everybody around the world was trying to become a Reiki master and the Reiki masters made millions making other people into Reiki masters. Now the whole motivation and attachment to Reiki is gone, people don't even know what it is anymore. The reason for this craze was the healing and therapeutic effect of Reiki. As the Chinese and Japanese systems have focused more on therapy, you will find that their description of meridians and pressure or puncture points are precise and accurate.

Indians did not focus on the therapeutic use. They maintained the awareness that prana can be applied for therapy, yet they did not go into specifics like influencing one particular meridian to overcome your headache, another meridian to help

you with your sinuses, etc. That specific knowledge developed in other Asian countries.

The Chinese system of meridians is close to the nadi system of yoga. There are eight main meridians in the body which control every function, and there are ten main nadis which control every function. If acupuncture is looking at eight main meridians which in all their varieties and forms manage the entire body, then ten nadis from the yogic perspective also manage the entire body functions and they can be correlated to the acupuncture meridians.

The gradual development of chakra understanding

The concept of chakras first came as centres of energy in the body, and then came the specifics. When you cook a meal, every ingredient has a different proportion; it can be one tablespoon of salt, one litre of water, two cups of rice. For a meal to be cooked well, everything should not be in the same measure. If you put everything in the same measure, you will end up with an inedible meal.

Just as there is a ratio for everything in order to make tasty food, there is a ratio in a chakra as well. That ratio is defined in the petals. If one petal represents one litre of water, the other petal may represent one teaspoon of salt. The qualities of the convergent nadis within a chakra are different. These convergent nadis are symbolically depicted as petals of a flower.

The understanding of the qualities of the convergent nadis represents the development of the awareness of the specifics. First came the awareness of chakras as centres of energy and then comes the awareness of what is on top, at the bottom, at the right and at the left. First the form was created, then it was identified: this is the top, this is the bottom, this is the right, this is the left, and then the frequencies governing the different nadis were placed. Further on, the emissions of the chakra were observed and the paths of their flows to specific organs of the body were discovered, resulting in understanding how

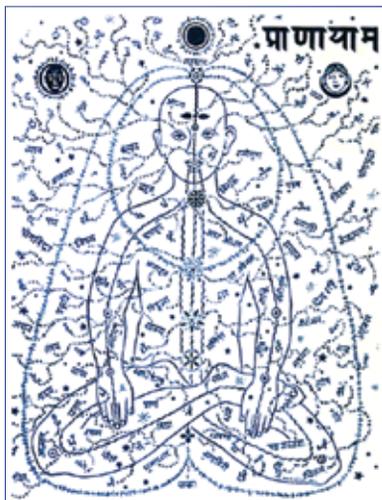
these flows create either balance and harmony or imbalance and disharmony. Then it was found that by performing certain gestures, it is possible to redirect or rechannel this energy. Thus the science of mudras came about.

Activating minor chakras

Before mudras, however, came the system of bandhas. These were the first practices, as bandhas deal with the chakras directly. Then, with the help of mudras you go into the specifics of how to maintain harmony, balance and equilibrium during the activation of pranic energy. This understanding of chakras through mudras gave birth to the understanding of the minor chakras in the body.

The six or seven main chakras deal with human evolution. They refine the human mind, the human energy, the human consciousness. There are other chakras which become active only to power a particular sensorial activity. They secrete chemicals and hormones in minute quantities, which can be used either for health and wellbeing or for death and destruction. These minor centres are situated all over the body, more specifically at the extremities such as the tip of the nose, the earlobes, the point of the chin, and also above vishuddhi chakra. There are many of these points of energy in the body, which are similar to the acupuncture points in nature, quality and attributes.

Sometimes people get confused when they read about chakras, as different books give different numbers. Going by the logic that chakras deal with the evolution of consciousness, there are six: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi



and ajna. They go from the earth element at mooladhara up to the mind element, *manas*, in ajna. They are for your growth and evolution.

Sahasrara is the seventh one, and it is a state of being. Those who are established in sahasrara do not swing from one state to another according to a mood. One state of transcendental awareness is maintained; that state is constant, unbroken and continuous. Sahasrara is the final chakra. If you attain it, there is no returning back. In the lower six chakras, which belong to the process of evolution, you can fluctuate.

Then there are minor chakras. Bindu, for example, is a minor chakra. Lalana, nasikagra are other minor chakras. However, they are minor only from the broad understanding of chakras. They are subtle centres that can have a profound impact on the physical, mental and psychic levels. You begin to activate these centres and develop their understanding with the help of mudras such as khechari and vipareeta karani. This you do in hatha yoga. Then, when you move into the higher yogas of kriya and kundalini, there are many other practices that take you deeper into their experience.

Turning on the switches

Mudras work as switches. In your childhood some of you might have experienced that if you put your finger near the forehead there used to be a tickling sensation. As an adult you don't experience it anymore, but as a child it was a strong sensation, and you could maintain that sensation continuously until you diverted the mind. This is an example of stimulating a chakra which is in the frontal region of the forehead. It is not ajna chakra, it is another chakra. Similarly, all other minor chakras are affected by gestures.

In *Kundalini Tantra*, Sri Swami Satyananda says that one should not be confused if the practice of awakening a chakra seems to be totally contrary to what you would imagine. For example, if you are trying to activate ajna chakra, you work with your mooladhara. Or if you are trying to awaken your

mooladhara, you use the trigger which is in ajna. Just as fans are here but the switch is somewhere else, in this body also the fan and the switch are not side by side. Action happens in a chakra, though the switch is in some other place. For example, *shambhavi mudra*, eyebrow centre gazing, is practised for mooladhara chakra. Whenever you are practising *shambhavi mudra*, you are turning on the switch for mooladhara. The switch is at the eyebrow centre and the bulb is down there in mooladhara.

In the same way, when you perform *chin mudra*, it affects a minor centre in the lungs, improving respiration. It also affects a minor chakra in the nape of the neck, allowing you to focus and concentrate. When you perform *prana mudra*, with the index and little finger extending out and the tips of the middle and ring fingers and the thumb together, you activate the *prana vayu*. When you feel depleted of energy, practise this mudra. When you return home from your office exhausted and want to be quiet for five minutes, at that time practise *prana mudra* while focusing on your breath from *manipura* to *vishuddhi*. In five minutes your energy level will go up and you will feel ready to roll for a few more hours without any exhaustion.

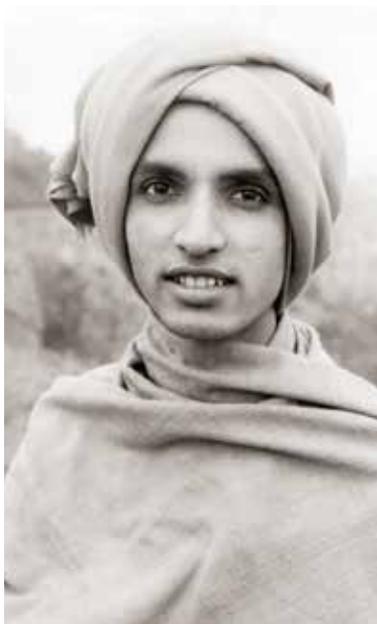
There are mudras for each of the *pancha pran*s and they all affect different chakras. *Prana mudra* activates *anahata chakra*, *apana mudra* activates *swadhisthana chakra*, *samana mudra* activates *manipura chakra*, and so on.

– *Published in Hatha Yoga Yatra 3*



Knowing Your Stress

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



An influential negative experience recorded in the brain will change the mental, emotional and conscious planes, and, depending on the cause, give the person a headache, depression, anxiety, worry, tension or anger. If the situation continues, then the breakdown in mental and emotional patterns may even be the cause of psychological or unconscious reactions and problems.

If any of the sensory cells or motor cells are not stimulated or working properly, then the output of that cell will consist

of sparse and uneven impulses. This will create tension in the central nervous system, causing a delay in the normal process and affecting the functions of the brain, as the input and output of the stimuli will be uneven, and this may cause different physical, muscular and mental tensions.

If this state continues in a person over a period of time, then the state of consciousness will change, energy resistance will be lowered, mental and emotional states will be uncoordinated, and another stress will be added to this chain reaction process.

Beyond relaxation

Self-awareness is perception or knowledge of one's own conditions or states, and of changes in the body or the mind. A trained and alert yogi is completely conscious of the

subconscious activities of the body and brain, and is able to control the autonomic nervous system by concentration. A yogi knows that the autonomic nervous system, which controls and regulates the involuntary functions of the body, is controlled by the subconscious mind. Up to a certain point, the subconscious mind can be directed by the conscious mind.

Through yoga nidra, antar mouna, mantra yoga, nada yoga and trataka, a yogi can coordinate and increase the relaxation of the muscular and nervous systems, thus avoiding the stress chain-reaction process. A yogi can gain relief from low emotional and low energy feelings and encourage the brain to develop its responsibilities for maintaining the harmony between the internal and external environments.

He can expand the receptivity of consciousness, allowing it to intermingle with the subconscious and unconscious parts of mind to become aware of those unseen activities that are constantly changing and forming the human personality. A simple practice of developing breath awareness, and trying to develop a rhythm in the breath, will allow one to watch exactly how the muscles and nervous activities are coordinated, how incoming and outgoing impulses are channelled, and how introversion of mind takes place.

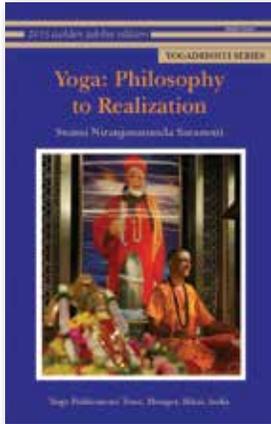
The same practice, if developed and practised properly, will enable the aspirant to transcend the sensual states of personality and adopt the attitude of a seer. This opens one's insight into the surrounding atmosphere in society, and helps in taking protective measures to defend the personality from the influx of negative reactions.

– *Published in YOGA Vol. 18,
Issue 11 (November 1980)*



Awareness of Stress

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The different levels of mental perception and awareness have been classified as the conscious, subconscious, unconscious, and superconscious dimensions of the mind. There is no division or partition between the levels. The only way to know the difference between the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious is by knowing the span of awareness in each dimension. In the unconscious, there is no span of awareness. The conscious faculty

does not exist there. Even though you are alive and the mind exists, there is a total absence of *asmita*, 'I-identity'. There is no awareness of anything the body is experiencing, which means the conscious faculty is absent even while the mind is active. When you are asleep, there is no feeling of your body. There is no feeling of a mosquito biting you or the bed-sheet falling off. That is the unconscious level of the mind.

The subconscious represents a basic presence of consciousness in a state of dormancy. For example, you switch the light on in a room, close the doors and windows. Then you go outside and notice the light coming through the cracks of the doors and windows. You guide and orient yourself using that thin shade of light. That is like the subconscious, where there is only a little awareness. You realize that something was at the back of your mind which you were not aware of. This something which surfaced from the back of your mind is the light of the subconscious.

The afflictions caused by the maya of avidya, asmita, raga, dwesha and abhinivesha germinate in the subconscious mind.









It is the repository of all tensions and strife. If the conscious mind were to realize the actual suffering, the *kleshas*, that the subconscious is going through due to avidya, asmita, raga, dwesha and abhinivesha, then most people would not be able to survive. Therefore, the conscious faculty is such that it only makes you aware of those things, situations or areas that connect you to the present time. You have to wilfully bring memories from the past to the present. They are not readily there for you. You have to bring them out. The conscious awareness has blocked the flow of the impressions of the subconscious to allow survival and interaction in the world of sense objects.

The kleshas in the subconscious mind are known as sufferings; however, due to the conscious mind attaching itself with sense objects, the kleshas tend to take the form of external suffering, and you try to discover the causes of suffering outside of yourself. You say, "That man was not nice to me." Your reaction is not due to the other person. Your reaction is caused by your ego, which is inside you, yet you are blaming the person outside. Whenever you blame somebody, know that you are blaming your own self and you are reacting to an emotion created within you. You are hating yourself in that moment. Instead of acknowledging that you are disliking yourself, you project your hate or dislike on the person in front of you. This is what will be found in the study of psychology.

The stresses alter the peaceful state of mind and give it a different colour. In the scriptures, envy and anger are identified as mental diseases. Just as modern psychology has identified depression, neurosis and psychosis as mental health conditions, ancient yoga psychology has identified not only these, but also envy, greed, jealousy, hatred and anger. They have been put in the same category of disease as they are negative expressions of the mind. If the body is reacting in a negative way, that is physical disease. If the mind reacts in a negative way, that is a mental disease. These afflictions which

stay dormant in the subconscious mind continue to enforce and strengthen *asmita*, and become the cause of suffering.

Management of suffering

Lord Buddha asked the questions, “What is suffering? How can one end suffering?” His spiritual quest started with these questions. He was thinking of the *kleshas*, the source of suffering which afflict every individual. Understanding the *kleshas* is the beginning of yoga psychology, and the next step is their management.

The *kleshas* germinate in the subconscious mind. When they come to the surface of the subconscious, before entering the conscious level, they create a *vritti*, a modification in consciousness. These *vrittis* become the cause of mental awareness. A *klesha* is recognized by the mind with the creation of a *vritti*, of which there are five: *pramana*, *vikalpa*, *nidra*, *viparyaya* and *smriti*. The concept of right and wrong develops according to these latent impressions. The traits of personality develop according to the impressions which are inherent in the mind as *samskaras*. Limitations are placed on human creativity as the latent *karmas* manifest and become part of one’s destiny and decide what one can and cannot do in life.

Thus, *kleshas* are the cause of suffering, *samskaras* are the impressions, and *karmas* are the actions that decide what your life is going to be and how you are going to live it. Nevertheless, when you become aware of the influence of *karmas*, *samskaras*, *kleshas* and their role in modifying your life, you can change them. Yoga generates awareness of the suffering and its effect on human nature. The moment you try to manage this suffering, the *kleshas* and the *samskaras* are altered, and the *karmas* are changed.

Improving relationships and interactions

In the process of yoga, there is greater focus on understanding and improving *sambandha*, relationships and interactions. It

is not necessary to meditate for hours. Instead, develop the awareness of how you can improve your connection and interaction with people, society, the environment, nature, and the Higher Self. The moment you start to improve your connection and relationship with people and with yourself, you will discover peace, *shanti*.

Meditation will not give you shanti. Meditation can only make you aware of the causes of *ashanti*, absence of peace. In order to discover shanti, you have to improve your interactions, relationships and your moment-to-moment awareness. This includes how you speak, as there needs to be awareness of that particular moment. There must be awareness when engaged in doing something and in making the effort to give your best. That moment is lived only once in your lifetime, therefore give it your best shot. With the improvement of interaction and communication there develops an understanding. This is the beginning of yoga psychology. Cultivation of understanding makes you the *drashta*, the witness, and you are able to observe your traits, limitations, attitudes and behaviours, and cultivate the appropriate qualities to manage the agitations of the mind in a better way.

Imagine a bare piece of land with a lot of sunshine, making it too hot to live there. What do you do? You plant trees, and when the trees grow they provide enough shade. It is not necessary to cover the entire plot with a ceiling and a roof to create shade. By planting trees, shade can be created even in the most bare of lands. Similarly, in life, if the seeds of good qualities such as hope, love and aspiration are sown, an effort is made to break away from selfish needs, and to explore the selfless interaction with the community and people, there will be more shanti, within and without. With the understanding of this process, management of the mind begins and the systems of yoga psychology come into force.

– *Published in* Yoga: Philosophy to Realization
(*Yogadrishti Series*, 2013)

A Prayer for You

I said a prayer for you today
And then God must have heard,
I felt the answer in my heart
Although He spoke not a word.

I didn't ask for wealth or fame
(I knew you wouldn't mind),
I asked for priceless treasures rare
Of a more lasting kind.

I prayed that He'd be near to you
At the start of each new day,
To grant you health and blessings fair
And friends to share your way.

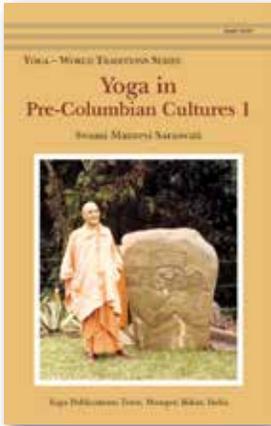
I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small,
But that you'd know His loving care
I prayed for most of all.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Guardians of the Planet Earth

Swami Maitreyi Saraswati



The Andes are like the spinal column along the west coast of South America. Reaching Colombia, the Andes divide into three mountain ranges stretching from the south to the north of Colombia. At the northern tip, at the Caribbean coast, is a pyramid-shaped mountain range separated from the three mountain ranges, the Sierra Nevada. It stands alone and is the highest coastal mountain range in the world with its highest peaks of 5,500 metres.

According to their beliefs, the Koguis and Arhuacos are the guardians of the Sierra Nevada and of the planet Earth. The purpose of their existence is to maintain balance on the planet by keeping balance on Sierra Nevada, the representation of the whole planet. Everything in their life exists for that purpose alone, their lifestyle, their actions, their thoughts. They are born to keep balance on the earth, nothing else. They call themselves the 'elder brothers' and the people outside of the Sierra are the 'younger brothers'. They have the responsibility to look after the younger brothers, teach them what is right and what is wrong, and how to live.

Aluna - the Great Mother

According to their beliefs and experience, everything comes from Aluna, she created the world. She created humans to protect and care for the earth, for the mountains, rivers, lakes, animals, plants and for other human beings. The Kogui believe



that Aluna is the creator principle as well as the mysterious powers of human beings and nature, similar to Hiranyagarbha and Mahat in Indian thought.

Prana is the manifestation of Prakriti, nature. The gross prana is breath, the subtle prana is vital force. The sum total of all pranas is Hiranyagarbha or Lord Brahma. Brahmaloaka is the world of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha. It is also known by the name Satyaloka. Those who perform meritorious actions without expectation of fruits, who lead the life of purity and righteousness, who worship Hiranyagarbha and all realized bhaktas will go to this realm.

– Swami Sivananda Saraswati

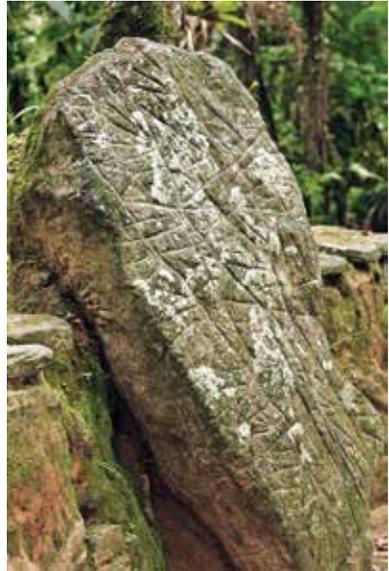
In the *Rig Veda*, the source of the creation of the whole universe or cosmos is *Hiranyagarbha*. The Sanskrit word means golden womb or golden egg. In the *Shiva Maha Purana*, Brahma was given the duty to create. However, he had no idea about how and from which point he should start creation. Lord Shiva sent a cosmic egg to Brahma to help him in starting creation. That cosmic egg is said to be *Hiranyagarbha*. The *Hiranyagarbha*

floated around in water in the emptiness and darkness of non-existence. Brahma realized that in order to start creation, he had to split the egg in half. From the two halves he created the spiritual realm, heaven or *swarga*, and the physical realm, the Earth or *prithvi*. *Mahat* is the great principle, and the first product of evolution of Prakriti or matter.

Where does the idea of earth come from? Where do we get the idea of water? Why do we have a word for it? These things were conceived in the beginning. Before the dawn of time, water and earth were ideas, we can only have ideas of things that have already been conceived in Aluna, before the dawning, before there was anything, we were conceived in the water of Aluna. So were the trees, the mountains, everything.

– *Mamo Ramon Gil*

What is concrete is only a symbol while true value and essence exist in Aluna. For example, in the ancient city, the lost city, there are mystical map-stones which show the paths of the city. However, these maps have no correlation with the physical paths. They are symbols for paths that exist in Aluna. The act of 'thinking' happens in Aluna. The moment of concentration or meditation which is expressed in rites and songs is to be in Aluna and to be attuned to the forces that are invoked for the benefit of the community. In humans, desires, wishes and love come from Aluna and carry something supernatural within.





We worship the eternal Mother who has no particular form, but is in every form. We should not say that She is formless. She has no particular form, even as clay has no particular form, but every pot is a form of clay. It is Her glory we see in the sun and the moon, in all forms of life. We worship the Mother whom yogis know as kundalini shakti, Vaishnavas as Lakshmi, Shaivas as Gauri and Amba, and Christians as Mary. Worship of the Cosmic Mother is a very ancient culture. Who can the original creator have been but the Mother? The Mother is the preserver and also the destroyer. It is by Her command that the celestial beings, human beings and all of creation moves.

– *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

The Mamos want to teach how the world was made. They say that we mutilate the world because we do not remember the great mother. She is not a distant god. She is the mind inside nature. Alan Ereira quotes the Mamos describing the presence of the great mother among them and the purpose of human life: 'The Mother bled. She had her period. She was fertile. And the world was fertile. Her blood is gold. It remains in the earth. It is fertility. Gold and water. Blood and water are necessary for all things. Human beings were made to care for the living things, the plants, the animals. This is why people were made'.

Conclusion

Yoga has been preserved in the Indian subcontinent for thousands of years and since the late 19th century has again been exposed to society by the great gurus and masters of India, such as Swami Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, Paramahansa Yogananda and in recent years our paramguru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, and Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati. Yoga has also been preserved in Latin America for thousands of years and in recent years it has been revived by the spiritual masters, the Mamos and elders of the existing indigenous cultures.

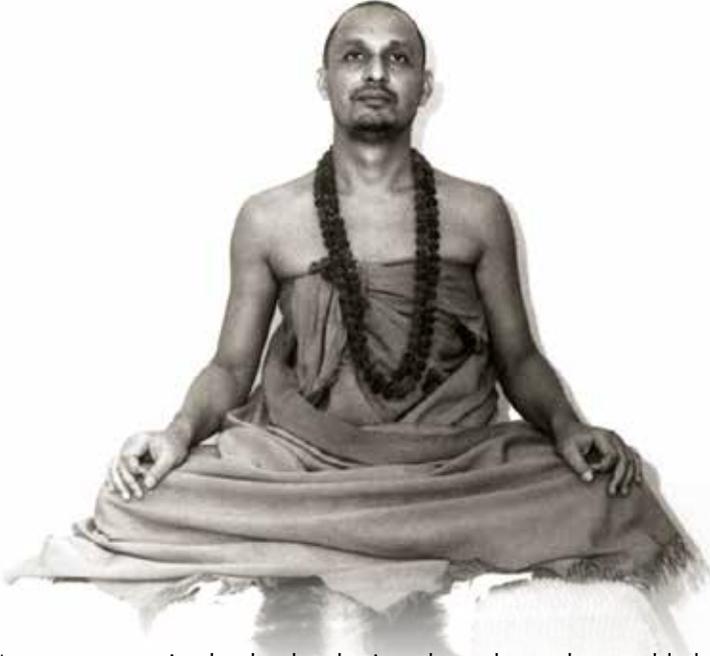
The reason for the global revival of yoga and the revival of the yogic spiritual traditions in South America are the same – society today is in great need of yoga. The Koguis and Arhuacos have lived in complete isolation without any interference from the outside world and modern society until the early 1990s. In those years, Aluna, the Great Mother, told them that the world was in a crisis and that it was time for the elder brothers to teach the younger brothers how to look after Mother Earth by changing and mending their destructive ways.

In Colombia the Mamos of the Sierra Nevada, the shamans of the Amazon and the elders of the Mhyuscas are facing the same problem as the true masters of yoga are facing today in keeping the tradition and the teachings pure. The practices, ceremonies and rituals have become a fashion and are used without spiritual intent or spiritual guidance, often for commercial gain or entertainment.

In 2018, Aluna gave the Mamos the mandate to spread all over the world the message that the most important teaching in this precarious time is to be positive and happy. This echoes the teaching of yoga which makes happiness a positive attitude, and positive behaviour the foundation of change and transformation of the individual, society and Mother Earth.

– *Published in* Yoga in Pre-Columbian Cultures 1

Towards a Yogic Culture



An awareness is slowly developing throughout the world that yoga is a system of self-help which can be adopted according to individual and environmental need.

Many groups of people are now spreading the message of yoga and meditation throughout the world in an attempt to resurrect the inner balance necessary for the survival and evolution of the human race as a whole. It is becoming more apparent that yoga will become a universal culture.

Thinking people in every field are now evaluating the role yoga will play in the formation of a new world order. People from all strata of society are discovering that yoga should be introduced to enable everyone to restructure the mind and personality.

In time we envisage the re-emergence of a yogic culture which will influence future generations just as the technological culture has influenced our generation today.

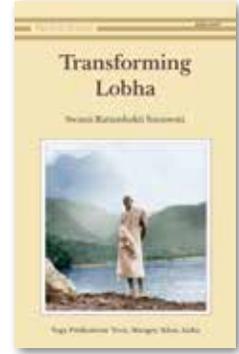
—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Understanding Lobha with Jnana Yoga

Swami Ratnashakti Saraswati

Human beings are capable of incredible things, of infinite knowledge and bliss, if they take steps to raise their level of awareness. Yoga systematically unlocks the portals of higher consciousness and leads them beyond the horizon of limitation to a greater vision of fulfilment within this life.

– *Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



The connection with yoga vidya shows us the way to improve the body, but also our thoughts, attitudes, feelings and emotions. Yoga sees the individual not only as a physical body, but recognizes the progressively subtler layers of existence, the subtle bodies formed by the pranas, the mind and mental energy, the psyche and ultimately the state of pure bliss. Vedanta asserts that the essential nature of every being is divine, and that divinity is experienced as bliss. To come closer to realizing and experiencing the pure, positive and luminous nature within we need to learn how to disconnect from the negative and unhelpful aspects of mind and emotions. This is the challenge of the second chapter of yoga.

For aspirants who are serious about taking the next step, an integral approach to the management of lobha has been given. Observation and analysis of lobha through jnana yoga leads to greater understanding and you learn to introduce the opposite quality as the antidote. The hatha yoga practices help to reduce the physical and pranic imbalance caused by lobha and rectify this through purification. The raja yoga techniques refine the

interaction between the senses and mind and then yama and niyama are used to change the vritti and create a positive input. Finally, transformation happens through cultivation of positive qualities that have been given in the lifestyle yama and niyama. This is the progression of sadhana that leads to lifestyle, where the positive qualities you experience inside are strengthened by expression in daily life. When life is guided by the positive, creative and joyous qualities of mind, then spirituality can be experienced.

If you work towards adding more positive qualities to your nature, you will remain constantly aware of the improvement that you are trying to make for yourself, and this will shift your awareness from the negative to the positive. This is a simple method of cultivating the virtuous and the positive qualities in life. Ignore the detrimental and the bad and keep in focus the positive and the good. This is point one. The second point is to become aware of the six conditions and their interaction in life. The role of passion, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy in life must be observed, as they are the root cause of all psychological disturbances and misbehaviours. Spiritual life flowers when you manage these six enemies. As long as you are unsuccessful in managing these six states, you are only an aspirant, a sadhaka, trying to fine-tune your nature. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that the spiritual journey begins with self-discovery.

– Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Jnana yoga begins with awareness and observation. To practise swadhyaya, or self-analysis, you need objective observation. Objectivity is the beginning of *drashta bhava*, the attitude of the witness. It is like treating an illness. When you start feeling sick the first thing you pay attention to are the symptoms. The symptoms are observed and monitored in order to make the

correct diagnosis. When the illness is of the mind and emotions, objectivity goes out the window. Instead of being able to clearly see the reactions of mind and emotions, the opposite happens.

To be conscious of the defects only in one's own self,
and to be conscious of only the virtues of others, is to
see God in all.

– *Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

The tamasic and rajasic complexes of inferiority or superiority, projection, justification and associated distorted perspectives take over. It is always easier to identify the shortcomings and negative behaviour of others but much more difficult to be honest about your own. Therefore, swadhyaya begins with the positive intention to connect with truth. Connecting with truth means being able to deal with the negative aspects of your own personality and make the effort to transform them. Don't project individual mental hang-ups and frustrations onto other people or situations. Outward projection of negativity is a complete waste of time which only delays further the prospect of spiritual evolution in life. Instead of going forwards, you go backwards. In the spirit of sadhana, maintain the inspiration that sustains your connection to yoga and have the courage to be honest and sincere.

Once you are able to observe the different experiences and expressions of tamasic or rajasic lobha, it is possible to find the triggers, the conditions that catalyze the reaction. Once you identify the trigger, work to disconnect from that. For this two important techniques have been given by Swami Niranjanananda, the first is the SWAN sadhana and the second is Review of the Day. SWAN helps you identify the internal causes of lobha by analyzing and fine-tuning the different components of the personality. Review of the Day helps you become aware of the external circumstances and interactions that trigger the reaction of lobha.

– *Published in Transforming Lobha*

Expand Your Horizons

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

How can we understand and transcend the samskaras when we have no knowledge of them?

If you have no knowledge, then gurus are there for that particular reason. It is like asking the question, “How do I split an atom when I have no knowledge of splitting the atom.” If you want to split the atom, then you have to become a nuclear scientist. In the same manner, in order to realize one’s karmas, samskaras, *vasanas*, deep-rooted obsessive inhibitions, one has to go through that process under the guidance of a competent master or teacher. That external direction is needed.

How can one become aware of what samskaras are? How can one become aware of what a habit is? There are so many habits in life of which we are not even consciously aware—mannerisms in speech, performance, behaviour, attitude and action. There are many people who, when you speak to them, go “Huh?” They are not aware of that particular mannerism, so how can they be aware of their samskara? If they are not even



aware of their expressions of speech, do you think something subtle like samskara can be known? It is impossible! Samskaras and karmas are not so simple that you can become aware of them at the first try.

Let us be frank and clear. When we cannot be aware of our mannerisms which can be irritating, repulsive, and different to what is expected of us, how can we become aware of something which is very subtle? Although we can talk of samskaras and karmas, we have to realize, know and understand that it is not the knowledge of samskaras and karmas which is going to transform our life, rather it is the development of awareness which is going to transform it.

So, instead of worrying about samskaras and how to deal with them, worry about how to expand your horizons of perception and awareness. That will be the right beginning.

– 8 August 2008, Ganga Darshan

Over the year 2021, YOGA magazine will publish the poem *Light Fire and Darkness*, written by Dhiru Desai (1932–1991)

Light Fire and Darkness

*A modernized version of the Bhagavad Gita,
by Dhiru Desai*

A Word from the Author

In the ancient Hindu epic called the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas, five brothers who epitomize good, go to battle against their one hundred cousins, the Kauravas, the forces of evil. Before the battle Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, hesitates to fight against friends and relations. Sri Krishna then expounds his philosophy, which came to be known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. In *Light Fire and Darkness*, Arjuna becomes the devotee and Sri Krishna becomes the divine voice. Chapters 1 and 11 are spoken by the devotee and the rest of the text is the divine message.

This is not a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This is a modernized version. I am not a scholar of Sanskrit and in this work I have not used any Sanskrit words, nor have I linked it in any way to Hindu philosophy. I have tried to write in a way that is likely to appeal to one not familiar with vedic culture.

– *Dhiru Desai, May 14 1987, Memphis, USA*

CHAPTER 3 – UNIVERSE BEFORE SELF

Knowledge brings enlightenment
to the universe;
action brings enlightenment
to the active.
Prefer action
to mere inaction,
for the lazy
are a burden
on others.

Actions are either
selfless or selfish.
Selfless action
saves the soul;
selfish action
enslaves it.
One has the scent
of divine faith;
the other has the stench
of self-interest.
Two persons bathe
in the Ganges;
one with faith
and the other without;
both cleanse their bodies,
but the one with faith
purifies also
the soul.

The selfless worry
about seconds lost

in inertia, and
the selfish about
rewards not received.
The selfless eat
merely to subsist,
the selfish live
so that they can feast.
The selfless put the universe
before self:
they water the plants,
feed their birds and pets,
tend to the cattle,
before helping themselves.

Inspire others by example.
Let not good actions
inflate your ego.
They will be free:
those who have faith,
are free from malice,
and take my advice.
Greed, lust, and anger
are your enemies.
Smoke befores a fire,
dust conceals a mirror,
so do desires cloud the truth.
Selfless action comes
from control of senses,
which though strong
are subject to mental processes.
The mind must be subservient
to reason;
and reason must minister
to the soul.

CHAPTER 4 - THE FIRE THAT BURNS ALL DOUBTS

Whenever evil
dominates the world and
duty is despised,
then to save the earth
I take human form
to destroy all wrongs
and proclaim the right.
One who believes this
and in the final
triumph of truth
achieves salvation.

I am the creator.
I made the tailor,
teacher and trader,
soldier and scientist,
farmer, labourer,
doctor and lawyer,
and the manager.
You can become one
not by right of birth,
but by aptitude,
by ability
and diligence.
I am your maker
but I do not claim
the fruits of your labor,
even though you are
under my power;
and so must you too
seek no undue gains
from your exertions.

The wise one perceives
action in inaction
and inaction in action;
for without vanity
a selfless action
becomes inaction;
and without virtue
inaction is the same
as selfish action.

Work done for reward
will burden the soul.
Work for work itself,
help for help itself,
love for love itself,
yield unsought blessings
and satisfaction.

The wise one is free
from all attachment
without bad intent,
is always content,
controls the senses,
has no self-interest,
is self-reliant,
is not covetous,
is fired by knowledge
and ever at peace.

In prayer, the candle,
the offering, and the devotee
are all divine.

God pervades every place and thing.
Many are the paths to the supreme:
forsaking all wealth;
control of senses;

devoting all passions
in praise of the divine;
living a life of prayer and penance;
selfless action;
renunciation;
and meditation, study and knowledge.

Knowledge is the fire
that destroys all doubts.
Supreme knowledge comes
from the equation:
knowledge plus action
equals action plus detachment
equals renunciation
equals knowledge plus inaction.
Action plus attachment
is selfishness
which leads to worry
and ends in misery.
Inaction without knowledge
is inertia
that only depraves
and enslaves the soul.

Seek the solace of saints
to achieve this knowledge.
Serve the learned one with humility,
but fear not to question, unceasingly.
Seek to quench your thirst
until all is clear to you.
Even wrongdoers can
cross the raging waters
with the ship of knowledge.

The Nucleus

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



There was a vital need for a doctrine of vigorous activism, having as its basis utter selflessness, calm detachment and total absence of personal passion and desire. The *Bhagavad Gita* has supplied the nucleus for such a doctrine. The passage of the centuries and the advent of numerous godmen and compassionate saints and reformers did the rest.

As the ignorant men act from attachment to action,
O Arjuna, so should the wise act without attachment,
wishing the welfare of the world. (3:25)

Karma Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, karma yoga is hard and ceaseless work with efficiency and equilibrium, without being affected by the karmas that the work brings. Maybe the work is a success or a failure, or a mixture of both.

One should not worry about the outcome, whatever it may be. One should work for the sake of self-purification, work efficiently in order to yoke all the tendencies of the mind, and work with equilibrium in order to succeed in the work. However, one should not worry about desired results. This is the philosophy of karma yoga, which is described clearly in



every chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It relates to everyday life and has to be practised in every sphere of life.

Karma yoga is the philosophy of one's relationship with life. It explains what the attitude towards work, family, children, problems, enemies and everything else should be. It tells how one should react in success and failure, love and hatred, victory and defeat. Karma yoga fixes a person's relationship with everything else in the world in such a way that nothing disturbs the mind at any time, no matter what has happened.

But whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages himself in karma yoga with the organs of action, without attachment, he excels! (3:7)

Karma, Jnana and Sannyasa

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

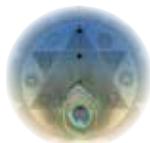
The philosophy of Chapter 4 is that you must have attainment through the practice of karma yoga. In the context of karma yoga, it has also given practical psychological techniques to help overcome the fluctuating mind by becoming free of *raga*, attraction or attachment, *bhaya*, fear, and *krodha*, anger.

Chapter 4 also says that *jnana*, the aspect of wisdom or applied knowledge, and *karma*, action, have to merge together so that jnana becomes active and alive, and karma becomes free from the bondage of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This gives freedom from both sides; freedom as you are living in wisdom and freedom as actions are not creating any further karmas along the way.

Sannyasa represents the aspect of renunciation and one of the prerequisites of sannyasa is that you have to renounce expectations and attachments. The entire gist of chapter 4 is found in this sloka:

Therefore, Arjuna, cutting asunder with the sword of knowledge this doubt in your heart born of ignorance, establish yourself in karma yoga and stand up for the fight. (4:42)

Taking up the sword is an action, a karma, but the form of the sword is wisdom. So karma and jnana have combined together and you are, through sannyasa, cutting yourself off from the doubting nature. That is sannyasa. If you truly ask yourself what is the ultimate aim of sannyasa, you realize it is the elimination of the doubting nature.





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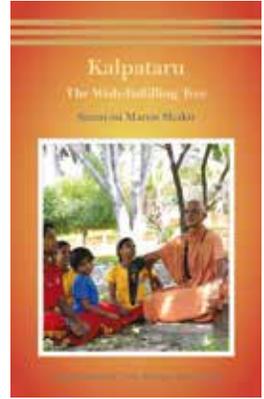
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With prayers and blessings of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati for your health, wellbeing and peace.

Om Tat Sat
The Editor