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Hari Om

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Holi at Ganga Darshan, 2021



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Sadhana

The purpose of sadhana is to release life from the limitations with which it is bound and to make one realize one's absolute independent nature. The practice of sadhana helps the aspirant to control the emotions and passions, and gives the power to resist temptations and remove the disturbing elements from the mind.

To this end sadhana should make one ever cheerful, more concentrated, joyful, balanced, peaceful, contented, blissful, dispassionate, fearless, courageous, compassionate, angerless, 'I'-less, desireless and mineless. Sadhana should give a rich inner life, introspective inner vision and equilibrium under all conditions of life. These are the signs of spiritual growth.

—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 ॥

This is the Goal

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



To transmute the brutal instincts and to become divine is the goal of life. If you control anger, eradicate selfishness and develop tolerance, compassion, selflessness, generosity, courage, forgiveness, you will become divine.

Is selfishness good? No. So become selfless. Is greediness good? Is anger good? Is lust good? Is vanity good? These form the lower nature of man.

So remove these and become selfless, generous, patient, tolerant, pure and humble. This is the goal.

Satsang

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Satsang is a medium of inspiration, and it literally means 'association with truth'. The person giving satsang does it to establish a connection between you, the listener, and your higher self. He uses the teachings from the spiritual texts along with his personal experiences to inspire you. Always attempt to incorporate the lessons of satsang, the teachings and the inspiration you receive, into your life.

There is a story about three identical statues that were brought one morning to the court of the great king Vikramaditya by a sculptor. The sculptor asked the king to identify the statues according to quality: the best quality, the medium quality and the lowest quality. Vikramaditya was a wise king. He took a piece of straw in his hand and put it through the ear of each statue. In the first statue, the straw went into its stomach; in the second statue, it came out of its mouth; and in the third statue, it came out the other ear.

Vikramaditya declared the first statue to be the best, since it represented a person who takes in, digests and tries to incorporate in his life whatever he hears. The second was of medium quality, as it represented a person who talks about, comments on and gives his own interpretation of whatever he hears. The last statue was of the lowest quality, as it represented a person for whom whatever is heard goes in through one ear and out the other.

You have to determine what type of statue you are and try and become the best one. When you hear a satsang, try to find in it one thought, one behaviour, one action that you can incorporate into your life. Only then does the teaching become fruitful; otherwise, it all goes in through one ear and out the other.

— *Published in Living the Divine Life, Yogadrishti series*

Basant Panchami

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

In the Indian mythology, there is the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The three together become God – Brahma is generation, creation; Vishnu is organization, maintenance; and Siva is destruction and transformation. So the trinity of generation, organization and destruction becomes the G O D, God. People are more attracted to Narayana and Lakshmi, and to Siva and Shakti and few people remember and recognize Brahma and Saraswati. There are temples of Narayana and Lakshmi in the thousands across the world, and temples of Siva and Shakti in the thousands across the world. There is only one active temple of Brahma and hardly any of Saraswati, except where she is placed along with Lakshmi and Parvati.

It seems that somewhere in history, Brahma and Saraswati were neglected, and there is a reason for it. Brahma had something which the others did not have and that was his ego – *ahamkara*. Narayana did not have ego, Narayana is transcendental. Siva did not have ego, he is also transcendental. However, Brahma needs to have ego for he is material. He is the responsible element in creation, so individuality has to exist in Brahma. This individuality becomes the cause of the downfall of every human being including Brahma.

Brahma

If we fail today it is because of our individuality, and if we succeed today it is because of our individuality. Narayana and Siva do not need individuality. They are transcendental conditions: all-pervasive, omnipresent. Brahma is an individual unit and there has to be ego in it. The ego always tells you that you are better, superior to other people. Due to this identity and awareness of being superior, Brahma was relegated to a lower spot than Narayana and Siva. He was also ignored, for

he represented the material growth and dimension of objects in time and space, whereas Narayana and Siva do not represent material objects.

Another important point is that nothing can happen, nothing can be created, without knowledge. Even to decorate something there has to be some visualization, some concept, some idea, some knowledge of how it should be done. Otherwise decoration won't be pleasant at all. To manufacture something there has to be a plan, some understanding of what has to be done. For farming, agriculture, engineering, construction, architecture, for everything in life to create something there has to be knowledge.

Brahma and Saraswati, the creative power and the knowledge of creation, are together. Brahma makes the car in the factory and then the car is sent out and people buy the car. Narayana becomes the service centre where the car goes after so many thousands of kilometres, or after so many months for a good servicing, check-up and top up. When the car begins to bellow fumes, doesn't run and function properly, then Siva comes to take the car away to his graveyard.

Narayana and Siva are for maintenance and for taking things away. They are not bothered by the mechanics of creation. Brahma is bothered by the mechanics of creation and for that he needs knowledge of what to do, so Saraswati is there. People somehow disassociated Saraswati from their own life and identified more with Lakshmi of Narayana and Shakti of Siva.

Saraswati

Basant Panchami represents the time of Saraswati as it also represents new growth. The



fifth day of spring represents the new growth after winter. So again it is part of creation, the Brahma element. In that Brahma element, Saraswati is inherent. Spring represents the Brahma element – revival of nature after the winter, and the fifth day of spring becomes Saraswati's.

The Saraswati effect is felt on all five *koshas*, dimensions or *lokas*, which are under the control of Brahma. Mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi are the realm of Brahma where everything is experienced individually. When you come to ajna and sahasrara nothing is experienced independently or individually. Everything becomes one homogeneous experience.

Wisdom is associated with creation and Saraswati represents wisdom, she does not represent knowledge. It is like food and digestion. You can eat food – breakfast, lunch and dinner, but then the body has to derive the nourishment from the food to survive. The energy is extracted from what you consume by the body and that becomes the prana shakti of the body.

In the same manner, what you study is like what you eat, but what you extract from that study becomes part of your behaviour, thinking and expression – that is wisdom. You study to gain knowledge, yet you don't necessarily apply the knowledge. If knowledge becomes wisdom, it is an expression of life, and that is the role of Saraswati. Therefore, she is the goddess of wisdom, not of knowledge.

You can have twenty degrees but no wisdom. You can know many things but never apply them in life. So what is the use of knowing? When you know things but you are unable to apply them that is the curse of Saraswati. When you know things and you are able to apply them to improve yourself that is the grace of Saraswati. That is the difference between knowledge and wisdom.

I am happy that Bihar School of Yoga was founded during the time of Basant Panchami as it shows a direct connection with the shakti of Saraswati. Sri Swamiji has said many times that we belong to the Saraswati tradition and our prime duty



is to preserve the vidya for posterity. This is an indication that *vidya* is living knowledge, and *jnana* is static knowledge. Saraswati aims to give vidya not jnana. Having Basant Panchami as the foundation day of BSY is the path laid out by Paramahamsaji – to always strive to develop and live the knowledge in life, and that is also the fulfilment of yoga vidya.

– 15 February 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Two Perspectives on Colour

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Holi is known as the festival of colours. In towns, cities and villages, on the streets, in homes, everywhere, the people, come out to colour each other in different colours. Holi also indicates the day of social integration as on this day there is nobody high or low, nobody belonging to different denominations or religions, nobody belonging to different customs and traditions. Everyone is united in the colourful spirit of Holi.

According to different traditions, you will not give colour, but you will give flowers to Gods. Today in different temples, you will see the flower petals being showered on the deity. That is the way devotees play Holi – through flowers.

The spiritually oriented people, the sadhus, the pious people, the yogis, the recluses, the renunciates give a different interpretation to the festival of colour. I have two examples in front of me. One example is of Sri Krishna and the other example is of Paramahamsaji.

Transparency

There is an incident in Krishna's life which is quite interesting. One day, Krishna was walking around the town and came across a person who was dyeing clothes. He had different buckets filled with colours, and people used to go to this dyer and say to him, that they wanted the dhoti dyed blue, red or yellow, or the shirt dyed yellow or pink. According to the customer's choice, the man used to dip the cloth in the bucket, take it out and give it to the person. Krishna watched him for some time and being a child was interested. So he went up to the dyer and said, "Can I also have a bucket? I also want to dye the clothes." The dyer said, "All right," and gave him a bucket which was filled with water, but without any colour. He told Krishna, "This is also a colour and you can dye different clothes in this colour as well."



So Krishna takes the bucket and goes to another cross road of the town and stands in the middle of the cross road and announces, "Anybody who wants to dye their clothes can come here and I will do it for free, in any colour of your choice." So some people first went out of curiosity and they said we want to dye our clothes in this colour, this colour, this colour and Krishna used to take the clothes from them – dip the material in the bucket and the colour that came was what the people wanted.

There was one bystander who was watching this game. He noticed that Krishna had only one bucket, but from that bucket blue was coming out, red was coming out, green was coming out, yellow was coming out, purple was coming out, black was coming out. That man was curious and awed at the same time.

Krishna continued this the whole day and come evening, people dispersed to go to their homes and Krishna was standing alone with the bucket, contemplating also returning home, when this bystander came with a piece of cloth and said, "I also want to dye my cloth." Krishna looked at him and said, "Which colour?" He said, "The colour in the bucket." What was the colour in the bucket? It was just plain water.

God gives colour according to the choice of the people and those colours come out of a colourless pot. We can put on many colours but the spirit is colourless. The spirit has no colour, so one has to dip in the transparency of the spirit. That is one meaning of Holi, from Krishna's perspective.

Geru

The next story is Paramahamsaji's perspective. And there is a poem which he has written - it is published in *Steps to Yoga*, in the letters to Satyabrata, Vishwaprem and Dharmashakti. To Swami Dharmashakti he is writing that in the world people are covering themselves with colours, but in the life of a sannyasin there is only one colour, the geru colour, which once it comes on, does not leave. You can wear any other colour in life and change every day, but once you wear geru, it doesn't leave the body.

Paramahamsaji says initiation is covering the body. People want the geru covering, yet the mind also has to be coloured



by geru and this people can't do. Geru symbolizes vitality, transparency, dynamism, luminosity, wisdom, activity, creativity. However, we all hang onto our old preconceived notions, impressions and ideas and we don't want to change, so how can we colour our mind in geru? How can we colour our spirit in geru?

This is the contemplation, the sadhana for the pious, the spiritually oriented people, the recluses, the savants, sages and sadhus to reflect on: What stops me in this conditioned nature? Why

can I not go beyond that conditioning, beyond the limit that I have set for myself?

Nelson Mandela says that everyone is afraid of their own luminosity. Nobody wants to connect with positivity and wisdom for that is their luminosity. People want to hang on to the opinions and beliefs which have shaped their nature, their personality, and they are not willing to change that.

Holi becomes the time for reflection according to Paramahamsaji: can we not colour ourselves geru internally?

– Holi, 28 March 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Blessed Self

2 April 1956

Affectionate blessings

Our Holi has not yet arrived; the day the sadhana is completed will be the day when we will wear its permanent colour. The sadhana camp will be the festival of Holi for us. With the japa mala we will colour Satyabrat, Basanti, Sita and others in the colours of Shyam, taking with us vermilion in the form of remembrance, held in the bag of recollections. Some colour has already been applied, but some still remains to be put on. I want you absolutely soaked in the colour of bhakti, drenched in the nectar of sadhana, intoxicated with the thought of the Lord, totally drunk in His remembrance. Our Holi will come soon.

The Holi that is played on the body,

Will be played on the mind.

Here the body is coloured,

There we will colour the being.

Here the clothes are soaked,

There the wearer will be soaked.

Here we colour each other,

There the One will colour Himself.

Just wait.

– Letter to Swami Dharmashakti from Satyam

Be Healthy and Happy Within

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

We need the grace of Ganesha to overcome the obstacles that we face in our life to become healthier and happier, positive and optimistic, smiling and hopeful.

This morning I came across a passage written by Paramahamsaji, 'The practice of yoga will bring happiness to people in Kali Yuga.' I was a bit surprised because I have never come across in his writing where he actually refers to a yuga. He may say the practice of yoga will bring health and happiness, but to say 'in Kali Yuga' was the surprising part for me. I started to think why did he mention specifically Kali Yuga? What could be the reasoning. Trying to decipher or understand his thinking made me analyze Kali Yuga as well.

Kali Yuga

What is the meaning of Kali Yuga? In one word we can say deterioration, something that deteriorates. It is deterioration of everything: the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, humanistic, the benevolent and the divine. It is said that Kali Yuga started 5123 years ago with the physical demise of Sri Krishna. The day Sri Krishna left his physical body was the day Kali Yuga started, and according to the calculations that happened 5123 years ago.

In these 5123 years, we have seen the development of the human civilization from being a foraging society, an agrarian society, to what it has become today. In this journey of humanity, there have been adjustments, adaptations amidst all struggles. Struggle has always been part of human life, yet we survived through all that to reach where we are today. We have not only survived but multiplied as well and have become the most dominant race on the planet. We have been given something that no other species on this planet possesses – intelligence,

the ability to know the good from the bad, right from wrong, the day from night, the plus from minus. However, the path that we are walking upon is not towards enlightenment, it is towards self-destruction. Why is it happening?

This change has been very drastic, dramatic, and very fast. If I analyze my own life, then the decade of the 1960s was the decade where I lived a carefree life. In society everybody was part of the family. There was no stranger. I used to run away from home at the age of three or four and people would find me two to three kilometres away in the railway station, recognize me and bring me back. Nobody ever thought of kidnapping me, yet today if a child is alone, there is no surety of survival. That was the carefree life that I have seen in the decade of the 1960s.

The decade of the 1970s was the age of discovery for everyone. The scientific discoveries were being made, like the refrigerator, television and air conditioner – out of solid twenty-four-gauge iron sheets which even an elephant could not dent. Travelling was by propeller planes not jet planes. The first time I travelled from India to Europe by propeller plane, it took me three days, flying from Delhi to Karachi, to Afghanistan to Dubai, to Paris, to London. From going at



snail's pace to the age of today when you get on a flight and you are in another corner of the world in a very short time.

The 1980s was the age of exposure. Everybody was exposed to modern technology in the form of computer, internet, the white web and the dark web. This changed people globally. Suddenly a rickshaw-wallah was able to see exactly the same things that a person in London sitting in Harrods would see. This change was very sudden and you have to remember that human beings have their own unique, individual personality. Sure, we have the right to choose, we can say, "Yes, I need it," or "I do not need it. This is my decision and my choice." However, there is something subtle behind me and my consciousness and that is the collective consciousness; and we are all part of that.

Selfish or selfless

According to ancient scriptures and yoga, the human body is nothing but energy. Science tells us that the human body is nothing but compressed energy. We know it because we have studied it and heard about it, yet we identify not with



energy, we identify with this matter which is the product of that energy. We are not identifying with the essence of life, but with something that is created from that essence, and which is material and gross. This has been the collective consciousness right from day one – the body, the senses! The mind simply enforces the needs of the body and senses and desire enforces the needs of the body and the senses. This externalized awareness is what has made us deviate from our evolution and led us towards destruction.

The last chapter of the *Ramayana* describes very eloquently what is going to happen in Kali Yuga – fear, insecurity, disease, death, separation, isolation, violence, aggression. The worst of the human nature is coming out, so much that you won't be able to face it, manage it or deal with it; it is going to destroy you. This is what the scriptures have said.

If we look at our own life, civilization and society, there is definitely a quest to seek happiness and pleasure, yet this drive is very much oriented to oneself only, 'This is my demand, I seek this pleasure, I seek this happiness.' When the same drive is not oriented towards oneself, and instead the same drive covers more people, more beings around you, then it becomes selfless. There are these two words: selfish, meaning self-oriented, and selfless meaning inclusive, where everyone is included in what I am having, experiencing and going through. Everyone is a part of that.

The selfish or self-oriented nature is the prominent nature today. It is the destructive nature as it does not allow the subtle aspects of our nature like emotions or the spirit to express their own nature of *ananda*, bliss, happiness. The craving of the desires and senses always makes one identify with what one does not have and ignore what one has, and this becomes the cause of unhappiness, disease and ill health.

When I read Sri Swamiji's statement that the practice of yoga will make people happy in Kali Yuga, I thought. 'Yes, health is what we need and for that asana and pranayama are very good.' Yoga has the only self-help tools in the world today,

apart from the medical tools, which can give optimum health. No other exercises, gym or practices will give you total health, but the correct and right application of asana and pranayama will give you total health.

Now about mental happiness. If you are happy, you have peace and everything. Happiness is the next quality. Just as health is required for the body, happiness is required for the mind. If you follow the principles and lifestyle defined by yoga, then you are bound to experience happiness. The path is laid out, but we lack motivation and continuity.

The fickle mind

This has been an ancient problem; people want to do something, yet they are not able to sustain or continue with it. Fickleness of the mind is human nature, even Rama asked his guru, Sage Vasishtha, how to control the fickle mind. Even Arjuna asked Sri Krishna, how to control the fickle mind. Every person in society today is asking how to control the fickle mind. The fickleness has always been there – and the lack of spiritual stability in life has become the cause of identifying with the external environment and disconnecting from the internal dimension.

Society and the world today is not a healthy or a happy place. The imbalance we see in people's lives and in society around the world shows that we have lost control over our mind and wisdom. There is no longer such a thing as wisdom. People derive happiness and enjoyment from complaining about others.

The culture of complaint has come into people's lives. Complain about anything and everyone, and the more people support you, the more important you become. All the social movements are based on complaints. This leads to dissatisfaction and unhappiness, which is the biggest setback for human life, as it gives birth to violence and aggression. People are going through it and the collective consciousness is transmitting the same energy to people who are not even in the vicinity.

The energy that is being transmitted by all the brains all around, the thoughts that are being transmitted by all the brains all around, the electronic waves that float in the air of all the Whats Apps and other medias – does it not affect the brain? Just because you don't see the radio waves you can't say that they don't exist.

The grace of Ganesha

For this reason, I can only pray to Ganesha to remove the obstacles and give us the wisdom to live in the right manner and be responsible for health and happiness and transmit that! Self-realization is not the need of today, it might have been an inspiration of the '60s and '70s. It is definitely not the need of today. Health and happiness is the need of today, and only these two items can bring balance in a person's life. If you are happy, you will become more positive, and the more positive you become, the more spiritual you will become.



Think about it and try to experiment with yourself and see if this capsule works on you or not. If it works, explore it, discover new venues, develop your own experience and inspire other people to experience health and happiness. This is going to be the next profession for the next decade. The way people are suffering from mental problems, from the isolation, the lockdowns, the family conflicts has become the catalyst to open new doors for mental traits which are not positive or conducive to a healthy life.

The WHO is worried about how to deal with mental health for the coming generation. Those people, who can understand the need to be healthy and happy, will be able to help those people who need some kind of intervention in their life. If you begin to live a balanced, harmonious lifestyle and encourage and inspire others to live like that, then that will be the biggest help to humanity – to manage the physical and psychological problems that we are going to face in the next ten to twenty-five years. This onslaught is not going to stop. It is the beginning, the first of many that are going to come. This is not the last virus, though it is a very potent one; it has changed life everywhere.

As people involved with yoga and spiritual life, we should be ready to deal with the challenges that our society and civilization is facing. We should be ready to help people discover health and happiness in their life, and for that you have to find it within yourself first. I pray to Ganesha today, that you find health and happiness within yourself.

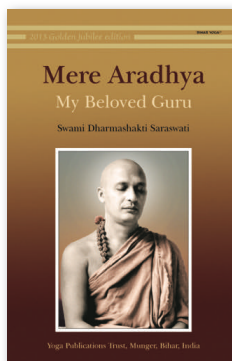
– 4 April 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger

I feel assured that Swami Niranjana will lead you all amidst the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in your life and you forget the way, he is the one who can tell you where to go and what to do.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati, *Sat Chandi Mahayajna*, 1995

Why don't You Eat Badam Halva?

Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati



In this desert of life, many are the beings running after the mirage of pleasure and happiness. Of such deluded, wandering souls is Swami Satyananda the guide. People are searching for a power, a force that not only aids them in the pursuit of happiness, but also alleviates their pain and suffering. Swami Satyam is equipped with such a powerful force. No wonder then that the people of Nandgram were greatly impressed and influenced by his speech, manners, satsangs and lectures.

There are many institutions in Nandgram where saints and sages come regularly and conduct programs. Satyavratji was associated with all of them, but he had a soft spot for the children's club of Shankar Bhavan (the place where Swami Sivananda had been asked to send a sannyasin to conduct satsangs during the Ganesha festivities in September). At the special request of the Shankar Bhavan people, it was decided that Swamiji's evening satsangs would be held there.

People poured into Satyavratji's house all day long. The day would begin at 5 am with an asana and pranayama class and from 6 am onwards, there would be a constant stream of children coming in. The schools were closed for the summer vacations, so the children had a free run of the place. From 2 to 4 pm a satsang would be conducted for the ladies, and at 6 pm everyone would proceed for Shankar Bhavan to attend satsang and return after the end of the satsang at around 9 pm.

Swami Satyananda's satsangs soon began to be published in the local newspapers and periodicals. At the insistent request of the townspeople, Swami Satyananda went to stay at Shankar Bhavan for a week. The B.N.C. mill was some way off from the town and a vehicle was necessary to get there, making it difficult for most townspeople to meet Swamiji. At Shankar Bhavan, the crowds started coming at 5 am and stayed till 10 pm at night!

The children used to spend their entire day there. Swami Satyananda had become their messiah. For the first time in their life, the children had an opportunity to come into close contact with a saint and imbibe some pearls of wisdom. The children would innocently ask, "Swamiji, why don't you sit on a silver chair like the other swamis who come here? And why don't you eat badam halwa? Once another Swamiji came and he would finish off one kilo of badam halwa, not to mention great quantities of fruit and dried fruits in one sitting! And he wouldn't give us even a tiny morsel as prasad. Why don't you get some badam halwa made for yourself? You hardly eat anything, so all the halwa will come to us as prasad. What fun that will be!"

The children would exhibit various talents all day long. They would sing, dance, play games and enact skits. They learnt many bhajans from Swamiji as well. People would exclaim in surprise, "Who are these kids! The cowherd friends of Sri Krishna or the monkey army of Sri Rama or the ghosts and goblins of Lord Shiva? And who are you? It is way beyond our understanding . . ." Swami Satyananda would laughingly reply, "I am a mere sannyasin and these children are the Ramas, Krishnas and Shivas of the future, the upcoming leaders of the nation . . ."

Whoever met Swami Satyananda or listened to his satsangs even once, could never forget him. Everyone wondered, "How could all these wonderful virtues and qualities have developed in one so young in years? Empathy, self-sacrifice, generosity, truth, unconditional love, affection, childlike innocence,



humility, gravity and far-sightedness – all these qualities are thoroughly ingrained in him. His character is worthy of emulation indeed.”

– *Published in Mere Aradhya, My Beloved Guru*

About Humility

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When the clouds are full of water they come closer to earth. When the trees are full of fruit the branches swing low. Those people who have outstanding qualities become humble, but those people who do not have those qualities, pose as though they have them. They become egoistic and arrogant. They make a show of their qualities. This is the tendency of most people. In fact, if you analyze the whole affair psychologically, you will find that real humility comes through the understanding of one's negative personality.

When we look within our own self impartially, when we try to judge ourselves impartially, then we see our qualities

and see what we do not have. Therefore, in order to achieve humility, one has to judge one's own self mercilessly. If one wants to succeed in this life and also in spiritual life, then one will have to see one's own personality thoroughly. No man is perfect, and no man is united in himself.

Everybody has a double personality, not only with others, but even with oneself. Can you make a confession about yourself to yourself? No, you can't. You cannot confess about yourself to yourself because, first of all, you don't know about yourself. "I am a very good man," that's what you know. "I am a very wise man," that's all you know about yourself. "I am a very strong man; I am a very capable man," that's what you think about yourself.

When you fantasize, what do you fantasize? When you imagine or build castles in the air, what do you do? You become a great man, you become the richest man, you become the most powerful man, but do you know that is not yourself? You are just a limited human being and you have many traits of imperfection.

Even a boy who is in primary school should know his limitations. They are his intellectual limitations. He should not make fun of a professor who teaches at a university. This is precisely the reason we quarrel in the family. This is precisely the reason we quarrel in the marketplace, because you think you are right and I think I am right, but the fact is both are wrong. If one of us was right, the quarrel would not have started.

I will tell you a joke related to two drivers in Japan. The two drivers were driving in opposite directions. Suddenly, at a U-turn they collided with each other. It was not a great accident, but it happened nonetheless. Both of them came from behind the steering wheel and greeted each other. One said, "I am sorry, it was my mistake." The other driver said, "No, not at all, it was my mistake." He said, "No, it was my mistake." That was their quarrel. Now both of them had to report to the police. When they went to the police, one driver reported, "I



made a mistake, I was on the wrong side and I collided with this car." The other driver also put in the same type of report. The policeman said, "What am I going to do?" Then one of the drivers said, "You please tell me what fine I should pay?"

When there is understanding of oneself, then comes humility. Humility is not a cowardly nature. A coward also looks very humble, but humility is a very dynamic nature in man. It is not the nature of the western people. A western man will say, "Sorry," and then the other western man will say, "Sorry," but when they go to the court, their lawyers will attack each other and each one will defend himself. That is the western way. That's not humility. That is the diplomacy of humility.

Humility means having a nature in which you try to understand your mistake in relation to the other person. We don't have to talk about Japanese drivers, let us talk about husband and wife, parents and children, the boss and the subordinate. It is a crisis in humility there. The wife is trying









to say that the husband is wrong, and the husband is trying to prove that she is wrong. If they go to their mother-in-law and father-in-law, they are trying to press their own argument. What happens then, you know. The quarrel amplifies. If one of them would withdraw, it would be painful in the beginning, but at the end it would pay substantial rewards in the form of happiness in the family, but the ego comes in between.

Sometimes the thoughts of humility do come in the mind. At the heat of passion – nothing, but sometimes she thinks, or sometimes he thinks, “Ah, all unnecessary, I should not have done it.” They know that this is not the way to happiness, but they do not tackle the problem through humility. If one of them or both of them could search their own selves and try to find out their own contribution to the quarrel, then they would gain humility and understanding.

Therefore, humility is dead. It is dead because of your hard ego. You have your personality problems, you are suffering from inferiority, or you have the feeling of superiority, or you see a certain mistake in your husband or wife, or you become careless about each other because too much intimacy breeds contempt.

There are definite ways of developing the virtue of humility. Start with your guru, because it is before the guru that you bow your head. You have to practise humility with someone first. You can practise humility with God, but with God there is no problem, because He is not there, you don't clash with him. With guru you come into a clash because he exists and he is going to crush your ego. He says, “Sit down.” For some time, you do what he says. After some time, you begin to raise your ego a little, because the ego does not want to be subdued by anybody. It is man's support in life. Therefore, in order to develop humility, you have to train your ego.

– 4 May 1984, *Satyananda Ashram, Kypseli, Athens*,
published in History of Satyananda Yoga in Greece,
Volume One with Swami Satyananda Saraswati

True Humility

Swami Sivamurti Saraswati

Humility is the hallmark of a great human being. It is the highest virtue. From the respect and consideration for others that arose through our effort to adapt, adjust and accommodate to the various situations, we have become more humble.

When we say, “Oh, you can do that much better than I,” although, we are feeling that we could do a better job, we put on a show of humility. Pretence, self-demeaning and belittling oneself are aspects of false humility. False humility can also be expressed by looking humble with the head bowed, the shoulders a little stooped and a humble expression, but there is no true humility inside.

True humility develops inner strength and stamina. It also develops a feeling of gratitude for what we have been given. If ever we stop to think how fortunate we are, we feel grateful for everything that is coming our way, we lose our arrogance and realize everything has its place in the scheme of things.

Thank you

Real humility combines consideration and respect for others by recognizing their value and importance. Ultimately, this attitude develops the feeling or desire to be of service. The feeling of service comes with humility, which is shown clearly in an anecdote from the life of Swami Sivananda.

One day, he went to give satsang at a devotee’s home. The hostess had spent a lot of time preparing the food and the house to make sure that everything was ready to receive the guru and guests. The satsang went on a little longer than usual and Swami Sivananda had a train to catch. The disciples around him were saying, “Swamiji, you have to finish the satsang now, you have to go. We will miss the train if you continue

any longer.” So Swami Sivananda got up, got in the car and went towards the train station.

On the way, he remembered that he hadn’t thanked the hostess for the effort she had made. He said, “Stop the car. I am going back. I haven’t thanked the hostess.” The organizers and disciples in the car said, “Swamiji, you can’t go back for you will miss the train and if you miss the train, you will miss the next program.” Swami Sivananda was adamant and said, “No, I must go back. I must thank the hostess. It is not right that she made so much effort and I left the house without saying a word to her.”

He went back and asked her forgiveness. He bowed down, touched her feet and said, “Forgive me for not thanking you for the beautiful hospitality and everything that you had arranged for me. It was amiss of me to have left the house without thanking you properly.”

This is a beautiful example of humility. Swami Sivananda’s high principles did not allow him to leave without behaving correctly and appropriately.

– *Published in Swami Sivananda’s 18 ITIES
& the Practice of Pratyahara*



Develop Humility

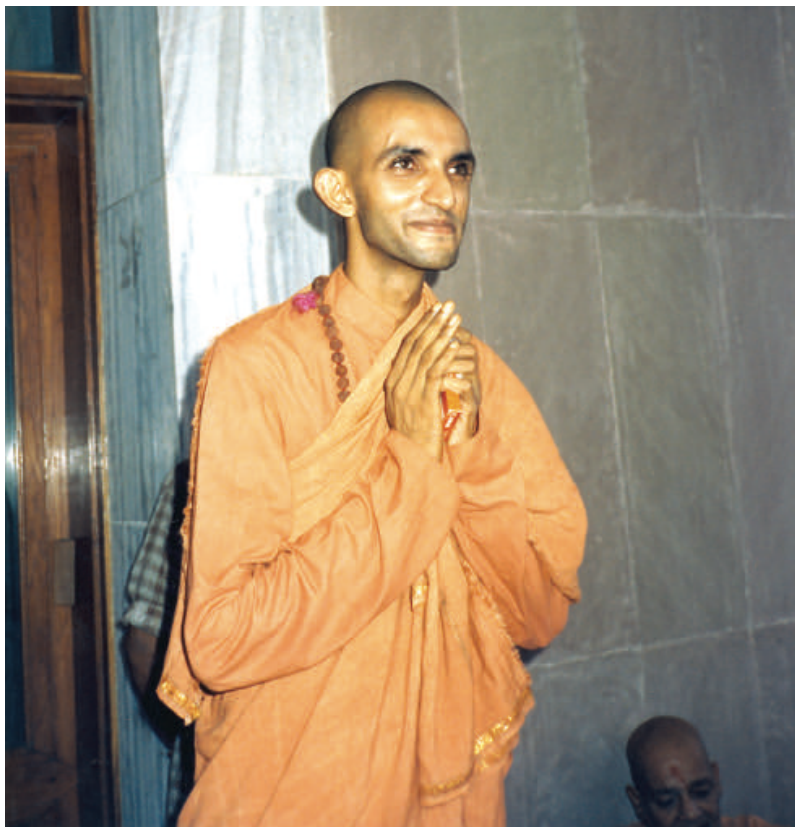


Respect everybody. Bow with folded hands before all. Do not talk in a loud voice before elders and venerable persons. See the Lord in all and feel that you are his servant, and so, the servant of all. Consider none as inferior to you.

— *Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Be on the alert when you do service in society: Unselfish service of any kind, platform lectures of any kind or any kind of public activity will surely bring you name and fame. Treat them as poison. Become very humble. You have to interact with your society, family and friends in a tender and humble way.

— *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



The key to humility is consideration. When we are able to develop the faculty of consideration, then a natural attitude of respect develops within us, which takes us to humility.

— *Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Mind and Energy

Can the energy of the individual mind connect with the universal energy?

Swami Niranjanananda: The mind is the subtle force or energy responsible for giving birth to an experience through the agency of the senses: recognizing them, realizing them, cultivating them, developing them and transforming them. The subtle power of the mind is present in everything in the form of *anu*, contained energy. The quality and nature of the mind is both *anu* and *vibhu*. *Anu* means atomic, contained and defined, and *vibhu* means connected, expansive and broad.

The mind in the *anu* form is contained within the body; it does not have any specific location in the body. It is part of every sense organ and sense experience. It is contained in vision – the moment you look at something, the mind becomes active. It is contained in hearing – the moment a noise comes to



your ears, the mind becomes active. It is contained in taste – the moment you taste something, the mind becomes active. It is an inherent part of touch – the moment you touch something, the mind becomes active. Every sense organ, *indriya*, is connected with the mind; each and every part of the body is connected with the mind.

The second aspect of mind is *vibhu*, interconnected beyond the body. The sages and rishis have maintained that the higher quality of the mind is *vibhu*. All minds are interconnected, although one is not aware of this. When one is able to transcend the restrictions and limitations of the *anu* mind, then one connects with the *vibhu* mind. The expression of the *vibhu* mind is seen in the lives of yogis and realized beings.

Yogis have maintained that all minds are interconnected. Your mind and my mind are interconnected, but you are not aware of it. If I can become aware of that connection, then I can know what is happening in your mind. If you can become aware of your connection, then you will know what is happening in my mind. It is fine-tuning the mind, just as a radio is fine-tuned to hear a station without any garbled sound.

Such fine-tuning is achieved through *sadhana*, sustained practice. In normal life, the *anu* or contained mind is lived. In spiritual life, the *vibhu* mind is lived; one connects one's mind with the universe. In the life of a spiritual aspirant, the *anu* mind has to be transformed into a *vibhu* mind.

The *anu* mind relates to your own life and gives birth to your own desires and needs. Its nature is selfish. However, when the mind becomes *vibhu* its nature becomes expansive. It connects not just with oneself but with others, for the essence of the mind is energy and energy tends to join with energy. In *Hatharatnavali* (4:44) this process is described:

*Karpoorakamanale yadvat saindhavam salile yathaa;
Tadaa sandheeyamaanam hi manastatraiva leeyate.*

Just as camphor dissolves in fire and salt in water, in the same way the mind also merges (in Brahman).

How can communication happen in the non-material dimension?

Swami Niranjanananda: In *prakriti*, or nature, the same energy and spirit is flowing in all aspects of creation. The communication between one's life force and the life force inherent in others is not mental, intellectual or verbal, but communication of thoughts and feelings. Many people have experimented with non-verbal communication.

The members of Findhorn in the United Kingdom were interested in communicating with plants, trees and flowers, as they believed it was possible to awaken the spirit of the *devas*, the illumined beings, within. In *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*, the physicist Itzhak Bentov spoke of the energy being awakened in a lifeless rock by giving it worship and prayer over centuries. He discovered the simple principle of non-verbal communication.

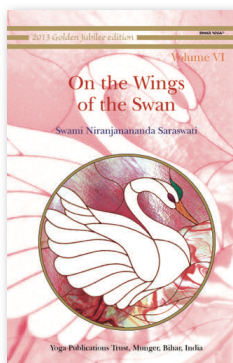
Spiritual masters have understood this connection and expressed it, not in a scientific manner, but through experience. They have come to the same conclusion – the mind is energy. The body is matter, the senses are expressions of matter, but the mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions and spirit are all energy. Communication happens in the realm of energy, in the non-material dimension.

– *Published in Conversations on the Science of Yoga –
Hatha Yoga Book 2, Hatha Yoga and the Mind*



Find Balance – Always

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The whole idea of spiritual life is based on pure, simple principles. The most appropriate principle has been mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita* in the form of *samatvam yoga ucchate* – “Yoga is finding balance and equilibrium within oneself.” This equilibrium is the balance between what is attainable and not attainable, between the perfectible and the not perfectible, between that which gives happiness and that which gives unhappiness. It is the balance between the two polarities of life. This is the first stepping-stone of spiritual life.

The idea of balance does not end as long as there is life, for life is an expression of paradoxes from birth to death. Until the time of death, one has to find the strength to experience balance. One has to find the strength to live harmoniously. Living harmoniously means with awareness of the body: health and illness, with awareness of the mind: the pulls of the mind, and with the awareness of trying to find harmony and peace.

The discovery of harmony and peace constitutes the foundation stone of spiritual life. People say yoga begins with asana or other techniques. People say spiritual life begins with discipline. However, from the facts, ideas and experiences of the teachers and masters, the real spiritual life is developed and experienced when one begins to take control over the fluctuating states of the body and mind, and brings about balance in their expression.

You have to make the effort, you have to make the attempt to find this harmony in thinking, in behaviour, in action, in living, in the environment, at home, in your profession. The different practices of yoga do help, but realization of spiritual



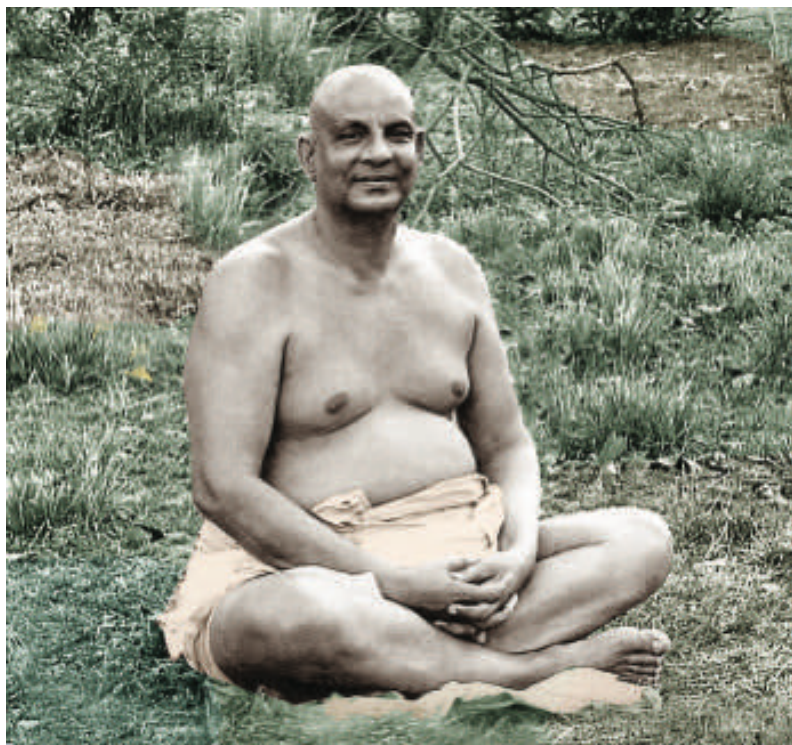
life begins with balancing oneself. Therefore, as a beginner or an advanced student, one always has to try to find this harmony in action, in non-action, in pain and pleasure, in happiness and discomfort. This is the ultimate test of human spiritual effort.

– 28 April 2006, *Ganga Darshan*,
published in On the Wings of the Swan, Volume VI

Qualities of a Yogi

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

In Chapter 12 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna describes the qualities that a true devotee possesses. He neither attaches himself to anything nor does he have any aversion to things. He has a balanced mind under all circumstances. He is not agitated by the happenings of the world, nor does he himself cause any agitation in others. He is perfectly desireless and rejoices in the Divine within. He sees equality everywhere, being untouched by sorrow, fear, honour and dishonour. He is perfectly content as he has surrendered his entire being to the Divine.





The devotee is neither elated by praise nor pained by censure. He keeps a balanced state of mind. He has controlled the organ of speech and so he is silent. His mind is serene and silent as he has controlled the thoughts also. He is quite content with the bare means of bodily sustenance. Contentment ever dwells in the heart of the devotee. Like the ocean which is ever full, his heart is ever full as he has no cravings. He is ever joyful and joyous. He never grumbles, complains or murmurs when he does not obtain food and clothing.

Those who are free from likes and dislikes, attraction and repulsion, can possess equanimity. Those who are neither elated nor troubled when they obtain desirable or undesirable objects can possess evenness of mind.

The bhakta does not rejoice when he attains desirable objects nor does he grieve when he parts with his cherished objects, and he does not desire the unattained. The ordinary person of the world is ruled by the pairs of opposites, honour and dishonour, cold and heat, pleasure and pain. A yogi, a sage or a devotee has a balanced mind. He has poise or equanimity and is not at all swayed by the blind forces of attraction and repulsion.

Contentment

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

You want to become a good person. You want to become pure, you want to become sattwic. It is a good idea, however, the secret of becoming good, pure and sattwic lies not in pursuing a desire but in developing the faculty of contentment in life. That is the secret.

The destiny of human life

There are many people who want to be good yet they are not content, and their mind is going through a lot of conflict and confusion. Expectations, needs and desires are expressed by the mind. All these expressions of the mind take us away from the state of harmony, balance, equilibrium. The harmony of mind, the balance of mind, the equilibrium of mind represents the state of contentment.

Therefore, one should make an attempt not to become pure, sattwic, good, happy and joyous but to become content in life. That is the training that we need in order to fulfil the destiny of human life.

What is the destiny of human life? God-realization? No. Attainment of peace? No. Being happy and joyous? No. They are only expressions. Happiness is only an expression, peace is only an expression of that state of mind which is experiencing contentment all the time. If you are content you are at peace with yourself, you are blissed out. If there is no contentment then every effort, every attempt that you aspire for in life will be futile: there will never be any satisfaction.

Sadhana

Santosha is a quality, and it is a niyama which we try to attain in yoga through observation and adjustment in life. The destiny of human life is to discover this source of contentment. As a result



of discovering contentment, we will find peace, happiness and joy. To become established in the state of contentment, we have to go through a process of sadhana, self-training. Training ourselves to be responsible for the actions in life, for the outcome in life and for our behaviour in life.

Then there is the concept of the *drashta*, the witness in yoga. Many times, when you study yogic literature, you read that you have to become a witness of yourself. You have to observe yourself, you have to become aware of yourself. What is this witness, what is this observation, what is this awareness? You become aware of your needs, expectations and desires. You are able to differentiate and distinguish between the just and the unjust, the appropriate and the inappropriate and, by developing willpower, you can adopt a path which is appropriate, not necessarily giving you pleasure, but that which is appropriate.

When you think of something appropriate then you should not think of the word 'appropriateness' in terms of pleasure and displeasure. No – the idea of pleasure and displeasure has to be taken away from the concept of appropriateness. Appropriateness is only an awareness which allows you to discover what is beneficial for you and what is not. With this understanding, if you are on the path of yoga, it becomes possible to experience the symptoms of purity and wholeness in life. That is the direction of yoga.

– 25 July 2001, Ganga Darshan, Munger

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 9 – MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

I am the word,
the decision
and the action.
I am the gift,
the sacrifice and the spirit.
I am the cross,
also the star
and the crescent.
I am fuel,
the timber
and the fire.
I am maker,
the preserver
and destroyer.
I am male
and female
and neutral.
I am mother,
also father and creator.
I am the pure
and the holy
and the divine.
I am support,
destination
and shelter.
I am well-wisher
and the friend.
I am seed
and the plant
and the grain.

I am sun
and the rain
and the wind.
I am the truth,
the invisible
and the visible.
And I am life,
and death and
eternity.

This is my message to the world:
The divine road
is the path of love.
Love is selfless action
and giving away
the fruits of action.
Renunciation is
not caring for the fruits.
When you care and produce
and give me the fruits,
that is love.
Renunciation requires
control of the senses.
But when you devote
your senses to me,
that is love.
Let your reason
be tinged with faith.
Open your ears
to divine music.
Sing the song of love.

My child, see me in every being:
in the beggar
outside your door
and in the cow.
Everything you do,
do with love,
as if you are caring for me.

Look after your cattle
and their gifts of milk and manure
will be even richer.
Care for the child,
and you will tend
to me in the child.
Prepare with care
the dinner for your guests,
for I am in them too.
Cleanse your body knowing that
the water you bathe in
is a gift from me.

Darkness disappears
when you light the lamp;
so will boredom and difficulty,
when you work with love.
When someone
ill-treats you
do not run
or hit back;
look back with
affection.

The world is a mirror
of your self;
if you look with love,
it will seem divine.
The yellow corn seed
with heat pops out
into a bloom
of pure lily white;
so let love make
your actions right.

Whatever you offer,
be it a leaf,
a fruit, a flower,
or just plain water,
I will accept
if you give with love.
Do not throw away your life,
for what you scatter
is swept away by the wind,
but what you sow will grow
into a field of greens.
Even a wrongdoer,
who repents and comes to me
with utmost devotion,
will find peace in me.
Offer your life
to me and mine;
that is my message,
my word, to the world.

CHAPTER 10 – THE SUN AMONG LAMPS

The wise know
I have no beginning
and no end.
They don't suffer
from delusions
and distractions.
With the lamp of knowledge
they strive through darkness
towards me.
They see me
in a mother's love
and a father's labor,
in a teacher's knowledge
and in the wisdom of a saint,
in the laughter of children
and in the wrinkles of old age.

The wise see me
in sunrise and sunset,
rivers and rolling hills,
winds and rains and snowstorms,
the lotus and jasmine,
mangoes and custard apples,
sandalwood and oak trees,
buffaloes and camels,
lions, tigers and monkeys,
and in crows and peacocks
and in nightingales.
They see me in big and small,
good and evil,
birth and death,

joy and sorrow,
success and failure,
fear and courage,
war and peace
and in truth and forgiveness.

The wise see me as the soul
in living beings,
as the beginning,
middle, and end
of all things,
as the sun among lamps
and the moon in darkness,
Himalaya of mountains,
Pacific among oceans,
the Nile among rivers,
spring among seasons,
the rose among flowers,
cobra among serpents,
holy fig among trees,
lion among animals,
eagle among birds and
butterfly of insects.
They see me
as the letter A in the alphabet,
in the mind among senses,
and in the words of poems,
in the conscience
of the living,
and in the silence of prayer,
and they know that the universe
is but a fraction of me.

From Unreal to the Real

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

True devotees of the Lord are wholly absorbed in Him. They have surrendered to Him and through single-minded devotion they are granted the power of discrimination, the discrimination that leads them from the unreal to the Real. Krishna emphatically declares that ignorance is destroyed and knowledge is gained through Divine Grace alone.

To them who are ever steadfast, worshipping Me with love, I give the yoga of discrimination by which they come to Me. (10:10)



A Perfect World

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Everywhere I went I received guidance, but I thought it was my inner being who was speaking, my supersoul! Who is my supersoul? God is the first and the last.

There is no supermind, no supernatural consciousness. For me, these are all interpretations and definitions; they are our words, our lamentations. Everything is God, Whom I have not seen or perhaps will not see in the future.

This is a perfect world made by a perfect being. God has no imperfections. God is most perfect. Whatever He has created, He has created with absolute laws.

I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house and the seed which is imperishable. (9:18)

Truth Alone Triumphs

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Sri Krishna is talking about the maturity of the mind through which one can understand what one's dharma is and how one can perform the karma associated with it. He has been telling Arjuna how to control the mind and direct his actions.

The law of creation is such that it allows the positive and the negative to manifest, but it will not allow the negative to rule; it allows the positive to rule. The negative can be strong, but it is not permanent. The positive can be weak, but ultimately it will rule, it will win, it will dominate.

Sri Krishna sees the negative and the positive, not just in an individual, but in nature also, which is part of the manifest creation. If the negative forces were to win in the end, it would defy all the laws of evolution, of progression and all laws of divinity.

God represents the sublime, the good. God-consciousness, higher consciousness, is pure, transcendental and divine and if everyone attempts to attain that state, then the negative is only a transitory phase. Therefore, it has been said, *Satyam eva jayate* – Truth alone triumphs.



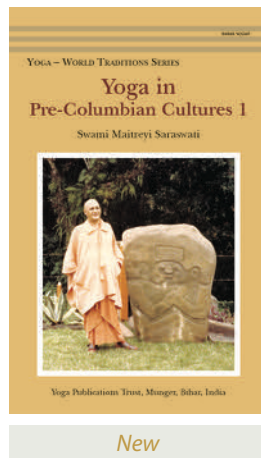
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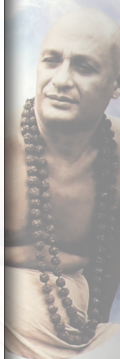
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Om Tat Sat
The Editor



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1923 - 2009	
Born	23 December 1923
Renunciation	1942
Meeting with guru	1943, Rishikesh
First yoga diksha	12 September 1947
Guru seva	1943 - 1956, Rishikesh
Parivrajaka life	1956 - 1962, India
Endate of yoga	1963 - 1983, Munger
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Yoga Samadhi	Midnight, 5 Decem