

# YOGA

Year 10 Issue 10  
October 2021  
Membership postage: Rs. 100



Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



## Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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**YOGA** is a monthly magazine. Late subscriptions include issues from January to December.

**Published** by Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar – 811201.

**Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd., Haryana – 121007

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**Membership** is held on a yearly basis. Please send your requests for application and all correspondence to:

**Bihar School of Yoga**  
Ganga Darshan  
Fort, Munger, 811201  
Bihar, India

☒ A self-addressed, stamped envelope must be sent along with enquiries to ensure a response to your request

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Total no. of pages: 56 (including cover pages)

Front cover & plates: Yuva Yoga Mitra Mandal  
Foundation Day Program, Munger, 2nd  
October 2021



## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

### Purity

Mental purity bestows calmness, cheerfulness, one-pointedness, victory over the senses and fitness to attain God-realization. The mind must be purified by the practice of virtues, self-control and devotion to God. A purified mind becomes a friend for it wears out the shell that covers the truth. There is no greater undertaking for any aspirant than purifying his life of enmity, hatred and passion and filling it with love, goodness and peace.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

**Published** and printed by Swami Shivadhyanam Saraswati on behalf of Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger – 811201, Bihar

**Printed** at Thomson Press India (Ltd), 18/35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Rd., Faridabad, Haryana.

**Owned** by Bihar School of Yoga **Editor:** Swami Gyansiddhi Saraswati

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Year 10 Issue 10 • October 2021  
(59th year of publication)

ole universe is embedded  
ct, united by one thread and  
read is in you, in me and in  
ne. We experience this when  
e to stay in the ashram.

एक मूत्र में बंधी है, वह मूत्र नृप  
में, सब में है, इसका अनुभव तब  
जब आश्रम आकर रहते हैं.

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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 ॥

# Figure It Out

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

The highest quality in life is understanding, not love, not compassion. What is the role of love, compassion and kindness if there is no understanding of the pain, suffering and problems that people go through? Interpreting a word just for the sake of the ego is not enough. One has to connect with the experience and that experience comes with understanding, not with self-projected ideas, ambition, ego and desire.

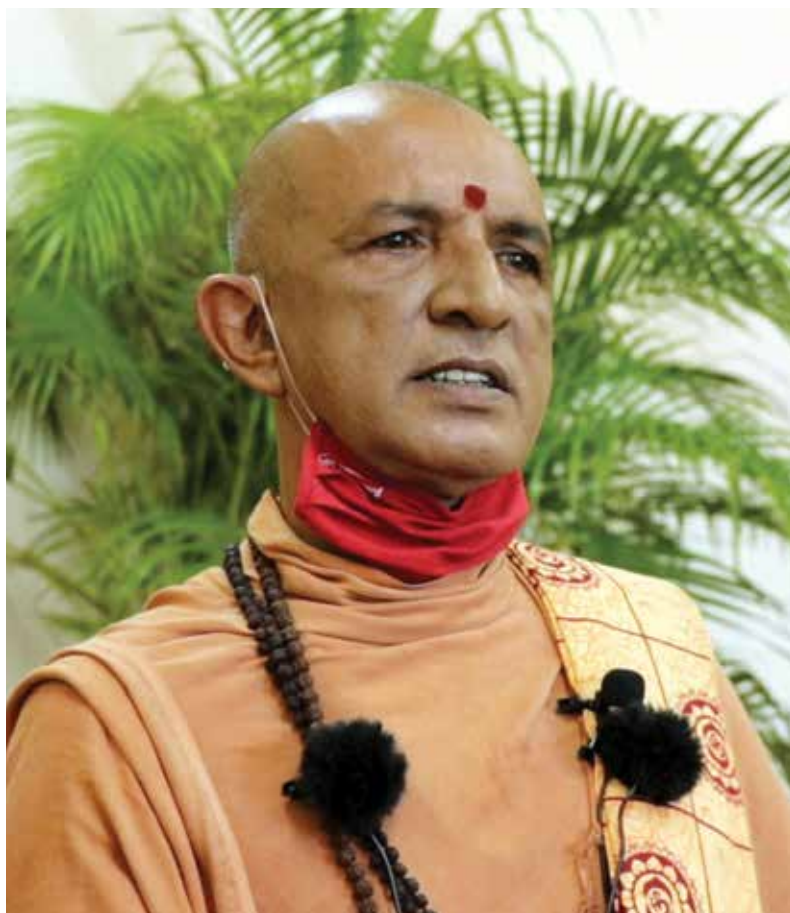
One has to be tolerant and patient, one has to be open in one's own heart to receive the good and reject the negative. It is easy to practise asana and pranayama but where will they lead you? To good health and lightness of the body, yes. Your body will be great, however your spirit will be dead. You can practise meditation and calm the agitations of the mind to experience peace, however for the spirit to come alive, it has to receive the right dose of nourishment. Just as the right dose of nourishment keeps your body healthy, and the right dose of happiness keeps your mind healthy and happy, in the same way, making a connection with its source keeps the spirit happy.

That is spirituality. Practising asana and pranayama is therapy, not spirituality. It is *swadhyaya*, learning about oneself. How is my body? Ill? Diseased? Healthy? Well? Weak? Strong? That is what people think about when they are practising asana and pranayama. What is the state of my mind? Am I happy? Am I dejected? Am I suffering? Am I guilty? Am I this? Am I that? That is all one thinks about; if not about oneself, about others. However, in all that thinking, is there anything positive, constructive, balancing, harmonious or uplifting? That is what you have to figure out.

*– 5 September 2019, Ganga Darshan, Munger*

# Antaranga Yoga for Harmony

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



We need harmony in the family, in our community, society and nation. This harmony can be achieved if we are able to develop an understanding of the correct action in the present circumstances. With that understanding we are able to adjust and adapt to the environment. Loss of harmony is when we are not able to adjust and adapt with our environment, or with

another person. Why do we get into strife with other people? Why do we get into a fight? Why do we feel frustration, anger and dejection? We are unable to maintain our own harmonious nature.

The way to maintain the harmonious nature is by practising yoga in the morning, learning to smile and incorporating *kartavyaparayanta*. *Kartavyaparayanta* means to be always ready to preform our duties and obligations. No expression of laziness, no lethargy, but always on the move to fulfil and accomplish our obligations, duties and work. This has to be done with the attitude of karma yoga. What is karma yoga? The word karma is a common word. *Karma* means action, performance, and we are all performing our karma from the time we take birth until our last breath. Our senses are performing karmas, our mind is performing karma, life is performing karma.

### **Karma yoga**

When we add the word yoga to karma, then we have *karma yoga* and a different meaning altogether - harmony in karma. How do you attain harmony in karma? Having the correctness of action, and performing it without any expectation as the fulfilment of our obligation and duty, leads to enhanced awareness. According to Sri Krishna, this enhanced awareness while performing karma leads to inner purification, *atmashuddhi*. When people come to the ashram they are not used to cleaning their room, washing their plates and clothes as outside everything is being done for them. In the ashram they come and clean their room and wash their clothes. They clean their breakfast, lunch and dinner plates, mugs and glasses. They maintain cleanliness of the ashram and when they go back home, this culture goes back with them. The people who were too lazy to even take their teacup to the kitchen, or too lazy to make their own bed after waking up, are now able to take responsibility for their life and their wellbeing. That is karma yoga.



People ask me, ‘Swamiji don’t you ever get tired from doing the things that you do all the time?’ I say, “No, I don’t get tired. For me every day is a new beginning. What I lived yesterday is not carried forward today. If I have to clean my room today, I will do it as if I am doing it for the first time in my life and try to do it in the most excellent manner possible. So, for me my karma yoga begins every day. It is a new beginning; it is not a continuation of something which I have been doing for a long time. No!”

That is the attitude of a karma yogi. Engage and involve yourself with your whole creativity, and accomplish what you set out to do with clarity of mind, without any expectation of the outcome, yet with the intention to express your excellence, *poornata* or completeness, *paripakvata* or maturity. That is real karma yoga. Even in the office, when you are sitting, finish your job before you get up from the table. At home when you are working, finish your job before you take up something different. When you complete one job, be happy that you have done it to the best of your ability, expressed your entire creativity and efficiency in performing that particular job, and be happy about it and rest happily at night. Karma yoga becomes an important aspect of creating harmony in your family, home and community.

Another aspect of karma yoga is to always try to extend a helping hand to people who need that helping hand. You are not only living for yourself, that is not the Indian vision. The Indian vision is that you live for the upliftment of the entire community: *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, the whole world is my family. You are part of the entire global community, and your obligation is the upliftment of the total community. Therefore, always be ready to give a helping hand to those in need, and that will also be your contribution for the betterment of your neighbourhood and your society. In this manner, if you are able to live the simple components of karma yoga in your day-to-day life, it will be a big achievement.

### **Jnana yoga**

Then incorporate some jnana yoga in your life. People think of jnana yoga as questioning, "Who am I?" I don't subscribe to that belief or philosophy. Even if I think, "Who am I?", and answer myself, "I am Brahman!" how does that help me at all? In my daily life, it does not help me in any manner. So my understanding of jnana yoga is not an abstract enquiry of, "Who am I? I am Brahman!" My jnana yoga is knowing myself, my own limitations, my own strengths and how I can manage my limitations and build up on my strengths. That is my jnana yoga.

For this practice of jnana yoga, take four sheets of paper. On one sheet, not instantly but over a period of one week, think again, then write. Over a period of one week, identify what your weaknesses, your shortcomings and limitations are. Think about them again. Cross them out. Add a new one. In one week, you will have a complete list of the shortcomings, weaknesses and limitations that you experience in your life, your profession, in the management of your own psychology and family.

Similarly, make a list on a separate sheet of all your strengths, abilities and qualities. Make another list of your ambitions, and a fourth list of all your needs, for the self, the

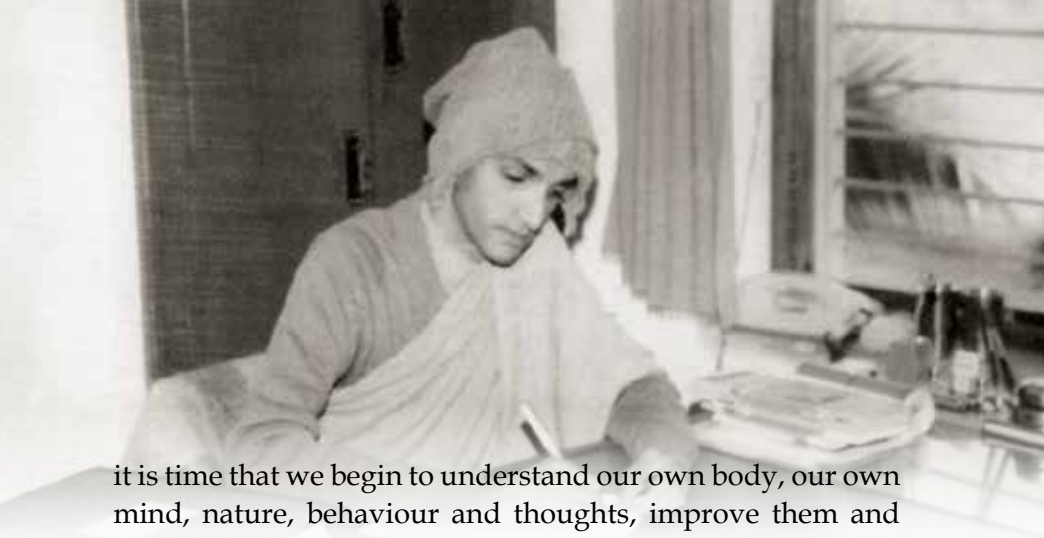


family and for everything that is required, for which you need to be active right now.

That is the beginning of my jnana yoga. The moment I am able to understand what my limitations are that restrict me, I can begin to work on them, modify them, correct them and convert my weaknesses into a positive strength and quality. I look at the list of strengths and see that this strength can balance this weakness, so focus on that strength to cultivate it more and more, to balance the particular weakness. I look at the list of ambitions and develop a priority: this is my ambition, and I will achieve it, I will work for it when I have the time, after one month, after six months, after one year, after ten years. Then think: today, I need to focus on the needs, which are my own, which are of my family and community. In this manner bring in the component of jnana yoga to cultivate your own clarity, wisdom and awareness of the right and the wrong.

The most important contribution of jnana yoga is not knowing 'Who I am'. Duryodhana said once, *Janami dharmam, nachame pravritti* – I know what is right, correct and just, but I am not gravitating, inclined or attracted towards it. *Janami adharmam, nachame nivritti* – I know what is incorrect, improper, unjust, but I cannot liberate myself from it. When we practise jnana yoga, we identify with *dharma*, and we express *dharma*; this is the main focus of jnana yoga, not to question 'Who am I', because you will never get an answer to that and you will never be able to experience that answer.

There are two aspects of life: experience and expression. You can experience something nice, yet can you express it in the same manner, in the same spirit? Experience and expression support each other. To say, 'I have the experience, but I cannot express it' indicates that it is not a complete experience. In yoga, whether it be karma yoga, jnana yoga, hatha yoga, or raja yoga, first you have to experience it and then you have to express the experience in your thought, behaviour and performance. Therefore, rather than thinking of yoga as an abstract subject, something that deals with self-realization or God-awareness,



it is time that we begin to understand our own body, our own mind, nature, behaviour and thoughts, improve them and build on them. That will be our yoga.

### **Bhakti yoga**

The third aspect for attaining a harmonious life is bhakti yoga. For a harmonious life, we are looking into the components of karma yoga, jnana yoga and bhakti yoga, in a practical manner which we can apply today to live these principles of yoga. Bhakti yoga is something which indicates purity of intention and thought, purity in behaviour and performance. There are many paths of bhakti. Mantra is one path; devotion, worship is another path; aradhana, upasana is another path; kirtan, bhajan is another path and meditation also becomes another path.

In meditation you are able to connect with the pure sentiments of your life, and if you can cultivate those pure sentiments, bhakti becomes effulgent. What are the pure sentiments? Three instructions have been given in our tradition to develop the pure sentiment. The first instruction is *daya*, compassion, to develop sympathy, to develop kindness and, generosity. The second instruction is *dama*, restraint. Restraint of the wild running senses and mind happens with the practice of yoga, with the entire science and the subject of yoga. Bhakti yoga in its practical form is expressing compassion, kindness and love towards other beings.

Bhakti as taught by my Guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, is not devotion to God, but awareness of the divine existence in

every being, the spirit that is in you. You are able to experience your body because it is material, you are able to experience your mind because of thoughts, desires, expectations, fears and insecurities. Are you able to experience your own spirit? The experience of spirit happens when you are able to connect with the soft and the positive qualities of life. Love is an expression of spirit, compassion is an expression of spirit. Just as frustration and tension is an expression of mind, and pain is an expression of body, love, compassion, kindness are the expressions of spirit. It is this love which is awakened in bhakti yoga through the cultivation of *atmabhava*, as my Guruji instructed and guided – the ability to see yourself in others. If you are able to see that divine spark in others, then you will always be willing to help the other person, no matter what dire situation they may be in.

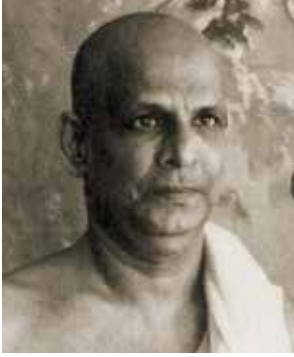
Sant Eknath, one of the great poet saints of India, took water from Gangotri and walked to Rameshwaram to offer it to the Shivalinga there. Just as he was about to enter the Rameshwaram temple he saw outside a donkey dying of thirst. Sant Eknath smiled and said to God, “You know how to take *pariksha*, exams, of your devotees! I had come with water to give to you in the temple, but you are demanding water in the garb of a donkey outside the temple. It is my honour to give you this water.” He gave the Ganges water to the donkey to drink and quench his thirst. If it had been you or me in his place, we would not have even looked at the donkey. We would have straight away gone into the temple and poured the water on top of the Shivalinga.

A person who has realized *atmabhava* sees that divine spark in animals, birds, insects, humans, and everywhere. *Seva* or service is to satisfy that divinity, the spirit within. Therefore, my Guru, Sri Swami Satyanandaji, says that bhakti is the expression of love during service, nothing more than that.

– 22 August 2021, Online Message delivered to  
the Forest Department, Bihar, India (Extracts)

# Program of Life

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



How many of you have got a definite program of life? Have you got an ideal, a goal to be achieved? Are you working definitely towards it? Do you have a program of life: after so many years I should retire, when I retire I should do some service selflessly, I should meditate and I should spend all my time in sadhana; I should take sannyasa at such and such age. No.

You have an ill-regulated life and go on blindly from day to day repeating the same old actions. You will have to discipline your life. You need not neglect your worldly duties. Have a changed angle of vision towards life. Treat the children as manifestations of the Lord. Treat all your activities as worship of the Lord. You should transform all your activities into yogic activities.

You must have a changed angle of vision, otherwise you will not be able to transmute all your actions into divine activity. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (8:7): *Tasmāt sarveṣu kaḷeṣu māmanusmāra yudhya cha* - Therefore, think of me always and fight. To fight means to do your duty. Whatever you do - eating, talking, everything - you can transform into a yogic activity if you feel that you are offering all these as worship to the Lord. Don't expect the fruits of the actions. Then you will not be bound by the actions.

You should put all these instructions into practice, not merely listen to lectures. Lecturing is only a little bit of intellectual play, a little intellectual gymnastics or amusement. Whatever you hear, you will have to put into practice.

- 12 September 1950, Theosophical Society, Varanasi

# Life is an Experience

*Sannyasi Amargeet, Munger*

Life is one word that comes with multiple meanings and experiences. Above all, life is not just about existence but also about how an individual defines that existence.

Almost every day of everyone's life is an experience. Every new experience influences a person's way of looking at life. Thus, there cannot be one single way in which one can look at life, consequently there cannot be one single meaning and purpose one might find to one's life. Life is not the same for everyone.

Life is the journey of Living. We live, we lead our life and we die. In doing so, we try to give shape to our lives. In past years



I have been thinking how do experiences shape someone's life? I believe experiences are episodes that changed the outlook of an individual, and these in turn shape a person's life.

Covid-19 emerged in March 2020 spreading fear and panic not only through our community but through the entire world. Villages, towns, cities, nations, everyone felt the fear of this pandemic. People took all possible measures and precautions to protect themselves following strict lockdown, maintained personal hygiene and that of the surroundings.

My family and I did the same, but somehow the virus came inside. On 26th April 2021, my father started showing symptoms of covid-19. As we knew about India's second wave challenges and complications, my father immediately decided to quarantine himself. To be honest when I saw my father showing covid-19 symptoms I was in shock and my whole body went cold.

As my mother was helping father to settle in the quarantine room, I took a walk in my garden calming and preparing myself mentally, physically and getting ready emotionally. In a moment I got a voice command from inside: Do not panic. My heart was racing, my mind was flooded with different questions and answers. That very moment I stood still, looked up into the sky, and my eyes could pierce the sky above, reaching out to the stars hidden behind.

My stars: my Gurus. I could feel their presence inside me as strength, energy and light guiding me through the darkest forest of my mind. Gathering myself I came inside and told my mother that there is nothing to worry about.

Mantra was our strength during covid times. I started chanting the Mahamrityunjaya mantra at night and continued chanting the entire night. As I was chanting the mantra I could feel my aura getting stronger and stronger. We were following the covid-19 protocol strictly yet I started showing covid symptoms the next day, and was followed by my mother the day after.

We started taking proper medication as prescribed by the doctor. I can say we were so weak yet we held each other's hands, supporting and taking care of each other. After two weeks we started feeling better and the covid-19 symptoms started to fade away.

Covid-19 has given us the opportunity to find ourselves again. Many of us who were so busy before, have slowed down. Each day is unique when you live one day at a time. Putting all our energy into it, knowing that a divine force guides us, we now have time to feel the blessings and recognize new opportunities in the quietness.

The pandemic has affected people of all walks of life, every religion, country, and every person in one or the other way. We are One. These times have given many of us a different lens with which we can see the world and know that each day is precious.

Being more spiritually aware gives us hope, hope amidst the pain and suffering. Getting through these testing times will require a lot of spiritual innovation. We can offer support to those who are fearful by praying for them and be the light to others who need our help. This has aroused the spirit of union of head, heart and hands as we all unite as a family.

To sum up, the reality of covid-19 has also shown us how fragile we are regardless of how developed we are as human beings. We ask ourselves, who we are? What is our purpose? Where are we going? The answers to such questions only come when we get in touch with our inner self, and search for ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.



# Bhramari and the Covid Choir

*Swami Bhaktananda, Hungary*



I am happy to share my experience of a positive event, which included Swamiji's Breathe for Healthy Lungs program. The events happened last week from Tuesday to Saturday.

Dr Katalin Vardai, an eminent pulmonologist, has formed a so-called 'Covid choir' as she uses singing as a therapeutic tool. Some of the members of the choir are ex-covid patients and some are currently in a lung sanatorium due to serious respiratory disorders. Some of them are in wheelchairs carrying their oxygen containers. In addition to the patients, four professional singers joined the choir.

The well-known Hungarian conductor Mr Ivan Fischer, who leads the world-famous Budapest Festival Orchestra, heard about the doctor's choir and invited them to perform two songs from Carmina Burana before their concert in Budapest.

Preparing for the event, the doctor called me to teach the choir members breathing exercises in 15 minutes before the rehearsals. There were five sessions in total, during which they did some of the exercises from the Breathe for Healthy Lungs program. During the first session the choirmaster, one of the professional singers, was very impressed with the effects, saying





that choir members became obviously calmer and more focused after the breathing exercises. In fact, he loved bhramari pranayama so much that he decided to start the concert with it.

Finally, the concert was held in Hungary's largest concert hall. Before the choir members took to the stage, the conductor, Mr Ivan Fischer told the audience what they were going to see from the choir and he spoke about bhramari.

He stressed the importance of breathing exercises and singing and presented the initiative as an example to follow.

In the minutes before going on stage another interesting situation occurred in which a part of yoga nidra was applied. The scene was backstage, where a lot of people were getting ready: the members of the symphonic orchestra with their instruments, the singers, our choir members and the concert hall stewards.

Then one of our choir members, who was in a wheelchair, had a minor panic attack. As we were only minutes from the performance, the choir leader asked me to help her. In this hustle and bustle, I squatted down next to her chair and guided her awareness around the body parts, like in yoga nidra. It only took a few minutes, and at the end she opened her eyes with a smile and went on stage.

# Fear – a Big Zero

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Fear is illusory; it cannot live. Courage is eternal, it will not die. Perils, calamities, dangers are the certain lot of every man who is a denizen of this world. Therefore, fortify your mind with courage and patience. Fortitude, courage, presence of mind will sustain you through all dangers.

Just as a rock on the sea-shore stands firm and the dashing of the waves does not affect it even a bit, even so a man who is endowed with courage is not affected by the dark perilous waves of this samsara. He stands adamant in all trying conditions and circumstances and comes out victorious. A man of courage does not tremble in the hour of danger. He is not embarrassed and bewildered. He does not sink down. He is not overwhelmed by despair. He smiles away all dangers and difficulties, blows the trumpet of triumph and attains victory in the end.

## **Ignorance and attachment**

The Sanskrit equivalent for fear is *bhaya*. Fear is an emotion or *vriddhi* in the mind that is produced when one's life is in danger on account of external forces or things. Man reacts to

the situation with a fear-emotion. It is characterized by pallor of the face, palpitation of heart, slowing of pulse or stoppage, tremor of limbs, perspiration, expressionless condition of the eyes, passing of urine and faeces unaware, in extreme cases, choking of voice, inability to speak. The body becomes like a log of wood. The mind gets stunned. The functions of the senses are inhibited. In extreme cases one may die of shock. In ordinary cases when the cause of fear is removed, one slowly recovers from the morbid symptoms and comes back to one's original state.

Ignorance is the cause of fear. Man tasted the 'forbidden fruit' and became a slave of lust. He forgot his original, divine nature and was thus caught up in the whirlpool of ignorance. The infinite fearless Brahman became the finite jiva with fear. Identification with the body or *dehadhyasa* is the cause of fear. Dehadhyasa is another form of ignorance. This physical body is an instrument for man's sensual enjoyment. If he suffers from any disease, he is afraid that he will lose this body which serves him as a vehicle for his enjoyment. He tries his level best to preserve this body. All other causes of fear are traceable to dehadhyasa.

Feeling of inferiority is another cause of fear. This negative feeling produces lack of self-reliance or self-confidence in man. He is afraid of those who are superior to him in talents, power, position and efficiency. He feels that he is incapable of doing anything.

*Raga* or attachment is the long-standing associate of fear. Wherever there is raga, there is fear. Fear and raga co-exist. Man is attached to his wife. The body of his wife is his greatest pleasure-centre. So there is fear for him, fear of losing her, fear of her death, fear of her running away with another man, fear of her divorcing him, fear of her being displeased with him, and so on.

As he is attached to his children, house and property, he has fear of losing his house, property and children. He is drowned in sorrow and gets a terrible shock if these objects

are destroyed or lost. Hence raga is the cause of fear. If there is no raga, there is no fear. The first link in the chain of raga is his attachment to his body. All kinds, of raga start from this raga to the physical body.

You are attached to a fountain-pen, walking stick, book, watch, towel, cloth. Fear slowly creeps in. There is fear of losing them. Always entertain the thought: all objects are illusory, perishable and pain-giving. You will have no attachment. Even if there is attachment, it will be mild. You can drive it away with slight thinking and discrimination.

### **Witness the menagerie**

The percentage of normal fear will be only five. Imaginary fears will come to ninety per cent. Imaginary fears cause diseases, deplete all energies in man and produce all sorts of feverish excitement, low vitality, uneasiness, discomfort, disharmony, etc. When there is an epidemic or cholera, or typhoid, fear is the predisposing cause. Man is terribly afraid of cholera, worries himself and imagines that the germs have entered his body. Imagination does serious havoc. He becomes a victim to the actual disease itself!

Sit for a while. Reflect well. Introspect. All imaginary fears will take to their heels. They will dwindle into an airy nothing. Mind deceives you through imaginary fears. Learn to discriminate, cogitate, reflect and meditate. Cultivate courage. Be a silent witness of the mind's menagerie. The mind will lurk like a thief. You will feel now that you were duped all these years by this mischievous mind and that fear is a non-entity, a big zero.

### **Re-educate the mind**

Fear is an instinct common in every man. Fear is universal. It can happen at any place. It can come at any time. Freedom from fear can be achieved by liberation from the objects of fear. Re-educating the mind, bringing forth the power of the spirit, dealing with practical affairs, diligently putting into practice

the knowledge that one possesses, are all essential factors to overcome fear. It must be felt that there is no object which is to be afraid of or to be feared.

Worse than in waking, many undergo drastic, alarming abnormality in sleep. This is all due to loading the mind with stray thoughts while retiring. One should never go to bed in a state of worry or fear. Nor with a heavy heart. Nor when he broods over an impending evil. Before retiring, everyone must evacuate all such thoughts and meditate upon God till he is released from them. He must have perfect peace in mind and soul. If he is unable to meditate upon God, let him loudly recite some hymn or poem till he sinks in the bed. He is sure to have peaceful, deep sleep

As we grow, we must develop constantly the knowledge that there is nothing in the universe to cause fear. The subconscious mind, which is first startled by an unusual sight or incoherent voice, should be kept assured that all such things are false, the Truth behind them being well acquainted with the normal sense and knowledge. When fear is completely removed, nothing can hurt us.

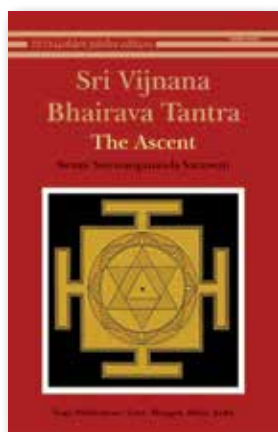
Denying fear, one can overcome the object of fear itself. You should not have any dualism in mind. You must always develop cosmic love and universal brotherhood. When there is love and brotherhood there is no enmity, there is no superiority of power, there is no pleasure or pain. Ultimately there is no fear. Of course, this is the stage.

The final stage is feeling oneness of all. All are Brahman. All merge in Brahman. There is Brahman alone pervading throughout the universe. There is no second thing of supremacy in the world. There is no second thing in His creation at all. This knowledge entirely uproots fear and brings one into eternal peace. Fear does not emanate from one's own Self. This is the secret of it. Knowledge of Brahman, the eternal Truth, totally annihilates fear.

– *Published in Conquest of Fear*

# Beyond the Mind

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



You must observe your desires and the source from which they arise. After all, to put an end to something you have to know where it resides, what it looks like, how it behaves and how it occurs. The root of desire is attachment, which springs from *raga*, or intense liking. The opposite of *raga* is *dwesha*, or intense dislike. Although they appear opposite, *raga* and *dwesha* are actually two sides of the same coin. They always co-exist together. Where one exists, you are sure to find the other.

## Focus on desire

*Raga* is one of the powers of *maya* which limits the power of *icchashakti*, or willpower, by creating intense attachment and repulsion, thus giving rise to increasing discontentment. *Maya* is the veiling power of unified consciousness, which springs into action during the course of evolution from spirit to matter and becomes the cause for the notion of duality and difference in unity. Once you realize that desire keeps you in bondage, you can set about uprooting it from its very source.

However, that is easier said than done because desires spring from the storehouse of past impressions which you carry with you in the form of *samskaras*, or archetypes. The storehouse for these *samskaras* is the subconscious and unconscious realms of the mind, and it is difficult to know what lies there unless you can delve into those spheres. Even if you come to know what lies down there by some quirk of fate, and you do not like what you see, how are you going to eliminate it?

Until and unless these samskaras are rooted out, one remains on the periphery without ever entering the spiritual dimension. So the answer lies in focusing on the desire itself. Practise dharana on the desires which arise from the subconscious and unconscious in a flash. Gradually, through concentration and focus on the desire itself, you will be able to put an end to it. This will take you to the source of the desire, which is the unified consciousness beyond the mind.



### **The exceptional mind**

To distinguish between friend and enemy or honour and dishonour is the quality of the ordinary mind and the average person. But exceptional minds experience equality in all beings and in all acts, whether they are beneficial or detrimental, pleasant or unpleasant. This means that such a mind has surpassed the influence of raga and dwesha, like and dislike, and experiences everything and everybody as a receptacle of that all-pervading Brahman.

This realization leads to the ultimate happiness because one experiences eternity. The notion of death is replaced with the firm conviction that, although the body ultimately decomposes, there exists within it the tattwa known as *atman*, or self, which is immortal. Each individual atman is connected to every other, as well as to the universal atman.

This understanding results in completeness, wholeness and happiness, because the very cause of unhappiness is the belief that you are mortal and subject to death and decay. But once you experience the immortal atman which resides within, all unhappiness, fear and apprehension will be eradicated.

– *Published in Vigyan Bhairava Tantra*

# Chittaprasad

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What you call peace in English and *shanti* in Sanskrit, in yogic terminology is known as *chittaprasad*. What a nice way to describe peace, as with *chitta* the emotions, the memories, the reactions are laid to rest. When they are laid to rest in *chitta*, there is no spike, and that flat line is known as *shanti*.

Tantric meditations work more with the heart and less with the mind. Yogic meditations begin with the mind and move towards the

heart, yet tantric meditations focus purely on the heart, evoking different responses, feelings, emotions.

There are nine forms of emotions which are known as the *bhavas* such as *vatsalya bhava*, the emotion to nurture something. *Madhurya bhava* is the emotion to express beauty and pleasantness. *Maitri bhava* is the emotion which expresses friendship, companionship. *Shatru bhava* is the emotion which expresses the negatives like anger, hatred, animosity. So these are all *bhavas* and they are channelled through tantric meditations.

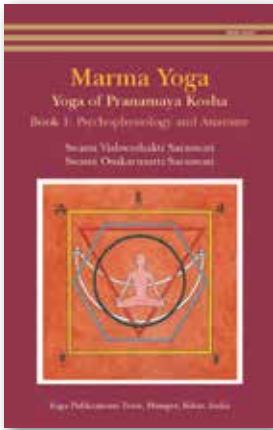
The effect of the world on the human being is through *chitta*. If *chitta* is harmonized and balanced, life is a bed of rose petals, however you have to make the determined effort or *sankalpa* to come to that point. It may be difficult, it may be challenging, yet if you can isolate yourself with *drashta bhava*, being the observer, and follow the path of meditation, then whatever is underground will be passed over.

— 15 April 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger, India



# Introducing Marma Yoga

Swami Vishwashakti Saraswati and Swami Omkarmurti Saraswati



Yoga was created with the highest aim 'to make the quality of life better for humankind and to minimize mental and physical suffering'. As such, from the beginning, the holistic science of yoga was in fact the science of the self-healing process.

Marma yoga is based on the knowledge of Samkhya philosophy, pancha mahabhutas, gunas, koshas, and the ida-pingala qualities of *prana shakti*, prana or vital energy, *nadis* or vital energy channel network, *marmas* or vital energy points and *chakras* or vital energy centres. Using this subtle knowledge, marma yoga creates the system of self-healing.

Marma yoga provides us with knowledge and awareness of *pranamaya kosha* or the vital energy field of our system. Pranamaya kosha is composed of the flow of prana shakti, the nadis, chakras and marmas.

Marmas are points of the vital energy or prana shakti, aligned on the nadis or vital energy channels. Through the pressure on marmas, it is possible to change the condition of prana shakti or vital energy, its flow through the nadis, and the condition of the flow itself. It means that through marmas we can affect the pranamaya kosha. This action of pressure further changes the condition of pranamaya kosha, and harmonizes the condition of prana shakti or vital energy. This harmonized condition of prana shakti or vital energy then restores the balance between the body, mind and pranic systems. The *pranamaya kosha* or our energy level acts as a bridge between *annamaya kosha* or the physical level and *manomaya kosha* or the mental level.

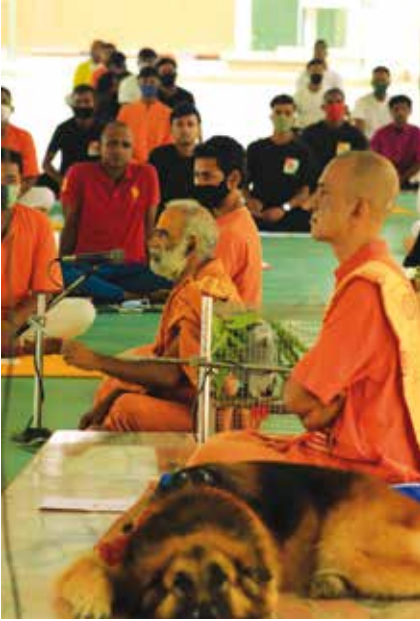
Annamaya kosha is the physical dimension of our consciousness and energy, which contains body organs, processes and systems. Manomaya kosha is the mental dimension of our consciousness and energy, which contains our mental, emotional and psychological perception. Pranamaya kosha is the energy dimension of our consciousness and energy, which contains prana shakti, nadis, chakras and marmas. An action of pressure on pranamaya kosha automatically causes changes and harmonizes the condition of the *pancha tattwas* or five elements, which changes the pranic and functional condition of our body organs, systems and processes, and the pranic and functional condition of our mental system and emotions. This is the result of the subtle pressure on marmas.

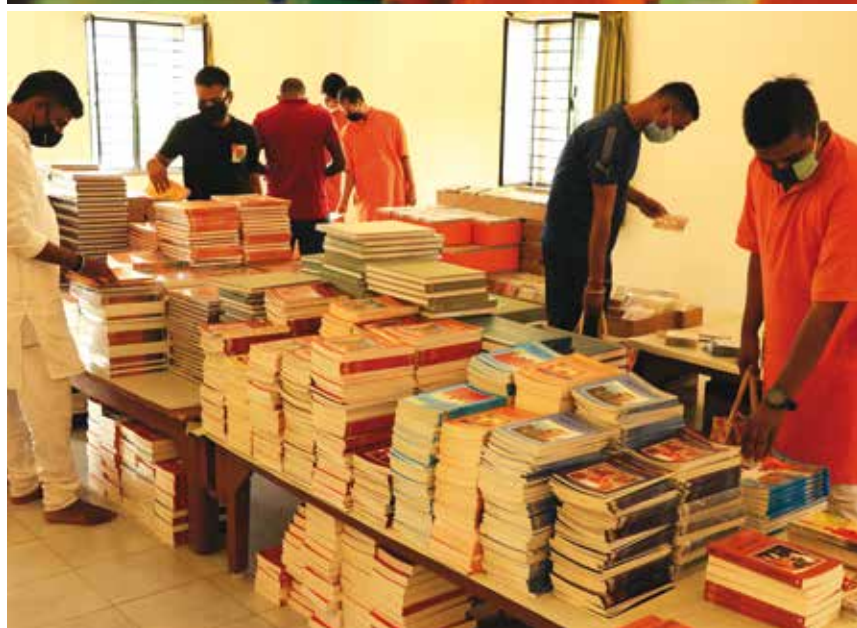
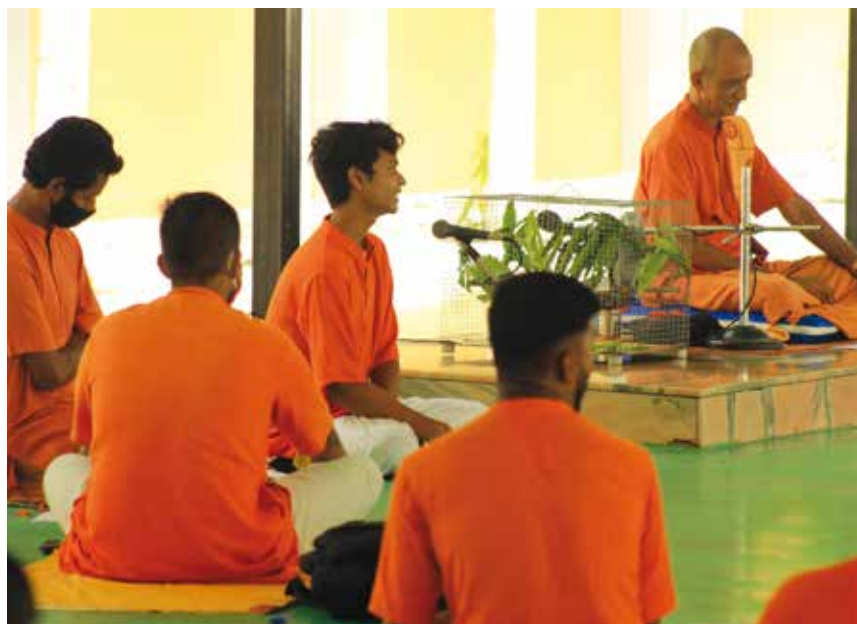
The first reference to marmas and nadis we find in the *Atharva Veda*. The great trinity of ayurveda, the rishis Charaka, Sushruta and Vagabata, were familiar with the knowledge of *marma chikitsa* or marma therapy, and they used this knowledge as a healing technique. Rishi Sushruta, one of the fathers of ayurveda, created the marma chikitsa system or the system of healing through the vital energy points. This was the beginning of the acupressure healing system which today is popular worldwide.

Later on Rishi Sushruta launched the *suchi chikitsa* or *marma bhedan chikitsa*, which today is known worldwide as the acupuncture healing system. It is evident that the other two fathers of ayurveda, rishis Charaka and Vagabata, used the subtle knowledge of marmas and *suchi veda*, as *shalya chikitsa* or piercing through the marmas for healing effects. Today we can find some references on nadis and marmas in *Shiva Swarodaya*, *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas*, *Shandilya* and *Chudamani Upanishads*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Gheranda Samhita*, *Yoga Sutras*, and other texts. Unfortunately, they are not very complete or systematic.

*Marma bhedan* or acupuncture means piercing marmas or vital energy points, and *chikitsa* means healing. This piercing can be done through different techniques: through the pressure of our fingers, by needles, electric energy, laser, magnets, crystals, massage, or through marma yoga.









In marma yoga, through different techniques of yoga, we apply pressure directly on marmas, which are aligned along the nadis, and we change the pranic and functional conditions of the body, mind and energy systems. Therefore, it means that we need to apply some kind of subtle mental or physical pressure, which will build up a certain amount of energy and then apply it on our pranic system. On this base operate all pranic therapeutic techniques. So marma yoga is not a new system of pranic healing, it has existed from the time of the Vedas.

Today we have chakra puncture therapy, which is based on yogic chakra theory and we use the principles of marma yoga therapy. Only the modern pranic healers use needles, laser, electricity, colour rays, massage or fingers to apply the subtle pressure on chakras, instead of yogic asanas, pranayamas, mudras and bandhas. The principles are the same and the results are the same.

It does not matter which method or technique is used to apply the subtle pressure of energy on marmas or chakras. The main subject is the energy of the subtle pressure. Even when we are practising meditation with the aim to change the pranic and functional condition of the body, mind and energy systems, we need some kind of subtle pressure of *manas shakti* or mental energy, which is a part of the prana shakti.

When we focus our consciousness, our mind and awareness on a certain point, we apply a subtle pressure of manas shakti on that point or region. This we could also call the pressure of prana or energy of our mind. Even when we practise mantra japa or mantra meditation, we focus and concentrate *mantra shakti* or energy of the sound vibration on a marma or chakra, and that subtle pressure changes the condition of our body, mind and energy systems. In kriya yoga of the Satyananda Yoga system we find that different techniques are used for piercing the chakras, with the aid of breath, mental energy, mantras and positions of body parts. It is also an aspect of marma yoga, though in a higher realm.

While we are practising bandhas we apply subtle pressure on a specific region of the chakra and marmas. That pressure accumulates prana shakti in the specific region of the chakra and marmas and changes the condition of prana shakti of that specific region. As the result of accumulated prana shakti in that specific region, further changes of directions of the pranic flows through the nadis occur. These changed directions of prana shakti flow will be redirected from that specific region to sushumna nadi and the flow of prana shakti will ascend through sushumna for higher purpose. At the same time, we will receive a lot of physical and mental benefits as secondary effects.

In yoga we often use techniques of pranayama and breath as the medium to transport prana shakti. We focus and concentrate the breath in a specific nadi, chakra and marma or in a specific region. It accumulates the pressure of prana shakti, which further changes the conditions of the tattwas, and levels of prana shakti in the nadic flow. As the nadis carry energies of the tattwas and are linked with the physical and mental body, so changes of physical, mental and emotional conditions take place. The kumbhaka or breath retention works through the same principle.

Even when we sing kirtan we stimulate our marmas by moving our bodies and clapping our hands. The sound of kirtan stimulates the vocal cords and the marmas on the nadis of the throat and chest region. We could say that to change the condition of our annamaya, manomaya and pranamaya koshas we need the subtle pressure on marmas and chakras or 'marma chikitsa'.

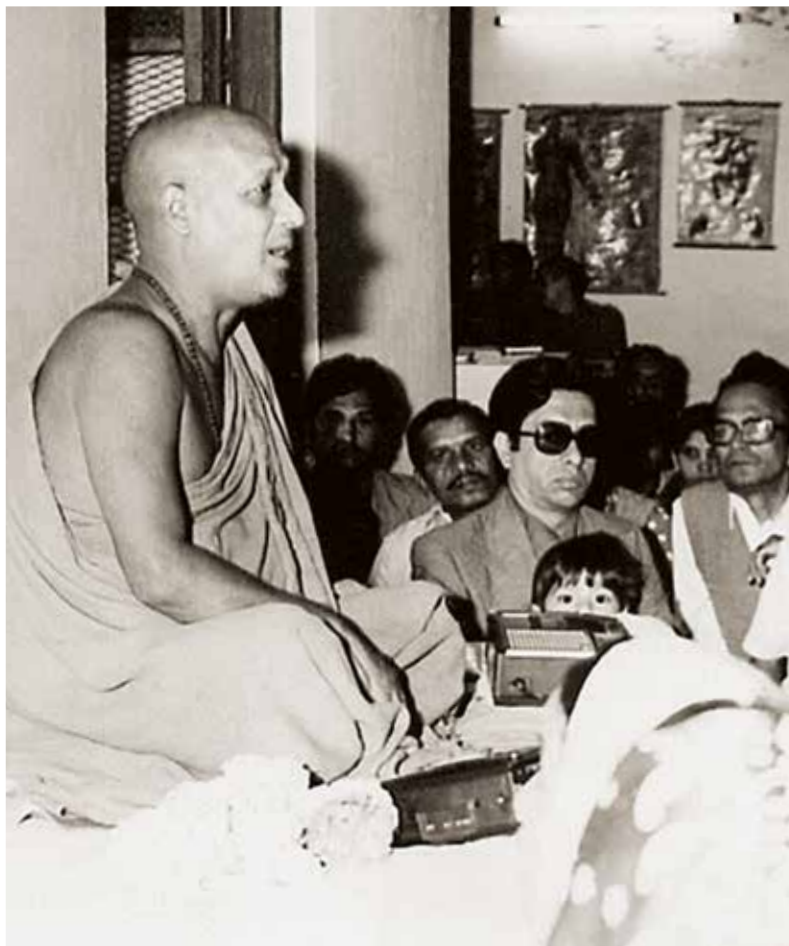
Therefore, we can see that the marma yoga or the marma therapy of yoga is a heritage of the ancient vedic Indian medical system. It is a gift of our vedic ancestors. Marma yoga as an integral part of the ayurvedic subtle healing process belongs to the cosmic healing system.

– *Published in Marma Yoga,  
Yoga of Pranamaya Kosha, Book 1*



# Yoga – a Therapeutic Science

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



All over the world people are living in a state of terror, fright, anxiety, passion, tension, insecurity, uncertainty, suspicion and so on. These states influence man's physiological structure, and cause most of the diseases that we suffer from today. In this context yoga comes to us as a great panacea. When we

practise yoga, the changes in the physical body are clear, they are earmarked. The behaviour of the heart, consumption of oxygen, rate of respiration, reactions of the nervous system, secretions of hormones, alteration of brain waves, and all the systems of the physical body are influenced and undergo certain changes.

This has a beneficial effect on most disease states but first, disease has to be defined properly, and yoga has its own definition. Disease manifests in the body but does not originate in the body. Disease originates with a state of imbalance. There may be disharmony between the nervous systems or an imbalance in the hormonal secretions, or in the digestive processes. As such, we define disease in a subtle manner, and we treat it according to its nature.

### **Restoring the balance**

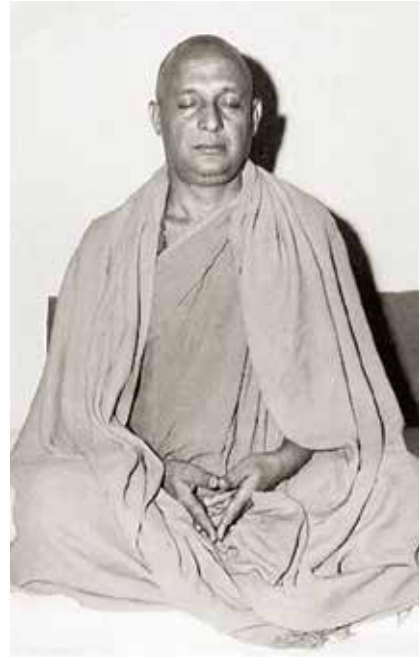
We don't treat diabetes as a digestive disorder. We know that it is a deficiency in insulin – there is no doubt about it. We also know that the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are controlled by higher centres. When these centres fail to activate the nervous system properly, then a deficiency of hormones in a particular area results. When we treat a diabetic patient we don't treat him for a deficiency of insulin. We don't treat him for the disease he is apparently suffering from. We know it is stress and strain that is responsible.

When we treat a mental patient, suffering from psychosis, neurosis or a nervous breakdown, we take him as a personality, a human being, an individual who can think and feel. We take him deeper into his own mind through the practices of concentration and meditation, bringing him to the root of his illness.

If a person is suffering from high anxiety, we don't prescribe practices to induce an immediate state of tranquillity. Rather, we try to explode his personality, to express what remains dormant in the back of his mind. This is possible with the practice of concentration, such as mantra, which is part of yoga. As a scientific principle, mantra is a very powerful instru-

ment. Through the practice of mantra, we try to explode the deeper phases of the consciousness. When the inner states of mind are exploded then one comes face to face with all the thoughts, distractions, passions and repressions deep within.

The physical body is influenced by the human mind. It is the sentiments, the emotions, feelings and objectives, passions, fears, anxieties and worries in the mind which create physiological changes in the body. The adrenal, thyroid and



pituitary secretions have a natural flow and order. A thought can and does influence the working of our physical body. Fear, psychosis or anxiety influence the endocrine glands and change the mode of brain waves.

### **Mind, prana and self**

The whole body is a composition of prana and mind. Pranas are responsible for action and motion in life. The mind is responsible for thinking and feeling. Together, mind and prana fill this living structure, penetrating it through and through. Mind and prana are the two great forces in our system, and if they lose their balance, a corresponding imbalance is created in our mental and physical behaviour. The science of hatha yoga is based on these twin forces. Pranas can be balanced by the practice of asanas and pranayamas. The mental force is balanced by the practice of concentration and meditation.

In yoga we say there are seventy-two thousand channels or *nadis* in the body through which the flow of prana and

the flow of mind move. Out of these seventy-two thousand channels of mental and pranic energy, ten are considered to be major ones. Out of these ten major channels, three are most important. In yoga we call them *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna*. *Ida* represents mental force, *pingala* represents pranic force and *sushumna* represents spiritual force.

The individual is a combination of mind, prana and self. Certainly there comes a time in life, and not necessary when you reach fifty-five, when you become aware, when you begin to realize that the body is not final. The mind controls the body; and the spirit, the *atma*, the self, controls the mind and body. When you become the master of the mind you become the master of the body, but when you are a slave to the mind then the body is full of disease. Once you become the master of the self, you become the master of the mind and body.

### **A mighty world culture**

Yoga is a science of therapy, a science of self-improvement, and a way to discipline. But besides all this, yoga is a culture, and every nation must have one, for the culture is the prana of a nation. Countries with political cultures have failed. Nations with military might have been destroyed. Races which had absolute power have disappeared, leaving no trace. But a country with a culture based on yoga has eternal existence. It can strive through the vicissitudes of life, the accidents of history and the ravages of time.

You are that people. You have survived through the accidents of life because yoga has been our culture. In the coming times, yoga is going to emerge as a mighty world culture, is going to direct the events of the world's history, and you have a definite role to play in this. It is up to you to accept this great science with love, with admiration, with hope and with sincerity.

– Address given at Gandhi Medical College, 28 February 1979,  
Bhopal, India, published in YOGA, June 1979 (Extracts)

# The Mantra Rama

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



According to the opinion of intellectuals, scientists, or mythologists, Rama was born in Treta Yuga, many, many millions of years ago. Some say that he was born 7,000 BCE, some say he has taken birth many times. Whatever may be said of him, one fact does not change – the inspiration he gives to everybody.

This is the beauty of the name Rama. *Rama* is the mantra of peace and *Rama* is the mantra of prana. *Rama* in psychological terms is the mantra for peace; through the ages it instils inner peace, yet at the same time it makes one awake in the outer dimension. There is an awakening towards the participation or involvement that each one of us has with our surroundings, nature, the cosmos and the divine.

Even the word Corona in Hindi may be an indication for you to chant Rama's name. *Ka* means *karo* – to do; *Ro* means *roma mein* or the name of Rama in every pore of the body. *Na* means naam japa of the name of Rama. So the meaning of the word Corona is: repeat and chant the name of Rama in every pore of the body. That is the spiritual meaning of the word Corona. The material meaning of the word Corona signifies illness and death, yet the spiritual dimension of Corona makes you aware of the

inner strength which you may not have been aware of before in your normal awareness, however now to draw on your inner strength, you have to connect with your inner self. Everybody in society has to connect with their inner self. If they ignore their inner self, psychological problems will develop more and more.

In India we never had psychology. Psychology is the product of the European culture. So many civilizations have come and gone, yet never had the subject of psychology, for people all connected with a lifestyle where there was no split in their thinking and action.

Today when there is a split in thinking and acting, then one has to wonder what type of psychology one is living, or what type of psychology that person is developing. The ancient civilizations, whether Celtic, Druidic, South American Shaman, Chinese, the Shintoism of Japan, or the Indian vedic traditions, all emphasized living in harmony with each other, with nature and the cosmic law. To remain connected to *ritam* and *satyam*, the cosmic law and the eternal truth – that was it.

This whole aspiration has been defined in the name Rama. Therefore, whether he was alive and took birth or did not take birth makes no difference to Indians, for they identify with the inspiration and the feeling that Rama invokes in each one of us.

Rama represents somebody who lived the perfect lifestyle, he was *maryada purushottam*, somebody who remains within the boundaries of *sanyam*, self-contained peace and harmony, all the time. Due to Corona the time is coming when we must again experience that self-contained contentment, wholeness, satisfaction and fulfilment. There have been many evolutions of the human civilization from stone age to industrial age to atomic age to space age to the Corona age. Maybe this is an indication now to stop looking for gratifications outside, to change our habits and thoughts and cultivate the best that we can for ourselves and for others. This is the actual meaning of the word and mantra *Rama*.

– *Ramnavmi, 21 April 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger, India*

# Essence of Spirituality

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



What is the definition of spirituality? Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram is the real essence. They represent positivity which is the highway to heaven; just as negativity is the highway to hell. If you want to go to hell, take the highway of negativity and you will be there instantly.

Spirituality is not a different experience up there somewhere in a heaven. Rather that experience comes down here, we don't go up there. The experience comes down for you are living in this world, in this body, in this environment, in this home, in this city, at this address.

## **Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram**

Spirituality comes down, but when it comes down what is the form of it? The form is of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

Satyam is the external, Shivam is the internal, and when they converge together the result is Sundaram. Why is Satyam



external? Why is Shivam internal? Satyam is external as you live in the outer, material, sensorial dimension interacting with other people. To have a harmonious environment and interaction the external connection to truth is important. As long as you are able to see the truth in the other person, there is no conflict, only peace. When you don't see the truth in the other person, conflict comes. Therefore, connection to Satyam brings peace in the outer, the living dimension.

Shivam is internal and it is the state of auspiciousness, goodness that you experience and live after having eradicated most of the blocks and barriers which restrict your expression of positivity. When Shivam comes, the mind becomes auspicious. The absence of *himsa*, aggression and violence, the absence of all the negatives makes the mind *Shivam*, auspicious. It brings out the auspicious nature, the quality in which only dharma is highlighted.

### **The mirror**

When Satyam and Shivam come together, the external and the internal, the complete, total experience is that of beauty, *Sundaram*. It is not only an experience, but also something which is created by you. You make the effort to become beautiful. Just as people make the effort every morning in front of the mirror to look beautiful, in the same manner by looking at yourself in your inner spiritual mirror, you can spend some time grooming, shaving polishing and powdering yourself. To look beautiful effort has to be made.

That effort has to become natural and spontaneous with the convergence of Satyam and Shivam. This is real spirituality, not God-realization. God is realized when you connect with



Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. The misunderstanding exists as we seek God without preparing the ground of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. Therefore, the search for God is always away from ourselves. Religions say, 'God lives in heaven, away from ourselves'. My cultural upbringing says, 'God has a very special place where he or she lives with all the people who are like-minded bhaktas'. The impression or the image is always that God is somewhere else.

In our effort too, we have to seek God yet we don't look at ourselves. There is a very beautiful statement in *Bhagavad Gita* (15:1):

*Urdhvamulamadhahshakhamashvattham prahuravyayam  
Chandamsi yasya parnani yastam veda sa vedavit.*

It talks of the mirror-world, the apparent and the real. What you see reflected in the mirror is not the real thing, it is only a reflection of what is out there. When you look at the mirror you say, "That is me." Is that correct? Is that you in the mirror or are you on the other side of the mirror looking at your own reflection? When you say, "That is me," it is incorrect, for that is not you.

You are not saying, "That is my reflection." You are identifying not with yourself, but with your projection. That is *maya*, illusion, as you are identifying with something which you are not. Can you look at yourself from the reflection and say, "That is me?" If you can do that, if you can look at your real body from the eyes of the reflection and say, "That is me," then that will be the real statement.

### **Connection**

This is the theory of Vedanta too, the real and the unreal: how we identify with the unreal and ignore the real. We are not aware of the presence of the real because we are identifying with 'me' over there in the mirror and not with 'me' who is watching the reflection. If we think of God not as the epitome of goodness who is away from us, but as something that can

be experienced by plugging our plug into the socket of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram, then that will be the most appropriate experience.

When you connect your plug of life to the socket of Satyam that becomes the sadhana of spiritual life. What is truth? My interaction with you, is that real? Is it dependent on my desire, expectation, ambition, do I understand the person, do I support the person? The whole life can come into play. Not just a theoretical or philosophical idea, the actual practical dimensions of life can be lived by discovering the truth. Life can be improved by thinking auspicious things instead of taking recourse and resort to negative thinking. Then one experiences Shivam. Satyam and Shivam lead to Sundaram. The whole cosmic, heavenly experience descends in the individual's field of perception and experience.

The cleaning of the spirit is connecting to Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. If you cannot express the beauty of your life, then you are not spiritual. If you cannot express the Shivam the happy, auspicious, contented aspect, then you are not spiritual. If you are disconnected from truth, you are not spiritual, and that is the tree of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The verse means (15:1):

The universal tree has its roots in heaven, and the branches and the trunk grow downwards.

This is the reverse of what is known as samsara. The divine dimension is its opposite and both create the mirror image of each other – and therefore I used the example of reflection.

It is the connection with Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram that constitutes real spiritual life. This has to be the motivating factor and inspiration – to walk towards Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. Therefore, make the effort with your own strength and clarity to remain true to your path and to retain your initial motivation and inspiration.

– Diwali, 7 November 2018, 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 18 – COME WITH JOY

Actions are of three kinds.  
True actions are selfless,  
austere and generous;  
they must not be avoided, provided,  
they do not give rise to pride.  
Avoidable actions are those  
which are selfish, futile, and false.  
Natural actions,  
like breathing and eating,  
are unavoidable,  
to the extent that  
they are essential.  
All actions have defects;  
cleanliness is good,  
but the act of cleaning  
may result in killing  
of germs and insects.  
To avoid all actions  
is not possible,  
but one must forego  
the fruits of action.

Renunciation  
is of three kinds:  
true renunciation,  
which is selfless,  
and without any  
expectations;  
selfish renunciation,  
which is undertaken  
to avoid problems and pain;

and false renunciation,  
which is purposeless.  
Those who do not  
forego the fruits  
enslave themselves,  
but those who do  
find themselves  
happy and free.

The success of action  
depends on perception,  
body, means, ego, and faith.  
Motivation for action  
comes from knowledge,  
and success depends  
on the know-how of the doer.  
The three elements  
of action are:  
aims and means and the doer.

True action stems  
from self-control,  
with the doer seeking no reward.  
Selfish action  
flows from desire  
and is full of expectations.  
False action comes  
from ignorance,  
and is regardless of the results.

True knowledge reveals  
the unity of  
this large and diverse  
universe.

Selfish knowledge  
perceives a world  
that is fragmented  
into properties.  
And false knowledge  
is purposeless,  
thriving on the trivial.

The true is free  
from pride and desire,  
is firm and brave  
and full of thrill,  
and does not seek  
to profit or gain.  
The selfish is filled  
with anger, greed,  
violence and lust  
and constantly thirsts  
for satisfaction.  
The foolish has  
no character,  
and is inert and obstinate,  
creating chaos and confusion.

The true mind  
can differentiate;  
knows when to work  
and when to retire,  
what to fear and what to fight,  
what to do and what not to do,  
and what is bondage  
and what is freedom.  
The selfish mind  
is partisan,

choosing to do  
or not to do,  
in accordance with  
one's wishes.  
The foolish mind  
is ignorant  
and lives  
in a topsy-turvy world.

True intentions flow  
from the harmony  
of mind, senses, and soul;  
selfish intent flows  
from greed and desire  
and dissatisfaction;  
and foolish intent flows  
from the emptiness  
of a fragile mind.

True happiness comes  
from knowledge  
that initial pain  
is followed by  
eternal bliss.  
Selfish happiness  
is found in pleasure  
that pollutes life.  
False happiness comes  
from dreams and delusions  
that destroy the self.

All must do their duty:  
the teacher and student,  
trader and accountant,

the ruler and soldier,  
supervisor and worker,  
the farmer and labourer,  
scientist and engineer,  
the nurse and the doctor,  
and the judge and the lawyer.  
They must do so selflessly,  
with love and truth and faith,  
with kindness and courage,  
with efficiency and ability.  
One must do one's duty  
without encroaching  
on the duties of another.  
One must work with joy  
for work without joy  
is no work at all.

Finally, I say to you:  
do your duty,  
control your mind and senses,  
curb your desires,  
seek not the fruit of your actions,  
be free from pride and selfishness,  
devote yourself to truth and love,  
acquire knowledge  
and meditate,  
renounce the world,  
and come to me,  
come with joy.



## With Thanks

We wish to thank the family of Dhiru Desai for giving their permission to publish *Light Fire and Darkness in YOGA magazine*. This has given us the opportunity to make his beautiful thoughts and sentiments available to a larger readership, in particular those who are interested in spiritual life and desirous to live the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

With our prayers for peace and prosperity to the whole family.

### A Note about the Author

It would have given Dhiru Desai immense pleasure to reach a wider audience with his modernized version of the *Bhagwad Gita*. The 59 years of his life were lived over four continents – Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. ‘*Light, Fire and*



*Darkness*’ may have been conceived in any one of these places but was finally given shape in Memphis, USA, in 1987, in his final home and resting place.

Dhiru Desai was born on 16 January in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) in 1932. After primary schooling at Robert Tredgold School he had to go to India, as there were no high schools for Indians under the apartheid system that prevailed.

He studied at Sheth C N Vidyavihar in Ahmedabad, which was like the Shantiniketan of Gujarat. The principal of the school was Snehrashmi, the famous Gujarati poet, who also happened to be Dhiru's maternal uncle, and had a great influence on him. After matriculation, Dhiru went back to Zimbabwe to help with the family business. The eldest of eight siblings, he took it upon his young shoulders to ensure a good education for his three brothers and four sisters.

In 1960, after the birth of his two daughters, Shraddha and Nishtha, he moved to London and studied to become a Chartered Accountant at the London School of Economics. His wife, Madhu, worked in a factory and ran the household on a shoe-string budget, making it possible for him to realize his dream of educating himself to pursue a career that would ensure his financial independence.

In 1969, he moved with the family to Lusaka, Zambia, where he worked for nine years, with a break of a year spent in Mumbai. Dhiru took the bold step of moving to the USA in 1979, with the aspiration of running his own business and being his own boss. He and Madhu worked hard and made a success of their business.

He doted on his grandchildren, Sheena and Kabir. He had dreams of retiring and travelling but, in July 1991, he was diagnosed with an incurable cancer and passed away four months later. Throughout his life, Dhiru found delight and solace in writing. A selection of his poems, *Across Four Continents*, was published in 2017 on the occasion of Madhu's 80th birthday.

# Perfect Self-Surrender

*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



In the final chapter, Lord Krishna presents Arjuna with His most supreme teaching:

Abandon all duties and take refuge in Me alone.

I will liberate you from all sins: fear not. (18:66)

This is a very powerful mantra which will help the devotee to effect total self-surrender if he constantly keeps before his mind the feeling: "I surrender myself to God." Those who repeat this with feeling will soon receive the grace of the Lord and be able to accomplish perfect self-surrender.

The grace of the Lord cannot come to one who thinks and speaks of his own ability. God's grace descends on the very humble soul who upholds that God does everything and knows that he is only an instrument in His hands.

# God's Grace and Blessings

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Whether it is called *kripa*, *ashirvad* or *anugraha*, in essence it is the same. There is no sense in worrying. One should establish the connection with God daily and see his blessings. Sri Krishna says:

Seek refuge in Him alone, O Arjuna, with all your heart and faith. (18:62)

God's grace flows towards everybody. God's blessings are for everyone. When it is raining, one person may leave an empty glass outside to collect the water, and another a corked bottle. What can the falling water do? It will continue raining regardless. Similarly, God's words and blessings are pouring down everywhere, but the mind needs to be opened more.

The attainment of devotion to God depends upon one's capacity. To be worthy of God's grace, one must become aware of His grace. God's grace is always there. His grace falls on everybody at all times, but people do not realize it.

# Prosperity, Happiness and Victory are Assured

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The *Bhagavad Gita* begins with a question that the blind patriarch, Dhritarashtra, asks his information minister and charioteer, Sanjaya. He says, "Tell me, Sanjaya, what is happening on the field of Kurukshetra, between my sons and the sons of my brother Pandu, who are gathered there for war?"

Sanjaya gives the answer to this question in the last verse of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the 700th verse:

Wherever there is Krishna, the lord of yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, there is prosperity, happiness, victory and appropriateness; such is my conviction. (18:78)

He says, "O king, what do you expect? You are asking me what is happening on the battlefield between your sons and the sons of Pandu. Don't you know that where there is Yogeshwara, Sri Krishna, and where there is the wielder of the bow, Arjuna, there is only victory, glory, prosperity and wellness?" This is how the *Bhagavad Gita* concludes.

# Connection of Goodwill and Support

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



The contribution and impact of the Bihar School of Yoga in the realm of yoga has been deep but unseen. We do the work and move on. All the ashrams in the world that people say are of Satyananda Yoga are autonomous centres. None of them is guided from Bihar School of Yoga, Munger. Not a single institution or ashram is being guided from here; all are autonomous. Each centre decides its own policies, its own method of functioning and working.

Bihar School of Yoga is a totally independent organization. It does not have any connection, any relationship with any other institution, except of goodwill, support, love and togetherness.

*– 24 May 2021, Ganga Darshan, Munger*



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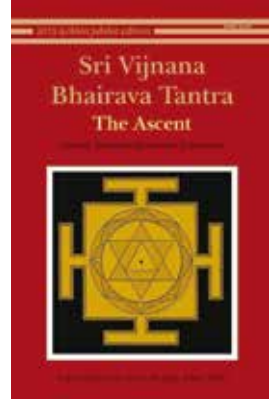
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- Registered with the Department of Post, India  
Under No. MGR-02/2020-23  
Office of posting: Ganga Darshan TSO  
Date of posting: 1st-7th of every month
- Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers, India  
Under No. BIHENG/2002/6305

issn 0972-5717

bar code

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*Hari Om*

We are happy to bring the joyous news that from January 2021, the monthly YOGA English and YOGAVIDYA Hindi magazines are available FREE of COST to all subscribers, supporters, yoga aspirants, devotees and spiritual seekers at –  
[www.satyamyogaprasad.net](http://www.satyamyogaprasad.net)  
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Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and uncertainties associated with it, the printed copies of YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines will not be available in 2021 for circulation to subscribers. Therefore, NO new or renewal of previous subscription is being accepted for these magazines for 2021, so please do NOT send any membership for the magazines.

You will be notified from time to time regarding the magazines and any new developments.

In the meantime, continue to enjoy the message of yoga and to live the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati to improve and better the quality of your life.

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

*Om Tat Sat*  
The Editor