

YOGA

Year 11 Issue 4

April 2022

Membership postage: Rs. 100

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyanin 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

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

Front cover & plates: Yoga programs of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati:

Cover: Mumbai, 1985

Plates 1: Mumbai, 1985

2: Mumbai, 1985

3: Raipur, 1981

4: Raipur, 1981



**TRIBUTES BY
GURUBHAIS AND DEVOTEES OF
SIVANANDA ASHRAM, RISHIKESH,
TO
SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI**

Satyam, you have an ever serene mind, a heart in which the light of truth shines in all its glory without being dimmed by the veil of ignorance and an intellect in which the rising sun of divine knowledge has dispelled the mist of clouded understanding. Perfect desirelessness, unrivalled selflessness and absolute egolessness give you mastery over the mind and therefore great powers of concentration and application, the secret of success in all undertakings. The whole world is indebted to you. We pray to the Almighty to bless you with health and long life so that humanity might continue to derive from you inspiration, guidance and enlightenment.

—The students of the
Yoga Vedanta Forest University

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 11 Issue 4 • April 2022
(60th year of publication)

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In 2022, YOGA magazine is dedicated to Sri Swami Satyananda's travels through India. This issue presents his talks and satsangs given in the **central and western part of India between 1976 and 1985.**

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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 ॥

New Year's Message



Cults can never be a worldwide culture. It is yoga which is going to be the culture of the future. We have made mistakes, and we are still persisting in making mistakes. The world cannot be saved unless the complete process of reorientation of yogic culture is imparted to every man, woman and child. Otherwise, we can never change the world, the country or society.

In order to change society, it is necessary to rethink and restructure all the social, moral, spiritual, and even political values. The present way of thinking, behaving and believing creates a total paradox between man's ideals and reality. As such, yoga has to be established in every city as an important part of its culture.

Yoga is an international culture. From the North Pole to the South Pole, from Japan to Beirut you find 'God' in English, 'Allah' in Arabic, 'Bhagavan' in Sanskrit, 'Kadaval' in Tamil; every language has a different representation for one God.



However, the only spiritual science which is always one and the same is yoga. In every language, yoga is yoga, mantra is mantra.

From this you understand how yoga is international in nature, universal in character and total in its influence. Whether you go to England, America, Spain, Germany, France or Russia, you will find the same terms being used. In religion, we use various terms to signify the same experience – one says emancipation, another self-realization, nirvana or kaivalya. This is the difference between religions. The yogic culture is based on one term and one presentation of ideas, symbols and systems. Therefore, yoga is a universal culture. It represents the feelings, sentiments and ideals, not only of one nation, but of the whole world.

– 8 March 1981, Bhilai, Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh)

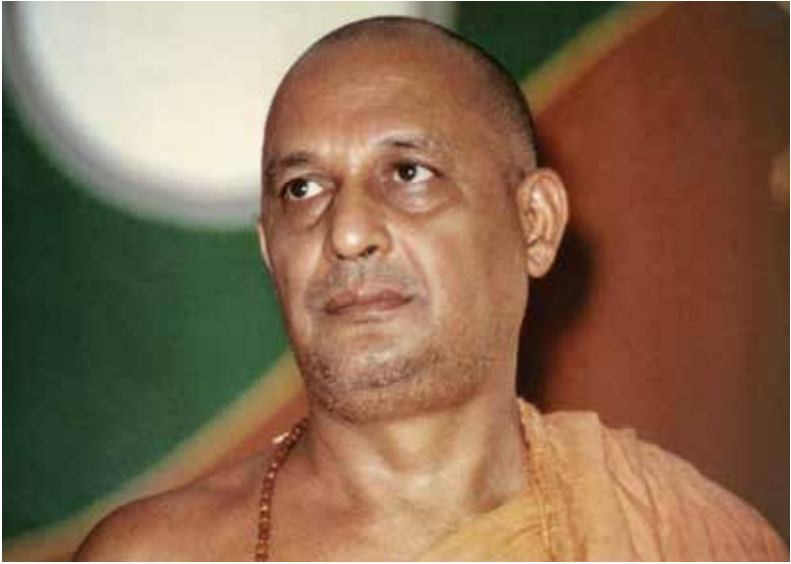
Aim of a Yoga Teacher

How should we set our goals about yoga in life after our teacher training course?

The first purpose is to go out and teach yoga wherever you are, wherever you go. Teach yoga; talk to people about yoga to whomever you wish good health, a happy and enlightened life and to help others. Talk to them. Even if they do not appreciate your talk about yoga, do not be frustrated. Do not be afraid that they will criticize you. You do your job. Whether the person is convinced or not is not your concern. Your concern is to help people through yoga as a doctor helps through medicine. Many times patients are annoyed with or criticize the doctor for the medicine or an injection that is given. Still the doctor continues to medicate, not for money, not for the wish of name and fame, but for the welfare of the patient. Likewise, you have to teach yoga to help people overcome their pain and their physical, mental, emotional, psycho-emotional problems through the knowledge.

This is only a means to reach people. This is only an excuse to be able to talk to people, give to people, and for bringing people onto the spiritual path. The purpose is not healing their diabetes, sinusitis, sciatica, asthma or anything like that. All those things are just side-effects. You practise an asana, and the automatic reaction takes place in the body, mind and emotions as chemicals change, the hormonal flow changes, and the work of the two hemispheres of the brain changes. The whole environment on the psychic plane also changes. This is an automatic effect for which you do not have to work.

If you have a physical, mental disease or any type of problem, you only have to check the sequence and type of asana and pranayama according to the diseases and problems. Otherwise, if you choose any random sequence of five asanas, two pranayamas, one technique of relaxation, any technique



of meditation, or repetition of mantra they may cause some effect. But if you choose the proper ones according to the need of your whole being, not only the physical, not only emotional, not only psychological or mental, but the whole being, that will bring about the desired result.

The tree is already there, you only have to irrigate it with these practices and techniques to derive higher sattvic knowledge, supreme knowledge. To put it differently, the glands will start to secrete in such a way that the diseases will vanish from the physical body. The effects which take place on the psycho-emotional plane can be dimmed, and thereby human beings can be healthy, happy and better enlightened persons.

This is the purpose. The aim and the purpose is to cure people, heal people, help people, make them happy and bring them to a better path, a better way of living. The goal is to make everybody find the path, or at least put them on the path, of higher seeking.

– 8 March 1981, Bhilai, Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh)

Yoga Practice for Children



I travel in a car driven by a trained driver. If my driver was not trained, you can imagine what terrible accidents might have occurred. Even if the driver is trained, but the car is not in order, I would not reach my destination. The case of the car and the driver also applies to every human being.

Training is necessary and it must be perfect training. We need training in engineering, in medicine and sports in order to achieve success. Do we have the proper training to guide our own minds, our own personalities? I would say, certainly not. This is one of the reasons why we have not been able to harness the potential of the mind.

Our mind is a very powerful agent through which we can achieve fantastic success in life. Systematic training of the mind in conjunction with our emotions is absolutely necessary. If you think that the intellectual training given in our academic institutions is the ultimate, then you have made a wrong assessment. Intellectual training is a part of life, but it is not everything. Work is important for an individual and the community. What is more important for a nation, however, is people with trained and disciplined minds. I don't believe in the discipline which does not spontaneously arise from within. I am not talking about social discipline or civil discipline, but self-discipline and self-organization.

The practices of yoga definitely help to develop self-discipline. They also have many other profound effects on the mind and body; here is just one example among many.

Normally around the age of seven or eight, the pineal gland in children starts to decay, and by the time the child reaches adolescence, its role in the body diminishes. The pineal gland is a tiny organ situated at the point where the head and neck join, directly behind and in line with the mid-eyebrow centre. It is a very important gland and it is believed to control all other endocrine glands and to influence the pituitary gland by delaying the onset of puberty.

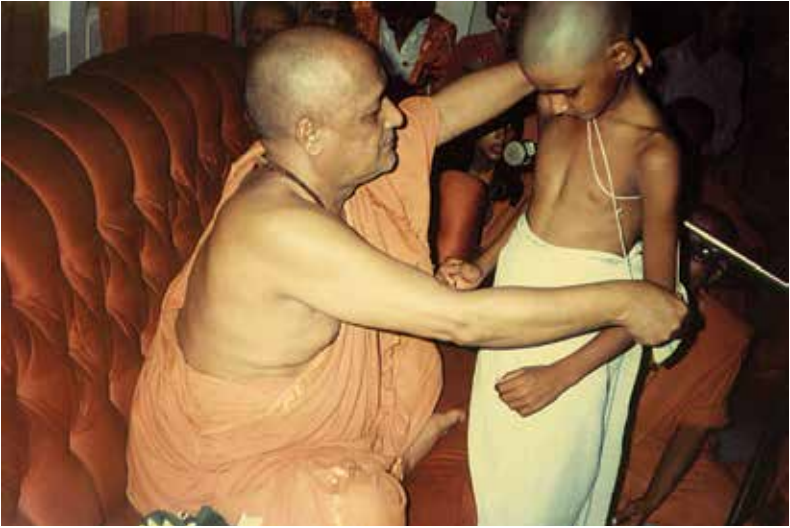
When the functions of the pineal body undergo regression, children begin to attain a stage in life corresponding with the awakening of the reproductive system that is called an emotional upsurge. If this phase can be delayed for eight to ten years, then the emotional upsurge can become a mature emotional expression. Otherwise, children generally have an unbalanced psycho-emotional personality and they suffer from a type of psycho-emotional obsession as they try to adjust to their new sexual role in life. Educators and parents must teach children the way to maintain the health of the pineal gland so that this premature sexual development leading to psycho-emotional imbalance can be avoided.

Upanayan

Today, unfortunately, most of our children continue to develop in a very unbalanced way. They are physically underdeveloped, mentally developed and emotionally confused. In yoga the most important practices for this problem are pranayama, mantra and surya namaskara. In the olden days when a child reached the age of eight, he was taught these three techniques in a ceremony known as *upanayan*. In the course of time, due to inadequate explanation and lack of scientific interpretation, there arose a great misunderstanding. Children thought that these were merely unnecessary religious practices.

Recent scientific investigation and research has discovered that the practice of pranayama at this age can maintain the health of the pineal gland for a further period of about ten years. If you can maintain the health of this gland for another ten years, I can assure you that you will not face emotional conflicts in your life, nor what we call sexual hallucinations or obsessions. These states are completely psychological and emotional that occur because the whole mechanism has gone out of control.

Pranayama is practised in the morning after you have finished your bath. Before beginning pranayama, sit down in a comfortable posture or asana, either *padmasana*, the lotus posture, or *siddhasana*, the accomplished posture. However, if padmasana or siddhasana are not possible, you can assume *sukhasana*, the easy posture. The important point is to keep the spinal column upright and straight. You do not have to sit like a statue, but sit in a comfortable position with the back straight throughout the entire practice. Next inhale through your left nostril, retain the breath for a few seconds, then exhale through the right nostril. Then inhale through the right nostril, retain for a few seconds, and exhale through the left nostril. This is one round. You should practise five rounds daily. This is the principle of pranayama. The breathing should not be forced in any way.



Surya namaskara is a combination of twelve postures. It is a dynamic exercise and the most ancient exercise prevalent in this country. The sun is the source of vital energy. It is the source of prana, knowledge and light. Scientifically, it is from the sun that we obtain many important radiations such as ultraviolet rays. The rising sun emits ultraviolet rays which are necessary for those people who suffer from deficiency of Vitamin D. They are also necessary for maintaining the health of bones and good eyesight. At sunrise, face the sun directly and expose your body to it. Of course, this does not apply in the chilly winter months. Practise the twelve surya namaskara postures. Six rounds will take you about five minutes. This practice will revitalize the whole body and mind. It activates the solar energy within us which is responsible for our vitality.

Pranayama is necessary for the mind and surya namaskara is necessary for the body. Pranayama develops the mental shakti and surya namaskara develops the prana shakti. What are you and I? We are a combination of mind and vitality. If there is no prana, there is no life; if there is no mind, you can't think – you would exist as inorganic matter. When mind and prana come together, they make this dynamic and promising body.

At the same time, it is also necessary to note that if prana and mind are not in balance with each other, disease results. If there is an excess of mental shakti and lack of prana shakti, you will think, imagine and fantasize too much, but will not be able to accomplish anything. As a result, you may go crazy, become hysterical or even psychotic. There are many children and adults, who think too much but can't do anything because they lack dynamism. They are not dynamic because there is no prana in them, no energy. This is one aspect.

On the other hand, what will happen if there is excess of prana but mental power is low? As an adult you will become a storm in society, as a child you will be the tempest in school, creating problems for your colleagues, teachers and society. With excess of prana, action in some form is necessary, but if there is nothing constructive to do, you just break and burn. Most people suffer from this imbalance in varying degrees. They have too much *prana shakti* or vitality, and not enough mental shakti to balance it.

Gayatri mantra

In order to balance this excess of energy you will have to turn to the science of mantra. In ancient days the young children were taught the Gayatri mantra:

Om bhur bhuva swaha tat saviturovarenyam bhargo devasya dheemahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.

This mantra has nothing to do with Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism or Communism. Anyone can practise the Gayatri mantra. It has a tremendous effect on the different centres of the brain – the centre of memory, reproduction, genius, understanding and the centre of interpretation. There are millions of ultrasonic and supersonic centres in the brain. Without these centres you would not be able to understand what I am saying to you at such a fast rate. It is like a computer that is always working. The Gayatri mantra has a composite and homogenous effect on the many centres in the brain. The

last part of the Gayatri mantra contains the word *dhiyo* which means intelligences, in plural and not only one intelligence, but many separate faculties – memory, quick grasping, recall, intuitive insight and communicative ability. There are hundreds and thousands of innate forms of intelligence in us.

When you chant the Gayatri mantra you are creating a possibility of change in the structure of the brain, opening up areas such as nervous pathways and nerve secretions. The brainwaves undergo a change in formation, a change in pattern. When your brainwaves are adjusted and properly functioning, then your intelligence functions miraculously.

Lack of adjustment is exactly the reason why, although you have previously understood and learned everything, at the time of examination it cannot be reproduced. You are overcome by a fear psychosis and on account of this state the alpha waves diminish. When you are suffering from fear psychosis there is an associated high anxiety and the brainwaves undergo a state of delirium and derangement. This is the problem with many school children, it is the cause of poor mental efficiency and the reason for bad results in examinations.

The Gayatri mantra can definitely help to overcome these problems. It is equally useful and beneficial for young and old, believers and non-believers. Its effects have been scientifically proven. The Gayatri mantra will affect your brain as much as it will affect your mind because it is a concrete and objective power or influence in the same way as penicillin or streptomycin or any other type of antibiotic affects each and every person equally regardless of race, age or religion.

Messengers of peace

So remember these three practices – pranayama, nadi shodhana for five rounds; surya namaskara, from six to twelve rounds; and Gayatri mantra, maximum is up to you to decide and the minimum is thirty-two for boys, girls, elders and everyone.

Yoga can contribute so much to the total development and training of children. You are the children of a very unique cul-



ture and age. To be spiritually enlightened children, you must learn to understand life with insight, and aspire to all that is great and noble. When children live by this aspiration, there is no reason why the world will not look to them for examples. Even today, though you have so many shortcomings and personality difficulties, the whole world is looking to you for light.

Please remember that you are not being educated merely to become a part of industry, not only to become engineers and doctors, teachers and professors, priests, sanyasins or factory workers. The aim of education should be to develop into a personality, a person who will comprise one unit among millions of people. A time must come when your personality should contribute to the personality of your nation. The personality of all human beings, all the civilians becomes the personality of the nation.

There is a culture which is above military culture, which is above political culture and which is higher than a culture which is mainly dependent on economics and industry. That culture is known as a spiritual culture, and you are its harbingers. You are the messengers of peace who were born to spread the yogic way of life to every corner of the world. Even those of you who do not practise yoga today can understand these words, and tomorrow you too will be amongst those who carry this message.

– February 1979, Vikram High School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

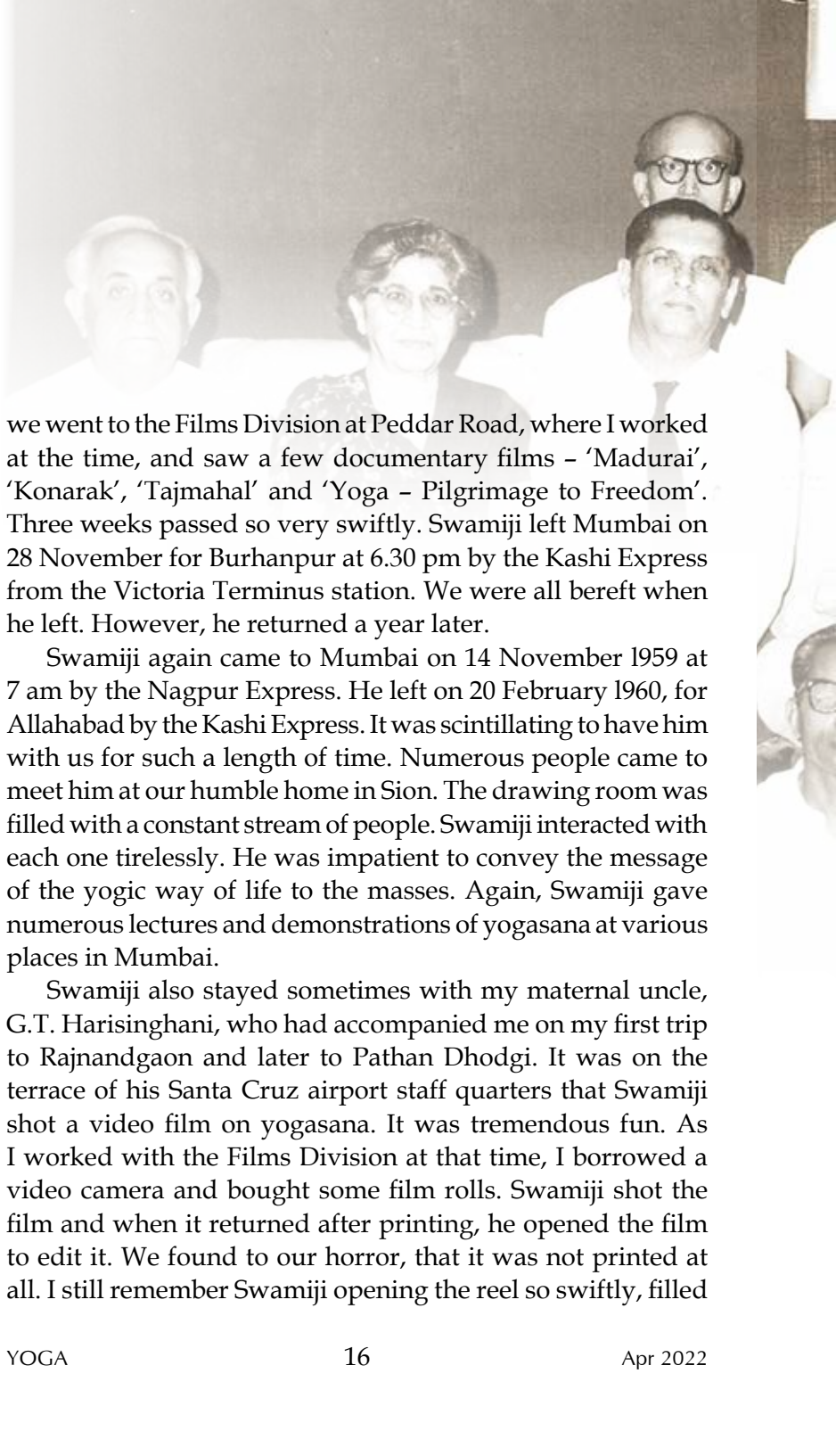
Beginnings in Bombay

Vishwaprem (Prema Baxi)

Swamiji came to Mumbai for the first time on 27 October 1958, at 12.16 pm by the Calcutta Express. He stayed with my uncle, G.T. Harisinghani, in his Santa Cruz airport officers' quarters for a few days. Uncle Harisinghani was an advanced sadhaka and had many spiritual experiences. On 7 November, Swamiji came to our home in Sion to stay with my family. It was wonderful to have him with us for three weeks. It was during this period that, on 12 November 1958, he initiated me into the techniques of kundalini yoga and said that he would take account of my sadhana from that date.

My parents welcomed Swamiji with open arms. It was such a great privilege to have him stay with us. He was thirty-five years and in his prime of youth - handsome, gentle and very charming. We would spread a mat on the floor and we all ate together and chatted like friends. Swamiji would ask for a green chilli and a piece of jaggery with his meals. Our flat was small, consisting of only one large bedroom and a long rectangular drawing room, where my father, Parsram Jiandani, had his dispensary. Swamiji adjusted very well and slept in the drawing room on a wooden divan near the main door of the flat while my father slept at the other side of the room. It was the same drawing room, which would later be filled with dozens of people thronging for Swamiji's darshan and to listen to his talks.

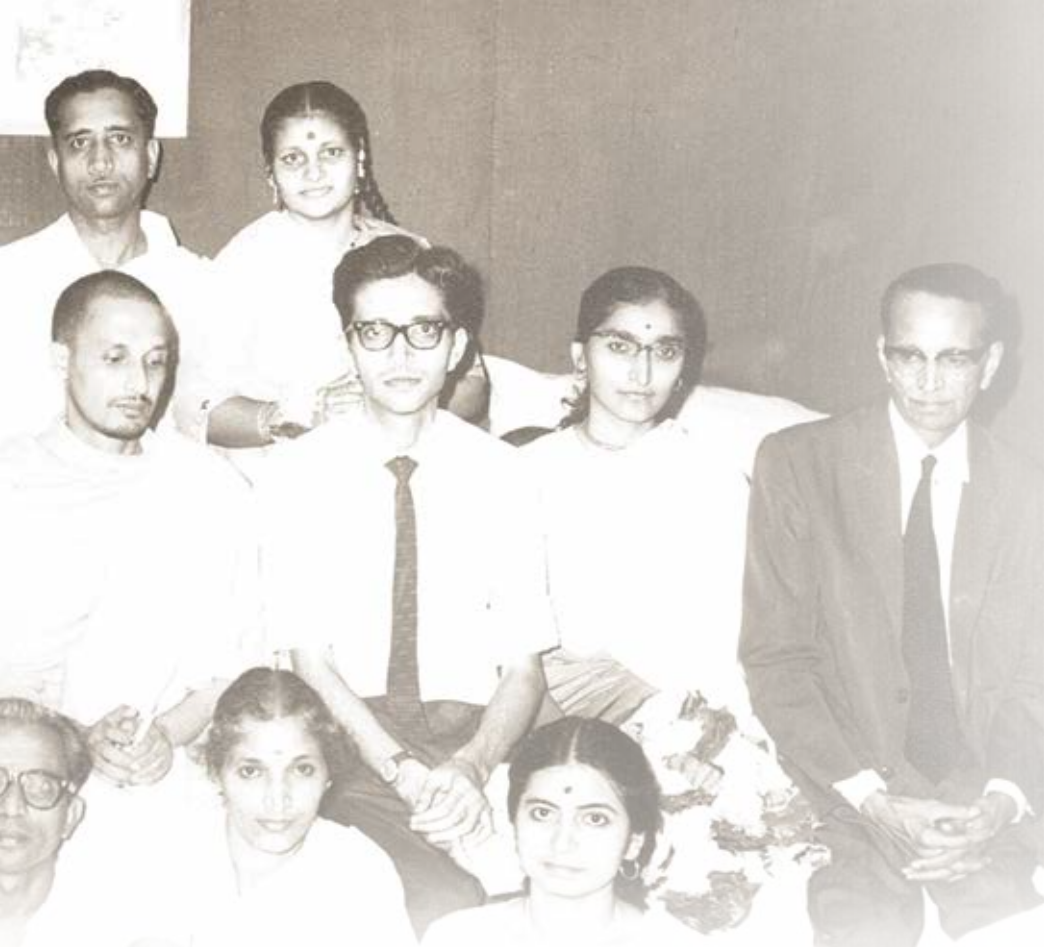
We arranged several satsangs for him. Among other places, Swamiji spoke at Govind Dham, Sadhana Ashram, Lakshmi Narayan Temple in Santa Cruz, Panchayat Hall and Guru Nanak Darbar in Sion. Then at Chembur, Jyoti Bhavan, Sindh Model Schools, K. J. Khilnani School, and so on. Swamiji graced the homes of many devotees including that of film actress, Sadhana Shivdasani, who also learnt yoga. On 27 November,



we went to the Films Division at Peddar Road, where I worked at the time, and saw a few documentary films - 'Madurai', 'Konarak', 'Tajmahal' and 'Yoga - Pilgrimage to Freedom'. Three weeks passed so very swiftly. Swamiji left Mumbai on 28 November for Burhanpur at 6.30 pm by the Kashi Express from the Victoria Terminus station. We were all bereft when he left. However, he returned a year later.

Swamiji again came to Mumbai on 14 November 1959 at 7 am by the Nagpur Express. He left on 20 February 1960, for Allahabad by the Kashi Express. It was scintillating to have him with us for such a length of time. Numerous people came to meet him at our humble home in Sion. The drawing room was filled with a constant stream of people. Swamiji interacted with each one tirelessly. He was impatient to convey the message of the yogic way of life to the masses. Again, Swamiji gave numerous lectures and demonstrations of yogasana at various places in Mumbai.

Swamiji also stayed sometimes with my maternal uncle, G.T. Harisinghani, who had accompanied me on my first trip to Rajnandgaon and later to Pathan Dhodgi. It was on the terrace of his Santa Cruz airport staff quarters that Swamiji shot a video film on yogasana. It was tremendous fun. As I worked with the Films Division at that time, I borrowed a video camera and bought some film rolls. Swamiji shot the film and when it returned after printing, he opened the film to edit it. We found to our horror, that it was not printed at all. I still remember Swamiji opening the reel so swiftly, filled



with the excitement of a child, and then looking at the blank reel with disbelief. Little did anyone imagine at that time, that in less than ten years, this little disappointment would only be an incident to laugh over, as very great work would already have been accomplished by the sankalpa of one saintly man.

We had to shoot the film all over again. It meant more fun and of course, more work. When we finally got down to editing the film, it was hard work. No one got much sleep for those three to four days, until the editing was completed. Swamiji was indeed a hard taskmaster. When it came to work, it had to be completed before anyone could rest. His training in hard work and patience came in very useful later in life.

– *Published in My Spiritual Journey with Swami Satyananda*

10 Years Later, Bombay – Before the World Tour

Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati



The train reached Bombay in the evening of 15th February 1968. We were lodged in a palace-like mansion on the seashore. The seven-storeyed building had offices and a hotel on the upper floors, while the lower floors were used for meetings, marriages and other such functions. The venue for the Bombay convention was the local racecourse, where a big marquee had been set up.

Many saints and sages graced the convention with their presence. Many national leaders also participated, including the Vice-President Sri V.V. Giri, Sri Morarji Desai and others. A big convention in the financial and industrial capital of India was bound to attract people in large numbers. People were pouring into the convention venue from all parts of the city.

The people of Bombay expressed a desire to have an ashram. Space was acquired at Somaiya Building Trust (Ghatkopar) and on 22nd February 1968, the Governor of Maharashtra, Sri P.V. Cherian, laid the foundation stone for the Bombay School of Yoga. Sri Morarji Desai and Mrs Savita Ben 'Porbander' delivered speeches on the occasion.

The plans for Sri Swamiji's first world tour have begun to crystallize. He is scheduled to depart on 27th April.

– *Published in Mere Aradhya*

Yoga – A System of Life

This is a very important evening for most of us as we are going to think about a system of life for ourselves, for society, the nation and the world at large. I have my own limitations and I don't promise that I am going to tell you all about this great science in such a brief period. Yoga is not just one part of life; it covers almost the entire range of human personality.

When I think about yoga, I have a very clear concept in my mind and that is the manifestation of the potential latent in everyone. With this potential, one can overcome all the limitations of life. This emancipation of the greater part of human personality can be achieved by the practice of the science of yoga. We were taught a few decades ago that yoga was meant for people who have nothing to do with social life, but now the picture has entirely changed. We have come to understand that yoga can fulfil our needs and help us in the conflicts of life, and more importantly, in the evolution of awareness.

Man is shackled by limitations and there are certainly limitations of one's personality which should be defined in one's own mind. The mind which is free, the mind which has attained a homogenous dimension of consciousness is capable of accomplishing greatness in life. The nucleus of man's personality is not only this *prana*, life energy, the nucleus of his personality is not only his thoughts and emotions but the nucleus of human personality is awareness.

This awareness should grow internally and externally so that the growth of this awareness brings to us its reward – intuition. In this particular context, yoga comes as a very valuable asset for mankind. All over the world people belonging to various religions have come to accept yoga and that is for just one reason: by the practice of yoga we develop our consciousness. Through the development of consciousness, we grow

in understanding, we grow in knowledge and we grow spiritually. Therefore, when we talk of yoga we talk of meditation, and that is what I am going to talk about this evening.

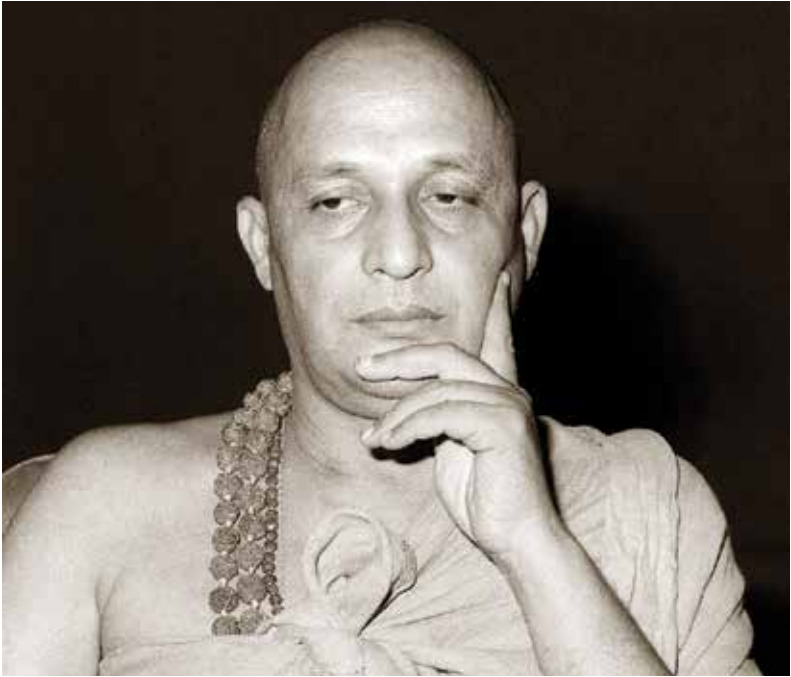
Meditation

When I say meditation, I am not going to deny the other aspects of yoga like bhakti yoga, karma yoga and hatha yoga. Of course, we need them but tonight I am going to devote my time exclusively to meditation or *dhyana* which our ancestors gave as a very valuable gift to humanity. Even as a scientist explodes an atom by the process of fission, we disintegrate the material particle of matter and ultimately what remains is energy – the inherent energy in matter is brought out. As with matter, so it is with the mind and the process is dhyana yoga. In one of the poems of Saint Kabir, he has clearly indicated what happens, Kabir says:

*Is bangley mein ek achamba
Nari purush ka joda;
Kahat Kabir suno bhai sadho
Jin joda, tin toda.*

In this house resides an astonishing
Female and male couple;
Says Kabir, listen my friend,
He who unites them breaks free of bonds.

This is exactly what happens. Mind is matter. Let me not speak too much about the mind because I don't consider the mind as a thinking apparatus or as a bundle of habits. The mind is a homogenous entity. It is an ocean of awareness. Emotion is not the ultimate definition of mind; thinking is not the ultimate and total definition of mind; memory, feeling, reasoning and all these things with which you are acquainted are not the total definition of mind. Mind is awareness. We do not even know what the mind is. We presume that we are thinking and therefore we should know the mind.



Homogeneity of consciousness is the mind. In yoga philosophy we use the word *chitta* because it is a kind of awareness. Anyway, this mind is matter, it is composed of *shakti*, power, potentiality and within the fold of this mind there is a light. You have to withdraw the whole mind, the total external awareness, then what remains is shakti.

This shakti is always conceived on two planes. One is the shakti that you obtain from matter. You know better about this than I do. That is called *aparashakti*, shakti that has been derived and liberated from matter. This physical shakti is a result of liberation of the same energy from the fold of matter.

In the same way, when you liberate energy from *chitta*, it is called *atmashakti*. This is the ultimate essence of man. Man is miserable because he has not been able to achieve this *atmashakti*. So by following the entire process of dhyana yoga and concentration on a particular point, what you are achieving is a process of liberation. It is a process of fusion. When you

sit down for meditation, you are withdrawing each and every thought or emotion that arises in the mind.

So here we have a very distinct definition of dhyana yoga. The raja yoga of Patanjali says, 'Withdraw the mind; concentrate the mind; then withdraw the whole awareness to just one point'. In this particular process of meditation, we have a number of exercises. I am going to give just one for your benefit.

Ajapa japa

According to the tantra shastras, Lord Shiva tells Parvati that there are millions of methods by which one can concentrate and liberate shakti and one of them is known as *ajapa japa*. This is a very old, and the easiest, method of meditation. You make the breath the basis of your concentration. In one minute you breathe 15 times, in one hour 90 times and in 24 hours 21,600 times.

We breathe but we do not know that we are breathing. If you follow the process of breath for one moment, then that breathing becomes the basis of pratyahara. Concentration on the breath can be practised in the nostrils, in the throat and windpipe or in the spinal column. When you have achieved mastery in concentration on breath, then you should add one word to it known as mantra. It can be *Aum*, *So Ham* or anything. This is how you progress on the path of dhyana yoga.

Now comes the most important point. When you try to concentrate, the mind does not cooperate. The mind is composed of three gunas: sattwa, rajas and tamas. These are the constituents of the mind. We are more or less sattwic, rajasic or tamasic. Those who are rajasic, tamasic or sattwic by nature will have different problems with their mind. There are those who, when they concentrate, fall asleep and become lazy. Those who are rajasic by nature are not able to concentrate. The moment they try to concentrate, the mind gallops like a horse. Those who are sattwic by nature are able to concentrate on the object chosen by them for some time and then they get

visions or psychic experiences. First of all, one has to find out to which particular nature one belongs.

If you are tamasic by nature and you try to concentrate, after a few minutes, you will start slumbering, and it so happened with me about 27 years ago. One evening at about 6.30 pm, I sat down in padmasana and in the morning at 4.30 when I awoke I was still in padmasana. I was very happy. I thought I had attained samadhi. Swami Sivanandaji said that I had realized the total form of tamas. Naturally everyone has some tamas in him. In case of predominantly tamasic people, the practice of meditation should be preceded by the practice of bhakti yoga and hatha yoga.

Those who are predominantly rajasic by nature should not try to control the mind by force because they will fail. It will only create a split in their personality. It is a problem that will be faced by most of us. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:14):

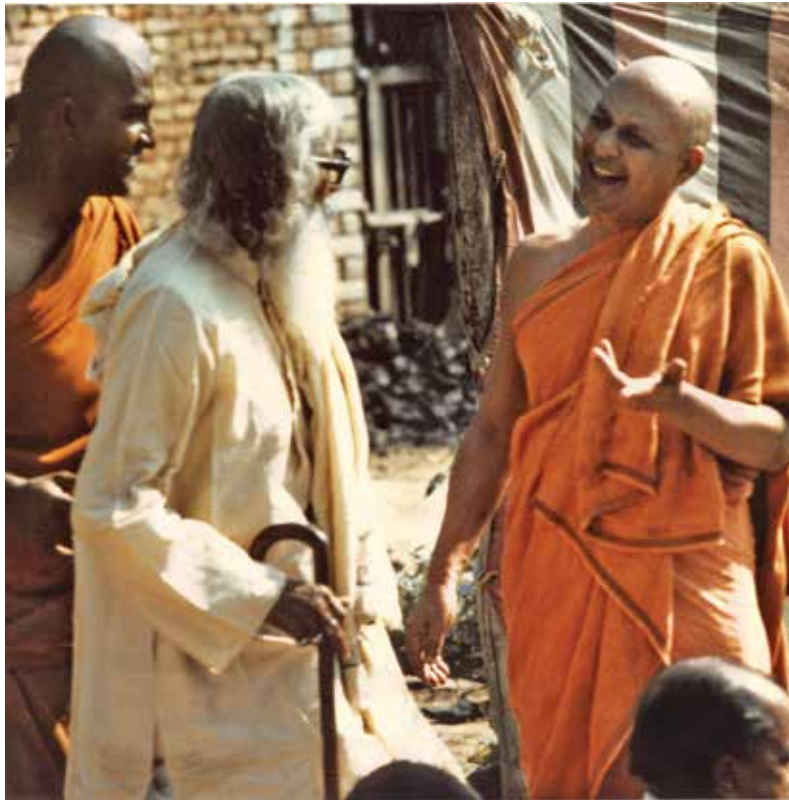
*Yato yato nishcharati manashchanchalamasthiram;
Tatatasto niyamyaitad aatmanyeva vasham nayet.*

From whatever cause the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the Self alone.

Whenever this unsteady and restless mind goes out, bring it back. This is not possible for us. We belong to a different age. Today if we are going to suppress our minds, we are going to get schizophrenia because we are creating a conflict within ourselves. We are creating mental chaos. That is the problem which many people have, but it can be overcome. Do not try to force or suppress the mind. Let it wander away if it wants to, but be aware that it is wandering away and bring it back to the practice again and again. In time it will grow weary of wandering and become more steady.

*– 11 March 1976, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research,
Bombay, Maharashtra*

Satsang



Why is it that from the beginning of time so many of the great saints and sages have been born in India?

This question is put to me many times. Right from the beginning of spiritual awareness in every part of the world, mankind has been trying to manage the affairs of his spiritual life. But he has been finding it difficult, either due to political situations, culture, food, climate, the forests, rivers or the quality of the soil. All these things have been obstacles in man's spiritual advancement from time to time. Therefore, in other parts of the world man could not make progress.

Benevolent environment

If you want to practise austerity and penance or follow something in Norway or Denmark, snow will pose a problem. whereas in the Himalayas, if you wanted to perform penance you found a hot spring in the vicinity of your kutir. In the course of time, people began to think, 'Let us have at least one place in this world where we can organize a culture, a society, a political creed to suit our spiritual advancement'. I think it must have taken them many centuries.

Finally, most of the spiritually-minded people from all parts of the world came to the conclusion that those who were sincere, highly spiritual and totally dedicated to spiritual life and who could not manage their affairs under the given situations in their part of the world, should have a place where they could live together. A particular social system should be created for them with minimum possible political structure, bureaucracy, and benevolent rulers and protection, if necessary, should be given to them. Such people would engage themselves in agriculture, cattle breeding, forestry and so on to occupy their mind.

I have been to most parts of the world and I am particularly fascinated by rivers. If I come across any river, I stop the car and take a bath. Rivers can also be very dangerous. Either the fish in it are dangerous or you cannot drink the water. Somehow or the other, nature in other parts of the world has not been like it is in India. If you want, you can drink the water of Ganga, Yamuna or Narmada as it is naturally pure. The routes through which the rivers emerge and flow seem to be free and healthy.

In other parts of the world rivers do not pass through clean fields. In South American countries, there are rivers into which it is risky to even put your foot because there are very small fish, little bit bigger than mosquitoes, billions and trillions in number. If you have a mosquito bite and you scratch it, if there is a little spot of blood, they will smell it and within a moment, you will be reduced to a skeleton. Animals cannot cross the river. I have not found a single river like this in India.

If you want spiritual illumination, you must remember that you have a body with its limitations. The body is a very complex system: nervous system, respiratory and circulatory systems. So, when you want to go into spiritual life, merely abstract idealism will not do except in a few cases like Shankaracharya and others like him. For the majority, you have to go through a systematic process of evolution that involves the body, mind and soul, either at the same time or one after the other.

If you are going to practise hatha yoga, in the present century you have got centrally heated rooms in Norway and Denmark. But 5,000 years ago, 4,000 years ago or even 1,000 years ago how could they practise shankhprakashana, or even neti or pranayama? Whereas in India, a swami who stays in Haridwar in winter from November to January goes higher up into the Himalayas in summer from March to June. Then he comes down again. So the spiritually-minded people from all over the world created a community that is called India, *Bharat*, the land of light.

Spiritual communities overseas

Today in America, Europe, Israel and in other parts of the world, young boys and girls are not satisfied with the type of life their parents are living. They find it very difficult to practise yoga, Zen Buddhism or any other sadhana at home because in the society that they live in, their mother and father do not understand. So they have started spiritual communities. There are more than 30,000 such spiritual communities all over the world. Some are small, some are big and in the course of a few years, some may die out but some of them are really thriving.

These spiritual communities function like ashrams and can be found in practically every part of the world. What do these boys and girls do there? They go to the newspaper office or the shop where they work as a sales clerk, and in the evening they come with their earnings. They have twenty, thirty acres of land and on Saturdays people work there. They get up early in the morning and practise asana, pranayama and dhyana,









they chant the *Gita*, Upanishads and from the Puranas, they try all kinds of things. Sometimes they collect money and invite a swami to give satsang.

Not only in India but everywhere in the world, people have this faith that India is a land with spirituality in its environment and atmosphere. The ecology of India is spirituality conducive where you can roam freely. If you read the Vedas, smritis like *Manusmriti* or *Yajnavalkyasmriti*, Upanishads, ayurvedic books or books on astrology and poetry, you will understand how old that civilization was, how enlightened the people were and what concepts they had.

They were prepared to accept free discussions on the nature of reality, although the Vedas had already declared their conclusiveness. They said, "No, in spite of the declaration, let us discuss." In one of the ten major Upanishads, there is a discussion where *Brahmavadins*, those discussing the nature of reality, sat down to discuss these questions: 'What is the source of the universe? What is the cause? Then what is the purpose? What is the process? Which way is it going?' They had to table their arguments.

This particular process, responsible for creating the Vedas, Upanishads, smritis, books on the medical system and so on, shows that they must have been a very spiritual race. How many centuries must that civilization have existed to come to such a point of development and write medical books on the properties of a substance or fever, on itching, eczema and other subjects?

This particular race is called Hindu. The word came from the Sanskrit word 'sapta sindu' which means seven rivers. According to Sanskrit grammar, 'sa' can also be pronounced as 'ha', so you can say 'sapta' or 'hapta', 'sindu' or 'hindu'. The Sindhu valley appears to have been the cradle of a great civilization. In the way we talk about Atlantis, we also talk about the Sindhu valley as being the cradle of civilization. Then there was a very big natural catastrophe and great changes took place. There were great monsoons, there were floods and

there was a great migration. The people of the Sindhu valley started migrating, not to the east but to the north-west. One of the tribes went to Germany, another tribe went to Siberia, yet another tribe went to Iran who are the Parsis.

I have read some of the Zoroastrian Gathas and other scriptures where it is mentioned that people were going from one place to another. From that we understand how they were migrating and that there was an exodus. Most people migrated from the Indus valley civilization in a north-westerly direction during a period of constant and continuous flooding. These people went I think as far as Europe and as far as Siberia and, of course, to Iran.

When I was in Ireland I met someone who was an insurance agent and was also a research scholar in history. He said that either after the political exodus that began after the Mahabharata war or during this Indus valley mass transmigration, the people from Hindustan, or what is now India, came to Ireland. Even now in the north and south of Ireland you have traces of the Sindhu race. Even in the Caribbean islands like Aruba, there are dark-skinned people, not Africans, and when I teach them yoga they just accept it. They see me as a swami and they just accept it. They don't have any difficulty and they greet me with 'Hari Om'. They will never say 'Hello', they will only say 'Hari Om'. Sometimes in Europe people find it difficult but in these countries where there is a continuity of the Hindu race, if you say 'Hari Om' once, they can easily follow it.

Now we come to the conclusion. India was created in order to provide spiritual facilities to spiritually-minded aspirants so that they could make further discoveries in spiritual life. Therefore, an ashrama dharma was created for householders. There is no ashrama dharma outside of India, you only find it among Hindus in India.

You have to design or plan your life in such a way that you will not only follow spiritual life but you will take care of your material requirements as well. For twenty-five years, children were educated, after twenty-five, they entered into

married life. After fifty, what should they do? This was how the whole life was planned. Temples were built, ashrams were created, saints, sadhus, mahatmas and paramahansas were allowed to live outside of society. They were told very clearly, "You have no social obligations" like attending births, weddings or even funeral ceremonies. From the thousands and thousands of sannyasins who renounced and lived separately, some started making experiments on spiritual life in their own personal ways. A few people were very brilliant like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharishi, Sukhdeva, Mahatma Gandhi and a few more.

Another point is that western countries are not 'un-spiritual', they are spiritual and they are aware of this. They know that there is a higher reality. Today they are not satisfied with the explanation or definition given to them by their religions. They say, "We don't understand all this. We want an answer." The answer is very clear. They say, "It is an experience. We have come to this point." But they have no facilities. They have to work in a particular way which society wants them to work and that is why these boys and girls who are spiritually minded just leave. You will find thousands of them in India, not just a few hundreds. Our main ashram is full, the Ramakrishna Mission is full, Sivananda ashram is full, everyone's ashrams are full of them. They are not dedicated to any purpose except one: they want to live in a particular way where they can carry on their spiritual experiences and spiritual practices. This is how India was made.

Why are people attracted to the Himalayas? What makes them go there?

The Himalaya provided a spiritual base for the spiritually-inclined people in India. You can go to the Alps, you can go any place, they are gigantic, majestic, beautiful but not holy. You go to Gangotri, just sit down and you are off on a spiritual journey. You go to Badrinath and just close your eyes, you have experiences. That is why people go there.



It is the atmosphere. The influences are interpenetrating, the outer atmosphere influences the inner atmosphere and the inner atmosphere influences the outer atmosphere. There is a spiritual magnetism and an external magnetism as well. High up in the Himalayas you just imagine the ions per cubic foot in comparison to ions existing here at this place, or the purity in the air which you inhale during pranayama and what you inhale in Bhilai or Danapur. The Himalayas still have got herbs and minerals which create a magnetic atmosphere wherever you go.

You do not find these dangerous fish there. When I went to Colombia I wanted to take a bath, but Mr Fernandez said, "Don't take bath." I said, "How is it possible? I'll take bath and

I'll drink water." "If you remain there you will die," he said. "Our Colombian rivers are not meant for anything." When the rivers are not meant for anything what are they good for? After all the most beautiful creation of nature is a river. When you look at a river, the expanse just gives the idea of majestic and glory. If that river is polluted by virtue of nature, then what is the point of having it?

In the Himalayas, if you sit down, you are in peace, even if you don't care for God, nature is enough to withdraw your mind. You don't have to go to God, nature itself will switch it off. You haven't been to Lompas, you haven't been to Hemkund. Hemkund is the place where Guru Nanak performed tapasya in his previous birth. About fifteen miles to Parchatti and across the Ganga to Hemkund, 14,000 feet from sea level is a place called Joshimath, a beautiful place with a beautiful dharamshala. They have built a heaven on earth there.

Lompas is known as the Valley of Flowers. When you go in the month of September, there is no colour which you cannot see and maybe there is something more which you have never seen. It is not just a patch of forest, the whole valley is blooming with beauty and colour.

At Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar there is no priest, no temple, no idol, but it seems everything is there. You do not feel that it is desolate. You feel an invisible presence though you know that nobody is there. It is a big beautiful lake with swans or ducks, crystal clear water and Mount Kailash reflected in Mansarovar. When there is no wind when everything is clear, you need not look at Kailash, you can see its reflection. There will be hardly ten or fifteen people, no more than that. A few Tibetans and a few Hindus here and there, but the whole place feels as if it is filled with a divine presence. You know very well that there is nobody here but this is your feeling. That is peculiar. Even the intellectual I was, used to think, "There is nobody here, but what am I feeling?" Then I came to find out what I was feeling, 'I am feeling as if I am not the only person here, but this place seems to be full'.

When you go to a particular town, city or a house, you know if the house is full or the house is completely desolate without anybody. There I did not feel that I was only with myself. and with ten or fifteen other people. I found the place was full. Then I thought in my mind, "It is all a game, it is just me who is thinking." But I couldn't get rid of that idea, of that invisible presence. Just like a child who goes at night to the bathroom and thinks a ghost is there, I could not get out of that idea. All the time, I was aware that there was some presence at work though what exactly it was I didn't know. I asked other people also. They said, "Yes, it seems a beautiful place. All the devis and devatas are here." They were innocent people. They were more innocent than myself. They could feel a little more reality than I could.

What are the different types of samadhi?

There are different stages of samadhi, not different types of samadhi. The ultimate samadhi is nirvikalpa. The state of samadhi is divided into two, savikalpa and nirvikalpa. In savikalpa, there is vibration and counter vibration, movement. In nirvikalpa, everything is still and there is no movement.

Vikalpa means vibration, a process of thinking. Before you come to savikalpa samadhi, you have one-pointedness of mind. The mind is capable of visualizing only one object at a time. The awareness of one object is not interpreted by another idea. If I am talking to you, one idea is flashing across your mind, intercepting it. The state of meditation is of one idea, one-pointed awareness where there is awareness of one point, one item, one person or form which becomes totally and absolutely continuous without any other thought interception. This ultimately leads to savikalpa samadhi.

In meditation you have one object as the centre or the stuff of your awareness. In samadhi that does not happen, the stuff drops and there is only awareness. In that awareness, there are certain motions and movements that go on. I am talking about a very deep thing that is going on.

Those who have attained the second stage of transcendence, *nirvikalpa*, are like Ramana Maharishi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Sivananda, Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri and Mahavir, the prophet of the Jains.

What is the experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi*?

It is written about in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *Ashtavakra Gita* and *Avadhuta Gita*. It is wonderful, and the experience is explained. If I drink too much wine and I do not know I am drunk, I am intoxicated, I am not in a position to give an intellectual detail of the state. But at the time when the bliss takes place, it is written down. You have that in the *Avadhuta Gita*. Ramakrishna Paramahansa has written about it, Ramana Maharishi from time to time used to speak about some things, not many things; he was a man of very few words. Swami Sivananda in the last three or four years of his life hardly spoke a sentence.

What is *dhyana*?

If you enter into *dhyana*, the mind becomes dynamic, very creative. It is not hypnosis. Meditation is not a negative nor a passive state of mind. It is like a tree which has flowers and a lot of seeds. It is capable of creating many more plants. It has powerful seeds. In the same way, in meditation your personality becomes like a flower. It is not a negative state where you don't know anything or you don't know time and space; that is a hypnotic space.

Many people do enter into the state of hypnosis where there is a regression of mind. They lose the powers of mind, memory fails, they make mistakes in decisions, in behaviour, they are very awkward. It means they are losing something mentally and they are not progressing. *Dharana*, concentration, *dhyana*, meditation, and *samadhi*, transcendence, are the three stages in which the mind must develop. It must bloom and bloom and bloom.

– 20 February 1980, Bombay, Maharashtra

Kundalini Yoga

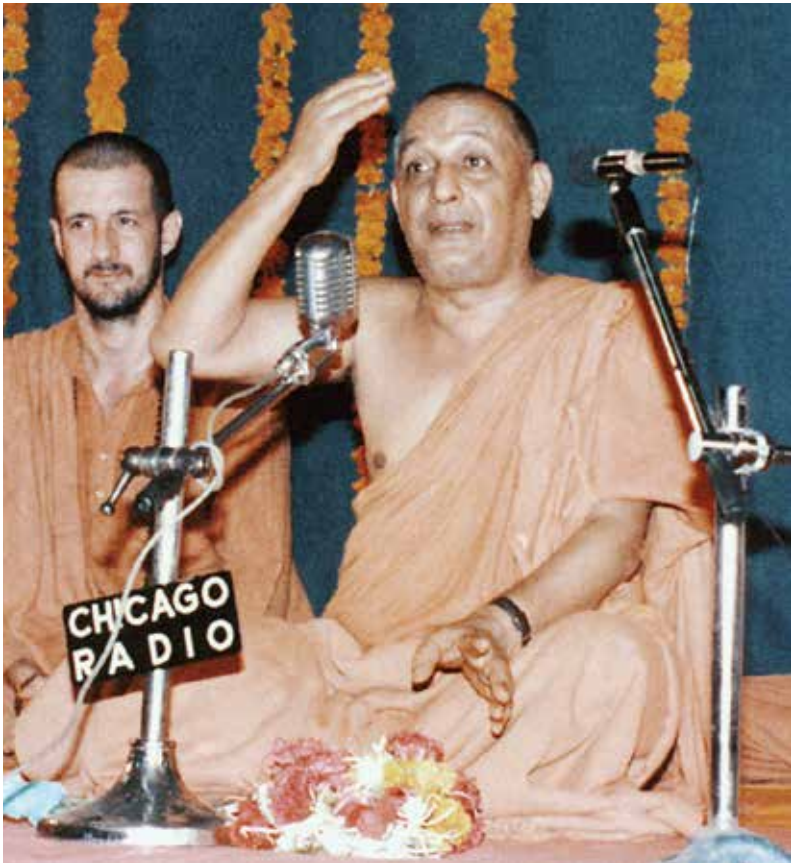
There is a popular belief that tantra is some sort of magic manipulation and the people who practise it, called tantrics, are feared. A lot of superstition is attached to these practices. Could you please clarify?

It will be very difficult for me to plead on behalf of tantra in this meeting, but I must make it clear that tantra, according to the ancient shastras, is definitely not magic. Kundalini yoga is a science which does not particularly belong to tantra, but the science of tantra has been successful in helping many people to awaken their kundalini.

Kundalini can be awakened by bhakti yoga, karma yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga and hatha yoga as well. However, it is not certain that these paths will be able to awaken kundalini in people because the practices and experiences of kundalini are not properly charted in these systems of yoga. Like there are railway and other timetables, similarly in all these yogas, the experiences, methods and other details are not properly graded and charted whereas in tantra they are. In these forms of yoga, which are very great, there is an element of puritanism which most people cannot always practise.

In tantra they have realized practical difficulties. The first practical difficulty is that everybody wants to awaken this inner force. He does not care that he drinks, eats meat, is an ordinary fellow and not ethically or morally perfect. He does not care about all these things, yet he wants to awaken this force! In other forms of yoga, they have not indicated any possibility, but in tantra they have said, 'Yes, it is possible'. A person who follows their instincts or one with proper reasoning or someone who has divine intuition, everyone can awaken their kundalini.

Tantra is a universal sect. Prior to the colonization of various countries in Africa, Latin America, North and South America,



the Chipcas, Aztecs, Hopi Indians and those people who are called Red Indians did practise tantric rituals. In fact, one of the last temples of tantric rituals was destroyed about six to eight hundred years ago. It was a temple where girls used to live and practise tantric sadhanas known as Saurya Tantra. There are different tantras like Saurya Tantra, Shakta Tantra, Vaishnava Tantra and various other sects of tantra. Saurya tantra was practised by Latin American people, not the people who are there today but the people who were destroyed, massacred and killed. These girls were priestesses, although the word is not accurate let us say so for the time being. When the invaders raided the temple, they killed everyone and destroyed everything.

In the same way, on the African continent, kundalini tantra was practised with the aid of music, dancing, and some sort of drink. You can call it *aushadi* or *vanaspati*, medicinal herbs. The pre-Christian culture, the primitive mother culture of Europeans is the Celtic culture. Christianity is an imported religion in Europe, just as we have imported technology into India. Christianity is not the old or original religion of Europeans, Americans, South Americans or Indians. It is an imported religion. This old Celtic religion was practised by Celts in Europe, Slavs in Russia and other Slavonic countries like Czechoslovakia, Albania, Romania and other places.

They used to practise tantric rituals in the same way as we Indians practise in our villages. It is called *tola totka*, the 'disgraceful' form of tantra. It has been misused in various countries, including India, in the form of magic spells. For example, if someone is angry with you, they do some *tola totka* with the help of a few things and your cow or buffalo dies or stops giving milk. In reality, these kinds of 'magic' practices are the performance of kriyas which were later developed in tantra.

Of course, kundalini yoga is a very important sadhana in tantra and tantra intends to free or liberate energy from matter. That is the literal meaning of tantra – *Tanoti trayati iti tantraha*. What is tantra? It is a set of practices which can expand consciousness and liberate energy. Just as you liberate the energy from matter like uranium and plutonium or you release energy from water or chemicals, in the same way the mind and body is matter and from this matter the energy has to be released. This process of liberation of energy from matter is called tantra.

Is it essential that one has to practise all the techniques of kundalini yoga? Can bhakti alone not awaken kundalini?

I have made it clear many times that the ultimate aim of yoga is to separate energy from matter and in a homage paid to Patanjali, the great exponent of yoga, it is said, 'Oh, Patanjali, I pay homage to you because throughout your book you have

taught us how to separate matter and energy but you have named it yoga.' *Yoga* means union; *viyoga* means separation. All through the yogic texts, whether it be karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga or any yoga, the purpose or the ultimate object is to extract the dormant energy from matter.

Just as you churn milk and extract butter and ghee, as you extract oil from the sesame seed or by rubbing two pieces of wood you let the fire manifest, or in modern physics as you extract nuclear energy from matter, in the same way, this gross body and this gross mind, the *sthula sharira*, is made up of the *pancha tattwas*, five elements, full of desires, passions, thoughts, limitations, which is *nashwar*, perishable or mortal and not immortal. However, this frame, this body, has a nucleus. In this universe there is no object, there is no matter, there is nothing which does not have a nucleus. This is the scientific fact. Even when a strand of hair is removed, it has a nucleus of its own. A diamond or any other piece of stone has a nucleus, but you cannot see it.

It is through the process of yoga or through a process of science that the nucleus can be known and experienced. Bhakti yoga, or any yoga for that matter, helps us to separate *shakti*, energy from matter. How do they do it? It is a very big science. It would take months for me to explain. The nature of matter and the nature of energy are contradictory to each other. There is no parallel, no similarity, no uniformity, no likeness between the qualities of matter and energy but still they are together. What binds them?

There is a third force called *maya* which binds them. Let us understand this *maya* in the form of the mind filled with desires for action and the passion to live. Let us use the word 'mind' because that is something which we can understand. The mind, which is filled with all sorts of unnecessary or necessary desires, is the binding force which binds Shakti and Shiva together. Once that binding force of the mind is withdrawn, they are separated and this separation can take place regardless of the practice.

Whichever practice you do can help you to withdraw the mind – any practice! If you go on singing ‘Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Hare Rama’ with music for one hour or half an hour, the mind is withdrawn and an awakening will take place. If you do japa or if you do *tapasya*, penance, or fasting, it can help you to merge the indriyas into the mind and the mind into buddhi and buddhi into atma. It can be through karma yoga or bhakti yoga.

What is love? Love is *prem*. When it is directed towards matter for passion, enjoyment and indulgence with a selfish motive, it is called *vasana*. When it is directed to your people, children, wife, husband, it is called *prem* or *mohabbat*. When it is directed to a higher self, the *atma*, the guru or God, it is called *bhakti*.

Love is known as ‘*ishk*’. This *ishk* is of two types. The Sufi saints have said, ‘*Ishk Hakiki*’ and ‘*Ishk Mijazi*’. When your love is directed to a point which is not permanent, when your love is directed to a person who is mortal, when your love is directed towards an object which will not be there after some time, that is called ‘*Ishk Mijazi*’, it is worldly love, fleeting love, *nashawar*, perishable.

When you begin to direct all your channels of emotion towards ‘*Hak*’, Reality, which in Sanskrit we call *Sat* and in Persian ‘*Hak*’. ‘*Hakiki*’ means ‘That which concerns Reality’. *Sat* is that which remains today, tomorrow and the day after and is not subject to time, space or any particular category. It is the self or the *atma* which is ever-present in everything, in every speck. It was, is, shall be. The destruction of matter, the destruction of form, the destruction of shape does not destroy it. That is called ‘*Ishk Hakiki*’ or Divine Love.

Examples of this divine love are too many for us to quote here. Mirabai is one such example. She loved the self or *atma* or *parameshwara*, whatever it is, as her husband. Mirabai considered Krishna to be her husband. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had Radhabhava. Ramakrishna Paramahansa had the bhava of a son, he considered Kali as his mother. You have to understand

how these emotions can be channelled through bhakti. Of course, the bhakti shastra is quite a big shastra in India. It is talked of a lot in India: What is ritualistic bhakti in a temple? What is real bhakti within one's own self? In the same way, it is not only through bhakti, even with karma or raja yoga and even by pranayama, you can annihilate the mind. You can bypass the mind and the moment you are able to bypass the mind; you remove that binding substance.

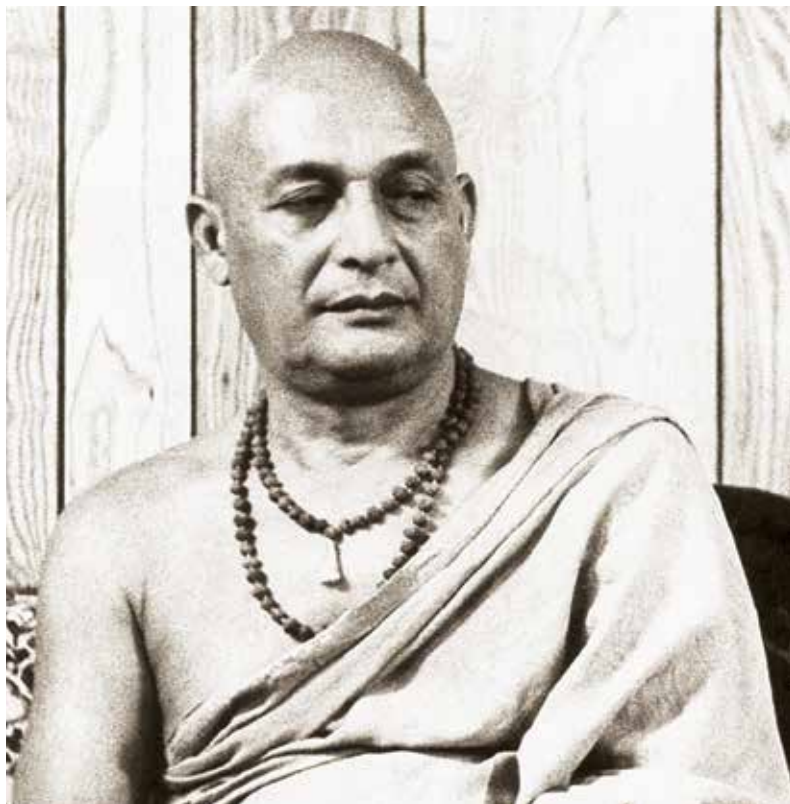
Therefore, you must remember that the purpose and ultimate aim is to extract Shakti. We don't use the word 'extract.' We call it *trayati*, liberation. In religious terminology, Christians use the word 'salvation', Hindus use the word 'moksha' and Buddhists use the word 'nirvana'. What does it mean?

People think that 'moksha' means that everything is finished. No, no, no! Salvation, moksha, nirvana or any other name which you may have is only this - when energy is liberated from matter, when energy is emancipated from matter, when energy is released from matter, when energy escapes from the fold of matter, that is called 'moksha'. That that is why it is said, 'Oh, he has attained moksha', meaning that he has been able to release that energy.

That energy in our country is known as '*devi*'. It is always considered to be feminine - Shakti, Devi, Durga, Bhawani, Mata Kali. Those feminine forms which have been given to Shakti symbolize the nature of Shakti. What is the nature of the atom bomb? In scientific language, in the language of physics, you can define it. If I am supposed to draw a picture of the atom bomb, it is not going to be a masculine form. It is going to be a feminine form more or less like Durga and Bhavani. All the qualities of Shakti have to be symbolized through a particular form. Shakti is the ultimate aim of kundalini yoga and the ultimate aim of tantra.

– 28 October 1985, *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,*
Bombay, Maharashtra

Mantra and the Mind



When we are practising mantra, should we let the mind wander or should we concentrate?

There are different theories about it. I do not want to criticize anyone of them. There are some people who believe that when the mind wanders, bring it back. There are those who say when the mind wanders, let it wander, and there are people who believe that when the mind wanders, let it but you follow it, you witness it. I am with the opinion you have to deal with the mind with your own capacities or according to the nature of your mind. If your child is being naughty, you just tell him

not to do it and he will listen to you. But if he is completely rowdy, what will you do? If you tell him not to do it, he will still do it; if you give a slap, he will still do it; if you beat him cruelly, he will run away, leaving you in pain and remorse. You have to deal with your child according to his nature and according to the situation.

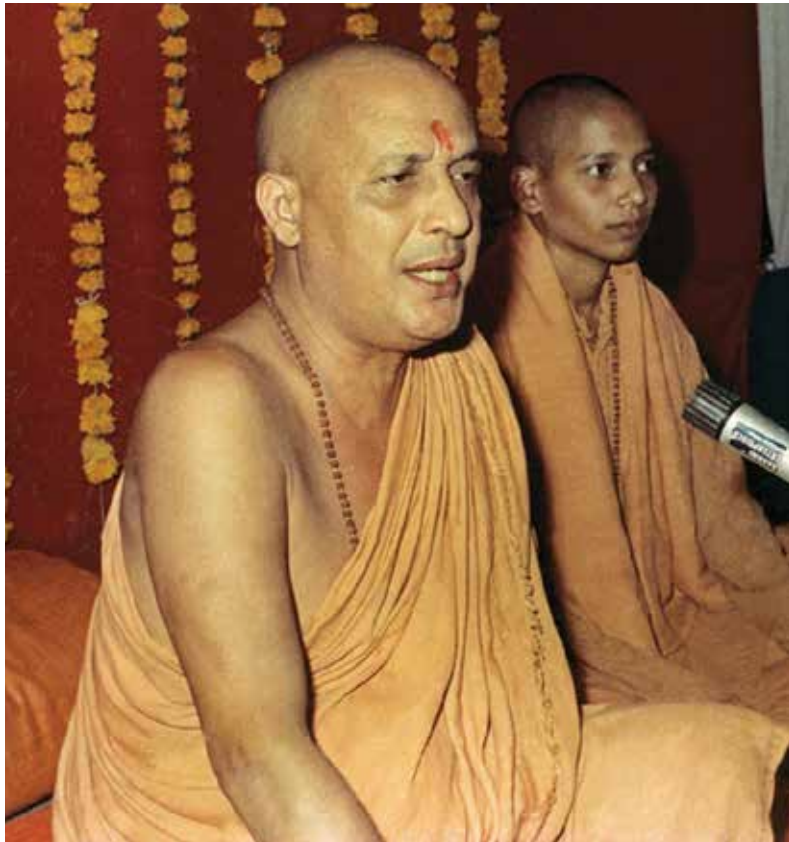
If your mind is tamasic, rajasic or sattwic, your attitude and behaviour with the mind will have to be different. If your mind is comparatively quiet, but sometimes it makes a little bit of mischief, then the moment it goes away from the centre draw it back because it is a good child. If your mind is rajasic, every time it gets out and you have to bring it back sometimes you do not even like to bring it back! Sometimes you are swayed by the mind. At that time what will you do? If you force the mind, then you will have headaches and hysteria, pain in the heart, lack of sleep, indigestion, all kinds of mental problems. Why? Because if you try to control the mind too much in the rajasic state, you create a conflict.

In the sattwic state of equilibrium, if you try to control the mind you don't create a conflict because the whole battery is one-sided. In the rajasic state, there is confrontation. The mind wants to do this. You say, 'No', the mind says, 'I will do it'. There is confrontation. In the sattwic state there is no confrontation, the mind agrees, 'Since you say so, I must do it', so there is no confrontation.

In the tamasic state you cannot do anything with the mind because there is neither confrontation nor any reaction. The tamasic state is that of the slumbering mind. You have to awaken the tamasic mind by hatha yoga, kirtan, austerity, mouna, there are many methods. Awaken the mind by these practices. In the tamasic state, there is no question of controlling the mind, there is only a question of awakening the sleepy child. In the rajasic mind, you let it do whatever it likes, you just follow it. In the sattwic state, pull it back immediately.

– 20 February 1980, Bombay, Maharashtra

Satsang



While reciting mantra, what changes take place in the physical, psychic and emotional body of the practitioner?

Mantras are a combination of *varna* and *akshara*. 'A' means no and 'kshara' means destruction. *Akshara* literally means imperishable, and every *akshara* has a *varna*. *Varna* means colour. You may have read the book on tantra '*Varna Mala, Garland of Letters*', by Sir John Woodroffe. *Varna* does not mean alphabet. *Varna* means colour. These *akshara*, these letters, have colour, frequency and a particular element as the

presiding deity. They have a form and this is very important. You may not understand this. I know, because I give mantra to illiterate devotees also. If I tell you to recite *Om Namah Shivaya*, you cannot go further, because you have certain ideas about *Om Namah Shivaya*. You have a base, whether it is Hindi, English, Gujarati or Urdu. You can only imagine on the basis of what you know. You cannot imagine *Om Namah Shivaya* as a pure sound, because there is an obstacle which you have created for yourself. An illiterate person has no conditioning. He does not know the form of *Om*. He imagines the sound, and therefore every sound has form. Even most of the musicians don't know this. We cannot throw off the form we have given to a particular sound.

Every sound has a form, frequency, colour and length. When you practise the letters of the mantra you are practising the combination of a few – for instance *Aim Hreem Kreem*. When you bring them together, the effect is on the basis of the content of those letters. *A-u-m* has three sounds, *Na-mah-Shi-va-ya* has five sounds, *Ra-ma* has two. Some mantras have five, some seven, some have eight or nine sounds. They are combined and their effect is on the basis of the particular combination. When you are practising the mantra, the effect is like taking a pebble and throwing it in a quiet pond. The ripples form circular patterns. If you take four pebbles and throw them, what happens? If you take a rock instead of a pebble, it will create waves. In the same way, the mind is like an ocean of *chetana*, consciousness. If you throw a sound like *Om* into that consciousness, it immediately creates vibrations known to us as sound waves.

Sometimes the effect is temporary, but if you go on reflecting on it again and again you can maintain the continuity of the waves. Then they go deeper and influence other areas of the mind because the mind is composed of layers. You call it conscious, subconscious, unconscious. In yoga we call it *sthula*, *sukshma* and *karana*, the gross mind, subtle or astral, and causal mind. Different layers of consciousness are affected by

mantras. If the mantra is chanted at night it goes very deep, it influences the subconscious and unconscious dimensions. If the mantra is practised in the morning, it affects the external areas of the mind, the conscious mind.

Can you tell us about Kirlian Photography? What is the aura? Is it prana?

The research done on Kirlian Photography has brought out a very important truth – every object has an area of magnetism called an aura. In the Vedas it is said that every object has an invisible field and that field is known as the pranic field. In Sanskrit we call it *mandala*. You have seen the aura or halo around great saints. When people did not understand it they thought it was just the imagination of an artist and that is how people thought for a very long time. When scientists, like the Kirlians, started their research, they used a special camera which operated on a high voltage of energy, about one thousand volts.

Thousands of objects were exposed to that photography. They found some sort of field around the objects. You may call it an electromagnetic or pranic field. They exposed coins held by thieves and also held by a temple priest, leaves which were torn by nature and which were cut by a knife. Different thumbs of healthy and unhealthy, spiritual, unspiritual, depressed or elated people. Each object had different auras. They came to the conclusion that this aura is the pranic field which is influenced by the emotional personality. Everybody has an aura. You may call it a magnetic aura, pranic aura or mandala. It can shrink, it can expand, it can even touch another person.

On the basis of this photography, spiritual healers in the West are awarded certificates for spiritual healing. Spiritual healing is more or less the same science which is being practised in rural India even today. Its modern version is spiritual healing. Those who claim to be spiritual healers are exposed to Kirlian photography. Their auras are examined and if it is found that their pranic aura is very powerful and can influence

the organism of another person, they are given a diploma. They are registered as spiritual healers. Some people have a very powerful pranic emission. These pranic emissions are controlled by different chakras where pranic energy is stored like in a battery.

In different lives, whether you practised yoga or not, you were evolving, and have been evolving and this evolution is the ascendance of consciousness in various chakras. I am not talking about Darwin's theory of evolution. Here evolution means the consciousness of energy which evolves from matter and goes beyond matter. Matter is one state of energy.

Matter is not different from energy but matter can manifest itself in the form of energy. That is called transformation, and also evolution. In the course of time, even matter evolves and manifests in the form of energy and whatever energy is there in this material plane is nothing but the manifestation of the evolved form of matter. Body is matter. Mind is matter. Mind is not a non-material substance. Mind is not a spiritual substance. It is not a divine substance as it is referred to in religious language. It is matter and this matter can also emit pranic energy through a process of evolution.

The chakras have inherited prana which you have achieved in the course of your evolution as a human being through different incarnations. Consciousness, the atman or individual awareness does not necessarily start in mooladhara chakra. Most of us have our individual awareness above manipura chakra. Quite a few have it in anahata. This is what I mean by evolution. The ascent of individual awareness from a material base through a particular channel to the spiritual level is called evolution. In millions of years, man may have the same form as today - a bit taller, a bit shorter, a bit fatter, a bit thinner, but we are going to be more or less the same. Nature has come to a halt in so far as the natural evolution of the body is concerned. With the human incarnation it is the evolution of energy which is beginning and there are people who have this magnetic energy from birth, this prana is awakened in them -

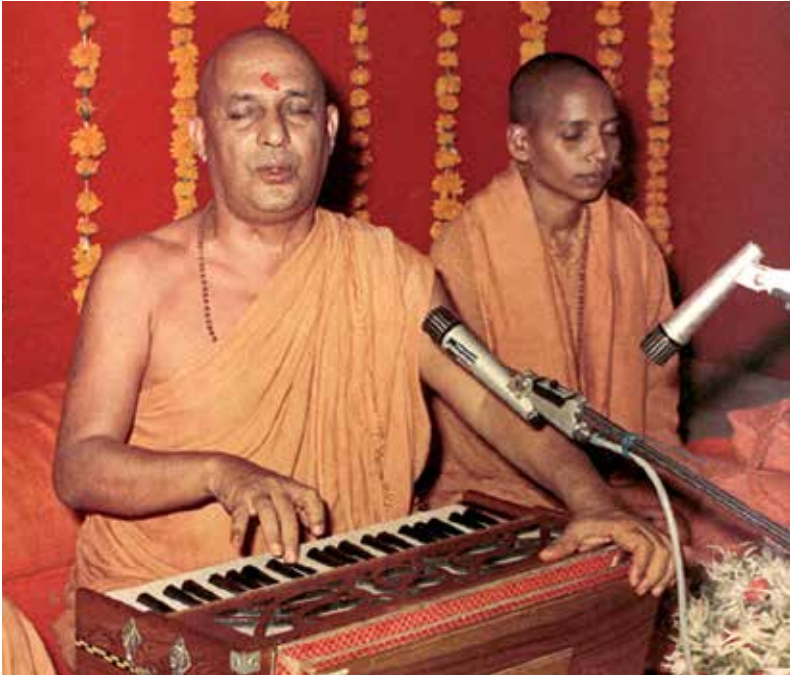
and in others it is not. Through the practices of yoga, tantra or other allied sciences, this pranic energy can be developed.

I have been researching this with a Colombian disciple in South America. She is a professor and has been working with ECG, EEG and other scientific instruments. She is writing a thesis to be presented in two or three years' time. She has travelled far and wide. She comes to India once or even twice a year to have consultations. She has taken thousands of photographs of the thumb of many people. She has also taken photographs of the books that are kept in my cupboard and of the same books kept by somebody else. The books have a different aura. She has also taken photographs of a wrist watch, an inanimate object. It used to belong to somebody else. First she took a photograph of it and gave it to me. I wore it for a year and then she took another photograph. This time the aura was different.

Animate and inanimate objects have *chaitanya*, consciousness. In Vedanta philosophy both animate and inanimate objects have *atma*, soul. Even a stone or an animal has *atma*. It is written in the shastras: Everything in the universe is permeated with the supreme consciousness. Regardless of whether it is a human being or an animal, you cannot say that it does not have *chaitanya*, the spark of consciousness, divinity or whatever you may like to call it.

The aura can shrink as well as grow. I remember another experiment that was done in Australia. A scientist took a Kirlian photograph of a man and a woman. After that, he asked them to shake hands and took another photograph. He found that the aura of the woman had enlarged and the aura of the man had shrunk. It was an unusual experiment. I don't know exactly what it means. It is up to you to interpret it.

The shrinking and enlarging of the aura depends upon one's emotional condition. Anger, greed, passion, charity, compassion, mercy and many other qualities relate to one's emotional personality. Sometimes it has also been seen that just before death the aura is completely absent. I have tried to correlate the same with the science of swara yoga. In the



science of swara yoga, when you look for your own shadow and the shadow does not appear, it means death is imminent. This has been observed and it means that pranas have begun to withdraw themselves from the body. If you practise meditation, pooja, mantra or similar sciences related to yoga, tantra or occultism, you are enlarging your own aura with these practices. The aura relates to your pranic body.

In Vedanta they talk about the five sheaths or five bodies, the *pancha koshas*. The grossest of these is *annamaya*, the gross body. *Anna* means food. Subtler than that is *pranamaya*, composed of prana. Third is *manomaya*, the mind body. Fourth is *vijnanamaya*, the body of the psyche. The fifth one is *anandamaya*, the sheath of bliss. These are the *pancha koshas* of which we are composed. When we talk about prana, you should remember that prana is material as well as higher energy. *Ida* and *pingala* represent two forms of energy. *Ida* represents mind or mental energy and *pingala* represents prana,

the pranic energy. The aura I am talking about relates to the emissions radiated through pingala nadi. Our own existence depends on the prana supplied through pingala nadi.

Pingala nadi can be equated with a small local generator like the ones which were used earlier that had limited energy and could supply energy to a few thousand buildings. Later those local powerhouses were withdrawn and the big thermal, hydraulic generating stations came into existence. In the same way, the source of prana is pingala and kundalini. both. Kundalini shakti is the form of prana which flows through pingala and sushumna channels. Radiation of prana takes place from kundalini even though your kundalini is not awakened. Yet we cannot say that it is not awakened because even if it is not awakened, the radiations are there. When radiation from kundalini is conducted through pingala nadi, it becomes this prana. If the same radiation is conducted through sushumna nadi, it opens *sahasrara*, the thousand petal lotus on the crown of the head. The prana, the radiation which is conducted by pingala nadi, cannot open the crown lotus.

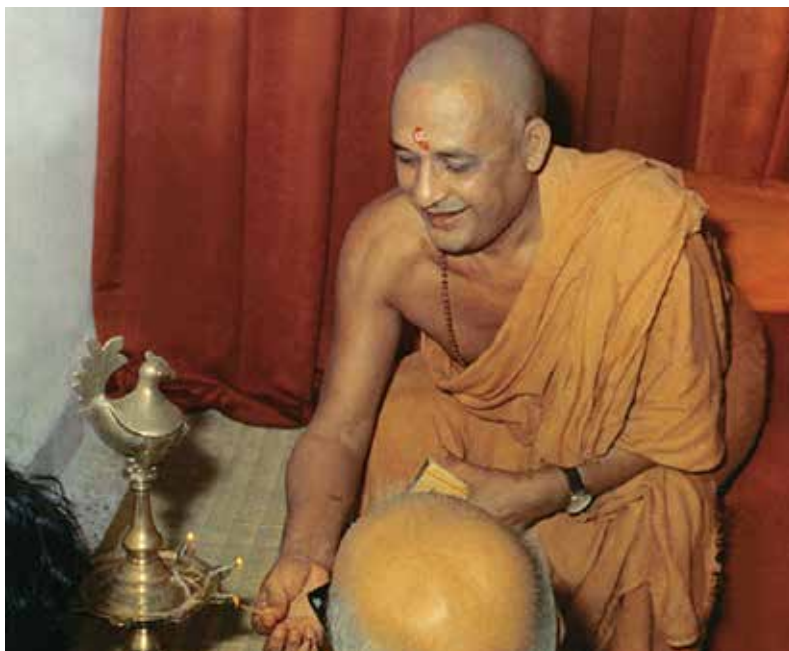
Not everybody has kundalini in mooladhara chakra. When we say that the whole of kundalini is in mooladhara, we mean that mooladhara is the abode of kundalini. During the course of evolution and through the practices of yoga or tantra, kundalini makes its way up through the chakras. You will find many of us have it somewhere near manipura and anahata. If it were in mooladhara, you would not be here now, you would not understand what I am talking about, because when kundalini is in mooladhara, the *jiva* or individual is in total ignorance. When kundalini has gone beyond manipura chakra, there is expression of spiritual awareness. There is a desire to discover something beyond what we see and what we know.

It is very difficult to know exactly where kundalini is. In order to trace it, the easiest method is the method of mantra. There are also other systems. You have your own mantra given by your guru. You are practising it for concentration

or maybe for accomplishing some motives, desires or maybe you are afraid that God will get angry if you do not practise your mantra. Whatever your attitude, if you practise mantra by fixing your awareness in each chakra for a day, a week or a month and go through all the chakras a number of times, sooner or later you will discover exactly where kundalini shakti has reached. When you are able to discover the exact point where kundalini has ascended, you can project it. The same projection can be seen in the halo of the great saints. You must have seen that Rama, Krishna, Christ, Mohammad, Zarathustra, many sadhus and gurus have a halo. It is not imaginary, it is real.

In fact, even a criminal can be detected by reading the aura. I am not only talking about spiritual people. Criminals also have a definite type of aura. This prana is a very important thing. Do your best to enlarge it. See that it is not wasted. Meditation, mantra and yoga helps you to develop it.

– 3 November 1981, Bombay, Maharashtra



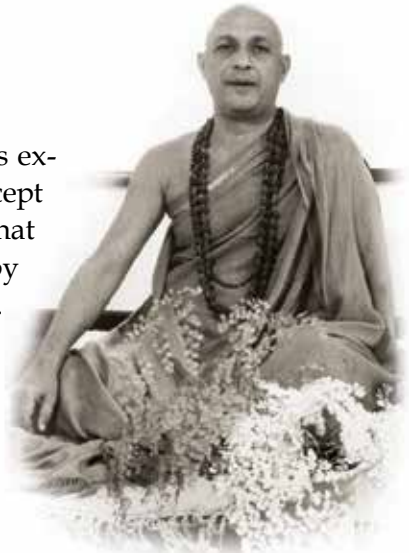
Spiritual Life

Unhappiness and depression is experienced because you do not accept this life yet you do not know what you want. You may be unhappy but you cannot denounce life. You must accept life, it is your karma. The springboard to reach the other life is to start with satsangs and practices.

When Rama was young, he fell into depression. He would not dress or bathe. He would say, "Everything will come to nothing. Why, therefore, should I do anything?" His father, Dasharatha, could not help him, so his guru, Rishi Vasishtha, explained to him, "Since you were born into the world, you must live in the world with total understanding of the world and divine life. You must experience both and treat them as complementary, not contradictory. Live with luxury, but after some point transcend luxury. There is no need to disassociate yourself from worldly matters. It is not important for a sadhaka to renounce, but it is important to 'add'. Your life is your karma, therefore do not renounce your life."

I have not renounced my life by becoming a sannyasin. I have fulfilled my desires and karma. So as a householder, you must be a sannyasin at home. Karma is for fulfilment, not only for renunciation. Enjoyment is also part of fulfilment. Real attachment is when the mind is overwhelmed by one idea. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that you must involve yourself in action but do not desire the fruits thereof; that is karma yoga. Every aspect of life is part of spiritual life.

– 3 September 1977, Bombay, Maharashtra



- 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

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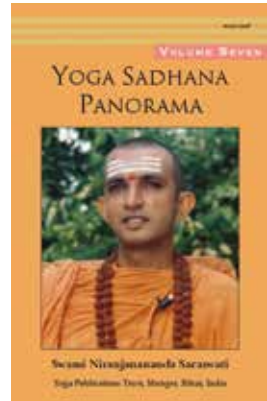
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