

YOGA

Year 11 Issue 7

July 2022

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:

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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: Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati

- Plates:*
1. Swami Sivananda Saraswati
 2. Swami Satyananda Saraswati
 3. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
 4. Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



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

Swami Satyanandaji is a devotee and is deeply interested in jnana. Thus he combines in himself karma, bhakti and jnana. He is a dynamic yogi and a philosopher. His devotion to duty is marvellous. He has never grudged any work that is entrusted to him. Swami Satyanandaji is simple in his habits. His wants are few. He is ever happy and cheerful. You can never find him idle. He keeps himself ever busy. Thus we will find him closely following in the footsteps of the master.

—Sri Narayan Swamiji

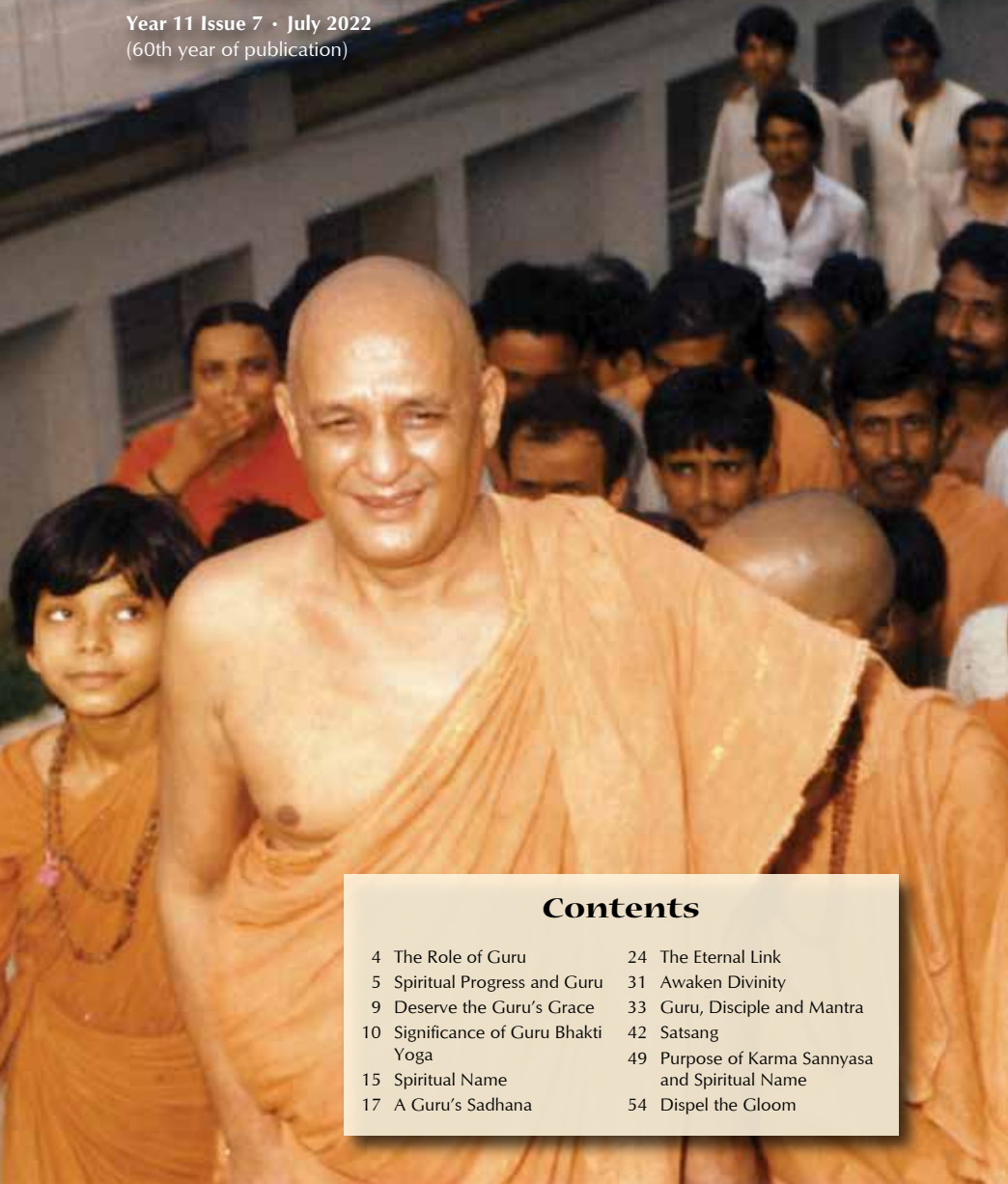
Published and printed by Swami Shivadhyanam Saraswati on behalf of Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger – 811201, Bihar

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 7 • July 2022
(60th year of publication)



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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 ॥

The Role of Guru

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

A guru lies within all of us. That guru is known as the inner guru, or *sat-guru*. Ultimately, there is no guru other than the one who lives within each and every one of us. This is the truth of the matter, but unfortunately there is always a gap between truth and reality. Unfortunately, it is not enough to believe that the guru is always within us. This belief is nothing more than an intellectual concept – it is a concept which exists simply as a pattern of the mind.

The situation we are dealing with is a very difficult one. Even though our minds can accept and believe that the guru is within us, this does not give us the guidance that we need, because we are not yet capable of tapping that inner guru. There is energy present within all matter, but in its natural state you cannot harvest it and use it. First you have to submit this matter to a scientific process which will release the energy. Then it can be harnessed and used.

So how can we unlock, how can we give expression to our inner guru? It is a question about guru that will always concern us. It is to this end that we practise sadhana and kriya yoga. With these practices we are trying to create a situation in which the inner guru can emerge. The guru we can see and understand, and whose language is within our intellectual grasp, is only our first guru. His role is to show us the way to our own *sat-guru*.

Part of this involves helping us select the right yoga practices. Usually we need this guidance because we are confused. We know a lot about different practices, and sometimes we know so much that we do not know how to put it all together in our spiritual life.

– 1 January 1981, Munger

Spiritual Progress and Guru

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Does mantra initiation accelerate an aspirant's spiritual progress?

There are and have been many people doing sadhana without having a guru, and still they evolve, but there have also been many people who have insisted on having a guru. Let me present Kabir as an example. As you know, he was not a superstitious man. He was very rationalistic, analytical and thorough in his approach. He had an adamant desire to be initiated, but because the circumstances surrounding his birth were not clear and his real parents were not known, he was denied that privilege.



So, one morning, he went to the ghat where Swami Ramananda, a great guru of that time, took his early morning bath. He lay down on the steps leading to the ghat, and as Swami Ramananda was descending the steps, he put his foot on the body of Kabir. When he realized he had stepped on a man, the swami cried, '*Ram, Ram*', as we usually say. Kabir jumped up ecstatically and said, 'I got the mantra. This is what I wanted to hear from you. *Ram, Ram*, that is my mantra.'

So, from that day onward, Kabir continued to repeat the mantra and increase his love for Rama. When people asked him, 'What do you mean by Rama, Rama who was a man, the

son of a king?' he said, 'No, I am talking of every Rama: a Rama who was the son of Dasharatha; a Rama who is omnipresent in all hearts and all beings; a Rama who has been playing this entire drama, who has been responsible for the whole creation; and a Rama who has transcended the mind, body and speech.' This is how he had been working on the mantra which he obtained by cheating his guru.

If that is the case, why should we have doubts about it anymore? It may be possible for us to realize the highest without receiving a mantra from a guru, but we are not sure about it. Therefore, it is safer that we take a mantra from a guru even if it is not necessary.

When you accept a guru, you start to work on the plane of ego. If you do not want to have a guru, you are fighting on the plane of ego, and ego is the greatest barrier between you and your inner spirit. When you accept a guru, you are surrendering your ego, and unless you surrender your ego, you can be sure you are not going to have a guru.

What is the relationship therefore, between ego and spiritual progress? Spiritual progress is essentially linked with the disintegration of ego. Here I can quote many examples, but I will give an example of my own. I had been aware of the higher state of consciousness by the grace of nature, even from the age of six. When I was ten, I started practising something because someone had told me that the awareness I had was natural and that I must start to develop it. However, I found that when I used to lift my consciousness, I always reached a particular point of *shoonya*, void, which I could never go beyond. My mind became void. I had no self-awareness, no awareness of time, space and matter, just *shoonya*, no experience. It was like the hibernation of the entire process of consciousness.

I asked many people for guidance. I was living in Almora then and lots of sadhus and mahatmas used to pass through Almora on the way to Mount Kailash. Some of them advised me, but I did not understand what they said. However, one very nice swami said, 'Look here, I cannot tackle your spiritual

problem, and nobody else can, because you need a guru.' I asked him why I needed a guru and he replied, 'The curtain that hangs before you can only be removed by substituting a guru in its place.' This was so difficult for me to understand. Anyway, circumstances changed and I left my home and went in search of a guru. I went to Rajasthan and stayed with an old swami who was a very good tantric yogi. He liked me very much, and from him I learned all about tantra. However, when I asked him how I could remove the barrier that blocked my path to higher consciousness, he said, 'This I cannot say.' So I left.

When I came to Swami Sivananda, I asked him only one thing. I said, 'When I meditate something is wrong, I do not know where I am. What should I do?' All he replied was, 'Do guru seva.' So I tried it and it worked. Therefore, in my personal opinion, there is no harm in taking a mantra from a guru, in following the type of sadhana he gives you, and in offering your inner devotion to him. That will only help your psychological or psycho-emotional condition.

It is true that many people are afraid of being exploited by the guru, but for that a disciple is more responsible than a guru. Your relationship with your guru is purely private and confidential. A guru is not a social event and a disciple is not a propagandist, a preacher or a public relations officer for his guru. A disciple is a guru's personal investment, and therefore the mantra is confidential. The relationship between the two is also an absolutely private affair.

Many years ago, I met a brahmachari in Munger when I was staying in Ananda Bhavan. We knew each other very well, and once by mistake, I happened to ask him the name of his guru? He said, 'How can I tell the name of my guru? It is so sacred. It is personal and intimate.' So, when even the guru's name is so sacred, the mantra that is given by him, the sadhana which he teaches you and the relationship which you endear, they are all very private matters. If this intimacy is respected, the guru can never exploit the disciple. Disciples are exploited

when they are over-ambitious. They keep stressing 'My guru is great' and they keep belting it out like a drummer beating on his drum. Then they exploit the guru and in turn the guru exploits them. This is a mutual affair.

What does it matter to you if your guru's name is written all over the walls in neon lights? Guru's name should be written on the walls of your heart and you know it. How much you love him and what type of sacrifice or offering you make to him only concerns you and him. Why should a third man come into the picture? Why should it be broadcast to the public? What has society got to do with your relationship with your guru? The relationship you have with your guru is purely spiritual and should be regarded as sacred.

Just as you treasure a valuable diamond and conceal it from the public, you should do the same with your relationship with guru. Do you show your diamond or nugget of gold to everybody you pass in the street? Do you brag about its monetary value? No, you keep it in a safe place and out of sight. Then why should your relationship with guru become so public, cheap and ordinary that you go around telling everybody about the miracles your guru performs, the greatness of his being, the eminence which he enjoys and the love and power and faith that he has? No, your guru should be your beloved. That is what Guru Nanak said, "My guru is my beloved, you have nothing to do with it."

In this scheme of spiritual evolution, guru's presence in your life is essential. If that is the case, then this is what you should do. If you have already received a mantra intuitively, or from your father, mother, grandfather, or any other family member, or if it is connected with the worship of any *kuldevata*, family deity, you go to a guru and ask him to chant that mantra in your ear. Listen carefully to the way he chants the mantra and the sound he is producing and try to reproduce that mantra in the same way. That becomes your sadhana.

– 13 October 1981, Munger

Deserve the Guru's Grace

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

If you want to drink the spiritual nectar of immortality which flows from the holy lips of the guru, you will have to be an embodiment of humility and meekness. The lower nature of mind must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor, "I want to practise yoga. I want to enter into nirvikalpa samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But, he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behaviour and conduct.



One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas and prejudices, and selfish interests should be given up. All these stand in the way of carrying out the teachings and instructions of one's guru. Lay bare to your guru the secrets of your heart. The more you do so, he will help you in the struggle against sin and temptation.

The aspirant, before he desires the grace of the Master, should deserve it. The supply of divine grace comes only when he is fit to receive it. Guru's grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him. Faith is confidence and trust in guru. Faith is firm conviction of the truth of what is declared by the preceptor by way either of testimony or authority, without any other evidence or proof. The disciple who has faith in the guru argues not, thinks not, reasons not and cogitates not. He simply obeys, obeys and obeys.

Significance of Guru Bhakti Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Guru Bhakti Yoga is important in the lives of everyone since each person has a special and personal relationship with the guru. The experience of guru's presence and the inspiration we draw from it is Guru Bhakti Yoga. While the rituals of yajna,

havan, worship and chanting of mantras have their place in society, at an individual level it is extremely important for devotees and sannyasins to ponder upon and arrive at a clear understanding about the way in which one can establish a practical relationship with the guru. Those sannyasins who are *manmukhi*, influenced by their own minds, listen to the whims and fancies of their personal ambitions and desires whereas sannyasins who are *gurumukhi* make an attempt to connect with the guru tattwa.

What is the idea that most of us have about the guru tattwa? This concept is primarily influenced by the way in which our minds work. When you are sick and somebody suggests some medicine to you, you say, 'The medicine worked, this person is my guru!' If you learn yogasanas from someone, you call that person your guru. This implies the nature of your understanding in which anyone who teaches you something is a guru. When you are so unaware of what 'guru' really means, how can it be possible to experience the guru tattwa?

Guru tattwa is an experience; it is the experience of the luminosity of the spirit in life, it is the experience of divinity in life. It is absolutely imperative for sannyasins to connect with the guru tattwa. Manmukhi sannyasins are wrapped up in their own wishes, indulgences and ambitions for that is where they find their happiness. There are many who receive initiation and the next day they declare that they are gurus themselves! They are manmukhi and only concerned with their own self-interest.

Even the idea, 'I wish to do something for society' reflects a manmukhi mentality. They think about serving society but what about serving the guru? There has been no thought about working for the guru's mission. When we think about going into society and doing this or that, we follow the dictates of our minds and put our emotions at the forefront. This is later justified by saying that this work will add to the glory of the guru's name. Is this truly the propagation of the guru's name or merely satisfying the demands of one's own ego?

This prevents one from establishing a pure relationship with the guru and is the reason which causes the downfall of a devotee, an aspirant and a sannyasin. However, when we are able to connect with the guru tattwa and derive inspiration from the guru, it is this source of energy that takes us ahead in life. This energy and inspiration impels us to work for the divine in our life, gives us a direction and makes it possible to uplift ourselves. The tradition of Guru Bhakti Yoga is an opportunity for sannyasins and householders to make an effort to learn from the inspiration and teachings received from the guru to become good, think in a better manner, act in a better way and see if we can incorporate at least one aspect in our lives.

Everyone wishes to meditate and attain moksha, however what kind of meditation is possible when even the desires within oneself are unmanageable? People may say they meditate, but if they are unable to tolerate harsh words from another person, what kind of meditation is that? If the mind is troubled by mere words or when an unpleasant act causes disturbance and distress, that is not spiritual life at all; it is only a superficial participation in satsang. The *Bhagavad Gita* is full of satsang for Arjuna had said, 'The mind is fickle and restless, Krishna,' and Sri Krishna spoke of many remedies. However, was Arjuna able to adopt and apply them? No. If you are under the impression that in the battlefield Arjuna sat down and practised pratyahara and meditated, you are mistaken. If someone truly understands the teaching, a practice is adopted as part of one's everyday life and those who do not understand, merely adopt a philosophy at an intellectual level. This is the basic difference between a dedicated sannyasin and a manmukhi sannyasin.

People talk about philosophy – this is how things should be, this is what should be done – and for thousands of years people have only been talking, yet has there been any real change? It has remained within the confines of a philosophy without translating into concrete action. When philosophical concepts are brought alive, the practical form can be applied

and become a source of inspiration for all. The principles of Vedanta which were hard to understand were clearly explained by our guru in one word: atmabhava. What is the point of reading scriptural principles about what is Brahma or what is the world and what is unreal or real? We have been given the means, a path has been created for us. Understand what atmabhava means and everything will become clear.

Atmabhava is the teaching of Sri Swamiji. People think, 'Atmabhava, what a wonderful word!', yet how many make the effort to incorporate this in their lives? There is envy and hatred towards others, there is a lack of understanding and conflicts in relationships, and yet people speak about atmabhava. This shows that atmabhava is only a philosophy for them, it has not translated into reality as there is no effort made in that direction. The day an effort is made, there will be an undeniable change in behaviour and thought, everything in life will change because of a connection with the guru's inspiration.

It is for this reason that it is necessary for an individual to decide how to connect with the guru tattwa for only then the true significance of Guru Bhakti Yoga will be experienced. Otherwise, one comes to a program, it feels good, there is a beautiful ambience and all that, but the mind is not willing to go any deeper.

This is why the first rule prescribed for sannyasins is *samarpan*, dedication and surrender. Until there is *samarpan*, unless pride and ego do not bow down in humility, a relationship with the guru tattwa cannot be established. Forget about the ego. Though you say that you will sacrifice the ego, are you even able to grapple with the desires and whims of your mind? Nothing has been left behind, neither desires nor the ego. Sacrifice is just a fantasy of the mind as there has been no real effort.

The teaching of the guru comes in just one sentence; it is not necessary to give a long lecture. Swami Sivananda spoke only one sentence to our gurudeva, 'Work hard, do your duty, do your seva and the veils within you will lift so that the light

within can blaze forth.’ What upanishadic principles did Swami Sivananda expound upon? Did he lecture on Vedanta, Samkhya or tantric scriptures? He only gave one single instruction: discover the qualities within, ignite the light within and seva is the path or method you can follow to achieve this end. Our gurudeva latched on firmly to that one single instruction, he did not go and attend any classes or lectures. It is not necessary to talk about the nature of the relationship he shared with Swami Sivananda. In a matter of moments, Swami Sivananda’s ‘hard drive’ was transferred to Swamiji through shaktipat. Why? Swamiji was gurunukhi. If it was one of us, we would have said, ‘Oh! I have come here to do sadhana but Guruji is asking me to work hard. This place is not good. I should go somewhere else.’ This is manmukhi behaviour, a manmukhi mind-set.

Guru Bhakti Yoga is an occasion to become *gurunukhi* in order to uplift our lives. I have given many examples and a single indication is sufficient for an intelligent person. One can teach the entire scriptures to a donkey yet an intelligent person will grasp the message in a trice. If it is the scriptures that you seek, then you have missed the guru’s message. Make a strong resolve infused with energy, purity and divinity so that you make an effort to connect with the guru tattwa today and not with whims, fancies and desires, not with likes and dislikes ‘Oh, I like this. I dislike that’. Rather connect with the feeling, ‘I have untethered the boat and set it afloat upon the river; take it to whichever shore You wish.’ There should be unshakeable trust and faith in the one who guides the boat. Guru is your navigator. Do you have complete faith in him?

— 4 June 2021, Rikhiapeeth, India

The guru watches, instructs and warns his followers in many different ways and on different levels of consciousness. With pure love and constant awareness he is always guiding them.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Spiritual Name

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The spiritual name first of all indicates your inner spiritual person. The spiritual name is beyond nationality, religion, culture and tradition. It indicates your evolution. The physical

body has a name given by your elders or priests, but the spiritual name has to be decided by the guru looking into your inner nature. At the same time, it indicates the way you have to proceed. You cannot be anything, you cannot be everything. There are millions of faculties that exist, and everyone should decide one goal and one symbol.

When my guru gave me the name, he indicated that that was my spiritual personality. Besides that he also wanted me to aspire to perfect that state. Therefore, I have been striving for that. *Ananda* means bliss, *satya* means absolute. So I have to strive to experience absolute bliss. I should try to achieve this irrespective of anything that happens in my external life.

In India there is a very important tradition. On the ninth day after the birth of the baby, the information of his time of birth, the planetary constellation and other heavenly factors is given to a wise man. Then his zodiac sign or *rashi* is decided. On the basis of that, quite a few syllables are discovered and a name is designed for him. That becomes his name. Someone may be a hopeless man, but he has an exquisite name like *Amarnath*, immortal lord, immortal consciousness.

When you select names for your children, your choice should not be just a choice, you have to discover the type of being that has come into this body. The child is born through you and is from your body. You have contributed no doubt, but only sperm and ova. Out of millions of sperms and millions of ova, millions and trillions die, but some have united to make one a criminal, a Napoleon, Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ, Moses, Krishna, Arjuna, or me and you.

What energy must have flown through that sperm and ova! It is not merely a combination of chromosomes. There should be something else that the sperm and ova must be carrying, combining, creating and integrating. That is the vibration of the energy of the soul. That soul finds the expression through your body. The name of the soul is called the spiritual name.

– 28 December 1981, Munger

A Guru's Sadhana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



I really did not practise or learn any sadhana from my guru. I have been searching for the cause of an experience which I had when I was only six years old. That experience which came to me, a very average child at the age of six, set my mind into motion and it brought me to maturity in thinking. I wanted to know whether it was a sickness, or an evil spirit or a divine spirit possessing me. 'What is it?' At the age of six, I had an experience where I could see my body as it is - hands, feet and everything, but I could not feel it. It was very frightening, it was not a soft, smooth experience. Every time it came to me I did not know what was going to happen and fear crept into my mind.

That was the reason why I went for many sadhanas. I did japa, I prayed, I chanted *Hanuman Chalisa* and many other things. I read the Bible and went to church. Then I practised asanas, pranayama and hatha yoga – neti, dhauti, basti. At the age of twelve, I practised khechari by cutting the tongue and all kinds of things. I do not know whether anything did produce any result because I was too small to make a judgement.

At the age of eighteen I met a lady of thirty-five. She was a tantric, illiterate lady from Nepal and she taught me tantra, practically all the forms of tantra that there are. That did produce results and hallucinations. It did transport me to a different realm of experience during the practice and also after the practice. Sometimes I could go a bit within myself. Sometimes I could go very far within myself. Sometimes I used to go within myself and be frightened and come out. Maybe what was happening to me was due to the sadhana that I had practised earlier and which might have purified my body. I learnt from her for about six months. That gave me very good results and I was very happy with it. After she left I still did have experiences but eventually they ceased to come, and she had told me that this would happen because these experiences belong to the lower divine planes. She said that one day these experiences would cease and I would go into samadhi.

It happened. I used to sit in the asana and then get lost. I did not know where I was. I lost total connection with time, space and myself too. It was much deeper than sleep, deeper than anything. It was something like death. I died and then I came back. By that time, I had lots of books and was studying Sanskrit. I can speak Sanskrit even better than English and Hindi. I love Sanskrit. It is perhaps the only language I love. So I used to read those books, the yoga, Samkhya and Nyaya texts. The various philosophies like Buddhist and Jaina texts and the texts related to the philosophies of India and Greece, and the Epicureans and Hedonists. I came to know that what I was attaining was *jada samadhi*, where the consciousness is

suspended. It is suspended animation and therefore the karmas are not roasted, the karmas are not extinguished.

Karma is the seed of existence: you are born again and again, you are unhappy, you get this incarnation and you feel this 'I'ness. It is the cause, the seed, the sperm of duality. Karma is in a suspended animation stage, and therefore once you come out of jada samadhi you are the same – same soul, same rogue, and there is practically no change in you.

Then I read Swami Vivekananda. I have very great respect for him as a swami, but as far as academic things are concerned or yoga I did not read his books because he is talking about something beyond what I need. I don't need inspiration. His book on the *Yoga Sutras* is very concise, and a book which can give you some experience. He said without *guru kripa*, without guru's grace, you cannot cross the barrier.

Until that time, I did not like the idea of guru and serving someone – it was not possible for me. When I was born, the first thing that my parents placed in my hand was a gun. That was my tradition. My ancestors fought on the battlefield and that was the traditional training, for we are fighters and warriors. We do not care for death. Death is just a passing show. It is nothing important, you do not have to worry or cry about it. So then I read about many gurus, like Ramakrishna Paramhansa, then I met Anandmayi Ma at that time. Finally, I left my place in search of a guru, not to learn sadhana from him but to get his grace – a free donation!

I went to Rajasthan and I lived with a tantric yogi for about nine months. He was a master in tantra but not in practice. He did not know as much as that lady knew but he was a scholar. He told me all the different systems of tantra, the Kashmir system and South Indian system and others, but I was in search of a guru who could just bring me out of that jada samadhi. I left the yogi and I do not remember the intermediate journey. I have a good memory, but I do not know what happened. Until a point near Saharanpur in UP. There was a sadhu with matted locks and he was smoking a cigarette. I had not smoked

for many months and I asked him to give me a cigarette. He got angry with me. He said, "You want a cigarette? You are a young boy." Finally, he asked me where I was going. I said that I was in search of my guru. He sent me to Rishikesh where I met Swami Sivananda within three days. Swami Sivananda told me only one thing, "Stay here. Work hard. That's all." I stayed.

I did not do sadhana as a matter of fact. From time to time I used to meditate or sit on the Ganges bank, that kind of thing. The sadhana which I did in Rishikesh was hard work, physical work as a kitchen servant, as a bullock cart driver. I used to cut grass for the bullocks in the ashram. I used to clean the cows and milk the cows, cook food for them, bring vegetables or take the post from Sivananda Ashram to Rishikesh two miles on my head and post it there and come back - no cycle. I used to go to deposit the money in the bank. From Rishikesh ashram to Dehradun is twenty-six miles, the nearest bank was twenty-six miles away. The nearest ration shop was six miles up. I had diseases like hepatitis, typhoid, paratyphoid, dysentery and ulcers in the mouth, vitamin A deficiency. Tuberculosis also I had. That was my sadhana.

Sadhanas like kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, swara yoga, prana vidya, ajapa japa, hatha yoga are intended for different categories of aspirants and really you do not know which will suit you and which you will be able to do regularly with great success. Those who are practising different sadhanas can do so but ultimately they will have to assess as to which is the particular sadhana to which the mind gets stuck, or which appeals to your mind, and as a result of that gives some kind of regularity and inner equanimity, and an inner experience is born.

You do not have to say which sadhana is greater. To some it is ajapa japa, to some kriya yoga and for others it can be any other sadhana. The central theme of every sadhana is life itself. If you practise sadhana in 'isolation' by extracting it from the flow of life, I do not think that you can get anything. A candle



is burning and the windows are open, when a gale comes, the candle is extinguished. Whatever tranquillity, one-pointedness or equanimity you attain through the practice of raja yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga or any yoga sadhana is immediately destroyed by the terrific currents of life, the day-to-day life. Therefore, it is more important to adjust your life current and the work you do in life, the karma and acts you do. They are really intended to purify yourself. That is the greatest sadhana.

You have children, parents, a wife, friends, property, money, passions, ambitions, desires and hatred. That is the totality of life. It is like a garden where you do not have only mango trees but also oranges. Different forms of experiences in your life become important and you will have to decide how to face them and fix them up. If you think that you are going to renounce and abandon them, perhaps you are going to have to come back again, as I did once. When you leave your karma, it is necessary to come back again. Life has to be understood whatever you do. Anger, passions, ambitions, worries, hatred,

anxieties, ill health, good health, good friends, bad friends, disappointments, frustrations – it is a big list. That’s life! How are you going to understand it? Swami Sivananda said, “Work hard and everything will be all right.”

People consider life in two compartments. Marketing, banking, driving, cooking, counting money, writing letters, talking to your wife and children, having good food are worldly things. Sitting for meditation and doing pranayama, reading the *Gita* and Bible are spiritual things. You have divided life into two compartments. Now break those compartments for they are just one and the same if you are a sadhaka. If you are a traveller on the spiritual path life is just one. If you are not a traveller on the path, then your worldly life is worldly life and spiritual life is spiritual life because you are not aware.

For people who have been searching for a way there is no one way, there are no two ways. There are only ways. Everything, the entire existence, manifestation, reaction, life as a whole is an experience within yourself. Your interaction with your family is taking place within yourself. Your interactions with worldly things are taking place within yourself. If you see some dirty, obnoxious stuff outside and visualize it, it is yourself. You are experiencing that dirty stuff within yourself in the form of your mind. You are experiencing yourself. Pain, pleasure, disappointments, the dull life and hatred, which you experience in your day-to-day life is an experience of yourself.

If it can be realized by you that every work which you do will be a part of the inner experience, then it can help you. This did happen to me in Rishikesh. Swami Sivananda has clearly written that my capacity to run the ashram was so fantastic – I am talking 25, 26, 27 years ago – so fantastic that the whole Divine Life Society is not Swami Sivananda’s dream – it is my dream. I dreamt it. I saw the houses, the quarters, the ladders, the staircases, the temple, the building, the colour, the painting, the woodwork, everything else, the mail, the money and the kitchen, everything. It used to go into my mind during the night all the time, for hours and hours together and for nothing. The

day I left I just left it. It is not in my mind. I am not sorry that I am not there, I am happy that I am here. This is how you have to arrange yourself.

Practise any sadhana you like. Practise swara yoga and after a few years or a few months you can give it up and practise kriya yoga; then you can give up kriya yoga and you can do some other yoga. That is not important. You need just two things in life in order to make a breakthrough. One is the tantric way of practising which is something very powerful. It can explode the mind. Every householder can do tantric practice.

For example, marriage is not necessary for progeny, though once upon a time it was necessary. Enjoyment can also not be the purpose of marriage. The purpose of marriage is to establish a relationship between the two poles of reality which in the universe are known as time and space.

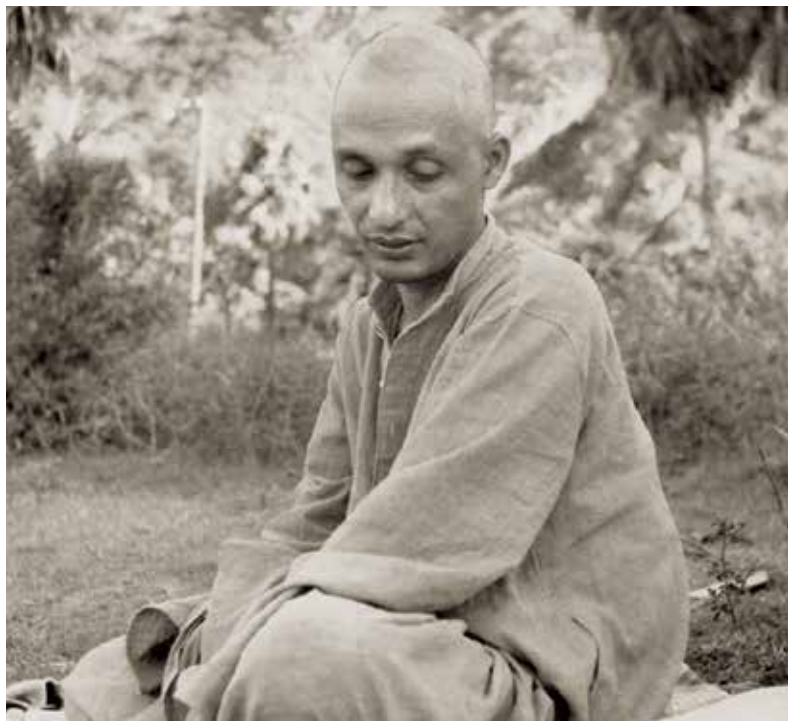
There are two forms of energy called time and space, what you call positive and negative, two forms of energy interlinked with man's consciousness. They are the two aspects of consciousness which always remain separate, apart from each other, diametrically opposite. There is a time when they travel in the opposite direction, towards each other. There is a point where they meet and where the experience begins.

Man and woman represent time and space. I am not talking of a social science or biology. I am talking spirituality. They are different and they have to be different. Positive and negative poles of energy are different from each other therefore they create an effect. This is the opportunity for everyone to make a breakthrough through tantra which is the easiest path: the body merges with the senses. The senses merge with the mind. Mind merges with buddhi. Buddhi merges with ahamkara. Ahamkara merges with *mahatattwa*, the great principle. Then, the second thing, you have to find a guru who should create a final breakthrough.

– 14 November 1987, Munger

The Eternal Link

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What was it about Sivananda Maharaja of Rishikesh that attracted you?

The destiny of guru and disciple is linked. No matter how much they try they cannot run away from each other. They follow each other life after life. Disciple is always on the lookout for the guru, and guru also is on the lookout for his disciple. Guru is not senior and disciple is not a junior element. They are complementary units; they make one whole. Guru is the transmitter and disciple is the receiver. If there is only a transmitter and there is no receiver can you imagine what will happen? Radio stations singing but there is no radio

and no transistor. There has to be combination between the transmission and the reception.

Guru is the power in the powerhouse of energy, and disciple is the conductor, carrier and communicator. Prior to my coming to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh, I had already been to a number of great men in this country. I had had initiations into the dakshina marga and vama marga. At the age of eighteen, I was initiated by a yogini into vama marga. After I left my home I met another yogi, who gave me instructions into dakshina marga. Whatever I learnt from them was very important for me. I was contented.

However, there was something in me which did not make me stay with them. I was not sure that what I was experiencing was the real experience. Then I met a sadhu with matted locks on the train. I did not really know who he was because I was a convent-educated boy, therefore, my vision was totally westernized. I thought he was a magician, but then he was smoking. I asked him, 'Can you give me a cigarette?' He gave me and said, 'Where are you going?' I told him that I was going in search of a guru. He seemed to be a very wonderful man. He said, 'Okay I will tell you where to go.' After a few stations he asked me to get down from the train. That was the station called Baderi, and he told me the train I had to take to Rishikesh.

In Rishikesh, I went and lived for about five or six days going to different ashrams. Fortunately, I went to one ashram whose head was a great wise man. He wanted to know why I had come to Rishikesh. I said I had come for a guru. He indicated that I should go to Sivananda Ashram. I went there and met Swami Sivananda on 19 March 1943, at nine o'clock in the morning. He asked me why I had come. I said that I had been meditating for many years and come to a point of experience where my consciousness became completely inert and hibernated, and that I did not know how to get out of that crisis. I said, "I have lived both ways of tantra which has given me a lot of willpower. I can manipulate my mind, my

emotion, my willpower and others as well, but I am unable to go beyond that point and manipulate that state of mind.”

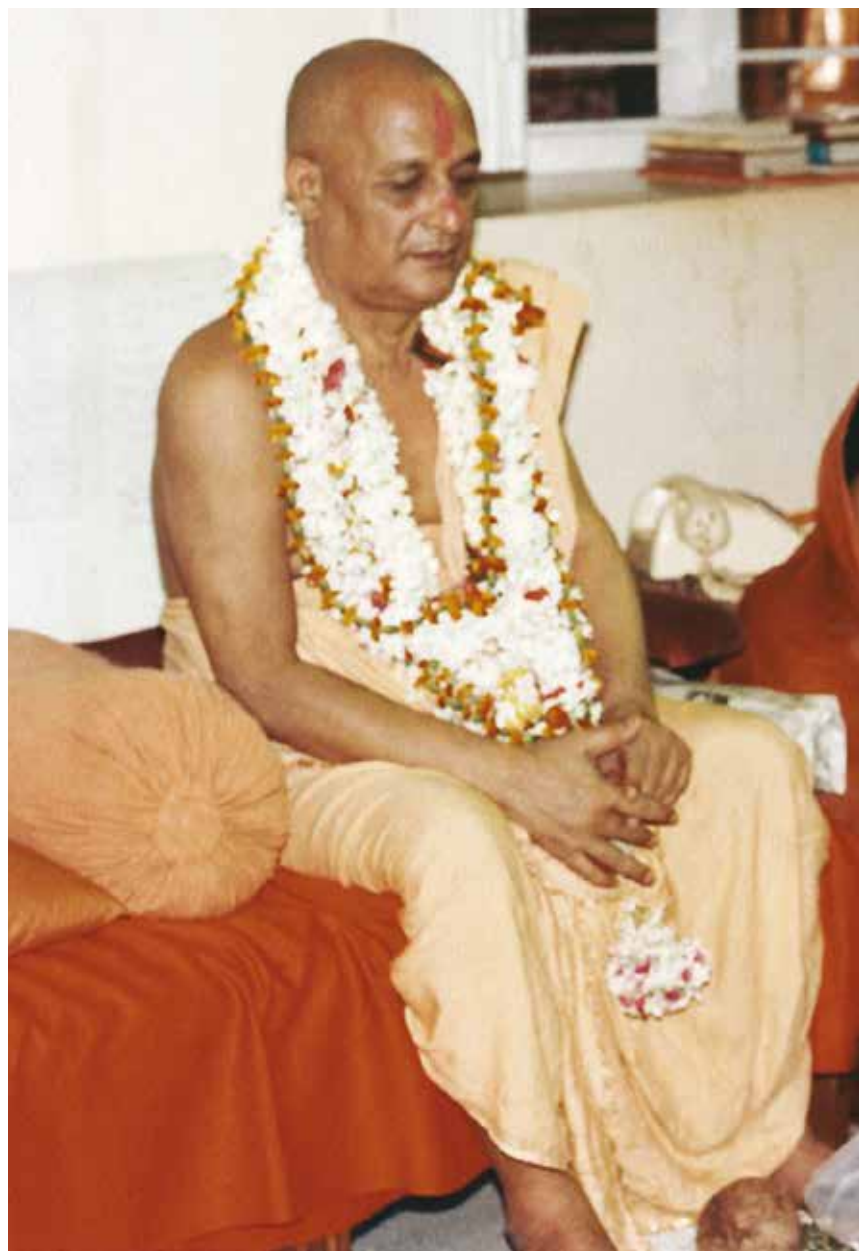
He just gave a very brief reply, “Stay here, serve your guru. Undergo sufferings, purify you mind.” It seemed to be very logical to me because unless the mirror is clean you cannot see your face. If your mind is not pure, you cannot see the self. There is no use going into higher realms of meditation without pacifying the mind. Because I had a strong mind, I forced myself into the higher realm. But then there were certain preparations which I had not made. I had not subdued my ego. I had not exhausted my karma. I had not undergone the necessary suffering for the purification of the soul. I had just followed the academic side of yoga, not the real side of yoga. I had forced myself into meditation.

I can definitely say that the time I lived with him was the most fruitful and most deeply impressive part of my life. He was not a scholarly type of personality. Though he has written over 250 or 300 books on different subjects he was not a scholar. He wrote of his experiences. He was very simple. Not at all shrewd. Very intelligent, very wise, but not clever. You could easily cheat him. If you give a lot of money or jewellery to your little baby, anybody can take it from him. For him it was the same. You could take anything from him.

For some time, all my communication was physical. Then a chain of astral communications took place. I do not work on my own. Nor do I think too much. I am the most relaxed person, because I know I have a commander, and I am a servant. He tells me to do it, I do it. If he does not tell me to do it, I will not. If he tells me the right thing and the consequences are positive – perfect; if he guides me and the consequences are negative – perfect. I do not own any allegiance to success and failure, because it is not my work. I am the servant, instrument or medium. That is why I am happy to be a disciple of Swami Sivananda.

– 28 December 1981, Munger









Awaken Divinity

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



Gurudev, Swami Satyananda, has connected us with Swami Sivananda, and that connection is very strong. He is as real in our lives as anything else. The only thing he said was, “Live a divine life.” Everything else fell into that, whether it is ‘serve, love, give’, the 18 ITIES, whatever he taught was summed up with this one phrase, ‘live a divine life’.

You are divine, but you don't feel it. Many times we feel we are wretched, hopeless, never able to do anything. Swami Sivananda gave this very beautiful idea, that you are divine. Why don't you feel that? You must feel it too. There are times when you do feel wretched, but this idea will immediately bring you out of that negative spiral. You are divine, live a divine life. You do not have to give up anything. In fact, you have to add something to your life, and that is the realization that you are divine. Awaken that divinity.

Swami Satyananda showed us the way to realize that divinity. Look at the tandem they work in. Swami Sivananda pronounced, 'live a divine life' and Swami Satyananda showed the way. He established the practices of yoga and various traditions; yoga is not the only one; he established thousands of traditions. Every kind of tradition that is there from ancient times, he brought them to light in a very simple way. He said, "If you want to lead a divine life, this is the way. This is the way. This is the way."

Whatever temperament you have, whatever you are; maybe you are foolish, ignorant, in darkness, because it is only when you are in darkness that you seek the light. If you are in light, why are you going to seek? What are you going to seek? It is only when the path gets very cloudy, murky and not clear, that we seek clarity, how to move forward. He has given all the ways to do that, whether it is yoga, mantra, seva, havan, kirtan, yajna – thousands of ways, very simplified so each person can do them.

That is the bond which has to exist between a guru and disciple. Guru speaks and disciple translates.

– 12 September 2019, Paduka Darshan, Munger,
published in Glimpses of the Divine IV

The guru and disciple relationship is constructed for your spiritual life. The guru must consider the disciple as a pilgrim, and the disciple must consider the guru as the lighthouse who shows the way.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Guru, Disciple and Mantra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Guru is a *tattwa*, a subtle essence. Everyone has that tattwa which can guide and inspire you. It can protect you in case you need it; it can also fulfil your life with contentment, peace and bliss, whatever you need or aspire for as an ideal of life. However, it is so hard to locate that personal guru.

You do not know what to do, where to start, because to locate that guru, to find his address or whereabouts, the only way is to have an external guru, who is guru but not guru tattwa. Then there are certain mental or intellectual topics you can understand. The language is the same, expressions are the same and perhaps sometimes the way of explaining and your way of understanding coincide. Sometimes it happens that I

explain and you cannot understand, but most of the times I explain and you understand.

With this guru a disciple must have a certain type of relationship based on devotion. Through devotion or *bhakti* comes faith. I do not mean superstitious faith, but the faith a child has in the mother. When the intellect does not ask so many things and the reasoning drops, faith starts. You practise this with the guru and as a result the awakening begins to take place within yourself.

This external guru acts as a detonator. The bomb and the explosive material, guru tattwa, is in you but the detonator is outside. You use the external guru to awaken your inner guru. Some people call this guru tattwa *satguru* – so we have the guru and the satguru.

The relationship with the external guru has to be based on *bhakti*, devotion and faith, *shraddha*. Sometimes guru and disciple have been husband and wife, like Sarada Devi and Ramakrishna; sometimes there have been guru-disciple relationships like the great rishi, Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi.

Yajnavalkya had two wives. One day he called both of them and wanted to distribute or divide his property between the two of them. The first one quietly accepted it, but the second one said, 'What shall I do with this? Will it give me immortality?' He said, 'No, it won't give you immortality.' She asked 'What will give me immortality?' She was a disciple, not just a wife.

As father and son, mother and daughter, brother and sister, husband and wife, or we may not even be related at all; we can establish this devotional and faithful relationship between ourselves, where the *dharma* or duty of the disciple and the guru are specified and very clear.

Those who live with the guru all the time, those who live around guru or those who do not live with him but are dedicated to him, must have only one thing in their mind, to be committed to the awakening. Every disciple has to be

committed to some sort of awakening because that is the only thing that we are aspiring for. It may happen now, or it may happen later, but that is the commitment, and it is a sort of promise.

This awakening to some extent has to take place in the disciple. It is not just an intellectual awakening or a psychic kind of awakening, when the actual awakening begins to take place it is at that time that a transformation takes place in the structure of the mind. It is not a change; it is a complete transformation – something like a dog becoming a horse. It is like a metamorphosis; the mind becomes entirely different. A person who has had certain values until this day, after that metamorphosis, thinks entirely differently. He does not think the way he has been thinking, because with the awakening of the grand force in you – you may call it kundalini, or you may call it anything else – certainly your structure of thinking and your structure of mind undergo a total transformation in quality, form, assessments and values.

At the same time, the perception or inner cognition becomes very subtle – you are able to apprehend, see the forms, behaviour or reactions of your mind in symbolic form. You can see your mental personality in symbolic form. That is the relationship in general.

Apart from this there have been many experiments conducted throughout the world, right from the beginning of creation. Mankind has always been wondering about many things and has always been wanting to realize the grand self in himself. People did not know the way, so they organized many systems.

In tantra, guru has a different personality; in religions the guru has an entirely different personality; for those who are not religious nor tantric but want to awaken their kundalini, the personality of guru is entirely different. But there is one thing that has to be remembered, that in every case both guru and disciple are committed to inner discipline. It can be any relationship, but discipline has to be there all the time. Without

discipline, the relationship in any place, for any reason, will be a great failure. The guru will be in trouble and so will you!

How to practise

Mantra is a system which very few people have been able to understand up to now. What is the source of mantra? Is a mantra the name of a Hindu god, Muslim god, Christian god or Parsee god? Has mantra to do with none of these deities and divine beings? How does it work? Does it work merely by chanting or do these mantras need some sort of supporting rituals? All these things have to be understood.

How to choose the right mantra? Do you choose it on the basis of the zodiac sign or do you choose a mantra on the basis of your tradition? Maybe you are a Vaishnava, so Vishnu, maybe you are a Shaivite, Shiva, maybe you are a Christian – what is the basis of choosing a mantra?

How should you pronounce the mantra? If you pronounce it incorrectly will it have an adverse effect? These are many points which you have to consider about mantra yoga. It is a yoga by itself and, it is a yoga which is very sure, but the only thing is, it needs a lot of time.

Mantra diksha is given by the guru to an aspiring disciple and the disciple has to understand that he is accepting the mantra from the guru in order to influence or awaken the inner, the grand force in him. When the mantra is given to him, the guru gives him a minimum discipline, but that minimum discipline should be adhered to regularly.

Anushthana

You should also try to practise more of that. You take the mantra first and practise it for about one year, then a second year or third year, as the case might be. Once in a year, you must retire into seclusion for three days or nine days and practise constant repetition of the mantra, without concentration, without meditation, without one-pointedness, just chanting, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya* from morning until



night, with small breaks in between and a light diet. That is what most people do in India. We call it Navaratri anushthana. Navaratri comes in the months of April and October, and we practise it for nine days. These are the days in India which are good for *anushthana*, unbroken repetition, because they are neither very hot nor very cold, and are the purest seasons in India. You do not have to do it twice a year, once in a year is all right.

Sometimes you do not have the time for nine days so you can decide on a three-days anushthana. One can start the anushthana one year or two years after the mantra diksha. After some time, when you know that you can devote more time, you have to practise purascharana. *Purascharana* means repeating the mantra 100,000 times the number of syllables that the mantra. If a mantra has five letters or syllables, five sounds, then

you practise it 500,000 times. If the mantra has eleven sounds, then you practise it 1,100,000 times. There are also other rules. If you cannot practise a particular mantra, within the span of days which you have decided, then there is also a method of practising purascharana which lasts for many years. I practised one mantra many years ago, maybe in 1946 or 1947. It took me about nine years because I did not have much time in the ashram, as ashram life is a life of service and dedication where you have to surrender your ego and many of the unnecessary things of life. I had to work a lot and I had very little time. Every day I used to do about eleven malas, that is eleven hundred times, but sometimes it was two thousand times, sometimes ten thousand, sometimes one thousand, sometimes five hundred. It took me so long to complete purascharana of that mantra.

This purascharana gives you what we call a form of awakening. All the karmas and samskaras which you have in the mind come out, because during the purascharana you do not control the mind, you just do *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya* and thoughts come in your mind. You do not do anything with these thoughts. You may be thinking about money, property, children and fighting, struggle, promotion, purchasing the house, agriculture, garden, flowers, land – all kinds of things. You can go on thinking; this is no barrier. The mind has to be allowed to function, you do not have to stop it.

When a thought comes to you it should come, even in meditation. You should not stop it! It is dangerous and as a result people go mad; it should be allowed and if you do not allow it you are suppressing it. It will come later, either in the form of sickness or it will change your behaviour pattern; it will bring quarrels with your family, your wife and children. So it is much better if you allow thoughts to come, just do not get panicky, only say, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya*. You can think anything for eight hours, nine hours, ten hours.

What happens is that after some time you get tired of thinking, you get fed up and say, 'What is this, every day I am thinking the same thing!' At this time, the mind just relaxes and

the thought process stops for a fraction of a second. It can happen for five minutes, it can happen for ten minutes, sometimes the whole day you do not get thoughts in your mind because you are not interested in thinking. Every day you are thinking the same thing and what is the use? You are not panicky or guilty about it, but it is too much thinking the same thing over and over again. So you have Christ and the cross, Rama, Shiva, Vishnu and Mohamed with a big crown and big beard and Buddhists all with shaven heads. They come very clearly to your mind and for one or two days you are so blissful. On the second day, it becomes a little less, third day a little less. Then again you start thinking the same thing, again and again.

There is a system of chanting, days of chanting, on which you start that mantra. You should know at what time – which constellation has to be in position, whether Jupiter is in the sixth house and so on. You should know which particular astrological position and the *muhurtha*, the exact time when you have to start that mantra, and what kind of ritual has to be performed.

Then there are mantras for helping people to get rid of diseases like hepatitis and many other things. Mantras have got a lot of divisions. What you and I are talking about is the mantra for your spiritual upliftment, for your spiritual experience, but that is not the only line of mantra. There are many kinds of mantra: tantric mantras, vedic mantras, puranic mantras or religious mantras, and for each and every type of mantra the system of practice is different. The author of initiation, the guru, is also different. For example, tantric mantras – I cannot give tantric mantras even if I know them because I am not an authority on that. Puranic mantras I can give; vedic mantras I can give but tantric mantras or the mantras in order to give you siddhis or for scorpion or snake bites, I cannot give. I know the mantras by heart but I have not practised them.

Although I have practised the scorpion bite mantra when I was in Rishikesh because once a scorpion bit me. It was a terrible pain! I had never cried in my life or reacted to pain. If anybody

beat me, I fought it; I never cried, even if I was wounded but that day it was such a great pain that I thought, 'No, I am not a strong man.' So I took the mantra from a scavenger woman who cleaned the toilets with buckets. She gave me the mantra. Can you imagine a scavenger woman as your guru? I had to touch her feet and offer her flowers; she put the tika on me and said practise this mantra. I practised that mantra and later on I tried it, even now I have tried it. I can just take a scorpion bite out, I touch it and it becomes all right.

Carlos Castaneda has also done a lot of adventures on mantra, hasn't he? He has tried a lot of mantra influencing a lizard or a frog or an animal to move from his shoulder, to go away or to come. So these mantras are there which do act as a gross, external force.

Mantra should not be understood in a limited religious sense of prayer. They are very powerful. In the Puranas like *Bhagavat Purana*, *Mahabharata*, they have depicted wars with bows and arrows but everywhere it is written that he chanted a mantra and remembered the shakti, and then he shot. The warrior disciples had such a quick memory that they knew at what time the opponent was repeating which mantra and what weapon he was going to throw at him and how he was going to counteract it.

A Frenchman wrote in the eighteenth or nineteenth century on laser beams and today we have laser beams; he wrote a story about what a laser beam could do and the same thing has happened. Similarly, 'Star Wars' - there is so much in the Puranas where these devas and devis are going into the sky, fighting with each other and destroying each other. That has been the fantasy of man and it may happen. So sometimes these crazy thinkers wrote books which talk about psychic warfare. They do not talk about mantra fortunately, but about the psychic forces being released by people towards each other and hurting, wounding and destroying them.

- 21 November 1985, Munger



Prayer to Guru

Life is a canvas,
A magnificent creation of the painter's brush.
The painting depicts the various facets of life
And reflects the pictures of this vast creation.

O artist of our lives,
Use your brush to create new life.

Paint a new life for us all
And in that picture give men, women and children
Laughter, happiness and joy in plenty.

O light of my life,
In this dark night
Give me a glimpse of yourself in my subtle mind,
And make the journey of other co-travellers
Bright, blissful and eternal.

O friend of my journey,
The path to the source is endless,
Unknown are the ways that lead there,
Only a few travellers dare to tread upon it.

Tell me, when shall we reach it?
I have covered a part of the journey,
Crossed some of the ups and downs
And traversed a few valleys,
But the journey is not yet over.
Inspire me through your paintings
And in the shadow of your feet
Enable me to complete my pilgrimage.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Swamiji, would you tell us a little about some of the enlightened people you have met?

Only Shakespeare can understand Shakespeare. Only an enlightened person can realize an enlightened person. For me it was more an impression and it was all instinctive. From early childhood the people whom I met, like Anandamayi Ma, how was I to assess whether she was realized or not? Because my father, mother or people said it, I accepted it, but I accepted instinctively that she was.

Then I met another lady who was a tantric yogini and she was with us for about six months. I do not even know whether

she was enlightened or not, but she was able to handle, and knew about some of the mysterious things of life. She was illiterate. She could not even do her signature, but she had a good command over the intricate matters of the time and space continuum. She used to teach me these things.

Swami Sivananda, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Ram Das and, much before, Anandamayi Ma, are the people whom I can count as enlightened people. There are many other great people who have good names, I call them great men, eminent people, good preachers or good teachers, but enlightenment is something else.

Ramana Maharshi did not speak to anyone. People just came and sat down. He used to lie down looking up. No talks. People used to come in, prostrate and sit down and do their own mantra and meditation or think of their worries or their questions. Ramana Maharshi did not speak English or Hindi, only Tamil, which is a very difficult language.

Anandamayi Ma also did not speak very much. She only used to say a few words here and there and her disciples used to interpret that. Sri Aurobindo did not meet anyone, so there was no question of talking. He used to give darshan only once a year. He used to give public audience. He came to the balcony and people came to see him. He closed himself away throughout the years and did not meet people.

Swami Sivananda also did not speak very much. He did not indulge in intellectual discussions. He used to say, 'I don't know. I only know God's name, that's all.'

Do you converse with your disciples without speaking to them?

In the ashram there are swamis who have not seen me for three months. They have not even seen my face whether I am ill or well. The swami who is in the kitchen has not seen me for four or six months. I hardly meet half a dozen people. After all, it is much more important to be able to be in touch with guru on a different wavelength.

This wavelength is intellectual. It is tuned and regulated to suit your mind and thinking. That is a different wavelength and for that a different wavelength has to be created. For that you need to have practice because sometimes you think that you are conversing with guru, but you are undergoing a state of hallucination. For a long time, it happens. You have to pass through that hallucination period when you are under the false notion that you are asking and your guru is replying; actually you are replying. It takes some time to pass through this hallucination and then the actual contact begins. If you start trying to contact me right from today, it won't happen. You will be talking to yourself, and we know it.

After some time, it does happen by itself – but it does not happen so frequently.

My contact with my guru in the last twenty years must have been three times and I do not know how to get in touch with him. I do not know the way. It happens by itself. I do not know the way, whether I should meditate or sing kirtan, fast or purify myself. I do not know the way; it happens by itself, what we call 'inner awakening'. Likewise, it will happen to you too. But it does take time.

Swamiji does it ever happen that somebody comes to you and you feel that you are not their guru?

No, I never feel it. They have come to me and I should not tell them that I am not their guru, because this is not a positive approach to life. They have come to me for asana, pranayama, kriya yoga or anything else. I can talk to them and give them some sort of guidance. With that they may practise, and after practising, if they get some positive result, it is okay. If they don't get any result for some time and still they are keen to go ahead, their instinct, their intuition will help them.

I always start my connection or relationship with people with a different approach altogether. There is no use my telling them, 'I am not your guru', because most human beings are already suffering from intellectual confusion. I do not want

that. If you want sannyasa, I will give you. I do not consider you inept, nor do I consider myself incapable. I am authorized to give you sannyasa and you are the deserving candidate for sannyasa.

Only sometimes when I see some danger to the person or even to me, I tell them, 'No, not now. If I give you sannyasa all kinds of things can happen', then I do not give it.

I have found, long ago the more I keep myself aloof from people the better it is for them. If you come to me, you will ask me a question. If you do not come to me you will not ask me, but the question will haunt your mind and you will get a reply, first from yourself and then from me. You are not able to see me, so you will use another wavelength.

The mind will automatically soar from this realm to another realm and if that level of mind is attained, naturally you can tune yourself. When you ask a question and I give you a reply, it is not too easy; it is too difficult because speech is so limited. How much can you explain to people? There are limitations in expression.

If you want to taste chocolate, take it and taste it. Now I have to eat it, taste it and explain to you what brown means, and what kind of sweetness there is, different from other tastes. It is so difficult to explain something through speech. Of course, if you have had the experience of chocolate then I do not have to explain to you at all because you know it. Writing and explaining is very difficult and it is becoming more difficult. I find that in the last few years, there is inadequacy of expression, not only in English but also in Hindi. I speak Hindi but I find difficulty and am not able to express adequately.

That is why Ramana Maharshi did not speak. If someone asked him, he would say in Tamil, "Just think, 'Who am I?'" That was his standard reply to all questions, if at all anybody asked him. Otherwise people were cautioned not to ask him anything. If any shameless or aggressive man went there and said, 'Guruji, please give me some answer or guidance,' he said, "Think, 'Who am I?'" That's all, and in Tamil.

What is the difference between an ashram where swamis live and a community, where all kinds of people live together?

The purpose of a community and the purpose of an ashram are quite different. The purpose of an ashram is to create an atmosphere or a zone of spiritual influence. Therefore, the people who live in the ashram and the people who run the ashram should be able to contribute to that spiritual magnetic or positive influence. If you include the whole community, then you have to relax certain rules. The quality cannot be as is expected because these people who take to sannyasa have a different state of consciousness.

All the swamis who stay here live a very detached life. They are not at all concerned with this institution. They are not at all concerned even with the work they do, but they do the work perfectly. There is no discrepancy. I do not see even one person making any discrepancy, whether it is accounting, translating, editing, management, kitchen or marketing. They do it perfectly, as though they were totally involved in it, as if they were the doers, but they are not at all involved.

This life of detachment is called the yoga of the *Bhagavad Gita*, *anasakti*. It creates a sort of magnetic field and the people who come here can experience a little bit of that magnetic field. However, if I included the community, it may have respect for spiritual life and for ashrams, but after some time the mind or the flesh is weak, and they do not know how to manage it.

The internal management of the ashram is by swamis, but the actual management is done by outsiders. This ashram is managed, governed, by outsiders. They are the policy-makers; they are the legal people, the board of directors who do not stay here. They come here for a few hours, once every three or four months. They are responsible to the government for accounting, property, for anything.

The swamis are not at all responsible to the government. They are involved but their involvement with the institution is not by living as managers. The governing body members come here, attend yoga classes and send their family and



friends, because most of the governing body members of this institution are as old as the institution itself. Most of the governing body members have been involved right from the inception of the institution from 1963 to 1985. For twenty-two years they have been on the board. So naturally they know about the institution.

In India, we expect spiritual health from ashrams, either in the form of therapy, peace of mind or right understanding. If my son has gone wrong, I believe if he goes to the ashram for a few months, he will get better. If husband and wife are not doing well, they go to their guruji and something better happens. At least for a few years, they live a better life. If some sort of discrepancies creep up in one's life, family life or community life, these ashrams are able to look after that. That has been the role of the ashrams. Involvement with commerce and religion is not looked upon here with respect; ashrams cannot do those things. Most ashrams sell their books and some ayurvedic medicines, but they do not involve themselves or indulge in big commercial gain like factories. All the swamis you see here get up in the morning, start the kitchen and do the work, but they are not at all concerned. They are only concerned that the work has to be done in a good way, they are responsible but with least attachment.

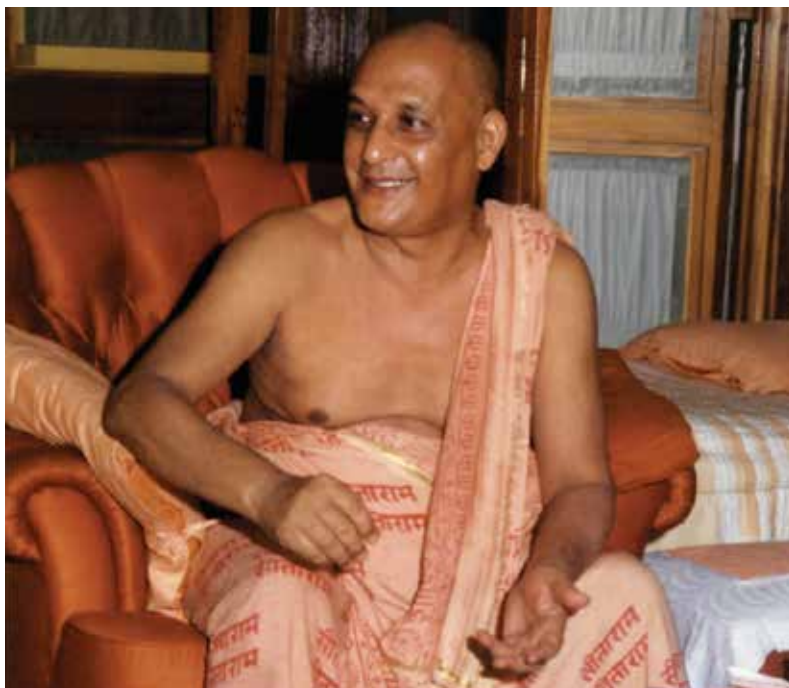
This ashram is not exactly an ashram, because there are better facilities. You have to see other ashrams! You are just provided with a small mat to sleep on the floor, no mosquito net. In Rishikesh ashram I was the manager for some time for the guests. When anybody came, I just gave them a key of the door and told them where the room was, but there was nothing in the room. There was just the room. In those days there was no electricity so there was no light, there was no bed, nothing. Just the room!

Can you imagine? For twelve years I lived that way, and nobody even thought, neither the residents who lived in the ashram, nor the visitors, that they were expected to be provided with even the minimum possible amenities. No, they were so happy to get a room there because people do not actually expect any kind of luxury in the ashram. Most people feel that when you undergo some sort of suffering, you are purifying your karma. So when you go to the ashram and get a little pain, diarrhoea, dysentery or fever, it is purging of the karma.

– 27 November 1985, Munger

Purpose of Karma Sannyasa and Spiritual Name

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When you are taking karma sannyasa or a spiritual name that in itself is a step further. Unless that idea comes into your mind you will not think of taking them. Everybody has a name and this name we have for convenience. That is not our real name. In ancient days they used to find the real name by consulting the *rasi*, *lagna* etc, and they used to find the quality of the person, whether he was predominately fire or earth. The spiritual name is the name of your spiritual consciousness and the present name you have belongs to your outer personality by which people know you as Mr so and so.

Karma sannyasa

Karma sannyasa is a big and very great step towards liberation of the individual from ego; not liberation from oneself, or oneself from one's worldly connections. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is said, you do not have to renounce your duties, your obligations, nor anything which can contribute for the good of others. *Shubha karmas*, positive, auspicious karmas, should not be abandoned. At the same time a dispassionate, philosophical attitude should be developed. That is karma sannyasa.

If I am going to Calcutta and I put my car in your garage, is that then your car? No, but still you take care of it. Your children, the people you love, property, money duties in society have to be considered in the same light. A fine day comes when you have to renounce these things compulsorily. You have to. So our relationships with each other, everything in the world has to be properly assessed and understood.

Many times, on account of *avidya*, ignorance, attachment and personality problems, you do not understand the proper type or angle of relationships. My mother is my mother. Of course she is my mother, but the way I understand my relationship with her or any other family relationship is not correct. The way I involve myself in understanding the type of relationship I have with them is wrong. There is a philosophical error. It is there on account of the quality of my personality. This correction when it is made takes you to karma sannyasa.

Karma sannyasa is a type of training when you are trying to understand your relationship with each and everything in the world, and in this you include everyone. You do not exclude anybody. You do not criticize or denounce, you respect everything, but you have to recognize and understand the fair value. Suppose there is a piece of glass and you think it costs 10,000 rupees. All the time you are thinking of the 10,000 rupees and that they must not be stolen. I say, "No. it is not worth 10,000 rupees, but 5 rupees! Keep it on the table." Over-estimation of our relationships with people and the things of

the world makes us householders, *grihasthas*. Once we have a proper understanding of the people, objects and events of life, we are enhancing another area of duty, fulfilment and realization. That is called karma sannyasa.

In the olden days, this karma sannyasa was called *vanaprashtha ashrama*. We had four ashramas: brahmachara, grihastha, vanaprashtha and sannyasa. They were the four stages of life, not only from the point of view of self-realization or spiritual realization, but also from the practical point of view. After all, the sages knew that when a man is fifty, if he is still loaded with worries and anxieties, he is going to get a heart attack and nervous breakdown. It is much better that he takes to karma sannyasa or vanaprashtha ashrama. In the olden days, there were places they could go and live with their wives. They lived the life of rishis.

In the olden days, there were great rishis like Vasishtha, Arundhati and Agastya. These rishis lived with their wives, led simple lives and had their children and their own tribesmen. If they were extraordinary kings, leaders of the community and politicians used to come to them for guidance. They did not aspire for this; they aspired for a spiritual life. They wanted to know what lies beyond karma and gratification. When you are totally satisfied with the objects of the world, property, prosperity, love, affection, family, eminence and so on, you wonder, 'Is there anything beyond it or nothing?' Is self-gratification the ultimate destiny of man? I do not think anyone will accept that.

I know that self-gratification, pleasures, are the inevitable experiences of human life. Even animals may get gratification though they may not understand it. They also run after comfort. You see the dog on the veranda, when it is cold he will come in and crawl under your bed. He does not want pain, he wants comfort. In the same way, a human being tries for gratification, comfort, pleasant experience. He wants good friends, no enemies, does not want disease or death. If God has granted him all this, will he not aspire for anything else?

What is beyond karma? Sannyasa is beyond karma. That is exactly what is going to happen in the western countries. Now they are crossing the border of karma, and as they do so they will not enter into the field of renunciation, they will enter into a field where karma and tyaga go hand in hand. *Karma* means involvement and *tyaga* means renunciation. When involvement and renunciation meet, that is called *karma sannyasa*.

It has nothing to do with orthodox concepts like becoming a vegetarian or non-vegetarian, a celibate or non-celibate, or that you have to speak the truth at all costs. Everybody has to speak the truth or be good at all costs, not only a sannyasi or a householder. These rules do not form a prerequisite of karma sannyasa. Whatever you are, with the same quality and content of your personality, you just enter into a new area of philosophical understanding of life – that is karma sannyasa.

Spiritual name

Now concerning your spiritual name. I had a friend many years ago whose name was Mr Wheatfield. He was my father's superior officer. He was a superintendent of police. I was very close to him. Many times I told him, "Please change your name, you are not a field of wheat." He was a very kind man who loved children. He used to gather them and talk to them. He hardly ever took any step against a subordinate, whether they took bribes or not. He did not even know that there is anything in the world called corruption. This was in the 1930s or 1940s. So I told him to change his name; someone suggested Mr Fox. These funny names exist.

I met a girl yesterday called Pinky. I asked her, 'What does it mean?' I told her I would give her a good name like Pooja or Arati, a nice name. These names ultimately become a part and parcel of your mind and your personality. In the course of time, they become a reminder that you have to be that.

My name is Swami Satyananda. Many times I thought to take pleasure in speaking the truth. I did, and that led me into much trouble. When I was in Rishikesh ashram I was a

disciple, a worker, a senior worker, sometimes the senior most. I called a spade a spade. On account of that I was not popular; so I could not be blissful in truth. At the same time, I could not understand how truth could be so bitter. It should be *ananda*, bliss, not *klesha*. Swami Sivananda was also a truthful man, but he was very sweet. I was not sweet, only truthful. One day he said to me, "*Satyam bruyat, priyam bruyat* – Truth should be spoken but in a pleasant manner, people must understand, accept and listen to it."

All these years I was thinking how to be truthful and sweet. Now I am trying to practise a little bit. So the spiritual name that is given to you by your guru is something you must meditate on, and try to be that in this life, even if only for a few days before death. Even if you can do that much, I think the purpose of the name is fulfilled.

– 1987, Munger



The guru's guidance is both present and necessary at all times. The guru always knows the way to the destination. The role of a guru is to give the disciple an immense sense of security and fearlessness.

–Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Dispel the Gloom

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Political freedom by itself is but a stepping-stone to cultural and eventually spiritual freedom. Two things are essential for its true fulfilment: that the country quickly revives the ancient spiritual traditions of the East, and that the people do not indulge in any kind of vindictive actions against the former rulers. Independence should broaden the peoples' outlook and make them cultivate all-embracing love. All nations should unite in love with an earnest desire to preserve world peace.

Time and space have dwindled today. The destructive arms of materialism are trying to grasp the soul of man. The Lord is on our side. Inspired by Him, work day and night to awaken the masses to the glory of divine life. The illumined soul, ablaze with knowledge of the Self, will dispel the gloom of materialism in the twinkling of an eye.

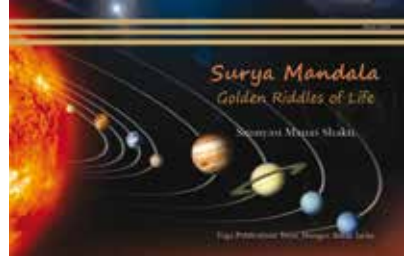


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- Registered with the Department of Post, India
Under No. MGR-02/2020-23
Office of posting: Ganga Darshan TSO
Date of posting: 1st-7th of every month
- Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers, India
Under No. BIHENG/2002/6305

issn 0972-5717

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Om Tat Sat
The Editor