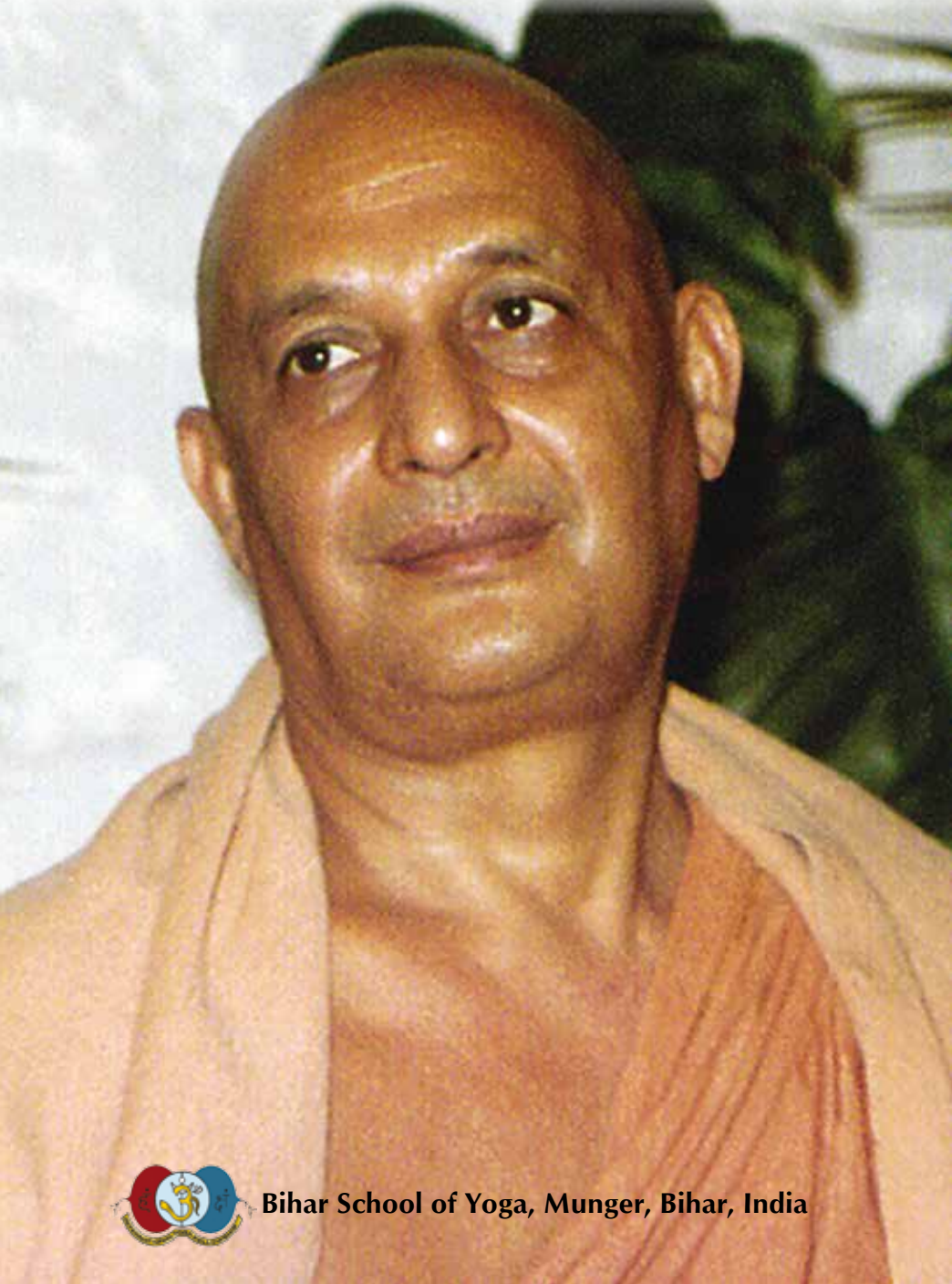


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Hari Om

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Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati



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

Swami Satyanandaji is a holy, gentle, humble and revered soul. He has extraordinary wisdom. He is not an ordinary person, but a holy saint who was moulded after Swami Sivanandaji, our great and rare master on earth. His marvellous and wonderful teachings divert human minds from worldliness and attach it to the holy feet of the Lord. God helps humanity through great souls like Swami Satyanandaji. His glorious and blessed examples surely would mould and elevate each and every one to the climax of highest realization. I humbly pay my homage to such a great messenger of God.

—Srimati M. Sivabakium Naidoo,
'Sivananda-Jyoti', Durban

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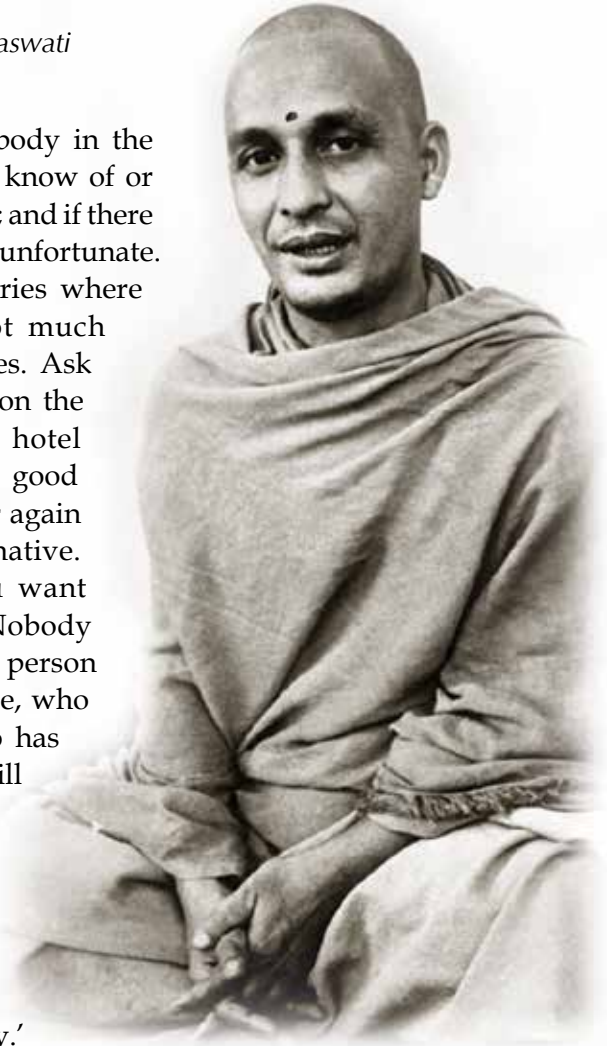
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)
तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

There is hardly anybody in the world who does not know of or has not heard of yoga; and if there is such a person he is unfortunate. Even in those countries where religion has not got much scope, yoga flourishes. Ask anybody anywhere, on the train or plane, in a hotel or cafeteria, 'Is yoga good for you?' The answer again will be in the affirmative. Ask again, 'Do you want to practise yoga?' Nobody will say no. Even a person who does not practise, who cannot practise, who has no will to practise, will say, 'I want to, but I do not.' If you ask, 'Does yoga harm human life?' The answer will be in the negative, 'Yoga cannot harm anybody.'



If there is one place where everybody comes and meets, it is under the canopy of yoga. If there is one philosophy which is compatible with every philosophy and religion, it is the philosophy of yoga. If there is any practice that gives you satisfaction, fulfilment, a sense of your own existence, the will and hope to live, it is yoga.

The History of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Please explain the history of yoga. Was the knowledge known outside India before it was recorded here? How did it spread and why was it forgotten? Why is there a sudden interest and revival of this ancient science?

In order to know and understand the correct history of yoga, we will have to rewrite its history. The history we read and know today has been written from time to time with certain political and colonial motives. History, when it is written, should have the motive to record events, not to fulfil and accomplish the designs of rulers.

The *Bhagavad Gita* was instructed to Arjuna at the end of the cycle of Dwarpa Yuga, at the beginning of Kali Yuga, and according to calculation, 5,100 years have already passed since then. When Hindus perform their daily pooja in the temple, there is a chanting of sankalpa in which every day one more day is added. That sankalpa is always correct because one day is added every day. There are references in the *Bhagavad Gita* from which we understand that the Upanishads were written much before the *Bhagavad Gita*. Out of 108 Upanishads, thirty Upanishads are minor, ten are major and the rest are simple Upanishads. Among these Upanishads many talk about yoga such as *Yogatattva Upanishad*, and *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad*. They deal directly with yoga, the word yoga and the topic yoga.

In the *Prashnopanishad*, one clearly comes across the concept of ida and pingala. It is not called ida and pingala, but *rayi* and *prana*. Rayi represents the mind or matter and prana represents life. These Upanishads were compiled much after the Vedas.

The *Rig Veda* is the most ancient of Vedas. *Rik* means hymn, *richa* also means hymn. The other Vedas are *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. In the Hindu tradition there is reference

to three and sometimes four Vedas. For the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said:

Vedatrayi parananta tattvārtha jnana manjari.

With the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* one will attain the knowledge of the three Vedas and the store house of knowledge of the meaning of tattwa.

There were certain sects who recognized only three Vedas and not the fourth, *Atharva Veda*, for the mere reason that it deals with all kinds of sciences such as magic, archery, and so on. The *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sama Veda* deal directly with the atman, Brahman, the Supreme Being. The subject matter of all these Vedas is parabrahman, or *satyam*, the ultimate truth, while the subject matter of the *Atharva Veda* is life. In the *Atharva Veda* there are references to pranayama, yogasanas, and different hatha yogic kriyas such as neti and dhauti.

Usha Sukta

The composition of the *Rig Veda* is very complicated because some of the hymns seem to have been written outside India, especially the *Usha Sukta*. There is a *sukta*, an ode to *Usha*, dawn. It is one of the most beautiful compositions in poetry ever written, giving a definition and description of dawn. Scholars feel that this hymn must have been composed where dawn is very poetic. It was not written in the Middle East, because when the sun rises there, it is frightful, as the temperature reaches a very high degree. In India, sunrise is a common event because it can be seen every day. One can see the rising of the sun, 365 days of the year. If one goes to the Arctic area, the polar region, being able to see the sunrise is most wonderful because one has to wait for it for days together. Sometimes the sun does not rise for six months. One does not see the sun at all and one waits for it to rise. Then one morning when the sun rises, it can be seen for about an hour and it sets again. In Norway, above the Nordic region, thousands of people go every day to watch the midnight sun.



This hymn to Usha must have been written in such a land. There is a story in the Puranas that almost relates to a civilization at the North Pole. There was a rishi named Dhaumya. He arrived at a kingdom in the North Pole, which would not have been a snow bound region then. It must have been a thriving civilization. The prince and the prime minister's son were playing outside and they were very rude to Dhaumya. The rishi Dhaumya wanted to be guided to some place where he could rest for the night. These two kids misbehaved with him and Dhaumya became furious.

The next morning the whole kingdom was buried under snow. This story indicates the coming of the snow age in the North Pole. Prior to the arrival of the snow age in the North Pole, a civilization must have existed there. Some of the hymns of the *Rig Veda* like the *Usha Sukta* composed in the arctic polar region, where a civilization thrived, could not have been earlier than 45 to 50,000 years. If one is talking about 45 to 50,000 years, it gives us the latest date in connection with the history of yoga.

However, we have another difficulty here. 45,000 years ago a great continent submerged into the Atlantic Ocean. That

civilization is known as the Atlantis civilization. According to my study, which is by no means complete yet, the Atlantis civilization was the mother of the yoga culture. This continent did not submerge all of a sudden. It must have taken a few centuries. The people migrated with the knowledge they had and went to different countries where they took the message of yoga.

The submerging of the Atlantis civilization and the history of the polar region must have taken place between 45,000 to 50,000 years ago. In the *Rig Veda* there are references to planetary conjunctions, which are called *graha*, or *yog* for the occurrence of such events. Some scholars like Max Müller, Griffith, and Wilson have pointed out that these planetary conjunctions took place 45,000 years ago. They have fixed the date of the occurrences as well. So we can say that these hymns of the *Rig Veda* were written over 40,000 years ago.

You can imagine how many centuries must have preceded it for the perfection of such a cultured, people, of a nation, which could write the most beautiful poetic hymns. A primitive culture could not have just emerged and started writing it. Hence, there must have been a culture already existing, much before the period of the *Rig Veda*. In the *Rig Veda* there is a clear concept of the philosophy of yoga: about dhyana, concentration and the processes through which one can awaken one's consciousness and elevate the level of one's atman.

In the earlier texts one does not find references to those yoga practices which relate to the treatment of diseases, because people were very healthy. They did not have sickness of the type we have today. Therefore, when they wrote about yoga, they only said that through the practices of yoga the realm of maya and avidya can be transcended.

In the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, the first of the Upanishads and the last chapter of the *Yajur Veda*, there are six mantras. They say that the spirit of those people who are involved only in the matter of the mind and senses, enters into the area of darkness, but those who are involved in the path of the spirit, that is

dhyana yoga, enter a still darker region. Further it is said that there should be a combination of the two; the world of the senses and the world of the spirit, both must evolve side by side. This is a clear indication towards a combination of both karma yoga and dhyana yoga.

Latin America

In 1973, when I was in Colombia for a big conference organized by our institution, I visited the south of Colombia. There are wild forests and not many people live there. First we went by helicopter, then by jeep, then I rode on a donkey. There were many people and swamis from different places with me. The name of that area is called San Agustin and it is considered to be a museum. There is no building, and it is spread over a very big area of forest maybe over hundreds of miles.

We took many photographs and printed them on the front cover page of the *YOGA* magazine. These stone carvings are so wonderful that they speak their story by themselves. I saw the stone carving of neti kriya, of a person holding a lota and practising neti. Of course there were stone statues of padmasana, swastikasana, siddhasana, vipareeta karani, bhujangasana, vajrasana, vrishchikasana and many other asanas, also of uddiyana bandha. There were hundreds of asanas depicted in that wild area, so now you understand how far this civilization has gone!



I have also travelled to different areas in Mexico and gone to different temples of Shiva in remote areas. They are not very well looked after by the government, but still the people of the locality take care of them. After a brief study, we have come to conclude that the civilization in Colombia preceding the invasion by the Spanish, Dutch, English people, of the different races of the Incas, Aztecs, Chibchas, were well conversant with the principles of yoga



The story goes that when the Spanish invaded there was a temple in every community, which used to be at the top of the mountain where they consecrated their daughters. The priests used to live in those temples which were dedicated to Surya, for Incas were sun worshippers and did Surya pooja. They dedicated their daughters to that sun temple and used to dress in white and yellow. The yellow colour stands for *vasant*, spring, and the white colour is life. They used to live the life of sannyasins, though not much is known as to what sadhana they did. It is known, however, that they did not mix with the general public at all and only worshipped Surya. Whether this was only the external Surya remains to be interpreted.

When the Spanish people invaded, they killed all of them. They packed all the gold and sent it to Europe. There is a written document about it. The letters written are now a part of the document of man's cruelty upon innocent people who were dedicated to spiritual life and a non-political culture. Spiritual people are not dedicated to the political culture; they do not understand it. Just because they do not understand the political culture does not mean that they have to be massacred.

It is believed that the king in Colombia, on one full moon night did some tantric ceremony and gold powder

came showering on him. Due to his tantric worship he was completely buried under gold, and that is also the reason the name of the Colombian airport in Bogotá is El Dorado. This story resembles the story of Karna of the *Mahabharata* who did tantric worship in Munger which was his capital. He also received gold due to his worship of Devi and distributed the same gold to his subjects.

The people in Colombia are very rich in gold. In the museums you see nothing but gold. In Indian museums you find only Buddha statues made of granite and different stones. In Colombia you find that everything is made out of gold from plates to brassieres. I have seen gold brassieres finer than the ones our ladies wear, because they were very expert people and knew how to work with gold very well. These people had a long tradition of yoga. Then their culture was destroyed by the political system and this wild forest remained. San Agustin does not represent their culture.

Colombians should have named this museum after the last king who was murdered. The Spanish invaders invited him to surrender but he refused. They battled for days but could not win over him. Finally, the Spanish said that they should become friends. The Colombians were innocent and gullible. The Spanish arranged a dinner for the king, who came unarmed and was killed. This museum should have been dedicated to such a man as that king.

Similarly, if you go to the south of France, to the south of Ireland, to Scandinavian countries, from there to Afghanistan, India, Tibet, South-East Asia and up to Vietnam, there seems to have been a belt where yogic science was very well known to the people. We have been collecting a lot of evidence in Scandinavian countries. There is a brilliant swami who has studied the yogic tradition in Scandinavian countries and has found in their old culture, the concept of kundalini, ida, pingala, sushumna, and the awakening of the inner spirit. From all these details we come to a conclusion that the culture of yoga is very ancient.



Of course it came to a sudden halt due to political systems. Political systems everywhere are responsible for the destruction of all that is beautiful that man has created. The science of politics is a science that inherits total selfishness. Political systems are based on selfishness and the cult of power. Most power hungry men need to get power by hook or by crook. It does not matter which religion one upholds, it does not matter which religion one kills, it does not matter which frontiers one breaks and which ones one defeats – politicians are not interested in it. They are very selfish and conscious only of getting control of power. They can prove anything, they can say and write anything, and the history you read today is written by these people.

This is how the culture of yoga was destroyed little by little in every country because power went into the hands of the people who were not virtuous, but who became great heroes by killing people and waging wars. This is the way history was influenced by people.

– 19 October 1981, Munger

The Atma

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Do you agree that western psychology knows nothing of the atma and has neglected it?

I do not agree completely with you. Western psychology has not yet perfected wisdom, science is always growing, that of the psychology of the self, and of yoga. It has arrived at a point, but that does not mean that it has terminated its search. The search will continue. If it is a religious search, you can use incense and books and all that. There is research where there are no books and no candles. In modern psychology, there will be brilliant scholars in the future, as there have been in the past like Freud, Jung and others.

In yoga you need to understand the laws of the mind relative to atman, and that atman is relative to jivatman and jivatman again to paramatman. I am not talking about God; I am talking about *Paramatman*, the cosmic self, the cosmic entity or cosmic unity. We do not see it, but there has to be something like that. It cannot just be floating matter in a womb of milk.

There has to be some sort of systematic link between the individual and everything else. Apart from that, the nature of atman is pure, imperishable, indestructible, homogenous, it is not involved, it is just a witnessing consciousness. Then if atman is like that, how has it come to be bound by circumstances? Why do we feel so unhappy? Why do we suffer if there is birth and death? If the atman is not allegorical in philosophy, why does it happen? You have to discover and search to understand how this immortal self dies or appears? How can you say that it is dying?

There has to be another force somewhere in the universe. This must be creating a hallucination, as an experience, or an idea of birth and death, pain and distress, happiness and 'mental problems', as psychology says. If I am free from



disease, death and the three gunas of prakriti, why do I get this neurosis and psychosis? Where do they come from? Do they come from matter? Then what is the relationship of matter with the atman? Where does it get mixed up? And where does it get separated?

Psychology will discover more areas of the mind. That will be the relationship between East and West. The East also has to understand that it cannot neglect matter because there is nothing but matter in the whole cosmos. Both matter and the Self are neglected. The East has neglected the study of matter and nature, and the West has neglected the study of the self and the transcendental. That is why meditations have to come into both eastern and western systems, their philosophical systems and psychology.

– 4 April 1986, Munger

Yoga Culture

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In 1950, I visited South India with my Guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati. That was 32 years ago. Then between 1956 and 1963, I visited the South a second time as a *parivrajaka bhikshu*, a wandering mendicant, but in 1950 I had come as a secretary to Swami Sivananda.

The South has always inspired me very much for many reasons. When we come from the North to the South, we see the immense wealth of temples in this part of India, and we can never forget it. However, more important for me is that my Guru was from Pattamadai, situated on the banks of the Tamprapani river, in the district of Tirunelveli. My *parampara*, tradition, begins from the South.

Besides, we belong to the Dashnami sampradaya of Adi Shankaracharya. Every sannyasin has a *parampara*, and my Guru's *parampara* and mine begins from Sringeri. So I have deep links with South India in general, and Tamil Nadu in particular.

When I left my home and wandered in search of a place where I could live as I wanted, I finally came to Rishikesh and discovered my guru in Swami Sivananda. I lived with him for twelve years, which according to shastra and *parampara* is the period that you must live with the guru. During this period, I was exposed to the way of thinking, the language, culture, art, literature and architecture of the South. I tell people, "Look here, I have an affinity with the South because my guru, my *parampara* are from the South. The philosophy I represent is Advaita Vedanta. I do not represent yoga; I represent Advaita Vedanta."

Adi Shankara, the exponent of Advaita-Vedanta philosophy, also came from the South. Not only Adi Shankaracharya but also great acharyas of other systems like Vishishtadvaita and



Shuddhadivaita hailed from the South and their philosophy ultimately enriched not only the heritage of Bharat, but also greatly influenced the philosophy of other countries. The Sufis of Islam were greatly influenced by Kevaladvaita Vedanta. I am just trying to introduce who I am and what I represent.

I teach yoga, no doubt, because today people are not in a position to experience *advaita anubhuti*, *aparoksha anubhuti*, direct experience. One must have a tool. The tool which we have today is not healthy, it is sick. The *chitta*, the mind, through which we understand, is full of *doshas*, *avarnamala* and *vikshepa*, humours, veils of impurities and distractions, the three faults of the mind. Even though the Advaita philosophy holds good for all times and for everybody, yet as a *sadhaka*, an aspirant, you must practise yoga. It is not enough if you say, *Brahma satyam jaganmithya jeevo brahmaiva naparaha* – Brahma is real, the world is an illusion, jiva is Brahma itself and not different, and meditate only on that.

There is a story. Brahma initiated Indra and Virochana with the statement *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That. When both shishyas went back, Indra began to doubt, ‘Guruji said that you are that eternal atman and that I am Brahman, the Supreme Self, but how can this be? This body is mortal; it is not eternal. These indriyas have their own limitations, they cannot be Brahman. This mind is full of *vikshepa*, *avarna* and *mala*, so it cannot be Brahman. This naked form is an apparition; it cannot be Brahman. Then who is Brahman?’ He started thinking, and ultimately he entered the state of *nididhyasana samadhi*, a profound state of continuous meditation on Upanishadic statements.

Virochana also repeated *Aham Brahmasmi*, and while washing his face in a pond, he saw his big moustache and said, ‘I am Brahman. This is Brahman’s moustache, his biceps, this is Brahman’s curly hair and chest’. He attributed the Supreme Self to the body. Indra and Virochana did not have the same type of *antahkarana*, mind, and as a result of different minds, they had different concepts of the truth.

Yoga is not my *sampradaya*, community. In India, it is the *sampradaya* of the Navanathas, like Gorakhnath, Champanath, Matsyendranath, Pancharinath, who were the propagators of the hatha yoga system. Rishi Kapila, the son of Devahuti, was the propounder of the Samkhya system. Yoga, Samkhya, Tantra, Vedanta, Bhakti marga had different acharyas. Shandilya and Narada were the propagators of the bhakti yoga system. We have the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* of Narada and the *Shandilya Bhakti Sutra*, *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, *Uttarmimansa Sutras* of Jamini, and the *Brahma Sutras* by Vasudeva. You may be the followers of Srimat Ramanuj, Adi Shankaracharya, Madhavacharya, Jamunacharya, Buddha or Mahavira, that is your parampara but it is the truth which you have to realize.

Shankara said that there is no duality, no separate existence of jiva and Brahman. The individual soul and cosmic soul are not two, but one and the same. Srimat Ramanuj said clearly that the jiva is immortal, but it is an *amsha*, a part of Ishwara. The jiva is not Ishwara and cannot become Ishwara. The Upanishads say that the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Now this is the truth which every *sampradaya* has to accept.

If you want to know the relationship between jiva and Brahman, you have to understand for yourself what that could be. The instrument through which you think, the power of concentration, reflection and meditation, should be enlarged. You need an intuitive, precise, calculating mind in your day-to-day business affairs, a sharp brain to get through your studies and examinations. In the same way, for *samyama*, total understanding of the subject, and *nididhyasana*, profound, deep meditation, you need a higher quality of mind. You obtain that higher quality of mind through yoga.

I have come to Coimbatore solely for that purpose - not to teach or preach dharma or religion, but to talk about yoga which will help everybody to maintain health, experience peace and the philosophical truths within themselves. Then you will not make a mistake as Virochana did, but know for yourself what is the truth.

Yoga has become a world culture. I am not saying a world religion, and I hope it does not become a religion. Yoga has helped everybody and it has been accepted by everybody – scientists, doctors, film stars, sportsmen, students, leaders, businessmen, shopkeepers, directors, agnostics, *astika* or believers, *nastika* or non-believers, sannnyasins, hedonists – for all people, yoga has become a way to improve the quality of life. With this yoga we hope that the world will come closer together and that religious and political differences will decrease.

In Coimbatore, people should try their level best to inspire every section of society to practise yoga. Today, India does not need yoga that much. You have fresh air, a relaxed way of living and your own connection with your parampara. However, India is entering a new era of technological modern life, and in another fifty or one hundred years, you will find that if our nation and our people do not revive the culture of yoga, they will follow the same fate and undergo the same psychological and spiritual crisis that some of the affluent countries are facing today.

There are many scholars who have said that as this technological civilization spreads, there will be new types of diseases which cannot be cured unless you have a new approach. A time is going to come when medical science is not going to be able to help you very much. When diseases are born from stress, conflict and psychosomatic factors, medical science can only give a little relief, it cannot completely cure you. I believe that all people will realize this not for themselves, but the coming generation is going to face tensions. If we do not leave any legacy or heritage for the next generation, we do not know what will be their fate. Many of you might know about what is happening in the affluent countries, and those who do not should know what crisis they are heading towards. My visit to Coimbatore should be the beginning of a movement, and the purpose of that movement is to revive yoga as the culture of tomorrow.

– 29 January 1982, Rama Temple, Ramnagar, Coimbatore

Three Ways

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The most important thing is the mind. When you stop the mind, you stop the prana and that is technique number one. When you stop your prana, you stop your mind; that is technique number two. Technique three is when you stop your emotion, you control prana and mind both. These are the three ways: raja yoga, hatha yoga and bhakti yoga.

In bhakti yoga, you control your emotions and direct them to the higher self. Thereby the mind and prana are controlled. In raja yoga, by yama and niyamas, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana, you control the influence of your mind and consciousness and thereby you control the prana. In hatha yoga, you practise pranayama, kumbhaka, moola bandha, jalandhara bandha and uddiyana bandha, and thereby you control the prana. By controlling the prana automatically the mind is also suspended. In my opinion, not one but all three ways must be taken up because only one way is never an efficient way.

Education for cultivation of awareness as an important factor of raising environmental consciousness (Extracts)

Harisios P. Ganatsios (Sannyasi Nityabodh), Anastasia F. Filippou (Sannyasi Mukti Dhara), Sofia Mpekiri and Kate Evelyn Danahy

We cannot overcome our limitations and problems on the same level of thought which created them. Our minds have to be transformed.

– Albert Einstein

Introduction

The relationship between people and the environment has in recent years become the centre of interdisciplinary and multicultural discussion. While this relationship is in itself a complicated issue, the global state of crisis – economic, environmental, health – that we are facing, puts particular strain on state and educational institutions to develop better methods of environmental education.

Very few evaluations with a broad enough scope have been made on the success of integration of environmental education (E.E.) in higher education. A recent report on the first evaluation done on all higher education institutions in Sweden (the first country-wide evaluation) about environmental education integration concluded that “lack of content, didactic and pedagogic competence among teachers is a major challenge at the higher education institutions” (Finnveden et al., 2020). Another recent study amongst eight European universities

in seven European Union countries also found that students' interest in sustainable food development (an important facet of sustainability and environmental education) had very strong associations with the teaching of competencies for making judgements and justifying decisions and innovation and creativity (Migliorini et al., 2020).

Traditional approaches in E.E. have focused on providing a plethora of information regarding how the environment functions, the articulation of environmentally friendly practices and the multitude of challenges we face as a species if we fail to alter our lifestyle, individually and as a whole, by adopting these practices. In our research, we identified these key interrelated barriers to the effectiveness of E.E. as it is largely employed over the world:

- flood of information and inadequate cultivation of discrimination and understanding
- along with the fragmentation of science and poor communication between scientific fields
- competitive educational system, stemming from the competitive nature of our social system
- mental and physical isolation from nature
- perpetuation of the crisis, leading people to become overwhelmed and develop apathy.

The aim of this research

The *aim* of this research is to illustrate the importance of cultivating awareness in raising environmental consciousness and promote a holistic environmental education as integral part of our lives. The main goal of this proposed educational paradigm is to facilitate amongst students, a cooperative spirit and respect for nature through understanding the unified field that permeates all.

Students of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment (F&NE) of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, serve as the target group of this study. Understanding sustainability is the major educational goal in the School of F&NE.

The aim of this paper is to contribute in the development of such an educational framework in a higher education setting that can serve as a paradigm for educators and institutions seeking to increase environmental awareness in their students and provide them with the skills they need to change their behaviour towards the natural and social environment. We began by identifying possible gaps in the E.E. programs we have observed so far, which are listed below:

- a) lack of environmental awareness
- b) lack of social skills necessary for cooperation and group action
- c) inadequate or absent education on matters of ethics.

In order to define an educational program that addresses these issues, we first had to clearly define the concept of environmental awareness. To this end we assembled a theoretical background on awareness.

Awareness in yogic literature

A research on awareness is incomplete without seeking guidance from the science of awareness cultivation. Awareness leads to understanding, one of the most precious human qualities, and therefore to the union of thoughts, feelings and actions (Niranjanananda, 2018). Evolution of awareness underpins all stages of understanding, which, according to the science of yoga are: detachment, discrimination, acceptance, control of negative expressions and finally understanding. Through this evolution, awareness expands and consciousness rises.

Unless we manage the mind at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels we cannot solve environmental problems, and for that there ought to be a science. Science is a sequential process of mental understanding, based on observation and analysis, today still in its infancy. Yoga on the other hand, the name for 'unity', is a sequential process of experiencing the positivity within oneself, at any rate an old science. Why not harness its experience? (Niranjanananda, 2016, 2015).

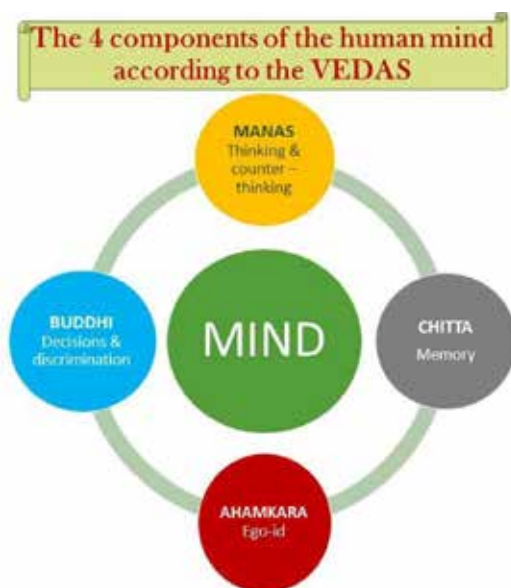
The yogic lifestyle is based upon the precepts of practice, awareness, attitude, and action. Awareness is the torchlight of consciousness, the ability to live in the present, to witness and understand ourselves (including detachment and discrimination) and the environment, conditions, and events that influence us. Attitude involves the ability to develop a positive and creative outlook by converting everything negative into its opposite and encourage others to do the same. Action entails an understanding of how we act, think and interact in the world, through discrimination between just and unjust, right and wrong, appropriate from inappropriate, universal and limited. When awareness grows, man's thoughts, concepts and values also change (Satyananda, 2018). Through awareness, an understanding of this process and its outcome begins to develop and in the end gain control over our own inner expressions, experiences, reactions and our circumstances. Awareness is in fact a natural process of the mind, the faculty by which the mind sees everything and can focus on anything.

Satyananda (republished in 2017) describes four tools of awareness according to Vedanta (see Figure 1, page 24):

1. thinking and counter - thinking
2. decisions and discrimination
3. remembering
4. ego or id.

These tools employed, allow us to perceive the whole picture, instead of the few pieces of the puzzle that are represented by various scientific disciplines. Knowledge comes from outside, while awareness is an inner ability. It means 'to know what I know' but through it we can evolve much further. The mind is made of the thinking, the thinker and the thought, but yoga identifies a fourth component: the seer of it all, the part of ourselves who is constantly observing. The emotional state is an important event that is associated with the learning process. This implies that neural circuits that generate certain emotional states become associated with the neural circuits that

Figure 1: The human mind according to the Vedas



generate thought processes like decision making, perception, communication, and movement production. To be aware, to 'know what we know', the 'seer' cannot ignore the emotional state.

For this reason, emotions have the ability to shape the brain in a way that influences decisions, world perceptions, communication, etc. By focusing all our attention to this, education can train the brain to act (through activation of evolved brain areas) and not react (triggered by fear or anger of amygdala and other less evolved parts); and awareness is the link to this higher intellect. Awareness frees us from falling victim of the impulsive behaviour of the mind (Immink, 2007). Concentration and the ability to learn improves, the software of mind based upon the hardware of the brain transforms and evolves. Thoughts, words and actions become aligned. Awareness over time and through training and application illuminates and mollifies conflicts within ourselves and our relationship with nature.

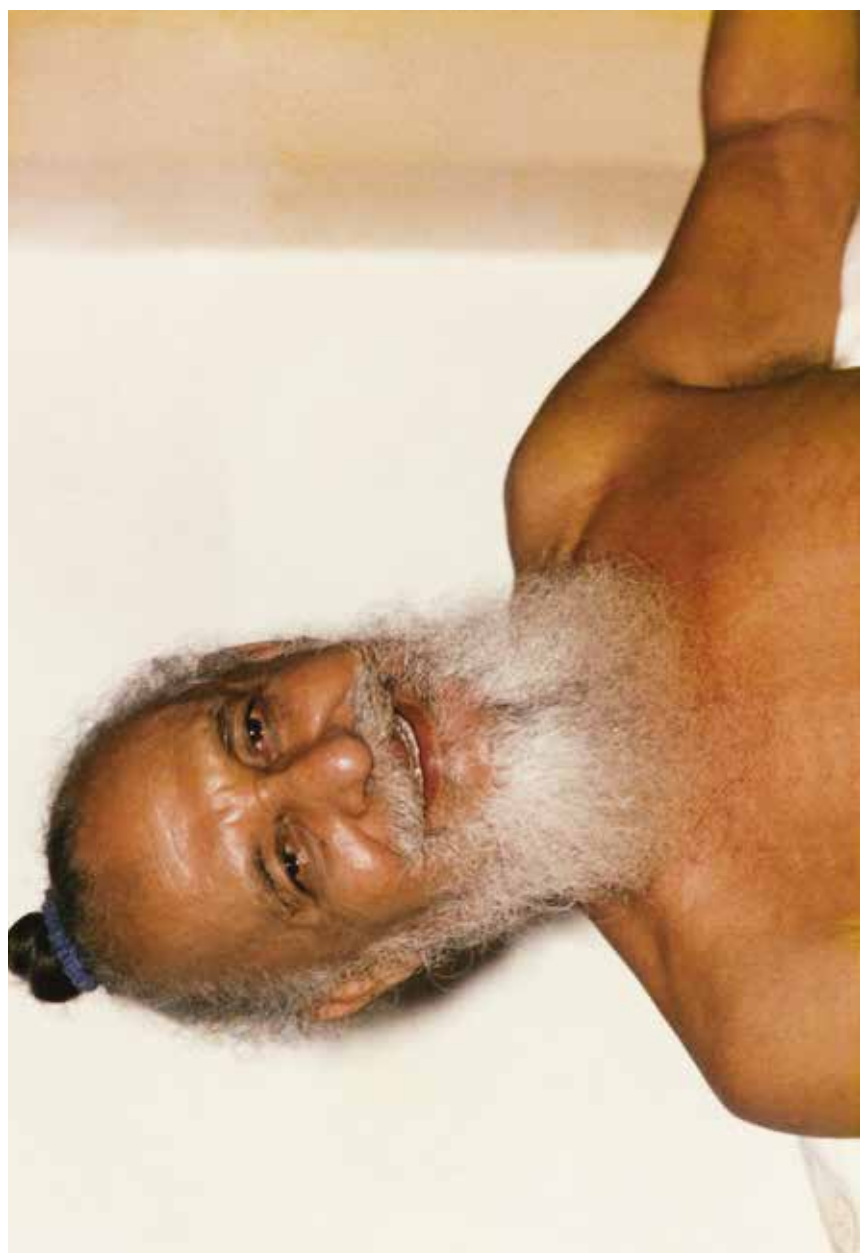
The link made in yogic principles on awareness and emotion is also reflective in modern findings of neuroscience. Immink (2007) mentions that since the brain has no sensory system for itself, thoughts can only be detected by observing them with another thought. Furthermore, Newberg and Waldman (2009) conclude that this very act of self-observing, conducted in the frontal lobes, reroutes brain activity from the limbic system – the older, reactionary part of the brain, where anger and pain are generated – back to the more recently evolved frontal lobe, which is responsible for higher functions like care, compassion and deeper understanding (i.e., awareness). Activation is related to increased flow of bioelectrical energy through the nervous system. Energy flows where attention goes.

So, this lack of training the brain on cultivating awareness reduces the effectiveness of E.E. and has been largely ignored so far.

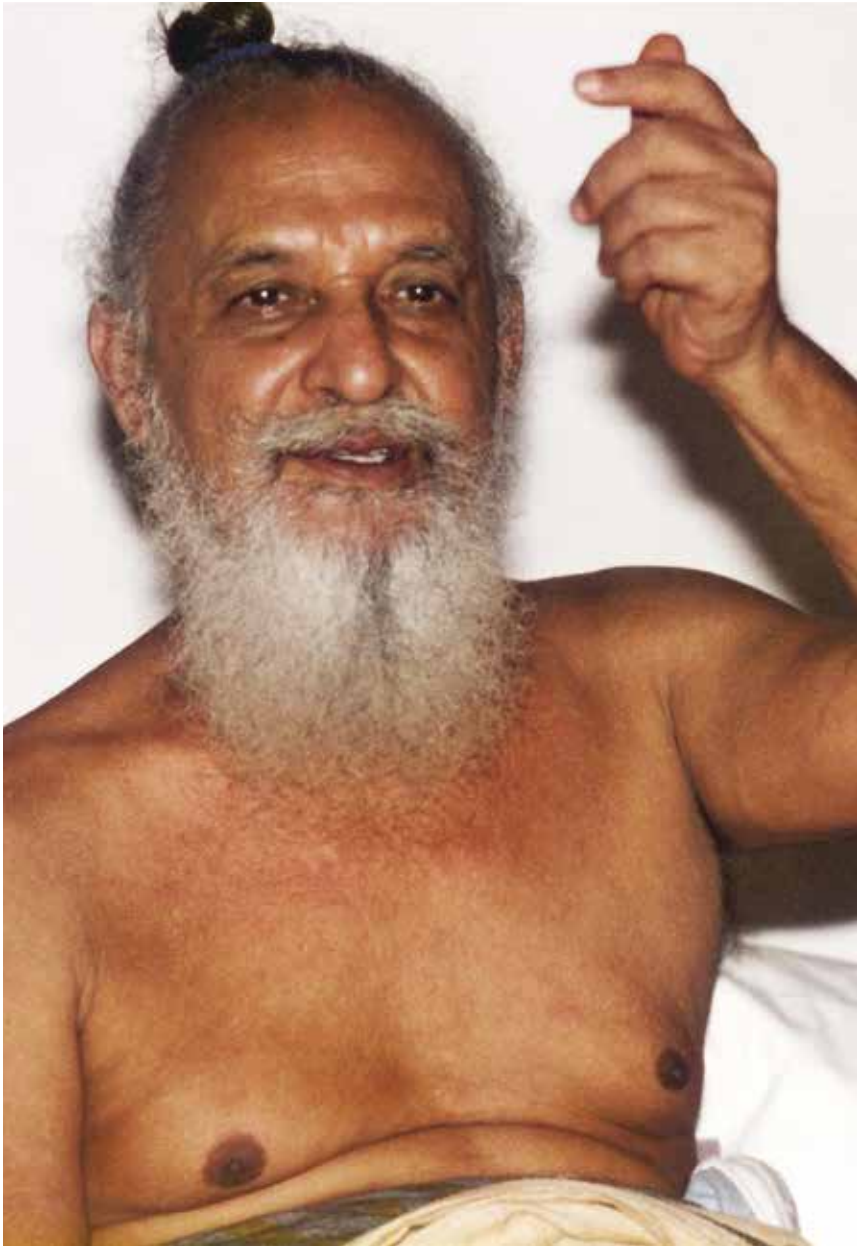
SWAN method

SWAN is a method created by Niranjanananda (1999). It is an acronym that stands for strengths (positive personality traits, skills, talents), weaknesses (qualities that prevent positivity from manifesting itself), ambitions (drive, motivation aspiration) and needs (basic life requirements like water, shelter, satisfaction, purpose, balance with nature) (Ratnashakti, 2018). During their field exercise, each student was, as a first step, asked to formulate their personal SWAN and then the SWAN of the natural environment (Figure 2). As foresters-environmentalists it is vitally important first to know the strengths of ecosystems relative to the fulfilment of our essential needs and the weaknesses, including threats and limitations to their successful management. The second step is identifying the ambitions and needs and differentiating between them as well as between ‘sustainable’ and non-sustainable ambitions. These ambitions and needs ideally, ‘naturally’, ‘normally’ are aligned.









To develop awareness of what one is doing, one needs to identify one's weaknesses, what triggers negativity within and what upsets one's balance, before they can be worked on. Discovering our basic needs, what is lacking in a situation to make life more harmonious, becomes a priority: first comes recognition and then self-transformation. This approach requires relaxation, self-reflection and the willpower to change. Awareness implies that one knows what has to change, how to proceed, and use past experiences to transform a particular condition or situation. Willpower means maintaining conviction, adhering to the right and proper context. These components help one evolve their values and qualities (Niranjanananda, 2018, 2013a).

So alongside the external goal of sustainable management of natural ecosystems, we need an internal goal of sustainable team management to promote cooperation, altruism and ethical behaviour in general, for which the Pratipaksha Bhavana method was introduced.

Figure 2: The SWAN method



Pratipaksha Bhavana method

Pratipaksha Bhavana is a practice outlined in the ancient *Yoga Sutras* that means anything negative should be converted into something positive (pratipaksha means ‘opposite’ and bhavana means ‘cultivation’ in Sanskrit) (Sivananda, 1946). It suggests that students focus on developing strengths, such as empathy – the capacity to experience the feelings of others – instead of fighting problems, such as aggression and poor emotion regulation. This method can be applied in the way we approach the environment (Figure 3). Participation, cooperation, and building capacity of all the stakeholders are the factors needed for a successful environmental sustainable development (Glavič, 2020).

Figure 3: The Pratipaksha Bhavana method



This educational tool strengthens the willpower to let go of negative and depressive states which hampers students' happiness and creativity, and helps build the courage and strength to replace them with positive, happy memories, ideas and visions, neutralising the mind's reaction. So this method is not about removing the negative, but calmly observing without fighting it, and cultivating and focusing on the positive (Niranjananda, 2018, 2013b).

As the third step of SWAN method, Pratipaksha Bhavana was introduced to transform weaknesses into strengths

and barriers into opportunities. Greed, a significant factor in environmental degradation, can be reduced through contentment and human connection, which will prove crucial in the students' future as managers, scientists, cooperators in groups and ultimately for the ecosystems.

Repetition is essential to reprogramming. Cells which are stimulated together interconnect (law of Hebb's). By replacing negative thoughts and emotions with positive ones, the negative flow of thoughts and emotions halts and reprogramming begins, limiting the effect of negativity on the person. There is no limit to the therapeutic and creative power of the human mind. If we accept this, a mental state of unhindered imagination starts changing the mind in order to establish new ideas. In the Pratipaksha Bhavana method the steps towards developing understanding not through consumption of information but through transforming it into attitude and action, according to Sivamurti (2013), are:

1. Gaining awareness of negative emotions and thoughts and creating an environment where students can observe them. Simply becoming aware is enough for them to start transforming a negative situation.
2. Accepting that negative patterns of thinking - feeling - reacting need change.
3. Realising such thoughts, emotions, behaviours and reactions disturb their peace of mind and taking responsibility for them.
4. Understanding those mental experiences can be replaced with positive ones.
5. Looking for ways and strategies to replace them with an opposite thought, emotion, behaviour, reaction.

An effort was made to apply (introduced to the students in brief) these steps to Forestry students, despite the limited available time, space and provisions.

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The Story of Nachiketa

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This mind is very limited. Its perceptions are erroneous and incomplete. Therefore, one should try to develop a higher type of consciousness, which does not depend on the senses, but on experience.

There is a story from the *Kathopanishad* which explains this. Nachiketa was the name of a young boy. He had some sort of difference with his father and his father said, 'I give you unto death.' So it is said that Nachiketa transcended this mortal consciousness and went to *Yamaloka*, the land of *Yamaraj*, the lord of death. He stayed there for three days and three nights, after which Yamaraj appeared. As Nachiketa had been waiting for him for three days and three nights Yamaraj gave him three boons.

One of the boons Nachiketa asked for was, 'Does the consciousness survive after death?' to which Lord Yama said, 'Don't ask that question because this question will not be revealed even to the great people.' However, Nachiketa insisted. Finally, Lord Yama had to give him the knowledge about eternity, infinity and the survival of consciousness after the death of the body.

The details of this actually is nothing significant. It talks about the experiences of that young man. It is not necessary to say or prove that Nachiketa went to heaven, because there is no such heaven at all. There is no planet or universe where Yamaraj lives. However, at the same time Nachiketa did go somewhere else.

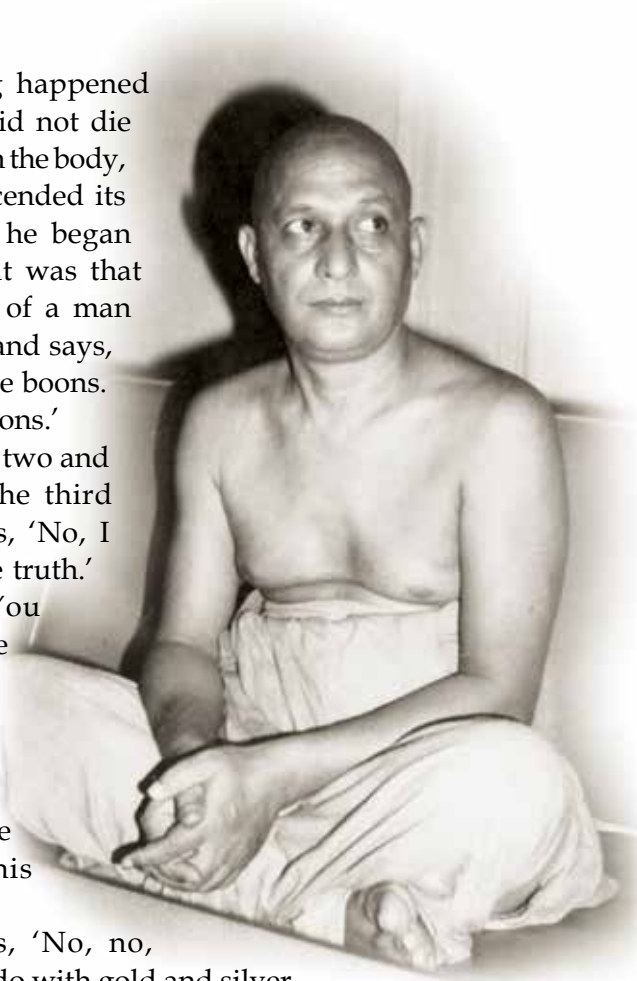
Death means two things, one the death of the body and secondly death also is when one has departed from the mind, from this state of consciousness, but not from the body. It happens in meditation. One does not depart from the body but departs from a particular mental state.

The same thing happened to Nachiketa. He did not die physically. He was in the body, but his mind transcended its consciousness and he began to experience. What was that experience? It was of a man who comes to him and says, 'I will give you three boons. Ask me for three boons.'

He asks for one, two and three boons. For the third boon the man says, 'No, I will not tell you the truth.' Nachiketa says, 'You have to tell me the truth'. Yamaraj says, 'My boy, I will give you gold and silver and anything that you ask for, please do not ask me this question.'

Nachiketa says, 'No, no, what am I going to do with gold and silver, damsels, palaces, kingdoms and horses? Please just tell me this. Some say that the soul survives and some say that the soul does not survive. Since you are the lord of death, you come here and go back to the manifest world, hence you should know it.' All these things happen within your own self.

Please read *Markandeya Purana* and you will know how a young boy Markandeya entered into the stem of a lotus in order to attain immortality. He remained for many thousands of years in that stem. That is how the story goes. These events are not of our current times, not even one thousand years of this calendar, but many thousands of years ago.



It is an interesting story relating to yoga. Of course, the actors are exhilarated, and it must be that way, because exhilaration is one of the beauties of poetry. He entered into the stem of a lotus leaf remained there for many ages. Death could not touch him there. He remained immortal.

When I say ages, I do not mean this time. I mean the time of that dimension, not the time here. It might have been only one year here, or it might have been fifty thousand years. I do not know because time in this dimension and time in that dimension are not the same. It is not written only in the Vedas; even modern scientists talk about it. Time is relative and as one goes further into space or away from space, the equation of time changes.

This has been the main problem for us in India and in order to solve this problem and give a proper answer the scriptures always insist that you must have experience. Scriptural knowledge or book learning from the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas is not enough. One has to have that experience and this experience can sometimes continue for days together.

Swami Muktananda, who is no more now, from Ganeshpuri, a disciple of Swami Nityananda, has written a book, *Chitshaktivilas*, the Dance of the Power of Consciousness. It is his autobiography. He writes that when he entered into his own self, he entered into a new universe. He said, 'I entered into myself and I saw a different universe and the universe in which I lived a short while ago did not exist there. Nothing existed there.' 'Nothing' denotes that the place was beautiful, there was no pain, there was just peace and that state remained with him for eleven days as he went on seeing it.

In that state, I sit here, but I remain within myself. I leave my touch, my relationship, my association with your time and space. When I enter inside, I enter into a new world. Thereafter, I have no attachment and am not sorry for having left all these things behind.

– 5 December 1985, Munger

Awakening

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In hatha yoga particularly, we talk about the nadis, the flow. The Sanskrit word *nadi* means flow, like the flow of the river or a flow of air, a breeze – anything that flows. Blood and energy can also be a flow. The word flow means nadis and these nadis are distributed throughout the body. It is these nadis we talk about in acupuncture. In hatha yoga, we talk about the nadis which are responsible for the supply of life energy and mental energy throughout the body.

This mental energy is definitely an energy force, and pranic energy is life. They work together. If there is no prana there will be no sense knowledge. If there is no life in you, you cannot see flowers, you cannot hear music. If you have no mental energy, you will be like a dunce, just living, not experiencing a flower, not experiencing sound, not experiencing a feeling – nothing. Somehow they have to work together, and when there is some difficulty in working together, diseases take place.

In philosophy, they say that the mind operates through the *jnanendriyas* and the sense organs and the pranas operate through *karmendriyas*, organs of action, like the feet and hands, speech. These nadis are stretched throughout the body but in hatha yoga, particularly through kundalini yoga, they have come to the conclusion that within the framework of the spine there are very subtle flows. When we say 'subtle', it means we cannot see it through the eyes. We have to use very sophisticated, sensitive instruments, to register the flow of force passing between the higher centre, the brain, and the lower centre, which is near the reproductive system. There is a relationship between these.

There are very subtle nerves within the framework of the spine. Out of those three are spoken of – ida, pingala and sushumna. The whole of kundalini yoga, and all of hatha

yoga is based on these three. These three nadis represent three forces. Two forces are material and one is spiritual. The life forces relate to external life, daily experiences, earth, and the eternal, perceptible cosmos. The spiritual force is called sushumna and the purpose of all yogas, whether it is bhakti, jnana, raja, hatha or karma yoga, is to awaken that third force.

You have experiences when there is awakening in sushumna and in order to awaken this sushumna nadi, in order to awaken this central nervous system, this central nadi, you have to plug both the others. You have to plug the pranic and mental force. Pranic force is power. Mental force is concentration. So by concentration, you plug all the mental experiences of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, feeling, or hunger. You plug them for some time. For half an hour, just stop, no feeling, just the pranic flow – that is pranayama. So when you plug your mind and your life and suspend it for some time, then it begins to show some sort of suffocation. I won't give you the causes individually, because medically I do not know, but the sushumna nadi, that particular dormant nadi, becomes suffused and as a result of that, the awakening takes place.

Once it begins to awaken, you have experiences and those experiences are sometimes very good and very soothing and very pleasant, but they are very awful sometimes, they are very terrible. Just total disorientation can take place.

The same practices can lead you to this. You plug the mind: stop. You plug your breath, and sushumna begins to awaken. Then you are in the experiences. Then you see fire, like the French scientist, Blaise Pascal, who saw fire for two or three hours. One evening he was studying and suddenly he found fire in front of him. He saw it! For two hours the fire remained there and then it disappeared. After the fire disappeared he began to cry. He said, 'My God, why have you left me?'

Many saints have these experiences like Saint Teresa of Avila. She was a great kundalini yogini. She suffered and suffered because I think she did not get proper guidance. Saint



John of the Cross went through the same thing. He did not get guidance. Like that many yogis have had difficult experiences.

It depends in my opinion on the purity of mind. There is some thought, there is some reason in the mind, there is some reason in one's life, which can be the basis of a kundalini awakening that is an unpleasant, inconvenient and terrible experience. Even if the same event of awakening of sushumna takes place – your sushumna may awaken and her sushumna may awaken, but she may have convenient and pleasant experiences whereas you may have terrible nightmares. Why? Does it mean that your total existence is affecting the process

of experience? Your total existence means the totality of your experiences, the totality of your ambitions, totality of your passions, totality of your inherited karmas from your father and mother? This is molecular genetics.

Gurus have said, 'It is safer for a kundalini yogi to first purify the different elements of life – maybe food, maybe sleep, maybe sex, maybe work, maybe money, maybe attachment, detachment.' You have to do some sort of corrections somewhere. Not just in one place, you have to correct yourself in different places. Not to the extent that you become a recluse, but to some extent so everything becomes very systematic. Food, drink, duty and you have to be disciplined, then you won't have these nightmares. There are some people, who are born with a very sensitive sushumna, who get some awakening at a very early age; others have to do their practice, and the central practice is pranayama. The most important practice, maybe the only one practice is pranayama.

Breathing in and breathing out is not pranayama; stopping the breath is pranayama. In order to suspend the breath, you have to take in and take out. Stopping the breath is not that simple, because when you stop the breath, you are creating a very great change in your heart, your lungs, your oxygen system, and more particularly in your brain. You are influencing the brain and the nervous system. You are also influencing the metabolic, catabolic and other processes in the body. You must know how much pranayama you should do according to your limited karma or limited personality.

I think practically everybody should do it and that is why in India pranayama practices were ordained at the age of seven. When you start pranayama at an early age you go slowly, very gradually, like a clock, so that by the age of thirty, thirty-four, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five you can go into higher and deeper practices of pranayama where you can hold your breath and do all the bandhas. Experiences will come. You must take time.

– 4 April 1986, Munger

Manifest and Unmanifest

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



A part of the universe is finite. This is said in the *Rig Veda*. A part of the universe, cosmos or *srishti* is a part of what is created and is manifest. The whole universe is not manifest. This is the conclusion of the Vedas and this is going to be the conclusion of science, too. You will see.

One form of creation is a *vyakta*, gross in outlook, or active and the other aspect of creation is *avyakta*, or indirect. One part of the universe is manifest and the rest, I am not saying, other. I am using the word rest, the rest of the universe is unmanifest.

That particular part of the universe that is manifest is finite; it is not infinite. The visible universe, or the universe which

has come into manifestation, which has come into light, is finite. It has a beginning, a centre, an end and it is limited by time and space, and is not beyond them. Beyond that the rest of the universe is invisible, unmanifest. It is shrouded in utter darkness. But who has known it?

That is the question in the *Rig Veda*. How do you know? As far as observing the finite universe is concerned, there are astrologers, astronomers, scientists, observers in the past and present doing it. There were scientists in Italy and Europe. In India we have great scientists and mathematicians like Aryabhata and Varahmihir. They counted the stars for their whole lifetime and wanted to make a catalogue of heaven. But no one, as yet, has been able to map out the unmanifest dimension of the universe.

How is the law of karma understood by the higher consciousness?

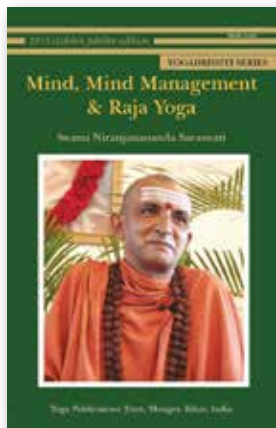
Good acts reap good results and evil acts, or bad acts reap bad results. How does one know it? Do you have any proof? How do you know that good acts reap good fruits? How have you come to this conclusion? Once one does an act, the act enters into an invisible area, an invisible domain, and after some time one sees the result. How does one connect the act with the result? For that one needs a special mind to observe.

When one is able to awaken the kundalini, there is the emergence of another kind of consciousness and that consciousness is not barred by time and space. It can function in any dimension, the empirical dimension and also the transcendental dimension. That is called intuition. That is called *prajna, jnana*, enlightenment. That state has to be arrived at and that is not difficult. It can happen sometimes on its own. Many people develop this transcendental consciousness or this limitless consciousness without doing anything.

– 5 December 1985, Munger

My views on *Mind, Mind Management & Raja Yoga*

Dr Rachna Sharma



This is not the sort of book you will read from cover to cover in a short span of time. This book requires the reader to take small bites and chew slowly to digest the information. If you want to approach yoga with the sole focus on the exercise and stretching component, this book might be an overkill. Although, a reader could still get plenty of use out of the yoga-sana section if that were the case.

Every time I open the book, I am forced to reflect on my life and how I live it. How do I navigate this world and think about things? What can I do better to make the most of my life and to be more of use to others? This book provided me with the personal enrichment in my yoga practice that I was looking for, from the inside out.

This book has the potential to transform you if you allow it to. And so am I. It gets five out of five stars from me. I will treasure this book until it falls apart, and when that happens, I will go out and replace it right away.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

About the Mind

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga as a subject is of great importance. Yoga is called *parinama*, a result or consequence. In the yoga shastras, the example of cotton, thread and cloth has been used to illustrate this concept. Thread is the result of cotton, cotton is the result of the cotton plant, and the cotton plant is the result of a seed. Everything in creation is the result of something or the other. Body, mind, matter – everything is *parinama*. Curd is made out of milk, butter out of curd, and ghee out of butter. Like this, everything in this world is a *parinama*. It is important to know what is not a *parinama*.

Let us think about the mind, intellect or *chitta*. All three are *parinama*. When your mind turns from *sankalpa*, firm resolve, to *vikalpa*, confusion between choices, it is also *parinama*. This is not the reason, rather it is the result or *parinama*. Whenever you experience anger, passion or perversion of the mind, it is a result and not the reason. You have to keep this in mind without fail. Even though these things are the result of something, they can be changed. Like our body is a *parinama*, yet it keeps changing. When it is twenty years old, it is called *yuvavastha*, youth; when it is forty, it is called *proudhavastha*, middle age; when it is eighty, it is called *vriddhavastha*, old, and after that it dies. That means there is a change.

Whether you like it or not, there will be definitely a change in your mind. In a hundred, a thousand years or more, there will definitely be a change. What we call the mind is not only an individual mind. This mind is a part of the universal mind. You also have to keep this in mind so that there is no mistake.

In this room you see so many bulbs, tube lights and this microphone in front of me. The electricity which flows through all these is one and the same, it is not different. In the same way, when you see different animals or people, they do not

have different minds. It is the circuit of the universal mind in all of them. It appears that your mind is different to my mind, but in reality that is not so. It appears like that according to your need, your karma, your time and according to your desire and ambition. The mind is not different, it is one channel, one energy, only the connection is different.

Energy is nature. This energy is connected to this fan and microphone. I am telling you that your mind and my mind are not different but they are one. Tendencies, impressions, senses are different, even the outlook which we have inherited from our parents is different from birth to birth in the cycle of time. A hundred years ago, man thought he would be happy if he had an elephant. Nowadays, man may be happy even with an orange, so even the tendencies in man change according to time and place. Thirty years ago man was satisfied by becoming an officer, now he wants to be an engineer. Twenty years later man may think of becoming a sannyasi. According to time and place, these ideas keep changing. One hundred years ago man was proud to possess an elephant. Fifty years ago man wanted a horse. Afterwards, he started thinking of having a palanquin with beautiful designs. In earlier times he preferred a bullock cart, now he wants a car, either a Mercedes Benz or some other make.

Four years ago when I was travelling to Denmark, an incident took place. In the aircraft, in a special VIP section, screened with glass, there was a lady who was about twenty-five or twenty-eight years old. She was good looking and smartly dressed, but her head was clean shaven. I was wondering about this, because nowhere else in the world have I seen the head of a woman shaved, unless she is a Jain muni or a sannyasin. However, this young lady was neither.

A little later there was an announcement in the aircraft: "We are very happy and proud to announce that such and such personalities are here on our flight whom we have the pleasure to introduce . . ." So, I came to know that she was a Hollywood actress. I recalled having heard the name before.



She must have been thinking about how to start a conversation with me. I was also hesitating, but then I decided to break the ice. I started by wishing her a good evening and asked her where she was going, and then we had a long talk. She asked, "How is it that your head is so shiny?" I said, "Yours also is shining." She said, "I apply cream." I spoke to her about biological, psychological and physical energy. Then she said that she shaved her head just for fashion. When most people have long hair and if somebody famous shaves it off, it becomes fashion.

The reason for telling you this is that according to time and place, there is a change in the mind. When mind is concentrated on one single thing, it is called *samastichitta*. You find this

state in animals, birds, plants and other animate beings also. Maharshi Patanjali has said in Samkhya darshan that there are many stages of chitta. According to him, even inanimate matter has chitta. This varies according to the different stages of evolution.

When a youth attains yuvavastha, the condition of his chitta is called *vikshiptavastha*, a state of dissipation. There are five stages of chitta. At *moodhavastha*, an inert stage, the chitta is not active. This was thought to be present in birds and animals, though nowadays scientists have found out that even plants can understand what is happening within other trees and flowers close to them. Many scientists who are closely researching physiology say that one-fourth of plant life is very alert. Suppose you give a garland to an elephant and it puts the garland round your neck, you cannot say that it is moodha, it understands. However, it is kshipta. That is the second category. *Kshipta* means that though there is an understanding for a second, it is not sustained.

Man starts from vikshipta chitta. *Vikshipta* means that the mind does not remain steady on one thing. We also call this vikshipta mind, a fickle mind. The important goal of yoga is to change the mind, to clean and weave chitta into parinama. Just like you take cotton, clean it, take out the seeds, and then you make it into a thread. Like that, you have to take this unsteady mind towards the state of parinama. There are many methods. A drastic method is when you have to curb this mind by hurting it. A simple method prescribed by saints is that you should study your mind. This is known as *manovishleshan*. Modern scientists use this method very often, which is the analysis of the mind. In the classical shastras it is called *swadhyaya*.

Suppose you say your mind is fickle, ask the question, 'Why it is fickle?' You must analyze your mind. While doing so, you should not interfere with it, or try to control it. When you are in the first stages of sadhana, you will definitely think of controlling your mind, but this is not correct. When you do not know your mind properly and when you have not

studied it, there is no point in trying to control it. If you give me wood and all the other necessary instruments and then ask me to make a table, how can I do so? How can I make a table when I do not know how to use the instruments? If you give the same things to a carpenter, he will produce a nice table. Similarly, when you do not know the nature of your mind, there is no point in meddling with it. This is the reason why many sadhakas go mad when they try to control their mind.

When I see famous artists, painters, poets, writers, scientists – all their work is the result or the creation of the mind. The beautiful paintings, attractive buildings, pleasant music, grand statues, who has made all these things? This is all the mind's strength. The mind has got so much creativity. If you do not try to destroy it, if you do not misbehave with it, one day this mind will make you a great poet like Tulsidas or Valmiki, or a yogini like Mirabai, or a great emperor like Ashoka, or a saint like Buddha, Mahavir, or a famous scientist like Einstein or Newton, or a famous revolutionary like Karl Marx. Karl Marx was a very inspiring revolutionary whose literature made people bring down a kingdom and destroy the royal family. That was the kind of brain he had. You can also become a great literary genius like Shakespeare or Tolstoy.

The purpose of saying this to you is that your mind should not get hurt by your attempts to control it while doing yoga. For example, if you are sharpening a pencil and you go on sharpening it until the blade gets blunt, the pencil also is reduced to nil. I feel that on the spiritual path we make the same mistake. Mind is only one thing, not different things. You get angry with your children, you are unhappy with your husband or wife, and your mind is disturbed. Your mind gets angry and you get good or bad thoughts, though mostly bad thoughts. When you get these feelings, you think, 'I have done something wrong'. So you try to curb or control this feeling. You are trying to stifle the very same mind which can make you a great scholar or a rich man. That is not correct. It is very difficult to handle the mind.

Until you know how to handle your mind properly, it is better that you do not touch it. Why? There is only one thing that is responsible for man's salvation and that is the mind, *chitta* or *chetana*, consciousness or awareness. There are many different names, but they mean the same thing. Mind is power and that mind is within us. When an electric wire is inside an insulator, you can measure it in amperes or volts. Not only that, you can also raise or lower its current.

About twenty years ago, a scientist was conducting some experiments on the brain to study what happens inside it. While we are asleep, dreaming, having thoughts or any feelings, simultaneously waves start to appear in the brain. There are four types of waves and among them, the scientists could not understand the purpose of one wave. Each wave has a different velocity. They could not make out anything about this particular kind of wave. Once a scientist was studying someone with an ECG instrument attached to that person. When this person started meditating and the concentration was focused on *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow centre, the voltage inside the brain immediately began to fall and reached that point which this scientist was experimenting upon. This energy should be considered as *shakti*, like an electric current. This current works differently at different times. While meditating, our mind comes to such a position that it changes.

Let us think about this because it is very important to understand, only talking is of no use. In the shastras, the ida nadi is also called chandra nadi. We sometimes also call it the cool nadi. The right nadi is hot. Ida nadi is connected to the left side of the spinal cord. In the spinal cord there are two nadis, on the left side is ida, on the right side is pingala. Each nadi has six distribution centres, *chakras*, known as mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi and ajna. The energy is distributed from these centres to every part of the body, from the bottom to the top. It reaches the brain and then goes down to the soles of the feet. This shakti or mind flows throughout the body. This is energy, you should not think of it

as psychology. Where is the original place of the mind? It has got two points. One is down below and the other is on top.

The mind has got two points. The first is at the tip of the tailbone of the spinal cord, at mooladhara, and the other point is in the brain. These two points should meet each other. Ida and pingala flow between these points and distribute all the energy to your body. Yogis do pranayama and ask you to also practise it. Why? When you do pranayama, you inhale from one nostril and exhale from the other, and then inhale from the same nostril and exhale through the other. This is known as nadi shodhana pranayama. Why is it called so? You have to purify the nadis. *Nadi* is taken from the Sanskrit word *nad* which means current, *nadi* means flow. You have to purify the flow by doing nadi shodhana pranayama. When nadi shodhana is completed then the breath flows in both the nostrils equally. Do not think that it will remain like that throughout the day or for a lifetime. No, it will only flow for half an hour or so, and at that time you should meditate.

When the nadi is impure, you are not able to meditate. When only pingala nadi flows you cannot meditate either, and when only the left nostril is active you will feel sleepy. Then how can you concentrate? When you meditate, you will hear noises and think that God has come to give darshan! When only pingala flows, your mind starts jumping like a monkey. This is pingala's greatness! That is why both the nostrils should flow equally. The purpose of pranayama is to equalize the flow in both nostrils and bring equilibrium between mind and prana.

That is why I was telling you not to misbehave with your mind. Do not thrust any guilt upon it. Study the mind, do pranayama for half an hour or so. After completing pranayama, sit in padmasana or siddhasana, then you can meditate as you like. If you want to meditate like the Jains, Buddhists or Vedantins, do so. You can meditate whichever way you want to and it will take you to the right path.

– 30 January 1982, Jain Association, Coimbatore

A Fine Concept

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Dehabhimana vidyate
Paramatmani yatra yatra manoyati
Tatre tatre samadhyam*

When the ego related to the body and the mind dissolves and you become aware of the paramatman in you, wherever your mind goes, wherever your mind stands, there it dissolves.

What a fine concept it is. When you look at a dirty thing you get into samadhi. When you look at sensual objects, your near and dear ones, at Rama, Sri Krishna or guru, or a beautiful woman you get samadhi. Wherever you fix the mind, you can get into samadhi. You have that much control of the mind, you have that much *samyama*, self-restraint, that you can experience samadhi at any point. *Yatre, yatre manoyate* – Wherever the mind goes, on whichever object the mind is fixed, be it sensual, spiritual, obnoxious, nostalgic, good and bad, it gets you into samadhi.



About God

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

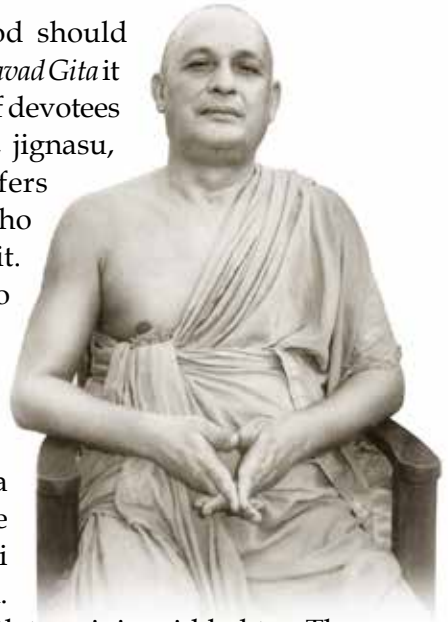
Should we decide for ourselves or leave things up to God?

From time to time, people have been thinking about how to decide things in life. Many depend on God and many go to gurus and accept their decisions. Then there are quite a few who concentrate their minds and take a decision by themselves. There is a fourth group who do not believe that the decision must be from God, guru or their concentrated minds; they just depend on themselves alone. These people have made fantastic progress in history.

Even now, you can divide the whole world into two groups. One group believes in grace and contact with God. They say, 'The heat is due to God. My son is born on account of God's grace. I have got a very good job because of God's grace'. This group of people live entirely by faith. The other group says, 'Oh, there is rain; it is the work of nature but I can do it myself. My child is part of a natural process, but I can do something about it'. They always depend on themselves, no matter if it is to build a city, a factory or do anything. This group dominates almost the whole world.

In Europe there is one group, and the rest of the world is the other group. Most of the builders of those nations do not believe that God does anything. God is there and we do pranam to Him. It is our duty to remember Him but as far as work is concerned, the building of the world, the education of our children, taking any decision, it is up to the individual. We should keep God out of the picture; he should only be a symbol of *bhakti*, devotion, whether he is a guru or God. He should not be the support for our insecurities, inabilities, inefficiencies, and our lack of confidence. You do not get on well with life so you go to a shrine, and three-fourths of the world is like that.

Gradually, believers in God should become *jnani-bhaktas*. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that there are four types of devotees who worship God (7:16): *arta*, *jignasu*, *artharathi* and *jnani*. *Artha* refers to those who are in trouble, who pray to God to get them out of it. *Jignasu* means those who want to know: What is transmigration? What is in the shastras? What is God? They want to know many philosophies. The third type is *artharathi*, if they want a job or children, they do some *anushtana* in a Kali or Devi mandir or at Tirupati Venkatesh. They are also *bhaktas*. The fourth type is *jnani-bhaktas*. These four types of devotee trust in God.



The *Gita* says, “The *arta*, *jignasu* and *artharathi* are all very generous in their devotion to me, but the *jnani* is my soul. The others pray, give their heart to me, believe in me, but so far as the *jnani* is concerned, he is my *atma*.” It is better to be a *jnani-bhaktas*. Leave God for a higher devotion. As far as worldly problems are concerned, one must sit for meditation, concentrate the mind, become one-pointed, develop the qualities of the mind, take decisions and - act.

We only pray when we want something. Why are we like that?

Everything depends on training. I will give you an example. Suppose you have a son, brother, younger daughter or wife, they will at once come to you about their problems because that is how the family structure is in India. In any European country, if the daughter or son have problems they will not go to their parents because that is not their type of training. They say, ‘If I have problems why should I tell my father? If I am a grown-up at twenty-two or thirty, I can look after myself.’

They have that kind of pride and personality. This is a type of individuality those people have.

People who do not have any type of individuality depend on their elders for some help and the same quality is transferred. If there is some sort of problem, go to a temple and do your worship. You can help yourself because you receive help only from within your own self. God is only the *adhara* or support, but things come from within you. The voice you hear is your voice; the dreams which you get are your dreams; the ideas which you get are your ideas. He only serves the function of an *adhara*.

I am not insisting upon it, I am only trying to tell you that God, guru, siddhas or anybody should only be the object of *nishkama bhakti*, selfless love. You do not love your wife because she cooks; you love her even if she does not cook. Even if she is not able to work, you love her. If she is a quarrelsome lady, you should love her. You do not love her because she is useful to you. You love her because you love her, that is all. Love should not have a condition. Bhakti should not have a condition. Our relationship with God should be *nishkama*; our relationship with our beloved should be *nishkama*. Whether he is a divine beloved, God or an ordinary worldly beloved, it should be *nishkama*.

Bhakti should be based on *prem*, love, or *rati*, intense attachment, not on *swartha*, self-satisfaction, otherwise you will love your people, husband or wife with motives and if they are not able to fulfil those motives you will kick them out. Ramakrishna used to say that *prem* should be the basis of bhakti and when that happens it turns into *parabhakti*, and *parabhakti* and *jnana* are one. You do not have to preach or practise Vedanta; bhakti becomes Vedanta. *Parabhakti* and *Advaita jnana* are the same. One should try to feel oneness with God in any form, whether it is *Advaita* or in the form of love. It is very difficult for we are not strong enough to feel oneness with the person we love.

– 6 February 1982, Neyveli House,
Lignite Corporation, Tamil Nadu



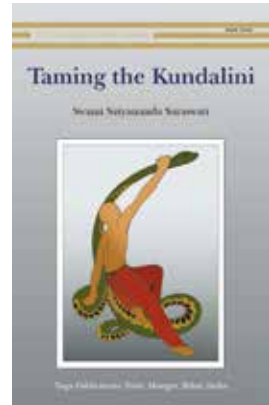
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Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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