

YOGA

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Hari Om

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Swami Satyananda Saraswati



TRIBUTES BY SWAMI SIVANANDA TO SATYAM

Satyam, work hard and you will be purified. You do not have to search for the light; the light will unfold from within you.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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

Japa

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Today I am going to talk only about one method to withdraw the outer consciousness through the method of sound waves. The most important thing to be understood is that the brain emits certain kinds of waves and it is those waves that are to be withdrawn and conserved. That method is called japa yoga, which means the method of complete union by the method of spontaneity. In japa we take a particular sound and try to consolidate our consciousness

according to that particular sound pattern and when the consciousness attains the rhythm of that particular sound movement, it almost becomes eliminated or negated. This is the first process of what we call meditation.

In this particular process, we take only three centres: the heart, the throat and the third is the centre between the two eyebrows. We do not have to take all the three centres; we take only one. The acceptance of the centre should be according to our convenience and according to the possibility of success. Some people will find it easier to have the vibrations at this point and others find it easier at the other centres. Here the sound is perceived with a particular rhythm, like the movement of a clock. There are sounds that broaden and expand and there are other sounds which shrink and become narrow.

You must have heard the cosmic sound *Om*. Forget all about its form; only think about its sound image. I do not have to tell you enlightened people that a sound has an image. Sound has

an image which cannot be written, but sound has an image which has waves. It so happens that this particular sound *Om* and its vibrations start from outside to inside. When you pronounce or try to use the sound, the sound starts from the state of expansion, and when it finishes, it finishes with a state of contraction. *O* is the expanded state of sound and *m* is the contracted state of sound.

The rhythm has to continue for 15 to 30 minutes, non-stop. While you are continuing the sound rhythms, you find that the mind is running in its own way. Sometimes your consciousness will become aware of the mantra and again your consciousness will become aware of different thoughts. This is how the state of alteration between one-pointedness and dissipation will take place. The mind will alternate between the two states. One state is the state of concentration, and the other is the state of dissipation or distraction.

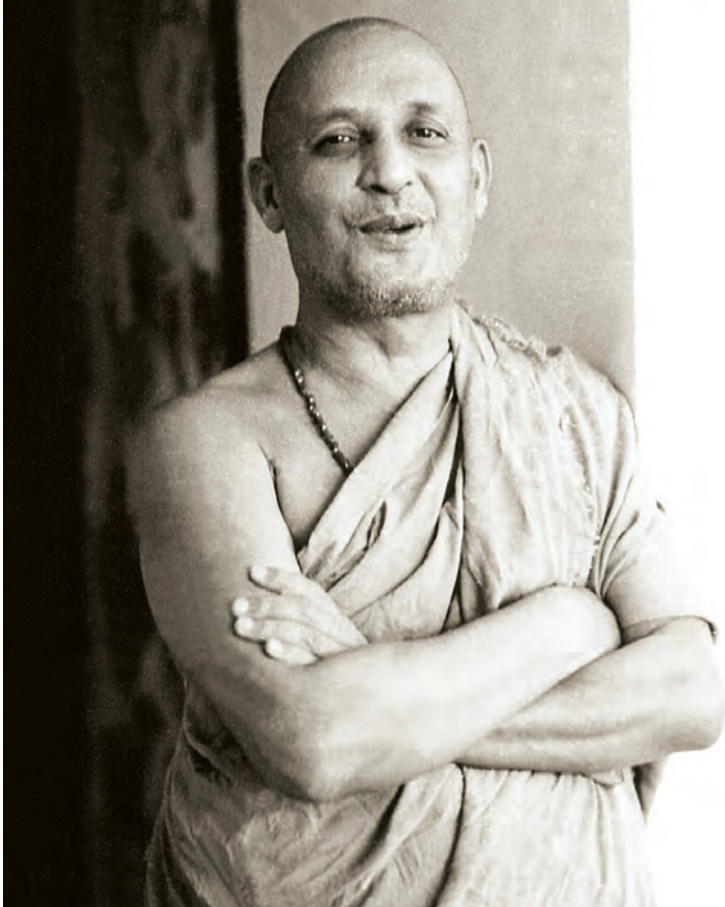
It is said by all experienced people that at this particular stage you should continue the rhythm of the sound waves in the particular centre and let the mind wander at the same time. Let the mind do as it wants, but you must continue both the streams of consciousness, side by side. When you have finished the required duration of japa, you should completely forget it and take your mind to one particular centre and there you should try to develop an image.

It is the development of this image that brings everything up from the bottom. The image which you will continue to make one-pointed in your consciousness or in the centre will not remain there. Even if it remains for one minute or half a minute, it will develop further images. Gradually when you keep your focus on this image, relaxation takes place. This particular aspect of yoga is known as pratyahara. According to Swami Sivananda and many other great experienced people, it is this method which is known and famous for tranquillity and for enlightenment.

– 14 July 1968, Belgium

Tantra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The modern world is a culture of great variety and diversity. Everywhere we see changes; new developments. On all levels man is broadening his concepts and views, accepting new and more efficient ways of living and achieving his multidimensional goals. The modern mind is completely different to the mind of other cultures and times. It is very

practical and aggressive. It works with terrific speed and is always discovering things. The modern man greatly admires the idealism and the tenets of Christianity, Vedanta and Buddhism, but he is unable to assimilate or practise them because they do not fit into his present pattern. With this understanding, people today must seek another way of spiritual life which fits the changing patterns of their life and which their minds can accept. Tantra is the correct system for the people of today.

Natural evolution

Tantra does not accept any kind of limitation, whether religious, cultural, tribal or national. There is no need to make a departure from your current status of life, nor should there be any disrespect for it. The attitude of tantra is that one should not suppress or renounce one's weaknesses, nor hate certain aspects of one's personality. The frailties of man can become part of his spiritual life and practice. In this way the mania of 'pseudo-purity' is avoided. In some spiritual paths one develops an egoistic idea that he is the purest being while everybody else is a sinner. If there is any science or any religion in the world which has respect for human weaknesses, it is surely tantra. Tantra is the lone beacon of tolerance which understands the laws of natural evolution to which every individual is subjected. That is the fundamental difference between tantra and other systems of spiritual consciousness.

When you suppress the mind, you suppress spiritual advancement. The mind is suppressed on account of guilt. This guilt is present in everyone and it is the greatest barrier in spiritual life. Tantra is the middle way, and the principle is: Do not interfere with the pattern of your life.

Mending the split

The mind is also limited by its conditioning and you have created these conditions for yourself. You have created definitions, but these definitions are not absolute. They are

man-made definitions, created by socio-political thinkers for the community, for the nation. These things have nothing to do with man's spiritual progress. If the light is covered by a veil, you have to remove the veil, and that is why I request you to give a thought to this tantric system of yoga.

The whole world is a slave to philosophy and principles. Teachers are behaving like priests or clergymen, preaching something very high. They are asking you to break your minds, to create a split personality. In one corner of the room you practise yoga and in another corner you read Freud. That is a split; that is a conflict. What spiritual illumination can you expect then? What do you believe in: the Puritanism of yoga or the psychology of Freud? You have to put this question to yourself.

Spiritual life has to be discovered on the basis of your own culture. Whether it is yoga or Vedanta, Bible or Koran, *Gita* or *Mahabharata*, please remember that there should be a uniformity in your life and your spiritual practice. To be very clear, if you drink whisky, your religion should not say it is bad. If you lead a life of sexual interactions, your spiritual faith should not contradict and criticize that. If you take non-vegetarian diet, your spiritual faith should not condemn it. Only when spiritual life is in accord with daily life can you balance your conflicts. This is the path of tantra.

Stepping-stone to evolution

The principle of tantra is very simple. In tantra, everything becomes a stepping-stone to evolution. The mind stuff, which is constantly evolving is not clogged or blocked. The mind is like a child. If you pester it constantly saying: "Oh, you are bad" it soon becomes neurotic and weak. That is why tantra says to treat the mind with respect.

You try to control the mind, but you can never do it. In the name of control, you kill the mind. It is like slapping your child left to right, for everything. If he laughs, you slap; if he weeps, you slap; if he plays games, you slap. What will happen



to your child? What is going to happen to your mind? This mind is your best secretary and it is sick and tired of slapping and control.

Have you ever thought about whom you are controlling, and who is controlling whom? Are you not trying to control yourself? This means that one tendency of the mind is punishing another tendency of the mind. One tendency is the controller and another is the controlled one. Thus you create two divisions in your mind. You are inimical to yourself, you oppose yourself, you are fighting with yourself. Is this the way to spiritual life? This is why you are stranded in spiritual life. In fact, the whole of humanity stands stranded somewhere in between external life and spiritual life, and no one knows which way to go.

Expansion of consciousness

In the history of mankind, spiritual life began with tantra. The cosmic nature taught man to live in a particular way and thereby evolve. Tantra literally means the expansion of mind and liberation of energy, and all the practices of tantra are aimed at this.

The idea of expansion is very important. The human mind functions in limited situations and is dependent on the sensory channels. The senses supply information and then the mind knows. It has a limited field. It is important for the spiritual

aspirant to understand how to expand the mind. This process occurs when the mind is able to know without the sensory channels. When you sit for meditation, the mind expands, it is able to experience things without the medium of the senses.

Tantra has a different definition of meditation. Unconsciousness is not meditation. In the state of meditation, both the internal and external dimension of consciousness are combined. In the beginning we try to become master of inner consciousness at the same time. For example, if you are inside, you can see the room very well, but you are unable to see outside. If you stand at the threshold, you can see both inside and outside. Then there is no 'outside' and 'inside'; both are the same.

You must remember that in order to have an experience, you need the help of the senses, but you can also have an experience without the senses. This means that there are two kinds of awareness: one is through the senses that is called the worldly experience. But when you are able to be aware without the senses that is called the inner experience, the transcendental experience. Who is experiencing both of these? One and the same self; the seer is one and not two. This is an important point that you have to remember in tantra. External experience is one type of spiritual experience. You should have both awareness functioning at the same time, which is the total, homogeneous complete experience.

Most people think that in the states of dhyana and samadhi, the external experience is finished. In fact it is not. This is one mistake that we have to correct. In meditation and samadhi you are able to have both internal and external experience at the same time, because you are the seer. When you are able to experience inner and outer awareness at the same time, this is known as the expansion of consciousness. When the expansion of consciousness takes place the energy automatically liberated.

*– 28 August 1979, Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center,
Antwerp, Belgium*

Two Missions of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga has two missions: one mission is to remove all the images one by one, and during the process of the elimination of those images, relaxation automatically takes place and emotional difficulties are overcome; shocks are absorbed, and anxiety is forgotten. Schizophrenia is completely defeated, and one develops peace and serenity from within. One develops the attitude of relaxation amidst tensions.



Swami Sivananda used to say that, if a man has money, a good family and children, to be relaxed has little meaning. If the scales are heavily loaded against him, family members have disowned him or cheated him, the world has deceived him and the physical body has not helped him, if at that moment the man can keep himself relaxed, that is the state of highest and real liberation. In a deeper analysis, it has been decided that peace and tranquillity does not come to man because there are so many images that are trying to cause confusion in the personality. I am giving a speech and you are able to hear everything because you are keeping quiet. If there is pandemonium here, even if I cry out loud, you won't be able to hear. The same is true with our personality.

Therefore, the two missions of yoga are to eliminate the images and to produce relaxation. If you are spiritually minded, you go ahead; you go on eliminating those images and finally become rooted in your own atman or your own Self.

– 14 July 1968, Belgium

Spiritual Atmosphere

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Blessed Spiritual Friends. It is a great pleasure for me to be with you this evening. When I see your calm, serene and peaceful faces they remind me of my Indian people whom I have left three months ago and whom I love very much. As I look at you I see the same solitude and the same saris that I see when I go to Indian villages. Sometimes I feel that in this calm and quiet country, away from the rush of the city, I must have a hermitage. Of course I have many hermitages in India and I am not going to have one built here, but I tell you how much your country has impressed me. Belgium has places where spiritual centres can be developed.

In a country where there are spiritual centres, calm and quiet places for meditation, mental illness does not take place. Far from the hustle and bustle of modern life, far from the pleasures and luxuries, far from the comforts and enjoyments of life, there could be and there should be in this country a

few wonderful spiritual centres, where spiritually-minded people could go from time to time and breathe the spiritual atmosphere.

When I was in America, I was very impressed with the spiritual mindedness of the people, but I was very sorry and dissatisfied by the country, noise and confused surroundings. I felt that even if Americans want to meditate, they have no place to meditate. If they want to meditate, they must have a sound, clear mind. Therefore, a businessman, contractor or scientist must come up with a soundproof room.

In this country, nature has been very good to you. If you leave your drawing room and go to your bedroom to meditate you can do so, sit down quietly and meditate without any difficulty or disturbance. In India, many people go to Haridwar or Rishikesh for about one month every year for calm and quiet meditation. Look how much time and money they have to spend, whereas you have calm and peace in your own homes. In spite of all these facilities you have been provided by God, if you do not follow the path of meditation, how do you expect peace and happiness in your daily life?

This country knows all about yoga and therefore I do not have to introduce yoga. Yoga has been flourishing in Europe for so many centuries, but in the last two decades it has come up because of the pressure of modern life. When the civilization becomes intellectual or when modern civilization comes with all its drawbacks, yoga can come to the rescue.

Yoga came to your country in the form of yoga exercises and breathing exercises. It came to your country in an automatic exchange program from India. The West gave technology to India and India gave yoga to the West. Yoga can give peace, which is very important for a country where technology is thriving. In the industrial civilizations where people not only have to work more, but also where there is keen competition to keep up, there are mental tensions, worries and nervous breakdowns. In a country where there is so much industrialization and where everyone is expected to take up the

tremendous demands of the country, people have very little time to think philosophically and to ponder over philosophical topics. The result of this is when there is any tragedy in life; we cannot take it.

The international statistics of health have declared that there are more mental patients in the West than in the East. Just as the West has conquered problems such as TB epidemics, the East has conquered the problems of nervous breakdowns, coronary thrombosis and mental sickness. When there are epidemics in India, modern science is going to help with medicines. In the West there is so much of mental sickness, so many cases of suicides. In America, two out of three go to mental asylums. In Denmark, suicides, the cases of juvenile delinquency and nervous breakdowns are increasing, millions and millions of tranquillizers are being used. There must be some method that can help the people. This is the worldly, the empirical side which we have to think about.

In addition to this, people who are spiritual and want to know themselves, what is the way? As far as the houses, the personality, your emotional life and your modern life is concerned it is all right, but what about your spiritual life? If you want to know the truth about the world, about yourself, here is the way. Western people are not ignorant; they are not foolish; they are highly intellectual; they think too deep. If they want to know what is truth, the ultimate reality, the essence of spirit, then they have to be given a direct and a correct reply.

Two questions

So my dear friends, there are two great questions before you. One question is, how to maintain mental health, be an integrated personality, have control over your mental impulses and cure the split personality, schizophrenia. The second question is, what is the truth. Is the truth inside me? Or is the truth outside me or is the truth inside me as well as outside? Have I come into this world for the first time or have I come into this world for the last time and then shall be no more?

Or is there a consciousness that is continuous? What is this continuous consciousness in relation to time and space?

To those persons who have been keen students of philosophy, these questions must have come into their minds. Each and every thinking person has to find out the answer to these questions. These are the few questions which are hanging before us, and which we have to reply; and yoga comes as a reply. By the practice of yoga, you bring about steadiness in your brain and you control your thoughts. Just as in the military, a soldier is given physical training, your physical body behaves in this same way. In yoga we also train the mind, the mental habits, the thinking and we improve and modify the mental discipline in such a way that it becomes helpful in our day-to-day lives.

I am reading a book, but fifteen minutes later I have forgotten what I have read in that book, because I have no concentration and my consciousness was functioning on two planes. One part of my consciousness was functioning on the book and another part of my consciousness was functioning elsewhere. If I can control my mind, I can bring all the forces of consciousness to the book, and I can understand the book and remember it. For all these purposes, yoga can offer the path of meditation. There are many aspects of yoga; I am not going to remind you of all these aspects, but I will only remind you of four things: asana, pranayama, relaxation and meditation. The meditation and relaxation aspect is a very important limb of yoga. Relaxation is not sitting on an easy chair, closing your eyes and going to sleep.

Relaxation is to be done on the physical, mental and emotional levels. When your physical body is tired, you sleep and it is called physical relaxation. When your body is overfed and constipated, you clean your stomach and your body undergoes physical relaxation. If there are toxins in your physical body and you eliminate those toxins by the practice of asana and pranayama, that is physical relaxation. When your mind thinks like a monkey or is completely

disturbed and you control your mind, that is called mental relaxation. If you have undergone an emotional difficulty in your life and that emotional difficulty is solved, that is called emotional relaxation. This relaxation is not relaxation, it is peace, *shanti*. Then your mind, your emotions, your heart all remain unaffected. Prosperity and poverty, success or failure, criticism or praise, pleasure or pain, nothing can give a shock to that man who has attained emotional shanti, emotional peace. Therefore, in meditation what we try to do is to control the mental influxes by mantra or by any other method.

I will tell you the philosophy of meditation in short. The individual consciousness functions in the form of thought impulses. If you close your eyes for ten minutes now, there are so many thoughts in your mind: I must go to my house, tomorrow I must go to Brussels, I must write a letter to my friend, this man is being like this and that man is being like that. This is happening this way and that is happening that way. So many thoughts will be coming in your mind according to the age group. Old people will have certain thoughts, and maybe young people will have different thoughts; little kids will have different thoughts. Artists, painters, diplomats, engineers, musicians, shopkeepers, manufacturers or whore house ladies will be having different thoughts or impulses of the individual consciousness.

I will give you an illustration to make it more clear. You see a small lake and take a small piece of stone, and throw it in the lake and what will happen? Ripples will start and move towards the outside. You keep quiet and after some time the ripples will become weaker and weaker until there will be stillness again. If you keep throwing stone after stone after stone, there will be ripples and waves and there won't be a system to the waves. There will be confused, depressed, contradicting waves, making a lot of noise. The quiet, calm and still pool of water becomes greatly disturbed.

In the same manner, your individual consciousness is always still. Your individuality, yourself, your atman, your

personality is always calm, but you keep on throwing pebbles of thoughts, the pebbles of desires, wishes and ambitions in it; and, therefore, the surface of your personality looks as if it is disturbed. If you go into the depth of your personality, you will find that there is calm and quietness everywhere. In meditation, we stop throwing the pebbles. As long as you keep this particular action of throwing pebbles under control, your mind is calm and your mind is still. This is called relaxation. Relaxation should therefore mean complete peace in your heart, in your mind and in your body.

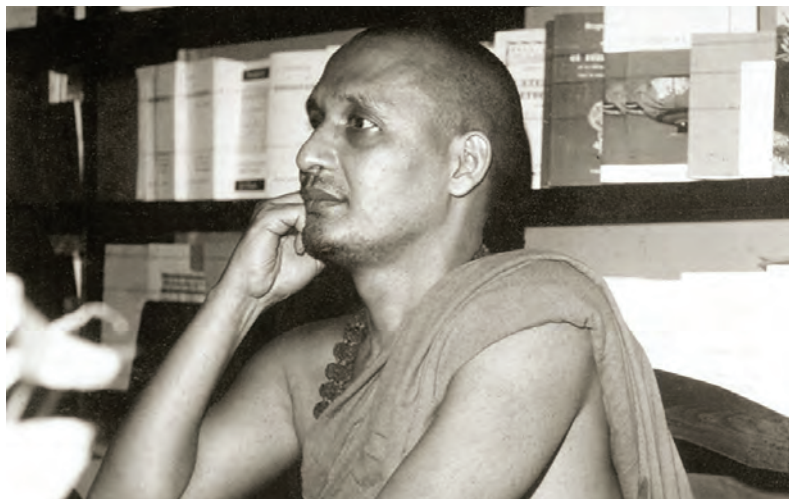
The point is how to meditate. It is a difficult problem for me to put before you in a very short time. There are many questions: how to meditate, how to control the thoughts; and, if the mind is disturbed, what to do? These are some questions. At what time should we meditate, for how long should we meditate, on what should we meditate, should we meditate independently or should we have a guide, should we meditate only if we believe in God, or should we meditate even if we do not, and if in meditation we have a psychic experience, what should we do? These are some of the important questions about meditation.

One reply is that meditation has nothing to do with any religion, although a religious man can practise meditation. Whether you believe in God or you do not believe in God, it is immaterial; you can meditate. Meditation is not a system of religion; it is a system of mental discipline and mental sanity. In order to practise meditation in the beginning, half an hour or twenty minutes is sufficient. There are various systems of meditations: some meditate on the breath, others on sound, others on a form, others on mantra and others on thought currents. The right method for the beginner is to meditate on the breath and mantra. Yoga meditation is known as *dhyana*, which has become Zen in Buddhism. Dhyana means total awareness, total concentration, one-pointedness and total attention.

– 18 July 1968, Aalst Town Hall, Belgium

Beginning Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Blessed spiritual seekers. I have in mind to speak about yoga. Yoga is something which has much to do with life. In the past, people in the West thought that standing on the head was yoga, but now it appears that it is not standing on one's head, but standing on one's own two feet is yoga. It is not that we do not have to practise yoga exercises; we have to practise them, but yoga is something more than that. It is a process by which one brings about a state of peace with one's own self. It is not a system of treatment, but it is a method of orientation of the entire personality, the pure personality in all its dimensions. Unless one realizes or communes with one's higher being it is not possible to become free from the miseries of life.

Those who are after higher realization, who seek to unite themselves with the higher self, for them it becomes absolutely necessary that they pass through this state, when you are at ease with your own self, at peace with your own self and when you have attained or united yourself with the pure inner being.

The word yoga means to join, to unite, to commune and to become one. Yoga means the unity of two things or two states. Union between the little I and the cosmic I, where the little I is completely lost in the cosmic I, it becomes one with that. Yoga is union between the little self and the higher self, where the little self becomes one with the higher self. Yoga means the experience of oneness, the experience of unity as against the experience of duality in our daily life.

In this world where we are aware of the empirical universe, the universe of objects and senses is the world of duality. From this we make a departure within, through a path, a passage, to become one with the supreme or the higher states, call it God or name it anything you like. This is the ultimate purpose of yoga, but it seems to be very difficult and we talk so much about it. Nobody has seen the higher self and when you think that the little self becomes one with the higher self, it comes to our minds that a little river joins a big ocean.

Since we have never tried to become one with that supreme self, it is our experience and our conviction that it is a most difficult path. But I have to say now that this path with which one goes inside from outside and which starts from the objective universe and culminates in spiritual experience, is the easiest one. When you make up your mind to dwell outside on the external objects, it brings stress and strain, tensions, fatigue, exhaustion, and ultimately a life with nothing, but when you draw your mind in, all the stresses and strains are dissolved, and you practise it every day and every night.

Coming out is a job and going in is an ordinary thing, it is just a simple affair. But somehow or other it has been put into our minds that going in is a great job and the becoming aware of living in the outside world is the easiest thing. We have to change the understanding and this conviction. Remember how when you go to bed every night, you cry for sleep; you want it and the moment you go to your bed you are still. This is the way of going in and you know the art of going in, but half the way.

Need for pratyahara

There are two roads, one leads to the unconscious and one leads to awareness. The path that leads to the unconscious leads to sleep, and the path that leads you to awareness leads to *samadhi* or the higher awareness. Therefore, the path of yoga is not difficult; it is an act of realization as Swami Sivananda has said in many of his books. Meditation is not an action; meditation is not an exercise; meditation is not doing something; meditation is a spontaneous manifestation of the state of mental relaxation in man. When your mind is completely relaxed, when your mind is not tense, when your emotions are not tensed and when your heart is pure and the body is completely at rest, meditation must manifest itself. I say it the other way. When you are completely tired, when the room is very dark and the bed is very comfortable, you do not have to sleep; sleep comes to you; the manifestation of sleep becomes spontaneous.

In the same manner, in order to succeed in meditation there are certain conditions which should be fulfilled first. I do not mean you should stop your meditation that you have been doing in the morning and in the evening, but please, that is not enough. If you are trying to concentrate your mind, I am not against it, but that is not enough. If you are trying to practise any of the exercises in meditation go ahead with it, don't stop it. But if you have been trying hard to bring about a state of concentration it means that you have not fulfilled the conditions and when you fulfil the conditions of meditation, you don't have to meditate, you have to experience it.

Swami Sivananda said in his books that meditation cannot be done; it can only be experienced. Sleep cannot be brought about; it can only be experienced; hunger cannot be created, it can only be experienced, but for that you need a condition. What are the conditions for meditations? A lot has been spoken about it, but still people feel that it is possible to meditate without the fulfilment of those conditions.

There are not many conditions; there is only one condition, and if you are able to fulfil that one condition, you can get into

meditation anywhere you like or perhaps meditation might come to you without you even wanting it. That condition is the dissolution of the state of tension, that's all. Find out a method, a technique by which the deeply imbedded tensions of your personality are completely annihilated. Before you try to practise meditation, please try one thing, try to relax your tensions. When you try to relax your tensions, you must try to understand at the same time that it is not taking rest in bed, but there are different kinds of tensions and mostly emotional tensions. These emotional tensions which we create in our day-to-day life and which become a part and parcel of our being, they stop, they pull us back when our consciousness tries to get into the deeper state of meditation. It has been my experience. It has been the experience of many people. This tension is seen in man. This tension is not the worry that you can feel.

When you analyze the problem of tensions, you will know that apart from the physical and mental tensions, there are emotional tensions which cannot be eradicated until you follow the path of *bhakti yoga* and *jnana yoga*, the path of devotion and the path of self-analysis. Before you succeed in meditation, you must take to the method of *bhakti yoga* and *jnana yoga*. Meditation is not difficult, provided you are free from tensions. You can get rid of tensions provided you follow a path. Sometimes when we sit down for meditation, even if we try to bring our minds back to the point, we cannot; and we wonder why it is not possible. On deeper analysis you feel that there was something working in your mind.

In the yoga shastra there is a method which is known as *pratyahara*. *Pratyahara* means complete relaxation, to a point when you are able to transcend the outer state, you are able to forget everything around you. Practices for meditation should be such that within fifteen or twenty minutes, your mind begins to take complete rest and goes within. It dives deep into your inner being. There are of course various methods of meditation and all of them are quite useful and effective,

but in most exercises of meditation it is the mental factor that is brought into operation and the mind has to be exercised. When the mind has to be exercised in meditation it is brought under tension.

Therefore, for the practice of meditation the easiest method should be taken up, in which you do not bring your mind into use. The whole thing becomes automatic, and you will be surprised to know that the easiest method for meditation is japa yoga. There is no method like that. There is a method of ajapa japa, kriya yoga, trataka, nada yoga, but out of all of these the method of japa yoga in which you take one particular sound and rhythmically mentally repeat it for a hundred times or a thousand times, or five thousand times, constantly for about one hour. It is very effective and brings a useful result very quickly, you do not have to go through many parts.

In spiritual life, in yogic life there are various paths, and one feels perhaps that the more complicated the path, perhaps the most effective it is. That is not true, from the experience of all great men of all great ages. I have come to this conclusion, that it is ultimately japa yoga, the yoga of mantra, the yoga of sound, the yoga of a syllable that brings about not only the state of serenity and peace to a human being, but it brings the state of communion. During my world tour I have also come across, hundreds and hundreds of people who have been practising japa yoga and have come to the point of higher realization.

The people who have been practising the complicated yogas have been misled. Some of them have been following the path of confusion and complication, and I have not found any practitioner of japa yoga who has come to the point of confusion and complication. The most simple person and the greatest intellectual, when they sit down for half an hour or so, enter a state of meditation, of communion. There is one thing which you have to remember, japa yoga brings you to a particular point and leaves you there..

– 27 July 1968, Amsterdam, Holland

Correct Asana Practice

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

A student of yoga must bear in mind that he must follow yogic practices strictly according to tradition, the way scriptures prescribe if he desires any substantial benefit to be derived from yoga. In the scriptures, it is mentioned that asanas should be performed gradually, not in haste and with full awareness. For example, when you are practising a particular yogasana, the headstand pose or the shoulder stand for instance, you must know at which particular centre you should concentrate and which particular centre is to be relaxed. Supposing you lie on your back and raise your legs gradually until they are erect and vertical, the entire weight is supported now; you are in sarvangasana, but this is only the physical aspect, yoga is not physical. Your awareness must also actively participate in the process, and this awareness must be directed to the centre of the thyroid in the case of sarvangasana.

In other words, yoga is not mere physical exercise, but the psychological aspect must also be united in the venture. We have certain yogic centres in the body and during the time of performing the asanas, we should concentrate on these centres. Every set of asanas has a particular centre where the awareness is to be directed. While performing sarvangasana, awareness must be kept at the thyroid centre and then this centre begins to awaken.

The purpose of yoga is to awaken various psychic centres in the body. If the centres are not awakened, if they are in a potential state, yogasanas will not serve any useful purpose. If you think that without concentration, just by pressing your chin to your chest, you can activate your thyroid it is scientifically impossible. By pressing a particular gland, you cannot make the gland operate. You are pressing the thyroid gland, but it is not flowing because you are not concentrating on it. If you



concentrate on the thyroid gland for five minutes, the thyroid gland will start flowing by virtue of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is stimulated by the thought process, and that is how sarvangasana is to be practised.

Fundamentally, there is no difference between the way (physical aspect only) others have been doing sarvangasana and the way scriptures recommended. The fundamental difference is in the psychological effort. Similarly, paschimottanasana is a very important asana for toning the pancreatic glands. This asana is good for so many things, but the main benefit is to revive the pancreas, which is responsible for controlling sugar and removing toxins.

There are different psychic passages in the body, but the main ones are two: one is in the spinal cord and the other one is in the throat. The inhalation and exhalation follow a psychic

path. Inhalation taking place through one way and exhalation through another way. If you observe your flow of breath at the nostrils, you will see that sometimes the right nostril is flowing and sometimes the left. When the right one is clear, it means that the solar energy is in abundance and the lunar energy is blocked. To awaken the lunar energy, you will have to give greater emphasis to that system. So what you should do is to practise pranayama with the left nostril, and this is known as blowing. You should do 'bhastrika' pranayama through the left side.

It is important that before the breathing exercises, both nostrils should flow freely and equally. If they are not flowing equally you must find out the method and it is the most vital point in pranayama. Next is control of pranas. By this method, you try to expand your prana to the higher body. When the pranas shrink from the body, the body becomes ill and when pranas are properly distributed to all parts of the body the body becomes vigorous.

To ensure proper distribution of prana to all parts of the body, pawanmuktasana is performed which releases prana from wherever it has been blocked, all through the body. This exercise also eliminates unwanted toxins. The prana forces the psychological centre in the system and while these exercises might be known to most people the only thing not known to most is the centre of this exercise.

This is the lotus pose, the famous one, but which is the centre? One has to find out the centre; one should know the centre. This is the bow posture. In all these, you have two things to consider. One is prana and the other is the psychological centre. After you have practised this second group of exercises for some time, comes the third group of exercises, and for the upkeep of health, we need about six exercises, maximum fifteen minutes. It is simply meaningless if you keep on practising all the exercises that are written in the books.

– 1968, Amsterdam, Holland

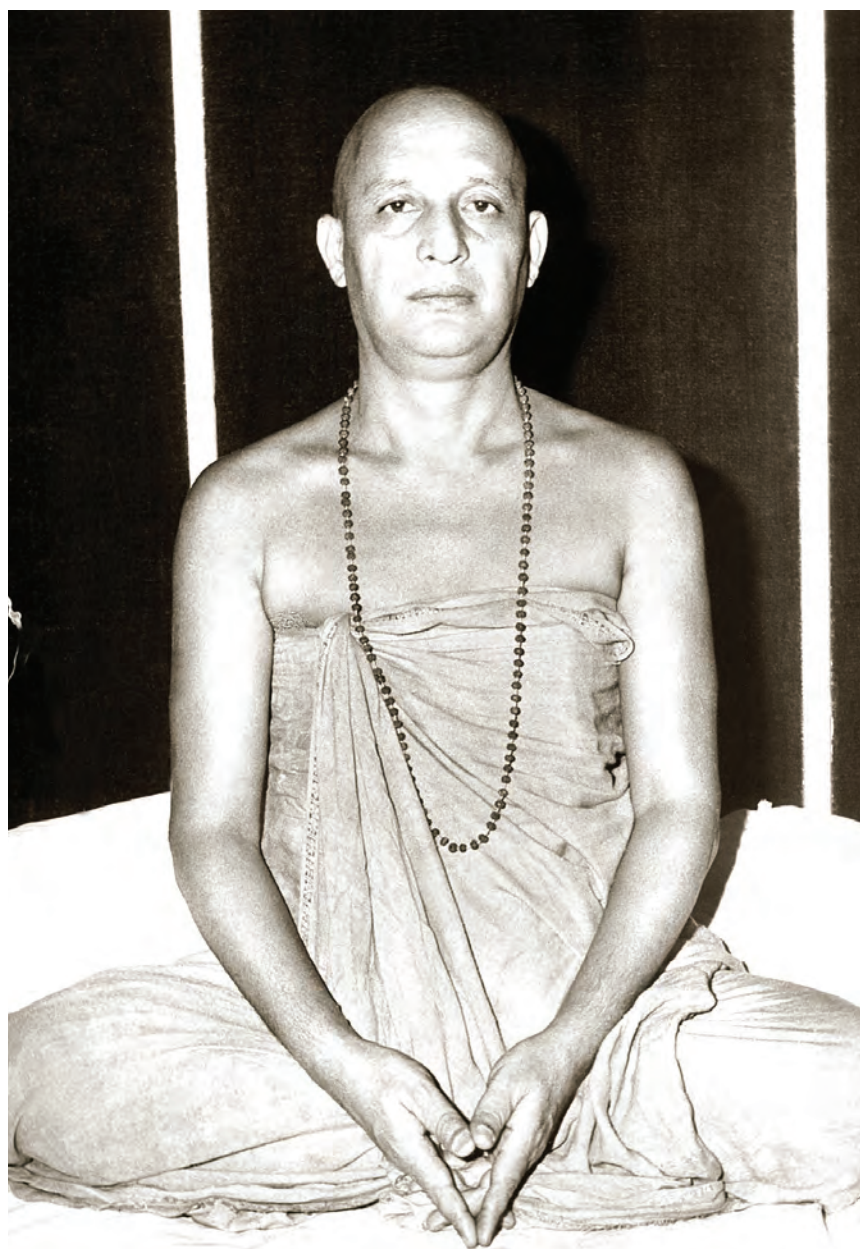
Meditation and Ideal Life

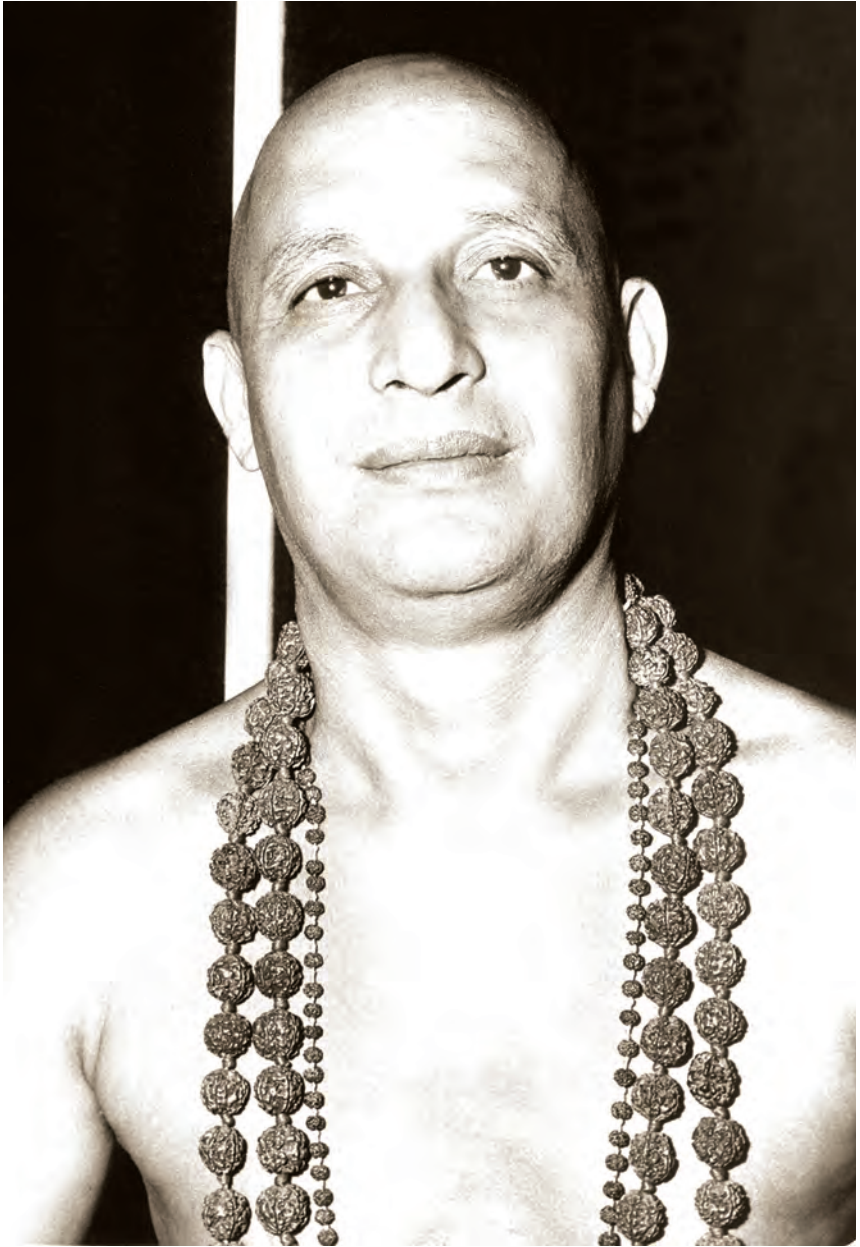
Swami Satyananda Saraswati

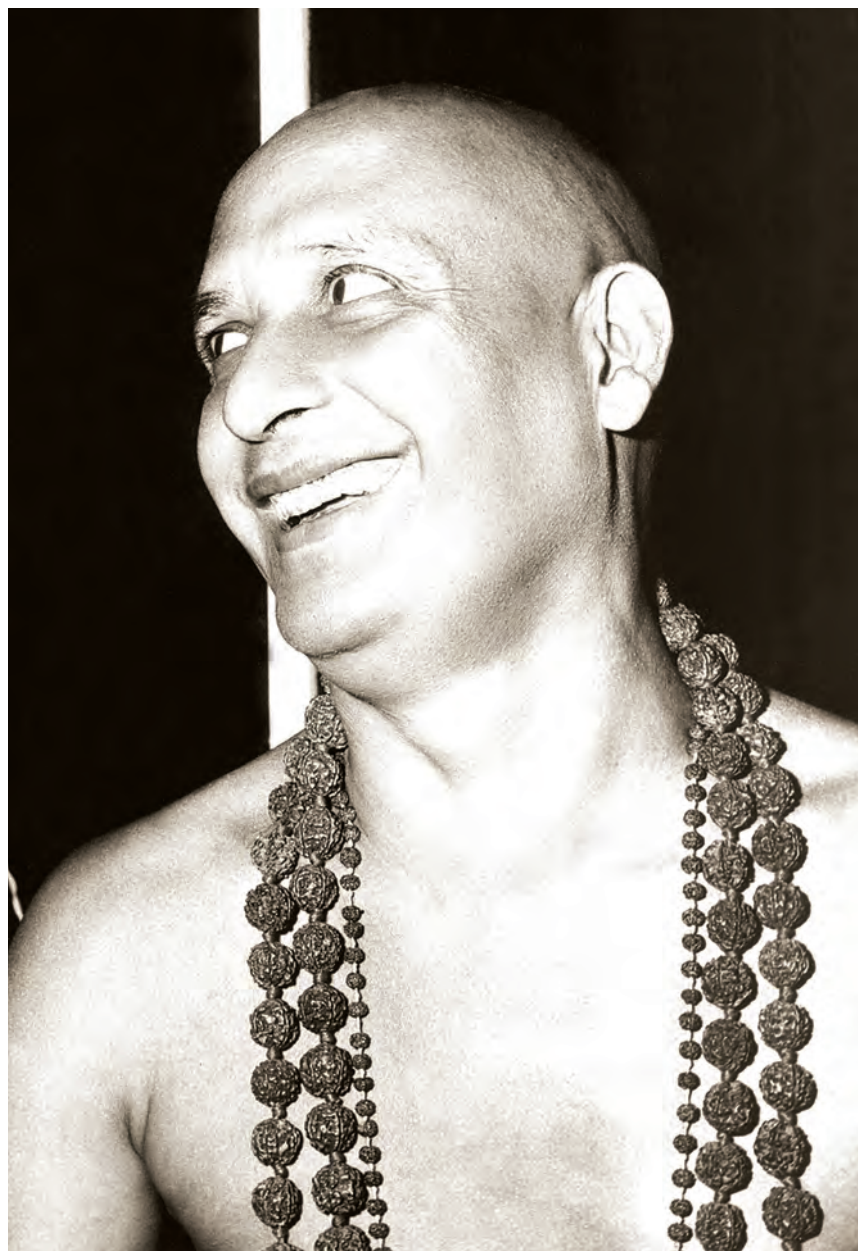


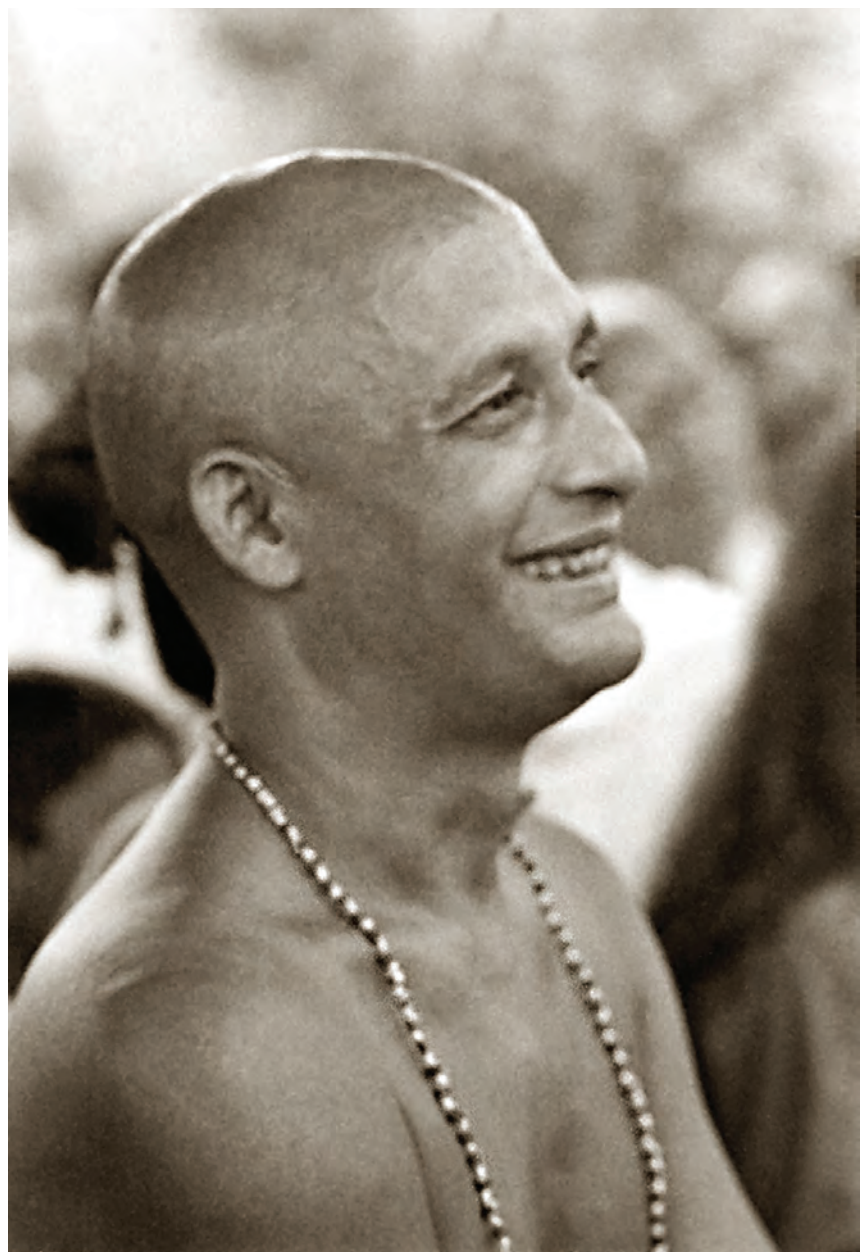
According to the Hindu pattern of society, human life is conceived to serve four purposes: *dharma* or righteous living, *artha* or acquisition of property, *kama* or the fulfilment of desires, and *moksha* or liberation. The whole human life of one hundred years is divided into four stages of twenty-five years each. The first stage covering twenty-five years is known as Brahmacharya order, a period of studentship. The boy leads a celibate and virtuous life devoting his time to studies and service of his guru. The next stage is household order.

When the boy has attained maturity, he marries and leads a family life for the next twenty-five years. He leads a happy and prosperous life through righteous living. This is the order where he tries to give expressions to his desires and finally when he has fulfilled most of his desires, he enters the life of austerity known as *vanaprastha* order, forest dweller, and spends his next twenty-five years. It is easy for an average









Indian to get his desires fulfilled by the time he reaches his fifth decade at the age of forty or forty-five. Any traces of unfulfilled desires are exhausted in the vanaprastha period, and after that he enters the life of sannyasa, devoting his last days purely to spiritual quest. The fulfilment of desires in a systematic and legitimate planned way is one aspect of the spiritual life that cleanses the personality completely.

Finally, with the agreement of household members, the person embraces sannyasa order and devotes this period for obtaining liberation from the unending process of transmigration. If you have to remain in the material life, in society, you are forced to maintain your relations with society and if society compels you to be corrupt, you do not have to agree with society, but after all, you have to live and this is how one must live. You know the truth, and you may know the whole world is corrupt, but at the same time you must keep peace with society.

This is how a yogi has to do and it is also the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*. You live in the world; you do all your karmas; you do all your duties, but remain unattached. The knowledge of the past and future is given to them who are not attached with the world at all. Otherwise the knowledge of the past creates mental troubles. By logical deduction you can know the future; you can know what you shall be as you sow the seed, so you reap.

Meditation

Meditation is a way which leads an individual to a higher life. In recent times, the subject of transcendental meditation has aroused keen interest in western minds and people like to know more about the subject. Many people feel that meditation is difficult; every great project we undertake is beset with many difficulties and so is the case with meditation. For those who want to know how they should meditate and how to be familiar with the inner lands of their personality, the following explanation will be of immense help.

The practice of meditation is divided into three stages, the first one is called withdrawal, which means a process of going in and it also means an act of negation of the empirical or the outer consciousness. When you are aware of the outside things around you, it is called outer consciousness, empirical or objective consciousness. When you are not aware of the external phenomenon, but you are aware of the internal working of the mind, it is called subjective or thought consciousness. When you are neither aware of the thought process nor of any external surroundings, it is called unconsciousness. When the consciousness has freed itself from objective, subjective and unconscious states of manifestation and abides in self-awareness, it is called superconscious state.

In this state, the consciousness transcends all the limitations and becomes universal. Meditation is nothing but a strict watch over the activities of the mind. First when you sit down for meditation, you must keep your spinal cord erect. If you cannot keep it straight, sit against a wall, and you are also allowed to make use of a chair. Usually that is not the right way because when you sit down on a chair, the legs swing below and the blood is attracted by the force of gravity and the twine currents in the body do not make a complete circuit.

Place your hands in the proper position and close your eyes. After closing your eyes, for a full three or five minutes, do nothing but maintain steadiness of the physical body. Just sit down quietly and let your lungs, heart, respiration, circulation and the entire physical systems become free from all tensions and after about five minutes, you start the chanting of the sound *Om*. The sound should vibrate throughout your body so as to bring peace and tranquillity. When you pronounce *Au*, the mouth assumes a circular shape and on pronouncing *Hum*, the sound appears to terminate at a point. So, it is a circle, terminating in a point.

You must constantly visualize that your consciousness is in the form of a circle and is ultimately becoming a point. This process repeating with every chant of *Om* is very powerful.



Chanting should be slow and gradual because it takes time for a circle to become a point. Chant the *Om* mantra in a rhythmic and melodious sound for half an hour. This will check the oscillation of mind. For checking the oscillating nature of mind, one can take the use of an Indian rosary, a *mala*. Repetition of mantra with the help of the rosary for about half an hour will make the mind introvert and one-pointed. Now at this stage, japa may be stopped and concentration on your chosen deity or any elevating form may be taken up.

You have to visualize the form in your mind as clearly as you can see by trying to form the mental image of the same. If the mental image disappears, after a short time, do not try to bring it back as it might create mental tensions. If you practise it everyday, you will find that the period of these conscious retention of the mental images will gradually increase. It must be understood that it is your own consciousness which comes to you in the form of mental images. If you meditate on a triangle, it is nothing but your own consciousness.

– 1968, Wageningen, Holland

Yoga is Union

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

What was on your walls a few minutes ago was the experience of consciousness. It was the experience of higher consciousness. I do not know if any one of you is aware of this fact, but this is only possible through the practice of meditation and not without it. You come here in order to see these colourful things on the wall, but very few people are aware of what these things really mean. They are spiritual experiences; they are psychic experiences.

When you sit down for meditation and concentration, and draw your mind from outside and forget everything from the outside and enter into trance, into samadhi, at that time the inner doors open and you enter into a space where these experiences are taking place. I don't know if you are ready for a meditation class, because in order to conduct a meditation class it needs an absolute atmosphere. The way we are sitting at present is all right for a speech, but for mediation the most important thing is that you must have a nice place to sit, so that you can sit with your spinal cord erect for fifteen or thirty minutes.

How is meditation done? How can you develop these psychic, spiritual, inner experiences within you? There are people who feel that these inner experiences can be developed through the use of drugs. I do not disagree, but at the same time may I tell you that there is a superior method for the development of these experiences within and that is through the practice of meditation what we call *dhyana yoga*.

This system of meditation is a method in which a particular mantra is taken. Supposing it is the mantra *Om*. You take the mantra *Om*; chant it and when you chant the mantra *Om*, you make the sound vibrations of *Om* to permeate through your body. Now will you chant *Om* with me? When you are chanting

Om, please forget everything around you; close your eyes, and feel that the sound of *Om* is completely reverberating, vibrating through every part of your body. *Om, Om, Om*. Again with full force and complete concentration.

This is the way of chanting *Om* before you practise meditation. Second, when you sit down for meditation you must keep your spinal cord straight, with a bent spine meditation does not become successful and meditation does not become useful. With your spinal cord erect, you must follow one rhythm and the centre of meditation between the two eyebrows. When you close your eyes, after the chanting of *Om*, keep your mind at the centre of the two eyebrows and for as long as it is possible until you see these lights which you saw just now on the screen. It may be possible for you to experience these psychic experiences quite early, but in certain cases it might take time.

The impact of meditation is slow and gradual, but the effect of meditation is steady and permanent. If you have these experiences once, you have these experiences forever. Therefore, when you practise meditation at the centre of the two eyebrows, if you see different lights, different psychic beings, different psychedelic experiences, your outer mind slowly goes in and the inner mind comes out. When the inner mind goes out, it is the point where the conscious begins to expand. What happens when consciousness begins to expand? You experience your own consciousness, your inner being, the divine being within you, and after you have experienced that divine being bliss and permanent happiness continues.

Meditation

Therefore, the most important thing for all those people here who want to develop their meditation, they have to decide upon two times in the day. Once in the early morning and second time at night. The right time to practise meditation at night is between 10 and 12. I am talking in Holland time and the right time to practise meditation in the morning is between

6 and 8 Holland time. In India it is 3 to 5 in the morning and 8 to 10 at night.

When you practise meditation, please remember that you do not have to practise it for two hours, because your brain, your nervous system is not prepared for that. There are yogis, great rishis in the Himalayas and different places who can sit for meditation and in samadhi, who can sit in trance for days and days together, but they have practised for years and years together. Their body is completely purified; there are no toxins, no poisons in their body. Our bodies have a lot of impurities and toxins, and, therefore, we should practise a little meditation, say half an hour.

How to meditate? The mind is disturbed; it is like a drunken monkey who has taken a lot of alcohol and it keeps jumping from this end to that end. That is exactly the condition of our mind. You try to make your mind one-pointed. Can you think of one point? Can you think of one object for one minute continuously? No, it is impossible; the mind does not stay. If I say rose, you keep the rose flower there and I constantly think rose, rose, rose, for about one minute and in between so many thoughts come and intervene. That intervention of thoughts between the flow of consciousness must be stopped and that is possible by certain practices.

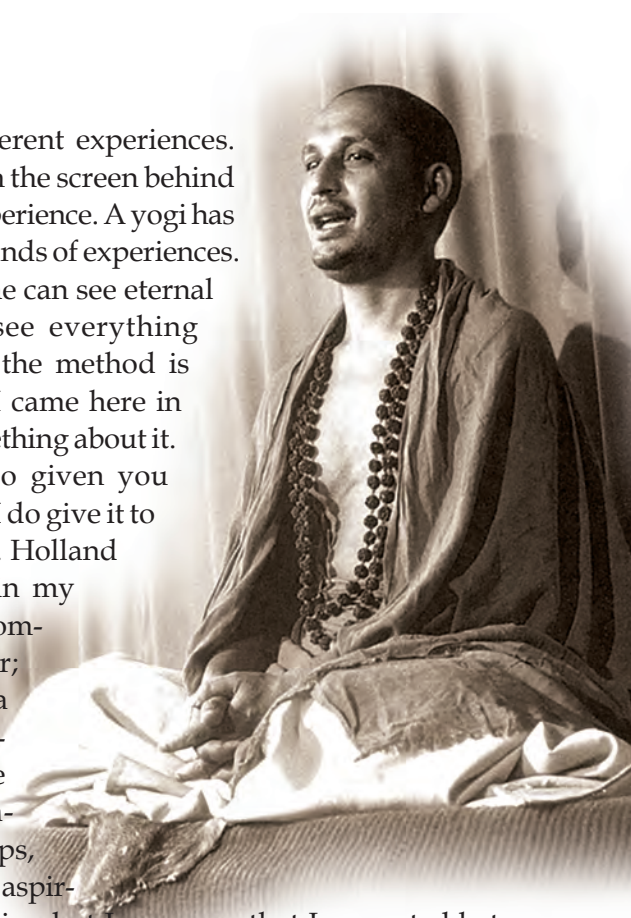
In yoga, there are many practices. One practice is internationally well known, the practice of Maharishi Mahesh, Transcendental Meditation. The other practice is called meditation on the breath and there is a higher meditation that is the meditation of kriya yoga. There is another meditation, and that is the meditation on the centre of the two eyebrows.

I think for you the best is to meditate on the centre of the two eyebrows and nothing else. Sit down quietly, with your spinal cord erect with your eyes closed and then chant the mantra, the sound *Om* for about eleven or twelve times. After that take your mind to the centre of the two eyebrows and keep it there until you receive the light. Your mind will gradually go in; you experience light; you will see many phases of consciousness

and have many different experiences. What you just saw on the screen behind is just a part of the experience. A yogi has hundreds and thousands of experiences. He can see heaven; he can see eternal universes; he can see everything within himself, but the method is yoga and therefore I came here in order to tell you something about it.

I could have also given you meditation, because I do give it to thousands of people. Holland is one of the halts in my world tour. I have completed a world tour; I have completed a tour of thirty countries, where I have been giving meditation to different groups, universities, spiritual aspirants, teenagers, hippies, but I am sorry that I am not able to give you meditation. I am sure that it is not possible for you to practise it here because meditation needs a calm and quiet place. Meditation needs a bit of cloth to sit on, and meditation needs a pure atmosphere. When you practise meditation, half an hour before that stop smoking, because the prana, the cosmic breath, the cosmic energy, the breath, the lungs, the heart must be pure; otherwise, you will have mixed experiences; you will have adulterated experiences. Then you burn the incense and sit down for meditation and maintain the purity of the atmosphere for some time. After a few years, it is possible that you may be able to meditate anywhere and everywhere you like.

I thank you for your patience and I will be very happy if I know that some of you have been inspired to lead the life of



meditation. I have been asked by the organizers to introduce myself. I come from India; I live in India and I am the head of many yoga institutions in India; they are known here as schools. I am also the leader of many educational institutions in India. I am on a world tour and my tour will be complete in Moscow, by then I will have completed fifty countries. The purpose of my tour is to make people yoga-minded and also to inspire and encourage them to turn to this path. Yoga does not mean standing on the head; please remember, but yoga is standing on one's two feet. Yoga has nothing to do with these acrobatic feats, although you can do it, I have no objection to it, but yoga is nothing but union, union with your own consciousness.

The literal meaning of yoga is 'two things becoming one'. Yoga means unity, communion, union. When your individual self, when your little self, when your little mind, which at present goes up, goes in, goes down, deeper and deeper and becomes one with the cosmic mind, that is called yoga. Please remember this definition again and again, and please do not be cheated by the so-called definition of yoga, that standing on the head is yoga.

Yoga means when your outer mind, when your small mind, when your tiny mind, when your worldly mind, when your intelligent consciousness becomes one with the higher mind, with the inner mind, with the cosmic mind, that is called yoga. Yoga means unity between two. Who are these two? One is the little I and the other one is the cosmic I. This little I is now speaking to you; this little I is now listening to this little I. Now when this little I will merge with the cosmic I, that state is called yoga. And friends, please understand that it is to preach this yoga I have come out of my country for this five-month trip. Thank you and Hari Om.

– 27 July 1968, in Paradiso and Fantasio, Amsterdam, Holland

Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What is the definition of yoga? In short, yoga is a system for the unfoldment of a greater, mightier and more powerful consciousness in man by certain physical, psychological, psychosomatic and spiritual exercises. The word yoga literally means 'union, communion, merger' or much better 'fusion'. It should be explained that yoga means a process of communion, a process of reintegration of the lower consciousness with the higher and mightier consciousness in man.

Even as rivers flow into and become one with the ocean, in the same way this human being with his small mind, with his narrow consciousness, with his limited awareness, has been suffering very much, but by the practice of yoga he tries to fuse his lower consciousness, his limited consciousness with unlimited and infinite consciousness and to become happy, peaceful and full of knowledge.

Therefore, all the practices of yoga tend to develop that state of mind in which we are able to practise concentration, meditation, one-pointedness and complete integration with the higher self.

– 1971, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Final Address

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

We are very fortunate to have attended this convention, and hear the very learned and experienced speakers and teachers from different parts of Europe. Before this, I was in Zinal, which was also a fantastic convention in which more than forty-eight countries participated. Previous to that I was in Spain, where we must have had a thousand yoga teachers of high standing from all over Europe.

This is a feast for me because all the time I think about these things in yoga. After all, we do not know where we stand, we do not know where our consciousness is. We have made certain imaginary caricatures about ourselves. So we have to be sure who we are and that we are not a game of time, space and mind. Maybe we are as the scientists used to say. We may be just a game, just a creation of time, space and mind. If that is what we are, then we should know it; and if we are not, then we should also know that.

The whole process of yoga as was pointed out yesterday morning by Mr Kent is body, mind and soul. We have to start yoga and we have to complete it; we have started it and we shall complete it no matter how difficult it is. Do not get frightened about kundalini yoga, every adventure has its own risk. When I think I travel on planes throughout the year, that is the greatest risk I take; kundalini risk is much less than that. If at all I go wrong in kundalini, there are so many good swamis, teachers and good brothers who can set me right, but if once the jumbo falls, there is no hope.

Don't be afraid of pranayama, it is the most pleasing and, I think, the nicest thing in life to sit down quietly, breathe in and hold the breath for one minute or half a minute, it does not matter. No, don't be frightened about any yogic practice. If at all things are being said against it, they are being said



by people who have no personal experience or who have no scientific evidence to substantiate their claims. If someone has been practising kriya yoga, kundalini yoga and pranayama, and if something happens to him that does not make it law or truth. It doesn't make it a principle that because many people die on the train when you go on a train you die. No, there need be no fear of yoga whether it is asana, pranayama, mudra or bandha.

People are afraid of fasting; they all want protein, calcium continuously in their life. Try one month without calcium, the result will be no high blood pressure, no arthritis. Man has created his own fears about those things which are responsible for his physical, mental and spiritual evolution.

When you practise kundalini yoga and awakening of kundalini takes place, what happens? Just for a few days, you don't like to do anything, you understand? For a few days you are not interested in anything, not interested in eating, not interested in talking, or working, you just want experience.

Many people have undergone terrible states of depression, they don't want to eat, talk, think; they don't want to do anything.

There is a swami in our ashram from London, and he used to tell me, "I don't want to eat." I said, "Fast." He said, "I don't want to fast." Well he is there, he is my right hand, an absolute one hundred percent Englishman. I told him, "Okay, go and rest." He said, "I don't want rest." I said, "Then work in the garden." He said, "That is what I don't want to do." I said, "Then do some typing for me." He said, "I don't want to type." I said, "Okay then read some books." "No, I don't want to do that." I said, "Well, what DO you want to do?" He said, "I want to die." I said, "Okay." "But," he said, "I don't want to die." This is what we call a nervous breakdown.

How did this swami get well? That is a beautiful story, a funny story; you may not believe it and I don't believe it even now, but it finished at ten am. After ten, he was okay, he was a perfect Englishman. There was no problem in his personality after ten, but up to ten he was horrible. I thought one day, he would commit suicide by jumping from the fourth floor of my ashram, so I used to tell the swamis, "Keep an eye on him."

One fine morning from the rooftop he saw a pig jumping on some human dung and relishing it. At that moment, he saw a vision. It was a recapitulation, a memory from when he was eight years old and used to go fishing. He used to have a little tin where he put worms and flies. For about one week he did not go fishing and when he checked his tin the little worms had grown little wings, so they all came flying upon him. Harmless creatures, harmless flies, but he was a child. When he saw the pig relishing the human dung, it kicked his mind and he saw one particular instance of his life which was connected with his present problems. From the next day, he didn't have any more symptoms. You can ask him; he is in Munger. It is something wonderful how the samskaras and karma affects our diseases.

I was telling you that when the awakening of kundalini takes place, for a few days you want to remain immersed in

the experience. You have no interest in anything. Is that bad? After all, this awakening is one of man's greatest achievements? All of us have been waiting for that great day when we shall be able to cross the boundaries of life and step into a different dimension of consciousness, from where we shall be able to see both in and out. I don't believe in seeing in only, I believe in seeing in and out both. That day will be the greatest day for man, when he shall be able to bring about a total unity between the inner and outer experience.

At the moment outer and inner experiences are two different areas. After the awakening of kundalini these two areas of experience do not exist anymore, because if you are able to experience inside and you are able to experience outside, how can you say that there are two areas of experiences? There is only one area of experience, but man does not see the whole, and therefore we are blind.

In this convention we have had a lot of nice things. We shall live again, one by one, and hope to be together again. The next convention will be a mammoth one in Bogotá, and I plan to invite a few of the learned people who are here to enlighten us. This convention is organized by our ashram in Munger and our establishment in Latin American countries. We have already had one convention there in 1975, and we shall be having it again in October 1980.

That will be a great joy for the people who speak Spanish, and you know my swamis love Spanish more than they love English. Maybe there is one in the ashram that has weakness for English, but generally my swamis have no weakness for English. The whole group of swamis speak Spanish fluently, and so they look forward to when they can go and say, Gracias Señor, gracias!

*– September 1979, Dublin, Eire,
International Yoga Convention in Saint Patrick's College,
Dublin, Ireland,
organized by the Belfast and Dublin Yoga Centres*

Sexual Act

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Is a knife a killer or a saviour? Well, if you want to kill someone, it is a killer, and if you want to operate on someone, it is a saviour.

The sexual act has three purposes depending upon your evolution: pleasure, progeny and spiritual awareness. Therefore, the sexual life can be helpful for your spiritual evolution. People have misunderstood it. Man has got some sort of guilt about it and he cannot get rid of the ideas that it is bad. Of course it is a pressing demand upon your nature so you follow it. There are only a few crazy people in the world who have not had a sexual experience. Everybody has it and nobody should deny it; it is a fact.

Why do you say you are celibate? Just to tell me you are a good man? I say you are a crazy man. There are natural laws that man has not made. They are not an act or constitution

made by kings and emperors. Man did not create the law that he must go to the toilet every morning. Man did not create the law that everybody must sleep every night. Man did not create the law that everybody must feel insecure. These are natural laws. What is a natural law? It is the law which has been created for the growth of your personality and incarnation. Therefore, you should understand that there must be a purpose and a nature behind.

In spite of everything that has been said about sexual life, it goes without saying that it is one of the most important aspects of human life which you cannot ignore. If breath is important, if natural functions of the body are important, sexual actions are also important. First you have to realize this truth.

Then comes the next question. If I don't do it, am I going to get higher experience? You can, perhaps, but what about the average man? Therefore, we must first of all refer this matter to the tantric philosophy which says that by which man thinks he has fallen, by the same he shall go up!

There are only a few people who can teach how this act can help you. I don't know, so please don't come to me about it. But I definitely know there are people who know.

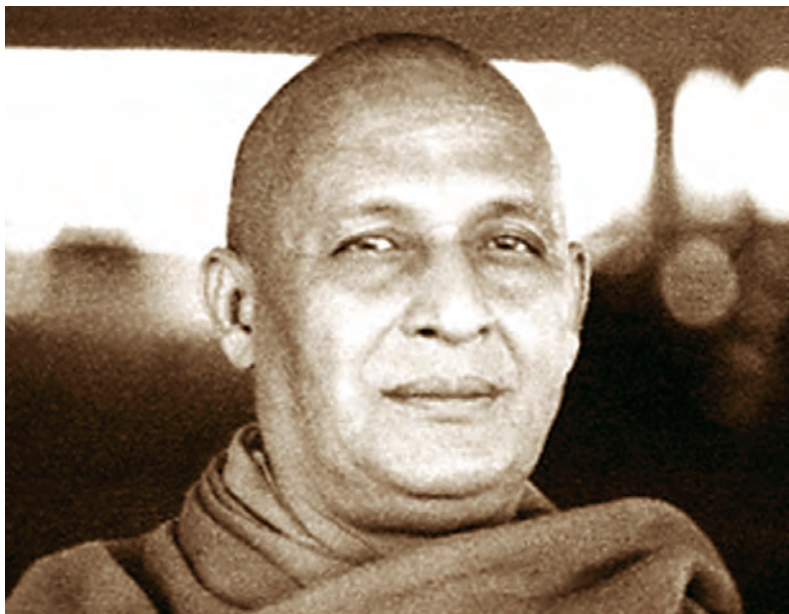
In hatha yoga they have talked about vajroli mudra, uddiyana bandha, shambhavi mudra, moola bandha, sahadjali, and many other practices. Patanjali talks about man's attitude and efficiency to redirect the sexual experience; and I have been telling it time and time again, and I don't have to repeat it. I am of the firm opinion that the sexual life is spiritual sadhana.

Therefore, please sit down with your wife or husband, talk it over with her or him. Then go in search of a guru. Remember, these gurus are never famous; they are not publicized. They come unseen and go unheard. Learn from them the art and practise it at home. Then one day you will see what Swami Satyananda says has some sense in it.

*– Satyananda Yoga Centre, Drishane, Tragumna,
Skibbereen, Cork, County Cork, Eire*

Connect to the Source

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Man is suffering from a block of energy. It is very difficult for us to understand. because we people have become too materialistic. I am not talking that we are materialistic from the point of view that we drink or smoke. No. I am using the word materialistic in the technical sense. We can understand matter, but we are not able to know the spirit. The final sphinx.

When we hear music we start jumping because it is affecting our gross body. We are not able to visualize the subtle forms of music, the sound vibrations, because we are materialistic. Our mind is now only able to comprehend and understand the physical, material base of experience and not the subtler experiences. I say we are materialistic in that sense.

What has to happen? How to break this addiction to materialism? Please understand once more that by materialism

I don't mean our personal lives, I mean our philosophy, our capacity to comprehend experiences. How to break man's addiction to materialism? Why should you not be able to see the mind behind the mind? Why should you not be able to see the matter behind matter? Scientists could see it so they brought up the concept of energy.

For an ordinary man this is just matter, but for the scientist it was not matter, it was the base of energy. Therefore, he could liberate energy from matter. In the same way, should we conclude that mind is the ultimate form of experience? Should we conclude that our consciousness is final and absolute and that there is nothing beyond this? Should we conclude that it is not possible for man to transcend this realm of experience and have a wider range of experience?

Maybe our frustrations, our physical illnesses and emotional problems are due to our limitations of understanding. 'I'm unhappy, frustrated, I want to commit suicide. I don't like my husband, or wife, children. I'm fed up with life. Maybe this particular behaviour of the mind which a person is undergoing is due to the inability of the mind to have a better experience.

When I am repulsed with life, I ask, 'Sun?' And the sun is not shining. I say, 'What happened to the Sun? It is very hazy.' The sun is not hazy; your eyes are not working. There seems to be something like a cataract in man's inner vision. Due to that cataract we are not able to experience life as it should be experienced. It is a matter of experience, and experience is a quality of consciousness. How do we improve the quality of consciousness? It has to be done practically and is not intellectually, please.

You will have to get down to the point somewhere. If you like you practise raja yoga. If you don't like it practise something else. If you don't like that as well, then practise any yoga you like, however the most important thing in yoga is to connect yourself with the source of energy.

– 24 May 1980, Dublin, Eire

Love

Swami Satyanadea Saraswati



I have received so much love from people and I have given love to so many people that I don't really need just one person to give me love or to take my love. I have very much love in me and I also receive very much love, but I know that I cannot receive from one person and give to one person only.

As such, love is not anti-yoga. On the other hand, yoga improves the quality and the quantity of love so much that you are able to give to many people, not only your girlfriend or boyfriend. Well, all are my girlfriends and boyfriends.

Vriksh Sankalpa - Nature Our Teacher

Prasiddhi Singh

Vriksh Sankalpa - Nature Our Teacher is an eco-yogic series talking of nature, culture and learning to inspire everyone not just to think but also to act.

A lesson from the Bael Tree

Hari Om. I am Bael also known as Wood Apple in English. In Sanskrit I am known as Bilva, Shivadruma (tree of Shiva) or Sripthal. My botanical name is *Aegle marmelos*, *A. marmelos* for short. I am known for my great medicinal values. I have a huge family called Rutaceae with 158 genera and 1,900 species. We are native to the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Tamil Nadu. I am found in dry, open forests on hills and plains at altitudes from 0 to 3,937 ft. We are deciduous shrubs to medium-sized trees of up to 43 feet. I and my family have a lifespan of about 80 to 100 years. I originated in India and other parts of Southeast Asia, but I am also found almost everywhere in various different ways, let me share with you how.

Trivia - Did you know?



The Bael tree has multiple names such as Bengal quince, golden apple, Japanese bitter orange, stone apple or wood apple. Wood Apple is also known as Curd fruit, Elephant apple, and Monkey Fruit.

Well, let's start with my health benefits. I am abundant in vitamins particularly A, B and C, and also rich in carbohydrates, iron, potassium and calcium, and full of protein. I am a life saver in conditions like diabetes, digestive and skin problems, constipation, scurvy, earaches, heart problems and even problems with hair. You also use my oil to stay fresh and relaxed, in fact even a dry powder made from my pulp has anti-inflammatory, carminative and anti-bacterial properties. In the *Skandapurana* it has been written that I have originated from the droplets of sweat from goddess Parvati which fell on Mandrachal Parvat.

Let me share a few accomplishments:

1. In Ayurveda I have been given the title 'The Healing Plant' as I have of multiple health benefits.
2. I have been included as one among the *Dasmula* or Ten Roots of different ayurvedic medicinal trees which are vital for the formulation of any kind of ayurvedic medication.
3. Health Products from Fruit to Root: There are various kinds of health products that can be made from my fruits, flowers and leaves. Starting from my fruit, when it is fresh it can be used to make *Bael Sherbat* also called *Bael Pana*. When my fruit is dry it can be used as pulp powder, toffee, squash, murabba, jam, candy or even nectar. The extract of my leaf can be used to control the cholesterol level in the blood or can even be eaten as salad greens. My roots have high ayurvedic potential which is why I am also one among the *Dasmula*. The extract of my bark is also used in traditional remedies.
4. My connection with God: In the *Sri Suktam* of the *Rig Veda* I appear as the abode of Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of prosperity and wealth. Even Goddess Parvati's abode is in my leaves, fruits and flowers which is why Lord Shiva is fond of me. I am also the incarnation of the great Goddess Sati, also known as Mata Sati. My trifoliolate leaves symbolize the three eyes and the trident of Lord Shiva. My leaf also symbolizes Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, the Trimurti, and their functions of creation, preservation and destruction.

It also represents sattwa, rajas and tamas. Sattwa is the positive energy, tamas is the negative energy and rajas is dynamic energy. I also have great value in Buddhist and Jain cultures. I am revered in countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Malaysia.

5. My economic potential & environmental support: By encouraging farmers, especially small scale farmers to grow my tree, farmers will have a wide financial scope as I am used in all the ayurvedic preparation and have multiple health benefits. This gives farmers financial support and in addition utilizing my tree in the right way will help strengthen rural communities. If my tree is grown through sustainable methods such as regenerative agriculture, it will support the environment. The shell of my fruit can be used as an efficient, low-cost absorbent to eliminate heavy metals such as chromium from polluted or drinking water. I am also an important food source for the biodiverse life forms, specifically in the wild.

Trivia – Did you know?



In the case of the Bael tree, the leaves are trifoliate. Which means each leaf is made up of 3 leaflets. The Bilwa is not the only tree to have such a leaf pattern – there are several others such as Palash and the Coral Tree.

But I am sad that despite my uses and benefits people do not understand my value and so are not protecting me. Currently I am under threat and if you do not help we will be vulnerable and soon extinct. This is why I need your help to protect my family and yours as well. So please think about me and take action accordingly.

Shiva is believed to live in the bael tree, so it is worshipped to fulfil a desire or remove an obstacle.

– Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Sankalpa - GIVE

So this was the Bael Tree explaining its importance, benefits and values. While I realized how useful and beneficial Bael is, I also realized that **Give** is a type of positive action that comes from within our soul. This is something that we can learn from Bael, because Bael does not only give from root to fruit, but it also grows in places where other trees cannot. It can grow in a wide range of soil conditions, it is tolerant of waterlogging and has an unusually high temperature tolerance from 7° to 48°C. Thus we can understand that in every condition the Bael Tree gives to society - from its fruits to its roots and in almost every condition it gives. Similarly, we should also give to society, the community and planet whatever we can and in whatever best way possible and in whatever situation.

Now I will request you to please recite the pledge as you read; don't forget to fill in the blank.

I _____ promise to GIVE to the planet and help in protecting the Bael tree. I will hereby take good care of the environment and protect Planet Earth by planting more trees, spreading environment awareness and living a yogic-sustainable lifestyle.

I hope you are following your Eco-Resolution Diary for the Palm Tree - SERVE and the Sandalwood Tree - LOVE. Here are some questions for you to check how well you understand the importance of the Bael Tree and its sankalpa GIVE in your life and how well you fulfil your pledge. Remember, you should



not only think but also act. This is a weekly tick box for your Eco-Resolution Diary:

- Did I plant, water or take care of a tree?
- Did I talk about the environment to friends and neighbours?
- Have I been practising GIVE to live a yogic-sustainable lifestyle? In what ways have I done this?
- Has the Bael Tree become part of my worship?
- Have I started supporting local and native produce by shopping from local vendors?
- Have I started practising the beauty of **Giving** like the Bael Tree?

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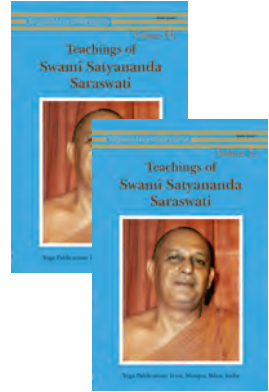
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<i>Oct 4-12</i>	Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training
<i>Oct 15-29</i>	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
<i>Nov 20-29</i>	Kriya Yoga/Jnana Yoga Training

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Aug 7-Oct 7 Yogic Studies, 2 months (Hindi)

Events

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<i>Every Ekadashi</i>	Bhagavad Gita Path
<i>Every Poonima</i>	Sundarkand Path
<i>Every 4th, 5th & 6th</i>	Guru Bhakti Yoga
<i>Every 12th</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamansas