

YOGA

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Hari Om

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Editor: Swami Gyansiddhi Saraswati

Assistant Editor: Swami Yogatirth-ananda Saraswati

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(for Android and iOS devices)

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APMB
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FFH (For Frontline Heroes)

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Swami Satyananda Saraswati



TRIBUTES BY SWAMI SIVANANDA TO SATYAM

“It looks like Satyam’s pockets are full to bursting point.” “This sannyasin’s pockets are empty, Swamiji,” replied Swami Satyam and then added, laughing, “Satyam will proceed on his journey only after you have filled his pockets to the brim.” Gurudev joined in the laughter and then said to one of the swamis, “Ohji, sing a kirtan in honour of Satyananda Maharaj’s trip to Gangotri.” After the kirtan he left saying, “Jaya ho, Jaya ho, glory to Swami Satyananda and his fellow travellers, glory to Ma Gangotri.” Everyone watched the scene transfixed. Not only his pockets, but Swami Satyam’s entire baggage had been filled with precious gems!

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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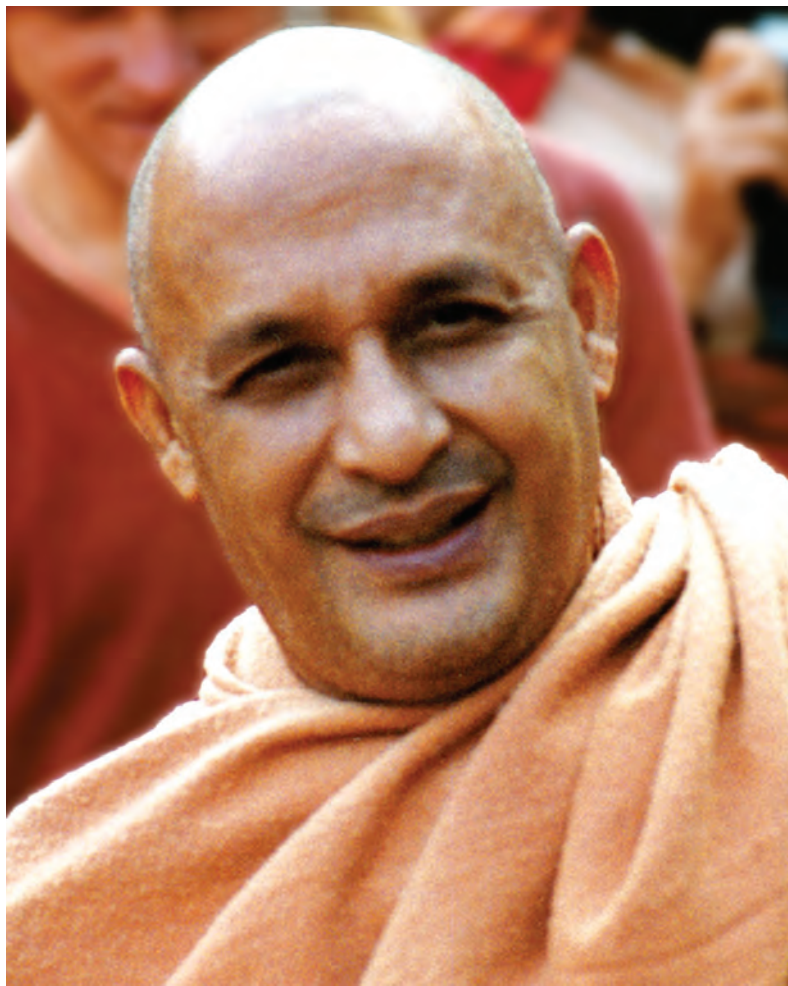
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)
तपस्विभ्योऽधिको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

Love

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



It is very difficult for me to explain love because I have never experienced what you people call love. However, I have thought about it often, because all over the world people ask me, "What is love?" I always use the word *yoga*, as *yoga* means

union. And if love has something to do with union, then it is much better if I explain yoga to you.

Yoga is not only certain exercises or breathing techniques. It is a process of union between Shiva and Shakti, the two complementary aspects in everybody's nature. Shiva represents consciousness and Shakti represents energy. When consciousness and energy unite, a great experience takes place. That is known as the awakening of kundalini.

When I was six years old, I had a fantastic experience. I could see my body but I could not feel it. I felt that I was bodiless. This experience came to me again when I was a little older, and I began to search for an explanation for it. This search led me to many people and to a life that was somewhat different from that of the average person. From the age of twelve or thirteen, I had hardly anything to do with other people. I didn't even know how to relate to my parents, I felt that I was living with them and that was all. Then, when I was in the ashram in Rishikesh, there were many swamis of my age, but I didn't have much to do with any of them.

Later, I attracted a lot of people and many disciples became attached to me, but finally they left me because they thought I did not love them. And this is the most common complaint of all the people who have lived with me in the last thirty to forty years. They come to live in the ashram with me, expecting some sort of love which I don't even understand. Not that I misbehave with them, but I do not know how to say, "I love you".

Often my disciples, students and devotees say, "We have so much devotion for you, but you don't give us anything in return." I don't really know what they want from me, but I have thought about it. I can feel for them and care about their spiritual welfare, and their material welfare too if it is necessary. I can think about them in my meditation or when I am practising japa yoga. I can tend to their physical, material and spiritual welfare, but more than that I cannot do. I think this must be because I was born with some sort of defect. That

particular mechanical device called the emotional aspect was not fitted into this machinery. Well, that meter is not here so it cannot work.

There was a magazine published by this ashram called *Light of Love*. The first issue was sent to me and my secretary held it up and said, "Light of Love." I said, "No! Light of Yoga," because yoga means union. When two things become one, it is called union. I think love should also mean that. Love is not merely talking to each other sweetly. Love is not just embracing.

Love is not merely saying, "My darling, my darling." I've seen the pictures, I've seen the books. Yes, that's romance. I don't mean to say that romance is unnecessary because many people do need it, but I can't explain that. Just as children need toys, some people need romance as well. But there is a higher aspect of man's mind and consciousness, and we call it union. This union can occur between the two complementary constituents of your personality called Shiva and Shakti.

In the human body, within the framework of the vertebral column, there are two channels passing from mooladhara chakra up to ajna chakra. They are known as ida and pingala nadis. Through certain practices, such as shambhavi mudra (eyebrow centre gazing), trataka, pranayama with kumbhaka, and kriya yoga, the forces of ida and pingala can be united. When the energies of these two channels are united, a current is created and then the energy descends to mooladhara chakra and awakens the sleeping kundalini shakti. This union is the highest of all unions, and when it occurs, you begin to feel everybody is a part of you and that the whole world is your expansion and expression. Then you do not see the difference between yourself and myself and you do not feel separate from other things. So, this is all I can say about your word 'love' which, in my language, is known as yoga.

– November 1980, Satyananda Ashram,
Mangrove Mountain, Australia

Airport Press Conference

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Question: Is this your first trip to Australia?

Swamiji: No, the third one.

Question: When were your other trips?

Swamiji: 1968 and 1969.

Question: What brought you here?

Swamiji: This conference – the yoga conference of the International Yoga Fellowship.

Question: How did you first come to yoga?

Swamiji: I was born with yoga. I did not accept yoga as a different way of life.

Question: How important is it when practising yoga to maintain a positive attitude yoga?

Swamiji: Even if one doesn't have a positive mental attitude, one will develop it through the practice of yoga. It is not the positive mental attitude that is necessary for yoga, it is yoga that is necessary for the positive mental attitude.

Question: What is the main message of yoga? What is the main purpose of yoga?

Swamiji: Better control of the mind and creativity.

Question: How can yoga increase knowledge of oneself?

Swamiji: By practice, by emulating it, by living it.

Question: How do you live it though?

Swamiji: There are methods of yoga, technical and practical, which you have to practise every day for some time so that you can develop the body and mind, and bring about a coordination between both.

Question: Our lifestyle is making us suffer more, and trust each other less. How can yoga change that situation?

Swamiji: Yoga is going to change that situation. The present picture is very dark, because the people who come to yoga arrive in very confused states of mind. Now that they have taken to yoga, in the course of time, their minds will evolve. As such all will change, and unity will come between man and man.

Question: Are there many world leaders, top politicians who practise yoga?

Swamiji: There certainly are. Of course, I don't know everyone, but as far as I can say top leaders all over the world are aware of yoga. And even those who are not practising are convinced of the effective role of yoga in the mental make-up of man.

Question: Is yoga a religion?

Swamiji: No, it is a science, definitely it is a science. Of course, ultimately a man's particular religion may accept yoga in the background of his own culture.

Question: But it does have spiritual overtones, doesn't it?

Swamiji: Certainly, when the mind evolves, it becomes spiritual.

Question: But there is no conflict between yoga and established religions?

Swamiji: There certainly should not be, just as there is no conflict between biology and Christianity. One is a science, the other a religion. As science is necessary for man, religion is also necessary.

Question: How can yoga be applied in everyday western life, say, for a businessman?

Swamiji: Just by practising. He must find some time for the practice of yoga, either in the morning or in the evening, as it may be convenient for him.

Question: When you said "Yoga can make a man more creative," what did you mean by that?

Swamiji: The limitation of the mind must be removed. The mind has limitations. You see, in everyday society there are limited minds, there are unlimited minds, there are potential minds.

Question: So you mean that if a man did yoga very well and he wasn't very good at mathematics, he could become a mathematician?

Swamiji: Certainly he could become a brilliant mathematician; he could become a brilliant scientist, a great swami, a very great . . .

Question: A composer of music?

Swamiji: That too.

Question: Do you think yoga has any political aspirations?

Swamiji: No, I don't think so because yoga brings about an evolution of the mind, thereby transcending political ambitions. Political ambitions belong to the lower category of evolution, not the higher category of evolution.

Question: How can yoga be taught to all people internationally?

Swamiji: Oh, as a science; you can teach it in schools, in public institutions. You should have academics for it. That's what you can do.

Question: Would you say that yoga is more of a physical thing than a mental thing?

Swamiji: No, it is a physical thing as well as a mental thing. After all, when yoga has to cater to the needs of the human being, it should cater to his physical as well as his mental needs.

Question: It has a very definite ritual about it. Is it a religious thing? I mean, are you a religious man?

Swamiji: I have a religion, but yoga doesn't have a religion. Yoga is a science. Even as I study a science like biology, anatomy or physiology, likewise, I can study yoga also.

Question: But what about the ritual that goes with it? Is that absolutely necessary?

Swamiji: Not at all. Rituals depend on individuals.

Question: For instance, the colour of the clothes that you are wearing; why do you wear that particular colour?

Swamiji: This particular colour is the colour of a swami; it is the colour of a sannyasin. It means we are dedicated to a purpose which concerns and involves the evolution of the inner personality.

Question: Do you get any physical vibration from that colour?

Swamiji: Definitely. Purity, strength, and an undaunted will to live.

Question: Swamiji, why have you shaved your head?

Swamiji: I have shaved my head in order to facilitate meditation, to be more receptive at the time of communion with the inner self.

Question: How does shaving the head help you to do this?

Swamiji: This concerns the science of magnetism. When you have no hair, you receive a greater amount of cosmic energy in the brain. During the period of meditation this cosmic energy helps you to maintain the height of consciousness.

Question: One of the greatest problems facing our society is hypertension, stress and heart attacks. What help can yoga be in this?

Swamiji: I personally believe as I have experienced that for stress and strain there is no better remedy than yoga.

Question: Well, you know, an average businessman mightn't like to wear the gear, shave his head and that sort of thing. How can he get into yoga in a way that's acceptable to him?

Swamiji: He has to remain a businessman, but he must practise certain postures and other techniques while at home, and then he'll get rid of his problems.

Question: Would you like to estimate how much it is going to increase his efficiency.

Swamiji: Well, it depends on how much practice he does. If the businessman, executives and administrators devote some of



their time to the practice of yoga, even if they don't develop efficiency, they can go a long way towards preventing stress, strain, nervous breakdowns, hypertension and so on.

Question: Do you think that we would have a better world if there was a movement amongst politicians to practise yoga?

Swamiji: Well, I believe that politicians must practise yoga. Thereby their consciousness will evolve, and they will be able to look at the problems of the world from a broader and more powerful angle.

Question: Which is more important, the mind or the body?

Swamiji: Both are important for each there. The mind is important, but the body carries it.

Question: Tell me, how much travelling around the world do you do?

Swamiji: Almost every month, sometimes to South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, India, others places.

Question: Who pays for your fares?

Swamiji: The world pays for my fares. I have got hundreds of thousands of good friends all over the world.

Question: You don't have any financial problems?

Swamiji: I have no financial problems. I have no personal bank account anywhere in the world. I don't own a penny. I have no money; I have no property.

Question: So when people want you to go somewhere they just send you a ticket?

Swamiji: Yes. From the other angle I am a beggar. I have no bank account of my own; I have no personal property of my own; I have no relatives.

Question: You have no wife.

Swamiji: No, not at all, never. I don't need one.

Question: Why do you not need a wife?

Swamiji: Well, I don't need one that is all. It is my personal mind. A wife is not the need of everyone. A wife is a social compulsion. Society has created a tradition, so everybody is following it. Tomorrow society will change, and then maybe many people would not like to have one.

Question: What about the economic problems some countries have, unemployment, and so on. Can yoga be of some help in solving these sorts of problems, mass problems?

Swamiji: I can tell you very frankly that I don't know much about economics, but I know that yoga can bring about a great change in the mind, and then man can find the way for himself.

Question: You don't think there is any conflict between yoga and traditional ethics?

Swamiji: No. Ethics has its own stand and yoga has its own. There cannot be any contradiction.

Question: I mean yoga, for example, wouldn't encourage people to drop out of normal day-to-day life and lead the life of tranquillity but without working . . .

Swamiji: No, yoga believes in hard work, a disciplined mind and alertness of personality. Everything should be creative and not destructive. Yoga believes in the evolution of the human mind, the human body, one's career and everything. So naturally it is never in disagreement with any religion or science.

Question: Swamiji, is the physical fitness aspect important with regard to yoga?

Swamiji: No, not necessarily. Even if one is physically unfit and takes to yoga, he becomes fit. Fitness is not important for yoga, but yoga is important for fitness.

Question: There are no strict rules about diet that come into yoga, are there?

Swamiji: No, not at all.

Question: How about if one of your devotees is a diabetic and he can't eat a lot of rice?

Swamiji: He will eat something else which is good for him. He is not restricted. You see, yoga is also for sick people, and therefore the restrictions will apply according to the sickness. Yoga is also for people who meditate long hours on inner communion or awareness of their inner soul. There can be some restrictions then, because long hours of meditation can bring down the inner temperature of the body. If you eat a heavy diet when the inner temperature of the body is brought down, it will impair your digestive system.

Question: For the people who are listening here today who may doubt what you have been saying, would you suggest a quick little exercise that they could do right now which would convince them that yoga can bring about some changes?

Swamiji: Well, first of all they should practise an exercise known as surya namaskara. After that they should quietly sit down, close their eyes and concentrate on their normal and natural breath flowing through the nostrils for as long as they can manage. This is the exercise with which meditation begins.

Question: How long should they do that for?

Swamiji: Well, they can start with five minutes and work up to fifteen minutes.

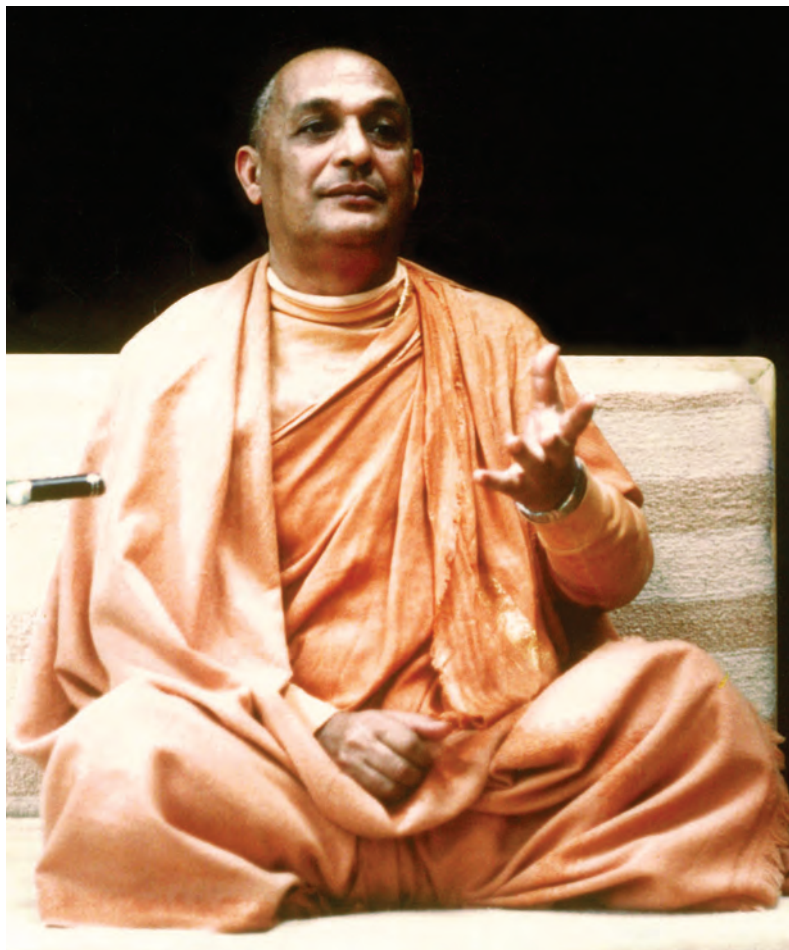
Question: And what should someone who is a complete novice feel after that?

Swamiji: After that he will feel totally relaxed, as if he has come out of a mental crisis.

*– 7 October 1976, Sydney Airport,
broadcast throughout Australia by TV, radio and press,
published in YOGA Vol. 15, No. 1 (January 1977)*

Karma Sannyasa Initiation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Today you are being initiated into karma sannyasa. It is a very important initiation. Karma sannyasa is much more difficult than full sannyasa, because you have to maintain a very careful balance between the external life and the inner inspiration without rejecting anything. Therefore, the balance that you

have to maintain between the external life and the inner life becomes a very important philosophy for you.

For most people, the difficulties, the problems in life are either punishments of nature or the fruits of one's bad karma. For a karma sannyasin, every experience in life is a stepping-stone; it is complementary and not contradictory. This point and this philosophy have to become very clear for a karma sannyasin, then only whatever you are, whatever you do or whatever you experience in life will help you to have inner experience.

If you think that this external life is harmful, that it is not good and it is anti-spiritual, then you will create a conflict between the inner and outer life. As a karma sannyasin, you are trying to unite both the forms of life. This is a very important aspect of karma sannyasa. When you are trying to unite or to fuse the external things of your day-to-day life, your job, your family, your children, with the inner experience, then you will have to create a very definite and clear-cut relationship between the two.

How is your external life to which you are committed every day? Is it related to an inner experience? Is it related to spiritual life, and how is it related? Now, in this particular respect you must remember that any experience which you have in your day-to-day life: quarrels, unhappiness, success, jubilation, joy, anger, frustration or even physical sickness, is leading you to inner experience; it is not disturbing your inner experience.

However, most of us do not think like that and we are angry, we are sorry, we repent and we don't want to have it any more. When we are unhappy and frustrated, we don't want that experience. That is the psychology of most people, but in karma sannyasa any experience which nature has provided for you is helpful for the spiritual experience and for the growth of spiritual life.

Three things are very important for a karma sannyasin. One is his daily practice, which he must decide for himself and do every day. The second is to involve himself in the spirit of

karma yoga. The spirit of karma yoga is the fulfilment of all obligations without attachment. When you are unaffected by what happens in your daily life, that is called *karma yoga*. The third thing is relationship with guru, not on the physical plane, mental plane, intellectual plane or emotional plane, but on the spiritual plane. To experience the relationship between guru and disciple on the spiritual plane, it will become necessary for you to go a bit deeper into the mind. When you go deeper into the mind, then you begin to realize the spiritual relationship. When you are not deep in the mind, when you are outside, then you realize the physical relationship, emotional relationship or intellectual relationship.

However, there is something called the spiritual relationship, which I will not be able to explain to you now, but which you will experience only when you have been able to go a bit deeper into your mind. As you dive deeper into the mind there comes the awareness of a link between guru and disciple. So, karma yoga, your spiritual sadhana and your relationship with guru are the three most important factors in the life of a karma sannyasin.

There are quite a few books you should read on karma sannyasa. One book published by me entitled *Karma Sannyasa* contains the philosophy, doctrine and practices of karma sannyasa. It will give you a very clear idea and answer many questions on the subject.

The second is a very important old and classical text known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is a small book in which you can read about the difficulties which a karma sannyasin encounters in day-to-day life and how he has to deal with his problems, with his inner life and with various aspects of his life. You should read it from time to time. That will give you a philosophical approach and understanding of karma sannyasa.

– 17 March 1984, Auckland Country Ashram, New Zealand,
published in Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati,
Volume V

The Science of Tantra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The science of tantra is very ancient. It is not, and it has never been, confined to any one culture or period of history. Even when man lived in a primitive state, tantra was known from time to time in every society. Especially in the olden days, people living in communities or villages found someone having special abilities like healing, reading thoughts, controlling the weather or predicting coming events. Such people were found in every community, in every time and period in history. These people did not practise any yoga. They somehow jumped over the fence, or maybe the generative combination in them meant they were born with a particular ability unrelated to the logical combination of mind, object and senses.

The source of man's psychic abilities

Our experiences in day-to-day life depend upon coordination between the mind, the senses and the object. If this coordination is not there, then there is no experience, but in those cases which I am referring to, knowledge and experience did take place without any coordination between object, mind and senses.

In the communities of primitive ages, these people were known as psychics, witches, hermits or ascetics. They were given various names according to the quality of the culture, and at the same time their ability was attributed to different causes. Some people said a spirit had entered them and so the spirit was doing it. Others said that those abilities had developed due to drugs. Still others said that they had been blessed by God, some divinity, angel or deva and so he was doing this. Various explanations were given for these psychic abilities.

In India, they tried to find the exact source of man's psychic abilities, whether it was due to an external spirit, devil or demon or if it was due to a spontaneous evolution in the system – maybe psychological, maybe genetic. In this research, this experimentation, this discovery, they came to realize that all that was happening in these people was on account of expansion of mind, expansion of consciousness, expansion of awareness.

This expansion of awareness, which took place in these people spontaneously, by an accidental genetic combination, created what we call a fresh release of energy. Here you come to the secret. When you are able to expand the mind, you release energy. Releasing energy means liberating energy, emancipating energy. What is this liberation, what is this emancipation and what is this word freedom?

The process of fission and fusion

Let me explain this in the tantric sense. When you churn milk, the butter is released; butter is freed or liberated. In the same way, when you separate the elements in matter, say uranium, then the energy is released – nuclear energy. In all

matter there is a certain amount of energy. According to the tantric science, matter is a gross form of energy. The matter does not contain energy, matter is a gross form of energy and, therefore, matter is nothing but energy. As such, matter can be completely converted into energy and energy can be converted into matter totally.

Matter and energy are not two separate things. Matter in one state, when converted, equals energy. However, when we are talking about a process of conversion, then we come to the conclusion that the energy has to become free from matter and to release the energy, a certain process has to be initiated. In nuclear science there are two processes. One is called fission and the other is called fusion. These two processes are utilized in the nuclear release.

The same fission and fusion process is also used in releasing, in liberating one's personal energy. When we say fission we mean that you will have to separate the idea and experience from the experiencer. He is called the seer, the one who sees, experiencer who experiences, witness who witnesses. What does he see? He sees an object. What does he think? He thinks a thought. What does he witness? He witnesses an event. There is an experiencer in us. And that experiencer is experiencing, is witnessing, is seeing each and every process, but these two things, the experiencer and the experience, are both so mixed with each other, like tea and sugar, so interspersed and entangled with each other, that we philosophers, logicians, intellectuals know them as two, but we can't see them as two. We can't separate the seer and the seen. This separation is called fission. You have to separate both seer and seen, and when you are separating the seer from the object, the witness from the event, at that time what happens is called yoga – separation.

Now, in the Samkhya system, which is the basic philosophy behind yoga and tantra, they don't say seer and seen, witness and event. They use the terms purusha and prakriti. The consciousness is called purusha and the experiences or the events are called prakriti.

It is very difficult to translate these two terms exactly. *Prakriti* means nature, not just in the relative sense, but in the total sense. It refers to all creation, everything that is in existence. *Purusha* is the consciousness, the seer of time, the seer of space, the seer of all events, the seer of past, present and future, the seer of everything. You are that, but you cannot experience yourself in the pure purusha state because whenever you try to experience yourself, you are experiencing yourself in time and space. There is no pure awareness of the self, of the consciousness, and this has to be established, accomplished first. That is called fusion. What is fusion?

In fusion, when you are concentrating on a particular point, object, idea or substance, at that time the whole of your mental consciousness must fuse with that object, so that for the time being you lose self-awareness – ‘I am that’. These two processes have to be established. In one you become aware of yourself and also of the experiences. That is called fission – separation. In the other, you lose self-consciousness and merge with the experience. That process is called fusion. This is tantra.

The beginning of psychic research

In tantra they say very clearly that the mind is the tool of awareness and knowledge in every sphere. This mind can function without limitation, but in order to make it function beyond limitation you will have to train it. The mind is limited. If an object is here, you can see it; if an object is not here, you can't see it. If music is played here, you can hear it; if music is not played here, you can't hear it. That is the limited scope of the mind.

Now, what is expansion of mind? When the mind can experience something without the aid of an object, without the aid of the senses, then it is called expansion of mind. If you sit down quietly somewhere and spontaneously begin to listen within yourself to a theme of music or a song, or you begin to see within yourself something beautiful or horrible, something pleasant or unpleasant, that is called expansion



of mind, because your mind is able to perceive without any external basis.

At this time a certain amount of energy is released and the release of this energy is called awakening. It is in this context that tantra has established the processes of yoga: hatha yoga, kriya yoga, mantra yoga. These are all branches of tantra; they are not different from tantra. Yoga is the practical side of tantra.

In this tantric system innumerable experiments have been conducted for thousands of years. Of course, many of these experiments are unsuitable today, although the scholars who write the books on tantra never fail to mention all those frightening practices and then the people try to utilize them. These practices are unsuitable, because in each and every age the techniques of yoga and tantra have to be adapted to the particular culture and taught in the framework of that culture. That is the way the practices have to be done.

In the olden days, sometimes people tried to awaken their consciousness through the drinking of soma, but later it was stopped because they found that it was not adequate for perennial spiritual experience. They also realized that after the drinking of soma, if the expansion of mind did take place and energy was released, they were not able to handle that experience. Later on, many other drugs were tried in the course of history. They tried cannabis indica and hashish, which the West is trying now, and finally they rejected it.

Early tribes used many things in their quest for consciousness expansion. Here in the museum you have ancient tribal

symbols called tikis. Now the origin of these symbols has been forgotten, but they were once intended to influence the psychic framework, the psychic dimension of the mind. That is why they used to keep these things for ceremonials and dance around them and sing and sing. Thereby, the practice was obviously able to trigger off the higher consciousness.

Many ancient tribes all over the world in Africa, South America, India, Persia, the Middle East, Scandinavia, Slavic countries, Japan and China had symbols of psychic culture. These symbols were considered to be idols or to represent some form of divinity, and they were intended to stimulate, to blow, to detonate, to explode that energy within us. They also tried the method which releases energy through sexual interaction. In tantra, this is called the *pancha makara*, which involves the use of the five *tattwas* or elements: wine, woman, flesh, fish and grain. Throughout the world, even today, scholars who write about tantra never fail to mention this practice, not because it is relevant today, but in order to expose this aspect of tantra.

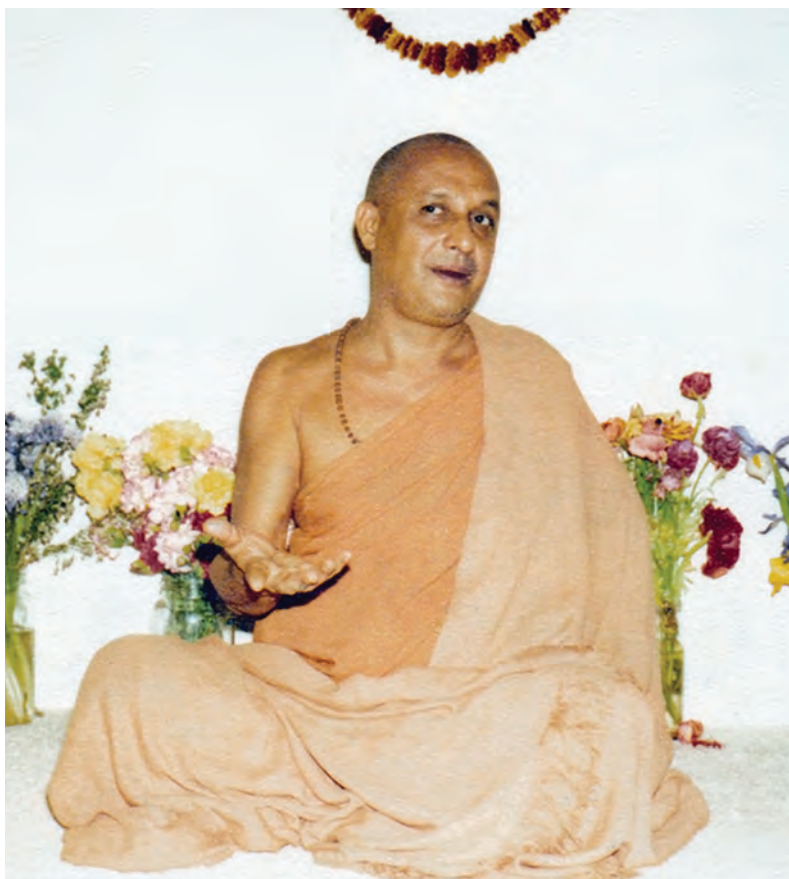
People did try that aspect of tantra as well, but they found that all these practices had their own limitations, either cultural, moral, religious or even spiritual. If you keep taking hashish or cannabis indica for many, many years, your memory will definitely be shattered along with your lungs. If you try to practise this *pancha makara* ceremony, you are going to create moral anarchy. There will be problems everywhere throughout the country.

In addition to these practices, Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* gave five traditional ways of awakening. If you want to perfect your consciousness, to raise your energies and to improve the quality of your awareness, then these five ways are suggested: 1. birth, 2. mantra, 3. austerity, 4. herbs, and 5. concentration.

– 18 March 1984, Auckland Country Ashram, New Zealand,
published in *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati*,
Volume V

Bhakti

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Once upon a time, a young girl was going to meet her boyfriend. She was deeply engrossed in the awareness of him. In the lane through which she was passing, a Muslim had spread his mat and was repeating his prayers. Muslims pray five times a day, anywhere and everywhere, even in the middle of the road. They are very strict about their prayer time. So he had spread his mat and was saying his prayers.

However, the girl was so engrossed in thoughts of her lover that she walked right over the mat and kept going. The gentleman who was praying could not control himself. He got up and shouted at her, "Arrogant, shameless, uncivilized." The girl continued walking and did not respond. The man became furious and ran after her calling, "Hey, hey!" Again she gave no reply. Then he blocked her way and demanded, "Why did you walk over my mat?"

The girl was taken aback and she said, "What mat? What do you mean?" The man said, "You unholy wretch! I was praying and you walked over my mat." The girl paused for a moment, and then gave a very revealing reply, "I was so engrossed in thoughts of my lover that I did not see you or your mat. How is it that you could have seen me walk over your mat, if you were praying to God?"

Therefore, the object which you select for concentration should be like the beloved of the girl, not the beloved of the man. That is where most of us have been making a great mistake. All of the saints, from the vedic rishis to Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, right down to the present day, have been stressing the same note, bhakti yoga. Your object of concentration should be related to you through your heart, not through your intellect. The mantra and the deity, which are the basis for consolidation of dissipated energy should be a matter of heart more than head.

Is bhakti yoga necessary?

What is heart? It is spontaneity of feeling, selection and choice. When you want to get off the mental plane, you have to use a greater force. A little bit of practice with a dry mantra here and a dry deity there will not do.

One of the great saints of India was Mirabai. She was a princess and a queen, then she became a swami, a sannyasin. She left her kingdom and devoted her whole life to the spiritual quest until she reached the final destination. Every Indian knows her songs. Mirabai says that when there is infinite love,

there is no further practice. "My beloved is in me, and therefore I do not have to go anywhere."

This spontaneity of devotion, this bhakti yoga, is the culmination point which everyone should remember. When one wants to evolve in spiritual life, dry raja yoga will not do; full, exciting kundalini yoga will not do. I have absolute respect for all of these, because I teach them. I am not criticizing them. I am only pointing out their limitations. You have to awaken the devotional aspect in yourself, and do not say that you do not have it. If you did not have this stuff in you, how could you love, how could you hate, how could you be happy?

Emotion, passion, attachment, the knowledge and feelings of pleasure and pain, are based on, or are the offspring of this stuff called *bhava* or attitude, *bhakti* or devotion. It is a very important point that we have to ponder in our lives. We have been living the life of a Christian, devoted to Christ, God and Church. Or we have been living the life of a Hindu, devoted to Hindu dharma, the temple, Rama and Krishna, and so forth.

In the course of time, all of these religious formalities have followed a tradition of decadence. There is nothing wrong with them, but everything has degenerated and decayed. Our Gurus, in Hinduism as well as in Christianity, have failed to explain how bhakti is intimately connected with the emotions and passions of our lives. Just as a passionate man loves a woman, or vice versa, so we must approach our deity with the same force, attitude and spontaneity. Do you have to make an effort when you love somebody? No! It is not difficult. Maybe sometimes you even have to control yourself!

How can we develop bhakti?

There is a certain technique by which bhakti will become spontaneous, by which this dormant substance, this latent quality of bhakti will become a reality in your life.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was once travelling with a disciple in a small boat. The disciple said, "Paramahamsaji, please tell me how to feel the spontaneity of love for God."



Ramakrishna at once became angry and said, “What nonsense you are speaking!” He promptly threw him into the river and told the boatman to row on.

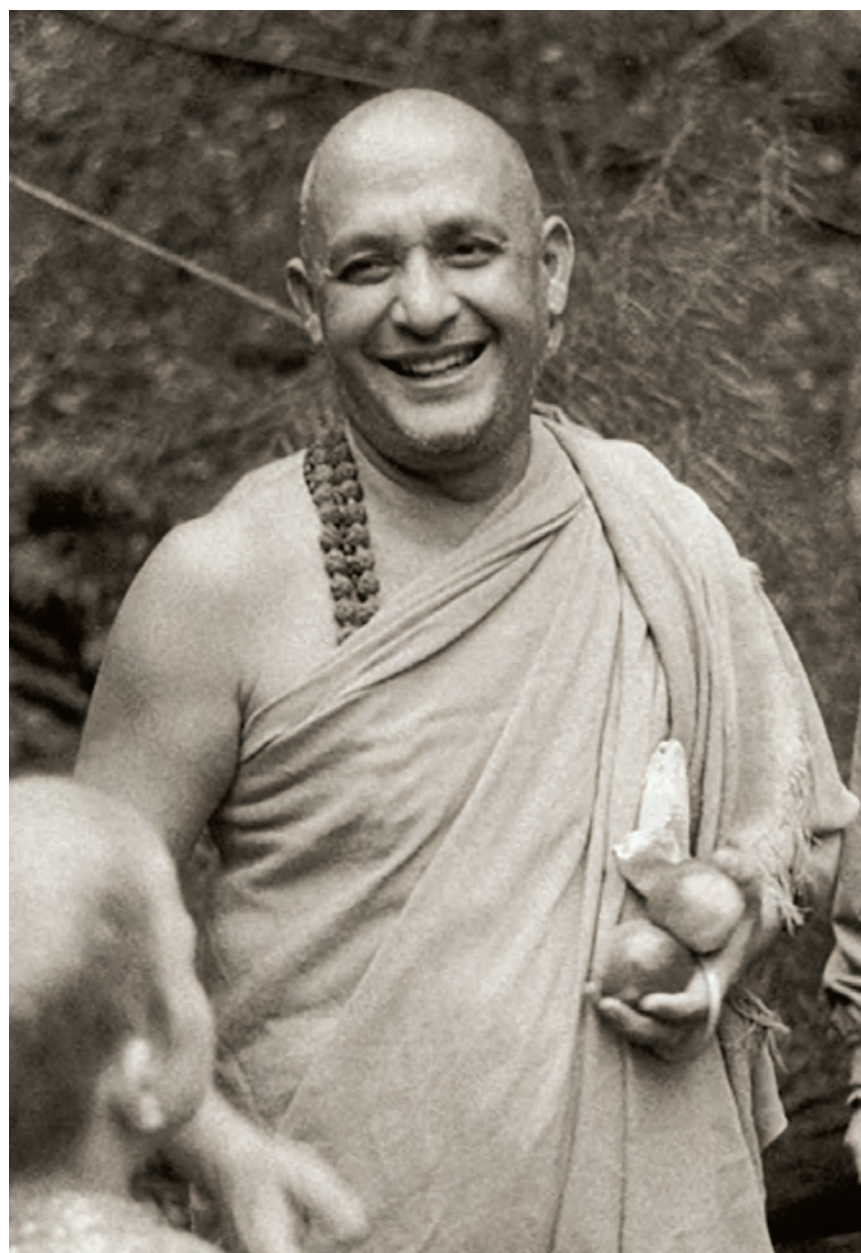
Now, the disciple did not know how to swim and he was struggling and gasping for breath; he was pining for life. Finally, the boatman went back and rescued him. After some time, when the man had recovered from his dunking, Ramakrishna asked, “How did you find the experience?” The disciple replied, “Only one thing was in my mind – how to survive, how to live.”

This is the way we should think and feel when we sit for meditation. There should be nothing in our minds but Guru, nothing but our faithful deity. But it is not there! Why? Because we have been practising dhyana yoga without developing our love to the full extent. We have been practising Rajneesh meditation, we have been practising ajapa japa meditation, without fully developing, without fully manifesting, without fully exposing the bhakti aspect of our lives.

This bhakti aspect has been misused. We have been squandering our bhakti. Where has our bhakti gone? To the









pictures, to the television, from one man to another man, from one girl to another girl, from one type of dress to another type of dress. We have been squandering this great, priceless gem, this gift of eternal reality which every animal, vegetable and human being possesses, which everything has. This bhakti has to be developed.

The one who ignites the dormant bhakti in your personality, the Guru, comes first in spiritual life. Once the bhakti is accomplished, dhyana yoga becomes spontaneous. You close your eyes and things start happening. For the awakening of this bhakti, Guru is the first, the second is kirtan, and the third is satsang.

Importance of satsang

Satsang is association, congregation, conference, meeting with the people who discuss and talk about the things pertaining to spiritual life - not politics, sociology, finances, romance, weather, fashion or food, but the spiritual life. This congregation, where we are meeting at this moment, is a satsang. *Sang* means 'coming together' and *sat* means 'truth, reality, spirit'. Satsang is very important. Someone must tell us the stories of those great saints who had the vision of the supreme.

Longfellow, the poet, said that we have to read the lives of the great saints to make our own lives sublime. Throughout history, these saints have led a unique type of life. They have experimented with a new system of life, a new conduct, a new way of thinking. They were revolutionaries of their time. I have read practically all of them, the Hindu saints, the Christian saints, the Sufi saints, the Muslim saints, the Hebrew saints and the Greek saints. If you go through their lives, they will inspire you. Their inspiration will awaken the bhakti. This is how we have to plod on with our spiritual consciousness.

– 1978, Australia,
published in YOGA, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March 1995)

Superior Birth

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The life of man is not for enjoyment. The superior life is not for this inferior purpose. The ordinary man lives with limitations but with complete access to the pleasures of life. However, this human body, this mind, this heart and soul which we have are not meant to be wasted in the fulfilment of pleasures. This is where the whole problem has cropped up.

The human body is a superior creation of God and this human incarnation has been ordained for us to fulfil the purpose of spiritual experience. No being other than the human being can have access to spiritual experience. Only we can have the experience of God, of atman, of the Supreme. God created this superior frame for the fulfilment of the spiritual purpose. But when we squander away the qualities of this superior birth in lower enjoyments, we bring pain, frustration, heart disease and mental breakdowns upon ourselves.

All the problems man is facing today are caused by the misuse of his incarnation. That is the only reason. We have been misusing this valuable human body. Not all of us need to become swamis, but definitely we must become devotees, *bhaktas*, and day by day increase our spiritual awareness, so that some day we may not be disappointed like some swamis who come to Munger for samadhi and end up with shankhprakashalana.

The Ashram

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



There is a pattern of life in the ashram which is completely different to the pattern of life you have in your environment or homes. Ashrams have to be different, and they have to provide, to create opportunities and facilities for the aspirants to live there more simply and to work harder, not softer, than they have ever experienced before.

The word ashram is a Sanskrit word. *Shram* means 'effort, labour'. A person who is working hard is doing shram. This is the Sanskrit expression. Now, working hard on the physical plane in the kitchen, in the garden, building construction, cleaning, management, etc., is external or physical hard work. That is also shram and that is one aspect of ashram life. At the same time, there is another way or dimension of working hard and that is the inner dimension: spiritual labour. You are trying to tread upon the path and you have undertaken an uphill task for yourself. It is not flat, plain ground. You have to pass through mountains, fields, valleys and many difficult terrains. You have to face various areas of your personality and for that you also have to work hard. To concentrate is to do stupendous labour. That is also shram.

Meditation is inner labour. Working in the ashram in the form of kriya yoga is also shram. That is why I have chosen the word ashram rather than yoga association, yoga academy, yoga school or anything else, because I want to make it clear that you have come here and you will be coming here for shram. Yes, for shram, labour, and the harder you work, the better is the quality of relaxation. If you are a lazy person, the quality of relaxation will be very inferior. If you are labouring hard, physically, mentally and spiritually, if you are a hard worker on the external as well as on the internal plane, then the quality of relaxation will be superior. You must remember this. That is why we have created a network of ashrams all over the world.

A new lease on life

Everyone should understand that they must spend some time every year in an ashram to express their physical, mental and intellectual energies and create things – bring forth vegetables, fruits, houses, roads, rooms. You have to create and that will give you a new idea after some time and that is going to be a discovery.

At this moment, many of you think that because you live with your family, you have to have attachments and you

have to face the consequences of attachment and detachment, love and hate. You go through many ups and downs on the emotional plane in relation to your interactions with your family members and friends, and you find it very difficult to change the quality of your experiences. You want to change the quality of your experiences arising from your interactions, but you find it very difficult.

When events in the family and society go against you, you are shocked and unhappy. You don't know how to manage it. You see, living in an ashram, working hard for the ashram, creating things, gives you another glimpse of your experiences with your people and friends, every now and then. After involving yourself with the ashram work mentally and physically, you will discover something. You will find a new idea, a new approach to the problems of relationships in daily life.

We are all one

There is a beautiful story, and with this I close. There was a farmer whose wife died. He called the priest and requested him to chant sutra and mantra incantations for her wellbeing in the other world. The priest began to pray. The farmer asked, "Are you praying for my wife?" The priest replied, "I'm praying for her as well as for all sentient and insentient beings." The farmer exclaimed, "But I asked you to pray for her exclusively. Why are you praying for all?"

So the priest explained, "It is my *dharma*, my duty, to pray for all beings, sentient and insentient, living and dead, and your wife is one of them." The farmer said, "But please make an exception. I do not want you to pray for the man who lives next to me because he is a rascal. If you pray for all beings, living and dead, then you are praying for him also, and I don't want you to do that."

This is how everybody lives life, but we have to be different, because the whole universe is embedded together, united by one thread and that thread is in you, in me and in everyone.

It is in order to experience this that we come to stay in the ashram for some time. And when we have caught a glimpse of that totality, then we are able to return to our homes with a new vision of life, which will help to guide us through even the most difficult situations.

The spirit of the ashram

An ashram is not just an external structure; there has to be a spirit in it. A temple without spirit, a church without spirit, an ashram without spirit or a body without spirit is nonsense. Spirit is symbolized by light, because we need it. In the darkness of night, when you want to go out you take a torch with you, and if you do not have a torch light, you will stumble.

In the same way there are various levels of man's existence where he needs light, and everywhere there is darkness. We are not able to see within our own selves. Our minds, thoughts, emotions, ambitions, everything is moving in the realm of darkness. By chance we sometimes experience happiness, but it has come to us only by mistake; we do not deserve it. As human beings we are travelling within the spiritual darkness and therefore the essence of light has to be brought in. In the ashram also there has to be light, and the person who is looking after the ashram has to be a light, so that in the course of time he can fill the hearts of his pupils and disciples with inner awareness.

Light and inner awareness mean the same thing. When the inner awareness grows in the mind, intellect and heart of the disciple or pupil, then and only then has he been given the light. When this inner awareness grows within him, gradually inner happiness and understanding increase, and then things begin to change. That is why we inaugurate an ashram with the kindling of a light.

*– 30 January 1984, Rocklyn Ashram, Australia,
published in Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati,
Volume V*

Science of Mental Training

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga is a science of mental training and is intimately connected with the evolution of human consciousness. Yoga can be practised by everybody, irrespective of religion, caste, colour or nationality. It does not interfere with the classical religions or different theological systems. In fact, the first classical yoga system was conceived by a man who denied the existence of God. Every individual is in search of tranquillity, peace of mind and balance. It is not possible for us to stop thinking. There is the compulsion of society, civilization and of our personal desires of acquisition and fulfilment. We are weak and have limited mental capacities, and on important occasions when we badly need their services they may fail to help us.

At critical moments, we are seized with nervous disorders, obsessions, inhibitions and so many other mental illnesses that surround us. The personality becomes distorted and behaviour is unnatural and artificial; we feel so unhappy about it. The main problem facing us is – can all these mental symptoms be eradicated? Medical science has brought many forms of

tranquillizers, LSD, sleeping pills and so on. We are using them in increasing numbers, which proves that we have lost mental balance and tranquillity.

Tensions

Let us diagnose our psychological background and the resulting errors of human thinking and behaviour. It is reported that our behaviour patterns are dependent on threefold tensions: mental, muscular and emotional. When the physical body accumulates toxins in different centres of the physical body, physical or muscular tension takes place. Over-activity and under-activity of the body also causes tensions. Over-activity and passivity of the glands also creates tensions. Sometimes when there is excess oxygen or too much carbon in the physical body, the body becomes tense. After a surgical operation in which the thyroid gland was involved, it was found that the person could not sleep at all. In another case of pancreatic deficiency, the patient became full of suspicion, mistrust and doubts. When the pituitary gland was excited by the direct contact with the sex glands, it was seen that the person used to see ghosts or apparitions. Likewise, different physical deficiencies in the body create different kinds of tensions which cannot be cured by any method, except one which will be discussed later. Muscular tensions will have to be traced back to the deeper functions of the physical body.

Mental tensions are created in the mental realm on account of over-thinking. If you keep on thinking all the time, a moment will come when your brain will refuse to think and that is the state of mental tension. In the evening, you are completely tired mentally, but are compelled to do some mental work. This creates faulty thinking and introduces errors in your judgment; this is called mental tension.

What is emotional tension? A flourishing business is lost overnight and you receive a shock; this is called emotional tension. Your son is studying in a distant land and you receive a telegram that he is suffering from an acute illness; anxiety

starts and creates emotional tension. If we neglect to remove these tensions from our personality, they will, in due time, create complexities in our life. Emotional tensions are piling up day by day; and unfortunately, we are either suppressing them or we are escaping them through self-forgetfulness by taking pills such as tranquillizers. This does not solve the problems but only aggravates them. The time is not very far off when the occurrence of nervous breakdown will be a common phenomenon.

Modern psychology, which is just a baby psychology, has not come to any definite conclusions. There are numerous books on tensions written by great scholars. Dale Carnegie has written a very famous book *How To Stop Worrying and Start Living*. However, the people who have read it have not learned how to stop worrying and start living. It is here that we introduce the subject of yoga.

Yoga research

The first author of a book on raja yoga was the great sage Patanjali. According to him, yoga means complete control over all dimensions of your personality. Control does not mean suppression, but it means complete mastery. If you have a car without brakes, you have a car without a controller. You may not feel the necessity of brakes, but when it arises, your car and yourself will be smashed to pieces. In the same way, everybody has a personality, but at the same time one must have a controlling force so that during moments of serious challenges in life, one is able to make use of it.

A certain well-known film star committed suicide by taking sleeping pills because she did not have this brake in her life. She was nourishing emotional tensions in her personality for years and years, without taking notice of them. One fine morning, when she looked in the mirror, she was terrified to see traces of wrinkles and signs of old age. She could not reconcile herself to this sudden wave of emotional outbreak and committed suicide.

Yoga asks you to gain control over your mind, yoga does not ask you to stop thinking. Control of the mind does not mean that one should refrain from one's day-to-day activities. Yoga prepares you to face the challenges of life intelligently and cheerfully without leaving any wrong impressions on your mental apparatus. Yoga can be broadly classified into three main systems. The first division pertains to the physical body. The second is a system which includes the vital systems in the body. The vital system includes the psycho-biological processes in the physical body. The third system is relaxation. To put it briefly, the first system is physical, the second psycho-biological, and the third is absolutely psychological.

The first is hatha yoga, which is the yoga of the physical body; it takes care of the entire body. Scientific and clinical investigations have been carried out in various countries like Poland, Germany, France, America and India. Their findings reveal that the practice of hatha yoga brings about a positive effect on different systems of the body. Last year a team of scientists conducted research on the effects of *sirshasana*, or the headstand pose, on the human body. When the research results were published they were really encouraging and inspiring.

A few years ago in France, great cardiologists and other doctors conducted electrocardio-graphic investigations on the different yogic postures and it was observed that the oxygen consumption, the glandular secretions, the rate of respiration, the rate of inertia in the heart and, at the same time, the ventilation in the brain were absolutely in order during yogic postures. What was more remarkable was that when research was conducted on the effect of pranayama, the scientists came to the conclusion that pranayamas bring deeper relaxation and the brain becomes tensionless.

Since I am intimately concerned with these medical investigations, I also did some research work in this field. I prepared more than 100 cardio-graphic charts on different mental conditions. It was found that when you breathe in and retain the breath for about a minute and a half, the condition of



the heart in relation to the condition of the brain is so fine that it brings your personal physical state to a point of relaxation. That is the subject of relaxation, which I call meditation.

Do not understand meditation from a religious perspective. The word 'meditation' cannot convey what I want to convey. In yoga, meditation is known as *dhyana*, which means single-pointed awareness. It has been observed that when the mind thinks constantly about one object for five minutes, meditation takes place. However, when you think of one object after the other and they are not connected with each other, tensions take place. This process of meditation is of the utmost importance for the present-day man.

There are various systems of meditations which have evolved to suit varying temperaments. We have three types of temperaments for which we have separate systems. The first type of people has mad and restless minds. The second type are oscillating between the condition of restlessness and a state of one-pointedness. The third type are said to be one-pointed. For these three types of temperaments, we have three types of

meditation. There are more than three types of meditations, but most variations of meditation can be classified into three groups.

Psychic sleep is for absolutely restless people. Psychic sleep is a kind of relaxation in which we bring complete relaxation to the disturbed mind. There is another system called inner silence, which is a method of adjustment with the inner mind. If you look at a monkey, the monkey jumps upon you, but if you just ignore him the monkey is quiet. It is that principle which we apply in this inner silence.

For the people who belong to the second type, whose minds are oscillating between two extreme conditions, there is the system of *ajapa japa*, which means spontaneous meditation and meditation through breath. Kriya yoga also brings about a great change in the physical and psychological personality, gives peace of mind and one-pointedness. This is how the whole syllabus of yoga is divided according to the temperamental limitations of the individual.

Sometimes when the meditation becomes successful, psychological images come to the surface. Various tensions, mental troubles and suppressed subconscious stuff come up in the form of visions and experiences. If the suppressions are deep, psychological images will be frightening. When the meditation becomes deeper and deeper, relaxation takes place and many divine images present themselves in the form of visions and experiences. This is something like the psychoanalysis of modern psychology. Meditation is a system of relaxation, but merely sitting on an easy chair is not necessarily relaxation. This is a misinterpretation of the word relaxation. You may relax your physical body, but your mind may be quite disturbed. So relaxation does not mean sleep, nor does it mean just physical stillness. Relaxation is a condition which pertains to the mind. When the tense conditions of your mind and emotions are absolutely absent, you are in a state of relaxation.

– 1968, Australia

The Creator

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



For most of us, the mind is a thinking vehicle, a tool for the thinking process, but in yoga, mind is more than that. When the mind is in a state of dissipation, it creates problems for itself. When the mind is in a state of unhappiness, it creates a disaster for itself. But when the same mind is tamed through the practice of yoga, it becomes a creator, a solid creator. Even as it created problems and disasters in its dissipated state, it can create matter, objects and things in this higher state.

In yoga, the mind is not only a tool for thinking, it is homogeneous consciousness. When you take matter and disintegrate it, finally nuclear energy is produced. In the same way, when the mind is purified through the act of meditation, and when all that remains is the mind and not the worldly desires and associations, then the mind becomes potential *shakti*, potential power. That is how the mind becomes creative.

– 16 October 1978, Melbourne University, Melbourne, Australia

Purpose of Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



It was understood that yoga had something to do with spiritual life, but most of you were thinking that yoga was only asanas and breathing exercises. It is, but side by side with physical control we also take care of mental control. In our age of culture, science, civilization, it is necessary that our mind and all the thought impulses should be under control, only then can we know peace and tranquillity in life. Sometimes it is said that yoga is part of renunciation or renunciation is involved in

yoga; it is not so. Yoga is an art through which you clear your subconscious mind and exhaust the karmas and by exhausting the impressions you breed tranquillity from within.

May I make a difference between peace and temporary tranquillity? Tranquillity arrived at an upper level is something different than the tranquillity we experience at a deeper level. When the noise within the subconscious mind, when the disturbances are completely absent, and when you have made your mind clear through the process of meditation and it has undergone a process of purging and exhaustion, then strength comes from within.

Mind and the brain produces energy and that energy goes out in the form of dissipated thinking. If you conserve that energy for some time, it becomes powerful and therefore

you find in our society there are many who have a very weak brain, a weak mind and there are those who are very strong. It is because they know how to control the constructive and destructive brain waves. The brain produces a certain amount of waves. It has frequencies; it has velocity; thoughts have colours. The stronger the thought, the lesser the frequency and the stronger the velocity.

If you keep thinking hundreds of thoughts, you will find your mind becoming weaker and weaker. By the process of yoga you reduce the dimensions of thinking, the thought process and then comes one-pointedness which can be utilized for a spiritual purpose, the development of intuition, in the business of your day-to-day profession and for achieving success in your life.

In yoga the mind is not killed, that is a wrong notion. We do not suppress the mind; we do not kill the mind; there is no repression. The mind is cultured and refined and, after it is cultured and refined, we utilize it for a higher purpose. The same mind, which was rowdy, dealing with the bad things of life can help us for higher attainments – maybe peace, maybe plenty, maybe prosperity. That is nothing difficult for the mind. Mind can do anything, it has infinite power and infinite potentiality. It is only up to us to dive deep. One of the great philosophers has said, 'In comparison to what we ought to be we are half awake, our mind which we have developed is only a fraction of that homogeneous mind which is yet to develop.'

I am talking about the mind and the brain at the same time. In medical sciences we have studied that only a part of the brain is active; there are other parts of the brain which are silent, dormant. If the dormant portions of this physical brain, the dormant circuits of your cerebellum become active, who knows what you can do? You may develop ultrasonic, supersonic knowledge, you may develop the sixth sense that we call intuition. All that is in the process of awakening different cells, different nerves, different parts of this physical brain. There are branches of yoga such as nada yoga, kriya

yoga, kundalini yoga, and of course pranayama through which the physical portions of the brain can be revitalized and new activities can be created.

This is the fundamental belief on which the theory of yoga is based. When we talk about the mind, we also talk about the brain. When we control the mind, we control the brain activities; the contraction and expansion, the vibration and modulation that is taking place in the brain can be controlled through concentration. When there is disturbance the brain moves, vibrates and shakes, but through pranayama and concentration it becomes steady. The moment it becomes steady, your thoughts and behaviour, your impulses and emotions become steady.

Sometimes there is influx of blood in the brain, through meditation we draw it back. There is a process of recession. Sometimes there is less supply of blood into the brain and as a result of that the brain undergoes a moment of depression, an experience of depression. That depression can be removed by supplying extra blood, extra prana, either through pranayama or the method of raja yoga through meditation.

Therefore, friends, this is my request to all of you this evening, that you study the subject of meditation from a scientific background. Let it not be considered a spiritual thing for the time being though it can lead you to spiritual enlightenment. We should study and discuss the subject of meditation or *dhyana* from the thought and brain point of view. We want to know if there is a method by which we can control our brain waves and give relaxation to our brain. Is there a method by which the blood pressure can be reduced or cerebral thrombosis can be avoided? Is there a method by which we may be able to develop the sleeping circuits of the brain, not one or two but millions of circuits in the brain are responsible for ultrasonic and supersonic knowledge? The reply is yes, but the path has to be learned.

– 12 May 1968, Anzac House Lecture, Sydney, Australia

Close Your Eyes

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

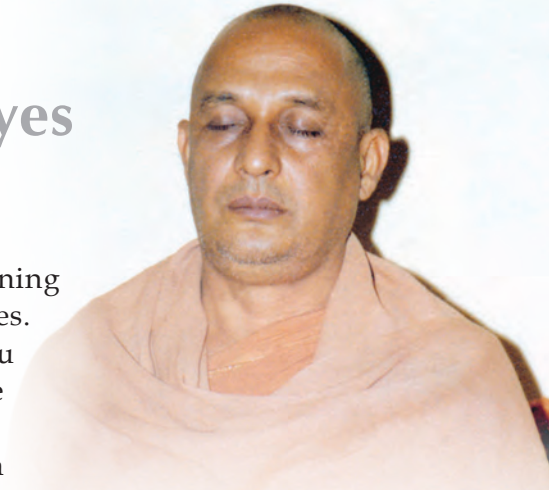
Everything starts happening when you close your eyes. Nothing happens when you open your eyes, because then you are living in the world of the senses which

is empirical and transitory. You are living in a world that is known by the mind, and what is comprehended by the mind is transitory, empirical and short-lived. But the moment you close your eyes and look within, the inner space becomes visible. When that happens, you go deep into your consciousness.

The saints and sages have told us time and time again that real life is within. What does it mean? What about this life, this drama, this existence? Is it not here? Yes, it is, but it is not the ultimate; it is not the real. It is a shadow of your inner life. What you see in a mirror is a reflection of your face. In the same manner, this external life is a reflection of your inner life.

If you are shaving yourself, you don't shave the reflection in the mirror; you have to shave your face naturally. If you want to dress yourself and comb your hair, you don't do it to the reflection; you have to dress your body and comb the hair on your head. In the same way, the external life which we experience day in and day out is a reflection of the inner life about which we have no idea. We have been totally ignorant of another dimension of our existence, and we have only been trying to beautify the mirror's reflection. We have been trying to find a panacea for the reflection and for the shadow, and we have never succeeded.

*– 14 October 1978, Riverina College of Advanced Education,
Wagga Wagga, Australia,*



Yoga Practice and Lifestyle

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

There are many aspects of yoga, yet it has to be clear to us what is important and useful for people. What is important is not spiritual realization, which can be the choice of a few and not of everyone. For everyone the choice is health, happiness and harmony, and that is what we need to focus on. It is the right step to take. When people are happy with themselves and have acquired the skills to deal with their daily health ups and downs or mental ups and downs, they will be better prepared for other aspects and dimensions of yoga. When somebody is hungry, do not tell them, 'I have a restaurant with so many different varieties of food. You can come and eat.' Give them something to eat then and there, so that they can overcome their hunger and make the right decision to come to your restaurant for a bigger and better meal.

The need of everyone today is physical and psychological wellbeing, psychological and internal happiness, joy, positivity, support, cooperation and harmony all around. That is the basic preparation, which you have to focus on when you think of yoga propagation. You do not only teach yoga; you also encourage people to adopt yoga as a lifestyle. When you encourage people to adopt yoga as a lifestyle, you have to emphasize other aspects of yoga which are non-physical. In your asana class or in your normal session, you can teach asana, pranayama, relaxation, meditation; you do that during the one-hour class. What about the remaining twenty-three hours? Give them a target and have a target yourself. Have the target to connect with the positive and joyous within you, and give them also this target for themselves.

People write many times, 'I think this and I get angry. I think that and I feel this emotion or sentiment'. Then I think, 'Why do people always have to identify with anger and think



about it even more? Why can't they identify with some different conditions or states of mind which are also there? Why do they always identify with something that is frustrating and depressing?

To change this conditioning is the role of yamas and niyamas. We always identify with the negative or destructive. We always identify with something that goes wrong or with our aggression; we do not think of how it can be improved or corrected. It is just a snappy reaction all the time. It is a small thing, yet it defines all our life. If we are able to tweak this, and instead of identifying with aggression and reaction, there is some understanding, then there will be more joy in life and our nature and personality will change. It will become different; it will become better. A different understanding will dawn.

This is the purpose of yoga lifestyle. In the yoga class you teach your APMB, however in yoga lifestyle, connect with the joyous, positive and optimistic aspect. This keeps you more peaceful and happy. The first yama of yoga is *manahprasad*, happiness. It is not a discipline like speaking the truth or becoming non-violent. That comes much later in raja yoga. The first lesson you are taught in yoga is to be happy and stop worrying. If worry becomes a nature, there is a danger.

If worry is simply a passing condition in life, it is okay. If the passing condition becomes something that we hold onto and it becomes our nature in life, danger bells and warning bells ring. For this reason, yoga said that the first lesson people need to learn is to be happy. To be happy you have to let go of those things that you hold onto to remain unhappy. You hold onto something to remain unhappy as you are continuously brooding on the restrictive, the negative, the limiting. You are feeling further dejected and depressed. Why and why? What have I done? Why is this happening to me? This is always the last question.

Yoga practice and yoga lifestyle are different. There are teachers of yoga who teach the practices, meditation and relaxation for the corporates. There is yoga here, there and everywhere. It is a technique presentation which will only last for the period that they are doing it. Then they fall back in the same environment, the same rut as before, with a few one-hour sessions of relaxation in between through yoga. The situation does not change. So introducing yoga lifestyle to people has to go along with yoga teaching.

The first requirement is to be happy. The second requirement is to know how to disconnect from the stressors of life. To disconnect from the stressors of your life and find your own balance, you need japa. The purpose of japa is to disconnect from the things that create stress in life and remember something nice. Be happy, see the angels blowing their trumpets and be happy. At least it changes your mind. It changes the mind completely. Disconnection from stressors and being happy are the first steps of yoga lifestyle.

Another point is that people find it difficult to forget and forgive. So there is kshama. *Kshama* means to forgive. Forget and forgive what other people do to you. If you get affected by what other people do to you, you are allowing them to influence you, your behaviour and performance; and people know it. They can manipulate it to their advantage. If you can forget and forgive, you simply keep on advancing in life

without any worries, while other people are left scratching their head, 'What happened to this person? This person did not react in any manner.'

These are the little tweakings that you do in life to live a yogic lifestyle. An indication of this is given in the book, *Yoga Dharma*. It has about six basic steps which you can use to improve your lifestyle without changing or altering anything drastically. You are just tweaking your awareness and your understanding, and you apply your wisdom and your patience.

If we can incorporate yoga practice with yogic living, the vision of yoga can be realized. Otherwise I find it ridiculous when people say, 'I am a yoga teacher. The aim of yoga is samadhi and to become spiritual. However, I only teach ten asanas that I have learned.' They tell you that by practising ten asanas you can become spiritual and attain samadhi. This is the general impression that people get when they see a yoga teacher. Instantly the idea comes, 'You know everything about yoga and you have also experienced samadhi.' Everybody is in awe, 'Oh you are a yoga teacher. Have you awakened your kundalini? Have you experienced samadhi? Have you opened up your chakras?' That is the expectation, when you hear the word 'yoga'; these are the images that come to mind. These images do not change. The yoga teacher only knows maybe twenty asanas, and is behaving as if his kundalini is awakened, or he has attained the experience of samadhi.

Ultimately, where will this type of teaching and presentation lead humanity? If it leads anywhere positive, I will accept it, yet I don't see it leading anywhere positive. There is no change in the person's life, thought or action. The only way yoga can become effective in life is if we are able to combine the practices with the lifestyle principles. So keep that in mind and I am sure you will have many interesting and good experiences, if you work with yoga in this manner.

– 27 March 2023, Bihar Yoga Traditional Teaching
for Yoga Teachers, Ganga Darshan, Munger



Ashram Life Experience 2023

Dear Swamiji

After my three-month Yogic Studies Course in 2019, I had the opportunity to come and stay in my spiritual home for which I am really thankful. I was eagerly waiting to relive the ashram life because once you taste something higher, you never want to taste anything else. This is how I hold this place in my heart.

I came to the ashram with the only purpose to go back to basics and free myself from everyday indulgence, and realigning myself with the truth, reality and teachings of my Guru. Normally when we do anything, we do it in the mood of achievement. We want to get it done as easily and as neatly as possible. This makes us believe that we are the real doers and it puts us at the centre making our ego to be the driving force.

In the ashram when we do something, we do it in the mood of service. We pray to the divine for being an instrument. This makes automatically everything perfect and auspicious because we surrender our will to Him.

This is what I learnt from you, from this place and tried working upon it, and also managed consciously to an extent. Spiritual life is all about serving and not achieving. With these teachings and keeping these goals clearly in mind – to serve, to love, to give, to be purposeful, humble and to spread love and joy to everyone – I say *Hari Om*.

– *Devishakti, Munger*



Dear Swamiji

This short stay in the ashram has impacted me so much that I am already planning my next visit. I have been coming to the ashram before going to school. My whole family encouraged me to come to the ashram, yet I never made up my mind to stay . . . In life we are told to study, have a degree, get a job, a good married life and then life is set. That is all I did. I studied and got a good job, yet I did not know why I felt I was missing something. I worked on every aspect of my life but not the internal one. Especially my grandparents told me to visit yet I was busy in my own way. Now that they are no more I feel like doing exactly what they wanted me to do.

I am amazed to encounter how a place can be so positive, an environment where everyone is so full of energy and smiles. A place where we work for one another without any motive. A place where I came several times yet failed to understand. I can say I was not mature to understand the true meaning of life. I am 27 now and I think I have done MBA, yet no degree teaches what needs to be taught . . . the basic learning I learnt here - doing things without expectation, to serve, love and give, to live a yogic lifestyle, to wake up early, to do karma yoga, to deal with my attitude and ego, to have a better understanding of positivity and goodness, to be more aware in all actions and to be positive in thought, word and action.

These are very small things yet I never imagined they could bring peace and happiness to me. I may sound not so mature but I also had my reality check. Doing things here was easy but doing the same when I am outside will be a challenge. I understood the changes in lifestyle and the small steps have the answers of my unanswered questions All people in the ashram are examples and we learn from them. My stay was full of learnings and a lot of hard work, a pocket full of sunshine, a lot of broccoli and positive vibes in my tummy. It was my first step to a good life.

– *Shruti, Munger*

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Donations to the ashram will be received only under the following 'Heads of Accounts':

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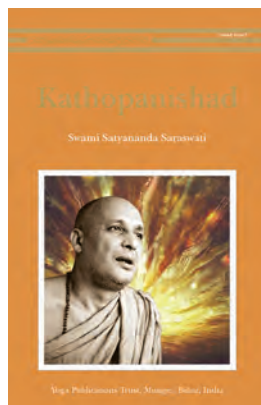
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<i>Jul 2022-Jul 2024</i>	Ashram Life Training
<i>Jul 1-Dec 31</i>	Yoga Chakra Experience
<i>Sep 20-28</i>	Hatha Yoga/Karma Yoga Training
<i>Oct 4-12</i>	Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training
<i>Oct 15-29</i>	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
<i>Nov 20-29</i>	Kriya Yoga/Jnana Yoga Training

Bihar Yoga Bharati Yogavidya Training

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

Events

Nov 4-12 Munger Yoga Symposium II

Monthly Programs

<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<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