

YOGA

Year 14 Issue 1
January 2025



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Hari Om

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Apps:

(for Android and iOS devices)

Bihar Yoga
APMB
YOGA (English magazine)
YOGAVIDYA (Hindi magazine)
FFH (For Frontline Heroes)

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Seva

Cleansing of the heart is the main task of the aspirant in the early stages of his spiritual practice. In serving this purpose, seva really excels. It is only in the active field of seva that he has a chance for developing good qualities and removing bad traits. Therefore, seva is usually the first step prescribed by the guru to a spiritual aspirant on the path of yoga. The thick coating of mental impurities is cleared away by doing selfless service for a number of years.

—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 ॥

New Year's Message

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



My message for New Year 2025 is to develop healthy, robust, positive connections. This should be the goal of every human being: make the attempt to develop a robust, positive connection and let this awareness spread. The only way out of the strife and anxiety in today's world is by connecting with something which is uplifting and positive, supportive and fulfilling.

What is uplifting, positive, supportive and fulfilling is a positive connection which we can develop with our own families, our society, group of friends, with humanity and the world. Only then can we expect harmony, peace and happiness. It is challenging to have a positive outlook in life. It is even more challenging to go through a creative process to beautify our life.

In the absence of these efforts, there will be darkness. The only way to combat darkness is to have a spark in our own life. One spark can illuminate the dark space by lighting a lamp. I cannot be a lamp, you cannot be a lamp, yet we can definitely strike a match and create sparks. We can pray that this spark becomes a flame. The spark is luminous and the flame is luminous. By keeping the awareness of the luminosity of life within us and in everybody else, respecting and supporting this luminosity, we can develop a positive connection.



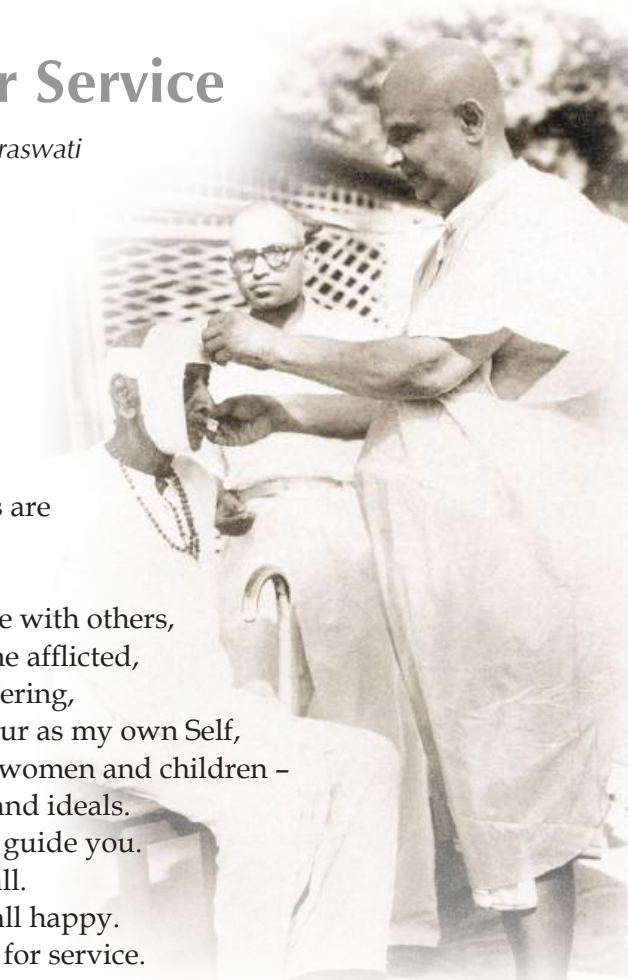
Twelve Wealths

In 2024 during the period of Chaturmas, Swami Niranjanananda offered *Guru Charitra*, a series of satsangs dedicated to the tradition of brahmavidya gurus, and specifically to the tradition of our own Masters. As part of the *Guru Charitra* satsangs, Swamiji spoke about twelve unique qualities that Swami Sivananda embodied and lived in every moment of his life, exemplifying practical Advaita Vedanta.

In the year 2025, *YOGA* magazine will present these twelve qualities from different perspectives as understood, lived and taught by the Masters of the Satyananda Yoga tradition. These qualities are: seva, dharma, universal love, vairagya, tapasya, yoga, dhyana, self-enquiry, positive interaction, balanced life, faith and devotion. May every month be an inspiration to all spiritual aspirants to also live and express these qualities. In so doing, we honour and walk the luminous path shown to us by Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda, Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda.

Meant for Service

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



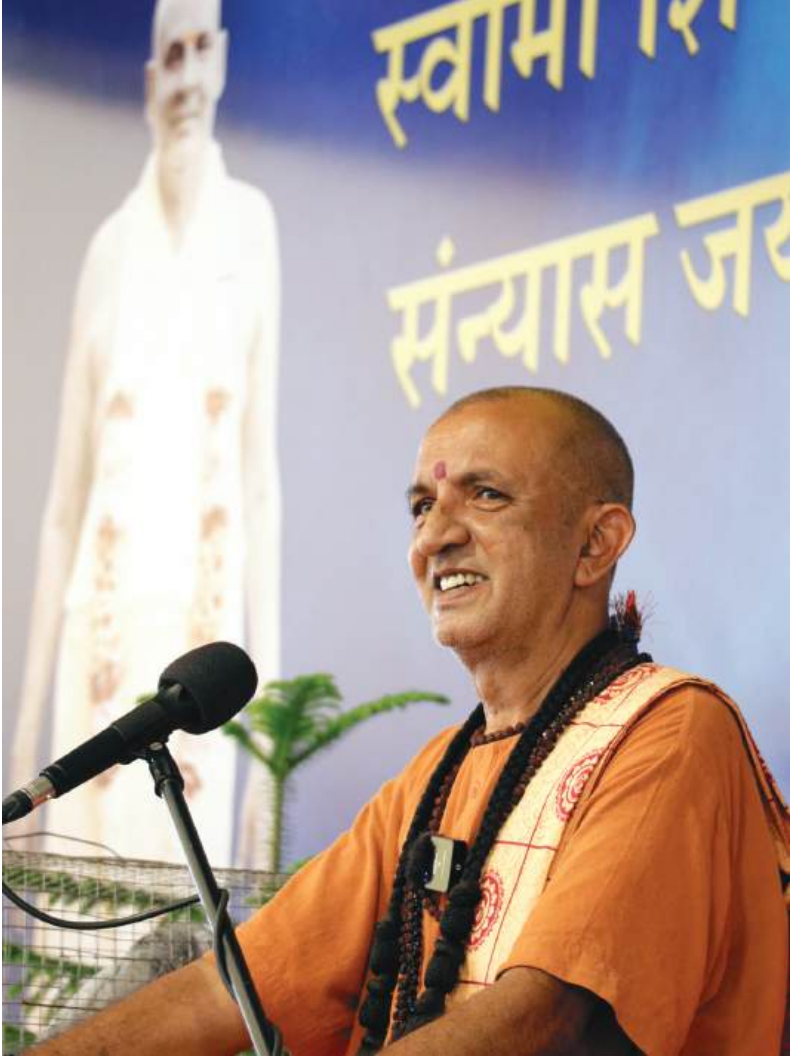
My aims and ideals are
to raise the fallen,
to lead the blind,
to share what I have with others,
to bring solace to the afflicted,
to cheer up the suffering,
to love my neighbour as my own Self,
to protect animals, women and children –
these are my aims and ideals.
I will help you and guide you.
I live to serve you all.
I live to make you all happy.
This body is meant for service.

The highest goal is the glory of service at the feet of the Lord. I never longed for liberation nor aspired for God-realization. I shall continue serving everyone and purifying my heart through selfless service. I shall always try to see God in everyone; otherwise I shall take birth again and again and go on serving until God Himself voluntarily offers me liberation.

My nature is to work and my goal is to serve. The spirit of service has been in me since childhood. Even if this organization and ashram collapse, I will sit in a hut, serve a few patients, print some leaflets and serve humanity.

Living Vedanta

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What was the life that Swami Sivananda lived? What were the expressions of his life which have become practical Vedanta?

The first one is *seva*; *seva* is service which is unconditional, without any expectation. When we work, there is expectation for the result, the outcome, the recognition, and for somebody to pat us on the back, 'Yes, you have done good work.' That is a position of selfishness, that is a position of self-gratification towards the work that we do. If we remove that desire of self-gratification through work, the work becomes selfless. That selfless work is known as *seva*, in which there is no expectation, no desire for a result, but only the expression of the best of human qualities. That is *seva* for Swami Sivananda.

The second point of the practical Vedanta was *dharma*. *Dharma* not in the sense of religion, but in the sense of righteous living. When you are able to live righteously, you are in tune with your own nature, with peace and with happiness. When you are unable to live righteously, there is *ashanti*, disturbance of peace and unhappiness. *Dharma* in the vedantic tradition represents righteous living. In this righteous living the body is flooded with peace, the mind is flooded with peace; the body is flooded with contentment and happiness, and the mind is flooded with contentment and happiness.

The third aspect is universal love. People speak of love and people want to learn how to love. My guru, Swami Satyananda, says, 'Did you learn anger, hatred and jealousy in any school or in any ashram? They are a natural part of your behaviour and expression. Yet, you come to me to ask, how to learn to love and become compassionate, as you think that these things are separate to your expressions. No. Just as nobody taught you how to hate and be angry, nobody should have to teach you how to love, be kind and compassionate. It has to be a natural expression of life, which you gain when you live a selfless life, a righteous life.'

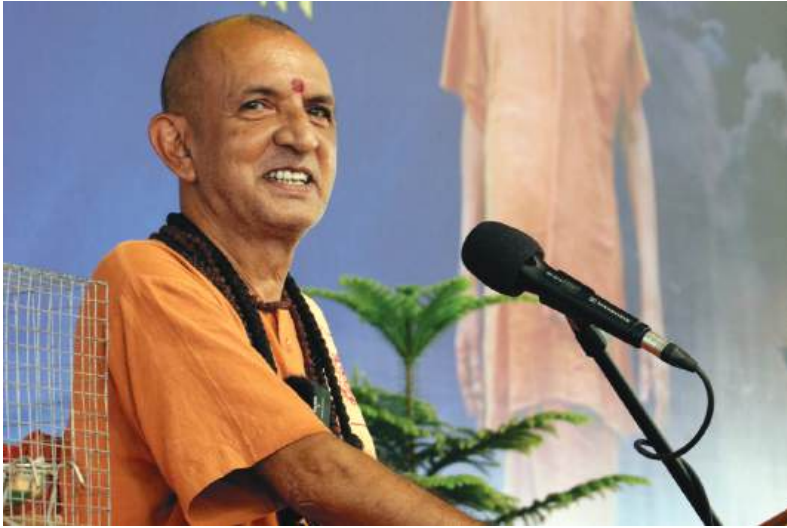
Today, we love our children but that love is sentimental, emotional, mental, with expectations. Even if these conditions are there, can you love a stranger in the same manner? No. So, why to speak of unconditional love, when you are unable to come out of your own shell of expectations and desires?

Universal love is a quality, just like the sun shines on everyone equally. The love which saints express is equal for everyone – there is no one more or less. That love does not mean patting on the back, hugging and kissing. That love is encouragement and inspiration to connect with the real source of inner strength, peace and positivity.

The fourth item is *vairagya*, dispassion and detachment. We are always attached, and our attachment changes from time to time. Today, the biggest attachment is the mobile. You can do without your family, without your wife, without your kids, but you cannot do without your mobile. The mobile is the biggest attachment. A person came many years ago to me and said, 'Swamiji, I want to take sannyasa.' I said, 'Yes, good idea. You will have to renounce everything.' He said, 'Yes, I am ready to renounce everything. I have renounced my family to come here. I have renounced my profession and my friends to come here. I can be a sannyasin, because renunciation is very natural to me.' I said, 'Fine. What is in your possession?' he said, 'Oh, a few clothes, personal items, mobile.' I said, 'Put the mobile in our Safe Deposit.' He said, 'Swamiji, that I cannot do because in this I have all the phone numbers and my bank balances and accounts. So, I cannot give that up.' I said, 'Well, then find some other ashram which will accept you as a sannyasin; here I cannot.'

What is this hypocritical behaviour? You are telling me, 'I have left my family, my home, my profession and everything,' so why the attachment to your mobile, and to the numbers that are in there. What numbers are there? 'Oh, they are of my parents and friends. I need to speak with them sometimes.' I said, 'Go and find some other guru and some other ashram. This place is not for you.' *Vairagya*, detachment or dispassion, is a quality which allows us to disconnect with those things and conditionings which hold us grounded to this material awareness and self-awareness; not only material awareness, but also self-awareness.

Then comes *tapas*, which many people translate as austerity. They think that any hardship which the body goes



through is *tapas*. *Tapas* is personal discipline, self-discipline. If there is self-discipline, you can do everything and if there is no self-discipline, you cannot even sit for five minutes quietly, without feeling the agitations of the senses and mind. *Tapas* is self-discipline, and it was the nature and quality which Swami Sivananda lived every moment.

Next come yoga and dhyana; the practice of yoga and meditation are also part of this vedantic tradition. Self-enquiry is also part of this vedantic tradition. When people think of self-enquiry, they question themselves, 'Who am I?' They read books and say, 'Oh, I am the immortal soul. I am made of gold,' and they go through these funny notions of the Higher Self, of being one with God. That is not self-enquiry. I call that self-hypnotism where you lose touch with reality, and you identify with something which is totally alien and different to your nature and behaviour.

Self-enquiry leads to inner purification. It is like cleaning the room of the mind, cleaning the room of the intellect, the room of the conditionings and memories, the room of ego. To clean these rooms, you first need to know the dirt which is lying there. You need to know the flaws of your own nature

and personality and correct them. You need to transcend the tamas of your own nature. Transcending the tamasic nature is the main purpose of self-enquiry; to know which tamasic nature is influencing you, your thoughts, responses, attitudes, behaviours, and to correct them. For us self-enquiry does not begin by thinking about Brahman or the Supreme Self, but by discovering the flaws of our nature and self-correction.

The next item is positive thinking. Positive thinking happens when you are free from the influence of negativity. Negativity represents tamas. As long as you are under the influence of tamas, you can never think positively about anything or anyone. The people who think ill of others, who get angry at others, who are rude to others are only living their tamasic nature. There is nothing positive about that. I am giving that as an example. Positive thinking is the state of a clean mind. Forget pure mind; work for a clean mind. It is difficult to experience purity in life, yet it is possible to experience cleanliness in life. This leads to the next item – a balanced life in which you are free from pain and pleasure, need and desire; you are always doing the right thing. This leads you to develop faith and devotion towards the Higher Self.

These are the twelve principles that Swami Sivananda lived, and these twelve principles denote his personality. For people who are affluent, their riches, their affluence denote their personality and life. They have everything – private planes, expensive cars, huge mansions, many helpers, servants, butlers, cooks and cleaners. They live the life of absolute luxury and affluence. In the life of a sannyasin, these twelve are the wealth which makes a sannyasin live a very affluent life. Not a materially affluent life, but a spiritually affluent life. These are the principles or stepping-stones to practical Vedanta, that Swami Sivananda personified, that Swami Sivananda lived, and that Swami Sivananda taught to his followers.

*– 15 August 2024, Paduka Darshan, Munger,
published in Guru Charitra*

A Brush and Appetizer

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The right spirit is necessary in seva. Not the smallest insect is to be treated callously. I once found a drowning wasp. I took it out, gave it some warmth and prayed for it. For I know that the Lord is there in that wasp. So work for the benefit of others because they are divinities, not because you want personal glory. Even a tiny bit of seva in this spirit will be recognized at once – while thousands of pounds, given with a view to self-advertisement, may earn you little merit.

Through seva an aspirant can gradually develop all the positive qualities or virtues. Have faith, energy, cheerfulness, courage, patience, perseverance, sincerity, concentration and serenity. Have no desire for name and fame, appreciation, admiration and gratitude. Be humble and free from hatred, jealousy and harshness. Speak sweet words. How can a proud and jealous person who expects respect from others serve others?

One who is easily irritated and easily offended over trifles is unfit for seva. Develop an amiable, loving and sociable nature. Move and mix with everybody without distinction of caste, creed or colour. Be adaptable, compassionate and tolerant. Adjust to the habits and ways of others. Have an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart. Have a cool and balanced mind. Have equal vision and rejoice in the welfare of others.

A good deed is never lost. It purifies the heart. Work for the welfare of the whole world. Return good for bad. It is the sign of a real human being. Doing good and bringing happiness to others brings goodness and happiness to you. A little self-denial, honest service, little words of cheer, encouragement, sympathy and kindness, little acts of kindness, little silent victories over temptations – these will pave a long way to the attainment of everlasting peace.

Do as you would be done by. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. This is the great moral law. You are not born to solve the problems of the universe. You are born to find out what you have to do. This span of life is given to you for lofty duties, not for selfishness, not to be spent in eating, drinking and making merry, but to improve yourself, to cultivate positive qualities, to serve humanity selflessly and to attain God-realization.

Through the practice of seva alone, you can develop all the positive qualities such as tolerance, mercy, kindness, love, patience and self-restraint which are necessary for the practice of bhakti and jnana yoga. How can a cave-dweller in seclusion practise tolerance, mercy and cosmic love? The practice of seva generates, waters and nourishes the positive qualities. Without seva they will dwindle and fade away. Seva acts as a brush to keep the mind-mirror ever clean.

Seva keeps all yogis ever dynamic and alert. It relaxes the mind for meditation, inspires, gives a change and induces vigorous meditation. Work acts as an appetizer for meditation and wisdom.

Do all the good you can in all the ways you can,
to all the people you can,
in every place you can,
at all the times you can,
with all the strength, love and heart and interest you can,
as long as ever you can.

Selfless Service

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Sivananda always emphasized that serving others is the stepping-stone to spiritual life. *Nishkama seva*, selfless service, is necessary for self-transformation, to clean the rajo and tamo gunas of the mind. It is like detergent. Selfless service doesn't just mean work; you should have a feeling for it in your heart. People are so busy running after money that there is no time for selfless service. The nuclear family is the beginning and end of all selfishness. No one worries about anyone else's family. You should not earn money just to indulge your own children, but to take care of others as well. In India, if you visit forty houses, you will come across scarcity, suffering, poverty, darkness and dejection. For millions and millions of people the state of affairs is abysmal. They have no shelter, no food, no cooking facilities, no toilet, not even water to drink.

What have you done for such people? You are wasting your time if you just wrestle with your own mind twenty-four hours a day. To find peace of mind you must serve the poor, destitute, disabled, sick, hungry and helpless. You don't have to go to a temple or church. You don't have to become a sannyasin or yogi. You don't have to practise asana, pranayama or meditation. Just do whatever you can with your mind,



knowledge, influence and strength to help the underprivileged. God loves those who love Him in this form.

Mother Teresa was so blessed by God that she could serve the most neglected, condemned and despised members of society till her last breath. She picked up those people whom nobody even dared to look at. But nobody wants to spend money on the underprivileged. Nobody wants to help out a poor boy or get a poor girl married. You are ready to spend on yourself, but if you are not prepared to spend one paise on a poor person, do not talk about God!

Selfishness must be renounced in order to attain God's grace. Start working for the benefit of the deprived. You owe them a share of your time and assets. Most leaders talk a lot, but do nothing to uplift the needy sectors of society. However, those who are dedicated to spiritual life can do something.

Include everybody within your own heart. Have the same intensity of feeling and compassion for others as you have for our own self.

I have practised every form of yoga, but ultimately I found that when I began to think about others, God began to think about me. The mandate I received from God to care for my neighbours led me to ask myself how the world could benefit from my spiritual gain and self-realization. A metamorphosis took place in my personality, way of life and destiny. I changed my teaching and my way of thinking. Then God began to show me the path. Now helping others has become my obsession.

My only teaching now is to practise *satkarma*, selfless, positive actions. Do good acts and earn divine merit. When you serve your husband, wife and children, it is just karma. If you feed the hungry or help a poor person, that is selfless or divine karma. Satkarma is any act that helps somebody physically, mentally, spiritually, monetarily or in any other way, or all ways.

Serve mankind, those who are sick, who are poor, who are bad, who want spiritual life, who want your love. Your dharma is to work for others. Until your heart is open to the suffering and misery of others, your sadhana will be in vain. Selfless service acts as a detergent and washes away the dirt of karma. In order to experience spiritual life while living in the world, enlarge the scope of your sadhana from asana, pranayama, japa and meditation to include serving those who are in need.

Does a river drink its own water? Do fruits and vegetables eat themselves? No, they give it all to us. This is *paramartha*, the highest service. Serving others selflessly, doing good works for others without any ulterior motive will become the social philosophy of the twenty-first century. It will be an age in which everyone will have a thought for others. To think about others is to think about God. To worship others is to worship God. This is the lesson those who are travelling on the spiritual path have to learn. Selfless service is a complete spiritual sadhana. It is the simplest and easiest path to God.

Seva and Karma Yoga

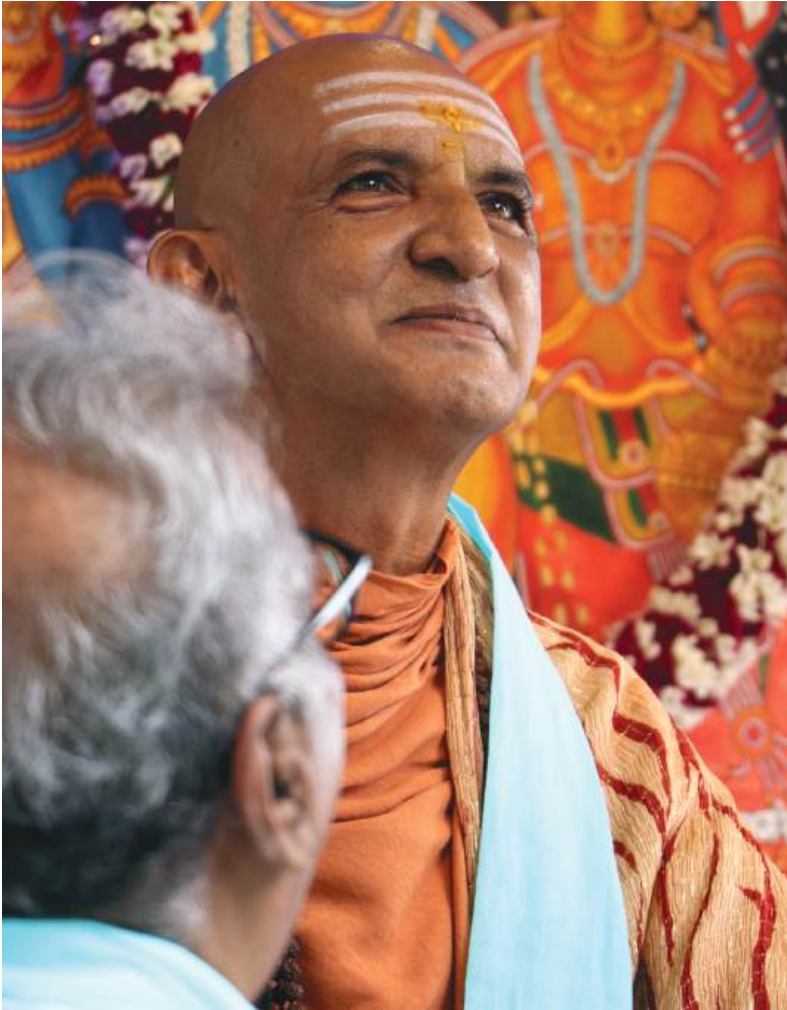
Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Seva and karma yoga are two different things. Karma yoga is learning how to harmonize the day-to-day activities, behaviour and attitudes, and finding your inner peace while performing all your duties and activities. Seva is serving others with compassion and with the best you can give.

What is karma yoga? *Karma* means action, and everyone is subject to karma; one cannot live without activity. It is a process that is subtle, physical, and continuously happening; it is being performed by the senses, the mind, the emotions, and also by the spirit. Yoga is harmony, integration. Therefore, when yoga is harmonizing and integrating all the dimensions of performance and action, that is karma yoga.

Karma yoga works at the attitudinal level, trying to change the perception of selfish activity into selfless activity. It tries to change the influence and effects of the activity from being self-oriented to universally oriented. This attitude has to be applied not only logically, but in action. Karma yoga is connecting with activity, not thinking one is above the activity, for then the ego comes in. The ego says, "Oh, why should I do that? Others can do it!" In karma yoga the attitude of selflessness becomes more dominant. By nature, karmas are selfish. When the word 'yoga' is added to karma, it changes the quality from selfish to selfless. For this reason, it is said that selfless karma is karma yoga.

Seva is serving and helping others with compassion; serving not for personal gratification but to uplift others. Seva is not meeting your own aims, but offering that service as *homa*, an offering in the yajna of life. Seva contains the best there is in you. When it is offered to another being and it contains your best thoughts and feelings, your love and affection, sympathy and compassion, then that action becomes a blessing to uplift



another being, and seva becomes a way of life, living for others and not for oneself becomes a way of life.

First you practise karma yoga then you move into seva. You continue to do the same jobs, whether typing letters or working in the kitchen, but the attitude, the idea, changes from karma yoga to seva. Then you see the beautiful canvas that karma yoga and seva yoga together can create in the life of an individual.

Sadhana of Seva

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Once in Haridwar the Kumbha Mela was in full swing. My worthy gurubhai, Swami Chidananda, had gone to attend the fair. When he went to a nearby jungle to attend to nature's call, he saw a man lying under a tree, groaning in agony. His body was decaying from leprosy, with flies hovering above the sores all over his body. Swami Chidananda was greatly moved by this sight. He came running to the ashram and said to me, "Satyam, I've seen someone in a horrible condition. We have to bring him to the ashram as soon as possible. Get a big gunny sack and come with me right away." His impatient hurrying didn't give me any chance to ask questions. I followed him and together we brought back the would-be recipient of our ministrations to the ashram.

We learnt that earlier he had been totally healthy. After taking a dip in the river during the Kumbha Mela, the disease had manifested in him all of a sudden. Our combined intellects were unable to correlate the bath in the river and the onset of this all-consuming disease. But a bigger question was staring us in the face. How to arrange for his care and cure? We made some rough calculations regarding the expenditure. The estimated figure reached four thousand rupees! Where would we get so much money from?

Just then we heard the khat-khat sound of wooden sandals and lo! suddenly the figure of Swami Sivananda was before us. He took one good look at us and then said smilingly, "All right, all right. Carry on with your seva." And so saying, he moved on. Whatever we had done till now had been done without informing him. We now realized that it was impossible to do anything without his knowledge. We went to him and placed our problem before him. During the course of our conversation, he casually placed a sum of four thousand rupees before us.

As if he had been ready with the money! Now our sadhana of seva started. Swami Chidananda and myself divided up the duties amongst ourselves. But the 'divine deity' never spoke anything but abuse. A little delay in any task would result in a shower of the choicest abuse, "I was lying in peace under the bael tree until you rascals brought me to the ashram. What was the need to bring me here?"

One day, Swami Chidananda was cleaning the patient's body and applying medicine. He applied a little extra pressure accidentally. Immediately the 'divine deity' hurled vulgar abuse at Swami Chidananda and spat in his face. Swami Chidananda humbly sought forgiveness for his inadvertent mistake, "I'm extremely sorry. Please forgive me, this won't happen again." Yet the patient was furious, "You rascal, why do you touch me if you have neither courtesy nor care?"

One day as I was shaving his beard, my untrained hand slipped a bit and a little cut appeared on his face. He immediately slapped me hard across the face and let loose a volley of invective. I became extremely annoyed and went straight to Swami Chidananda. "Please take care of your divine deity yourself. I am not doing any more of this seva."

Nonetheless we continued to serve him. A person in his condition wouldn't have recovered even with years of regular and proper treatment, but he got well in only two months and then one day disappeared without a trace. But before leaving he said, "Everyone in this ashram is a crook. Only Sivananda is a true sadhu, and the other one is Chidananda. And Satyananda a little bit. I've seen the true colours of everyone else." What surprised everyone was that he didn't take anything with him. We never saw a trace of him again. God only knows who he was!

Sometimes I think Swami Sivananda himself was the director of this entire drama. His sudden appearance on the first day together with his remark, 'All right, carry on with your seva' and then handing out a sum of four thousand rupees for an unknown stranger supports this theory. In



any case, by that time Swami Sivananda had reached such spiritual heights that the barriers of space and time were meaningless for him. Even the most surreptitious secrets of total strangers were like an open book for him. As far as the money is concerned, perhaps besides the satisfaction of serving a needy person, there was the desire to test his disciples as well.

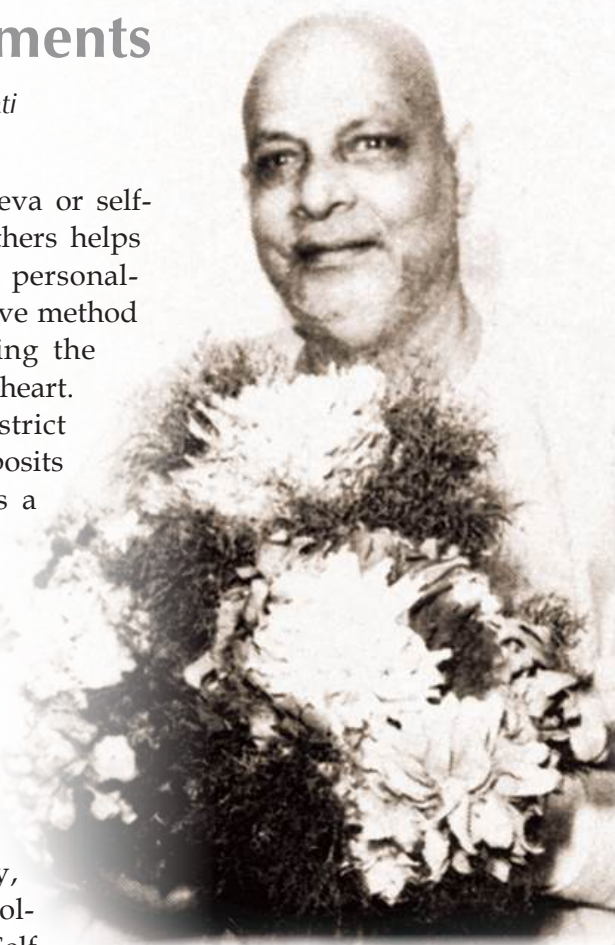
Only Instruments

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

What is the object of seva or selfless service? Serving others helps to develop the human personality. It is the most effective method or sadhana for cleansing the mind and purifying the heart. Negative qualities constrict the heart and leave deposits on the mind, acting as a veil or thick crust to separate you from others. Selfless service breaks the veil, removes the crust and causes expansion of the heart.

Egoism, hatred, jealousy, prejudice and pride vanish. Humility, love, compassion and tolerance are developed. Selfishness is eradicated. You begin to feel the oneness or unity of life. You develop a broad heart with a broad, generous outlook on life. If you see God in everyone, if you have a generous heart, then and then alone can you do real service to the world.

At first you feel that you are doing all the work. However, in the course of time, when the heart becomes purer and purer, you will actually feel that a higher power is working through you. You will feel that your body and mind are only instruments in His hands.



Seva

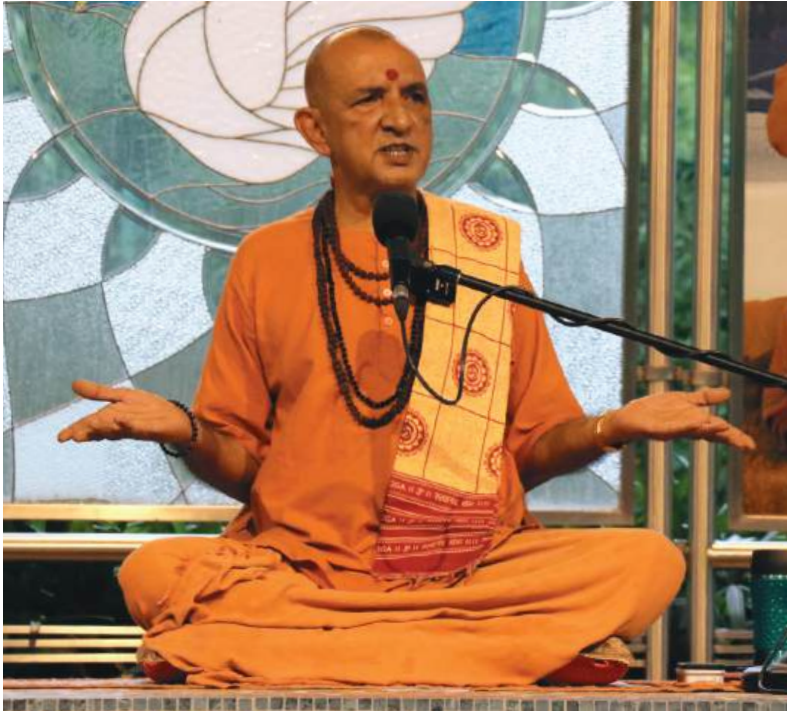
Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Some people had asked me, "What is the difference between karma, karma yoga and seva, since they all involve participation – physical, mental and emotional? In every aspect karma is done, karma yoga is done and seva is also done." So what is the difference between the three?

Let us begin with karma. *Karma* means engagement, involvement, action. Everyone in this world performs karma from birth to death. We survive because of karma. If there is no karma, this world will not exist, you will not exist, and even God will not exist for even God does karma. All of you are sitting here due to God's karma. Karma is the basis and foundation of everything in life, in creation, in the manifest and known universe. That is karma at the cosmic level.

When we come to the individual level, we are also subject to karmas as we are continuously performing karmas. Karmas do not have to be conscious all the time; they are autonomous as well. Like breathing is a karma, yet you are not aware that you are breathing. The heart beating is a karma; it is happening autonomously. The body has its own karma, the mind has its own karma, your actions and reactions have their own karma. We are not living in the sea of peace and tranquillity, but in the ocean of karma. Actions-reactions, actions-reactions keep on happening all the time.

These karmas are coloured by the three gunas giving rise to tamasic karma, rajasic karma and sattvic karma. Tamasic karma creates discord in life; it injures people, hurts people, creates suffering and pain in life. Even if somebody tries to bug someone, they are creating discord in the life of another person. That karma will be considered to be tamasic karma, not a negative karma. Any karma which creates hurt, injury and discord is tamasic.



Sattvic karma, on the other hand, is any karma which brings about harmony, balance, equilibrium and clarity. We constantly fluctuate between the tamasic and the sattvic. The tamasic karmas are known as *dushkarmas*, bad. Sattvic karmas are known as *satkarmas*, good. Remember that dushkarmas or the bad karmas create discord, and satkarmas or the good karmas create harmony. In this material life, we express both at different times, the good and the bad. We are not conscious of what we are doing; we are not conscious that our actions are being experienced as bad by the other person, or our actions are being experienced as good by the other person.

There are two types of classification for people in the world. One classification is the power group and the other classification is the spiritual group. In the power group we have the kings, politicians, people at the helm of administration who manage different industries, different departments,

different areas. These people identify with position, status and power. I call this group the power group. This power group do both karmas – the destructive and the constructive. They do satkarma and dushkarma.

The other category of people who are spiritually aware, I am not using the word 'awakened' but 'aware', such people focus on satkarma. They do not belong to the power group of people who are enhancing their own image. They simply engage in doing the right thing for people, the environment, nature and divinity. Whatever our karmas may be, whether sattvic or tamasic, they keep us in duality: I and you. This is the recognition in normal life. I am separate to you; you are separate to me. Duality always exists. Karma without duality is no karma. For there to be a karma, there has to be duality – 'I am separate and you are separate'.

Even in the vedic tradition, which is supposed to be the most ancient of the traditions in the world, they speak of karma and satkarma. They say that everyone is engaged in karma, yet everyone should make the effort to do the satkarma, the right karma, the good karma. This understanding of karma, to do good, continued during the period of the vedic civilization.

The birth of seva

Then came the upanishadic period, the puranic period, the guru period, when people used to go to live in the ashram to learn with the Master, and where they were exposed to a different routine. It was at this time that the concept of seva came in.

Seva, in a sense, also means anticipation of what is to be done. Anticipating what has to be done and to do it before you are told that you should do it. This is an understanding of seva too. The gurukul experience, where students were living with their guru in the gurukul, became the ground where seva was practised, lived and experienced. We also lead two types of lives: one type of life is at home, and at home our life is whimsical. There is no discipline, there is no awareness of

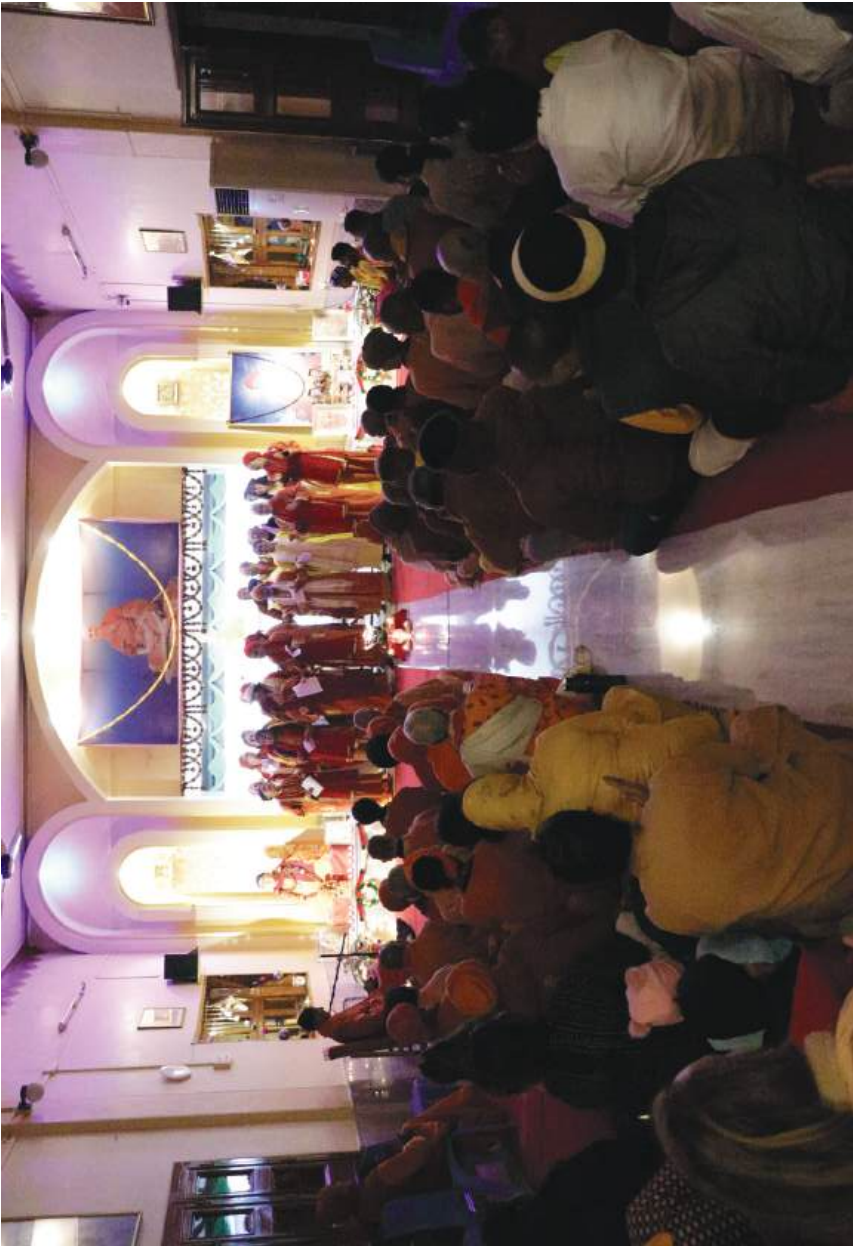
what is right and appropriate. Children follow their whim, parents follow their whim, there is no waking up time, there is no sleeping time, there is no eating time. The interactions are random and everything is geared towards sensorial gratification and sensual gratification.

In society we all live a whimsical life; there is no *sanyam*, restraint, there is no discipline, there is only an engagement with the world. In this engagement with the world, with our desires and expectations, life is totally whimsical. 'I want to do this, therefore I do it. I do not want to do that; therefore, I do not do it'. It is an individualistic approach to life and to karma. When you come to an ashram, or a gurukul, your whim does not work. There the system or the discipline which is an evolute of the guru's vision and mission takes prominence.

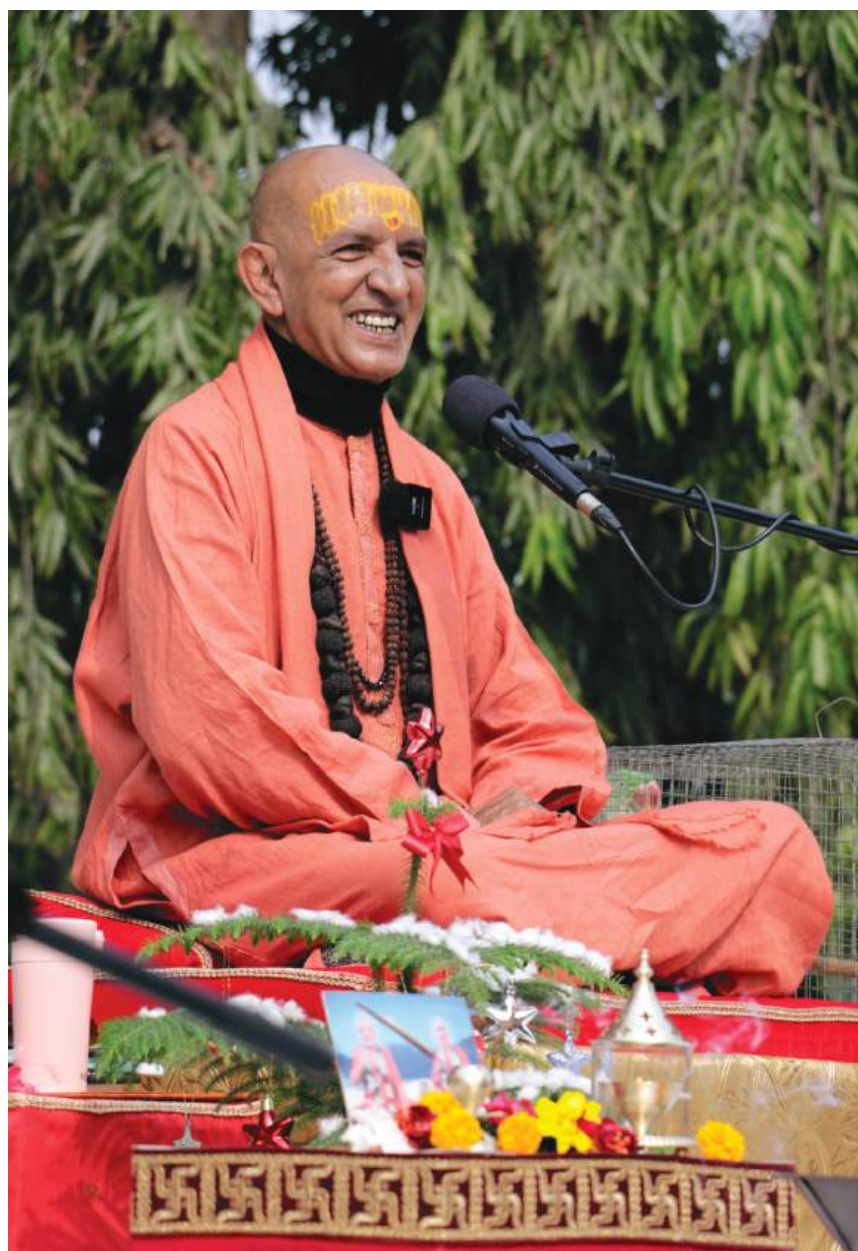
You have spent ten days here, one month, two months and then you will go back. How much of this system and discipline will you be able to maintain at home? Here you have to wake up because class is at 5.30. At home will you wake up at 5? No. Here you sleep because there is a system: lights have to be off, doors have to be closed, the building has to be secured. At home, you are awake until late watching different things, working with social media, worrying, anxiety, FOMO, Fear Of Missing Out, all these things happen. Once you go back to your home, you will live your whimsical life again. At night when you feel hungry, you will go to the fridge, open it, eat and drink. The whole routine and life is different. There is no *anushasan*, discipline.

When you come to an ashram and you find yourself in an environment where there is a structure, you adjust and begin to live accordingly. It is a change in your life routine; it is a change in your life pattern. Initially you may find it a bit odd or unusual, but as you get adjusted, you begin to enjoy the life in the ashram. In the ashram, the training which was given to the group of students who would live with their guru was of *seva*.









Anticipation and awareness

At his palace, Rama lived a luxurious life as a royal prince. There were servants who would bring him water, there were servants who would dress him, there were servants who would put his shoes on. When he came to his guru's ashram, there was nobody to do anything and the discipline was seva. The students had to wake up before the guru woke up. They had to clean the place before the guru came out of his room. They had to gather fruits and firewood and prepare everything for the guru's sadhana before he sat down to start. Everything was anticipated - now this will happen, then this will happen, and we have to prepare for it, we have to get it ready, we have to go for it. Everything was organized much before the guru would come out of the room. That is how it was in ancient times.

The people who are here and who remember Paramahamsaji will recall that for any event or program, we were always there much before Swamiji came. Everything was organized; he would walk in, sit down and do his thing. Today, students are waiting in the class. One minute before 5.30 am, the teacher comes rushing in, huffing and puffing, while the students are already there. Huffing and puffing, the teacher will come, sit down and start, 'Breathe in deeply, chant *Om* with me three times. *Om . . .*' I have seen this with my own eyes in this ashram. There is no concept of seva. Many times I come and sit down ten minutes before and the teachers come rushing in half a minute before the program. I am just giving you an example that one of the meanings of seva is to anticipate and to do everything properly.

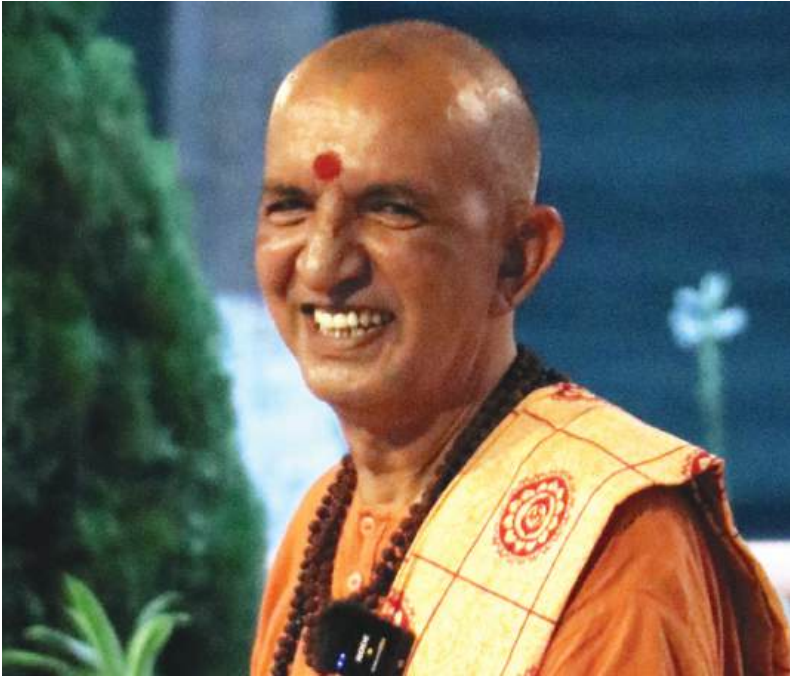
In society, in our community, nobody does seva. They all perform their karmas. You can do a good deed, yet that good deed is not seva as you are still in duality. I am doing the good deed. I am blowing up my ego, pumping my head saying, 'I am doing a good deed.' I am becoming happier and happier and my ego is getting more and more inflated. In our life, we are all subject to action and reaction without any awareness. If there was awareness, there would be no such word as

reactivity. Reaction indicates lack of awareness; there is action and reaction to that.

One simple example; if I call you a dog, you will react instantly and aggressively, and maybe even beat me up. That is the reaction, and you will not be able to analyze what has been said and how you can counter it in a better manner. A spiritually minded person can counter it efficiently and effectively. If I call a spiritually minded person a dog, he will come and shake my hand. Why? He will tell me, 'I am so happy to meet another dog.' One dog recognizes another dog, and the whole thing is settled. This shift of mind to do the right thing and not react, is because of awareness. When you get ready to hit the other person aggressively because he has called you a rude name, that is done without awareness. Everybody in this world is performing karma without awareness. The outcome of that karma is suffering.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna has given a beautiful sutra. In that sutra he has given the points on which to focus so that karma can be converted into seva. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says (5:11), '*Yoginah karma kurvanti, sangam tyaktva atmashuddhaye*' - 'Yogis perform karmas', that is the first statement. He has not said civilians perform karmas. He has said yogis perform karmas, indicating that they are people who have gone beyond household attachments, and who are trying to establish themselves in spiritual life and yogic life. Here an indication is given to change the interaction or the involvement of karma, from being the normal social to being social yogically.

Yoginah karma kurvanti, yogis perform karmas and normal people also perform karmas. When yogis perform karmas, what happens? That is given in the second point, *sangam tyaktva* - they free themselves from attachments. They are not detached, they become non-attached. Things are there, yet they are not attached to them whereas normal people are attached. The infatuation is there, the hypnosis, the desire and attachment is there. In normal people, attachment is there; for yogis there should be no attachment to karma. That is the second rule.



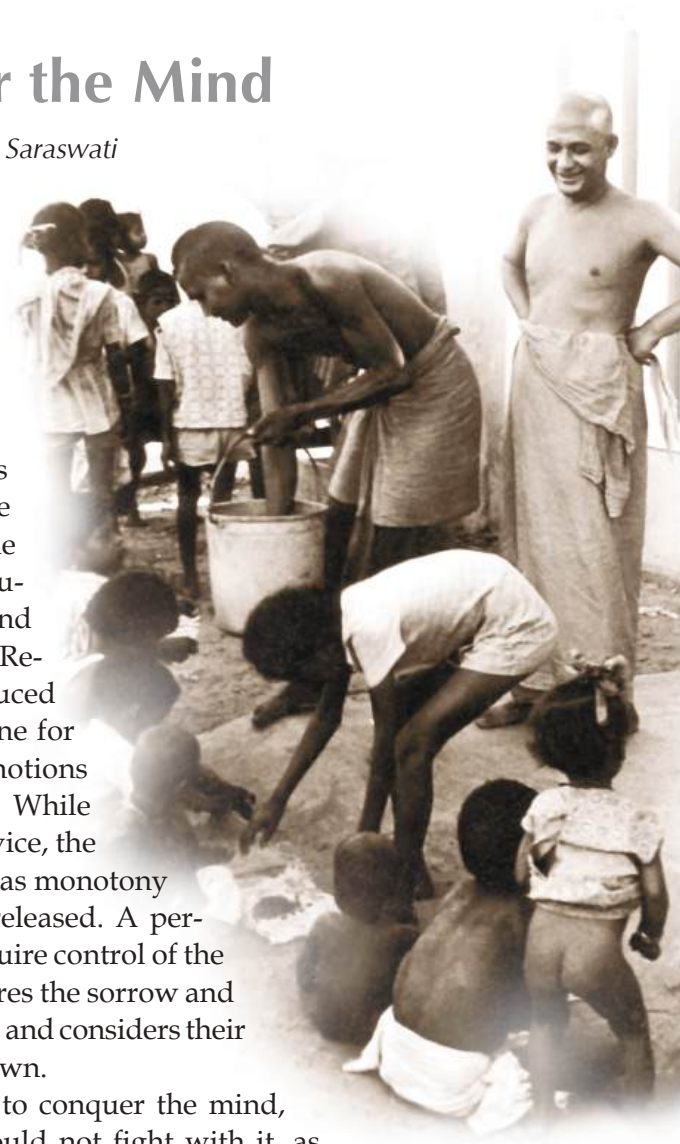
The third is *atmashuddhaye*, for self-purification, for unburdening the dross of life. Normal people are so entangled in the *moha* state, the infatuation state, that they do not think of the negative aspects of the karma which are binding them. By being free from the bindings of the karma, you attain inner purification. This statement of Sri Krishna is an important one to focus on, to understand what *seva* is.

First is to be non-attached, without *raga* and *dvesha*, without being influenced by attraction or repulsion, maintain your equipoise, your balance and harmony. Once you get into this state of non-attachment, you also have to become aware of the *dharma*, the inherent duty and virtue. Then, to attain *atmashuddhi*, you have to manage the *shat ripus*, the six conditions: *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*, desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy.

– 9 November 2024, Ganga Darshan, Munger

A Job for the Mind

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Selfless service is the cleanser of the mind. Work done for oneself produces both positive and negative results. Results are not produced when work is done for others, as the emotions are not involved. While doing selfless service, the mind is occupied as monotony and tension are released. A person can never acquire control of the mind until he shares the sorrow and suffering of others and considers their misery to be his own.

It is not easy to conquer the mind, and a person should not fight with it, as ultimately he will be the loser. The only way to deal with the mind is to give it a proper and sound job that it likes. The mind likes to serve humanity, to help the poor, feed the hungry, nurse the sick, take care of orphans, and go from door to door finding out the problems of others and rendering whatever help is needed there.

The transformation in the mind will be seen, like carbon which becomes a diamond. One may practise raja, jnana and bhakti yoga as much as one likes. However, they only pacify the mind for the time being as a first aid treatment. One can never deal with the mind, whether one is young or old, rich or poor, capable or incapable, unless one can think and aspire passionately to help others. The mind can only be dealt with by a sattwic programming of dedication and self-sacrifice. The vedic, Vaishnava, Christian and Muslim traditions make the same statement. By fighting with the mind, one creates psychological problems and becomes sick.

The only way to conquer the mind is to dedicate it to the service of an ideal that will make it happy. Work done free of charge is necessary for self-transformation, as it cleans the rajo and tamo gunas of the mind. Nishkama karma does not just mean work; there has to be a feeling in one's heart. In India, if a person visits forty odd houses, he will come across scarcity, dearth, suffering, poverty, darkness and dejection. He may come across a house where it is different, but that is an exception.

An aspirant is wasting time if he just grapples and wrestles with the mind twenty-four hours a day. He boxes with it, he gives it the slip. In his combat with the mind sometimes he falls and sometimes the mind falls, but neither can attain a decisive victory. The head and the tail win equally, half and half, and the wrestling ends in quits. In the evening he is fagged out. He begins to moan with a headache and takes a tranquillizer or opens a bottle. Some people opt to visit a temple or church for respite. Some go to a discotheque to refresh themselves. Some decide on a session of yoga nidra and play a tape. Nobody thinks of going to the house of a poor man and lighting a lamp. Nobody thinks of visiting the have-nots.

Seva alone changes the inner programming of the mind. When one removes the pain and helplessness of other people, one's own pain will be removed.

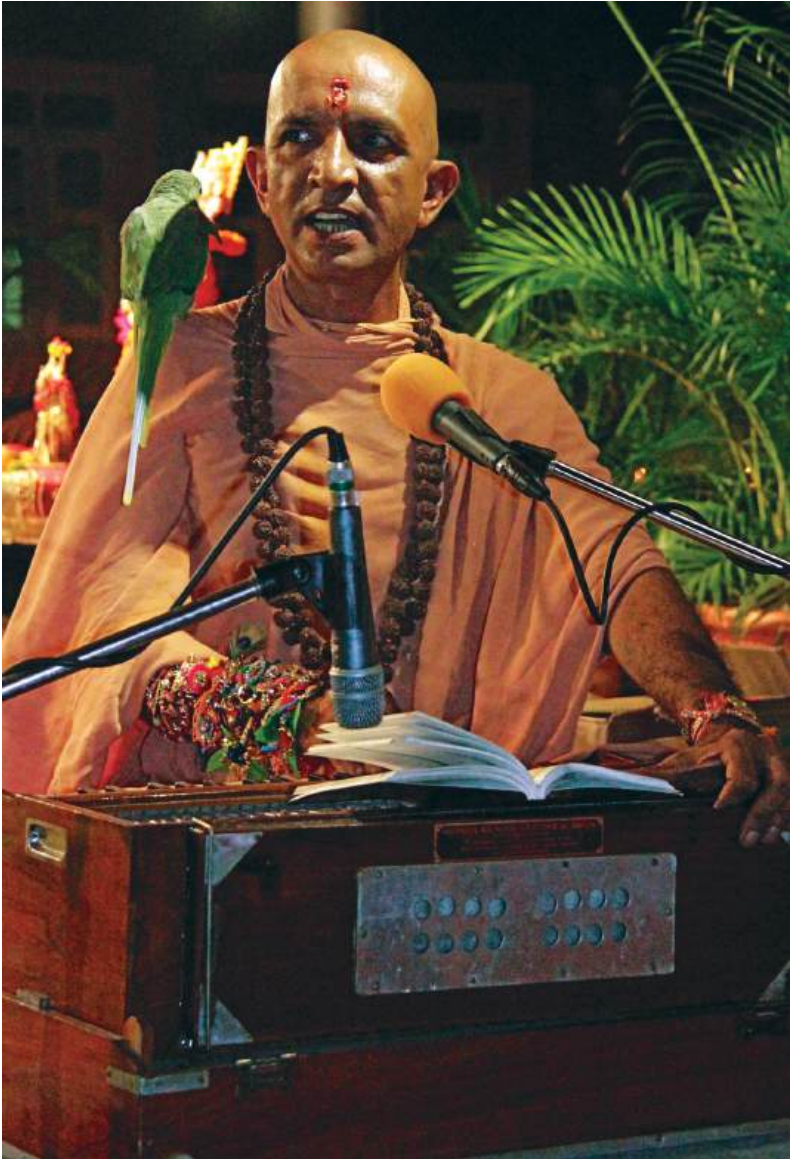
Dilute the Ink of Attachment

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

When one turns a self-oriented karma into a selfless karma, it becomes seva. If the harmonium had a mind of its own, it may think, “Oh, I play really well.” But the harmonium cannot play itself. If an adept player plays it, the melody will be harmonious. If a first-timer tries to play, the melody will be disharmonious. Therefore, it is the player who is important. When the aspirant understands that he is only a medium to fulfil a destiny, but something else is playing him, the first level of surrender comes. He says to himself, “I am not the doer. I am not the performer; I am only a box like a harmonium. Somebody is playing me, sometimes in accord, sometimes not, and with each melody, one part of my destiny is being fulfilled.” The final commandment of yoga is ishvara pranidhana. It is the first stage in transforming self-oriented karma into selfless karma and leads to purification of the emotions.

Swami Sivananda, in his practical eightfold path of yoga, has placed service on the first rung. Service or connecting with those in need helps to purify oneself. He says, “Do not fight attachments as they are a part of every individual.” He gives the example of drops of black ink put in a cup of water. Does the water turn black or does the ink turn watery? If one wants to clear the water of the dark ink of selfish attachments, more water or selfless attachment has to be added. When the selfishness of attachment is diluted and the attachment is directed not to one but to ten, not to ten but to a hundred, not to a hundred but to a thousand, the selfishness of one’s attachment is divided by a thousand. The selfishness of attachments is reduced by including more people in the fold of one’s life.

When more people are included, one experiences the eternal human connection that transcends intellect and feelings. It shows that one is a part of that unified field known as G-O-D,

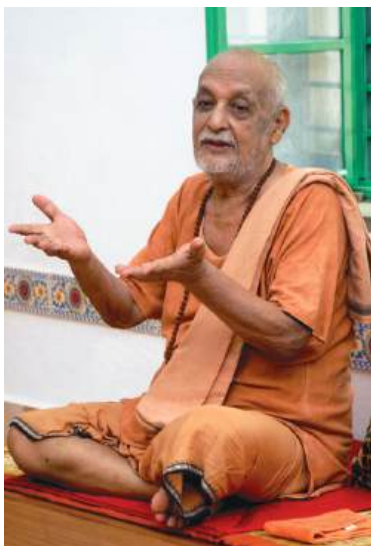


the source of Generation, Organization and Destruction. It is consciousness which creates, sustains and destroys. It is also the concept of ishvara pranidhana, leading to purification of the heart, due to expansion of one's perception and awareness.

Become a Spiritual Person

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

We may practise hatha yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga and bhakti yoga, but they only pacify the mind for the time being. They are all first-aid treatments. We will not be able to deal with the mind, whether we are young or old, rich or poor, capable or incapable, until we can think and aspire passionately to help others. If we want to befriend our mind, then we must treat the whole world as our family and reach out to as many people as we can.



Peace of mind is not the ultimate goal of human life. How can we find peace at all when everywhere in the world people are crying and clamouring? The world is on fire, our own neighbourhood is burning, while we sit smugly in our own air-conditioned room. But the day is not far off when the fire will engulf our house too. What are we doing for those who are suffering all around us? What are we doing for the billions who are living below the poverty line all over the world?

First we must take care of others and then take care of ourselves. First work for their moksha, then our moksha is guaranteed. First ensure their peace and prosperity, then our peace and prosperity are guaranteed. If we can't think about and understand the problems of others, we can never realize our self. In this way a transformation has to take place within our own consciousness, whether we are a sannyasin or a householder; then we will become a spiritual person.

Inspiration to Serve

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The first step on the spiritual path is selfless service of humanity. Selfless service is the watchword along the road to salvation. Service always elevates and makes one divine. Service purifies, redeems and energizes. To live life through service is to be intimate with life's innermost secret. To serve humanity with sincerity and feeling is to be in union with the cosmic consciousness.

* * *

Three things are necessary when practising selfless service. One must be free of egoism, not expect any appreciation for the work one does and have a balanced state of mind in success and failure. Life is not fully lived if one does not serve and love humanity. The aspirant should think how best his energy, intellect, education, wealth and strength can be used for the betterment of others.

* * *

Life is meant for serving others. God's plan for human evolution is seva to humanity. To grow on the spiritual path, one must serve humanity selflessly, become a lover of humanity and feel that the world is one big family and all people are its members. Humanity is God, and service of humanity is worship. One who works for all is dear to God. The cancer of individuality is dissolved when one serves humanity with divine bhava.

* * *

A person lives in vain if he does not have a generous heart. Through selfishness, a person creates a boundary wall around himself and his family members. Most people are unable to feel the suffering of a stranger. They may present an expensive car to their own child, but will not spend one rupee to relieve the suffering of the poor. When selfishness is removed, half of one's spiritual sadhana is over. One should serve, love and unite one's heart with all, be a little more patient, forgiving, charitable and loving. The angle of vision and views must be changed. The experience of selflessness is not merely self-denial or service done without reward, but is achieved through beholding the One.

* * *

Selflessness is a divine virtue, the mother of cosmic love, a friend of spiritual progress, a herald of saintliness, an archenemy of egoism and the jewel of an aspirant. It is the alpha and omega of spiritual sadhana and the yoga of all religions.

* * *

Never say, "I have helped that man," but say, "That man gave me an opportunity to serve. This service has helped me to purify my mind and I am extremely grateful to him." Service should always be rendered cheerfully and willingly, without a sour Sunday face or castor oil face and without grumbling.

* * *

The Place of Seva

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The first sentence Swami Sivananda said to Swami Satyananda was, “Stay here and do hard work. Do hard seva. Do hard karma yoga. Once the dross of the mind is cleaned with karma yoga, the light will shine forth.” That is what happened. Swami Sivananda inspired all his disciples to tread the path of seva and the path of dharma. The mandate of yoga was part of dharma and seva.

Sage Patanjali and Swami Sivananda have given definite systems for the development of the human personality. In the *Yoga Sutras*, Sage Patanjali described the method for working with ourselves to transform our restricted, conditioned nature and to experience inner freedom. Sage Patanjali's system represents the effort one makes in sadhana to understand oneself. Swami Sivananda, our paramguru, emphasized self-expression and self-actualization. He defined the eightfold path of self-expression. The yoga of Swami Sivananda begins where the yoga of Sage Patanjali stops.

I used to wonder what the final aim of yoga was. In my early days I was involved with the practices and teachings, but there came a point in my life where I began to ask, what do I do now? I saw the answer in the life of our guru, Swami Satyananda. After having attained personal enlightenment, he began to involve himself more with other people. I used to think, is this what I will be doing in the future? What is the purpose, the reason for that involvement? Then I understood the teachings of Swami Sivananda, the yoga of self-expression.

In Swami Sivananda's yoga, the first-stage is *seva*, service. If *seva* comes after samadhi, after dhyana, what is it? It is again involving oneself in the affairs of other people and the world. What we attain, experience and acquire through our process of sadhana has to be used for the betterment and upliftment of others.

The sequence of Sage Patanjali's yoga begins with the yamas and niyamas. Yama and niyama help to regulate the functions of the human personality and nature. After that, come asana and pranayama, then pratyahara and dharana, followed by dhyana and samadhi. From a seed we have become a tree and its fruits come in samadhi. Sivananda yoga begins with *seva* and love, they are the first two stages, the first expressions of this yogic journey. The third and fourth stages are giving and purifying. The fifth and sixth stages are becoming good and doing good. The seventh and eighth are meditate and realize.

The stages of meditation and realization are the same as the seventh and eighth stages of Sage Patanjali's yoga, dhyana and samadhi. Sage Patanjali's dhyana and samadhi represent the microcosmic effort, where we experience the flowering within. The meditation and realization of Sivananda yoga is the macrocosmic expression, where we experience oneness with the higher nature, which is not a personal, subjective experience, but a connection with people, with the world, with creation and with God.

If, after attaining realization, one stands before God and says, "I have become enlightened, now I am able to experience you," he will say, "You have been selfish because you desired God-realization, which is only for yourself. By attaining this state you have not helped anyone. You cannot enter the kingdom of heaven because you have only cared for your own emancipation, freedom and realization, not the suffering of any other being around you. Go back to the world and become selfless. Die to live the divine life." The yoga of Sivananda begins with self-expression and self-actualization.

Serve

The first component is service. Service is an extension of one's actions. When we are able to serve others without expectations, it becomes seva. Seva has to be connected with the idea of compassion and love. Love has to be experienced in an expressive unconditional way. From the example of Swami Satyananda it can be seen that unconditional love means giving and involving oneself, and conditioned love is taking, withdrawing and isolating oneself. We are conditioned and therefore the expression of our qualities is also conditioned. We take from other people to fulfil our needs and aspirations. We become happy with what we have received and we isolate ourselves from other people. Taking and isolating ourselves is reflected in relationships too, 'me and mine', not letting go of what I consider mine. Taking and withdrawing, not sharing, is conditioned love.

Giving and involving becomes unconditional love. When we give, we are not taking, not shutting ourselves within four walls, but reaching out to others and helping them grow. As we help others develop, we are involving ourselves in their journey, encouraging them to be an active participant in the process of growth, inspiring them to transform their restrictive natures.

According to Sri Swamiji, charity is the mother of poverty. From charity, dependence takes birth. If you give a fish to a hungry person, he will expect another fish next time from someone else. He becomes dependent on other people and rather than acting he becomes poor and dependent. Giving is not charity but helping the other person uplift the quality of their life. Giving can happen in any form. In the early 1970s, we conducted a yoga seminar in a mining region in India. The miners were poor people, who would go to a bar and drink after working all day in the mines, then go home, abuse their wife and children and go to sleep. There was little food or clothing in the homes and sickness was evident.

Part of the yoga seminar was shankhprakashana, which was done by the entire workforce. When we returned after a month, we saw a big change in the lifestyle of the people. After doing shankhprakashana, the men had to follow certain dietary rules, including not drinking alcohol for a month because of the sensitivity of the stomach lining. The miners were following that rule, so their health and the family environment had improved. As a result, the families were saving money which was being spent on food, clothes and medical care as well as books, notebooks and pens for the children's education. Their lives had improved.

Yoga can change people's lives. If a positive change improves people's living conditions, that is also a form of giving, a type of service. In this way we can use yoga and our personal attainments to improve other people's quality of life. The concept of service mentioned above is an extension of action. Most human actions are guided by ambitions and needs, otherwise



there would be no need to perform action. Ambitions and needs only represent our aspirations to acquire something better in life. How much of the need is real and how much is artificial?

When action is performed to fulfil our needs and ambitions, it is self-oriented, for our own benefit, wellbeing and happiness. We are happy sitting in our air-conditioned home while fires are raging all around us, content with our ideas of security and safety, status and prosperity, name and fame, and the drive to acquire more. This is the cause of deterioration in the human personality.

When action is not self-oriented but extending outwards towards other people in a selfless way, that selfless action is called *seva*. Generally, *seva* is translated as service, but in reality *seva* means connecting with the other person. Connecting with other people happens when the mind and heart are not confused by their own selfish natures, not guided by their own desires and cravings, but have become peaceful, open and free. When the heart and mind become peaceful, open and free, then we become a human being in the real sense. When the qualities that we share as human beings flower, we follow humanness in life, and the religion we follow becomes humanism, which is the expression of the divine nature in human life.

– 1 June, 2006, Volkings, Germany,
published in Yoga Sadhana Panorama, Volume Six



Time to Rethink

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I have searched for the highway, the straight path, to reach God. The path to reach God is: Never think of yourself. I have lived a spiritual life for more than sixty years. In Rikhia, I received a clear mandate from God. He said, "Love your neighbours as I have loved you. Help them as I have helped you." That set me reflecting on His words and I asked myself, "Satyananda, are you selfish? How can the world benefit from your spiritual gain and self-realization?" Swami Sivananda had also told me, "You want to realize God without changing yourself, but that is not possible."

After that, a metamorphosis took place in my personality, way of life and destiny. I changed my teaching and my way of thinking. Then God began to show me the path. Now helping others has become my obsession, my passion. Seva is the simplest and easiest path to God in the Kali Yuga. God is here where we are. We are here where He is. But He can't be seen because there is no sentiment of selfless service; there is only the emotional attachment of selfishness. When mankind learns how to love and serve one another, to be kind and tolerant to one another, to help one another and to share the problems, worries and ideas of others, then your family, your society and the world will be a better place to live in.

When we work for others there is no karma, but when we work for ourselves there is karma. The more we are aware of others, the more we are aware of God. Swami Sivananda always said, "Worry and anxiety will not harm you as long as they are not for your own selfish problems." Whatever we do becomes a sadhana provided we offer it to others and to God. In this way we can exhaust our karma without creating more. So, we should not aspire only for meditation or moksha. We should rethink our spiritual life and reschedule our program.

Seva – To Be With That

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Seva is twofold, self-oriented and selfless. When actions are performed with personal motivation, for the fulfilment of a personal need, expectation or desire, they are known as self-oriented, self-gratifying or selfish actions. They are meant to satisfy the person who performs them. The term 'selfish action' is not used in a negative sense, but indicates that self-oriented behaviour and desire is predominant in those actions.

The other form of action is selfless, without any personal desire or expectation; there is only performance. The scriptures say that as long as one has social responsibilities, one is selfish. Whatever a person does is for his stability, gratification, fulfilment and enjoyment. However, traits of selflessness are seen from time to time in his life even when he is predominantly selfish. When his actions begin to help others and are not performed for self-gratification or pleasure, they become selfless actions. Performing selfless action is difficult. Only a person whose mind is clear can put a plan into force for performing selfless service. People begin to think that treating the sick and serving the old is selfless service, but that is not the real concept of selflessness.

Selflessness means to come out of one's shell. The mind which identified with oneself has to identify with others. When the world is perceived not as a stranger, but as part and parcel of life's expression, selflessness begins. Selflessness manifests if one feels that each person is part of one's life. After all, when one looks after one's children, knowing and believing that they are part of one's life, some of the actions towards them are selfless and some are self-oriented. In the professional arena, too, streaks of a selfish and a selfless approach are seen.

It is difficult to be totally selfless when living as a householder in society. There has to be a process of learning how



to become selfless, and the teacher is the guru. In India, it is said that to learn the real meaning of seva, one has to go to the guru's ashram. In order to perfect seva, one has to serve the guru, who teaches that whatever one does is not for oneself but an offering to God. An aspirant will practise if there is

faith and trust in the guru. Without faith and trust the guru is not guru, only a wise person. With faith and trust, guru and disciple are like two windows in the same room that open to allow the air of selflessness to blow through.

In English, the word *seva* is translated to mean service, but in reality, it is the culmination and perfection of karma yoga. When a person is able to perform karma yoga with three ideas: participation, perfection and no expectation, the state of *seva* is experienced. *Ishwara pranidhana*, complete dedication to the Lord, happens automatically. When there is no expectation, one lets go and surrenders. When there is total participation, one-pointedness is experienced. As one strives for perfection, one sees new expressions of creativity. The mind, emotions and actions, head, heart and hands, become aligned and balanced. This balanced expression is known as *seva*.

Swami Sivananda went one step further when defining *seva*. He said the purpose of *seva* is to purify the heart. Purification of the heart comes about when expectations and attachments are refined. When they are no longer sensorial or sensual, they do not carry any idea of gain or loss. Instead, one feels for others as one does for oneself. There is a shift in perception, a shift from being self-orientated to self-expressive.

Seva is a state of participation in life at a higher level of consciousness. *Seva* means the final stage of human involvement in the world, while being in a higher state of consciousness. The literal meaning of the word *seva* is 'to be with that', *saha eva*, to be with that which is human, compassionate and loving. *Seva* means to connect with the divine transcendental nature and express that nature in thought, word and deed. Of course, to do this, one needs to let go of the many identities and ideas that are held close. This is where the concept of letting go or surrender comes in. Surrendering to the divine will and becoming the instrument of its peace is the outcome of *seva*. At the final level of *seva* one becomes only a medium of expressing God's grace and will. That is the real meaning of the word *seva*, where one is 'with That'.

No Loss of Effort

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Serving others helps to develop the human personality is the most effective sadhana for cleansing the mind and purifying the heart. Negative qualities constrict the heart and leave deposits in the mind, which form a veil or thick crust separating an individual from others. Selfless service breaks the crust, removes the veil and expands the heart. The whole world is nothing but a manifestation of God. Service of humanity and country is nothing short of service to God. It is worship and prepares an aspirant for the attainment of cosmic consciousness, the life of oneness or unity with God.

The individual aspirant does not lose anything in seva. Any service done for the country, society, poor or sick people brings

advantages and benefits. Service prepares the mind to receive knowledge of the atman. The *samskaras* or impressions, of these good actions are indelibly embedded in the subconscious mind. Their force propels one again to do more good actions.

The path of *seva*, which eventually leads to the attainment of the infinite bliss of the highest self, cannot be futile. In agriculture a person may fertilize and plough the land, but his efforts are futile if there is no rainfall during the year. However, this is not the case in *nishkama karma*, as there is no uncertainty regarding the result of any effort and there is not the least chance of doing harm. Some harm will certainly result if the doctor is injudicious and administers an overdose of medicine, but this is not the case in the practice of *karma yoga*. Even if a person does a little *nishkama karma* in any form, it will save him from the great fear of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death. That is the reason why Sri Krishna says to Arjuna (2:40):

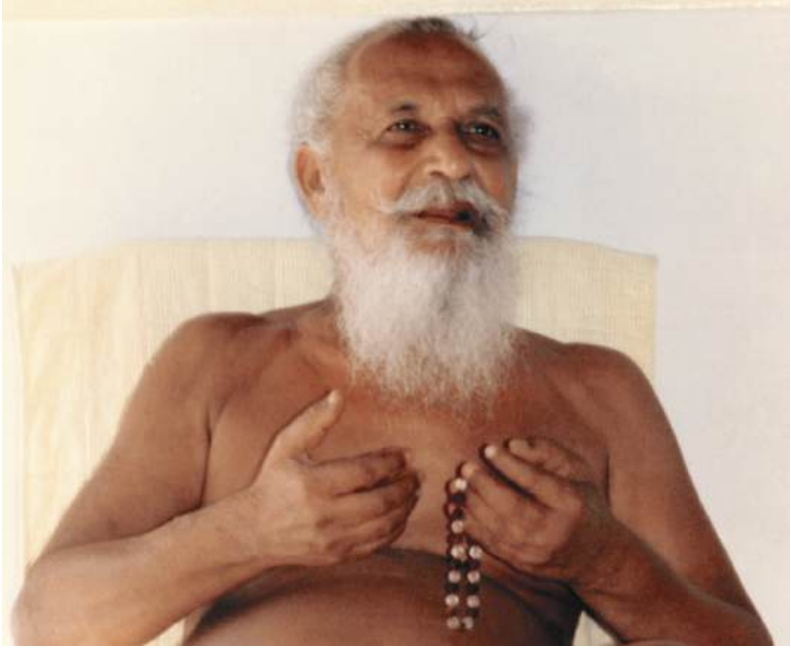
*Nehaabhikramanaasho'sti pratyavaayo na vidyate;
Svalpamapyasya dharmasya traayate mahato bhayaat.*

In this there is no loss of effort; nor is there any harm. Even a little practice of this service protects one from great fear.

The force of *karma yoga* induces an individual to work more and more with greater zeal and enthusiasm. The spirit of self-sacrifice grows and selfishness is annihilated. A person who works in the public field for the welfare of the country and humanity realizes the truth of this statement. When the thought of doing good becomes part and parcel of a person's being, he does not entertain any selfish motives and takes immense delight in serving others. There is joy and bliss in the practice of vigorous *seva*. The *karma yogi* gains spiritual strength and power by performing selfless and motiveless actions. When he works without any kind of motive, he feels the effects of purity and inner strength.

For the Twenty-first Century

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Serving others selflessly, doing good works for others without any ulterior motive is going to become the social philosophy of this century. The twenty-first century will be an age in which each individual will have a thought for others. Each age has a pertinent philosophy, and selfless service will be the philosophy of the new millennium. To think about others is to think about God. To worship others is to worship God. This is the lesson those who are travelling on the spiritual path have to learn. The simplest and the easiest path to God is to serve others. Seva is a complete spiritual sadhana. We should have at least one corner in our heart for the suffering and misery of others. If we help our fellow beings even a little, God will most certainly shower His grace upon us.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DONATIONS

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

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To Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust or Yoga Research Foundation

Funds will be utilized towards developing and furthering the Yoga activities.

2. **Corpus Donation**

To Bihar School of Yoga Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Bihar Yoga Bharati Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Yoga Publications Trust Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Yoga Research Foundation Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund

Interest income generated from **CORPUS (MOOLDHAN) FUND** shall be utilized towards all the activities of the Society/Trust.

3. **CSR Donation**

Funds will be utilized towards CSR activities.

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Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust or Yoga Research Foundation

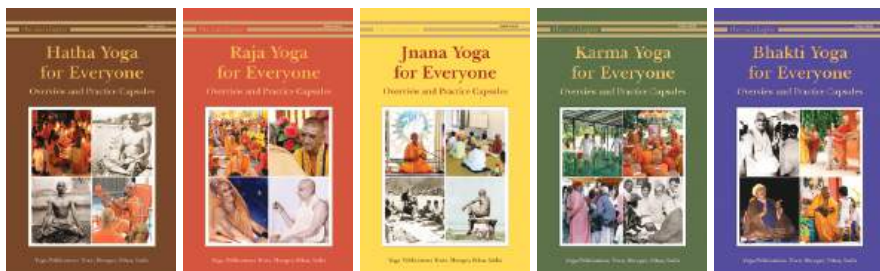
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Websites and Apps

www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga includes information on: Bihar Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Foundation.

Satyam Yoga Prasad

The digital library of the Bihar Yoga Tradition presenting audio, video and publications online. Available at satyamyogaprasad.net and as apps for Android and iOS devices as *prasad*.

Living Yoga Lifestyle Sadhana

This program is released aiming to improve and enhance health and total wellbeing. Available from biharyoga.net and satyamyogaprasad.net.

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YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines are available as free apps for Android and iOS devices.

Other Apps (for Android and iOS devices)

- *APMB*, the bestselling yoga book from YPT available as an easily browsable mobile app.
- The *Bihar Yoga* app brings to the user ancient and revived yogic knowledge in a modern medium.
- *For Frontline Heroes*, designed for people who are active in the fight against Coronavirus, presenting simple yoga practices to help alleviate tension and stress caused by the pandemic.

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Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2025

Bihar School of Yoga Yogavidya Training

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Dec 1 2024–Feb 9</i> | Sannyasa Experience (overseas aspirants only) |
| <i>Jan–Dec</i> | Ashram Life Experience |
| <i>Feb 8–14</i> | Total Health Capsule (Hindi) |
| <i>Mar 3–9</i> | Pranayama – Breathe for Healthy Lungs Training (Hindi) |
| <i>Mar 22–28</i> | Pratyahara & Dharana Training |
| <i>Sep 22–30</i> | Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training |
| <i>Oct 3–11</i> | Hatha Yoga/Karma Yoga Training |
| <i>Nov 1–15</i> | Progressive Yoga Vidya Training |
| <i>Nov 16–Jan 30 2026</i> | Sannyasa Experience (national/overseas aspirants) |

Bihar Yoga Bharati Yogavidya Training

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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Nov 1–Dec 31</i> | Yogic Studies, 2 months (English) |
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Events

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| <i>Jan 28–Feb 2</i> | Basant Panchami Celebrations/ BSY Foundation Day |
| <i>Jun 25–Jul 9</i> | Ved Parayan |

Monthly Programs

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Every Saturday</i> | Mahamrityunjaya Havan |
| <i>Every Ekadashi</i> | Bhagavad Gita Path |
| <i>Every Poornima</i> | Sundarkand Path |
| <i>Every 4th, 5th & 6th</i> | Guru Bhakti Yoga |
| <i>Every 12th</i> | Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamanas |