

YOGA

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July 2025



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Hari Om

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Useful Resources

Websites:

www.biharyoga.net
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www.satyamyogaprasad.net

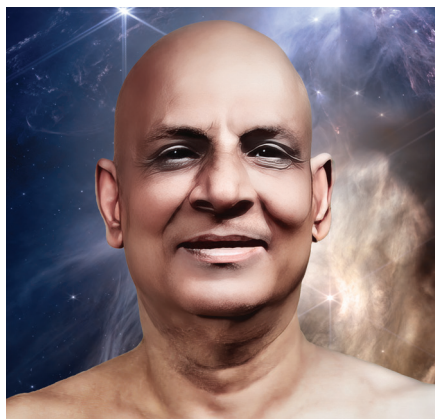
Apps:

(for Android and iOS devices)

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

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Dhyana

Just as the man who runs after two rabbits will not catch hold of any one of them, so also a meditator who runs after two conflicting thoughts will not get success in any one of the two thoughts. Have only one divine thought all times. Stick to it tenaciously at any cost. Run after the thought with greater vigour, strength and one-pointedness. Success is bound to come. Do not be anxious. Do not act according to the dictates of the mind. Act according to the words of sages and saints. Mere remembrance will inspire and goad.

—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 ॥

Guru

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

The guru is a link between the individual and the immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from *this* to *That* and thus has free and unhampered access into both realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality and, bending down, he raises the struggling individuals with one hand, while with the other he lifts them up into the imperium of everlasting joy and Infinite-Truth-Consciousness. Guru is your electric lift. He lifts you to the peak of perfection.

See the guiding hand, the awakening voice, the illumining touch of the guru in every object in this creation. The whole world will now stand transformed before your changed vision.

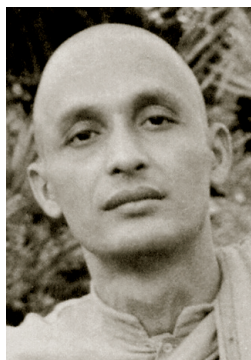
Guru is the door to liberation, but it is the aspirant who has to enter through it. The guru is a help, but the actual task of a practical spiritual practice falls on the aspirant himself.

Listen to all, but follow one. Respect all, but adore one. Gather knowledge from all, but adopt the teachings of one Master.



A Disciple

Swami Sivananda Saraswai



A disciple is he who follows the instructions of the Guru to the letter and spirit, who propagates the teachings of the Guru to less evolved souls on the path till the end of his life. A true disciple is concerned only with the divine nature of the Guru. The Guru's actions as man is not the disciple's concern. He is totally oblivious of it. To him, the Guru is Guru even if he acts unconventionally. Always remember that the nature of a saint is unfathomable. Judge him not.

Measure not his divine nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. Criticize not your Guru's action which is done on universal vision. True discipleship opens the vision. It kindles the spiritual fire. It awakens the dormant faculties. It is most necessary in one's journey along the spiritual path. Guru and disciple become one. Guru blesses, guides and inspires the disciple. He transmits, transforms and spiritualizes him.

The Guru teaches through personal example. The day-to-day conduct of the Guru is a living ideal to the disciple who is observant. The life of the Guru is a living sermon to the sincere disciple. By constant contact, the disciple imbibes the virtues of his Guru. He is moulded gradually. Study the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. You will find that Indra stayed with Prajapati for a period of a hundred and one years and served him wholeheartedly. The Guru only knows the spiritual needs of his disciples. The student can imbibe or draw from his teacher in proportion to his degree of faith. When the Guru comes to the aspirant to give spiritual instructions, if the aspirant does not pay any attention, if he is self-sufficient and heedless, if he bolts the door of his heart, he is not benefited.

A State of Mind

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Meditation is not something which can be practised; it is a state of mind. When we attempt to go into a meditative state, it is not only the mind which has to be focused and made alert but also the energies moving in the body. When the pranic forces are channelled, it becomes easier to experience the inner self.

The body can meditate. The big toe can meditate. The hair on the head can meditate. It may seem extraordinary but it is true. Every part of the body has the ability to experience meditative states.

What Is Meditation?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Meditation is known as dhyana yoga. It is the seventh stage in the raja yoga system. The definition of meditation in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is worth studying. The first definition is that in meditation the mind is freed from objective awareness, and as one goes further in meditation, the awareness is continuous. These are the actual definitions of dhyana yoga in the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

Before dhyana yoga, there are two important practices. The first practice is known as *pratyahara*, which means withdrawal of sensory awareness. The second practice is *dharana*, which means concentration on a point. Pratyahara, dharana and dhyana are continuous processes. When you practise pratyahara, you automatically come to dharana, and when you practise dharana, you automatically come to dhyana.

In the practice of pratyahara, we try to isolate the consciousness and the brain from the senses. The senses carry impressions to the brain, which are sent to the mind. If you can block the sensory channels, then the brain and the mind are isolated. There are many techniques for achieving this. In fact, the yoga techniques you read about in the books are all practices of pratyahara. Many times, there is a confusion in our minds. We are not able to decide which of the practices are genuine and good.

We read various books by different authorities and every authority has one or more of his techniques in his book. Every authority has a technique different from the others, which creates confusion in our minds. You do not know and cannot decide which of the techniques are true and which are not suitable. When these authorities write and suggest 'practices of meditation', they should clarify and write that these are 'practices of pratyahara'. In my opinion, all the different techniques are

good, and no practice is superior to another. One should not get confused at all. Simply choose one or more practices, from one or more authorities on the subject, and that will do.

Nada yoga, for example, is a technique of pratyahara. These techniques prescribed by different authorities help us to isolate the brain and the mind. When you isolate them, then you can concentrate on one point without much distraction. Whatever you concentrate on, any one point, is known as dharana. Dharana literally



means to place or fix the mind on one point. If you practise concentration or dharana without practising pratyahara, you will encounter a lot of difficulties, because the senses will be stimulating the mind and the brain from time to time. You see, if you open all the windows of this hall, the sound of the train will be disturbing us a lot. You close all the windows and if this hall is soundproof, then the sounds will not matter. In the same way, the mind has to become immune to impressions.

Now meditation cannot be practised, there is no specific way to practise it. The different techniques taught by all of us are intended either for pratyahara or dharana. Meditation is not a practice; it is the automatic culmination of your practices. In meditation, there should only be awareness of one object, that is all. In dharana, there is awareness of more than one point. In pratyahara, there is a lot of fighting with the senses. So, pratyahara leads one to dharana, and dharana automatically culminates in dhyana. When dhyana becomes deep, it is called samadhi.

– August 1981, Chamarande, France

The Editor of Life

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

You have written a book and want to publish it. What will you do? You take the manuscript to the editor or publisher, he will read it and cross out sentences, remove inappropriate or superfluous pages, and chapters are shuffled from here to there. After editing is done it goes for printing. The book you had written has been changed by the editor to make it better, more understandable, cohesive, logical, to create links between different events and chapters, to bring personalities and different events together. The book is published in your name.

Now transpose this. You have a book of life, and according to your understanding, it is going nicely, no problem at all – good job, good career, good family, good children, good house, good factory. Everything is fine. You think you have the perfect manuscript to publish. You take your book to the guru, he looks at the book and says that this chapter is superfluous and that sentence is not necessary. When you visit your guru, your book is in the process of editing, all the time. The guru will tell you to do this and not do that. You are all the time in the process of being edited as is the book of your life, and therefore no book is being published. Life is a book.

This is the reality and you have to understand it in that manner. When the guru sees the book of life then the karma changes; editing of the book takes place by the guru. In regard to guru seva, it is the fulfilment of the editing. When the guru says, “No don’t do this,” it is not that the guru does not trust you. It is not a question of trust; it is the editing process that is happening in the manuscript of your book. In this process the guru has become the editor of life.

– 8 March 2008, Nasik

Preparing for Meditation

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

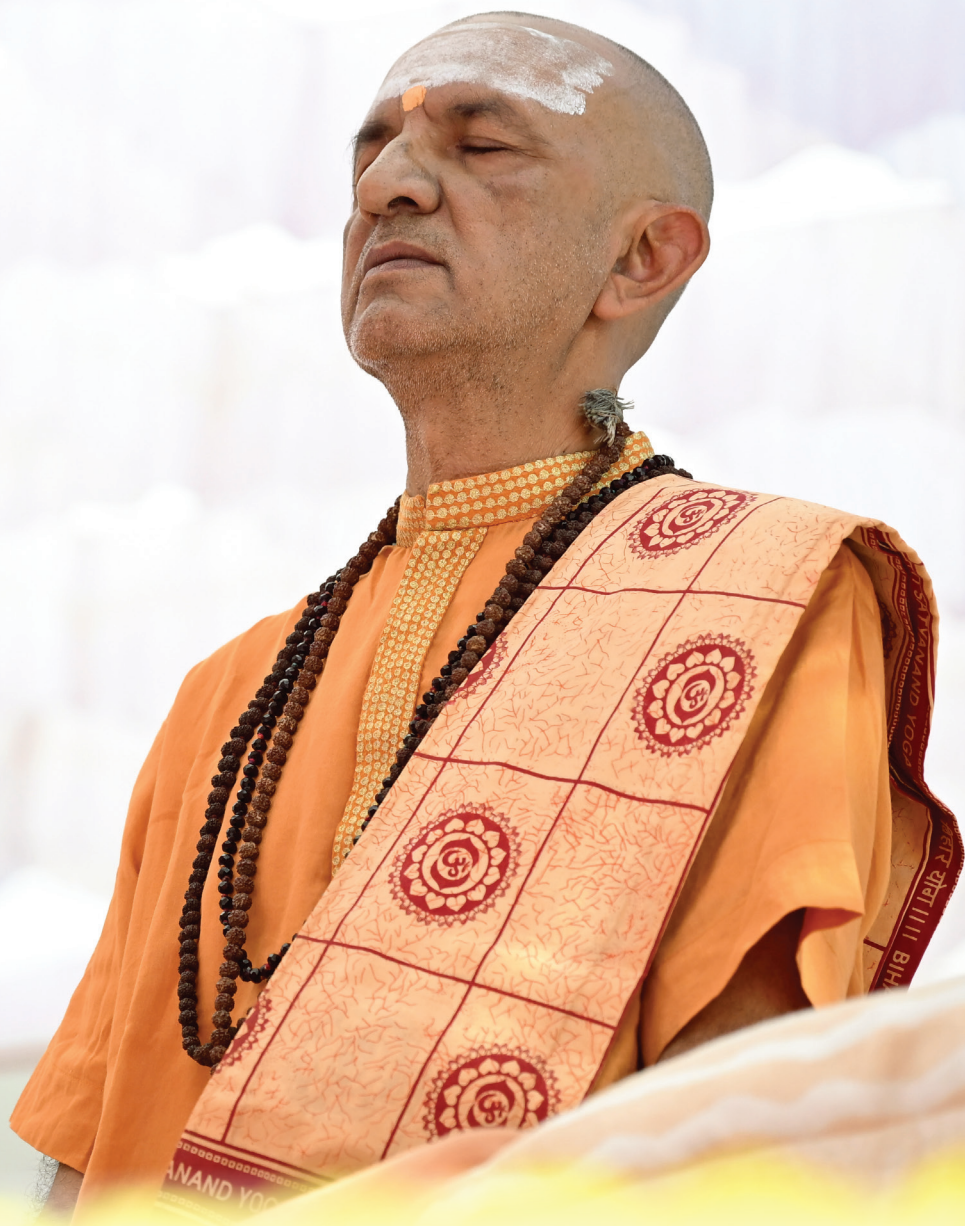
The eight steps of raja yoga are: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama. Yama and niyama are mental conditions. Asana and pranayama are physical activities. Then comes pratyahara, dharana which are the two practices. Then dhyana and samadhi which are two aspirations; they are not practices. You cannot practise samadhi and you cannot practise dhyana. They are experiences that develop and manifest naturally, as the result of you working through yourself.

In reality, raja yoga is not ashtanga yoga. It is only '*do-anga*' yoga, pratyahara and dharana, two parts. Pratyahara and dharana are known as raja yoga. Samadhi is the outcome of pratyahara and dharana perfection. Dhyana is the outcome of pratyahara and dharana perfection. Asana and pranayama have no reference here. Even Patanjali does not mention asana or pranayama. Nobody practises yama and niyama, thinking they are ethical and moral rules of yoga. People meditate, but they do not practise yama or niyama. So, the whole focus is on two components only.

Pratyahara

What is pratyahara and what are the different stages of pratyahara? First stage of pratyahara is relaxation. This relaxation is not sleep; this relaxation is reduction of stressors of life. You develop the ability to manage those stresses of life which create tension, anxiety, frustration, dissipation of the mental energies and faculties. Relaxation is the beginning of pratyahara.

After relaxation, comes the development of awareness. There are many aspects of the mind just as there are many different parts of body. There are arms and legs in the body, there is the head in the body, and all parts have different



functions. Together, they are known as the whole body. I can grab this whole body by grabbing your wrist, by grabbing your arm or any part of the body. When I grab that part of the body,

I can also control your body. If I grab your arm, I can pull you, push you or move you, as there is that much control.

The practices function in the same manner. For example, there is a practice called *antar mouna*, thought observation. The mind is not only thinking; it is one component, just as the arm is one part of the body. When you are able to control that thought process, you are also able to deal with the rest of the mind – up to a point. If you are able to develop awareness of the thinking patterns, it is like grabbing the arm of somebody, and then you can move the person. Just by grabbing one aspect of the mind, you can also influence other aspects of the mind. Awareness begins with one aspect, then another, then another. It can begin with thought, it can begin with visualization, with breath or with mantra; and each aspect activates the awareness. It forces you to observe, it forces you to bring your dissipations or your dissipated mind back to focus, back to its centre. So, cultivation of awareness is the next item.

Relaxation and awareness become the strength of pratyahara. Then, other areas of mind are explored and brought into control. This is a basic description of pratyahara. Without going into philosophy or scriptural references, one can say, pratyahara is the process of relaxation and developing awareness from the sensorial to the mental, from the sensorial to the emotional, from the sensorial to the psychic dimension, covering all dimensions of human nature.

Dharana

Dharana means focusing or concentration, holding your mind onto something. Look at a flower, and you keep on looking at it without thinking of any other thing. Maybe you can hold that attention for a few seconds, yet those few seconds will represent dharana, the time when your mind was fixed on the object. Not the time when the mind moved from the object, but the time it was fixed on the object. If I look at you, for example, for whatever time I am looking at you, my focus is not on any other person, it is on you. So, the mind is fixed there.

Although I am not aware of that as dharana, I am aware of that as sight, 'I am looking at you, I am looking at you, I am looking at you.' The same vision can become dharana, if I hold that image for an extended period of time without the mind being dissipated. So, focusing and concentrating, they constitute dharana. There are many ways to perfect dharana as well. You can concentrate on breath; at the eyebrow centre, on the tip of the nose, a star at night, the moon, on nature or a flower. As long as your concentration is fixed, it will indicate your dharana, focusing and concentration.

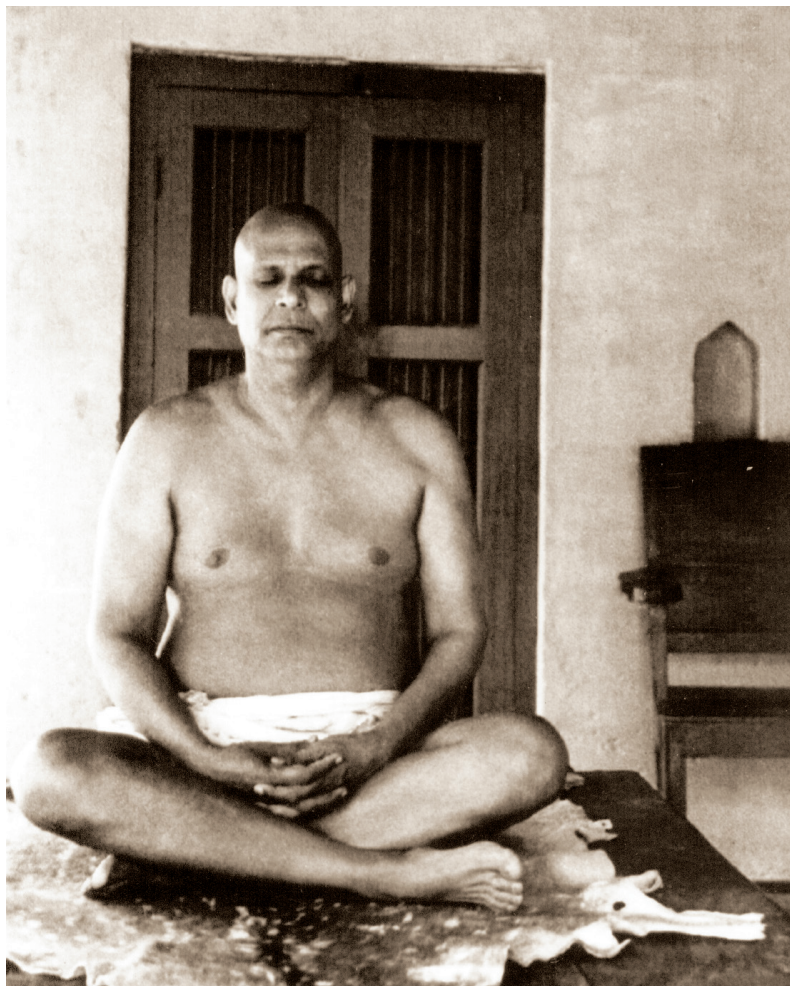
Pratyahara and dharana become an important ingredient for our life. If we can apply the principles of pratyahara and dharana in our normal yogic routine, in everything that we do, then we would be in control of our life. Right now, we are not in control of our life, yet, in this manner, we can take control of life and the fluctuations that we face. We can maintain our balance and our sanity in this world. From my perspective, this is the need of the time now. Psychologists and psychoanalysts around the globe say that the next biggest challenge is going to be mental health. That mental health does not relate only to children, young people or students. It is also very much part of an adult's life.

Our whole life depends on our mental health. So what are the possible external tools to improve our mental health? That has not yet been found – except going to a psychoanalyst, for counselling, consultation, taking some medicine and spending some money. There is no clear pathway to deal with mental health challenges. If we think of pratyahara and dharana, and learn to apply them properly in our life, many of the mental health challenges can be overcome with the application of pratyahara and dharana, not as tools of meditation but as tools of regaining our inner balance. Once our inner balance, our mental balance is regained, then the same becomes the tool to advance in meditation.

*– 1 April 2024, Pratyahara & Dharana Training,
Ganga Darshan, Munger*

Ignite the Spiritual Dynamo

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Knowledge of the ways and habits of the mind, its operations, the laws of the mind and the methods of mind control and mental discipline is very necessary if you want to enjoy real happiness and abiding peace.

Steadiness of mind is very essential for a reversal of the normal outgoing activity of the mind. Unless the mind is first made steady and brought under complete control, it will not be possible to change its course to the opposite direction. You must know how to withdraw the mind from external objects and fix it on one point. You must know the right method of concentration and meditation. Then alone you can be really happy. Then and then alone, you will attain peace, freedom and perfection.

Neuroplasticity

Meditation acts as a powerful tonic. It is a mental and nerve tonic as well. The holy vibrations penetrate all the cells of the body and cure the diseases of the body. Those who meditate save doctor's bills. The powerful, soothing waves that arise during meditation exercise a benign influence on the mind, nerves, organs and cells of the body. The divine energy freely flows from the feet of the Lord to the different systems of the sadhaka.

Considerable changes take place in the mind, brain and the nervous system by the practice of meditation. New nerve currents, new vibrations, new avenues, new grooves, new cells, new channels are formed. The whole mind and the nervous system are remodelled. You will develop a new heart, a new mind, new sensations, new feelings, a new mode of thinking and acting and a new view of the universe.

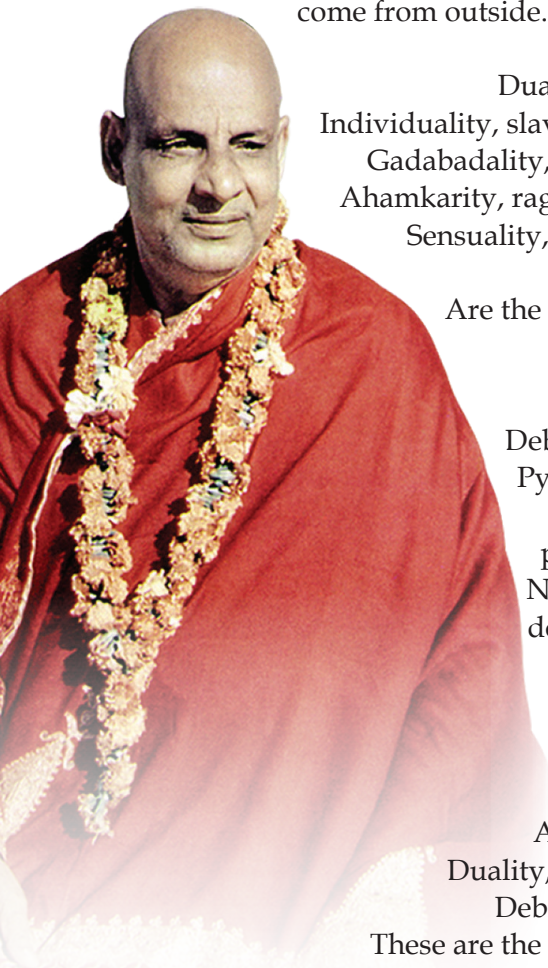
If you can meditate for half an hour daily, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation. Such is the beneficial result of meditation. As you have to move with different minds of peculiar natures in your daily life, get the strength and peace from meditation and you will have no trouble and worry.

You have got all the materials within you for transmuting yourself into a sage. A little application and rigorous meditation will ignite the spiritual dynamo within. Exert. Struggle. Plod. Ignite. Realize.

Obstacles to God-Realization

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

An intelligent and comprehensive understanding of the various obstacles that act as stumbling blocks in meditation is indispensable. Then alone will the aspirant find it easy to conquer them one by one . . . The real and serious obstacles to meditation are from within only. They do not come from outside.



Duality, multiplicity, plurality;
Individuality, slave mentality, dadabadality;
Gadabadality, dambhacharity, asmitaity;
Ahamkarity, raga-dweshity, abhiniveshity;
Sensuality, sensitivity, sentimentality;
Inactivity, rotundity;
Are the obstacles to attain divinity.

Universality,
cosmicity, real unity;
Debility, morbidity, anemiaticity;
Pyorrheaticity, blood pressuricity;
Myopiaticity,
presbyopiaticity, amblyopiaticity;
Nyctalopiaticity, hemianopiaticity,
doctors' mahafollyishnessity;
Maha andhakaraity,
are the obstacles
to attain divinity.

Atrocity, curiosity, cruelty;
Anxiety, partiality, timidity;
Duality, individuality, immorality;
Debility, morbidity, sensuality;
These are the obstacles to attain divinity.

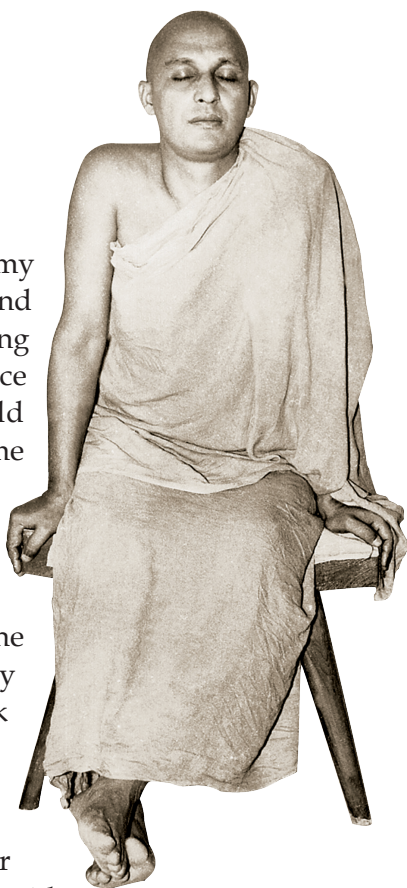
Swami Sivananda

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Many times I made mistakes, both in my life and in the ashram, as an inmate and as an executive. I was always expecting to be called by him, but he never once called me. I thought that he would rebuke me or admonish me, or tell me what was right and wrong, but he never said one word. When I used to go to him he would never raise the point. He would just say the usual things. He never recognized the mistakes in man. He always used to say that everybody had in him the spark of divinity.

Swami Sivananda lived life in all its completeness: at once a great saint of the calibre of Christ; an administrator in the highest position; a sannyasin with total detachment from life; a man brimming over with compassion, love and charity, but living a life of austerity and dispassion; a bhakta and devotee of God, and side by side a philosopher of superior intellect; a man with discipline and strictness, as well as loving kindness for every sentient and insentient creation of God.

The temperaments of my guru and myself were diametrically opposed. He was like the humble, holy cow, whereas I was like a ferocious Alsatian dog. To this day there is still some vestige of that diehard habit left in me, but my guru was very calm and serene and I placed all my trust in him. He invariably said that everyone must learn to stand on their own two feet. I believed him because he told me that I should never think



of living in the ashram permanently. I would never become a frog in the well.

He gave me just one piece of advice, which was to have unshakeable faith in God. He told me not to be ruffled by hope and dejection, not to worry about my talents or the powers I would obtain later. I followed his words with full faith. I never planned to do this or that. I decided to do as he bade me. Everyone is born with a predetermined destiny. We are all pre-programmed and our journey through life follows that program. It is extremely difficult to explain what kind of relationship I had with Swami Sivananda. I think of him very often, but it is not like the way you think of your near and dear ones. My guru always guided me and put me on the right track.



Questions on Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

For a beginner what is the best way to begin meditation?

I can only give you a glimpse into how one should meditate. There are three stages of meditation. The first stage is when you try to block the thinking process, the second stage is when you try to centralize it and the third stage is when you eliminate it. In raja yoga these three stages are technically known as pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. In modern psychology we call them relaxation, concentration and meditation. First you must try to relax the thoughts, then concentrate on a symbol, and when you become one-pointed on that symbol, meditation arises automatically. First you have to know how to relax and how to concentrate. Do not ask how to meditate because meditation is something that happens. It is an event, not an action.

Relaxation is a difficult technique to achieve because in it you confront all the challenges and agonies of the mind. You do not know whether to let it function or to control it. It is like dealing with a naughty child at home. If you beat him he becomes bad, if you love him you feel you are spoiling him, and if you leave him alone or send him to boarding school you feel you are neglecting him. This is the same problem people have with the mind because it is also a child. I have come to the conclusion that of all the yogic practices, meditation is the core of yoga, no matter how difficult it may be. No matter which path you choose, it is not easy to attain the goal of yoga. One should not expect attainment in this life. Even without reaching the goal, the very practices of yoga, founded by the ancient yogis many thousands of years ago, constitute one of the best sciences known to man.

In the last few years there has been a lot of scientific research conducted into the effects of meditation, not only in



India but also in America, Japan, Australia, East European and other countries. Researchers have found that the practice of meditation even for a few minutes can bring about great changes in the whole body. Investigations were carried out on subjects who had no previous contact with yoga and those who had been doing yoga for some years. They were placed in control groups under laboratory conditions. Different practices were given to them, including chanting of mantras such as *Aum*, concentration on the mid-eyebrow centre, navel and other parts of the body. Within 10 to 15 minutes they started

reacting. Their brain displayed greater clarity in thinking and decision making. Their breathing rate as well as their need and utilization of oxygen decreased. Investigations at Harvard Medical School in the USA found that the level of oxygen decreased by approximately 10% during sleep, while during the practices of meditation it decreased by 20% indicating that a greater degree of rest was obtained in meditation. The brain waves showed an increase in alpha waves and decrease in beta frequency.

One definite and major result that was displayed in all scientific investigations was that the practice of meditation, whether through mantra, kirtan, concentration or pranayama, eases the tension in the coronary system. Blood pressure gets lowered. The heart rate and metabolism decrease and in most cases the use of drugs is either significantly lowered or stopped altogether. Therefore, let us say, even if yoga is not good for anything else, science has shown conclusively that at least yoga reduces hypertension. According to medical authorities, hypertension is the cause of more than one hundred diseases. Statistics released in the USA show that one third of American males suffer from hypertension and one half of the deaths in America are from coronary diseases. Hypertension can cause divorce, suicides, murders, heart failures, insomnia, migraine, loss of appetite, premature blindness, brain haemorrhage, paralysis, digestive problems, arthritis and many more medical conditions. So, if yoga can reduce hypertension it can also alleviate hundreds of related diseases.

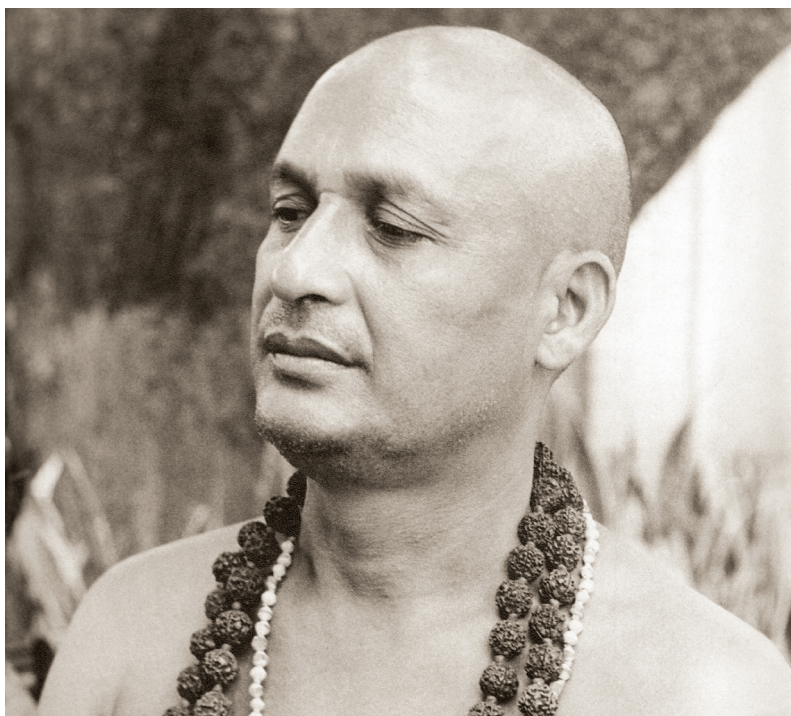
What is the best way to reach the state of meditation?

Practising mantra or any other technique is meant to attain the state of meditation. Meditation is not a technique or a posture. It is a state of mind which is attained through great effort using such techniques as kriya yoga, mantra yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga. Karma yoga is the fastest way to reach meditation. You can reach the state of meditation faster through karma yoga than through any other yoga, even faster than kriya yoga.

Should we try to control the mind during meditation practice or should it be allowed to wander?

There are three categories of sadhakas: sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. During dhyana, a mind predominately sattwic in nature will seldom wander. It will mostly be one with the object of concentration. However, people who are rajasic and tamasic by nature, who happen to constitute the majority of the population, have minds which are very disturbed by worldly anxieties of day-to-day life. If they try to withdraw their minds during dhyana, they will face mental tension and may even develop a headache. When two lines of thought fight each other there is a state of conflict. Your mind wanders, so you pull it back. It goes out again and you try to pull it back again. During this process of wandering and returning, the mind develops a kind of tension which in an advanced age can result in blood pressure, or in youth, cause migraine headaches, hysteria, epilepsy, and so on. The purpose of concentration is not to stop the mind but to explode the subconscious so all that is hidden underneath in the subliminal mind comes up. That is where everybody is making a mistake. If the mind is allowed freedom in the beginning, it will automatically settle itself after some time and it will not be necessary for you to drag it back and forth.

There is another point to consider. When you are concentrating on Shiva for example, and your mind is wandering, are there two minds or only one? The mind is one, but its vrittis are two. One vritti is trying to concentrate and another is trying to wander away. This conflict between the two vrittis of your mind can develop into a mental condition known as a split personality, which can further develop into an acute condition called schizophrenia. With people who constantly fight their minds, men, women and children alike, the vrittis are not able to compromise with each other. If one compromises, it is alright, but often one or both vrittis are not prepared to compromise. The wandering mind says, 'I'll go'. The tranquillized mind says, 'Sit down', resulting in a split in the mind between the ego and the superego. This is how neurosis arises. This happens not



only in practices of meditation but also in day-to-day living. Therefore, in meditation, first there should be relaxation of the mind, second concentration, and third meditation.

I want to make one thing very clear – do not suppress the thought currents before concentration takes place. The purpose of dharana is to ignite the dynamite in order to explode the subconscious mind, just as dynamite is ignited to explode a whole mountain and everything blows up like a volcano. In the same manner, suppressions in the personality and subliminal province must be brought up during concentration.

What does it mean when a person who has had very little success with meditation has a beautiful vision and then nothing thereafter?

It is not success or lack of success when you see some pleasant vision or when you experience bliss. Similarly, it is not

failing or falling down in your meditation when you have an uncomfortable, unpleasant experience. No, you must not feel like this. These experiences do not mean anything. You are like a pot full of samskaras, full of all kinds of things. These samskaras are sometimes good and sometimes bad. It is like a reel of film on which there are good photographs and bad photographs. When you close your eyes to try to practise higher awareness, you sometimes notice the samskaras with greater clarity, and you consider that this is bad and that is good. This does not mean that you are experiencing success or failure.

It does not matter whether you have good or bad visions, good or bad experiences. Through yoga all the samskaras are taken away, good and bad. When the good ones come, do not think that you are having success. When the bad ones come, do not be disappointed or afraid. They are the same on the spiritual path because they are not permanent.

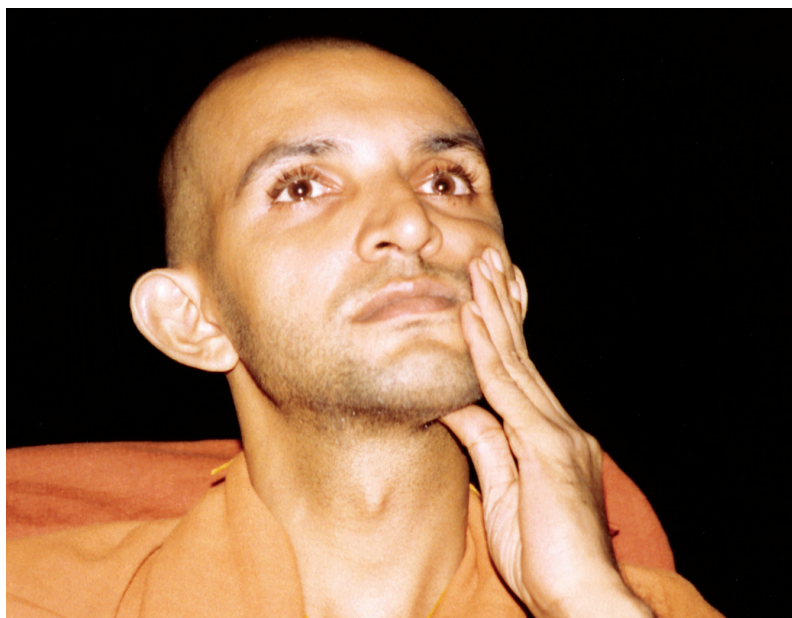
What can be gained by developing dhyana?

When one knows dhyana, one can go straight onto the spiritual path. Dhyana is an art. It is like shooting a rifle. Anyone can pull the trigger, but to hit the target bull's-eye is difficult. Everyone can close their eyes in padmasana or siddhasana, but they lose consciousness, trying to pull the mind back again and again or suppress it. In dhyana, consciousness expands; it does not contract, and for this to take place one must know the proper way. Therefore, we have to revive meditation. A dhyana yogi knows how to die as well as how to live. This atman can see, hear, smell without a body. A dhyani can separate the atman from the body, choose his next birth or not die if he wants. Shankaracharya said that even if a man has everything in this world, he has nothing if he does not have dhyana.

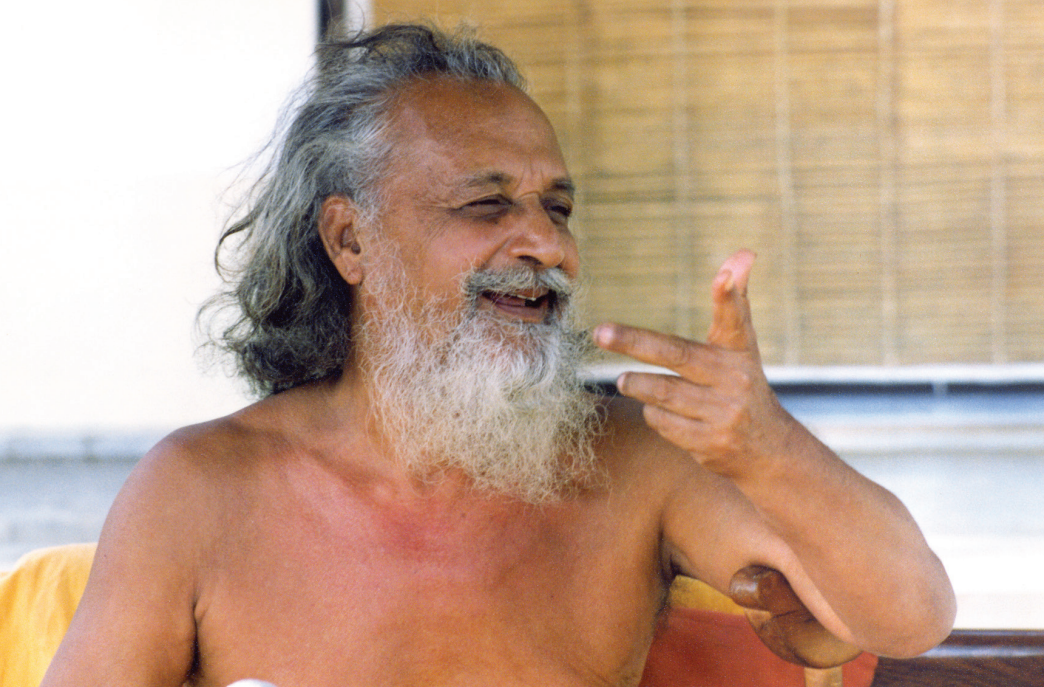
– 1979–1980, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Sri Swamiji's Teaching

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



I have noticed that in Sri Swamiji's sadhana the concept of how to incorporate the qualities of love, affection, compassion and devotion are subtly coming to the forefront. In his own way, he is trying to teach us how to develop these four qualities, so that we can be more at peace with ourselves and more creative in our lives. When we say 'develop love, compassion' or any quality, the question always arises, "How do we do it?" The love that we are expressing now, is it not enough? The affection or compassion that we are expressing now, is it not enough? Even in these expressions, we tend to involve our egos, attachments, ambitions and desires, and the purity of the quality is never experienced. Rather, the more we worry about it, it seems the more we distance ourselves from the purity. There is too much ego-identification.



Sri Swamiji is trying to teach us by being an example and the symbol of how we can cultivate these qualities within us, so that eventually we can make this world a better place for ourselves and for future generations. If you can pick up what he is trying to give you on a subtle level, you will see that it is similar to what I have just said. I am not going to say that it will be the same as it is my understanding and feeling; yours may be different. What I have picked up is according to my nature, what you will pick up will be according to your nature.

We have identified and linked ourselves emotionally with a person having or representing some state which we want to achieve in life. We have identified with a body, an image, a concept. I feel that now he is trying to make us identify with the essence which has kept him ticking all this time. It is like he is saying, "Don't look at the body; look at the force which has kept this body going in a particular direction, on a particular path, and identify with that force rather than with a personality."

– 22 November 1994, Ganga Darshan, Munger









Dhyana Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saarswati

The gurus and teachers in the twentieth century talk about meditation as a medicinal pill, and I am no exception to this explanation. When you read the books of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, of Swami Sivananda, of any yoga teacher in the western hemisphere, or you open any scientific manual on the research of meditation, it seems that meditation is a system of therapy.

It will not be possible for me to quote the names of the books and their writers but most recent books on the subject of stress and strain have come to the conclusion that meditation is the best way. They have also said that, the two symptoms of stress and strain are the cause of most diseases, let us say eighty-nine percent. This means that if you have a migraine, meditation will help you. If you are suffering from hyperacidity and consequently peptic ulcer, meditation will help you. If you have tension and hypertension, high blood pressure, meditation can bring it down. There is no end to this type of citation now and this is, in my opinion, the one reason why the modern world is accepting meditation.

Scientists are against occultism and mysticism, and there is no place for God in their theories. Naturally, where is the place of meditation for a scientist? If meditation is a way to apprehend God or if meditation is a way to experience the Self, scientists do not want it. Therefore, meditation in our century has survived by the mistakes of humanity. If science can give you happiness, there is no hope for meditation, but this is just a temporary phase of what you call meditational philosophy.

I came to the West in 1968 for the first time and in these sixteen years I have seen a sea of change in their way of thinking. Transcendental Meditation, though it is a very important meditation, is not considered enough. People want to know more about their own self. This process of knowledge

of the self came to a halt maybe two thousand years ago. In India, the search for the self went unabated, but in the West it came to a halt. Socrates was served hemlock. Why was he poisoned? Because he spoke a dangerous philosophy. He said, 'Know Thyself.' The Greek people thought, 'What do you mean by it? I am Plato, I am Aristotle, I am Pythagoras, I am Greek, I am Macedonian. That is all I am! What is this crazy man talking about? No, he is talking insanity. Finish him!' The search for the self stopped there.

There was another unfortunate man in Greek history. He was known as Alexander the Great. Unfortunately, that man happened to go to invade India. It is easy to conquer India politically and militarily, but it is very hard, very difficult and impossible to conquer India philosophically. There he encountered a few swamis in Punjab, Takshasheela, and he was very much impressed by them.

Basically, the Greeks were philosophers. They were brilliant people and so was Alexander. When he went to India he did not go only with the commanders-in-chiefs, he also went with wise people. He took with him philosophers, because he knew that in India he was going to encounter the swamis. Two things happened at the same time: Alexander conquered Punjab and India conquered Alexander. He returned.

Before his return and during his stay in India, he wrote quite a few letters to Aristotle who was his philosophy teacher. When Aristotle received the letters from Alexander he was very angry, and so Alexander met the same fate as Socrates. He brought with him a guru from India who had to live in Babylonia and an ashram was established for him there, but there was no Alexander.

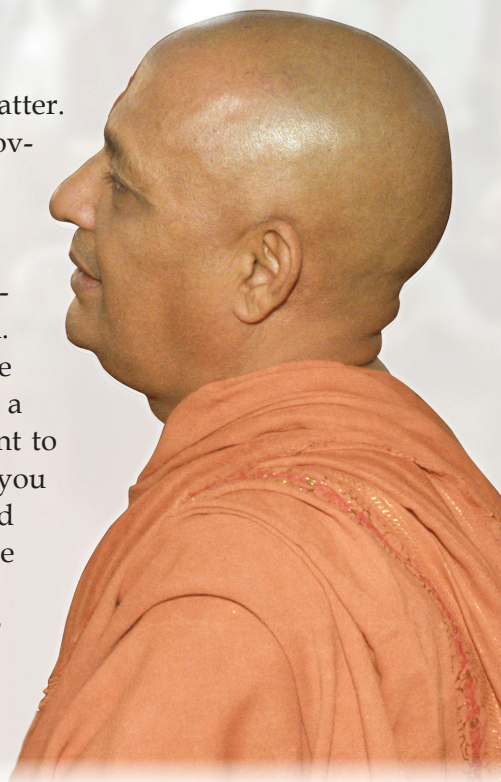
With this a tragedy begins. What is that tragedy? Greek thinkers were the fathers and their philosophy of matter, not the philosophy itself, continued right up to 1927 when Einstein said $E=mc^2$. Isaac Newton was the last of the scientists of matter. The Greek philosophical system said, 'Know the matter.' So, they knew matter.

Today, scientists know matter. The sciences in the West discovered the deeper and greater areas of every matter, but Hindus said, 'Know the self.' In order to know the self, the intellectual process is not enough. The process of thinking is the process of reasoning which is a process of analysis. If you want to realize the quality of matter, you have to use your reasoning; and this reasoning can become more and more fine.

The German philosopher scientist Immanuel Kant used to call it 'pure reason'. When you are analyzing matter, there comes a time when reason is superseded by a higher knowledge. You can call this 'philosophic attention'. How many times does an apple fall from the tree? It was only Isaac Newton who discovered the theory of gravity by the falling of an apple. That is called 'pure reason', 'philosophic attention', and in yoga it is known as dhyana.

Forget meditation for the time being. The words meditation and contemplation are a part of the Christian church theology. You are Christians but you do not know very much about it. In Christian theology you are allowed to pray and meditate, but you are not allowed to be aware. There was a saint, Saint Teresa of Avila. She had this problem with the church. She wanted to go deep into awareness and she was told not to, but to contemplate. This contemplation is an intellectual, mental or psychological process.

During the process of awareness there is only one object. The knower is not there. The process of knowledge is also



not there. There is only one substance called awareness. Sometimes in dreams it happens. In Sanskrit, the word is dhyana; its equivalent is not meditation but awareness, absolute attention.

When my mind does not think about myself, when the mind does not think of the place where I am and when the mind does not think what is happening, but there is awareness of one object alone; that is called dhyana. This dhyana word in Buddhist literature is known as jhana. When Buddhism went to China it became chhaan and in Japan it became Zen.

In India for the last four, five thousand years, the only thing being worked out is how to practise dhyana. Just to close the eyes and try to concentrate on one point does not bring you the desired result. In dhyana yoga you are entering into your own self. In dhyana yoga you are entering into the universe. In dhyana yoga you are becoming what we call cosmic.

Now you are not cosmic. You are an individual, a person, a part of matter and the senses, but in meditation or in dhyana yoga you become the universe. This is a big journey from individual to universe, from microcosm to macrocosm, from finite to infinity. In between these two, a lot is to be done. Many people try to concentrate and get hypnotized. In India, we have always thought of how to practise dhyana yoga and therefore, they named the science yoga. Yoga means dhyana yoga. Hatha yoga, bhakti yoga and similarly karma yoga and others are the means and not an end. The ultimate goal, the ultimate aim of all yogas is just one, dhyana.

When your mind is turned from this material world of diversity, from this transitory world of name and form and from this world of the senses and the mind, and when you begin to visualize something which the eyes cannot see, that is known as the path to meditation.

– 7 July 1985, Antwerp, Belgium (Extracts)

Some Advice

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

- Do not try to drive away the unimportant and irrelevant thoughts. The more you try, the more they will return and the more strength they will gain. You will only tax your energy and will. Become indifferent. Fill the mind with Divine thoughts and the others will gradually vanish.
- There are three *doshas* or defects in the mind: viz., *malam*, *vikshepa* and *avarana*. The impurities of the mind such as *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *matsarya* are termed *malam*. This is removed by the practice of *yama*, *niyama* and *nishkama karma yoga*. *Vikshepa* is tossing of the mind. It is removed by *upasana*, *trataka*, *yoga* and *pranayama*. *Avarana* is the veil of ignorance. This is removed by the study of vedantic literature, meditation and *jnana*.
- If you entertain thoughts of hatred, you are really a murderer of that man against whom you foster such thoughts. You are committing suicide, because those thoughts rebound upon only you. Hatred ceases only by love and not by hatred. Your thoughts, sentiments, moods and emotions produce their strong impressions on the face. The face is like an advertisement board wherein is specified what is going in the mind.

Guru Tattwa

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



I love my guru but as a Christian I love Christ too, so who is my guru? It seems there is a contradiction.

The contradiction is there because you always live in the realm of duality. You always look at the physical dimension. In essence, guru is not a physical being, guru is a *tattwa*, an element, called the guru tattwa. Just as you have the *pancha*

tattwas, the five elements, there is a guru tattwa. You have higher tattwas existing in you, higher and more subtle tattwas which you don't know, because you don't have the sensitivity. The guru actually exists within you, each one of us has that guru tattwa.

Knowledge

Ajna chakra is where the guru tattwa manifests and it represents the free flow of knowledge. The knowledge flows through you. You don't have to read books, to go to the library or the classroom, the knowledge is available, because that knowledge is just flowing all around you. At the moment you cannot catch it because you don't have the receptor, but if that guru tattwa awakens in you, then the knowledge becomes available. You can know the past, present and future. You can know history, geography, science, mathematics, which is very elementary knowledge.

Swami Sivananda taught kriya yoga to Swami Satyananda in five minutes. Swami Niranjanananda has never been to school, but if you talk to him you won't ever realize that he never went to school. That is the guru tattwa. It is not a physical entity, and anybody who has awakened it is a guru. Guru is not a certificate or a degree, you don't just become a guru because you want to. You are destined for that and it happens in your life. The knowledge starts flowing through you because you have become empty and therefore an efficient channel for knowledge.

When Swami Satyananda was in Rishikesh, he did not sit and study the Vedas or the Upanishads or the *Bhagavad Gita*. He used to work like we work in the ashram, cleaning, carrying water, collecting leaves, attending to the guests. Today he has the full knowledge of the Vedas and Upanishads, which he can recite verbatim. The guru element awoke in him, because of his dedication, sincerity, commitment, unswerving faith and trust and spiritual service to his guru. He was destined for that, and the knowledge was and is available to him.

The physical guru

It can happen with you too because that guru tattwa is in you. Therefore, when you ask, "Is Christ my guru or is Swami Niranjan my guru?" I would say, they both are your guru. You can think that Christ is that pure atma within you and Swami Niranjan is the person with whom you can communicate, you can speak to, because it is essential to have a physical guru to whom you can ask questions. You have not reached that level, where you can just sit and know what is right, what the guru is saying. We have not attained that mental frequency. Therefore, you need to hear it from the guru's lips. There are many questions which come up in our minds and we need to ask.

Of course, if we don't need to ask, then that is much better. It is much better to reach that frequency, but many times we imagine things. We think that the guru has told us this, and we have these headtrips. It is always better to have a person with whom you can clarify these issues.

All gurus are connected

Many times people say, "Is Swami Sivananda my guru now or Swami Satyananda or Swami Niranjan, because I took initiation from him and now I can't see him and I can't ask him anything?" There is such confusion. However, gurus are all connected and not different from each other. They may be in two bodies, but they have one soul. When that happens, a transmission takes place which is difficult to understand because we have never experienced it. We only understand through intellect - if somebody speaks, then we understand. In transmission there is nothing spoken, something is just passed on and you receive it. The guru becomes a medium of transmission. Any knowledge can be available through him, whether it is from Christ, Krishna, Rama or Swami Satyananda. You have to have that faith, if you have accepted a person as your guru.

No place for doubt

It is better not to have a guru if you are going to doubt. Once you make someone your guru, there is no place for doubt. The word guru itself is sacred. A guru is not a teacher but a person who has attained a level of awareness and can know many things about you. It is your need that brings the guru to you, and your need to ask something. The guru doesn't need to know what you are thinking; he can know if he wants to. He does not sit the whole day trying to know what you are thinking because he is not interested. Supposing you have a problem and you are in London, Italy or France. You remember your guru and you pray with sincerity and with your heart. Definitely, he will know it. However, you always doubt, and that is your problem. Definitely, if he cannot hear you, then he is not a guru. The minute you say 'guru', accept the reality that he can know everything, because it is not the conscious mind which knows but a different level of awareness that grasps it.

Swami Satyananda often said, "Don't bring your problems to me if you want my blessings." The conscious mind does not give blessings; it is the higher awareness which gives the blessing and that can know anything. Consciously he may not know what you are thinking, but his higher awareness is picking up everything, and everything is being passed to you from there. It is an automatic process.

What is the significance and importance of diksha?

The Sanskrit word *diksha* is derived from the root *dik*, which means direction. When you decide to start your spiritual journey, you have to decide which direction you will take. Initiation is intended for that purpose, to give your awareness a direction which it can follow. When you decide to do spiritual practices and you sit down for meditation, what do you see inside? Nothing, blank, darkness, and then suddenly sometimes you get some visions and thoughts. In which direction are you going to move your awareness? Diksha is intended to give you a direction as well as a momentum.

It is like a formal ceremony, just as when you decide to get married, there is a formal ceremony. You go through that formal ceremony, even though you can just live with somebody, because it gives you dedication and commitment, meaning and significance. There are so many mantras, just pick one and don't worry about initiation, but you will not get the same result, because that initiation gives you a direction, a momentum, and formalized it becomes your personal initiation.

In addition, in diksha, there is a transference of energy from the person who gives diksha to the person who is receiving it. There is transference of energy, which helps you when you do the sadhana. It is like an impulse which goes to the person and you have to keep that impulse, you should not lose it. That impulse grows in you as you continue to do your practices. If you are careless about it, you lose it. There are many people who take initiation, but they don't follow the practice or sadhana and then they lose that impulse.

Mantra

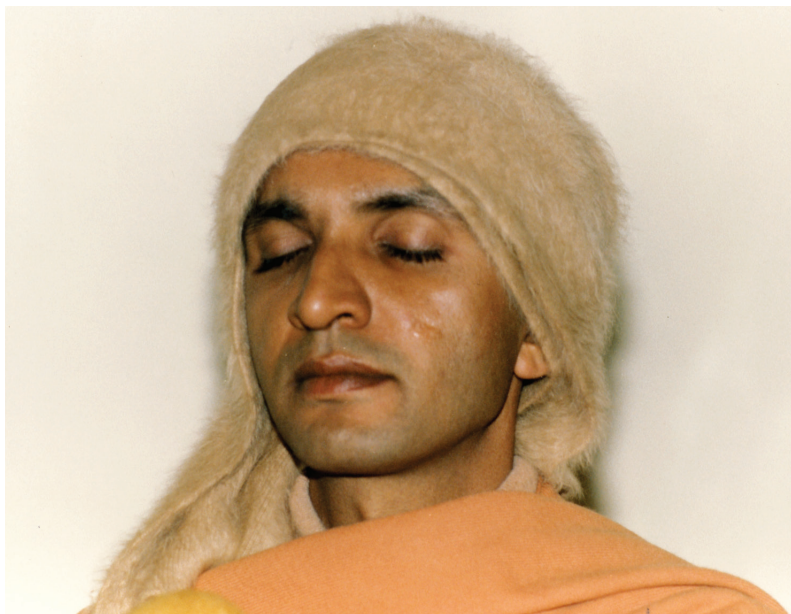
The most important diksha for spiritual life is mantra initiation. If you have that, you have everything, you don't need anything else. You don't need anything after you get the mantra. For spiritual life mantra is essential and the only diksha. If you have that, you can consider that you have everything for the evolution of consciousness or awareness. Of course, if you want to lead a particular kind of life and you want to develop certain ideals, then there are many other dikshas available.

The mantra gives movement to the evolution of awareness. The awareness has stagnated and is stuck with the house, the job and the enjoyment of the senses. It is stuck there and not able to get out. When you want it to move, the mantra is given for the purpose of getting the awareness out and giving it a momentum, so you can have a different kind of experience along with the experience you are having now. That is what diksha is intended for.

—16–19 July 2009, Harrogate, England,

Meditation

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are two kinds of sadhakas. One type of sadhaka follows a tradition, a system, a path of discipline, has a basic philosophy and acts according to the norms of that philosophy, which is personal and private. The other type of sadhaka is extraordinary in the sense that they have gone beyond the stage of self-conviction and self-identity. What is self-conviction? It is a re-affirmation of 'I believe'. I believe it to be an experience. I believe in my mind, in my body, in my understanding and learning. The sadhaka who has gone beyond the state of 'I believe in the body', who is not limited to self, 'my mind', or 'I believe in my actions' or 'I believe in my philosophy', lives spontaneously and naturally with the senses under control.

In the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is a beautiful statement about a person who follows a pre-

determined path without any deviations. Those who follow this universal path have to overcome or be in control of the expressions of the senses, the senses being the organs of action and knowledge. To control these is difficult. How can you have control over the organs of action? Do you have control over your itching? You know you are itching; can you control that itch? Itch is the experience of the skin. It is difficult to control it. It feels nice when we touch something smooth, soft and cuddly, and something like a rock feels hard. You would not want to touch it as often as you would want to touch smooth, velvety silk. Even that creates an attraction. How difficult it is to control speech. Most of us like to chat, talk, gossip, or have our say. Even speech is interacting with intellect. What will you say? Something that you believe in. So control the senses, and then control the mind.

The word *dehadhyasa* has been used in the *Gita*. *Dehadhyasa* means the desire that arises concerning the senses, for example the desire to listen to something pleasant. One likes music but one does not like noise. It is pleasant to hear words of flattery, but one avoids listening to critical statements. Similarly, one likes looking at a pleasant sight, not something ugly. One is attracted to pleasant things but runs away from the unpleasant. All these come under *dehadhyasa*. It is not merely rising above the belief that 'I am the body'.

After controlling the senses one is supposed to renounce the karmas, the senses and the intellect, and surrender them to God. When that happens, God manifests in life. There is no doubt about it. This is the path of the extraordinary aspirant. The ordinary aspirant has a systematic understanding; A to B, B to C, C to D according to one's rationality and philosophy. One may sit for meditation and go deep, diving into the depths. *Dehadhyasa* would still want to achieve and not give up all actions. As long as one is in meditation, it is pleasant; yet when one comes out of it, it is the same vagaries of the world: desires, attachments, passions, anger, infatuation, lethargy, anxiety. In this state, people are not able to completely connect their

mentality to God or Guru. The samskaras of external senses are so strong that they keep pulling the senses away.

For example, you are meditating and the urge to relieve yourself is great. So you start chanting the mantra and moving the mala rapidly. When you are hungry, do you do your japa with the same speed, in the same way as when you are relaxed, calm and content? Somewhere or the other, restlessness occurs for sure in this calm mind. This restlessness pulls the consciousness, brings the awareness out into the external world. Suppose your meditation practice is writing. You are translating something and you are so engrossed in it that you continue late into the night, and then again start at three in the morning. This is meditation of a different sort. You are not closing the eyes, but you lose yourself in it and lose the touch of time. 'What time is it? How much time has elapsed? What state am I in? What must I do next?' When there is no inkling of time or space, that is also meditation. It is not different from meditation with the eyes closed.

There is awareness and concentration with eyes closed in one case and awareness and concentration with eyes open in the second case. The difference is only about the eyes. In both cases, the state of mind is the same, that of awareness and concentration.

Take the example of someone whose meditation is focusing the camera and holding on to capture the perfect moment. He keeps waiting in the same position for even ten minutes. He will stay watching like a snake with hood raised and fangs ready to strike at the appropriate moment. Another example is of the crane catching fish. The crane is standing still, waiting for the fish to come close. When it finds that a fish is within range, it strikes. It is meditation of the moment. Human beings can turn each moment, each action into meditation. This is the definition of extraordinary meditation. Sitting for regular, fixed hours with eyes closed, lost to the world, is not the only kind of meditation.

– 13 July 1994, Munger, Ganga Darshan

Inner Guru

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The inner guru is the awakening of the guru's force in the life, body and personality of the disciple. It is the flowering of the guru's energy which is manifesting inside.

The word *guru* means dispeller of darkness. It can be a person, it can also be a concept or a thought, it can be anything. The inner guru is something which helps you to overcome the limiting traits of your nature, and to have a broader vision concerning yourself and the cosmos.

For many people, guru is a book, and for many guru is a living presence or an idea of faith and devotion. For the Sikhs the ultimate guru is the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The main text and guru, which they follow with the utmost reverence and faith, is a compilation of the teachings of the ten gurus of their tradition. They do not have a physical, living guru. Even the followers of the Sanatan spiritual tradition in this region have the Vedas and the Upanishads for their guru.

For many spiritual aspirants, gurus are living persons or forces, while for others guru is an idea or a concept of divinity towards which they have deep inner reverence, respect and faith. So the concept of guru can change. However, whatever form of guru you have, it is simply a means or a medium through which you can overcome your limitations, remove the veil of ignorance and experience light.

It has been a human trait since the beginning of creation for man to relate himself to someone manifest. We have always looked to another person to guide us in our process of discovery. Therefore, in the modern context, guru means a relationship with a living person who represents the culmination of an idea or the fulfilment of a concept. This fulfilment of a concept also becomes an important drive. People who are bhakti oriented find solace when they go, for example, to the Hare Krishna community. People who are intellectually inclined felt satisfaction when they visited somebody like Swami Chinmayananda, who was a highly intellectual person. People of all odd shapes, colours and sizes like us feel attracted towards a person like Swami Satyananda.

To experience the inner guru, the disciple or aspirant has to make some effort to let down his defences and allow the force of the guru to transform his entire being from inside. If you

want to take a bath, you have to take off your clothes first. If you have a job to do, you have to adopt the method necessary to do it. If you want to experience the inner guru, you have to surrender.

You have to surrender for as long as there is the barrier of 'I am a distinct person from the guru and I am the judge of my guru's instructions,' you may desire in the deepest core of your being to experience the inner guru. You will not experience it as there is duality, *dvaita bhava*. There is the notion of 'I' and 'he', there is the notion of 'me' and the guru as separate beings.

The two words 'but' and 'and' do not exist in surrender. 'But' represents the ego, 'and' represents one's ambition. If you surrender, you will experience the inner guru. For that you need to be a different person. You cannot be yourself, you cannot be what you perceive of as being yourself, 'I am this person having this idea, this drive, this motivation, this desire, this feeling.' If that is what you are, then it is not really worthwhile or necessary for you to become a disciple.

If you do not consider yourself as 'I am this, I am that', then it is easier to merge with the wider body of the guru's energy. It allows for more freedom. Otherwise it is like trying to swim across the river carrying different packs on your back which are pulling you down. The person on the other side says, "Throw off the burden from your back!" and you say, "It has all my life experiences in it. How can I do that?" So if you can't do it, sink. Who cares?

The guru is not going to care, he has to care for everyone. Why should he kill himself due to the whims of one who does not wish to listen to him? That is the practicality of being a guru. The disciple has to be of a different type, one who can simply say, "Okay, all my burdens are off, I have created freedom of movement. Now what do I do?"

– 1994, *Ganga Darshan*, Munger

Trataka

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



All meditation practices aim initially at establishing concentration of mind as a prelude to meditation. To attain this state, different methods are adopted. One of the most direct, simple and yet at the same time effective, is the technique of trataka. Trataka is a most powerful practice for developing concentration. It is also an excellent method of developing inner visualization; in other words, the ability to see and maintain a clear image of any object in front of the closed eyes.

Both of these abilities are important for meditation. In the practice of trataka the mind is directed towards an external object such as a dot, the flame of a candle, a picture of a cross, *Om*, or anything. This helps to hold the mind more firmly on the object of concentration. The object should also be something that the eyes can easily focus on and which does not disturb the mind. Whatever the object, it has the same function: to 'trap' all the attention of the mind and eyes and focus it on one point.

Concentration is the essence of trataka, and it is through powerful concentration that one makes progress in yoga. What is concentration? It is one-pointedness of mind, the ability to hold, to focus the attention on one point, without wavering. Perfect concentration leads to meditation. With practices such as trataka, concentration leads to complete mental attention on one object, form or thought to the exclusion of all others. There is no distraction from the environment or other peripheral things.

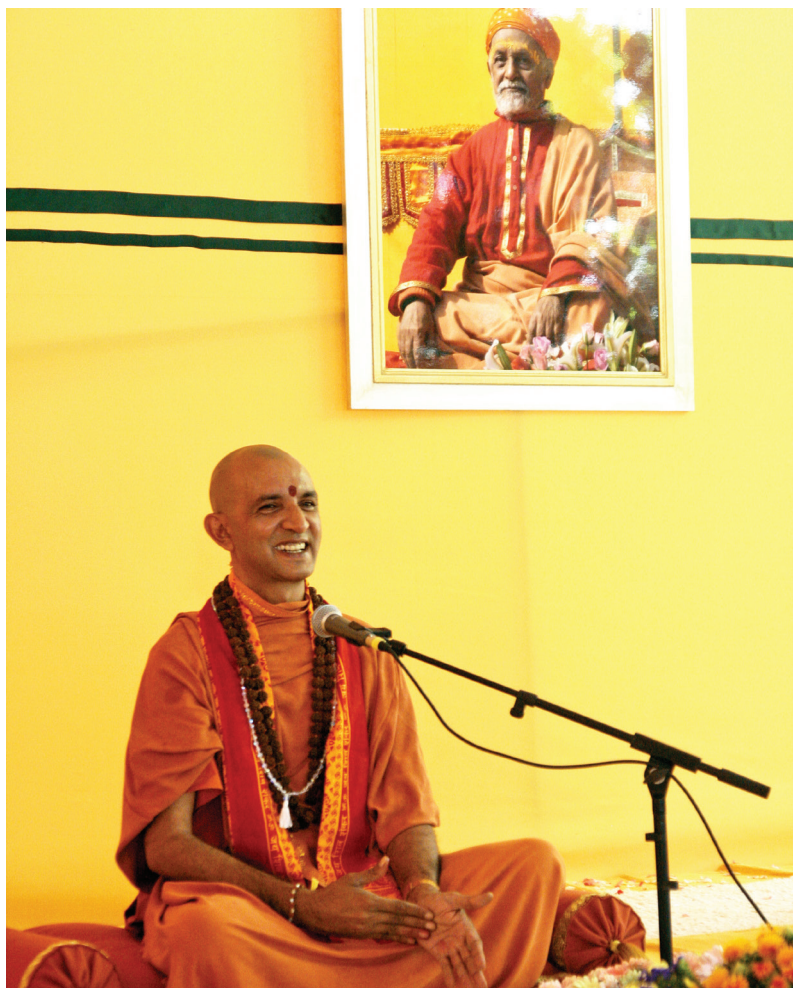
Concentrated thought also has vast power. A concentrated mind acts as an irresistible instrument of action: it leads to efficiency in one's activities in the outside world and is a dynamo which generates vitality and enthusiasm in every direction. A concentrated mind also has the ability to be a sensitive receiving instrument. It becomes receptive to higher vibrations, to heightened perception. It becomes a receiver of the influx of higher awareness, bliss and knowledge. This is normally beyond the range of the average mind, which is too disturbed and distracted by its continual inner chatter. Concentration is the key that will unlock the door to higher states of awareness.

Inner concentration is preferable to external concentration for meditation practices, as it further reduces the tendency of the mind to wander. However, inner trataka is more difficult than external trataka, as a distinct image must be visualized. Ideally it is a non-changing image for the duration of the concentration, for if it fades or disappears the depth of concentration is lost. During the process of meditation, when the meditating self and object of meditation combine and merge into one, it is called meditation. Perfect concentration is attained only when the three merge into each other. Perfection of concentration is meditation.

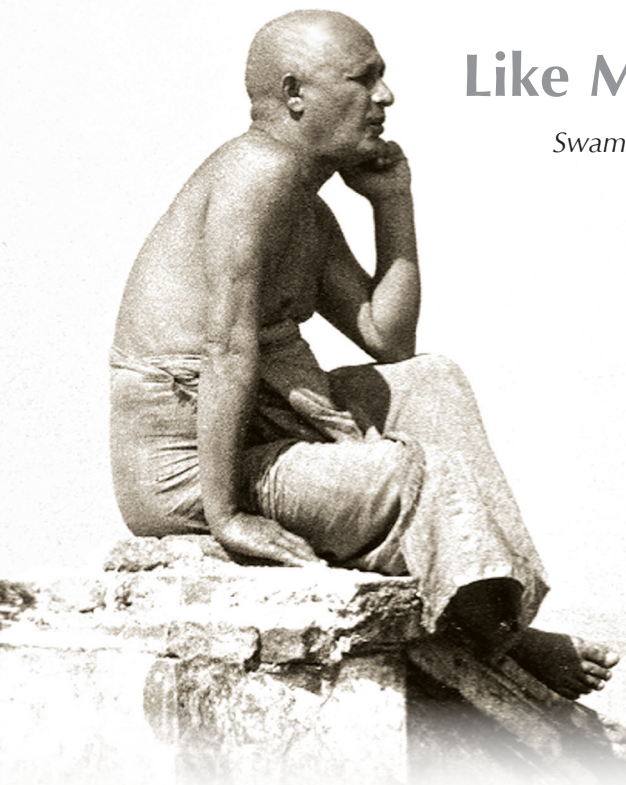
All one has to do is practise trataka and merge one's being into the object, form or thought, disappearing into it like an arrowhead into a target. To accomplish this, any method of trataka can be practised, according to one's liking.

Co-disciples

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



You will find that when you are offering the light of yoga to others, you will feel very close to me because I am not a guru. I am a disciple, and as a disciple I need co-disciples to help me fulfil the command of my guru.



Like Marco Polo

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Infinite dormant potential exists within each individual. It is there waiting only to be discovered. To find it, however, one must plunge into one's inner being. One must be like an explorer, but instead of exploring outer unknown territories one has to discover the inner uncharted environment. Like the first explorers of the world, one does not really know where it will lead.

Marco Polo had strange but wonderful experiences on his journey and fabulous riches at his destination – China. It is the same with meditation. No one can tell of the wonderful experiences that one will have on the inner journey; only that one will surely have them. Many people did not believe the stories and experiences that Marco Polo described when he returned home. It is the same with meditation; no one will believe people who relate their experiences unless, of course, they have made a similar journey themselves.

Spiritual Awareness

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Every journey has to begin somewhere. It always begins with the basics. We are not hoping to teach every person yoga. We are hoping that you take another step in the coming years and deepen your own experience of yoga. This will connect you with the vision of the yogis of transcending the limitations of body, senses, mind, and establishing oneself in a spiritual personality or nature.

Somebody had once asked Swami Satyananda, 'Is it possible to be self-realized?' He said, 'No.' 'Then all the scriptures and all the masters are wrong, when they say that you can be self-realized?' He said, 'No.' 'So, what do you mean?' He said, 'Self-realization is not possible, because our mind is not like that anymore. Self-realization was possible maybe centuries ago, when the mind was not subject to the dissipations, distractions and influences it is experiencing today. This fragments the human personality and nature. The maximum is what you can experience in meditation; beyond that you cannot go.' The person asked, 'Then if self-realization cannot be the focus, then what should be the focus in life?' Sri Swamiji answered, 'Cultivation of spiritual awareness should become the focus of life.'

That spiritual awareness is not God-intoxication. That is religious awareness. Spiritual awareness is the connection with the positive, benevolent, peaceful and the luminous in life. It is that awareness, which has to develop. If we are able to develop that awareness, either individually, as a group, society, a nation or as the world, the whole life will change. You will have heaven on earth, because of that spiritual awareness, there is connection with positivity and creativity, the expression of the faculties of head, heart and hands, there is harmony in life, peace in society, and prosperity and plenty for everyone.

The focus or purpose of life should be the cultivation of spiritual awareness. That is possible if we become practical in life and try to develop those channels which can connect us to luminosity. There are many channels like thought, feeling and sentiments. If we can connect with these channels, we can hold on to one channel, and develop the best of that, develop the beauty and quality of that channel, and live it. A super being does not have all the powers. They only have one power. It is not just one person with all the powers of all the super heroes, like as Flash, Green Lantern, Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman. Why can't you accept that you can only be one, why do you have to be everyone? Because we try to become everyone, we never find ourselves. We are too confused, thinking, 'Who am I? Am I this? Am I that? Am I this? Am I that?' We are comparing, 'Am I this or that? This or that?' Instead of realizing, 'This is what I am.'

Spiritual awareness is realizing, 'What I am. Who I am.' That has to be the focus, and it starts in a simple manner. Of course, the same simplicity of the beginning can become a complex thing at the end. It changes the whole perception, view point and outlook. What you observe today as your strength and weakness, tomorrow you will be observing the same thing as atma and parmatma. The strength will become the highest consciousness; the weakness will become the lowest consciousness. The strength and weakness, in the course of time, will change themselves into the experience of individual consciousness and higher consciousness. The process remains the same; the perception changes.

Once a person had come to the ashram, and he had this funny obsession. He started cutting the trees of the ashram at a seven-foot height. People objected, 'What are you doing? Who told you to cut the trees of the ashram at a seven-foot height?' It was his problem, his mental illness. He used to say that all trees of one specific colour should be of the same height. He used to go around with an electric saw, just chopping off trees at a seven-foot height. It was a big problem. Then Paramahamsaji



advised him, 'Why don't you do one thing? If you walk on the ground, you will see things which are bigger than seven feet. So, I suggest you sit in a helicopter and go up. Because from the top, when you look down, everything will be less than seven feet. So, change the perspective – what you see from here is one thing, and what you see from above, is something else.'

When you are seeing things from the ground level, and when you see the same thing from a higher, elevated platform, the vision, view, perception and the understanding, everything changes. A continuous transformation is happening and you are the witness of that change and transformation. And that, you can carry with you as spiritual awareness.

– 30 March 2024, Bihar Yoga Traditional Teachings,
Ganga Darshan, Munger

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

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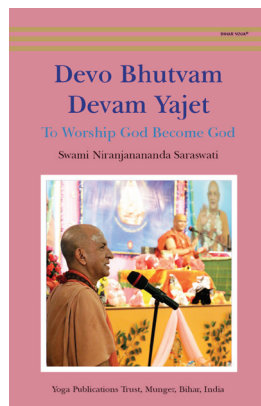
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Devo Bhutvam Devam Yajet To Worship God Become God

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

33 pp, online, ISBN 978-93-48677-37-2

On the occasion of the centenary celebration of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, *Ram Katha* by Swami Girishananda Saraswati of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, was hosted by Paduka Darshan, Sannyasa Peeth. Swami Girishananda spoke about the life of Sri Rama as written in the *Ramacharitamanas* by Tulsidas. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati concluded each session by speaking on the relationship that Sri Swami Satyananda had with Sri Rama, thus making the experience of Sri Rama and his devotee a living reality.



New

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



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- *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>Jan-Dec</i>	Ashram Life Experience
<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

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

<i>Jun 23-Jul 9</i>	Ved Parayan
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Monthly Programs

<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<i>Every 4th, 5th & 6th</i>	Guru Bhakti Yoga
<i>Every 12th</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamansas



For further information, as well as the online version of YOGA, visit the official website of Bihar Yoga at biharyoga.net or scan the QR code.