

YOGA

Year 15 Issue 6
June 2026

भारत योग यात्रा, पटना-2026

अध्यात्म में प्रवेश

स्वामी निरंजनानन्द सरस्वती

परमाचार्य, बिहार योग विद्यालय विश्व योगपीठ, मुंगेर
के सान्निध्य में

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

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Useful Resources

Websites:

www.biharyoga.net
www.sannyasapeeth.net
www.satyamyogaprasad.net

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

Vedanta

Serve all with the feeling that everything is the Self. Melt all illusory differences and annihilate separateness. Destroy all unreasonable likes and prejudices. Mix with all, include all, embrace all. Never remain idle even for a moment. Lead a life of intense activity, but in the midst of it keep always a calm mind and thus become a practical Vedantin. Glory to such practical Vedantins. May they radiate joy, peace and love everywhere. May they demonstrate a life of practical Vedanta by their exemplary living.

—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 ॥

Real Happiness

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Real happiness is within you. It is in the atman. It is subjective. It manifests when the mind is concentrated. When the indriyas are withdrawn from the objects outside, when the mind is one-pointed, when there is *vasana kshaya* and *manonasa*, when you become desireless and thoughtless, atmic bliss begins to dawn and spiritual ananda begins to thrill.

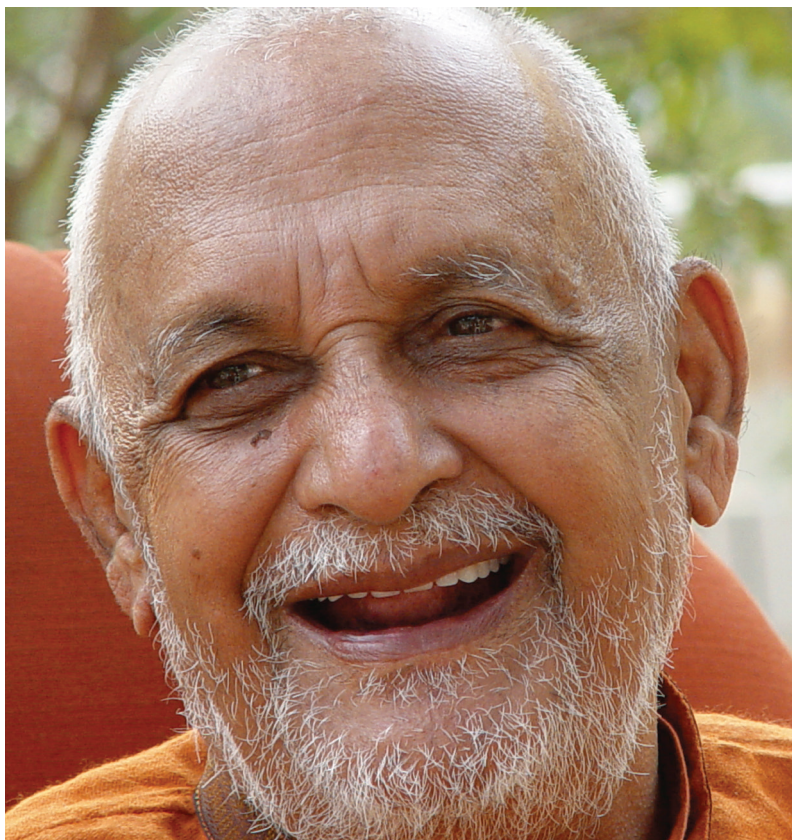
The musk is in the navel of the deer, but it runs here and there to smell it. The chain is on the neck of the damsel, but she runs hither and thither in search of it. The precious diamond is within you, but you run after the broken glass pieces in vain. Even so, the ocean of bliss is within you; the fountain of joy is within you; and yet, you run here and there in search of it. The Sun of suns is ever shining in you, but your blind eyes cannot behold it. The eternal sound is ringing within you, but your deaf ears cannot hear it.

Go wherever you may, to Gulmarg or Pahalgam in Kashmir, to Darjeeling or Simla, to Vienna or the Alps. It is all the same. You will not find any real rest. The charming scenery may soothe the retina for a second. Raga, dwesha, jealousy, passion and greed are everywhere. You will find the same earth, the same sky, the same air, the same water, and you carry with you the same mind. Imagination and change of place have deceived not a few.

O man, be contented. Live where you may, but discipline the mind and the senses. Meditate on the inner self, the *antaratman*, ceaselessly. Here you will find the everlasting peace. Now the mind will stop deceiving you.

How can we keep ourselves happy, regardless of our surroundings and situations?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



It is not very easy. Society is of course homogenous, but it has different prongs and everybody is reacting differently to the different behaviours. How we conduct ourselves in relation to them, has always been a matter of discussion.



There are some eternal rules known as dharma. You can call it religion, but by religion I don't mean a church or a sect. These are eternal virtues. One of the eternal virtues is forgiveness. The second eternal virtue is non-violence. You can say non-offence; not hitting anybody either by speech, action or thought. The third virtue is patience: even if the other person is not correct in his behaviour, I will behave better and hope that he will respond

positively. Even if he does not respond correctly, I have the patience to wait. The fourth eternal virtue is perseverance.

Like this, there are certain eternal virtues and we can pick these up, one by one. I have been working on one plan for many years. I have not worked hard on many things. I have not worked hard on many points. I practise truth and non-violence, not many things. I picked up for myself just one thing, and that was not to speak badly about anyone. Even if he is a criminal, even if he is a murderer, even if he is a first rate debauchee, I will not speak against him. Even if he is speaking against me, even if he is trying to destroy me, I will not speak against him. I will also see that nobody else speaks against him. Both a good man and a bad man must be protected by me.

I started this as my root virtue, and I found that after some time, my language became positive. We have to start from one root virtue. We can't go on practising many things at the same time. Then we will be confused and we can't progress. We will be stopped everywhere. So, I concentrated on one point. In the beginning it was not possible, but in the course of time my whole attitude changed. A time came when I could not even think against anyone. When anyone speaks against anyone, I feel he is wasting his time and I am wasting my time.

What do you mean by happiness?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Your definition of happiness and my definition of happiness can be poles apart. So, first you have to decide what do you mean by happiness. How do you live your happiness? That is the most important question that one has to ask oneself. If you are not in tune with my happiness, you won't understand my definition. What Sri Swamiji has said in this article indicates happiness and how to live happiness. You cannot copy what he did, because you do not have his mind-set. If I talk about happiness, I can only speak from the mind-set which I have and which may not necessarily relate with your mind-set.

As Sri Swamiji mentioned, debates will always happen. Generally, people think of happiness as a physical expression – smile, laugh, enjoy, be happy. That is an expression of the senses only. Is happiness limited to the sensorial expressions or is it something much more? If I take a cue from what Sri Swamiji has said, then I would say that the foundation of happiness in his life, and the foundation of happiness which I am trying to cultivate in my life, is through the basic virtue of ahimsa, which Sri Swamiji explained as non-violence or non-offensiveness.

This is something important to understand. Everyone reacts. If somebody says good things about you, you react by inflating your own self-image, ego, self-perception. If somebody says bad things about you, it is the same ego which is punctured. The loss of self-esteem, self-prestige through your understanding will make you react, confront and be on the offensive. In this reactive situation, how will you be happy? If you are happy in this reactive situation, for how long will you be happy? I believe that the best line that Sri Swamiji has given



योग साधना YOG SADDHANA

अध्यात्म में प्रवेश - STAGE 1

भारत योग यात्रा - BHARAT YOG YATRA

22, 23, 24 मई 2026 | अभ्यास

Under the guidance of Shri S
Paramacharya, Bihar School of Yoga, Vishnupur



us is ahimsa, in thought, word or speech and in deed. Do not think ill of anyone. If you do not think ill of anyone, criticize or see anyone in an inferior manner, then there is clarity and purity of thought, which will eventually make a non-reactive mind. That is Stage 1.

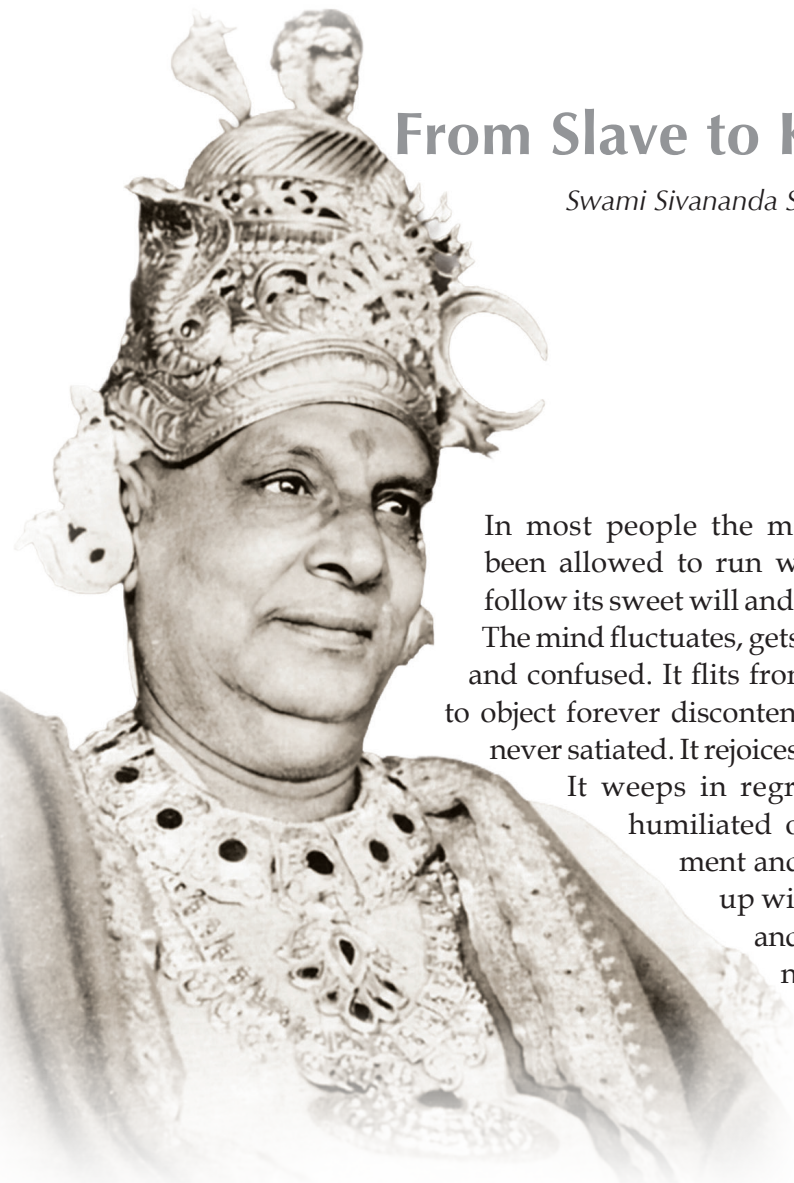
Stage 2 is through speech. When you criticize anyone, talk badly and gossip about anyone, use the Chinese telephone system. You whisper something, and then that person whispers into the ear of somebody else, then the third person, then the fourth person. By the time you hear it back, the sentence has gone through many transformations. All these things that we use speech for, has to stop. That will make the behaviour more positive and conducive. The third is the deed, the act; don't put hurdles in anyone's path. If this is perfected, then one is always happy. There is no confrontation, no offence, no negativity, no violence. You live your life happily.

Once this inner transformation happens, there is no cause for unhappiness. I tell people not to look at philosophies,

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
Swamiji of the Yoga Peeth, Ganga Darshan, Munger, Bihar



Words have no power anymore. Words are heard from one ear and taken out the other ear, and there is never any implementation. If you look at how people who have lived happiness, ahimsa, perseverance and patience lived, then maybe you will be inspired to take on certain values which these people have lived in their life. Otherwise, in today's environment, in your mental environment, words have no value anymore. So, it is my conclusion that now words do not mean anything to anyone. If you are sincere and true to yourself, then find a baseline in your life which will help you elevate your mind from the gross nature, and then there is hope of change in your life.



From Slave to King

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

In most people the mind has been allowed to run wild and follow its sweet will and desires. The mind fluctuates, gets excited and confused. It flits from object to object forever discontented and never satiated. It rejoices in vain.

It weeps in regret. It is humiliated one moment and puffed up with pride and ego the next.

The mind is your tool or instrument only. You must know how to handle it. When emotions, moods, sentiments arise in the mind, separate them, study their nature, dissect and analyze them. Don't identify with them. The real 'I' is entirely different from them. It is the silent *sakshi*, the witness. Master your impulses, emotions and moods and rise from the position of a slave to a spiritual king.

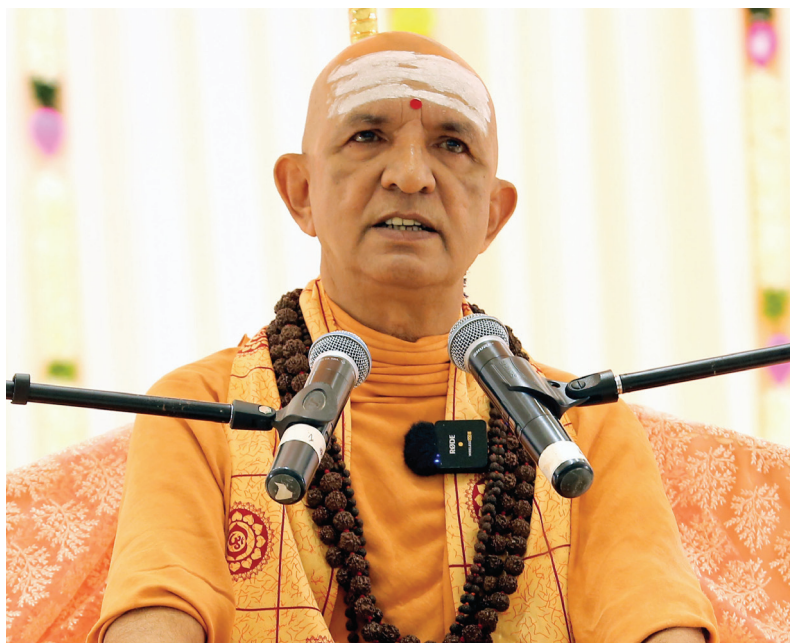
Mind

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

It is the mind which sees the positive and it is the mind which sees the negative. It is mind which tells you what to do. It is the mind which tells you what to avoid. All the expressions of life are controlled and guided by the mind. What you have lived until today is nothing but the control of the mind over your life. You desire something; you are attracted to it and want to possess it. You are averse to something, so you avoid it. This is *raga* and *dwesha*. *Raga* is an attraction for that which gives you pleasure and comfort; *dwesha* is the aversion from that which does not give pleasure or comfort. These are the traits of the mind and they control your life all the time, from birth to death. There is no escape from it. If you are able to escape the conditions, the traits, the nature of the mind, and if you are able to convert and transform them, then they make you into a real human being, who is in control of their desires and their own minds.

What is mind?

In its most simple form, the mind is a collection of thousands and thousands of desires. Logic or *buddhi* is one small part of the mind. *Manas* is just one small expression of the mind. *Chitta* is just one small state of the mind. *Ahamkara* is just a small awareness of the mind. Mind is much more complex than these four aspects that have been described by sages. It is an accumulation of thousands and thousands of desires, which are known as *eshanas*. The desire for name, fame, recognition and status is common across the world. This desire is known as *lokeshana*. The desire for wealth, property and prosperity is common across the world; it is known as *viteshana*. The desire for family, *putreshana*, is common all over the world. All our actions, our efforts, motivations and expectations are to fulfil



these different desires in life. Everything that we do is for the fulfilment of these three categories of desire in life, yet we are not aware of them.

You have 50,000 thoughts in your waking hours. How many of them are you aware of? Only a few. Out of these 50,000 thoughts that you have in your waking hours, eighty percent are repetitive. They keep on repeating, and you realize it only when it takes the form of worry or anxiety as the same thought keeps going on in your head. That is at a conscious level. Even at the unconscious level, there is a continuous repetition of thoughts, which you are not even aware of. Out of these 50,000 thoughts and the eighty percent of repetitive thoughts, at least eighty-five to ninety percent are negative. That is our life, our mind. All these thoughts relate to one of the categories of desire – lokeshana, viteshana or putreshana. It is this mind which has to evolve, and to make this mind evolve you have to work, for it is not the natural state of the mind.

Mind comes to this world of Prakriti as the companion of spirit, along with the five senses. This has been stated by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (15:7):

*Mamaivamsho jiva-loke, jivabhutah sanatanah,
Manah shashthanindriyani, prakritisthani karshati,*

An eternal portion of Myself having become a living soul in the world of life, draws to (itself) the (five) senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in Nature.

If the pure spirit, accompanied by the five senses and one mind, takes birth in this Prakriti, it has to follow the laws of Prakriti. The spirit is untainted, but the mind is not, the senses are not. Prakriti is subject to birth, growth, decay and death. Everything in Prakriti, from planets to suns to moons to stars to human beings to life-forms, is subject to these four conditions. Even suns die, planets die, people die. Different life-forms die, and then they take birth again. That is the law of nature which also confines the mind to the tamasic state.

The tamasic state means the conditioning in which birth, growth, decay and death are experienced. When you purchase a piece of land, is that land clean? Is that land bereft of all the weeds, thorns and rocks? No, the land is full of weeds, rocks and thorns. When you acquire it, what do you do? You clean it, you remove the weeds, thorns, you clear the rocks, to construct whatever you want to do with that piece of land.

Our senses and our mind are tainted by Prakriti and the condition of tamas which exists in Prakriti. The focus is not purity, it is not to realize the purity of the Self; the focus is to bind one more and more and become more entangled in the realm of Prakriti and maya. Therefore, suffering, disturbance and illness is experienced in life. Everything good and bad is experienced in life. This life is guided only by desires, which, depending on their intensity, create a particular mood of the mind, known as *chitta vritti*. A yogi has to realize and understand these chitta vrittis, to transform them, transcend

them and realize the purity of one's life and the purity of the spirit that is inside. This is another statement in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali (1:3):

Tadaa drashtuh svaroope'vasthaanam.

Then the seer is established in his own essential nature.

The observer, the person who is able to observe these conditions of nature affecting the body and mind, who is able to realize the moods of the mind and their influence and who is able to transform and transcend them, realizes his own true nature. That true nature is the divine, pure nature. It is an illumined nature. The shastras do give us hope that there is a chance of improvement and transformation. Transform the mind and you will experience peace. Neglect the mind and you will experience distraction. When we follow our own mind, there is distraction and dissipation. When we are able to transform the mind, there is luminosity and peace.

How do we manage this mind through yoga? Stage 1 is to relax and be aware. Stage 2 is to gather all the dissipated energies of the mind, focus and concentrate; and stage 3 is to change the behaviour and nature of the mind, and then transform and transcend it. These three are not complex activities. They can be attained in a simple way through the practices of pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. In the practice of yoga nidra, you are taught to relax, release the stresses, tensions, anxieties and worries, and achieve a peaceful state of your body and a relaxed state in your mind. Along with relaxation, you are also cultivating awareness. Relaxation without awareness is no relaxation. You sleep every night, but do you relax when you sleep? The stresses and worries in the mind continue all the time. When you wake up in the morning, you feel tired. You have not recharged yourself. You have not removed the anxiety and stress from yourself. So, sleep is not relaxation.

Yoga nidra and samiksha

My guru, Swami Satyananda, devised the technique of yoga nidra, the sleepless sleep, in which you consciously relax yourself and eliminate those blocks which become the cause of your anxiety, tension, worry and stress. With yoga nidra, you not only remove these conditions which dissipate your energy and distract your mind, but you also cultivate awareness. Awareness begins with a simple practice of observing the movement of the mind, or movement of your attention. After all, when you practise yoga nidra what do you do? You move your mind from one part of the body to the next – right hand thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, fourth finger. You are moving your attention from one part of the body to the next, to the next.

You are engaging your mind; you are not letting go of your mind. The mind is not free, but under your control, under your direction. It is following your instruction and guidance. By engaging your mind, you are relaxing the mind. The moment you let go of your mind, it will again be attracted to its worries and anxieties. If you are able to take the mind away from its worries and anxieties even for five minutes, by giving it direction to look at something different, you will find your relaxation deepen much more than before. That is the subject of yoga nidra, the state of sleepless sleep, or the state of deep conscious relaxation.

Along with yoga nidra is the practice of *samiksha* or observation. Yoga nidra is a form of meditation, which you are practising while lying down, not sitting. Although you can also practise yoga nidra in a sitting position, people enjoy lying down to relax their physical body, remove the stresses of the muscular system, the tensions of the nervous system, and allow the whole body to relax. That is perfectly fine, but yoga nidra is not a technique to sleep, it is a technique of meditation which you practise in a supine position. Samiksha is also a technique of meditation, which you practise in a supine position.

What is this samiksha? When you lie down on your bed at night, ready to sleep with the lights off, instead of allowing

your mind to wander free, practise a short yoga nidra, at least the component of the body rotation. Become aware of the different parts of the body and release the tightness and tension accumulated in the different parts of the body, in the muscles and joints. Then begin to observe the activities of the day, from the time you woke up in the morning, until the time you come to sleep. When you woke up, what did you do after waking up, when did you go to the bathroom to freshen up, what did you have for breakfast, whom did you see first, what was your communication with that person? In this way observe your day, from moment to moment, from morning until evening and night.

While you are observing this like a movie in your mind, also notice when you were happy and when you were not happy. When you were happy, your communication, your demeanour, your mind and your responses to external situations were different. When you were unhappy, your responses, your demeanour, everything was different. It changed. You might have had a heated debate with somebody – either your wife, your husband or your child. You might have been irritated with your boss or a co-worker, yet were not able to express it. You might have encountered different conflicting situations during the day, to which you reacted verbally or suffered mentally. Anything could have happened. In an objective manner, observe everything like a movie on your TV.

As you come across a point of anxiety, an aggressive or emotional response, stop the movie and think for a moment, 'How could I have dealt with it in a better manner? If I encounter the same situation tomorrow or the day after or some time in the future, can I deal with this situation in a more positive, more harmonious, relaxed manner, with more wisdom, clarity, positivity and optimism?' Then move to the next situation. This is known as *samiksha*, observation of the events of the day and your responses to them. Also analyze whether you can improve upon it if the same situation happens again. Then go to sleep.



You may not find any major change or difference in your behaviour or response for the next week, but definitely after a week you will find that your mind, your perception, understanding and responses are becoming different. If you encounter the same situation, you will be able to deal with it in a better manner. In this way, develop awareness of your day-to-day activities, from moment to moment. You will cultivate the ability to manage and direct your mind in a positive direction, rather than reacting to a situation in a negative, aggressive, emotional or confused manner.

This is the beginning of pratyahara, where you learn to relax and become aware. This leads you eventually to the next stage, when you are able to gather your dissipated energies and learn how to concentrate.

Concentration

Concentration is of two types. One form of concentration is without awareness and one form of concentration is with awareness. Yoga leads to concentration with awareness and your social life leads you to concentration without awareness. When you are walking on the street and you have your mobile in your hand, you are focusing on your mobile so much, that you do not even know what is happening around you. A car is coming towards you and can hit you. You lose your awareness because you are focused. Such accidents have happened. People have died; cars have hit people, because people have lost their

awareness while they were focusing on their mobiles. That is one type of concentration; the mind is so engaged and involved that it forgets everything else. You will never know, who has passed beside you, because you are engaging your mind in observing something different. That is concentration without awareness.

What is concentration with awareness? When Arjuna had to shoot the eye of the clay bird with his arrow, that was concentration. Although he could see everything, he was focusing only on the eye of the bird. All his brothers were looking at the eye of the bird, and were also seeing everything else. That is the difference of yogic concentration with awareness, which leads to transcendence, and the normal concentration without awareness, which leads to accidents.

That aspect of yoga is known as *dharana*, learning how to bring your dissipated energies together and to focus the mind. A student can focus better on studies, an engineer on designs, an architect on the building, an artist on the painting, without dissipation and distraction of the mind. That mind is known as the mind of *sankalpa*, where there is willpower. *Sankalpa* is willpower and *vikalpa* is absence of focus. Concentration or focus is *sankalpa*, and *vikalpa* is where there is no focus or concentration.

When mind becomes the *sankalpa* mind, it becomes a powerful mind. If we can attain it, that mind will open the doors of creativity in our life. That is the meaning of Swami Sivananda's words – to cultivate the faculties which are lying dormant in every individual which will only happen if the mind has awareness, focus, and is known as the *sankalpa* mind. We all have a *vikalpa* mind; we do not have a *sankalpa* mind. The *sankalpa* mind is attainable through the practices of *dharana*. Yogis have the *sankalpa* mind, while normal people in the world have the *vikalpa* mind. After the *sankalpa* mind, comes transformation of the lower tendencies into higher tendencies, in meditation and through mantra.

– 25 April 2025,
NGP Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, India

Sadhana

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



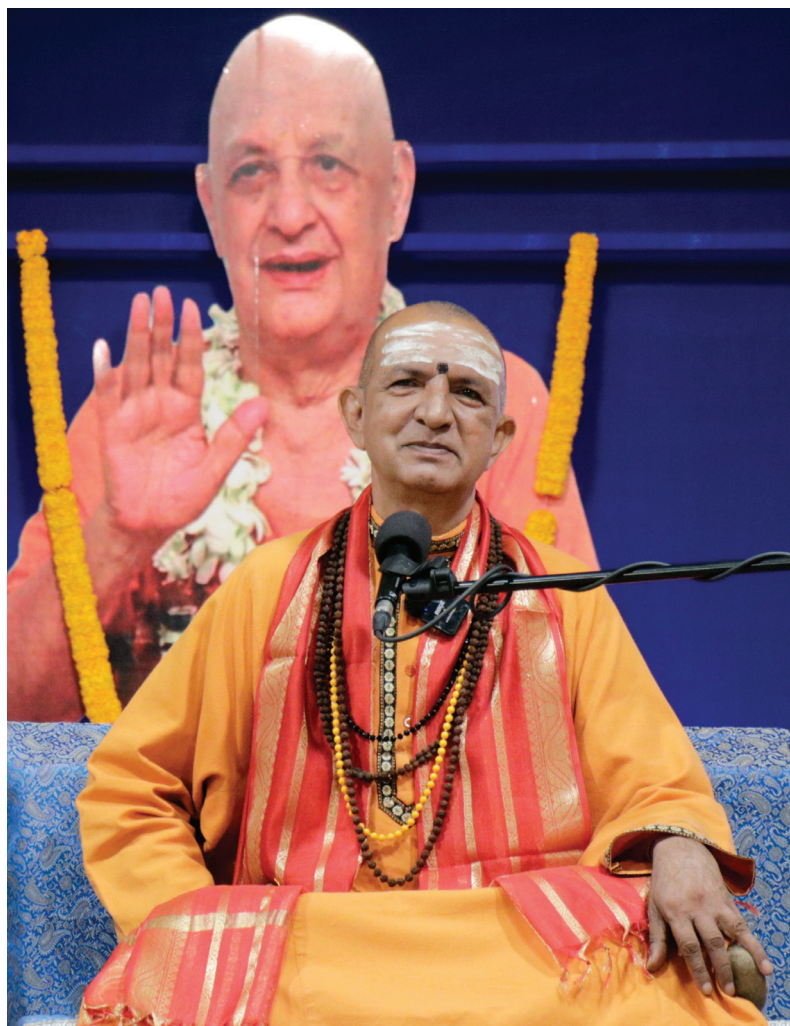
Sadhana is the attainment of excellence and perfection in everything that you do. Sadhana begins with the process of self-purification, with the development and awakening of faith.

Regularity, continuity and trust are the three important ingredients of sadhana. The main thing is regularity and continuity of your aim in life – regularity of sadhana and continuity of the goal you have set in front of you. In the course of time, your life will adjust positively.

Sadhana is of two types, mental and physical. Mental sadhana is cultivation of the attitude of *vairagya*, non-attachment. Physical sadhana is continuous effort, *abhyasa*. This journey into *abhyasa* and *vairagya* is ongoing and continuous, there is no end. The effort you make to beautify life is sadhana.

Sadhana of Bhakti Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Positive thinking in all situations and connecting and identifying with one's inner strengths, *sadvichara*, is a sadhana of bhakti yoga. When one experiences any difficulty or suffering,

one prays to God to help one overcome shortcomings and distress. One feels there is pain and suffering within and one cannot connect with the source of strength, so one prays to an outer figure, God, for help.

Another approach is to recognize one's own strength and remain positive. It is difficult to maintain a balanced attitude in all situations. Arrogance has to be under control. If one is arrogant, one will see the negative in whatever is being said and done, and react. The moment one is able to manage the ego and learn humility, one will become more positive and, with humility, discover the strength within. In a tempest, a banyan tree can be uprooted by the force of the wind, yet a humble blade of grass simply bends over and stands upright when the wind has gone. If one remains inflexible, one will be uprooted. Thinking to be so strong that nothing can shake one is actually one's weakness; however, if one begins to bend, that humility and acceptance will make one positive. It will give complete control over one's strengths for it will allow one to become humble and face situations with a positive attitude of mind.

The aspirant should live in the present, maintain a positive attitude all the time and associate with people who are positive all the time. If one associates with people who are negative about others, one's thoughts will not remain positive either. Sri Rama stated that there should be no falsity or crookedness in life. This is the process of coming to this point where one can develop a guileless disposition, a mind free from perversity, and absolute contentment. When one lives in the present, one will be contented. If one lives in the past or future, there will be discontent.

The purpose of yoga and the purpose of human life are the same: to excel in whatever field one is in, whether it be as a student, worker, businessman or sannyasin, and to explore the creative aspect of that field. The purpose is to find contentment in life, and through contentment, total perfection.

Kirtan

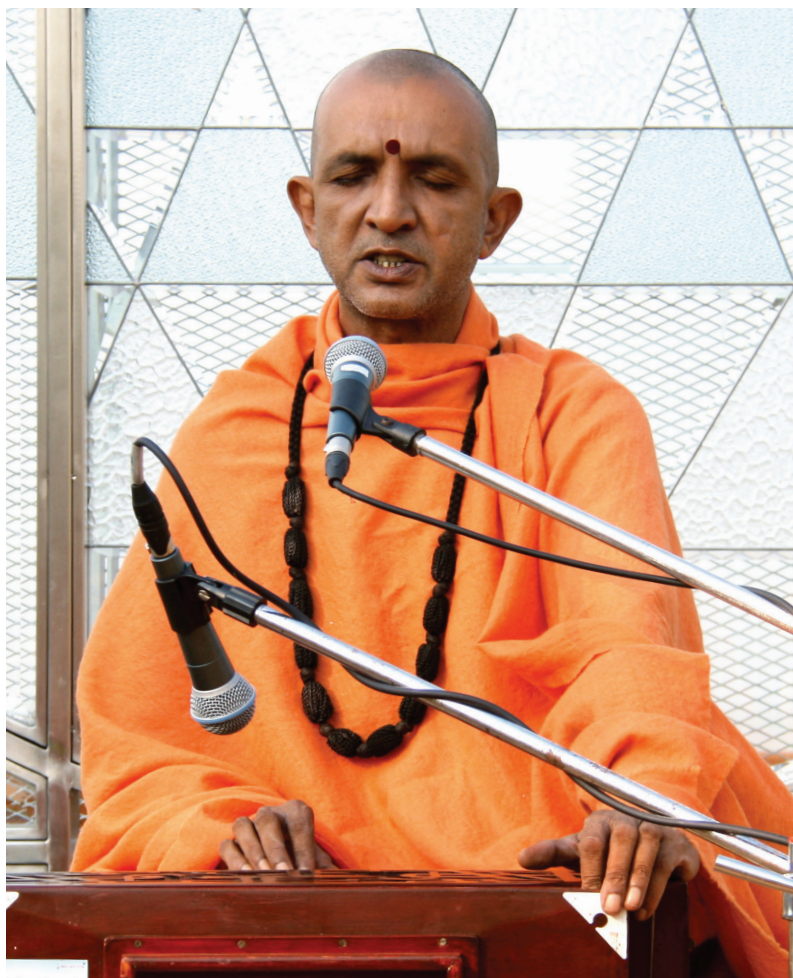
Swami Niranjanananda Sarasawati

Kirtan is an expression of feelings or emotions. When the expression of the emotions is directed towards one ideal, our beloved or ishta, there is a transformation in the quality of those emotions. The emotions or feelings which were directed towards worldly life and were scattered and fragmented, in kirtan you are able, quite naturally and spontaneously, to concentrate them on one point, on one pattern of thought, on one ideal. When the human emotion is able to concentrate itself on one point, one mantra, one thought, when it can centre itself on one awareness, then that mind attains peace.

Many people often ask how to silence the mind, what action to follow to attain peace of mind. The mind is restless by nature and there is no simple, straightforward answer to this question. However, if we observe closely the nature of the mind and try to understand the psychology and working of the mind to know the reason of its scatteredness, we find the answer – the mind, the emotions are attracted towards that object from which there is an expectation of pleasure and fulfilment.

If we find pleasure and comfort from an object, we are attracted towards it; if we have an expectation of pleasure and fulfilment from a person, we are attracted towards that person; if we experience pleasure and contentment from a particular thought, the mind is attracted towards that thought.

In this way, the mind is forever like a monkey, keeps jumping from one branch to another, from one sense object to the second sense object, from the second to the third and so on. This has become the habit and the nature of the mind. You know how difficult it is to change our habits or our nature. Unless the person is strong-willed, unless one's consciousness is awake and one has strong willpower, one keeps fighting a losing battle with one's habits.



So to change an external habit, one has to struggle so much, one expends so much energy, one has to literally fight with oneself. If we think it is this easy to silence the mind by simply closing the eyes and trying to meditate, then we are like the ostrich which buries its head in the sand and thinks that nobody can see it. Like the ostrich we bury our head in the sand of our thoughts and in the earth of our ideals and we think, 'Now I am truly blessed, I have become transformed and achieved the objective of my life.'

However, the reality is that we are still miles away from attaining our aims and objectives, as we are still struggling to overcome our simple habits. It is important to be able to centre our mind and concentrate on one point. There is a story of concentration regarding Dronacharya, the guru of the Pandavas and Kauravas in the epic *Mahabharata*, and his disciples. One day Dronacharya summons his disciples to test them and impart a lesson in eternal wisdom. He ties a clay bird to a branch of a tree so that it looks like a real bird, and asks his disciples to lift their bow and arrow to shoot the bird. First all of them had to tell him what they saw, while aiming at the bird's eye. His disciples come, one after another, pick up the bow and start describing the numerous objects in the line of their vision – the leaves and branches of the tree, the sky and clouds, other birds flying in the sky.

After listening to each, Dronacharya orders them to put the bow down. When it is Arjuna's turn, he replies that he was able to see only the bird's eye which he had to shoot at, and nothing else. This does not mean that Arjuna was blind. It merely means that he had the quality, the ability to completely concentrate on one point, to centre his whole awareness on one point, one sole objective. A capacity for such concentration cannot be attained without awareness.

I am trying to tell you that kirtan is the simplest way of trying to focus the scattered thoughts and feelings so that they may be channelled in one direction and in one emotion. Kirtan is the easiest and simplest way of trying to mould and direct our mind, so that the mind and emotions centre themselves on our ideal, our ishta, our beloved. Kirtan becomes the simplest and the most natural way of focusing the scattered energies of the mind. Kirtan thus leads to an inner transformation in the mind.

Kirtan leads to a subconscious, unconscious transformation in the mind, whereby, we experience joy, contentment, bliss, happiness and fulfilment. Subconsciously, unconsciously, kirtan becomes that external factor of motivating the consciousness to centre itself on one point which is our ishta or beloved ideal.



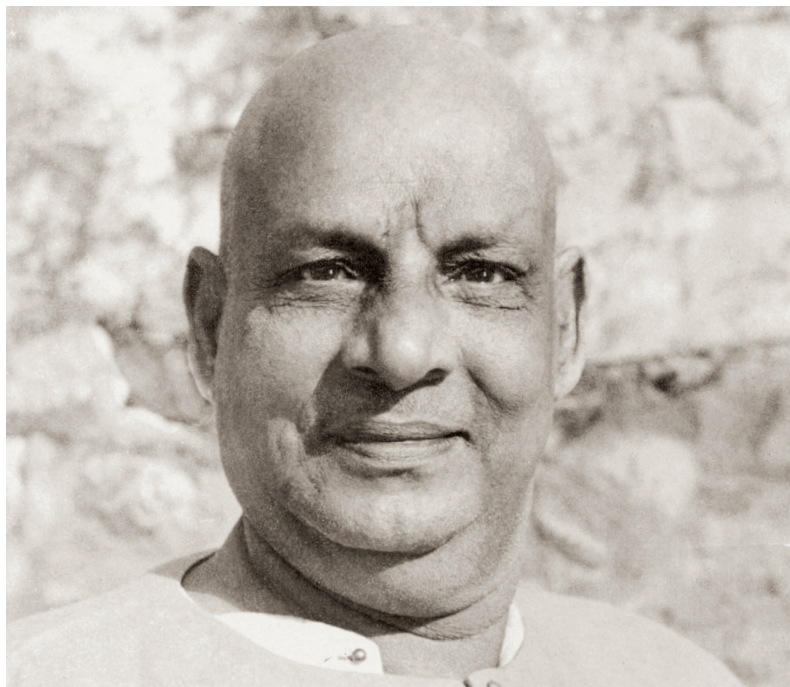
Therefore, kirtan is not a means or a sadhana of entertainment. Kirtan is a method of focusing our consciousness. Kirtan is the simplest and the most straightforward means of concentrating the mind and emotions.

There are only two entities in kirtan – you and your beloved. There is no question of feeling shy. When the mind finds the right connection with the beloved, when there is the right tuning in with our ishta, then the mind is able to overcome all fear. The mind becomes established in the knowledge of the truth, ‘I am one with my beloved and the hand of my beloved, my Lord, is ever placed on my head in His eternally graceful gesture of protection.’

When this faith awakens in us, we are able to establish the connection with our ideal or beloved. It is this connection with our ishta which becomes the purifying factor in our life. The purifying emotion, generated by kirtan, enables us to see and experience God in every object of nature, we experience the feeling of universal oneness of God and are able to literary see God in every face we see, and there is a fulfilling and happy transformation in our life.

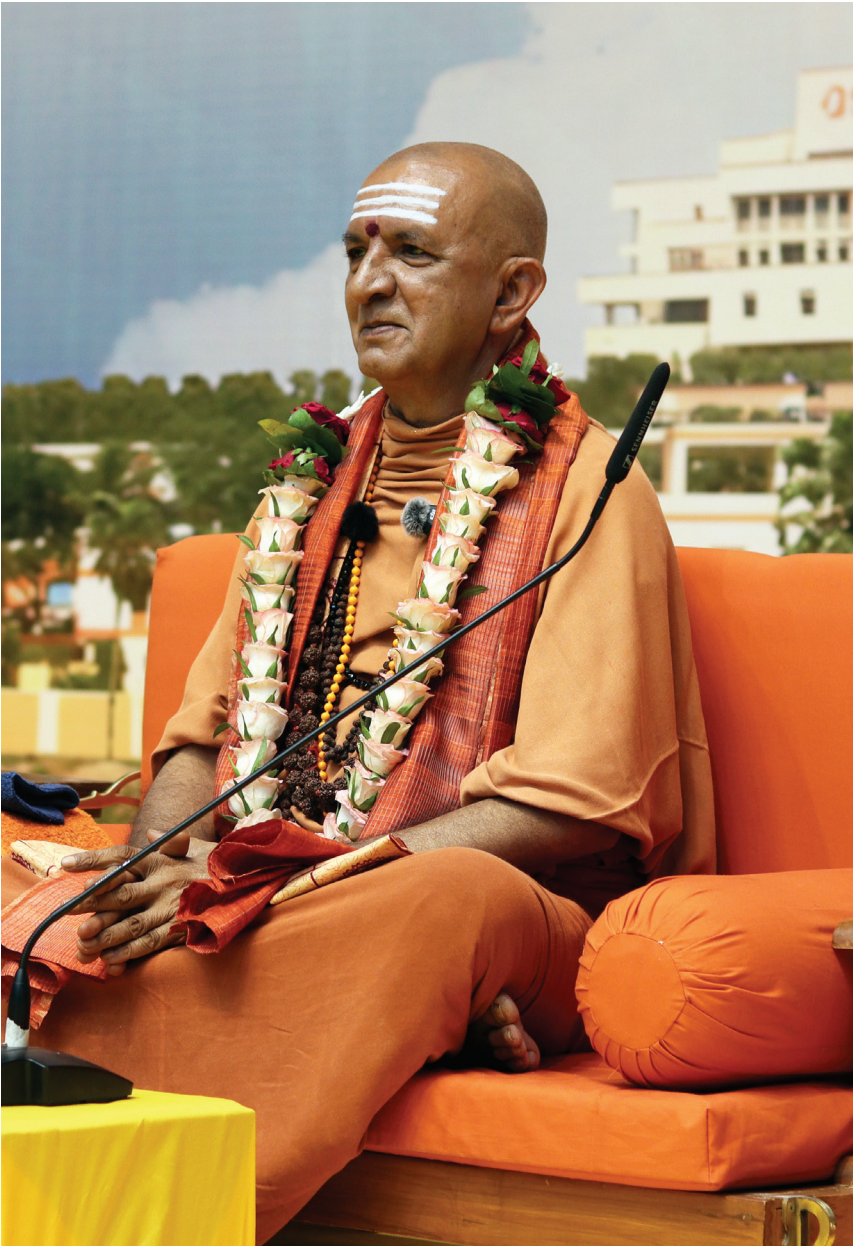
A Way of Life

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Yoga is a way of life, not something that is divorced from life. Yoga is not forsaking action, but efficient performance in the right spirit. Yoga is not running away from home and human habitation, but a process of moulding an attitude to home and society with a new understanding. Yoga is not a turning away from life; yoga makes life spiritual. Equanimity is yoga. Serenity is yoga. Skill in action is yoga. Control of the senses and the mind is yoga.

Anything by which the best and highest in life can be attained is yoga. Yoga is something that has to be assimilated and put into practice in daily life. Yoga is all-embracing, all-inclusive and universal in its application.







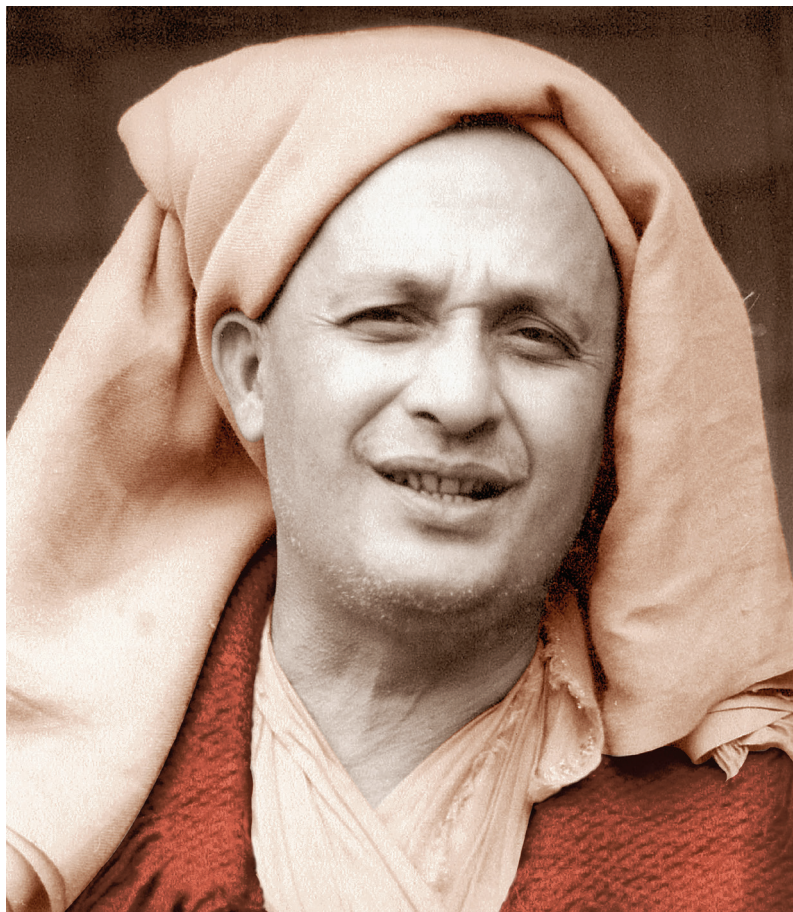
भारत योग यात्रा, पटना - 2026

अध्यात्म में प्रवेश



Avidya

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



As you continue practising yoga, you continue to modify your ego. You should read the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. He says the problems in life come in a series and they all emanate from within man's personality. The source of all problems is ignorance or *avidya*, lack of awareness. From *avidya* emerges *asmita*, egoism, from *asmita* emerge *raga* and *dvesha*, likes and

dislikes, and they lead to *abhinivesha*, clinging to life and fear of death.

Avidya is our inability to assess situations. If somebody abuses you, you immediately return the abuse. If somebody criticizes you, you hit back in the same way. But if you sit quietly and think over the situation, you will realize that you have not assessed it correctly. If you had kept quiet and not hit back it would have been better. Therefore, we have to strike at the very root of our problems and eliminate avidya through the practice of yoga.

There is a problem. We can see the external universe, however incomplete that is. We can understand the movement and the nature of laws and objects, but if you try to look into yourself you see nothing. It seems that a dark curtain is drawn between yourself and the object. This is called blindness. Why can't you see something that is within you? How funny it is that you are able to see something that is outside you! You are able to see something which you are not and you are not able to see something which you are. The jewel is in the pocket but you don't know it; this is called blindness. In yoga it is called avidya, ignorance or nescience.

Incapacity to experience yourself is on account of a great force called avidya, therefore one of the missions of yoga should be to destroy that avidya. Whichever form of yoga you adopt for yourself, the first mission or the first purpose of that should be to rend asunder that veil. We do try to meditate because we are sincere people. We meditate for decades but we are not able to jump over the mind. Every experience that we have through meditation is certainly nothing but a quality of our own mind, but we are not practising in order to know the mind. We have been practising in order to transcend the mind, in order to jump over the mind and yet every time we try to jump over the mind, we are within the mind. This has been the problem of everybody. If you don't recognize the problem, that's okay, but if you do recognize it you will realize that this problem is a hard nut to crack.

Tamas and Sattwa

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Everything that we do is directed by the mind. How we perceive ourselves, what we think, what we desire, what we want – everything is an expression of the mind. It is this mind which has to be brought under discipline or *anushasan*. Once the mind is under discipline, anushasan, nothing is impossible to achieve in life. The body is only the medium through which we can fulfil the ambitions, desires and expectations of the mind. The mind is the medium which can connect us with our inner dimension of spirit. The mind is in the middle between body and spirit. The purpose of yoga is to manage this mind. Yoga also looks at all the different aspects of life, including the body, energy, mind and spirit, not in the form of a philosophical belief system or a system of religious practice, but as sadhana to develop the qualities that are hidden, inherent within our own body.

It has been stated in the scriptures and literatures of all different traditions in the world, that mind can express the demonical nature and mind can express the divine nature.

Mind can become a demon and mind can also become a god. When mind becomes a demon, negative qualities manifest. When mind becomes god, then positive qualities manifest. These ideas are just indications of the natural behaviour of the mind in the realm of *tamas* and in the realm of *sattwa*. The yogic journey is to move from the dimension of *tamasic* behaviour and nature, towards the *sattwic* behaviour and nature, by changing the limited, restrictive conditions which become the cause of afflictions in our life, to something which is healthier and happier, more positive, creative and constructive. People who live in a negative state of mind, their behaviour, performance, action and interaction are not according to the principles of *dharma*. The people who connect with the positive dimension of nature, with the positive aspect of the mind, represent the expression of *dharma*. The intention of yoga is to connect with the positive, the constructive and creative.

For this, our *rishis* and our ancestors have discovered a process. In this process, we look at five things. There is this Russian wooden doll which is hollow inside, you can open it. When you open the first doll, inside you will find another doll. When you open that one, inside you will find a third smaller doll. You open that one, and inside you will find a fourth smaller doll. When you open that one, inside you will find the fifth, the smallest doll. There are five dolls, from small to big, all contained in one doll. That is the understanding of yogis about the human body as well. The physical body has another body inside it, which is known as the vital body. Inside the vital body is another subtle body, known as the mental body. Inside that mental body is another subtle body, known as the conscious body, consciousness. Inside that conscious body, consciousness, is the fifth smaller body, known as the spirit body.

In our life, we have these five different levels of existence, and five different experiences – the physical, the material; the vital, the energetic; the mental; the consciousness; and the spirit. Yoga takes you step by step, through all the experiences

and awakenings of these five different bodies, with its practices of mantras, asanas, pranayamas, relaxation and concentration. This is the start to discover our own nature, abilities and potentials.

We live in the world which is controlled by tamas; there is no sattwa in the world. Sattwa is something that we try to achieve, but tamas is something that we naturally express. Even what you desire in your life – post, position, power, wealth, recognition – is nothing but the expressions of the tamasic nature of life. If you desire peace, happiness, if you cultivate kindness and compassion, then that is gradually moving away from tamas into the dimension of sattwa. Once you establish yourself there, you become more effective and efficient in your karma, your thinking and expressions, and your life is more fulfilled and complete. Few people understand that we live in the dimension of tamas. What we desire is nothing but something for self-gratification.

Social media is nothing but self-entertainment and self-gratification. There is no life in it, only bondage. It binds your mind; the world, the sense objects, they bind your mind with maya. In the beginning it is fine, later on we begin to feel the suffering and pain for the position, power, wealth, control, domination, recognition that we desire is not easily attainable, as there are too many people competing for the same. Initially you may be infatuated and inspired by the dream of becoming great, yet as you go along that path, you will encounter competitiveness, jealousy, frustration, dejection from all sides and sources, and you will question yourself, 'What am I doing? Why am I unable to achieve? I have this high ambition and desire. I believe that I can achieve it, but I am unable to achieve.' These thoughts will emerge, indicating that you have entangled yourself in the dimension of maya and tamas.

Many people enjoy it and many people get frustrated. Many people are successful and many are not successful. Successful people question themselves, 'What next?' Unsuccessful people question themselves, 'Why didn't it happen to me?' In both

cases, we are caught and tainted by the shadow of tamas. Greed makes us commit sin: the greed for power, position, wealth, prosperity, control, success, domination, recognition. They deviate us from the path of wisdom and the path of dharma. An enlightened being is a person who does not forsake the path of wisdom and the path of dharma. That is the meaning of enlightenment. It is not God-realization which you call enlightenment – it is not deviating from the path of wisdom and dharma, which is the ultimate form of enlightenment.

I also live in this world. Gurus also live in this world. Yogis also live in this world, and they also face the effect and the influence of maya and tamas. What makes them different from the common people is that they are not controlled by tamas, whereas common people are controlled by tamas. They are controlled by expectations and desires, the need for entertainment, as a means to enjoy life. Yogis are not controlled by this tamas component; they are free from it. They utilize it, but they are not bound by it. How can you experience the best of both worlds, the tamas and the sattwa? It can happen with the practice of yoga.

For that yoga should be well balanced, not only the practice of physical postures or asanas, not only meditation. There has to be a sequence of yoga practices, which cater to the different needs of the human personality and mind. We have been able to create a formula of yogic practices which can cater to all these different needs and dimensions of human experience. People generally say that they do not have time to practise yoga, because they think of the yogic practices as a one or two-hour time frame, in which they have to dedicate themselves to yoga practice. So, how can we live the yogic principles in our life, while living in the world of tamas and understanding the world of sattwa. There is a five-fold aspect of yoga practice, which we call the yoga capsule consisting of mantra, asana, pranayama, relaxation and concentration.

– 20 April 2025, *Srimad Andavan Ashram College, Trichy, India*

Ahamkara

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



You cannot at once eradicate ahamkara altogether. You can easily give up wife, children, money, anger, but it is extremely difficult to give up ahamkara. Try to minimize it little by little. Remove one anna of ahamkara within three months. Within four years, you will be able to root it out completely. You will have to remove it either by self-sacrifice through karma yoga, through bhakti or self-surrender or self-denial of vedantic atmavichara.

The deep roots of ahamkara should be burnt by the fire of knowledge, *jnanagni*. Then you will quite easily get the wealth of moksha. All tribulations, sorrows, miseries and afflictions will terminate now. Control of the indriyas and pranayama help to develop the buddhi.

Through the sankalpas of manas, ahamkara is generated. If the modification of the mind, which leans to sensual pleasures,

is destroyed, the atman, divested of its ahamkara, becomes the unnameable Brahmic Reality.

Ahamkara is like a thread. It connects or links all the indriyas on itself. When the thread is broken, all the pearls fall down. Even so, all the indriyas will be broken down or destroyed when the thread of ahamkara is broken by *Aham Brahma Asmi*, *bhavana*, feeling, *sakshi bhava*, the witness, *nimitta bhava*, the method of self-surrender, having the attitude of being 'the instrument in the-hands of the Lord'. The connection with the indriyas will be severed. Within the time taken to pluck a flower, within the twinkling of an eye, this ahamkara can be easily eradicated by right sadhana or *Brahma Bhava*.

Even if you identify yourself with a subtle body inside, it will help you in your self-realization. It is only the identification with the fleshy, physical body that brings all sorts of troubles through gross ahamkara and 'mineness.' The physical 'I' is a very great menace. Whenever ahamkara asserts itself, raise a question within yourself, 'What is the source of this little I?' Again and again, moot this question and enquire. When you remove layer after layer, the onion dwindles to nothing. When you analyze the little 'I', it becomes a non-entity; it will gradually vanish. It will dwindle into an airy nothing. The body is not 'I'. The 'I' remains even after the leg is amputated.

There are four ways of destroying the ego or ahamkara, two are advaitic methods (positive and negative), one is the bhakta's method of ungrudging, unreserved, absolute self-surrender or *atmanivedana*, and the fourth, is complete self-sacrifice of nishkama karma yogis.

The negative vedantic method is denial: 'I am not the body, I am not the mind.' *Brahma satyam jaganmithya jivo brahmaiva na-aparah* – Brahman alone is real. The world is unreal. Jiva is identical with Brahman.' The world includes the body. Meditate on this idea and the aham will vanish. The positive method is that everything is Self only: '*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* – All is Brahman. There is nothing but Brahman.'

Is it possible to overcome the ego?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The Sanskrit name for ego is *ahamkara* which is made from two different words – *aham*, meaning ‘I, me, mine, my’, and *akara*, meaning form, shape. What is my identity, what is my form, what is my shape? My identity is ‘I am an individual being.’ My identity is ‘I am a separate person from you.’ My identity is ‘I am a separate individual from the rest of people.’ This is the unique identity that I have – ‘I exist, I am.’ That is *ahamkara*.

This identity of ‘I am,’ is coloured by the three *gunas*. Tamoguna gives you the ego identity of arrogance, the rough, dark and selfish identity. *Krodha*, *kama*, *lobha*, *moha* are all identities of tamasic *ahamkara*, the tamoguna. When you say,

‘Is it possible to eradicate this ego?’ you are referring to the tamasic ahamkara. You can make the effort and you will also be successful in the course of time, if you are sincere, true and committed.

Even if you overcome the tamasic ego, the rajasic will remain and the sattwic will remain. It is hard to overcome the tamasic ego, which is guided by passions, arrogance and aggression, by greed, possessiveness, infatuations and attachments, by an unnatural self-esteem, self-perception and different negative traits. You may feel that you have made some progress, but in certain situations you will realize that you have also failed. Overcoming tamasic arrogance does not happen in the material world. It happens when you surrender yourself to Guru. The Guru tells you the method to manage the tamasic ego. So the rajasic remains and the journey continues from tamas to rajas. In the course of time, even that has to be managed efficiently.

When you have been able to manage the tamasic and rajasic ahamkara, still the sattwic will remain. The sattwic ego will be your true identity. I know that I am. I know that I exist. That is the sattwic ego. Self-identity will always be there. Instead of identifying with the tamasic and rajasic traits, it will be an awareness of ‘I am,’ and that will remain until you depart from this world. It cannot be eradicated as long as you use your body and mind to live and survive in this life. As a pious and good person, you can live with the sattwic ego. As a destructive, selfish person, you are living the tamasic ego. As a desirous person, a person wanting to govern, change, transform, control, you are living the rajasic ego.

There are many dimensions and aspects of ego – it is not just one word. When we say ego, in the world of tamas we are talking of self-centred arrogance, which is controlled by the six natures of the mind – *kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya*. Matsarya is jealousy, competitiveness, the desire to come before everybody else. These are the natural traits and states of the mind which manifest spontaneously and naturally. The good



traits of the mind do not come naturally to you. Many people ask, 'How can I be more kind, compassionate and loving?' It is difficult for them to experience. Nobody will ask about greed, about envy, jealousy, as they manifest spontaneously and naturally in the world of *tamas* and in the materialistic dimension. They are known as *durgunas*, negative qualities. Identification with *durgunas* is *tamasic* ego; living the *sadgunas*, the uplifting qualities, is *sattwic* ego. So, instead of eradicating or trying to remove ego from your life, try to live more of the *sattwic* ego in your life.

When you take birth from the womb of your mother, you do not take birth as a lump of flesh; you take birth as a body with different organs – legs, arms, fingers, toes, eyes, nose, ears, hair; everything is there. As we grow, up these limbs and organs also grow with the body and become strong and capable of doing things, which they were not able to at the time of birth. Along with the body the mind also takes birth. Just as the body has limbs, the mind also has its own organs

and limbs. The limbs of the mind are six, and in the course of time they grow with the mind in this dimension.

The six limbs are kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya. *Kama* and *krodha*, desire and aggression take birth from rajoguna. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (3:37):

*Kaama esha krodha esha rajo-guna-samudbhavah
Mahaashano mahaa-paapmaa viddhyenam iha vairinam.*

It is desire, it is anger, born of the quality of rajas, All devouring, all sinful, know this as the enemy.

Lobha, moha, mada, matsarya, which connect you with the senses and sense objects, are the products of tamoguna. These six together give birth to the identity which is known as the ego. What is the identity of *matsarya*? It is ego. It is ego which experiences matsarya, envy and jealousy. It is ego which gets affected by greed, possessiveness. Each of these conditions gives birth to a specific ego.

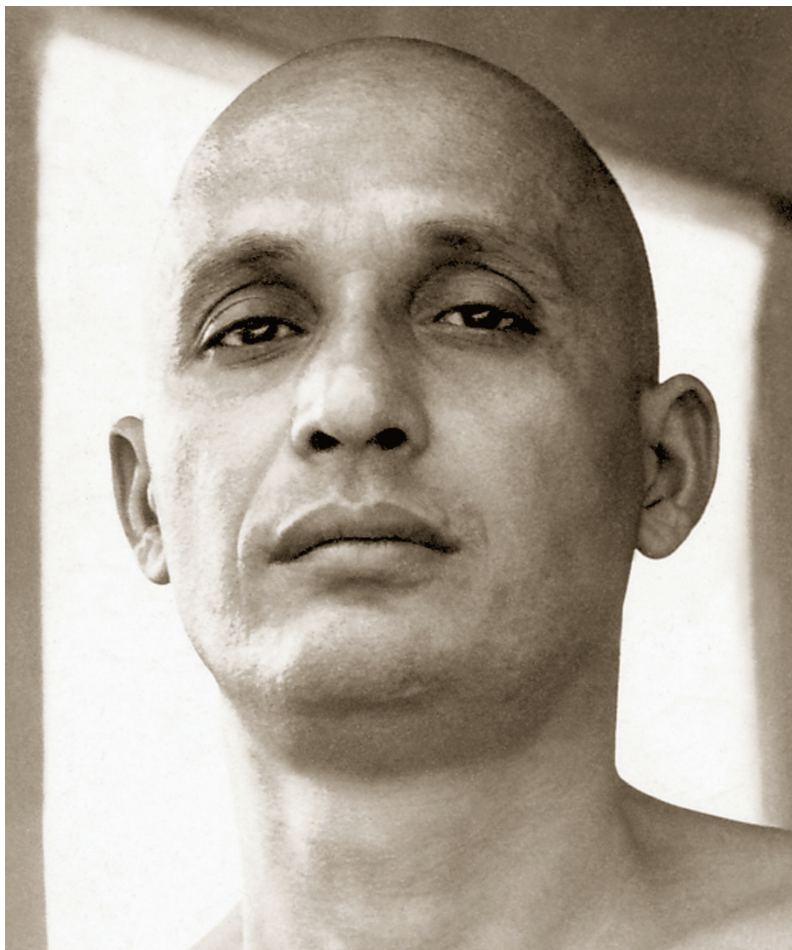
So, which ego are you trying to eradicate or control – the matsarya ego, the mada ego, the krodha ego, the kama ego? To say, ‘I want to control my ego,’ does not mean anything. You will never be successful, for you do not even recognize the different aspects of the ego manifestation.

What helps is the guidance of guru and your commitment to the sadhana to transform the lower nature of life and experience and connect with the higher nature of life. The higher nature of life are the sadgunas which can be cultivated and which will purify the gross tendencies of the mind. Swami Sivananda used to say that only gurus can perform egodectomy. After performing the tamasic and rajasic egodectomy, they connect you with the sattwic ego, which is *Aham Brahmasmi* – I am That. ‘I am’ still exists, yet now it is connected to the luminous dimension of your life and nature.

– 16 April 2025,
KBS SREE Convention Centre, Pondicherry, India

The End of Desires

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Desires are never-ending. An inspector wants to be a director, a lawyer wants to go to the high court, a high court lawyer wants to become a judge, a session judge wants to become a high court judge and a high court judge wants to become a supreme court judge. There is no end to desires. When one desire is fulfilled,

a person goes after another. Desires cannot be satisfied and fulfilled. There is a moment when this process has to come to an end. A person can go on desiring for ten, twenty, thirty and forty years, always thinking, "Once my desires are satiated, I won't desire anymore." But the wise say this never happens, as desires can never be satiated. Therefore, at a particular point in life, those who have greater common sense, understanding and wisdom decide, "No more desires now." They close that chapter and become desireless. It is hard to understand. It is said in the *Yoga Vasishtha* (6(2):160:22):

*Yaani sankalpajaalaani pratishthaamaagataanyalam;
Tyaktaikadrishyaalasthadehaanaam dridhachetasaam.*

The web of desires that I have been fondly weaving so long proved at last to be fragile and frail. Hence people of firm minds learn betimes to abandon their desires for the whole range of visible objects.

Desires are like the demoness, Surasa. When Sita was abducted by Ravana, Rama went in search of her. After some time, he found a powerful person to help him, Hanuman, the monkey god. It was discovered that Sita was in Lanka. Hanuman said that he would find her himself. He went to the seashore and from there he jumped across the sea and reached Lanka. He came across the demoness Surasa, who said, "I want to eat you." She made her mouth big enough to swallow him, so he also enlarged his body and become double in size. She went on increasing the dimension of her lips, and he also started increasing the dimensions of his body and became very big. Then Hanuman suddenly decreased the dimensions of his body. He became as small as a mosquito, went into her mouth and came out of her ear. Premature desires are like this. A person goes on fulfilling his desires, and suddenly he stops all desires – that is, he 'comes out of the ear'. He becomes desireless. When this happens, suddenly all the jumping and acrobatic feats of the mind stop. It is said in the *Yoga Vasishtha* (1:3:9):

*Ksheenaayaam vaasanaayaam tu cheto galati satvaram;
Ksheenaayaam sheetasantatyam brahmanhimakano yathaa.*

The absence of desires leads to the extinction of mental actions, in the same manner as the absence of cold is conducive to the dissolution of small particles of ice.

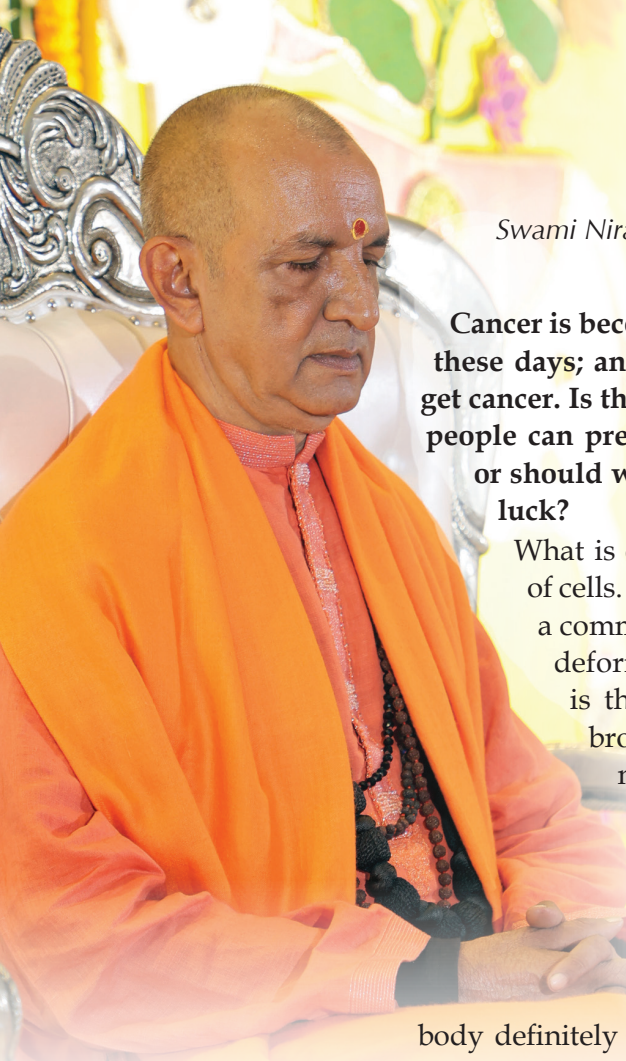
Desire is the only propelling force that makes one think and act, that makes one work hard, that makes one practise yoga. Everything is done because of desire, whether the desire is materialistic or spiritual. Desire is desire, regardless of whether if it is for the ordinary, transitory, perishable and fleeting objects of life or for nirvana, samadhi or kaivalya. They are all desires. It doesn't matter which chain binds the hand, a golden chain or an ordinary chain. A chain is a chain. Sage Vasishtha said in the *Yoga Vasishtha* (4:57:19):

*Baddho hi vaasanaabaddho mokshah syaadvaasanaakshayah;
Vaasanaastvam parityajya mokshaarthitvamapi tyaja.*

The man bound to his desires is a bondsman, and the person freed from them is set free from his slavery.

This state of desirelessness is difficult to attain, but there is a time in life when some people must practise it. One has to be desireless, for one gets what one is destined to get, not what one desires.

If this world were to follow the pattern of one's desires, there would be no contentment. For people who are full of desires, this life becomes an abode of discontent. For those full of longings, this life is an abyss of despair. For devotees of God, this life is the road leading to God. For the wise, this life is a bundle of changing values. For those who are detached, this life is as dust. For those who have no control, this life is a consuming fire. For the coward, this life is a bundle of sins. For the yogi, this life is a means of purifying the mind.



Satsang

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Cancer is becoming very common these days; anyone at any age can get cancer. Is there any way that the people can prevent or cure cancer, or should we accept it as our ill luck?

What is cancer? Deformation of cells. Even when you have a common boil, the cells are deformed. The difference is that here they can be brought back into their normal condition and you can see the healing. At times you cannot bring them back to the normal state. The immunity of the body definitely has a role to play in this, and immunity has taken a big beating in the present times. All the tasty food that we enjoy, all the chemicals that we ingest – pollution of food, air and water has affected the health of the human body. The latest scientific studies show that since the year 2000, in every generation we are losing 10 percent of immunity. This is a serious challenge before humanity, yet nobody is thinking about it. Nobody is willing to change their eating or drinking habits. If we are not going to change, how can we expect wellness and therapy? The more we ingest these pollutants, the more susceptible we will be to many more illnesses and diseases, not just cancer.

There may be many other illnesses in the future which we will not be able to deal with.

The best thing for human health is to go back to the basics, go back to a natural life where you can be out in the sun, play in the mud, bathe in a spray of water, and live a life connected to nature. Eat nourishing food, drink not the bottled water but water that can help the body, with the right alkaline content. We need to bring a lot of changes in our lifestyle and routine for achieving total health. Otherwise, it will just remain a distant dream and we will be firefighting this problem now, that problem in the next generation, and a third problem in the generation thereafter.

Health-wise, we have come to the point where we can fall over the cliff at any time. There are some people who are aware of the risks and are making the attempt to live a better life, but that percentage is minimal, the majority like to indulge in life. At least conscious people should make the effort to change their lifestyle, and inspire and encourage others to change their habits, with a better understanding of what is happening to the human body. The focus should be on lifestyle rather than therapy. That is my understanding.

As an employee my dharma is clear to me, but how does the CEO, leader or employer decide what is the dharma when faced with a plethora of options?

Their dharma is to follow the rules of the organization. If the rules of the organization say you have to be like this, then you have to be like that. If you try to be different, the organization will put you out. I will give you an example. This is an ashram. People of different mind-sets come here. Some people want to live their own life, some people want to do eight hours of sadhana, some people want to perfect the mantra, some people want to awaken kundalini, some people want to see the divine light. However, the focus of this place is yoga, very specifically. If you come here for yoga, no problem, but if you come here demanding your social right to this or that, you will be told,

“Sorry, this is not the place for what you are asking. Here the focus is yoga; if you want that, you have to find someplace else which will support it. Here, we support yoga.”

In the same manner, every organization, whether Amazon, Safeway or Amway, or whether yoga ashrams, clinics or schools, has its own set of laws and focus. For an individual who is a part of that, the dharma is to connect with the vision of the place where they are. That is the primary dharma.

What is the actual meaning of being a karma sannyasin today?

Sannyasa is a life of renunciation, traditionally speaking. Does that mean anyone who wants to live the principles of sannyasa has to renounce everything? No.

Sri Swamiji brought in the concept of karma sannyasa for householders who live in society with their family, profession, and so on, but they may still follow the values of sannyasa. People then asked, “If we take karma sannyasa, do we have to be celibate?” He said, “No, you do not have to be. You have a family, you are husband and wife, you have children, you have your responsibilities. If you have the strength to be a celibate, fine. If you don’t, just follow the dharma.”

Those who belong to the Christian background, where celibacy is given importance, often have doubts about this. That is in relation to the religious belief that they have grown up with. Poorna sannyasa represents renunciation of everything material and social; however, karma sannyasa is accepting the life where you are, and having the focus, ‘Even in this life, with all my responsibilities and duties, I can cultivate my spiritual awareness and experience.’ The effort is to maintain that balance.

– 10 January 2025, Ganga Darshan

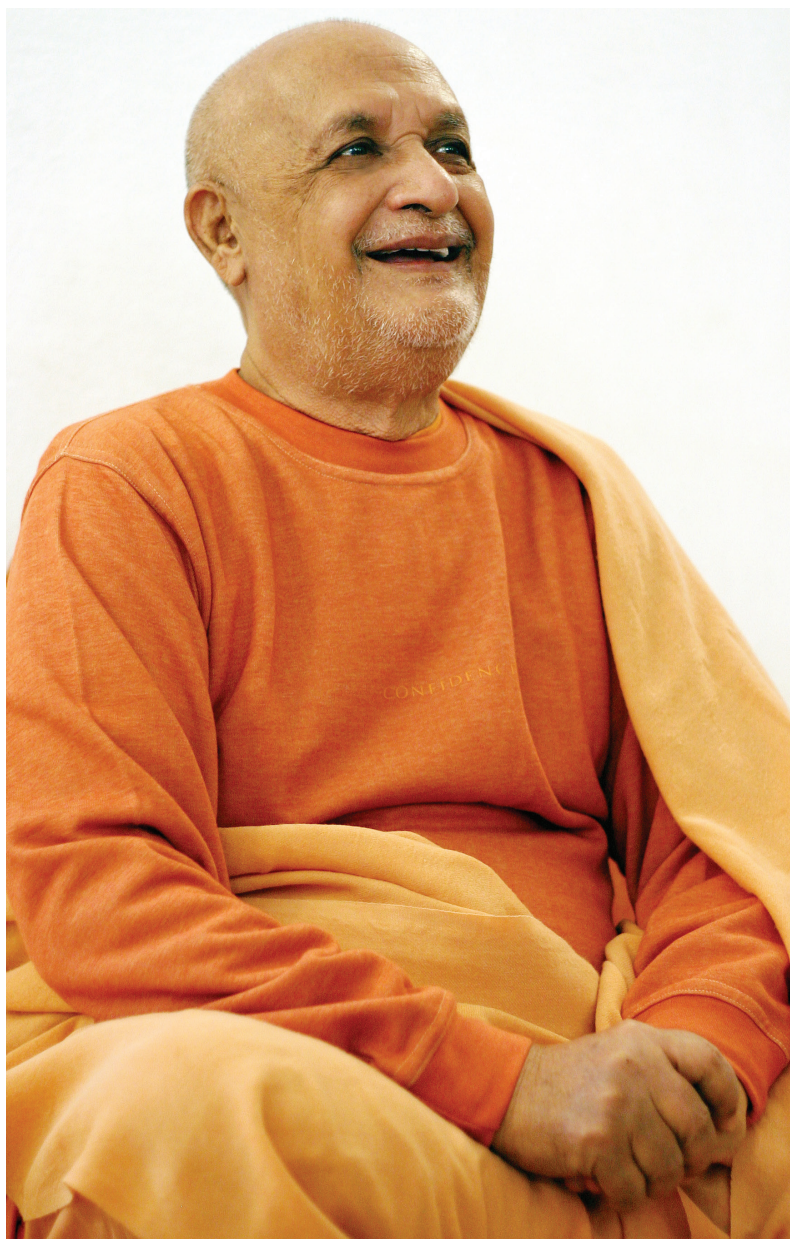
More Than Just Sattwa

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Your question is if a householder can become sattwic. Reflection of past, anticipation of future, dissatisfaction with the present, these are three non-yogic activities. Householders can become sattwic, but not predominantly, because they have a mind which has to attend to the rajasic influxes, such as greed, jealousy, passions, complexes, inhibitions, quarrels, frictions and conflicts, agreements and disagreements, acceptance and rejection about family, society, religion and nation. A householder is not an individual; he is related to the family, society, the nation, religion and his spiritual self. Even if he is a liberated person, still he gets a little bit of shock from maya.

In my opinion, householders should live like householders without any guilt complexes about the mind, but they must live like karma sannyasins; I mean sannyasins in the home. In ancient days in India there used to be people called rishis. They had a wife and children, disciples, obligations and everything, but they were highly realized people. They were very powerful people who understood the deeper nature of reality. If you know about them, you will become very optimistic about your own life.

You ask, can a householder become sattwic? The *Bhagavad Gita* has a theme, 'Can a householder realize?' Your theme was much simpler, can he become more balanced, can he be balanced in pain and pleasure? Can he be balanced in profit or loss? Or can he have balance of mind in every adverse situation? That was your question. The *Bhagavad Gita* goes much further, 'Is it possible for a householder, who has responsibilities, obligations, commitments, and his own mental weaknesses, to realize God?' The ultimate conclusion of the book is, 'Where there is yogic awareness and where there is devotion to your commitments, definitely realization will come.'



Not only realization, prosperity, wealth, peace, friendship, victory, as well as realization.' That is the conclusion.

True Beauty

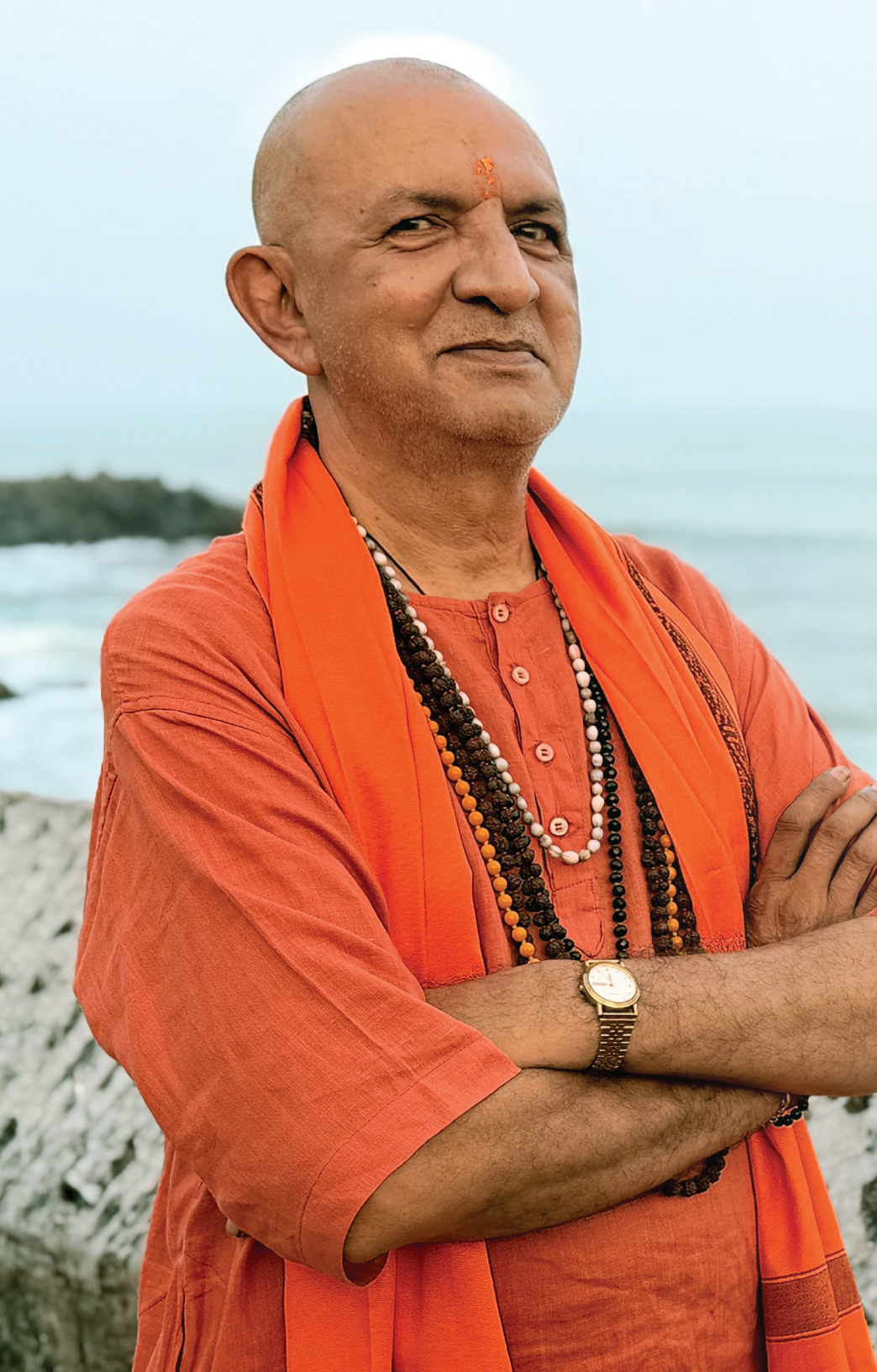
Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Physical beauty is no beauty at all. It is skin deep. That woman who has the beauty of the virtue of chastity is the really beautiful woman on earth. This is in consonance with the proclamation of the great lawgiver Manu. Beauty and ugliness are mental *kalpanas*, illusory creations of the mind only, just as sweetness or bitterness lies in the mind and mind alone. Such are the dharmas of the mind. Rise above the mind. Then you will be able to find beauty in ugliness, sweetness in bitterness and good in bad. Even the ideas of goodness, sweetness and beauty disappear when the proper grade of evolution is achieved.



The hand stands for *seva*, the heart for *bhakti* or *prem* and the head for the intellect. This is a very rare combination which can be found in very few people. Beauty is the inner spirit of purity in a woman. That is to be treated as 'true beauty'. Always try to see the good, the beautiful, the auspicious, the pleasant, however condemnable the worthy object of adoration be, on account of negative qualities. Then and then alone will you be able to evolve into the Infinite in greater and more abundant measure.

As long as man limits himself with constricted notions and cherishes debasing, negative and dualistic thoughts, he is not to be considered as an expanded soul. Feel that your position, your status, your earning capacity and your personality are but trash and a trifle when compared to the abundant wealth of beauty of solidified virtue. Give up egoistic assessment of values in life.



Discipline

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

We think of discipline as an imposed rule, but actually it is a process of re-educating ourselves. Discipline represents the state of perfection and understanding within us.

The yogi learns from the beginning to deal with his mind in a different way. He accepts, he does not deny any aspect of his mind. Why should he feel guilty about anything? The mind may have negative aspects, but these must be accepted, otherwise the personality will be split and weakened from the outset.

A yogi learns to develop mental strength and control based on acceptance of the mind. A yogi's attitude towards his mind is one of fearlessness. Whatever comes up, he is ready to face, like a hero in the midst of battle. He is engaged in a struggle with the mind. He may falter, he may fall down, but the yogi will always get up again. He knows that victory is his: he has only to keep on with the struggle. Ultimately, he will reach a state of equilibrium with his mind. This is *shanti*, this is peace.

Only when the whole dimension of thoughts, positive and negative, creative and destructive, can be objectively witnessed, does the aspirant succeed in the difficult task of directing his whole mind towards the expansion of awareness.

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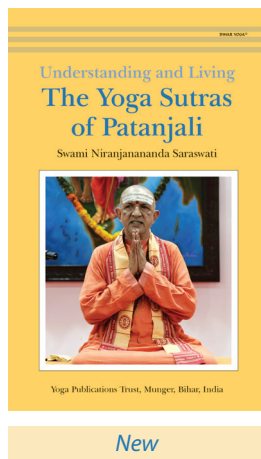
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Understanding and Living The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

55 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-93-48677-

On the occasion of the Yoga Shastra Sangamam conducted from 27th February to 1st March 2026 at Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati delivered daily lectures on the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, the theme of the 2026 Yoga Shastra Sangamam. He emphasized that the concepts of the *Yoga Sutras* are not mere philosophy or distant ideals, but a relevant and practical teaching for all yoga aspirants. For each *pada* or chapter, he introduced practices that enable the aspirant to experience and live the teachings of Rishi Patanjali – in any station of life. These satsangs are a valuable contribution to the understanding of the *Yoga Sutras* and a guide to live a yogic life.



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