

Ever feel the presence of God. Know that God is merciful and kind. There is no end to His mercy. He is Kamadhenu. Whatever you ask, He will give you. Have intense faith in Him. Acquire this faith by regular prayer and worship.

We have not come here to live and die as human beings. We are born as human beings, but we have come here to depart from life as all-perfect divine beings.

Divine grace is the fruit of self-surrender. A few drops of Divine Grace will bestow upon you an ocean of Bliss.

Swami Chidananda
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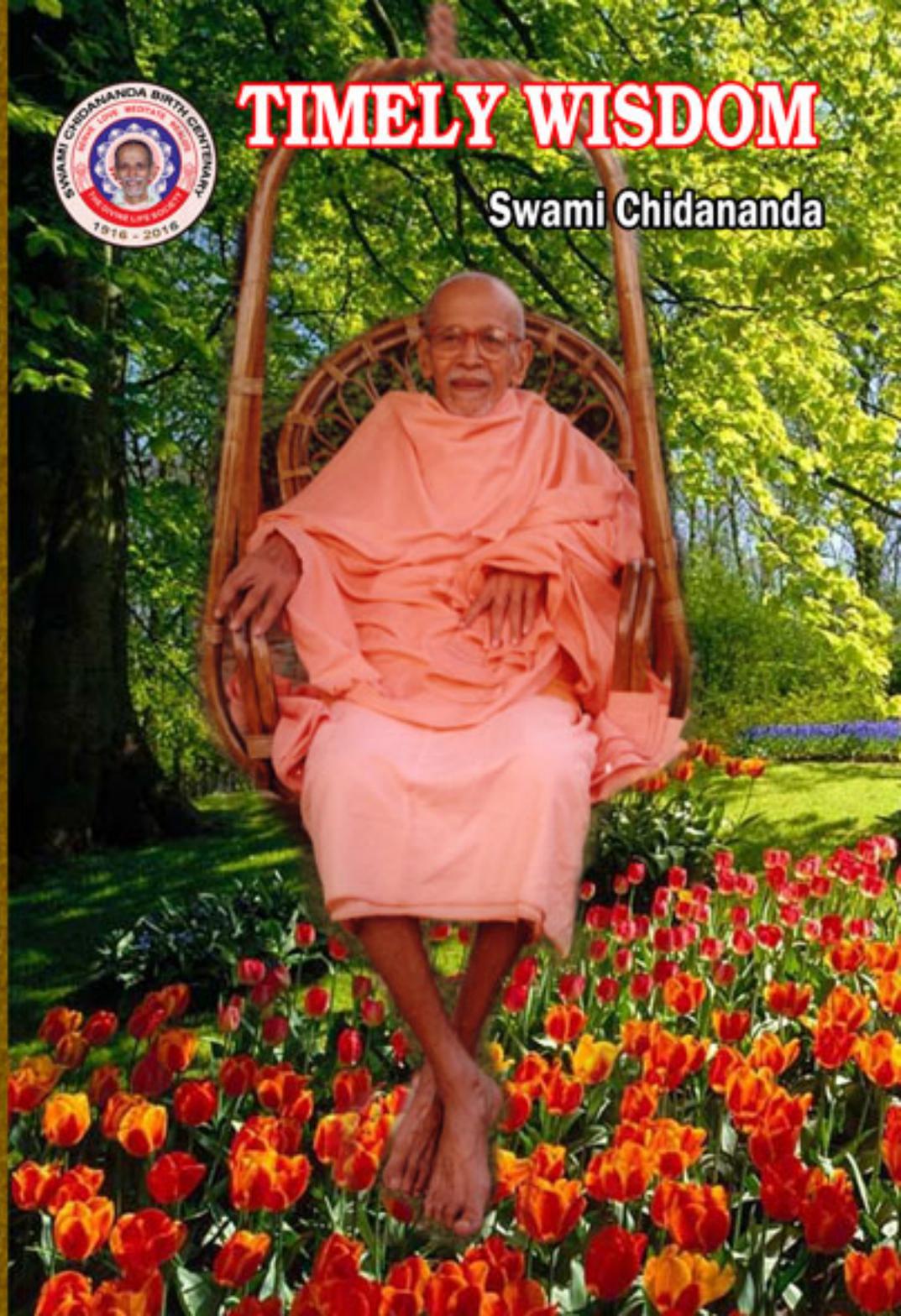


A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



TIMELY WISDOM

Swami Chidananda



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WISDOM**

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FROM ANCIENT SEER TO MODERN SAGE

Sri Swami Chidananda

*(Talks given at the retreat in Bagneux, France
from 4th to 7th September, 1992)*



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PATANJALI

HIS VISION AND TEACHING

Radiant Immortal Atman! Seekers and devotees of God! All those of you who have assembled here, though from many different places, have come unified in one identical aspiration for a higher life above and beyond the normal, biological life lived by millions of people and millions of animals. This aspiration is for the upliftment and ennoblement of your entire nature. Though the ultimate experience may be a transcendence of this human nature and the attainment of a divine experience, the transformation of your human nature is very important to this ultimate goal.

This transformation of your present human, physical, mental and intellectual nature is no less important than the ultimate transformation of your consciousness. It is important because this physical, psychological being of yours is the way through which you have to ascend to that level or plane of consciousness. It is not only the way, but also the instrument through which you have to work out this transformation. Naturally, therefore, the way has to be free from obstacles and pitfalls and the instrument has to be pure and worthy.

That is why Yoga (the process to, and union of the individual with the Universal Soul) commences with the body, goes next into the subtle life force, then into the mind and intellect, and ultimately concludes in an experience that goes beyond the mind. The means you adopt are as important as the goal you are trying to achieve. Yoga science propounds first and foremost a set of physical exercises. If the basis and foundation of a building is strong, the edifice will be strong and long lasting. The physical, mental and ethical disciplines are like laying the foundation and getting the necessary equipment to set up the superstructure.

Patanjali, the great sage who expounded the Yoga of Meditation, starts out with the establishment of self-control of your own physical organism. The eight-fold stages of Ashtanga Yoga are a continuing, progressive system, commencing with the body and gradually going inward through the different levels of your being, to a state of inner quietness of the mind.

Patanjali did not have the advantage of any of the scientific instruments of today to test the various workings of man's inner system, nor did he have at the time the psychological studies and discoveries of this present age to guide him. Nevertheless, he achieved a marvelous insight into the most detailed and minute workings of the mind and intellect. This insight into the workings of our interior, into mind, into intellect, memory, imagination, thought processes, feelings and

emotions, both positive and negative, is really astounding in its great depth, thoroughness and correctness. Down through the decades his findings have not been disproved. On the contrary, whatever he discovered and declared has been borne out to be authentic in character.

What is the genesis of thought? How does it arise? There are very learned scholars and scientists today who say that thought process goes on until the brain dies. Apparently this works very scientifically. There is no doubt that there is a connection between thought and brain. It is the same connection as that between a master musician and his musical instrument. A violin or clarinet or flutes do not contain music. They are made up of inert parts.

First, the entire totality of a musical composition is within the consciousness of the musician composer. He is able to visualize and even hear the music before he puts notes down on paper. What he experiences in the silence of his consciousness he transfers onto paper when he starts composing the melody. You cannot have music without a musician, but you can have music without a musical instrument. Caruso did not play a musical instrument, yet he was a great master who treated the whole world. He did not count upon an instrument to produce his music.

The mystics and yogis (those practicing Yoga) heard music even in the depths of their own silence, whether they were oriental or occidental mystics. They were able to be transformed into

blissful states by listening to this inner, celestial music which did not even require the function of their vocal chords. The point is, what is the source of these mystics' inner visions? What is the source of man's mind?

Mystics heard the music when the brain was not functioning and were even able to chant it later. Mystics saw vivid visions. So, the belief that inner thought processes depend upon the functioning of the brain is a very natural and understandable error. It is an error on the part of those who had not experienced the existence of higher planes of consciousness, because their conclusions were always based upon observance. You can observe only that which is expressed. That which has not been expressed cannot be observed. Therefore, you cannot know anything about such phenomena.

In depths of trance and deep meditation, the experiences that take place are not experiences that present themselves for expression to any other person. Not having known of the existence of such phenomena, it is obvious to see how some scientists came to the conclusion that all observed phenomena are the result of brain function. This was, in the ultimate context, presumptive, because they inferred or presumed that the interior of the person or subject, whom they were studying, was functioning in a certain manner, based on their observations of the behavior of that person. This inference may or may not be correct.

Also, it does not explain why that person harbored such a pattern of thought and feeling within.

Perhaps they may be able to infer or presume the existence of a certain state of mind. But why that state and not some other? For this, they go into a study of other factors by which the person is surrounded or is in contact with, such as home environment, influence of other family members, etc. They try to look into the early period of one's infancy and childhood, and through such a study, they came up with certain observations and conclusions about that person's nature. If a person reacts in a particular way, they say it is all due to his family background and early experiences. But if these are not sufficient to explain a certain behavior, they assume the influence of heredity.

This is a new dimension: microbiology and genetics. A couple has seven children. Due to genetics they may have some common facial features of the father or mother, but given the same parents, the identical treatment, the same diet, and the same education, yet each of the seven children develop absolutely different and distinctive character traits of their own. This is not a supposition, but is true in hundreds and thousands of human families all over the earth. Therefore, it seems to contradict the psychological theories formulated by modern scientists of the mind.

Patanjali found no problem in explaining this. He said the mind had existed before this

particular individual was born into human society, and that it is a mysterious factor that has been brought over from a previous existence. Much has come into the makeup of the mind and nature even before it starts to function within, as an individual human being. This fact has to be carefully considered when we deal with this Science of Yoga, which is concerned with the discipline and transformation of the mind.

Your mind starts picking up impressions and experiences after you are born to your parents. It comes already containing within itself the subtle seeds of previous experience in the form of subtle impressions. It also brings along with it certain predilections or inclinations of behavior due to latent tendencies from previous experiences. Thus the impressions of previous experiences make up the factor which is already in the mind when you take birth.

Secondly, latent tendencies have been brought over from a previous existence. Impressions are called Samskaras, and latent tendencies are called Vasanas. Both are in the mind in a state of inactive dormancy or unmanifest latency. In this unmanifest condition, they subsist in a certain part of the inner being of the individual soul. This part is, as it were, a repository or storehouse. All potential for all thought activity is inherent in that level of your being. It is this level of your being that is a prolific source of all thought processes and functions.

Therefore, Patanjali's vision went beyond earthly life and infantile experiences and even heredity, and took one into a non-physical dimension that went beyond earth experiences of that being within the individual. It is this fact that explains the totally different natures of half a dozen children of the same parents, all given the identical experiences, from the point of view of diet, upbringing and education.

It was Yoga Science that took upon itself the task of dealing with this depth of the individual human person. When I speak of these Samskaras and Vasanas, these impressions and tendencies, being in the depths of the human consciousness, I am not referring to some academic or theoretic individual, but it is a practical fact which you have to wisely use, with the knowledge derived from these insights, to deal with yourself. You have to know how to educate and train your interior.

You must not be juvenile and puerile and try to take shelter behind theories brought out by modern psychologists like Freud and Jung. It is alright to read these modern studies and fields of knowledge, to get to know how things have been seen by occidental studies of the mind. It is alright to get some knowledge, but you should not make use of this knowledge as an excuse for allowing negative states to prevail within yourself. Neither should you condone these things within yourself in order to justify behavior by giving it a very nice, modern explanation. Do not try to use these theories in order to get sympathy or to avoid

dealing harshly with yourself. This is not the yogi's way of making use of knowledge of the inner being.

The yogi makes use of knowledge of the inner being for self-conquest. The spiritual seeker makes use of this knowledge to rise higher and higher in order to overcome oneself. The entire approach is positive, constructive and creative. Always remember this. Never forget it for a moment. Knowledge of psychology and of neuroses and complexes is not to be used as a shelter to hide behind. It is not supposed to condone your conduct. If you make use of some of these observed facts, that is fine. But ninety-nine percent of people in the modern world try to take shelter behind modern psychological theories to explain away their aberrations and eccentricities.

Patanjali said, "Here I am giving you all these facts. Now take them up as truth to work with. Make necessary references and use them to overcome all negative states". He did not tell you about these negative states to give you excuses. He gave them so you could watch out for them, equip yourself to deal with them, and then go beyond them.

So, you have brought your nature (in the form of Samskaras), with you. Now you know what you have to deal with, and Yogis, I am telling you how to deal with them. Use them to overcome yourself and to advance toward the goal. This is the purpose of the Science of Yoga. Its main thrust is

towards overcoming and transcendence; also, towards sublimation and transformation.

Sometimes an extraordinary scientific method renders something harmful into something harmless. Take for example a certain tendency. If a preponderance of Tamo Guna (quality of ignorance, inertia) is allowed to prevail in the presence of that tendency, then the tendency begins to function as a problem and causes great difficulties within your interior. But, if the same tendency is predominated by Rajo Guna (quality of passion, restlessness), it begins to function in a different manner. It is not a great problem, but is transformed and begins to function in a different way. Level by level that selfsame tendency, when subjected to a preponderance of Satva (light, purity) through Yoga, gradually disappears. Or, in course of time it may even begin to function as a helpful process of your spiritual evolution. These are insights that the great sage Patanjali gave to us about our own interior.

Thus, thought processes may manifest in your brain and control the nervous system, but their root source and origin is not the brain, but is at a much deeper, subtler level of your subconscious, which existed even before your brain had come into being or your body had been born. When the individual center of consciousness migrates or transfers from one existence into a new existence, it brings along

with it all these factors which later on function within the new personality that it now assumes.

It brings along with it its five inner organs of perception (sight, sound, taste, touch and smell), and the five main Pranas (vital energy, life-force) and the five secondary Pranas, which make the different parts of the body function in their respective manners. The individual center of consciousness also brings along with it the ego-consciousness: its mind activity, its intellectual powers, and its latent repository or storehouse of all the subtle inclinations or tendencies. This is called Chitta (mind-stuff, subconscious mind), which holds the key to your whole nature and behavior.

The intellect, mind and ego are the three which are manifest in the active aspect of your mind, whereas the fourth one is not the active mind, but the submerged inner depth of the mind's interior. Pantanjali concerns himself with this inner depth, for it supplies the potential for the emergence of all thought phenomena. Latent potential for all thinking, feeling, urges, desires, memories, all inhere at this level.

If you can work upon that and bring about some changes, you hold the key to your inner transformation. It is called Chitta. Its activity sends up the impulse for the emergence of thought upon the active mind and thus it holds the key for the discipline of your inner being and its control. This impulse that sends a potential seed thought to become manifest upon the mind

is called a wave, or Chitta Vritti. An impulse sent up by the Chitta is like a bubble being sent up from the bottom of the sea, or from the bed of a lake which then appears and bursts and sends ripples over the water's surface.

To try to get control of this function is the central purpose of the Science of Yoga. If you gain control of this process, you will gain control of the mind in all its aspects. The way in which it manifests depends upon the ratio and proportion of the three Gunas (qualities born of nature) within your interior. Sattva is subtle, with an upward direction. Rajas is less subtle, and its direction is outward. It is distracted and agitated. Tamas is very gross and heavy, and does not allow any positive movement. It holds human nature at a lower level of awareness and functioning.

A considerable part of Patanjali's Yoga and its various practices is aimed at bringing about a more desirable proportion of these three Gunas. All three Gunas are present in all human nature. The thing to decide is which among the three Gunas is dominant. Sattva should be in control, and Rajas and Tamas should be regulated. This is the condition that is desirable to cultivate within your interior. Therefore, at the very onset of his expounding of this science, Patanjali declared that Yoga is the disciplining and overcoming of the activity of the Chitta.

Hence, the well known Sutra (aphorism) about the gaining control of the subtle tendencies of Chitta, keeping them under check and allowing

new impulses and tendencies to prevail within your consciousness. New tendencies and impressions are created by Satsanga (association with the wise), by the practice of carrying out the spiritual instructions of the Guru, by unfailing daily study of important scriptures and spiritual books, through spiritual discussions with fellow seekers, and through transforming processes like Japa (repetition of the Divine Name), Asana (posture), and Pranayama (regulation of breath), and certain spiritual disciplines, like vows, fasting and vigils, etc. They all have the power of subduing Rajas and Tamas, and of increasing Sattva . They bring about a subtle change within your interior.

Simplicity of life, sublime thinking, adhering to certain ethical principles, refusing to compromise your ideals, outer and inner cleanliness, the practice of self-control, always keeping up a positive state of mind, a minimum state of austerity, and constantly dwelling with heart and mind in the divine Presence with dedication to the divine Reality, are the various ways of bringing about the gradual transformation of your interior.

Each one of these factors functions in a different and special manner, but the overall result is the transformation of your interior: increase of Sattva, control of Rajas, elimination of Tamas, and a clear perception of your interior. In addition to these various yogic disciplines, one can never underestimate the importance of having

a heightened awareness within, and a certain gratefulness. If you want to evolve, you must watch day by day, moment by moment, when you are alone and when you are among others, in all situations.

The Yogi should not forget himself. He is always a self-aware person, not in a metaphysical sense, but in a practical sense. Be aware of yourself, physically as well as psychologically. Keep watch over the movements of your thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Keep a close watch upon your reactions. This is very important. It is our reactions to things, people, surroundings and circumstances which reveal exactly what we are. That is the depth of your real inner state. Introspection is Yoga and Sadhana (spiritual practice). Self-examination is Yoga and Sadhana. Detached observation of your reactions is Yoga and Sadhana. It is this which reveals to you the state of your interior.

This revelation is valuable because it reveals what is necessary to be done within yourself. If you do not know yourself day by day, you will not know what to do. These are methods by which to see in which direction you must work. Yoga psychology is the positive, creative way to study your interior. It is not a 'know-how' in beating a retreat, but a 'know-how' in making an advance. It is not a system of knowledge for half-hearted escapism. It is a positive system of knowledge to face yourself and to deal with yourself and to go beyond yourself.

This is the central idea which you must grasp about Patanjali's insights into yourself. He was not a clinical psychologist, but he was a mystical, transcendental intuitionist. That is the value of his discoveries and his system of knowledge. It tells you about the mind. Make use of your knowledge of the mind to subdue and overcome it, then you can go beyond it. So, luminous seekers of God, strive to lead an ideal life. Hari Om.

INNER MAN—HIGHER REALITY

Let us carry further our consideration of the inner man. We spoke of the entire purpose of Sadhana and spiritual life as the purposeful directing of our mind and thoughts towards Reality. We saw how this process was hampered by the natural tendency of the mind to always move in the direction of outer things in this universe, because the outer objects present themselves with a certain glitter and power of attraction. Ninety-nine percent of the entire global human population is convinced that these objects are solid reality, substantial things. They also are absolutely confident that they will obtain happiness and satisfaction through these objects.

Seeing that all human beings here on earth are constantly engaged in avoiding pain and suffering and trying to seek and find happiness, it is natural that they move towards outer sense objects. They think them to be the solution to all pain and suffering, and that certainly happiness will come from the possession of these objects.

You people who have obtained the life spiritual form a microscopic minority, who, by the grace of God and the benediction of the saints, have become aware of the higher destiny for man other than running after these petty objects. You are convinced that there is something higher and greater than the little mundane life of sense satisfaction and desire fulfillment. You have

become aware of a greater Cosmic Reality which is of the nature of fullness, bliss and peace. Due to your faith in the scriptures of the world, and also in the declaration of illuminated perfected masters, you are convinced of that great Reality. One does not find true satisfaction in this finite world.

You are absolutely convinced by these great teachings that once the goal has been attained, all desires will be satisfied and there will be a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Hence, your gift is not a gift of perishable, non-eternal, finite things, but of the Eternal and All-perfect. You want to contemplate and meditate upon the Eternal, but you find that the mind habitually runs after the old patterns of earthly objects and things. It is engaged in running after created things and not after the Creator of these things.

It is the concern of the Science of Yoga to change these natural behavior patterns and conditions of one's interior, to somehow make them go inward, to meditate and to attain that Reality. Yoga concerns itself with the mind and what causes its movements, activities and its habitual thought processes. It is here that the ancient spiritual genius of those great seers intuitively discovered mind as being an independent faculty of the human brain. Brain is not the source of thought. Thought transcends and exists even before brain existed.

It is in this deep inner study of the Science of Yoga that this valuable truth has been brought

out: **that which is perceived by the five senses is not the ultimate Reality.** The ultimate Reality cannot be a created thing, because a created thing would not exist before it was created. That which had known existence in one time, can go into non-existence at another time. The possibility is always there, and it makes all objects not worthwhile. So, the quest is after the beginningless and endless Reality.

To direct our entire being towards that Reality, we must first master our restless minds. Patanjali gave us valuable information about the very nature of the mind, how it can be curbed and checked, and made to dwell upon the Eternal. Here we have a glimpse into the marvels of Yoga psychology and science, of how thought activity must be transcended. The subduing of the unceasing thought processes is essential to Yoga Science. It commences with this transformation, and goes on to explain the root and origin of all thought waves, which goes beyond the explanation of modern psychologists.

The formation of thought patterns is not based merely upon heredity only. Biological patterns are not derived only from genetics. Behavior patterns are not merely from prenatal conditions, nor from birth and infancy. The seers had the insight that when one is born, one brings the potential for an entire pattern of thinking and behaving from preexistence. The exact manner of this preexisting nature is described in detail.

Knowledge that Vasanas and Samskaras were found to be the basis of our physical nature.

Patanjali's Science of Yoga drew up a comprehensive formula which constitutes distinct processes, both internal and external. In external form, it constituted the first five Angas (steps, limbs) of Yoga Science. They provided for dealing with one's habitual nature according to one's level of awareness. Repetitive activity of a uniform kind becomes a habit. Habit becomes second nature, which is difficult to shake off. Therefore, the repeating of such activity was negated by taking some basic vows. The seeker deliberately ties himself down to certain vows and he eliminates all activity contrary to these vows. Thus you see how, at one stroke, all manifestations of wrong action contrary to spiritual progress are controlled by the first Anga.

These great vows which form the first Anga of Yoga are: non-injury, purity in thought, word and deed, non-stealing and non-acceptance. Once this is achieved, to stop all useless action patterns in order to change our present nature, a whole series of daily observance is suggested for the seeker. The whole life of the individual is now given an upliftment into a God-oriented movement. This is achieved by suggesting that one follow a definite daily observance, with the ultimate effect of turning the mind's direction. The results bring a further check of old habits, plus these observances begin to make one God-oriented in all one's activities: cleanliness, a positive attitude of

mind, contentment, the pursuit of a certain degree of austerity, daily study of scriptures, and last but not least, the surrender of the human ego at the feet of the Divine.

Thus through these first two steps, Patanjali succeeded in establishing a right-about-turn to life's movements. Gradually we must move inward. This is the key to man's destiny. 'As a man thinketh, so he becomes.' Whatever the faith of the person is, that the person receives. What distinguishes you from all the lesser creatures and as the supreme end of evolution on earth? The faculty of thinking and reasoning, which is denied to all lesser forms of life on earth. This ultimate factor actually opens the door for unlimited power, progress and experience.

The human individual is an integrated mechanism. All levels are interconnected with one another. Mind and body are inseparable. Modern scientists have now discovered that many physical conditions are brought about by the mind. This is called psychosomatic illness. Patanjali's knowledge of this situation was very deep. He knew precisely and exactly the anatomy and mechanics of how the body worked.

Mind is not directly connected with the body. It transmits its effects onto the body through an intervening sheath within us, called the Pranamaya Kosha, or seat of the life force. This force is divine power. It pervades the entire world. It vibrates in every cell of our being and in our minds. It is the basis for mental activity also. Body

connects to mind through this Prana. Mind is the actual target to subdue, control, centralize and focus upon the Supreme Reality. This subtle inner vital force is the key to the ultimate overcoming of all mental activity.

The second step was to try to discipline and control the body. When the body is in a state of hectic activity, Prana within the body is also in a state of hectic activity, and when there is this state of disharmony and discord, the situation is conveyed to the mind.

Asana is the third step in Yoga. You take a fixed seat in which you remain motionless, without pain or pressure. Patanjali's Asana is not to be taken for the various Asanas of Hatha Yoga, which are very good for their physical effects on the body and one's health. However, for the purpose of Yoga meditation, a steady unshaken pose, with the head, neck and spine in a straight line, is to be held for a certain period of time.

In that state of equilibrium, the Prana contained within naturally tends to subside into a slower rhythmic pace. When thus poised and in harmony, the steadiness of the body is conveyed into the sheath of Prana, and Prana takes on a similar state. The Prana communicates itself to the brain, to which it is directly connected. When this is communicated via Prana to the mind, the mind gradually begins to undergo a change. Pranayama is the fourth step. Thus a gradual subdual of mind processes is achieved through Patanjali's first four Angas. This process is to be

persisted in. The more Sattva you bring into your system, the greater the continuity of this state of contemplation and concentration.

The fifth inner state deals with the externality of the mind, or its habitual exterior movement. Gurudev Swami Sivananda spoke about this a great deal. He said all other processes of Yoga are done in a certain place and time, through all waking hours, day after day. The Sadhana of Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from their objects) is not confined to any time and place, but you must train your mind to dwell in a constant state of Pratyahara. It means training the mind not to run after the external world. Not allowing it to run after external things requires a great deal of understanding of the mind. You have to persuade the mind that all these objects are the source of pain and suffering.

It is only through Satsanga, Vichara (enquiry into the nature of the Self), etc., that one is gradually convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that all external things are worthless. It is the result of conviction arrived at after much deep thinking and observation of what is happening around you. "The more I run after these things, the more restless my mind will be." Desires never subside. In fact they only become more intense. This fact has to be discovered about the nature of desires. Created objects are sources of sorrow. Now, firmly believing this, you begin to give up and renounce desires. This is explicitly stated in

the Gita. Here, Vairagya (dispassion) comes in to establish you in Pratyahara.

When perfect withdrawal is obtained, you enter into the state of internal Yoga. The five earlier Angas are called the outer Yoga. They are indispensable at their own stage. The first four steps to the fifth stage must be carried on as a process you continue throughout your life. Doubtless after entering into the inner plane of Yoga, the emphasis will shift from the first five to the last three.

Having entered into the inner Yoga, there is now a severe test of the patience of the Sadhaka. What type of patience is required? See the sixth chapter of the Gita. It contains the essence of Raja Yoga. Consciousness comes and goes. Mind has so long been habituated to being on the move that trying to check it and lead it in a desired direction is resisted by its old habit patterns. As many times as you try to concentrate the mind, it moves away from its center. Without the least agitation, gently bring the mind back. Strong love for your object of meditation is a sure guarantee for success in meditation. When these attempts to focus the mind are achieved and consciousness is unbroken and lengthened beyond a certain period, then it becomes Dhyana (meditation). Then our main practice becomes only meditation.

Emphasis now rests entirely upon this ultimate process, for meditation is the ultimate process. Here, the thought is entirely transformed. It is filled with Sattva. Vrittis

(thought waves) go away into Nivritti (renunciation). Even as various thoughts arise, they are all centered around God. Directly or indirectly, they are connected with the ultimate object of meditation, because the eighth state is no longer a process. Mind ceases to be and only a yogic state prevails. Seven Angas constitute yogic processes, five external and two internal. Mind is not only filled with Sattva, but it is also totally established in firm abidance in that state of Yoga. It does not now wish to move from that Yoga, for it finds peace and joy in that state. It has totally changed its very nature.

When Vrittis arise from the subconscious into this state, they are automatically rejected. There are no processes and no effort is necessary because mind stuff becomes totally sanctified. This is the state that all Sadhakas should strive to gain. Samskaras and Vasanas cannot exist in this evolved state of mind.

THE MIND—LIBERATION OR BONDAGE?

We have been considering the importance of understanding the mind, of being able to deal with it and ultimately to be able to make use of it in order to attain to a state of super-consciousness, beyond mind. The uniqueness and distinction of the human being is the possession of the faculty of the mind. Human beings are not like animals, but are far above, because they possess this unique

faculty. Therefore, one author has said, “Man is a thinking animal”.

When a man completely loses his mind, society considers him no longer fit to be in society and they put him away. If this same mind becomes diabolical and the source of great evil and harm, society may decide to put him away to protect others in society. Ultimately, if the mind works out something very destructive to human life and safety, society may decide to destroy that person.

Thus, even in today’s modern world, great countries and governments sometimes have been obliged to take this extreme step of capital punishment. Though it is a highly controversial subject, certain governments, due to their experience in dealing with such subjects, refuse to regard this as an ethical issue and they deal with it on a totally different secular level. When there is no one hundred percent guarantee of being able to reform and change the mind of that person, they do not want to risk the lives of others within that society. The government authorities feel that they are responsible for the safety and security of the subjects whom they rule, and thus they feel compelled at times to still keep this law operating.

The point is, all this is due to the extremes of the human mind. The same mind, if it functions in a sublime manner, becomes the source of immense good to innumerable people. Then, the whole world recognizes the nobility of such a mind, and in recognition they present two

distinctive honors or awards: the Nobel Prize and the Macassay Award, which was awarded to Mother Theresa. Just as in the film world, an Oscar is given for various outstanding skills, so a Nobel Prize is given to people of such distinction. Giving of the death sentence or awarding the Nobel Prize are both functions of the mind.

This is to make you aware of the importance of the place that the mind occupies. Great thinkers have seen that the individual, by the way the mind is made to function, can make a heaven or a hell right here on earth. Upon a different dimension of metaphysical thought, there is a famous Sanskrit saying: "It is the mind itself which makes for the human being's liberation or bondage."

Ultimately, no matter at whatever level, it is your mind that makes the difference. Raja Yoga (Patanjali's Royal Yoga of meditation) is spiritual psychology. From start to finish it is the refinement, purification and perfection of the instrument called the mind. Human mind is human nature. Mind is a distinctive faculty and it is indispensable for you to function. Your entire understanding of the world around you is due to the mind at every step. It helps you to get along in this world. Your speech has its source in the mind. Action springs from the mind. The entire pattern of your relationships ultimately comes from the state of your mind. Your understanding of yourself also comes from your mind, as the result of the function of the mind on itself.

Thus, mind occupies a central place and plays a most important role in your life. It is in this same interior that your problems exist. Mind can also be your problem. It can bother you no end. But, properly directed and handled, mind can become a valuable instrument and it may become the one and only faculty, force and pattern by which you can attain Reality.

Remembering God is also using the mind. Thinking of the great Reality and reflecting upon it requires mind. Directing your love and devotion to God is part of the inner function of the mind, as emotions. Though most people consider the mind to be a thinking process, it is also a feeling process. Your mind has a four-fold aspect by which it functions: mind, intellect, ego and memory. Ultimately, it becomes the instrument 'par excellence' to take you into communion with the Divine. Whether it will become your enemy or your greatest friend depends upon how you manage it.

The entire Science of Raja Yoga is a systematic method of thus understanding the mind, dealing with it, training and disciplining it, and making it your greatest help and the instrument through which to enter into direct communion with God. One book which explains this Science in a knowledgeable way, is the English translation of a book by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda, entitled 'How to Know God' (Los Angeles Vedanta Society). Swami Prabhavananda was a senior monk at that

mission, but he is no more. Also, Gurudev's book on Raja Yoga.

Even though the very essence of your human status is the mind instrument, you must be able to deal with the mind as distinct and apart from you. You must be able to be objective about the fact that in spite of your being a human individual with a human status, you are in fact above and beyond your human personality. You are Atman (the Self), immortal, distinct and different from mind, intellect, memory and ego personality.

Human ego-consciousness is a temporary state through which you are functioning in this world. In fact, you are beyond that. To realize that higher identity of yourself is the purpose of Yoga and Vedanta. In this system of Patanjali, you enter into that state of Reality in the eighth stage of Ashtanga Yoga. In that state of Samadhi (superconsciousness), the seeking soul realizes its higher spiritual identity and knows itself as the Atman, distinct and beyond all the various factors of nature (Prakriti), which make up the human personality. It is a state of resplendent consciousness. Yet the supreme Self is independent of Prakriti.

Thus, the mind is a problem in the beginning and a helpful instrument in the later stages, and the main force by which to enter into true communion with the Divine. In the plane of the pure spiritual realm, the seeker is asked to understand his mind and to intelligently try to relate to it in a positive manner. Whether you are a

Bhakta (devotee of God), a Jnani (one who follows the path of wisdom), or a Vedantin (one who follows the path of Vedanta Sadhana), you have to deal with the mind to enter into the spiritual realm through the mind.

The need to deal with, understand and control it is not confined to Patanjali's Raja Yoga only. The entire human life is made up of how you are able to cultivate your mind. Your actions are the results of your thoughts. Your destiny depends upon the thoughts you allow to prevail in your mind. Your gradual growth is into that which you constantly dwell upon through the thoughts of your mind. 'As a man thinketh, so he becomes.' It is the mind which makes heaven or hell on earth.

Thus, the declaration of the great Vedic thinkers, that mind alone is the cause of man's bondage or his liberation. Reflect well upon this truth and take a keen interest in the development of your mind. All significant scriptural works give a great deal of attention to this important inner factor. The outer is ten percent, but the inner part is ninety percent.

SIVANANDA

LIVING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

The problem of the modern person today is in the context of the changing times and conditions. One cannot recreate and duplicate the same exact circumstances of spiritual life of hundreds of years ago. Present day life has become greatly modernized, industrialized and commercialized. Money economy exists everywhere. People are no longer self-sufficient. Sometimes they are required to be at their place of work for eight hours a day, and it may take them an hour to go and come from work. In temperate zones, people go to and return from work in the dark.

Many years ago, I lived with a Polish family in the U.S.A. for a number of months in the wintertime. The man was a welder, who had to drive one and a half hours to and from work. When he returned home, it was after 4 p.m. and already dark. By train or bus, it would have taken even longer. Under such circumstances, how much time would he have for meditation, Japa, etc.? This is a typical example which can be repeated in thousands of circumstances. Often, both husband and wife work.

All these things seem to have been perceived by Holy Master Swami Sivananda. He knew that life is short, time flies away, so naturally, what

has to be done must be done while you are still alive. But such is the lifestyle of modern man, that Gurudev said that since you all have to work, do it, but do not lose life's great opportunity. Even in the midst of your work, develop the habit of repeating God's name silently to yourself. Leave your hands to work, and let your tongue repeat God's name. While so engaged in work, the repetition will keep you in God-remembrance. So contact with God will not be totally lost, because a part of your mind ever remains with Him.

In the work that you do, let there be a worshipful attitude, knowing that God is not a far off, remote Reality, but is an ever-present Being. "Whenever I am working, whatever I am doing, I am doing it in God's presence. I offer whatever I do to Thee. We are all divinity. My work will be my adoration. All my activity will be my way of worshipping God." If you give your life this feeling, it will take a Godward movement. From time to time, mentally offer your life at the feet of God. "Oh Lord, whatever I do, all my acts, I offer at Thy feet." Thus, everything becomes linked up with God and all activity becomes a yogic process.

Everything you do becomes devotion and worship. In all that you do, keep an unbroken current of God-remembrance. Then work becomes meditation. It becomes Yoga and worship, and a continuous attraction to God. There is also Jnana (wisdom) in it, because you understand that you are living, moving and

having your being in God's presence. It is knowledge, devotion and meditation.

Gurudev said that in order to live a life of Yoga it is not necessary to renounce. You can do it internally. What he suggested was the renunciation of the feeling of 'I and mine'. It is not renouncing things that is important, but the idea, 'I am this body, mind, desires,' etc. This identity with all these added factors should be renounced. Desire for petty little sense objects should be given up. This is giving up the identity with the human personality and its desires and cravings. When thus, desire and attachment are renounced, already you are moving towards God.

Everything in this life should be brought into direct contact with God. Behold His presence in all His creation, and make service to all His creation part and parcel of your life. For this the study of the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is very helpful. Don't allow your attention to be distracted by things. Through the Gita see that there are many things, but God alone appears in all things. "Everything is a reminder of My existence. It is not something which hides Me, but it is there to reveal Me".

Change your perception of things. Look at them as reminders of the Divine, and not as so many things which distract and hide Him. On the contrary, they are there to remind you of the Maker. A change in the angle of your vision is necessary. In the morning recite, "Thou art everything that exists. Thou appeareth before me

in a million forms. All that I perceive through the senses is Your multifarious manifestation. As You thus manifest before me, I bow to You again and again. I salute the Infinite Endless, Who is appearing in these infinite forms”.

When you arise from sleep, first salute the cosmic appearance of God. Always abide in God and be aware that He abides within you as your inner being. With this awareness, offer all your acts as a perennial prayer to God. Make a careful study of the Bhagavad Gita and try to read the book by the Christian Brother Lawrence, ‘The Practice of the Presence of God.’

Gurudev’s prescription for the modern Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) is that you do not need to set a time, place and pattern for your daily Sadhana, but make every moment and everywhere the place to realize. Let there be a constant living in the presence of God. Make your life itself a great Sadhana by the spiritual manner in which you live it. Bring a spiritual quality into your aspiration, movements and actions. Do not think of yourself as living in the modern world, but as living in God. Thus head, heart, mind and intellect are all God-oriented in their activity.

This is the way for modern man. It does not mean that you should not have a set Sadhana with a certain time and place. Within your everyday possibility, have that also, but know that the time for this is limited. Of course there is a little difference between the time when you are fully occupied and when you retire from your

occupation. At that time you are expected to devote more time to God, but that only comes after twenty-five or more years of hard work. Therefore, it is for people who are in a state of full occupation that Gurudev has suggested making your entire daily life a Sadhana.

Let no part of your life be divorced from Sadhana. Let no part of your life be merely worldly and secular, but bring God into everything you do and live in the constant awareness of your close relationship to Him. Live your life divinely, with the awareness of God's divine presence within you and the full realization of your own divinity. Always have the awareness of God-realization as the ultimate goal of all that you do.

This is Gurudev's distinct Sadhana for modern man. Do not let Sadhana be merely some particular portion of your life, but know that all of your life is Sadhana. The spirit of Sadhana should pervade your entire life and its actions. This formula is called 'Divine Life'. Let all your time have meaning as long as you are in this physical life, for it becomes insignificant and without meaning as long as you depart from Him.

Countless kingdoms, empires and dynasties have appeared and then vanished into nothing. There are ruins and sand dunes where once great empires flourished. Now, birds nest, lizards roam and spiders weave their webs in structures built for the Roman emperors. Countless numbers of human beings have come, played out their drama here and then gone. Where are Louis XIV and

Napoleon? This is the play that continues on life's great stage in this earthly theater.

Ours is but a brief sojourn here on this earth plane. Soon, we shall be gone, and humanity will not take any notice. Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill and Roosevelt have all come and gone. Lenin and Stalin have come and vanished. Because you have a body, you have need for food and shelter. You have certain activities to do here, but they have no enduring meaning or value. It is the same thing repeated day after day, from birth until death: eating, sleeping, waking; eating, sleeping, waking, etc. One day you stop breathing and you are put into the ground. This cannot be all of life. Certainly, such a life is not for you!

You are an immortal spirit, created and made into the spirit of God. There is something eternal and imperishable within your perishable body. That inner divine spirit is your true identity. It is what you are. You have to live your life in that dimension. Otherwise, your life is only physical, biological existence. If you are not active in your goal, it is only a living death.

Fill your life with real living. The spiritual goal of life is the real goal, for it is your true purpose here on earth. Therefore, have the proper sense of perception and take keen interest in your own highest spiritual welfare. No one else here can do that for you; neither father, nor mother, relative, nor friend. It is between you and God, your Maker. All the effort must come from you only. You can

get help from God's saints and other sources, but the main, central effort must come from you.

It is a great privilege and blessedness to make use of this gift of God called 'life' for the attainment of a higher subtle goal and purpose. Recognize this very clearly. Your being is an immortal, spiritual spark of God. You must live your spiritual life actively and purposefully, so that you will find yourself further towards your goal.

Each human life is a gift from God. A spiritual gift is an even greater gift from God. Have thankfulness in your hearts and carry on your Sadhana, prayers, spiritual study and worship with earnestness and devotion. You must be in love with your spiritual Sadhana. Your inner spiritual life must give you great joy. It should not be regarded as a task, but as a blessing. You must look forward to the beginning of each day, so that you can enrich it by filling it with a great deal of spirituality. Through every day you will advance nearer and nearer to that grand goal of God-experience, which is the only Reality. Other things pass and change. The fruits of spiritual life will live forever.

Your life will be evaluated and judged by the benefit you have brought to all God's beings around you, by your prayers and meditation, by the number of times you have glorified and remembered God during your life. Sadhana and Seva (service) constitute the real flowers of life. To

serve God's manifestations, and to abide in God's spirit is the real essence of life.

May God speed you upon your glorious, spiritual journey, without any obstacles. May you reach the golden shores of eternal sunshine. May Gurudev's and Ma's benedictions be with you. May the Divine Grace of God be yours throughout. God bless you.

