

ARADHANA YOGA OF THE HEART



Year 14 Issue 2
March/April 2025
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Rikhiapeeth, Rikhiya, Deoghar, Jharkhand, India

ARADHANA Yoga of the Heart ♥
is an offering to Paramguru
Swami Sivananda and our
beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami
Satyananda.

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Rikhiapeeth, the tapobhumi of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, has developed into a vibrant spiritual epicentre abundant in peace, plenty and prosperity. Aspirants, seekers, devotees, householders and sannyasins come from all parts of the world to live and work together for the benefit of others by following the high ideals of seva (selfless service), sadhana (spiritual practice), swadhyaya (self study) and satsang (association with truth), as taught by Swami Sivananda and established by Swami Satyananda. It is a place of inspiration and joy for the thousands of natives who live in the hundreds of villages that surround Rikhiapeeth, as well as for millions of spiritual aspirants and devotees who come to imbibe the spiritual vibrations that abound in this sacred place.

ARADHANA Yoga of the Heart ♥ is intended to share the profound teachings and lifestyle that are being practised and lived in this sacred place for the benefit of all.

This issue of ARADHANA is intended to share a glimpse of the profound and vast teachings of Sri Vijnana Bhairav Tantra and to share some teachings and satsangs on the topics of meditation and dharana.

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ARADHANA

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Aradhana Invocation

देवाभ्यावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः । परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ Bhagavad Gita 3:11
Yajnas nourish, strengthen and empower the Devas, they in turn empower us.
Strengthening and nourishing each other in this way, both attain shreya (prosperity).



Introducing Dharana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Each of us at one time or another has looked at the sky and stars at night and felt an ineffable awe at the immensity of everything. Some feel an inexpressible joy while others feel a sense of complete insignificance compared to this infinite colossus called the cosmos. If each and every one of us also looked inwards to the unfathomable depths of the internal cosmos of the mind, this inner universe is just as awesome, breathtaking, stupendous and exciting as its outer equivalent. In fact, it is more so. It is also infinite in extent. It is limitless. It is by knowing the nature of the inner cosmos that one ceases to feel totally dwarfed by the outer cosmos. This is the whole reason for meditational practices.

In Sanskrit, the material universe around us is called the mahakasha. The word maha means 'great', and akasha means 'space' or 'ether'. Therefore, mahakasha literally means 'the great space' or 'ether'. It is the exploration of the mahakasha, the external universe, that almost everyone has been totally concerned with in the past and today. This applies to the farmer, the engineer, the sailor and the astronaut. They are all exploring the potential of the material cosmos in their own way. It is a sad thing, yet nevertheless a fact, that very few people make any attempt to explore the inner cosmos. They don't even know of its existence. Man continues to go further and further into outer space but neglects the infinite within himself. Almost everyone is so engrossed in looking outwards that they forget to look inwards.

However, there is one simple thing that everyone in this world should know: 'Man is more than he appears to be.' In every human being there is a state of consciousness, a dimension of personality which is tenable, powerful, creative and beyond pain. We have lived in the body and we continue to live in the body - that is the tragedy of our life. We have never been out of the body. We don't know if there is anything that is beyond the body or anything that controls the body. We have a mind and we don't know it. We have a cobra in our pocket; we have a bomb ready to explode; we have the treasures of the three worlds underneath us, and we don't know it.

This is not to be taken in the religious sense, but it is something very intimate. You know the difference between an illiterate man and an educated man. An educated man is capable of handling certain things in society, whereas an illiterate man is not. Both are human beings. Both have brains, jnanendriyas, and minds, but one is capable and the other is incapable. This is because one has undergone incessant training and the other has not. On account of training, the buddhi or intellect of the educated man is able to handle the affairs of his life in a much better way than the illiterate man. In the same manner, thousands all over the world are in the grip of suffering; and everyone, without any exception, is a victim of what is called the 'pains of life'. It is not because the world is full of pain - it is man's incapacity to transcend the pain and apprehend the pleasure of life.

Yoga is a very scientific system by which man is able to transform his state of consciousness. The same mind which suffers from pain is also capable of experiencing pleasure. Happiness and misery are both expressions of the human mind in different states. So, instead of fighting with pain, instead



Darshan at the Samadhi Sthal of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

of kicking the shadow, why not bring in the light? The mind of man is total and complete, and it is the most mysterious personality of all. Unless you are able to handle the mind, you can never handle the affairs of life. If you can't handle life, you can't handle God - it is impossible no matter what you think or who you worship. Knowledge of the mind and the harnessing of the potentialities of the mind are necessary if we are to be successful in life. This mind is passion and greed, neurosis and suicide, insomnia and cancer, but this same mind is also samadhi.

Sage Patanjali's treatise on raja yoga, the Yoga Sutras, codified the first definitive, unified and comprehensive system of yoga. He divided the path of raja yoga into eight stages, starting from the basic rules of character change in the individual and ending with the final stage of samadhi, which was also divided into four stages, culminating in self-realization. The first five stages are the preparatory practices and stages six to eight are the higher stages. It is divided into two divisions, the external yoga, *bahiranga yoga*, and the internal yoga, *antaranga yoga*.

Dharana etymologically means 'to hold fast,' from the root dhr. Patanjali's definition has been translated in several ways in the Yoga Sutras: Vibhooti Pada (3:1):

Concentration (dharana) is binding the mind to one place.

It has been interpreted as 'fixation of the mind on a single point'. This is literally correct. It has also been rendered as holding the mind within a centre of spiritual consciousness in the body or out of it, or fixing it on some divine form, either within or outside the body. Such steadiness of mind in order to be meaningful has to have the aim of comprehending the object.

Dharana means concentration of mind. It is the step before meditation and is concerned with fixing awareness on one object to the exclusion of all others. If the state of pratyahara has been achieved, then all outer disturbances should have been eliminated, yet the mind is still full of inner chatter in the form of memories of the past and projections of the future. The mind thinks of and tries to relive past pleasant experiences, is obsessed by unpleasant experiences, or is planning or fearing the future.

Dharana is one of the stages leading to dhyana, meditation. It is a practice of pictorial conception. For the mind there are three bases: the gross base, the base of the idea and the occult base. When you concentrate on your Guru, that is the gross basis. When you concentrate on any object like Christ, a cross, a rose, that has a concrete basis because you can see it. The second type of base is the basis of an idea; you think of eternity, infinity, bliss, and develop that as a base. Third, you concentrate your mind on the unseen, or on unheard sounds, or you fix your mind on some of the occult centres of the body or on some of the forms you cannot see. This is called the occult base. When you concentrate on any of these symbols that is called dharana.



Akshay Tritiya, Rikhiapieth, 2009

Monument of Infinity - Kaleidoscope Samadhi







Concept of Dharana

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The yogic term for concentration is dharana, which means 'to hold the mind at one point'. This holding or binding of the mind to one point is the concept of dharana. In Sanskrit, the word dharana is derived from the root dhr, which means 'foundation' or 'base'. So, that object or concept upon which the mind is firmly based is the actual definition of dharana. In the yogic tradition, dharana belongs to the internal stages of raja yoga which is the path of mental discipline. Dharana follows the stage of pratyahara in which the mind is withdrawn from the external sensory objects and internalized.

After separating the mind from the senses, the mind can go deep. It can create its own worlds while the senses remain outside. Once we are able to create this differentiation or distinction between the sensory awareness and the mental awareness, then the mind can be directed to go deeper into other

states where dharana becomes intense. Dharana, which is termed as mental concentration, is deepening of mental awareness. As the mental awareness deepens, and when there is total absence of sensorial awareness, then dharana takes place.

Intensity of Experience

Dharana can take place in any form. We can compare dharana with the experience that two lovers have when they are together for hours and hours, but it seems as if only a few moments have passed. However, if something unpleasant has to be done, then one moment will seem like one whole hour. So, the intensity which makes us aware of one moment as being a long time, or of a long time being as one moment, is dharana. In the positive aspect, dharana is deepening of awareness, where the concept of time is lost, where the objective consciousness is lost, and only the awareness of space remains.

When there is sensorial disconnection of mind, then anything which manifests internally in dharana actually becomes more intense and powerful. We may have experienced this intensity in the form of an emotional outburst at the time of meditation. There are many people who become highly emotional as they go deep into meditative states. These emotional outbursts are often attributed to some kind of mental, psychological or emotional blockage, however beyond this there is another reason. According to yoga, when an intensity of thought, idea or feeling is experienced unconsciously in the deeper layers of the mind, without the distraction of the senses, at that particular moment the idea or thought form itself becomes a very intensive experience.

Such an emotional outburst is also a state of dharana. The difference is that in this case, there is no support or basis to which we latch ourselves. Therefore, the intensity is very strong and we feel it coming from deep inside. As that particular emotional outburst takes place, we relate it to some event, situation, circumstance or experience from the past. Childhood memories rise to the surface; images of happy or sad times that we have had in life come rushing up and we go with the force of those feelings. That is the external reaction which takes place in meditation when the mind is without a support. Therefore, it is quite common to see people crying, expressing their emotions and going through different spontaneous, physical movements in the state of dharana. Right now, with the externalized mind we are conscious and aware of how our body has to react and behave. In the external state there is also an



unconscious control of prana, whereas in meditation that unconscious control is not there. There is no control over the prana. The mind is cut off from the body and the prana begins to move and flow spontaneously. So, the body adopts different postures according to the movement of prana. When this disconnection takes place, the prana becomes free. The mental concepts become free from the conditioning of body, environment and even local mentality.

Intensity of Concentration

The important thing here is to keep the mind fixed on one point only. Any point of concentration can be used such as a mantra, symbol, thought, idea or any form. Intensity of concentration is generally regarded as dharana. There is a story in the Mahabharata which illustrates the intensity of concentration required for this practice. When Acharya Drona was teaching archery to the Pandava and Kuru princes, he asked his pupils to come forward one at a time in order to see a small clay bird that he had placed on a branch at the top of a tree, and to shoot an arrow through the eye of the bird. As each prince came forward, the Guru asked them the same question, "What do you see?"

The first prince replied, "I see the forest, the sky, the tree, the leaves, the branch and the bird." The Guru said, "Don't shoot. Put your bow down." Then he called the next prince and asked, "What do you see?" The second prince replied, "I see the tree, the leaves, the branch and the bird." The Guru told him also to put the bow down. All the pupils who came forward failed



Lighting the Panchagni Fires, Rikhiapeeth

to understand the teaching that the Guru was trying to impart, because he expected a very specific answer.

Finally, Arjuna's turn came and the Guru asked him, "What do you see?" Arjuna replied, "I see the bird's eye." The Guru asked, "Do you not see the leaves of the tree and the branch on which the bird is sitting?" "No," said Arjuna, "I see only the eye and nothing else." The Guru then asked, "Do you not even see even the bird's wings or head?" Arjuna replied, "No, I see nothing but the eye, that is all." So then the Guru was satisfied and said to Arjuna, "You have learned well." Arjuna did not have tunnel vision, nor was he blind to the scenery around him. But the intensity of his concentration was so great that all his faculties of perception were fixed on one single point - the bird's eye.

At the time of meditation, if there is oscillation in the mind, then concentration will not be experienced. Dharana is a state in which there is total one-pointedness. It may come only for a second after a lot of practice. If you are trying to practise meditation with an oscillating mind which is moving from one point to the next, while different thoughts and ideas are coming and going, then it is not meditation or dharana, or even pratyahara, because there are too many oscillations and distractions. So just closing the eyes and trying to fix the mind on an image is not enough. Proper training has to be given to the senses, to the mind and also to the mental faculties as and when they manifest, in order to perfect dharana and to come to the meditative state of dhyana.




Sri Vijnana Bhairava Tantra - A Tantric Text of the Shaiva Tradition

Peethadhishwari Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

The practices described in Vijnana Bhairava Tantra are all methods for expanding the mind or awareness, thereby releasing the energy locked up in the gross matter which constitutes the body. Thus it is classified as a tantric text of the Shaiva tradition, not as a text of yoga, although many of these practices are also taught in yoga. Actually, tantra and yoga are one and the same. Yoga is 'union' and tantra is 'expansion' through that state of union.

The sacred tradition of Shiva is known as Shaivism. Shiva's antecedents are so remote that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. However, it is certain that he was a yogi who attained the highest spiritual eminence, that of supreme consciousness, through intense and rigorous spiritual life. Today he is worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent



and far beyond as the supreme awareness into which everything merges and dissolves. He is the bestower of boons. His followers are known as Shaivites, just as the followers of the sacred tradition of Vishnu are known as Vaishnavites, and those of the Shakti tradition are known as Shaktas.

Apart from these three traditions, in ancient times there were two more which still exist today in some regions of India. They are Ganapatya, worshippers of Ganesha, found in Maharashtra, and Saura, worshippers of the sun, found in Bihar. Thus you have Shaiva Tantra, Vaishnava Tantra, Shakta Tantra, Saura Tantra and Ganapatya Tantra. The underlying beliefs of these traditions are derived from tantra, which is the mother of all philosophies, traditions, sects, beliefs and practices. Tantra is the oldest spiritual culture in the world, even older than the Vedas.

Within these traditions there are further divisions that can be identified by three distinct systems of thought. They are: Advaita, knowledge of the one supreme reality, Dvaita, knowledge of one supreme reality that appears as duality in the relative world, and Traitā, where the one supreme reality appears as three-fold. This is the age-old question: whether the supreme reality is one, two or many. Vijnana Bhairava Tantra resolves this question by asserting that it is all of these. It postulates one reality, or consciousness, which has two aspects: transcendental and immanent. The former is beyond manifestation and the latter pervades the universe of manifest phenomena in a multiplicity of forms. Both are real, says Vijnana Bhairava Tantra, for the effect cannot be different from the cause.

This supreme consciousness eternally alternates between two phases, 'rest' and 'action', i.e., transcendent and immanent. The transcendental phase is a period of potentiality, technically described as the state of pralaya, or dissolution, when matter becomes dormant in the bosom of consciousness. The immanent phase, where matter becomes manifest, is technically called srishti, creation. In this way consciousness is eternally expressing itself through its passive and active phases.

Shaivism too is further divided into two main systems: Kashmir Shaivism, which flourished in Northern India, and Shaiva Siddhanta, which flourished in Southern India. Kashmir was the birthplace of Shaivism. Eminent scholars, saints and pandits born there expounded its philosophy as well as codifying and explaining its practices. It is a sublime philosophy classified as the Spanda Shastras, doctrine of vibration, and Pratyabhijna, doctrine of recognition.



Darshan with Peethadhishwari Swami Satyasangananda, Sivalaya, 2025

In very classical and technical terms it describes the root of creation as spandan, vibration, and how the individual can once again recognize his true nature or the essence of reality.

Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is a text of Kashmir Shaivism and forms a part of the Rudrayamala Tantra. This literally means the tantra of the union between Rudra and his Shakti, which in modern terms represents the union of consciousness and energy. This text expounds the Trika philosophy, which relates to the Traita system of thought and is the basis of Shaivism as it flourished in Kashmir in the seventh century.

Trika, as the name implies, deals with the three-fold principle of shakti or energy: para, apara and parapara. The first principle, para, is the reality perceived as transcendent. The second, apara, is the reality perceived as immanent. The third, parapara, is the intermediate stage when traces of both are perceived. These three divisions of shakti or energy are expressed through the triple division of shiva, shakti and nara, or consciousness, energy and matter. Vijnana Bhairava Tantra, being essentially based on the Trika philosophy, describes how to experience that supreme state of consciousness which is transcendental and immanent in its pristine purity.

Author of Vijnana Bhairava Tantra

As the awareness increases through sadhana, varying stages of consciousness are experienced. Although these experiences are perceived by the mind and remembered by the chitta (memory), they belong to a higher realm of existence. These states are classified as the sapta bhumikas, or seven levels of existence. The first is bhuh, which corresponds to the gross physical awareness, followed by bhuvah, which is the intermediate plane between the physical and the divine. Beyond bhuvah is svahah, which corresponds to the plane of divinity where the experiences are full of luminosity, radiance and light. The next plane is mahah, the abode of realized beings, the saints and siddhas. Janah is the next plane of the seers or rishis, who can create worlds and manifest matter. This is followed by tapah, which is the plane of liberated souls, and the highest is satya, the level of absolute truth.

These planes of existence are like a ladder with seven rungs, which the awareness must ascend, in order to experience the ultimate truth. Tantra says that these sapta bhumikas, or seven states of consciousness, are enshrined within each one of us, and describes in meticulous detail the different experiences a sadhaka undergoes on this journey. These different states of awareness have been clearly defined, categorized and explained in the tantric texts and they are also represented by the different tantric sects. For instance, the Aghoras are a sect of tantrics whose consciousness is described as being totally attuned with nature. They can understand,



Yoga Purnima, Rikhiapeth, 2008

converse with, influence, as well as control all natural phenomena. Nothing in nature or creation is abhorrent to them because they experience total and complete unity with nature.

The Paramahansas are a sect whose consciousness is established beyond the state of duality. The word parama-hansa means the 'great swan.' It is a befitting word to describe this state of awareness, as here the consciousness is so refined that it begins to separate the essence from the form in much the same way as the swan is able to separate milk from water. At this point the awareness is three-fold, sometimes inner, sometimes outer, and often both simultaneously. The Vairagis are another sect of tantric practitioners, who experience intense detachment from the material phenomena and an attraction or pull towards the spiritual. The word vairagya means 'non-attachment' and the vairagis are known to transcend matter, which is a very rare and elevated state of awareness. Very few people in this world have true and constant vairagya.

Sannyasa is also an ancient order whose roots are found in the tantric tradition and it represents a state of consciousness where there is total surrender to the universal consciousness. The totality of one's being: the body, mind and soul, is offered to the will of the divine. This is a choiceless awareness and very difficult to attain. To become constant in this state of awareness, one must seek a guru or illumined being and live in total surrender in order to imbibe this awareness from him. The word sannyasa means 'trustee'. A sannyasi is a trustee of all that he is, and entrusts himself to the higher will to use as He wants. The basis of surrender is inner faith, without which surrender does not flourish and blossom as it should.

Bhairava is another tantric sect which represents a higher state of consciousness where the awareness is able to perceive and experience the three principles of creation, sustenance and annihilation. This is an epithet of Shiva, who is Bhairava, and his consort Parvati is Bhairavi. Just as sannyasa is both a state of mind and an order, known as Dashnam, so too there is an order, or sampradaya, known as Bhairava. In this tradition there are eight Bhairavas, known as: Batuka Bhairava, Kaala Bhairava, Shanta Bhairava, Ananda Bhairava, Vijnana Bhairava, and so on. Perhaps they were disciples of Shiva who attained that state under his tutelage and were given that epithet, just as sannyasins today have ten names, such as Saraswati, Puri, Giri, and so on. In that sense, it may not be wrong to surmise that Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is an epithet on Tantra, written by a



Meditating under the Rudraksha Tree, Puja Area, Rikhiapeeth, 2010



Rudraksha Tree, Sivalaya, Rikhiapeeth, 2025

person known as Vijnana Bhairava. Just as you have the Yoga Sutras by Patanjali, the Dharmashastras by Jaimini, etc., so too you have the Tantra by Vijnana Bhairava. Perhaps the dialogue between Shiva and Parvati took place in his presence.

Vijnana Bhairava Tantra was evidently written when this philosophy was at its zenith or pinnacle. Each philosophy has a life that can be divided into three periods: growth, establishment and decline. The directness and strength of the assertions made by the author point to the fact that Vijnana

Bhairava Tantra was written when this philosophy was fully accepted and very popular. At the time of growth and decline a philosophy is compelled to add unnecessary ideas and beliefs in order to survive. But when it is at its peak, it does not have to compromise and can say exactly what it wants to. The book itself is a masterpiece and every sadhaka will realize that. Without fuss and fanfare, it describes many different ways to focus and hold the awareness so that inner illumination can occur. It is an encyclopaedia on tantra, as it sums up its multifaceted philosophy through simple and clear instructions on practices that lead to expansion of mind and liberation of energy. Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is an invaluable text for anyone who wants to know what tantra really is and what it has to offer.

The text is presented in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and his consort, Parvati, and in the very first sloka we eavesdrop on a conversation between them. This is an exchange between two lovers, who also happen to be husband and wife as well as guru and disciple, and represent the universal principles of consciousness and energy. They are extraordinary in the sense that they have attained luminosity and shine with knowledge. At one time they must have walked on this earth like you and me, but today they are worshipped as devata and devi, the illumined ones. This divine couple often have such dialogues. Parvati, the kinetic energy principle, raises some high-sounding metaphysical and philosophical questions, and Shiva, the conscious or intelligence principle, answers them. These dialogues are the basis of the agamas. They were revealed to enlightened sadhakas and then passed down through successive ages.

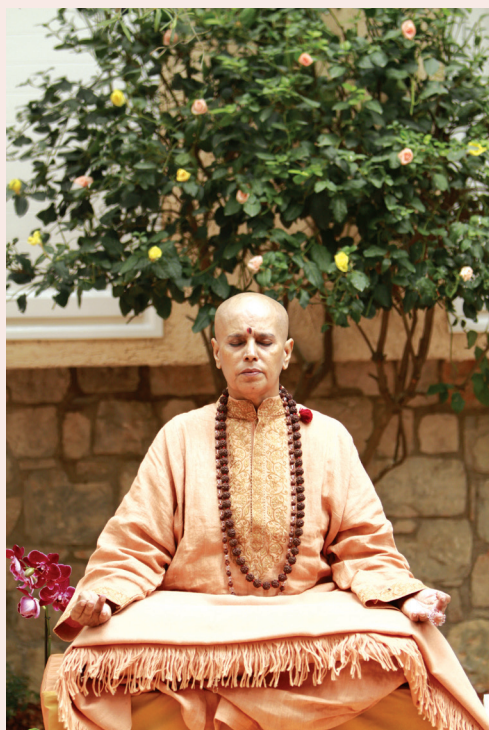
Tantra says these revelations are the birthright of each one of us. This knowledge is inherent in us, but we cannot avail ourselves of it until and unless there is expansion of mind and liberation of energy. Then we too can overhear the dialogues between Shiva and his consort, Parvati. One may wonder why Parvati, who is illumined herself, needs to ask these questions to Shiva. Surely, she must know all the answers, as she is not different to Shiva. They are both knowledge personified, and it is their anugraha, or grace, that compels them to present this knowledge to us for our evolution. It is their love for humankind and intense desire for upliftment that motivates them to discuss these matters. She is primordial energy and he is primordial consciousness. He is grace and she is receptivity. As an evolute of consciousness, she is a part of him. Still there is a need to raise this question because he is the principle of knowledge and she is the principle of experience.



Basant Panchmi 2025

Saraswati Puja and Enrollment of New Kanyas





Sri Vijnana Bhairava Tantra

The Ascent

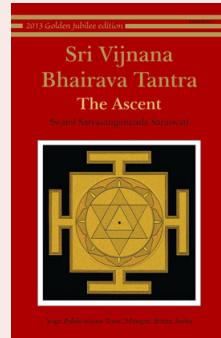
The knowledge of history, geography, astrology, astronomy, languages and other subjects that we study is recorded in their respective texts. Similarly, the knowledge of the mind and consciousness is recorded in the texts of the Tantras, Vedas and Puranas. These texts were written in Sanksrit, which was the language of their time, but this factor now limits the access to information contained within them to a very small minority who know that language. However, there are students of the science of the mind who have studied these texts and explained them in modern languages so that sincere seekers can avail themselves of this valuable information. This is not an easy task as these texts are written in a coded and abbreviated way, which only the discerning and enlightened can shed light on. On account of this limitation, very few texts are available today that elucidate these ancient forms of spiritual knowledge.

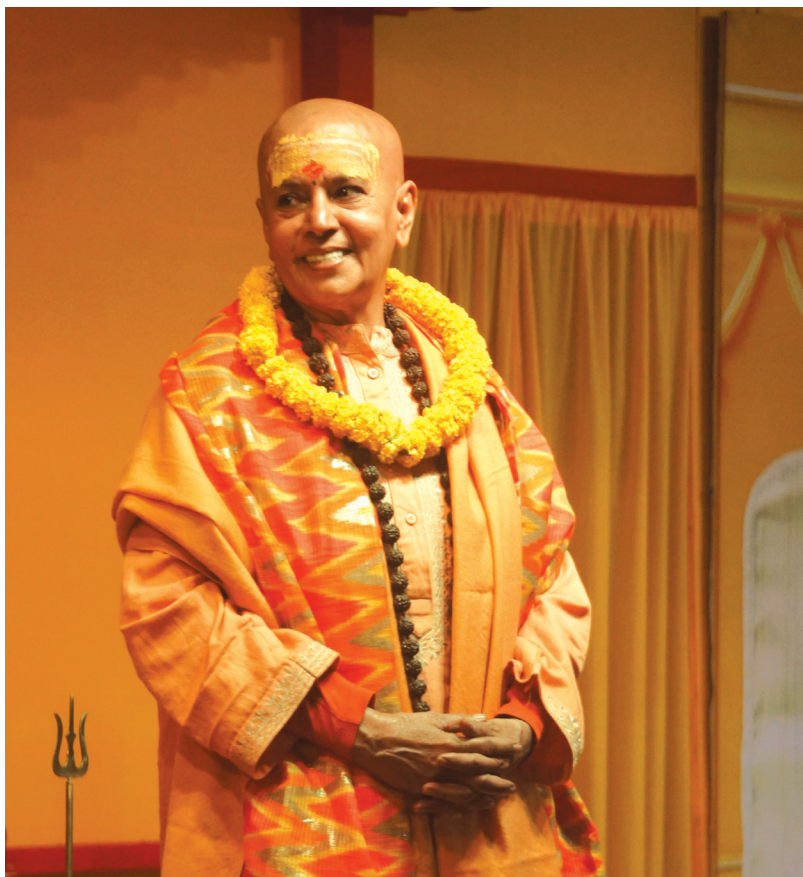
It is often said that when the student is ready the teacher appears, and also when the time is right, conditions to spiritual dissemination arise. In that sense the subject of dharana, or concentration, which is the theme of Sri Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is most relevant today. Spiritual seekers the world over who have maintained personal disciplines for the evolution of consciousness, are now in need of this knowledge. For this reason the time is now ripe to introduce the tantric system of dharana as it was practiced by the ancients. Of course, the techniques of dharana are not new to practitioners of meditation, yet very few are aware of the full scope of the tantric system and its application.

Whether one is a materialist or a spiritualist, it is important to realize that the practice of dharana is most vital for progress in all spheres of life. Even the materialists pay homage to energy, because they realize that this whole world is nothing but a play of energy. The materialists exploded the atom through the physical process in order to harness its immense energy for the benefit of mankind. In the same way, the practice of dharana explodes the atom of energy within the mind through a spiritual process, so that it can be harnessed to accelerate the evolution of individual consciousness. For this reason, dharana is as valuable as the nuclear sciences and should, therefore, receive the same recognition and status.

This translation and commentary of a classical tantric text by Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati sheds much light on the practice of dharana which until now has been revealed only by peripheral explanations. The text comprises 112 different dharanas, or techniques of concentration, which can easily be incorporated into one's daily life. Although dharana is a practice intended for an adept, whose mind is steady and controlled, the techniques contained within this book provide a way even for the aspirant with a distracted mind to gradually develop concentration and meditation.

This work is the result of an in-depth study of dharana in relation to the tantric view of meditation, substantiated by the personal experience of Swami Satyasangananda. Included is a detailed introduction followed by the original Sanskrit slokas with transliteration, translation and extensive commentary.





Quantum Leap

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

Vijnana Bhairava Tantra teaches the scientific principles of tantra, which gather the scattered waves emanating from the mind and fix them at one point. This, in turn, leads to the experience of Bhairava consciousness, where you are just about to enter the domain of the ultimate reality. When the train is about to pull into your final destination, you cannot see that place as you have not yet reached there, but you begin to get an idea about it from the smells, sounds, air and vibrations that emanate from the approaching

station. In the same way, when you experience the state of consciousness known as Bhairava, the attributes of Shiva begin to show up and surround you from all sides, but you are not yet face to face with him. It is a moment of intense excitement, anticipation and longing. This agony of separation is similar to two lovers who are about to meet after a long separation, but it is of the nature of bliss, not sorrow; of knowledge, not ignorance.

Vijnana, by its name, implies that during this state of consciousness the aspirant experiences a free flow of specialized and pure knowledge within. However, despite access to the supreme knowledge, still the highest reality has not been experienced in its totality. In philosophical terms it is said that this is on account of avidya, or lack of knowledge.

In technical terms, this is because of the fact that at this point the consciousness is suspended in the twilight zone where dawn has set in but the night has not fully gone. From this point the consciousness is within the purview of darkness as well as light. On one side it views matter and on the other spirit. Suffice it to say that, as the consciousness is not fully rid of its material shell, it is still within the gravitational pull that surrounds the physical body. In order to get out of that circuit, it will have to take a quantum leap into the unknown to enter the range of influence created by the most subtle, pure and effulgent consciousness.

What this actually means is that in order to transcend matter, you have to transcend gravity. It is gravity that holds matter together and pulls the awareness down to the material level. Try to imagine the scenario if one day while sitting in the practice of dharana, your mind were to attain such intense concentration that dhyana occurred and then you entered samadhi. Transcending gravity momentarily, your consciousness would leave the body and become all pervasive, all knowing, all seeing and all-experiencing. At that moment your physical body might begin to rise into the air and float. Depending on your prowess, you may be fully alert or enter into a trance-like state. If the awareness is trained in dharana, it will remain alert and follow the correct path on its flight without being diverted or lost.

At the point when you emerge from the pull of gravity, finding the correct spandan or vibration is very important. Your consciousness has left its cage and is about to take flight. What path should it follow and who or what will guide it at that time? Will it turn back or will it go forward on the right path? Apart from dharana, the only other factor that can guide the consciousness



at this stage is the Guru's grace. That is why the spiritual master is known as Guru, for he dispels the darkness by steering the disciple's consciousness onto the narrow path which leads to the light.

Classification of practices in Vijnana Bhairava Tantra

Having understood the ultimate goal, Vijnana Bhairava Tantra tells us that the same mind which functions in everyday life is transformed through the practice of dharana into the most heightened state of awareness. Let us now take another look at the general modes of practice it prescribes to achieve this task of enlightenment. These methods, or upayas, can be classified as sthoola, sukshma and karana. The sthoola upayas are physical in nature and belong to the jagrat state. They include those methods that relate to the breath, such as pranayama, and to the nadis, such as mudras. The sukshma

upayas are subtle in nature and belong to the swapna state. They include methods of dharana that relate to the psyche, such as japa, trataka and concentration on a symbol. The karana upayas are abstract in nature and belong to the sushupti stage. They include those methods that relate to the causal body, such as dharana on ideas, emotions, thoughts and feelings. There is no technique or upaya to reach turiya. It just happens spontaneously by itself at a certain moment in time.

Although the practices have been classified, they have not been graded. Each practice is complete in itself and can lead you to that heightened state of awareness. The practices do not depend on each other to progress towards that awareness. The sthoola upayas are no less potent and effective in achieving that experience than the sukshma or karana. The practices have been classified so that the aspirant may choose the practice suited to his temperament. If his consciousness is in jagrat awareness, he should choose the sthoola sadhana. If his consciousness is in swapna, he should choose the sukshma sadhanas, and if it is in sushupti, he should choose the sadhanas that influence the karana sharira.

Only one who knows this science and has an understanding of the inner mind can assess the level where the consciousness is functioning. Therefore, it is mandatory that these practices are chosen and performed under the direction of an adept or Guru who has mastered this path of tantra. Although certain practices are termed sthoola, they should not be rejected as inferior, because they can take the aspirant to the sukshma and karana awareness quite effectively. So, one should not choose the karana practices over the sukshma or sthoola practices with the idea that these will give the experience faster. The correct upaya is that which one is spontaneously comfortable with and which totally absorbs the mind so that concentration occurs without much effort and is not broken time and again.

Dharana is not a sthoola sadhana. It actually comes under the category of karana sadhana because its area of influence spreads over three realms: physical, subtle and causal. Dharana is the bridge by which the sadhaka crosses from the outer to the inner realm. Therefore, it is important to perfect this practice before proceeding further, as the path becomes more difficult to follow in the subtler dimensions and the abysses into which one can fall are deep and unknown. The common underlying factor in all the practices of Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is your own awareness, which must be directed

towards one single object to the exclusion of all else. In each practice your awareness must be directed, only the object differs. The objects specified in different practices range from prana and breath, to matrika and mantra, as well as nada and chakras. If these do not suit you, there is another whole range of practices that directs your awareness to emotions and feelings of pain and pleasure. Then again there is a range of abstract dharanas on ideas and thoughts, and yet another range of even more abstract dharanas on shoonya, void, emptiness and stillness.

Vijnana Bhairava Tantra says that it is possible to reach the most heightened state of consciousness by directing your total awareness, not fragmented awareness, to any of these points. Logically, this ought to be true because the supreme awareness is all pervading, so it should be everywhere and we can discover it anywhere. Vedanta says Brahman is everywhere in the manifest and unmanifest too. In that case, every thought, idea and feeling, as well as everything seen and unseen, should have Brahman as its source and destination.

Tantra also advocates the same idea. In theory Shiva, the supreme consciousness, is omnipresent and pervades every atom, molecule and cell of all beings. The phrase in Hindi is: "Kan kan mein bhagavan." Vijnana Bhairava Tantra says that if you focus your full awareness on any point, you will discover the power residing within it. That power is energy, or shakti, which is none other than Shiva. Shiva is shaktiman, the holder of shakti. How can the holder of shakti be different from it? There is nothing in this world or out of it that is made up of Shiva or consciousness alone. Wherever there is consciousness, there is energy; they are inseparable.

If you hold love in your mind, you become love, and it can be said that you are love. Or if you hold greed or hatred, you become that. Just as these feelings pervade you, in the same way shakti pervades Shiva and vice-versa. Even when they separate in order to manifest matter, they still remain as one at the cosmic level. Shakti is that principle or phenomenon by which the consciousness of Shiva can be known. Without shakti, Shiva remains inert, inactive and unseen. The practices of dharana are aimed at awakening the power or energy within matter. They act as a mirror in which your consciousness can see its own splendour. Shakti, or energy, has the passport and visa to travel freely whenever and wherever the awareness is directed. Thus by awakening shakti one becomes all-pervasive and whatever one wishes is fulfilled.

Preparation for Higher Practices

It is significant to mention here that Swami Satyananda has taught all the practices of Vijnana Bhairava Tantra to his disciples and students as hatha yoga, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, laya yoga, nada yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga. They are the very same practices that you may already be doing, but there is a subtle difference. That difference is in awareness.

The ABCs that are learned in nursery school form the basis of all that is learned later in life. Without that foundation you could never grasp the knowledge you receive in an MSc. In the same way, all that you have done until now has prepared you for the higher stages of practice. In teaching all the yogas, Swami Satyananda has prepared us for this promotion into the higher class of dharana and dhyana. Those who have sincerely followed the practices will find it easier to slip into the higher class than those who have not.

Vijnana Bhairava Tantra is a higher class or stage in the sense that the practice of dharana uses mental faculties rather than physical ones. All of these experiences are self-created in the absence of objects by conceptualizing forms, thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, sounds and even the movement of the breath. In Vijnana Bhairava Tantra the idea of form is transcended up to the point where you can recreate it within yourself in the absence of an object. In other words you are allowed to dwell on a form so long as you have created it yourself without any external stimuli. This is a big leap which will crystallize the energies in a manner that no other practice can.



RANG BARSE - HOLI 2025 @ RIKHIAPEETH







Necessity of Mental Training

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

An important factor to remember regarding the process of meditation and the experience of higher consciousness is that dharana is an essential stage in order to avoid uncharted flights of awareness. Just as the pilot of a plane or the captain of a ship takes the aid of compasses, maps and charts to reach the destination and avoid losing the way, similarly, the sadhaka also needs a plan and direction for the flight of consciousness, where to turn left, right, about turn or apply the brakes. Without a defined path and milestones to guide the consciousness, accidents may take place or one may be diverted or lost and never reach the destination.

The mind and consciousness is an immense power which must be managed correctly. In the hands of an adept the mind is directed to become a luminous and positive force, but if it is misused or misdirected, this same mind can plunge into darkness and despair. Therefore, the mind is not something to play around with. Directing the mind is a serious matter, which requires understanding and attention. Dharana is most important in this sense, because it gives training and a direction to the mind and awareness.

At present the mind is directed by the indriyas, the ten organs of action and knowledge, known as the karmendriyas and jnanendriyas. Wherever they lead, the mind follows. If the indriyas are trained, then the awareness is focused and directed. But if they are not, which is usually the case with most of us, it is as if the mind is mercilessly driven by an untrained animal. Dharana is a process of mental training that enables the aspirant to focus and direct the awareness as he desires, without any interference from the indriyas or senses.

If you want to progress in sadhana, you have to first fix the awareness at one point, so that it has a specific direction in which to travel. In other words you must train the awareness before allowing it to roam freely. Until the awareness is firmly established at one point, it must not be allowed free flight. This is not only damaging, in some cases it may also be irrevocable. It is for this purpose that different symbols are used in meditation, and some are more efficacious than others. The tantric symbols utilized for dharana are mantra, yantra and mandala. They are purely scientific as they depend on the influence of sound, form and light to create an effect on the energy within the body and mind. Mantras are mystic sounds that reverberate with tremendous energy, yantras are perfect geometric formations of the sounds emanating from the mantras, and mandalas are three-dimensional forms of the same mantras.



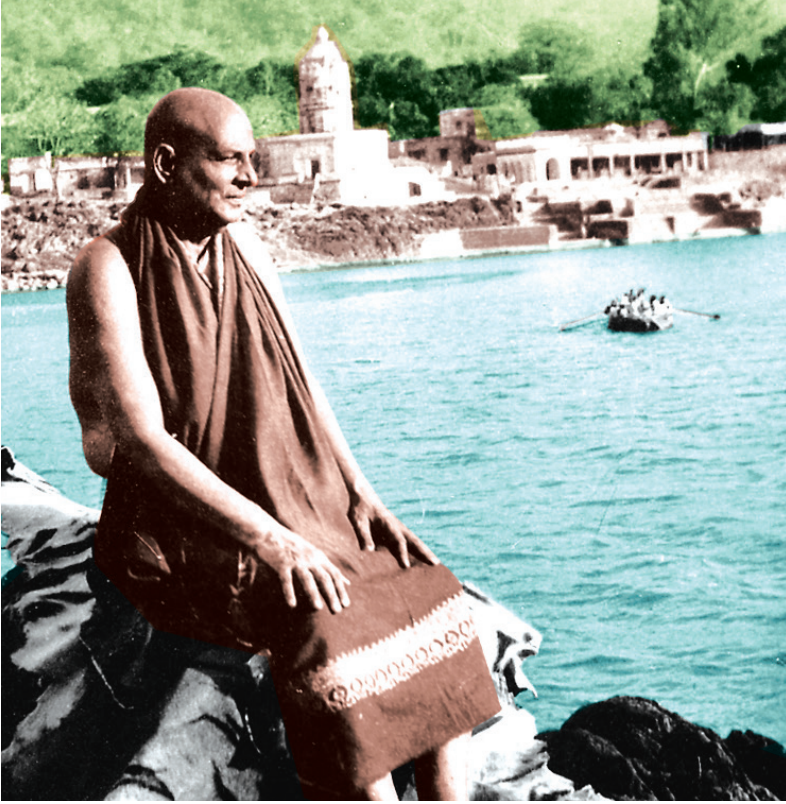
The following parable aptly illustrates the path of dharana and the importance of symbols as a basis for the mind in meditation. One day it began to rain and the rain continued for days and months on end. Everything was submerged under water and there was no land or landmark of any kind in sight. A lone bird was hovering over this vast expanse of water and seeing no landmark anywhere became lost and could not return to its home. Then the water gradually receded a bit and a log of wood came into sight. The bird at once landed on the wood and using it as a base, flew back and forth from there in order to find food and whatever else it needed. Each time the bird flew off in any direction, it kept the piece of wood in sight and in this way, always returned to the same base without any difficulty.

Similarly, in dharana the awareness flies high and travels over vast expanses of consciousness, which are untracked and have no visible markers to identify them. But again and again the awareness returns back to the object which it is focused on, recognizing it to be the base for all of its flights. That way the awareness does not go astray or get lost. It makes forays into the unknown, but is guided back in the right direction. This is why the object of dharana is important and should be one that you are naturally drawn to. If you have a natural attraction for the object of dharana, the mind will remain fixed on it and will not be distracted easily. Otherwise, the awareness tends to wander from the base for long periods and may eventually become lost in the uncharted dimensions of consciousness.



CHAITRA NAVARATRI 2025 DAILY KANYA BHOJ





धारणा का सिद्धान्त

स्वामी शिवानन्द सरस्वती

मन को किसी बाह्य विषय अथवा आन्तरिक बिन्दु पर एकाग्र करना धारणा है। एक बार एक संस्कृत के विद्वान् कबीर के पास गये और उनसे प्रश्न किया- "कबीर, अभी आप क्या कर रहे हैं?" कबीर ने उत्तर दिया- "पण्डित जी, मैं मन को सांसारिक विषयों से वापस खींच कर भगवान के चरण-कमलों पर एकाग्र कर रहा हूँ।" इसे धारणा कहते हैं। उत्तम आचरण, आसन-प्राणायाम तथा विषय-वस्तुओं से प्रत्याहार धारणा में शीघ्र सफलता-प्राप्ति को सरल बनाते हैं। धारणा योग की सीढ़ी का छठवाँ पायदान है। मन जिस पर टिक सके, ऐसी किसी वस्तु के बिना धारणा नहीं हो सकती। एक निश्चित उद्देश्य, रुचि, एकाग्रता धारणा में सफलता लाते हैं।

इन्द्रियाँ आपको बाहर खींच लाती हैं और आपके मन की शान्ति को भंग कर देती हैं। यदि आपका मन बैचैन है, तो आप किसी प्रकार की प्रगति नहीं कर सकते हैं। जब अभ्यास के द्वारा मन की किरणें एकत्रित हो जाती हैं, तो मन एकाग्र हो जाता है और आपको मन के भीतर से आनन्द प्राप्त होता है। विचारों और आवेगों को शान्त करें।

आपके भीतर धैर्य, दृढ़ संकल्प तथा अथक दृढ़ता होनी चाहिए। आपको अपने अभ्यास में बड़ा ही नियमित होना चाहिए, अन्यथा आलस्य और विपरीत बल आपको लक्ष्य से दूर ले के चले जायेंगे। एक उत्तम प्रशिक्षित मन को संकल्प के अनुसार किसी भी विषय पर, चाहे वह बाहरी हो या आन्तरिक, सभी विचारों के निषेध के लिए एकाग्र किया जा सकता है। प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के पास कुछ विषयों पर धारणा हेतु क्षमता होती है। लेकिन आध्यात्मिक प्रगति के लिए धारणा का अत्यन्त उच्च स्तर तक विकास हो जाना चाहिए। उत्तम धारणा वाले व्यक्ति की अर्जन क्षमता अच्छी होती है तथा वह कम समय में अधिक कार्य कर सकता है। धारणा करते समय मस्तिष्क पर किसी प्रकार का तनाव नहीं होना चाहिए। आपको मन के साथ संघर्ष नहीं करना चाहिए।

एक पुरुष जिसका मन वासनाओं तथा विभिन्न प्रकार की काल्पनिक कामनाओं से पूर्ण है, वह मन को किसी विषय पर एक पल के लिए भी कठिनाई से ही एकाग्र कर सकेगा। ब्रह्मचर्य का पालन, प्राणायाम के अभ्यास, आवश्यकताओं तथा गतिविधियों में कमी, विषय-वस्तुओं का त्याग, एकान्त का सेवन, मौन-व्रत, इन्द्रियों पर संयम करने तथा काम-वासना, लोभ, क्रोध का उन्मूलन करना, अनावश्यक लोगों से मिलने-जुलने से बचना, समाचारपत्र-पठन और सिनेमा देखने का त्याग- उपर्युक्त बताये गये नियमों के पालन से धारणा-शक्ति में वृद्धि होती है।

संसार के कष्टों, दुःखों से मुक्ति के लिए एकमात्र मार्ग धारणा है। इसके अभ्यासी का स्वास्थ्य उत्तम तथा उसे मानसिक दृष्टि से उत्साहित रहना चाहिए। धारणा का अभ्यासी सूक्ष्म अन्तर्दृष्टि प्राप्त कर सकता है। वह किसी भी कार्य को बड़ी कुशलता से सम्पन्न कर सकता है। धारणा आवेगों को शान्त करती है। विचार-शक्ति को दृढ़ बनाइए और विचारों को स्पष्ट कीजिए। यम तथा नियम के द्वारा मन को शुद्ध कीजिए। शुद्धता के बिना धारणा का कोई उपयोग नहीं है।

किसी मन्त्र का जप तथा प्राणायाम मन को स्थिर करेगा। विक्षेपों का उन्मूलन कीजिए और धारणा-शक्ति में वृद्धि कीजिए। धारणा तभी की जा सकती है, जब मन सभी प्रकार



Saundarya Lahari Sadhana Retreat, Rikhiapeeth

के विक्षेपों से मुक्त हो। किसी भी उस विषय पर जिसे मन पसन्द करता हो या जो आपको अच्छा लगे, उस पर धारणा करें। प्रारम्भ में मन को स्थूल विषयों पर धारणा द्वारा प्रशिक्षित करना चाहिए और बाद में आप सूक्ष्म विषयों तथा निर्गुण विचारों पर सफलतापूर्वक धारणा कर सकेंगे। अभ्यास में नियमितता सर्वाधिक आवश्यक है।

स्थूल रूप - दीवार पर एक काला बिन्दु, मोमबत्ती की लौ, चमकता हुआ तारा, चन्द्रमा, ॐ का चित्र, भगवान शिव, राम, कृष्ण, देवी अथवा अपने इष्टदेवता के चित्र को अपने सामने रख कर खुली आँखों से ध्यान करें।

सूक्ष्म रूप - अपने इष्टदेवता के चित्र के सामने बैठ जायें और आँखें बन्द कर लें। अपने इष्टदेवता का मानसिक चित्र अपनी दोनों भौंहों के मध्य अथवा अपने हृदय में रखें। मूलाधार, अनाहत, आज्ञा अथवा अन्य किसी आन्तरिक चक्र पर धारणा करें। दैवी गुणों जैसे प्रेम, करुणा अथवा अन्य किसी निर्गुण विचार पर धारणा करें।

धारणा कहाँ करें?

हृदय-कमल (अनाहत चक्र) अथवा भ्रूमध्य अथवा त्रिकुटी (दोनों भौंहों के मध्य स्थान) अथवा नासिकाग्र पर धारणा करें। नेत्रों को बन्द रखें। मन का स्थान आज्ञा चक्र है। यदि आप त्रिकुटी पर धारणा करेंगे, तो मन सरलता से एकाग्र हो जायेगा। भक्तों को हृदय पर धारणा करनी चाहिए। योगियों तथा वेदान्तियों को आज्ञा चक्र पर धारणा करनी चाहिए।

मन का अन्य स्थान है सहस्रार (सिर का शीर्ष स्थान)। कुछ वेदान्ती यहाँ पर धारणा करते हैं। कुछ योगी नासिकाग्र पर भी धारणा करते हैं (नासिकाग्र दृष्टि)।

धारणा के एक केन्द्र पर दृढ़तापूर्वक अभ्यास करते रहें। इसे हठपूर्वक पकड़े रहें। यदि आप हृदय पर धारणा करते हैं, तो सदा इसी पर करते रहें, इसे कभी न बदलें। यदि आप आस्थावान हैं, तो आपके गुरु धारणा हेतु केन्द्र का चुनाव करेंगे। यदि आप आत्म-निर्भर व्यक्ति हैं, तो आप स्वयं ही केन्द्र का चुनाव कर सकते हैं।

भूमध्य-दृष्टि अर्थात् दोनों भौंहों के मध्य दृष्टि को केन्द्रित करना। यह आज्ञा चक्र का क्षेत्र है। अपने ध्यान के कमरे में पद्मासन अथवा सिद्धासन में बैठ कर एक मिनट तक धारणा करें। इस समय को शनैः शनैः आधा घण्टे तक बढ़ायें। इसमें बल-प्रयोग न करें। यह योग की क्रिया विक्षेप अथवा मन के भटकाव को रोकती है तथा धारणा का विकास करती है। भगवान श्री कृष्ण ने गीता के पाँचवें अध्याय के 27वें श्लोक में इस क्रिया-विधि को निर्दिष्ट किया है "स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे ध्रुवोः" - बाह्य सम्पर्कों को दूर करके दृष्टि को भूमध्य में केन्द्रित करें। इसे भूमध्य-दृष्टि भी कहते हैं; क्योंकि नेत्र भूमध्य की ओर केन्द्रित किये जाते हैं। आप इसके सिवा नासिकाग्र दृष्टि का भी चुनाव कर सकते हैं।

नासिकाग्र-दृष्टि में दृष्टि को नासिका के अग्र भाग पर केन्द्रित करते हैं। जब आप सड़क पर भ्रमण कर रहे हों, तब भी नासिकाग्र दृष्टि रखें। भगवान कृष्ण ने गीता के छठवें अध्याय के श्लोक 13 में इसका वर्णन इस प्रकार किया है: "सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रम्" - चारों तरफ न



देखते हुए, मात्र नासिका के अग्रभाग पर एकटक स्थिर दृष्टि से देखें। यह अभ्यास मन को स्थिर करता है तथा धारणा शक्ति का विकास करता है।

एक राजयोगी त्रिकुटी पर धारणा करता है। यह आज्ञा चक्र का स्थान है। यह भ्रूमध्य में है। यह जाग्रत अवस्था में मन का स्थान है। यदि आप इस स्थान पर धारणा करें, तो आप सरलता से मन को नियन्त्रित कर सकते हैं। यहाँ पर धारणा करने से अत्यन्त शीघ्र ही, यहाँ तक कि एक दिन के अभ्यास से ही कुछ लोगों को प्रकाश दिखायी देने लगता है। वे अभ्यासी जो विराट् पर ध्यान करना चाहते हैं तथा जगत् की सहायता करना चाहते हैं, उन्हें अपने ध्यान हेतु इस स्थान का चुनाव करना चाहिए। एक भक्त को हृदय पर जो कि भावना तथा अनुभव का स्थान है, ध्यान करना चाहिए। जो हृदय पर ध्यान करते हैं, उन्हें महान आनन्द की प्राप्ति होती है। जो आनन्द प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं, उन्हें हृदय पर ध्यान करना चाहिए।



Sivananda Jayanti Celebration, 8th September, Rikhiapeth



एक हठयोगी अपना मन सुषुम्ना नाड़ी जो कि मेरुरज्जु का मध्य मार्ग है तथा किसी विशेष चक्र जैसे मूलाधार, मणिपूर अथवा आज्ञा चक्र पर एकाग्र करता है। कुछ योगी निम्न चक्रों की उपेक्षा करते हैं। वे अपने मन को आज्ञा चक्र पर ही एकाग्र करते हैं। उनका सिद्धान्त यह है कि वे आज्ञा चक्र पर नियन्त्रण के द्वारा सभी निम्न चक्रों पर स्वयं ही नियन्त्रण कर सकेंगे। जब आप किसी चक्र पर धारणा करते हैं, तो प्रारम्भ में मन तथा उस चक्र के मध्य तन्तु जैसा सम्बन्ध स्थापित हो जाता है। इसके पश्चात् योगी सुषुम्ना के साथ-साथ एक-एक चक्र ऊपर चढ़ता चला जाता है। यह उत्थान धैर्यपूर्वक प्रयत्न द्वारा शनैः-शनैः होता है। सुषुम्ना के प्रवेश-द्वार में हल-चल होने से अत्यधिक आनन्द की प्राप्ति होती है। तब आप मदमस्त हो जाते हैं। आप संसार को पूर्णतः विस्मृत कर देंगे। सुषुम्ना के द्वार में स्पन्दन होने पर कुलकुण्डलिनी शक्ति सुषुम्ना में प्रवेश करने का प्रयत्न करती है और अन्तर में महान् वैराग्य आ जाता है। आप पूर्ण निर्भय हो जाते हैं। आपको अनेक दृश्य दिखायी देते हैं। आप श्रेष्ठ अन्तर्ज्योतियों के साक्षी बनते हैं। इसे उन्मनी अवस्था कहते हैं। विभिन्न चक्रों पर नियन्त्रण द्वारा आपको अनेक प्रकार के आनन्द तथा विभिन्न ज्ञान प्राप्त होते हैं- जैसे यदि आपने मूलाधार पर विजय प्राप्त कर ली है, तो आपने भूमण्डल पर स्वयं ही विजय प्राप्त कर ली है। यदि आपने मणिपूर चक्र पर विजय प्राप्त कर ली है, तो आपने अग्नि पर स्वयं ही विजय पा ली है, अब अग्नि आपको नहीं जला सकती। पंच धारणा आपको पंच तत्त्वों पर विजय में सहायक सिद्ध होगी। इसको किसी दक्ष योगी के निर्देशन में सीखें।



धारणा

स्वामी सत्यानन्द सरस्वती

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ।। मन को एक स्थान पर टिकाना धारणा है। यहाँ 'देश' शब्द का अर्थ मानसिक अथवा भौतिक बिन्दु अथवा स्थान है। विभिन्न ग्रंथों में साधक के लिये तीन आधारों का उल्लेख मिलता है, जिन्हें वस्तुनिष्ठ, आत्मनिष्ठ तथा काल्पनिक आधार कह सकते हैं। इस तरह धारणा का तात्पर्य मन का किसी एक वस्तु, क्षेत्र अथवा बिन्दु पर टिकाना होता है। एक लक्ष्य अथवा बिन्दु पर धारणा का उत्तम उदाहरण महाभारत में मिलता है। जिस समय गुरु द्रोणाचार्य पांडवों को धनुर्विद्या सिखा रहे थे तो उन्होंने अपने शिष्यों से बारी-बारी से पूछा कि उन्हें क्या-क्या दिखाई दे रहा है। सबसे बढ़िया उत्तर अर्जुन का था, जिसने कहा कि उसे पक्षी की आँख के सिवाय और कुछ भी नहीं दिखाई पड़ रहा है। यह धारणा का उत्तम उदाहरण है।

जब मन एक बिन्दु पर दत्तचित्त एकाग्र होता है तो सहज बोध की क्षमता अत्यन्त तीव्र हो जाती है। जब आँखें बंद रहती हैं तो वह वस्तु, बिन्दु अथवा विचार जिस पर धारणा की जा रही है, चेतना के परदे पर बड़ा स्पष्ट दिखाई पड़ता है, मन जरा भी नहीं हिलता। यदि वह अपने लक्ष्य से जरा भी विचलित होता है तो इसे विक्षेप कहते हैं। विक्षेप का मतलब अस्थिरता अथवा चंचलता होता है। धारणा में एकाग्रता के विषय को छोड़ अन्य किसी भी बात का ख्याल नहीं आना चाहिये। कभी-कभी यह कहा जाता है कि आप एक साथ दो वस्तुओं अथवा क्षेत्रों पर एकाग्रता कर सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिये जब मंत्रजप किया जाता है तो एकाग्रता का एक बिन्दु- मंत्र तथा दूसरा- स्वरूप होता है। प्रारंभिक साधक के लिये जप सहित दोनों बिन्दुओं पर एकाग्रता को बड़ा लाभप्रद बताया गया है। बाद में जप के बिना भी एकाग्रता का अभ्यास किया जा सकता है। जबतक मस्तिष्क में रक्त का आवागमन चलेगा, उसमें तरंगे उठेंगी जिससे एकाग्रता में कठिनाई होती है। इसलिये रक्त के आवागमन में कमी आना आवश्यक है। इससे मन में तरंगे नहीं उठेंगी और एकाग्रता में व्यवधान नहीं आएँगे। इसके लिये एक दृश्य व्यवस्था की सहायता ली जाती है।

इस दृश्य व्यवस्था की मदद से मस्तिष्क में उत्पन्न होने वाली तरंगे घटती हैं। यदि आप नेत्र खोलकर किसी वस्तु अथवा बिन्दु पर थोड़ी देर त्राटक का अभ्यास करें और फिर आँखें बंद कर लें तो आपको पाँच मिनट में ही नींद लग जाएगी। जिस प्रकार आप किसी पात्र में रखे



Guru Puja, Samadhi Sthal of Swami Satyananda, Rikhiapieth

जल के तल पर लहरें उत्पन्न न होने देने के लिए उसे स्थिर रखते हैं, उसी प्रकार उपस्थित होने वाले व्यवधानों को रोककर अपने मस्तिष्क में उठने वाली तरंगों को रोकते हैं। इसके लिये मस्तिष्क के क्रिया-कलापों को भी रोकना पड़ता है। इसके लिये हम मन को किसी बिन्दु अथवा वस्तु पर टिकाते हैं। यह बिन्दु मूलाधार, मणिपुर अथवा आज्ञाचक्र हो सकता है जिसपर हमारी चेतना घूम फिर कर बार-बार टिकती है।

मन की भागदौड़ पर अंकुश रखना होता है, इससे उसकी गतिविधियाँ थोड़े समय के लिये थमती हैं और मन एकाग्र होता है। प्रारंभ में मन को अधिक समय तक एकाग्र करना संभव नहीं होता।

सब कुछ भूल बैठना एकाग्रता कतई नहीं होता। यदि आप सब कुछ, यहाँ तक कि एकाग्रता के विषय को भी, भूल जाते हैं तो उसे धारणा तो नहीं, शून्य समाधि अवश्य कहा जा सकता है। इसी का दूसरा नाम लय भी है। परन्तु एकाग्रता के दरम्यान मात्र उसके विषय की चेतना तैल धारावत् बने रहना जरूरी होता है। यदि आप किसी मंत्र पर मन को एकाग्र

करते हैं तो अभ्यास की पूरी अवधि तक मंत्र की अटूट चेतना कायम रखिये। अब यदि इस अटूट चेतना में जब तक विच्छेद उपस्थित होता है तो उसे धारणा कहेंगे और यदि किसी भी प्रकार का विच्छेद अथवा विक्षेप नहीं होता तो वह ध्यान कहलाता है। एकाग्रता में साधक को हर क्षण यह ख्याल बना रहता है कि वह एकाग्रता का अभ्यास कर रहा है। ध्यान इससे अधिक भिन्न तो नहीं है, हाँ उसकी गुणवत्ता एकाग्रता से कहीं अधिक होती है।

धारणा किसी वस्तु की चेतना होती है जो समय-समय पर मन के भीतर उठने वाले विचारों और गहरी आवाजों से भंग होती है। इस प्रकार समय-समय पर भंग होने वाली चेतना की एकाग्रता को धारणा कहते हैं।

कभी-कभी ये भंग इतने तीव्र होते हैं कि पुनः मन को एकाग्र कर पाना बड़ा कठिन होता है। यह विक्षेप अथवा व्यवधान कहलाता है। नए साधक को अक्सर इस मुश्किल का सामना करना पड़ता है। ऐसी स्थिति में कभी-कभी तो वह प्रयत्नपूर्वक पुनः मन को एकाग्र करता है, और कभी एकदम नहीं कर पाता। शायद इसका कारण उसके शरीर में स्थिरता की कमी होती है, क्योंकि जैसे ही शरीर थोड़ा भी हिलता है, हृदय की धड़कन और श्वास की गति बढ़ जाती है। परन्तु जब शरीर मूर्ति की तरह स्थिर और अचल रहता है, एकाग्रता गहरी और अटूट रहती है। अब यही कारण है कि स्थिर आसन जरूरी माना जाता है।





धारणा की अवधारणा

स्वामी निरंजनानन्द सरस्वती

योग में धारणा का अर्थ होता है मन को किसी एक बिन्दु पर लगाये रखना, टिकाये रखना। मन को किसी एक बिन्दु पर टिकाये रखना ही धारणा की अवधारणा है। धारणा शब्द की व्युत्पत्ति संस्कृत धातु 'धृ' से हुई है, जिसका अर्थ होता है आधार, नींव। अतः धारणा की वास्तविक परिभाषा है- वह वस्तु या प्रत्यय जिस पर मन दृढ़तापूर्वक आधारित होता है। योग की परम्परा में धारणा राजयोग का अन्तरंग अभ्यास है, जो मानसिक अनुशासन का मार्ग है। धारणा के पूर्व का चरण है प्रत्याहार, जिसमें मन को बाह्य संवेदी वस्तुओं से खींच कर अन्तर्मुखी बनाया जाता है।

इन्द्रियों से विलग होने के पश्चात्, मन गहराई में जा सकता है। वह अपना संसार निर्मित करता है, जब कि इन्द्रियाँ बाहर में ही रह जाती हैं। एक बार जब हम इन्द्रिय-चेतना और मनश्चेतना को अलग कर लेने में समर्थ हो जाते हैं, तब मन को उन अन्य अवस्थाओं की गहराई में निर्देशित किया जा सकता है जहाँ धारणा तीव्र हो। धारणा, जिसे मानसिक एकाग्रता की भी संज्ञा दी जाती है, मनश्चेतना का प्रगाढ़ होना है। जब इन्द्रिय-चेतना का पूर्ण अभाव हो जाता है तब धारणा घटित होती है।

अनुभूतियों की प्रगाढ़ता

धारणा किसी भी रूप में घटित हो सकती है। हम धारणा की तुलना उन दो प्रेमियों के उस अनुभव से कर सकते हैं जब वे घण्टों-घण्टों साथ में बैठे रहते हैं, पर उन्हें लगता है अभी कुछ ही क्षण बीते हैं। फिर भी, यदि कोई अप्रिय कार्य करना होता है तब एक-आध क्षण भी घण्टों के समान गुजरता है। अतः वह प्रगाढ़ता, जिसमें हम एक क्षण को एक घण्टा या एक घण्टे को एक क्षण के रूप में अनुभव करते हैं, धारणा है। अतः सकारात्मक पक्ष में धारणा चेतना का गहरा होना है, जिसमें काल की अवधारणा समाप्त हो जाती है, जहाँ तटस्थ चेतना तिरोहित हो जाती है, और केवल 'दिक्' की चेतना रह जाती है।

जब मन का संवेदी-विच्छेद हो जाता है तब धारणा में जो कुछ भी आन्तरिक रूप से अभिव्यक्त होता है वह अधिक तीव्र एवं शक्तिशाली होता है। ध्यान के समय हम ने इस तीव्रता को भावनात्मक विस्फोट के रूप में अनुभव किया है। बहुत से व्यक्ति जैसे-जैसे ध्यान की गहरी अवस्थाओं में प्रवेश करते हैं, अत्यधिक भावुक हो जाते हैं। इस भावनात्मक विस्फोट का कारण किसी प्रकार का मानसिक, भावनात्मक या मनोवैज्ञानिक अवरोध ही होता है। परन्तु इसके परे अन्य कारण भी होते हैं। योग के अनुसार जब मन के गहरे स्तरों में अचेतन रूप से बिना विक्षेप के विचारों, भावों और भावनाओं की तीव्रता की अनुभूति होती है तो उस क्षण, भाव या विचार का रूप एक अत्यन्त गहरा अनुभव दे जाता है।

ऐसा भावनात्मक विस्फोट भी धारणा की ही एक अवस्था है। अन्तर इतना है कि इस स्थिति में ऐसा कोई आधार या आलम्बन नहीं होता, जिस पर व्यक्ति टिक सके। इसलिए तीव्रता



अत्यधिक गहन होती है और हमें ऐसा लगता है कि यह गहरे अन्तस् से आ रही है। जैसे ही यह भावनात्मक विस्फोट होता है, हम उसे अतीत की किसी घटना, परिस्थिति या अनुभूति से जोड़ देते हैं। बचपन की स्मृतियाँ उभरती हैं, जीवन में जो सुखद या दुःखद अनुभव हुए हैं, उनके बिम्ब तेजी से ऊपर आते हैं, और हम उन्हीं भावनाओं में बह जाते हैं। ध्यान के समय के ये बाह्य अनुभव हैं, जब मन आलम्बनहीन होता है। अतः धारणा की अवस्था में व्यक्तियों को रोते-चीखते, भावनाओं को प्रकट करते, तथा विभिन्न सहज शारीरिक भंगिमायें करते देखना सामान्य बात है।

तत्काल, बहिर्मुखी मन के साथ हम चैतन्य और सजग रहते हैं कि हमारे शरीर को किस प्रकार प्रतिक्रिया या आचरण करना है। बहिर्मुखी अवस्था में प्राण पर भी एक अचेतन नियंत्रण रहता है, जबकि ध्यान में यह अचेतन नियंत्रण नहीं रहता। प्राण पर कोई नियंत्रण नहीं रहता है। मन शरीर से विच्छिन्न रहता है और प्राण सहज स्वाभाविक रूप से गतिशील और प्रवाहित होता रहता है। अतः प्राण की गति के अनुरूप शरीर भिन्न-भिन्न भंगिमायें धारण करने लगता है। जब यह विच्छेद होता है, प्राण स्वतंत्र हो जाता है। मानसिक अवधारणायें शरीर, वातावरण, यहाँ तक की स्थानिक मानसिकता की सीमाओं से भी स्वतंत्र हो जाती हैं।

धारणा की तीव्रता

यहाँ केवल मन को एक बिन्दु पर स्थिर रखना ही महत्त्वपूर्ण है। इसके लिए धारणा के किसी विषय, जैसे मंत्र, प्रतीक, विचार, भाव या किसी रूप का उपयोग किया जा सकता



है। एकाग्रता की तीव्रता को ही सामान्य रूप में धारणा मानते हैं। महाभारत में एक प्रसंग है जो अभ्यास के लिए आवश्यक एकाग्रता की तीव्रता को दर्शाता है। जब गुरु द्रोण पाण्डव और कौरव कुमारों को धनुर्विद्या की शिक्षा दे रहे थे तो एक दिन उन्होंने सभी कुमारों को पेड़ की डाल पर रखी एक मिट्टी की बनी चिड़िया को देखने और उसकी आँख को तीर से बेधने के लिए बुलाया। एक-एक कर सभी राजकुमार आते गये और गुरु सबसे एक ही प्रश्न पूछते, "क्या देख रहे हो?"

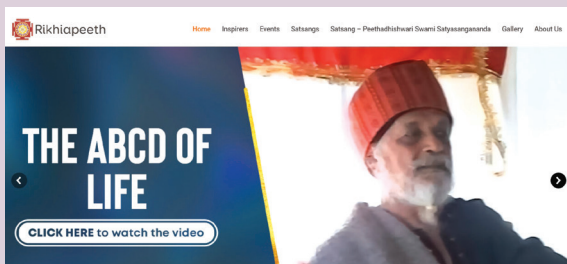
प्रथम कुमार ने कहा, "मैं जंगल, आकाश, पेड़, डालें, पत्तियाँ और पक्षी, सबको देख रहा हूँ।" गुरु ने उसे तीर चलाने को मना कर दिया। फिर उन्होंने दूसरे कुमार को बुलाया और उससे पूछा, "क्या देख रहे हो?" उसने उत्तर दिया, "मैं पेड़, पत्तियों, डालियों और उस पक्षी को देख रहा हूँ।" गुरु ने उसे भी धनुष रख देने को कहा। इसी प्रकार सभी कुमार आते गये, पर गुरुजी जो शिक्षा देने का प्रयास कर रहे थे, उसे वे समझ नहीं पाये, क्योंकि वे एक विशेष उत्तर की अपेक्षा कर रहे थे।

अन्त में जब अर्जुन आये तो उनसे भी वही प्रश्न किया, "तुम क्या देख रहे हो?" अर्जुन का उत्तर था, "मैं चिड़िया की आँख देख रहा हूँ।" गुरुजी ने फिर दूसरा प्रश्न किया, "क्या तुम्हें पेड़ की पत्तियाँ, डाली जिस पर पक्षी बैठा है, दिखाई नहीं दे रहीं हैं?" अर्जुन बोला, "नहीं, मुझे तो केवल पक्षी की आँख दिखाई पड़ रही है।" गुरुजी का अगला प्रश्न था, "क्या पक्षी के पंख या सिर भी दिखाई नहीं दे रहा है?" अर्जुन ने कहा, "नहीं, मुझे चिड़िया की आँख के सिवा और कुछ नहीं दिख रहा।" इस पर गुरु ने पूरी तरह संतुष्ट होकर कहा, "तुमने पाठ ग्रहण कर लिया।" अर्जुन की कोई नलिकाकार दृष्टि तो थी नहीं, और न वह अपने आस-पास की दृश्यावली के प्रति अंधा ही था। परन्तु उसकी एकाग्रता की प्रगाढ़ता इतनी अधिक थी कि बोध की समस्त सूक्ष्म शक्तियाँ उस एक बिन्दु-चिड़िया की आँख पर संकेन्द्रित हो गई थीं।

ध्यान के समय यदि मन दोलायमान हो रहा हो तो फिर धारणा की अनुभूति नहीं होगी। धारणा तो वह स्थिति है जिसमें पूर्ण एकचित्तता रहती है। यह तो बहुत अधिक अभ्यास के बाद भी एक आध क्षण के लिए आती है। यदि आप अस्थिर मन से ध्यान की साधना का प्रयास कर रहे हैं, जो एक बिन्दु से दूसरे बिन्दु पर आ-जा रहा है, जब भाँति-भाँति के विचारों एवं कल्पनाओं का आवागमन लगा हुआ है, तब न तो यह ध्यान है, न धारणा, यहाँ तक कि यह प्रत्याहार भी नहीं है, क्योंकि वहाँ बहुत अधिक विक्षेप और अस्थिरता है। अतः केवल आँखें बन्द कर किसी प्रतिमा पर मन को ठहराने का प्रयास ही पर्याप्त नहीं है। मन को, इन्द्रियों को तथा यदा-कदा अभिव्यक्त होने वाली मानसिक सूक्ष्म शक्तियों को समुचित प्रशिक्षण की आवश्यकता है जिससे धारणा सिद्ध हो सके और ध्यान की अवस्था में प्रवेश किया जा सके।



Rikhiapeeth Website: www.rikhiapeeth.in



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