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An Overview Of Swami Satyananda Sarasvati's Perspective On The Yoga Sutras Of Patanjali

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Abstract:

Yoga philosophy recognizes that the final goal of human life is to attain freedom or moksha from the cycle of birth and death. Yoga views humans as complex energy and awareness systems that can be balanced and cleansed through physical practices, ethical precepts, breath control, meditation, and deep thought. The Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali, an ancient classic of raja Yoga, present an eight-step path to liberation. According to Yoga theory, following our dharma and acting without attachment can create good karma and attain freedom. Yoga emphasizes that the ultimate goal of life is to know oneself and grow spiritually, leading to freedom from pain and connection with the limitless awareness underlying everything.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati provides a commentary on the Yoga Sutras in Four Chapters on Freedom, which offers a verse-by-verse analysis of the sutras' essence. He emphasizes the practical implementation of Yoga teachings and the importance of having a clear understanding of Yoga and its ultimate goal. He highlights the transformative potential of Yoga, not only for personal growth but also for the benefit of society as a whole. Swami Satyananda's teachings also emphasize the importance of sustained effort and discipline in Yoga practice.

Keywords: Kaivalya Pada , Yoga philosophy, Vibhuti Pada, , moksha, Sadhana Pada, , Yoga Sutras, Samadhi Pada,

Introduction:

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां। मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन॥

योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां। पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि॥

Meaning: Yoga calms the mind, language makes for clear speech, and the healing arts get rid of illness in the body. He gave these things to Patanjali, the wisest person in the world, to whom I pay my deepest respects.

According to the philosophy of Yoga, the final goal of all people is to be freed (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death. Yoga sees people as complex systems of energy and awareness. Yoga cleans and balances this system, bringing inner calm, insight, and spiritual awakening.

Yoga philosophy recognises that pain is a part of life, but it also gives ways to deal with it. The Patanjali Yoga Sutras describe an eight-step way to liberation that includes ethical precepts, physical practises, breath control, meditation, and deep thought.

In Yoga, karma is the idea that what we do determines what will happen to us. Karma and dharma, which is our life's goal, are linked. Yoga theory says that following our dharma and acting without attachment can make good karma and reach freedom.

Advaita is a part of Yoga theory that says atman and brahman are the same things. Yoga helps people see this truth and feel like they are one with everything. Yoga is a way of life, not just a set of poses. Yoga theory says

that a vegetarian diet, regular exercise, meditation, and selfless service (karma Yoga) can clean the mind and body and bring about inner harmony and well-being. Yoga also says that the goal of life is to know yourself and grow spiritually. It leads to freedom from pain and connection with the limitless awareness that underlies everything.

Four Chapters on Freedom:

The Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali are an ancient classic that succinctly presents raja Yoga's profound teaching sutras are also referred to as strands. Swami Satyananda Saraswati authored the commentary known as Four Chapters on Freedom. In it, he explains the essence of the Sutras by verse-by-verse analysis. Each word in each sutra contains significant meaning, and in order to interpret them for a modern reader, one must have a profound command of Sanskrit and an enlightened understanding of a sage.

Sincere yogic aspirants and spiritual seekers on the never-ending path of raja Yoga will find Four Chapters on Freedom to be an invaluable source of illumination. Included are both the Sanskrit text and a transliteration and translation of the sutras. A significant number of sannyasins have contributed generously to the compilation, editing, and publication of this material. The Yoga aspirants would like to express their appreciation to everyone who made this information accessible to them.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are one of the most important books in the field of Yoga. They give you a framework for figuring out how the mind works and how to reach truth. Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the founder of the Bihar School of Yoga and a well-known Yoga teacher, gives a reflection on the Yoga Sutras that emphasises how they can be used in real life. The Bihar School of Yoga is said to have been started by Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

Swami Satyananda on Samadhi Pada:

According to Swami Satyananda, the Samadhi Pada outlines the various stages of Yoga and provides a comprehensive roadmap for spiritual seekers to follow. The first sutra, "atha Yoga anushasanam," which means "now, the discipline of Yoga," marks the beginning of this journey. It indicates that one should start practising Yoga now and not delay it, as spiritual progress requires sustained effort and discipline.

Swami Satyananda stresses how important it is to have a clear idea of what Yoga is and what it's for. He says that Yoga is more than just a physical activity or a set of breathing exercises; it is a full plan for realising yourself. Yoga's final goal is to reach samadhi, a deep state of meditation in which one's consciousness merges with all other consciousnesses.

Swami Satyananda says that the best way to deal with these problems is to train your mind to be calm and focused. He says that you should meditate to gain mental calm and clarity. The second sutra, "Yogas chitta vritti nirodha," which means "Yoga is the stopping of the mind's fluctuations," emphasises how important it is to be able to control your mind when you perform Yoga. Swami Satyananda emphasizes that the practice of Yoga is not just for personal liberation but also for the benefit of society as a whole. He notes that as one progresses on the path of Yoga, one develops a sense of compassion and empathy towards others, which leads to the desire to serve and uplift others.

In conclusion, Swami Satyananda's commentary on the Samadhi Pada provides a clear and insightful explanation of the various stages of Yoga and the obstacles that one may encounter on the path towards achieving Samadhi. His teachings emphasize the importance of sustained effort and discipline in Yoga practice and highlight the transformative potential of Yoga not just for personal growth but also for the benefit of society as a whole.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati on Sadhana Pada:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati emphasizes that Sadhana Pada is not just a theoretical exposition of Yoga, but rather a practical guide for spiritual seekers. He explains that the goal of Yoga is to attain self-realization or enlightenment, and this can only be achieved through dedicated practice or Sadhana. He suggests the Kriya Yoga, which comprises three essential practices: tapas or austerity, svadhyaya or self-study, and Ishvara pranidhana or surrender to a higher power. Swami Satyananda Saraswati explains that these practices are not isolated, but rather interconnected and interdependent. He stresses the importance of tapas or the cultivation of discipline, as it helps to purify the mind and body, and creates the necessary conditions for spiritual growth.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati explains that self-study involves the systematic exploration of one's inner world through various yogic techniques, such as meditation, introspection, and self-reflection. Through this practice, one can gain insight into the nature of the mind and discover the true Self or Atman.

He emphasizes that the practice of asana or physical postures is not just about flexibility or strength, but rather a means to prepare the body for the deeper practices of pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, and dhyana. Similarly, the practice of pranayama or breath control is not just about improving respiratory function, but rather a means to regulate the mind and cultivate inner awareness.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati also stresses the importance of pratyahara or sensory withdrawal, which involves turning the senses inward and disconnecting from external stimuli. He explains that this practice is essential as it helps to reduce distractions and create the necessary conditions for meditation. Swami Satyananda Saraswati discusses the practice of dhyana or meditation, which involves the cultivation of inner awareness and the experience of a state of pure consciousness. He explains that meditation is the ultimate goal of Yoga, and it can only be achieved through dedicated practice and the cultivation of inner awareness.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati on Vibhuti Pada:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, in his commentary on the Vibhuti Pada, emphasizes that the ultimate goal of Yoga is not to acquire siddhis, but to attain spiritual enlightenment. According to Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the siddhis are not the ultimate goal of Yoga practice, but rather a byproduct of the deepening of meditation. He explains that as one progresses in their meditation practice, they may start to experience certain phenomena such as clairvoyance or levitation. However, he cautions that these experiences should not be considered the goal of Yoga practice, but rather as distractions that can impede one's progress towards enlightenment.

Furthermore, Swami Satyananda Saraswati notes that the attainment of siddhis can be both a blessing and a curse. He explains that the siddhis can be used for positive or negative purposes, depending on the intention and motivation of the practitioner. Therefore, he suggests that one must be careful in their practice and use the siddhis for the benefit of all beings. Swami Satyananda Saraswati's explanation on Vibhuti Pada emphasizes the importance of spiritual discernment and the ultimate goal of Yoga practice – the attainment of spiritual

liberation. While the siddhis may be a byproduct of deepening one's meditation practice, they should not be considered the ultimate goal of Yoga. Rather, one should focus on developing a regular and consistent meditation practice in order to deepen their understanding of the true nature of reality and attain spiritual enlightenment.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati on Kaivalya pada:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati emphasizes the importance of developing awareness, concentration, and detachment in order to attain liberation. Swami Satyananda Saraswati describes kaivalya as a state of complete freedom and independence, where the individual soul is liberated from the limitations of the mind and body. He explains that this state can only be attained through the practice of Yoga, which involves the systematic cultivation of awareness and detachment. According to him, the practice of Yoga enables us to transcend the limitations of the mind and body and realize our true nature as pure consciousness.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati emphasizes that Samadhi is not an end in itself but rather a means to attain the state of kaivalya. He explains that the experience of Samadhi helps us to cultivate a deep and unshakable awareness of our true nature, which is essential for attaining liberation. Swami Satyananda Saraswati also recommends the practice of kriya Yoga, which involves the systematic cultivation of awareness, detachment, and discrimination. Kriya Yoga comprises of three practices - tapas (austerity), swadhyaya (self-study), and Ishwara pranidhana (surrender to the divine). Through these practices, we can purify our body and mind, develop a clear and discriminating intellect, and surrender our ego to the divine.

Conclusion:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati's commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali provides a clear and insightful explanation of the various stages of Yoga and the obstacles one may encounter on the path to achieving samadhi, the ultimate goal of Yoga. His teachings emphasize sustained effort, discipline, and the transformative potential of Yoga not just for personal growth but also for the benefit of society as a whole.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati also emphasizes the importance of developing awareness, concentration, and detachment in order to attain liberation. He describes kaivalya as a state of complete freedom and independence, which can only be attained through the practice of Yoga, including the cultivation of awareness and detachment. He recommends the practice of kriya Yoga and explains that samadhi is not an end in itself but rather a means to attain the state of kaivalya.

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