

Shree Nisargadatta Samadhi Charitable Trust, Mumbai

श्री निसर्गदत्त समाधी चॅरिटेबल ट्रस्ट, मुंबई द्वारा प्रकाशित त्रैमासिक

NISARGAVANI

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११

ऑक्टोबर

आपल्या भजन आणि किर्तनातून
सर्वधर्मसमभावची शिकवण देणारे

राष्ट्रसंत
तुकडीजी महाराज



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Appeal for Articles

As any journal depends on articles from potential writers, we appeal all of you to send in articles to us. Self-Knowledge is beyond all religions, caste and creed. Remembering this aspect Nisargavaani will contain wide range of topics not only related to the Self-Knowledge expounded by Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj specifically but also Self-Knowledge teachings of various saints, experiences related to the practice of their methods, biographies, teachings, experiences related to the practice of methods taught by other spiritual masters, teachings and stories from religions other than Hinduism, interpretations of sacred texts and verses, spiritual travel and insights, poetry and of course feedback from our worthy readers. We firmly believe that Spirituality is in itself has a wide and diverse covering aspects.

Suggestions

As a guideline, we request that as far as possible articles should be short (say around 750 words), medium (around 1500 words) or in longer format (around 2300 words).

Please send in your contributions through e-mail to
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EDITORIAL

Exploring India's Timeless Spiritual Heritage

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj was the very embodiment of Vedanta. When Maharaj was giving discourses or engaged in friendly conversations, the divine verses of the eternal Upanishads would flow spontaneously from his mouth, as if adorned with a Marathi sari and ornaments. As his name suggests, Nisarga means simple or natural form. The natural river of knowledge that arose from this form reached the hearts of listeners, seekers, and disciples, satisfying them and introducing them to their true nature.

The essence of Maharaj's teaching is this profound saying from *Dasbodh*:

ऐक ज्ञानाचे लक्षण | ज्ञान म्हणिजे आत्मज्ञान |
पाहावे आपणासी आपण | या नाव ज्ञान || (द.५/स.६)

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj would say: "There is no other God, Guru, Ishwara, or Parameshwar other than your own Self-knowledge. Therefore, know yourself and be worry-free."

Self-knowledge is the knowledge of "we exist" that is present in every individual. The knowledge of "we exist" or "I am" is everyone's awareness of their own existence, their living state. This awareness, in its formless, attributeless state, is the inspiration of "*Aham Brahmasmi*"

(I am Brahman).

The same awareness, Shri Samarth says in Dasbodh, is addressed with feminine words like *Jagajyoti*, *Jagadamba*, *Jagadishwari*, *Vaishnavi Shakti*, *Shiva*, and with masculine words like *Shiva*, *Jagadishwara*, *Ishwara*, *Vishnu*, and also as *Brahman*, *Atman*, *Antaratman*, *Purusha*, and *Shuddha Sattva*.

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj says, “This awareness that ‘you exist,’ this memory that ‘you are,’ this is your eternal wealth. This awareness is the reflection of that form, the news about that form, its advertisement, and its identity. The awareness ‘I am’ does not show you what to see, but it shows you in which direction you should look.”

From the unmanifest, the manifest arose, and from the manifest, the individual. From the state of cessation (*Nivritta*), the state of activity (*Vritta*) arose, and from activity, the profession (*Vrutti*) arose. The manifest or the active state is this awareness, the consciousness of “we exist” present in everyone. This awareness is also not personal, it is universal. However, when this awareness says “I” to the body, senses, and life force, the individual is born.

To attain knowledge of the Self, Maharaj primarily said that it is necessary for this awareness to meditate upon itself. That is, to see ourselves. Maharaj used to say, “The mind is the flowing awareness.” The practice (sadhana) is to free this awareness from thoughts and from desires and doubts. The goal of the seeker is to have a thought-free, liberated awareness. Taking into account the mental state of the seeker, Maharaj beautifully combined the conditioned forms with attributes (Saguna Sakara), the conditioned formless (Saguna Nirakara), and the unconditioned formless (Nirguna Nirakara), saying, “Consider the awareness of your existence as the feet of the Sadguru and worship it.” The word Charana means movement. The first movement in the attributeless formless is this awareness or the awareness that “we exist.” Maharaj further says that when a seeker begins to practice according to the Guru’s words, this subtle awareness, which is in seed form, later becomes a banyan tree, pervading the universe and introducing the seeker to his own nature. He says, “Anoint knowledge with knowledge. Meditate on memory with memory. Hold tightly to your memory, your

identity.” If one continues to do this, this awareness will merge into the source from which it arose, and knowledge of the Self will be realized.

In this way, Nisargadatta Maharaj has given this world an extremely simple, easy, yet scriptural, Upanishadic, and Vedantic philosophy.

The Mother Shruti has also mentioned this from time to time:

आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत्पुरुषविधः | सोऽनुवीक्ष्य नान्यदात्मनोऽपश्यत् सोऽहमस्मीत्यग्रे व्याहरत्
ततोऽहन्नामाभवत् | तस्मादप्येतर्ह्यमंलितो ऽहमयमित्येवाग्र ॥१॥

– *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Chapter 1, Brahmana 4, Shloka 1*

Meaning: [Agre idam atma eva asit] Before the production of any other bodies, all this multitude of bodies was just the Self. [Saha purushavidha anuvikshya] That Virat, who was like a man with a head, hands, feet, etc., after contemplating, ‘Who am I?’ or ‘What are my characteristics?’, [atmanah anyat na apashyat] did not see anything other than his body and senses. He only saw his all-pervading Self. [Saha aham asmi iti agre vyaharata] He first said, ‘I am’. [Tataha aham nama abhavat] Therefore, he received the name ‘Aham’ (I).

[Tasmad etarhi api amantritah] Therefore, even today in daily life, when one is asked, ‘Who is there?’, [ayam aham iti eva agre uktva] he first says, ‘I am here’, [atha anyat nama yat asya bhavati tat prabrute] and then states his other worldly name.

Similarly,

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः | मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥१०॥

– *Kathopanishad, Chapter 1, Valli 2, Shloka 10*

Meaning: [Indriyebhyah parah hi arthah] The senses are gross. The objects of sound, touch, etc., from which they originate for their manifestation, are more subtle, of greater magnitude, and of eternal nature than these functional senses. [Arthebhyah cha param manah] The mind is more subtle, of greater magnitude, and of eternal nature than those objects. Here, the mind (manas) refers to the subtle element that initiates the mind’s activities, as it has the capacity to initiate desires and doubts. [Manasah tu para buddhih] The intellect (buddhi), which

initiates decision-making, is more subtle, of greater magnitude, and of an imperishable nature than the mind. [Buddheh atma mahan parah] The Self is great and supreme, even beyond the intellect. Because it is the innermost Self of the intellect of all beings, it is called 'Atma', and because it is greater than all, it is called 'Mahan'. The great Self, which is a state of consciousness/ unconsciousness related to Hiranyagarbha, the first to arise from the unmanifest, is said to be supreme to the intellect.

महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात्पुरुषः परः | पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित्सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ||११||
– *Kathopanishad, Chapter 1, Valli 2, Shloka 11*

Meaning: [Mahatah param avyaktam] The unmanifest (Avyakta) is beyond Mahat (the great), meaning it is more subtle and greater than all. It is the seed-like state of the entire world, the unmanifested form of names and forms, the aggregate of all cause and effect powers, worthy of being denoted by names like unmanifest, unformed, Akasha, etc. Just as the power of a banyan tree is contained in the subtle particle of its seed, this is completely contained within the Supreme Self. [Avyaktat purushah parah] The Purusha is more subtle and greater than the Avyakta, which is the aggregate of all powers, because He is the cause of all causes. He is Purusha because He fills the entire creation. Now, someone might think there could be something even more subtle than that, so to resolve that doubt, Death says - [Purushat na param kinchit] There is nothing beyond Purusha. [Sa kasha] Because there is no other object superior or more subtle than the Purusha, who is pure consciousness, therefore, the ultimate limit of subtlety, greatness, and innermost Selfness is Him. The lineage of subtlety that started with the senses ends here. [Sa para gatih] Therefore, for all traveling worldly beings, He is the supreme destination. But here, the main meaning of the word 'gati' is not to go, but rather the secondary meaning of attainment is used, to indicate that this mantra shows that the Purusha is the innermost Self of all.

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽऽत्मा न प्रकाशते | दृश्यते त्वग्नया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ||१२||
– *Kathopanishad, Chapter 1, Valli 2, Shloka 12*

Meaning: [Eshah sarveshu bhuteshu gudha atma na prakashate] This Purusha is secretly hidden and pervades all beings, from an ant to a pillar. He is the one who performs actions like seeing and hearing, and is covered by the ignorance of maya; therefore, He is the Self of all. But because He is hidden, He is not apparent to anyone as 'He is my Self'. (And even if He is not apparent to anyone, it does not mean He doesn't exist. Rather-) [tu sukshmadarshibhih agrayaa sukshmayaa buddhyaa drishvate] He is seen by the subtle seers. That is, by those who have seen the lineage of subtlety as described in the previous verse (e.g., 'objects are supreme to the senses'), by those who have the quality of seeing the most subtle, and by the intellect that is refined and one-pointed like the tip of a fine point, an intellect capable of seeing the subtle object, that Principle is seen.

यच्छेद्वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि । ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्तद्यच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥१३॥

– *Kathopanishad, Chapter 1, Valli 2, Shloka 13*

Meaning: [Prajnah vak manasi yacched] A wise person should merge the organ of speech into the mind. (Here, the long i in manasi is for meter, and the word vak is representative of the other senses.) [Tat jnane atmani yacched] That mind should be merged into the Self, which is the form of light - the intellect (buddhi). Since the intellect pervades the mind and other senses, it is their Self (atma) - their innermost being (pratyak). [Jnanani mahati atmani niyacched] The intellect should be merged into the great Self; and [tat shante atmani yacched] that great Self should be merged into the quiet, undifferentiated, unchanging, innermost, and a witness to the thoughts of the intellect, the principal Self. In this way, the Purusha, by dissolving all actions in the Self, becomes fulfilled.

In the above Shruti, the words 'Mahat' and 'Mahatma' are used for Arivu (awareness), that is, for the awareness of "we exist" that is within every individual.

Similarly, further on,

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह । बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥१०॥

– *Kathopanishad, Chapter 2, Valli 3, Shloka 10*

Meaning: [Yada pancha jnanani manasa saha avatisthante] When the five sense organs like the ears, along with the mind, become steady within the Self, [cha buddhih na vichestati] and the intellect does not perform its function of decision-making, [tam paramam gatim ahuh] that state is called the supreme state.

That is, according to Maharaj's teaching, the goal is a thoughtless, desire-free awareness. And when that awareness is then dissolved into its source, the ignorance created by the mind-form is removed, and the knowledge of the pointed-to Self-principle is attained.

Likewise, Mother Gita also tells us:

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत | क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ||
– *Bhagavad Gita* 13.2

Meaning: O Bharat (Arjuna of the Bharata lineage), know that the knower of the field (the living being) in all fields (in all bodies) is Me. And the knowledge of the principles of the field (body) and the knower of the field (one who knows it) is what I consider to be true knowledge.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः | अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ||१०/२०||

Meaning: O *Gudakesha* (Arjuna), I am the Self residing in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.

The worship of the inner Self as taught by the Samarth in Dasbodh is literally identical to the philosophy of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj.

जाणिजे देव निर्गुण | जाणिजे मी तो कोण | जाणिजे अनन्यलक्षण | म्हणिजे मुक्त ||२६||
जितुके जाणोन सांडिले | तितुके दृश्य वोलाडिले | जाणत्यास जाणतां तुटले | मूळ मीपणाचें ||२७||
न जाणतां कोटीवरी | साधनें केलीं परोपरीं | तरी मोक्षास अधिकारी | होणार नाहीं ||२८||
मायाब्रह्म वोळखावें | आपणास आपण जाणावें | इतुक्यासाठीं स्वभावें | चुके जन्म ||२९||९/४

The one who knows what Nirguna God is, who knows who I am, and who knows what it means for I to be one with the nature of Brahman becomes liberated. In worldly life, as much as one has known

and abandoned, so much has one crossed the visible world. When one finally knows the knower behind the known, that is, the nature of the Self, the original root of “I-ness” disappears. Without knowing this nature of the Self, even if millions of spiritual practices are performed, no one becomes worthy of liberation. One must know both Maya and Brahman. We, the illusory “I”, must know “ourselves”, that is, the nature of the Self. Then naturally, birth and death are avoided and liberation is gained.

प्राणी व्हावया मोकळा | आधीं पाहिजे जाणीवकळा | सकळ जाणतां निराळा | सहजचि होये ||५०||

First, *Janivakala* (knowledge of awareness) is needed for a person to be liberated from this bondage of the visible world. The one who knows the essential from the non-essential, the gross from the subtle, naturally becomes separate and becomes worthy of the state of liberation.

कांहींच नेणजे ते अज्ञान | सकळ जाणजे ते ज्ञान | जाणीव राहातां विज्ञान | स्वयंचि आत्मा ||५१||
– विकल्पनिर्शननाम समास सातवा ||१.७||

‘Not knowing anything’ means not knowing the true nature of the objects of the visible world, which is ignorance (*ajnana*). To know all this, to know its true nature, is knowledge (*jnana*). When this knowledge-awareness remains and becomes wisdom (*vijnana*), Self-realization spontaneously occurs.

वासना जाणजे जाणीवहेत | जाणीव मुळींचा मूळतंत | मूळमायेंत असे मिश्रित | कारणरूपे ||१३||
कारणरूप आहे ब्रह्मांडीं | कार्यरूपे वरें पिंडीं | अनुमानितां तांतडीं | अनुमानेना ||१४||
देहान्तनिरूपणनाम ||१.८||

The awareness in the body-intellect is purpose-oriented, and its nature is to say “I want this, I don’t want that,” which is Vasana (desire). The root of awareness is connected with the Ashtadha Prakriti in the original Maya. In this way, the original thread of awareness is mixed in

Mula Maya in a causal form. The awareness that exists in the universe is in a causal form. In the individual body, it exists in a functional form. Its nature cannot be comprehended quickly, but that awareness is subtle like the wind.

जाणीवरूप मूलमाया | जाणीव जाते आपल्या ठायी | गुप्त प्रगट होऊनियां | विश्वीं वर्ते ||२६||
- देहान्तररूपण-२ नाम समास आठवा ||१.८||

Mula Maya is of the nature of awareness. This awareness naturally goes to 'its place', that is, to the place of the Self. The awareness that has merged into the Self becomes still.

Further, in the Ninth Samas of the Ninth Dashak, Sanket Kubadi Kara Sri Hamsaraj Swami says to remove doubts:

नववा म्हणें ब्रह्मास | ब्रह्मांडें भेदिलें सावकास | अरें आकाशीं लाविलें दीपास | तरी काय तेणेंभेदिलें
||संकु९-४४||
सागरामध्यें खसखस | तैसें परब्रह्मीं दृश्य | मतीसारखा मतिप्रकाश | अंतरी वाटे || संकु९-४५||
वृत्ति करितां विशाळ | पाहतां ब्रह्मांड बदरीफळ | ब्रह्माकार होतां केवळ | काहीं नाहीं || संकु९-४६||
आपण अविवेकें लाहनाळला | वेगळा देहधारीं जाला | मग हें ब्रह्मांड तयाला | कवळेल कैसें ||
संकु९-४७||
तरी वृत्ति ऐसीं वाढवावीं | पसरून नाहींच करावीं | परब्रह्मास पुरवावीं चहुंकडे || संकु९-४८||

That is, in the ninth Samasa, it is explained how it is wrong to say that the universe gradually pierced the Brahman. If a lamp is lit in the sky, does it mean it has pierced the sky? In the same way, the universe exists within the Brahman. Just as a poppy seed appears in the ocean, so too the visible world has a place in the Brahman. The light of knowledge falls on the intellect according to its measure. If one expands the mental state (*vritti*), the universe appears like a small jujube fruit, and if one expands the mental state to be all-pervading like Brahman, the universe as a substance ceases to exist.

But if we become small out of ignorance, we take the form of the body, then how can we encompass this universe? Therefore, one's mental state should be expanded so much that as it spreads, it completely ceases to exist, and it becomes as pervasive as the Supreme

Brahman from all four directions. That is, it eventually ceases to exist.

All events in this universe happen through the existence of the inner Self. The infinite inner Self is the seer and the witness of all. The inner Self, which is of the nature of awareness and consciousness, is called the Jagadishwara (Lord of the world). His authority runs everywhere. He holds, nourishes, and protects all worlds and beings. He is full of knowledge. Based on His knowledge, all the systems of the world function properly. The nature of the original resolve being realized in the world is understood only by fortunate individuals. The seeker should maintain the contemplation of that inner Self, and meditate on Him. From that, knowledge will arise. God and the devotee then become one. Therefore, worship becomes the form of knowledge. “I am He” is the great causal body. Finally, that too must be abandoned, and then the experience becomes complete.

Sanket Kubadikar Sri Hansaraj Swami says,

चौथा म्हणें सर्व चालवीं | तें द्रष्टा साक्षीची उठाठेवीं | उपासना नेहटून पहावीं | तरी तेंचि ज्ञान ||
 (संकु २०-१६॥)
 मूळ संकल्प मूळ जाणीव | ज्ञान उपासना हें अपूर्व | दोहोसीं पाहतां अभिनव | अधिष्ठान आपण असें
 ॥संकु२०-१७॥
 तेंचि परब्रह्म जाणावें | दुजेवीण उगेंचि असावें | निर्विकार तें स्वभावें | असतचि असें ॥संखु २०-
 १८॥

That is, in this Samasa the distinction between the seer (*drashta*) and the witness (*sakshi*) is clarified. It is explained how that Jagadishwara, who is the inner Self of everyone, conducts the affairs of the world. Worship (*upasana*) is the introduction to the inner Self. It is our own introduction. That is the true knowledge. The original resolve is the original awareness. That is both knowledge and worship. We are the substratum of both. One must know that Supreme Brahman, which exists in a non-dual state without a second entity. By its very nature, it is unchanging.

Finally, in the twentieth Dashak, the Samarthas say:

प्रगट रामाचें निशाण | आत्माराम ज्ञानघन | विश्वभर विद्यमान | भाग्ये कळे ॥१४॥ दा.२०.४॥

Pragat Ramachen nishan means that the Supreme Brahman, which includes both the conditioned and the unconditioned, is manifested by the name “Ram”; its mark is directly known as “pure awareness and the form of the world.” The self-consciousness is densely filled everywhere. It is *Jnanaghana*, that is, the Supreme Brahman in the form of knowledge, full of knowledge. Because it fills this universe, it is *Vishvambhara* (sustainer of the universe). That *Vishvambhara* exists in a state of being everywhere, and His existence is continuously present everywhere at this very moment, and this existence is understood by a person only through great fortune.

In conclusion, let's end with a saying from Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj. He says:”Just be quiet and pay attention to the awareness of ‘I am.’ The ultimate reality, or the true nature, is right behind it. It will either manifest itself or absorb you within itself.”

|| Jai Sadguru ||



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Shri Tukdoji Maharaj was popular due to his “easy to sing” bhajans for masses played on a khanjiri. He wrote bhajans of patriotic meaning, that created awakening among the villagers. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj participated in the Vishwadharm Parishad (International convention of Religions) held in Japan in 1955. He dedicated his entire life for the services of the masses irrespective of caste, class, creed or religion and worked with the villagers in road constructions, village-sanitation and other social activities. His selfless devotion and dedication are bound to teach the lessons for the generations to come. On the eve of his auspicious Anniversary falling on 11th October 2025, Nisargavaani Team most respectfully offers tributes to this great saint of India.



श्री निसर्गदत्त समाधी चॅरीटेबल ट्रस्ट

Nisargavaani

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Yogi Pavan Manacha

A Brief Biography of Hansaraj Swami

Hansaraj Swami, revered as a saint of the *Hansa Sampradaya*, was born in 1805 at Parbhani. His original name was Narayan. His father, Gangadharpant and mother, Renukabai, nurtured him as the middle child among three sons. Misfortune struck the family soon after his birth when Gangadharpant lost his job, forcing them into a life of wandering from village to village in search of sustenance.

At the tender age of twelve, Narayan was married to Lakshmi, which added further responsibility to his young shoulders. When his elder brother chose to live separately, Narayan, still only fourteen, set out into the world in search of work. Though he took up various jobs, his mind remained detached from worldly pursuits. From childhood itself, he was drawn to the higher truth, finding joy in reading scriptures and spiritual works. Yet, his restless heart found no lasting peace. What he longed for was not merely knowledge, but the living grace of a *Sadguru*.

This yearning led him to Vasmata, to the holy presence of Shri Laxmanrao. Perceiving Narayan's deep devotion, Laxmanrao blessed him with spiritual initiation. Shri Laxmanrao himself was the sixth torchbearer in the sacred *Uddhava Parampara* descending from Samartha Ramdas. The lineage, as described in the text *Hansa Paddhati*, flows from Adinarayan (the Hansa Avatara) to Brahmadeva, Vasishta, Lord Ramachandra, Samartha Ramdas, Uddhava, Madhava, Rudraram,

Nagnath, and then to Laxman Narayan.

The author of *Hansa Paddhati* honored this holy tradition with the name *Hansa Sampradaya*. It is within this sacred stream of wisdom and realization that Narayan came to be known as Hansaraj Swami.

After receiving the grace of his Guru, Hansraj swami chose to live in close proximity to his Master. He set up a separate household nearby, so that he could serve his Guru while remaining constantly in his presence. In due course, his wife became pregnant, but fate dealt a heavy blow. She went into premature labour in the seventh month, and the child was stillborn. Within a few days, his wife too passed away. With this tragic turn of events, the ties of worldly life were severed, leaving Hansaraj swami free to wander in the path of divine pursuit.

In the course of his travels, he came to Pandharpur. There, he came into close association with Janardan Utpatt and Sakharam Baba Domgaonkar. Around this time, he also met a northern ascetic named Purnashram. From him, Hansaraj Swami learned the *Praish Mantra*. After Purnashram Swami departed northwards, Hansaraj Swami invoked the sacred mantra and undertook *Sannyasa Diksha*, renouncing worldly life fully. From that moment, he became known as *Narayan Tirtha*. Owing to this initiation into the state of *Paramahansa*, he came to be revered by the name Hansaraj, as noted by Shri Raghunath Shastri Godbole.

After staying in Pandharpur for some time, Hansaraj Swami at the earnest request of Sakharam Baba Domgaonkar, moved to Domgaon. He is believed to have resided there between 1834 and 1840. During this period, he composed four spiritual works, as mentioned by the author of *Hansa Paddhati*. Around 1840, when Sakharam Baba attained samadhi in Hyderabad, Hansaraj Swami felt it no longer appropriate to remain in Domgaon. He then moved to Paranda, where he was blessed with a large community of disciples. There he composed several profound texts that enriched the spiritual literature of the tradition.

In 1855, Hansaraj Swami entered into *Yoga Samadhi*, consciously shedding his mortal frame. His sacred *Samadhi* shrine continues to stand in Paranda, where devotees pay homage to this radiant saint of the Hansa Sampradaya.

In his childhood, Hansaraj Swami's education suffered greatly due to adverse circumstances. It is believed that he did not receive any formal schooling. Against this backdrop, his remarkable literary contribution must truly be regarded as a wonder. His biographers describe his intellect as exceptionally sharp and discerning.

Though he had no formal training in Sanskrit, by the strength of his deep study and spiritual insight, he composed a Sanskrit treatise titled *Swatmadarsha*. He had keenly studied the works of Adi Shankaracharya, the principal Upanishads, and other foundational texts of Vedanta. Alongside, he had also immersed himself in the writings of the great Marathi saint-poets of earlier times.

Hansraj Swami was a prolific writer who composed a total of 14 works, which can be classified as follows:

Unavailable literature:

१. *Gurubhaktisara*,
२. *Swatmadarsha* (in Sanskrit)
३. *Kathakalpalata* (ten chapters)
४. Miscellaneous *Abhangas* and devotional verses on Bhakti, Jnana, and Vairagya (number unknown)

Partially Available literature:

1. *Kathakalpalata* (only eight chapters)
2. Miscellaneous *Abhangas* and devotional verses on Bhakti, Jnana, and Vairagya

Unpublished literature:

1. *Tattvazhada* (in prose)
2. *Purvarambhagatha* (in prose) – This work is now in the process of being published.

Published literature:

1. *Agamasara*
2. *Sanket Kubdi*
3. *Kathakalpalata*

4. *Sadachara*
5. *Chudalakhyaana*
6. *Vedeswari* (a commentary on *Shivagita*)
7. *Laghuvakya Vrittitika*
8. *Vedajna* (a commentary on the *Ishopanishad*)
9. *Veda Navachi Pade*
10. *Anubhav Amrita* (a metrical commentary in *Ovi* form)

According to the traditional method of reckoning, the extant works of Hansaraj Swami amount to 37,000 verses. It is noteworthy that in several of his titles such as *Vedeswari*, *Vedajna*, and *Veda Navachi Pade*, the word “Veda” appears. This was the chosen literary insignia or signature of Swami Hansraj.

The writings of Hansaraj Swami bear several distinct features. Most of these works were composed at the request of one disciple or another, which shows the living, interactive nature of his teaching. All his writings are rooted in Vedanta, wherein he consistently presented *pure Vedantic truth*. He had solemnly declared: “*Even if it were a mere assemblage, I would speak only in accordance with Vedanta*”

Yet, within this steadfast devotion to Vedanta, his works display remarkable variety. They are not mere repetitions of the same ideas. Instead, we find narrative-based texts, detailed expositions, concise summaries, interpretative commentaries, critical explanations of Sanskrit scriptures, reflections on Marathi saintly literature, poetic compositions, and prose treatises. This diversity enriches his body of work, while keeping the central focus always on spiritual illumination.

All of his writings are didactic and enlightening, with the clear aim of imparting the knowledge of Vedanta to seekers. Since his purpose was the instruction and upliftment of disciples, his compositions were crafted with the precision and structure of a spiritual textbook. In almost every work, he begins with a discussion of the *Anubandha Chatushtaya* (the fourfold requisites of a scripture), and then organizes the text into two sections: the *Jnana Khanda* (Knowledge Section) and the *Abhyasa Khanda* (Practice Section).

In the *Jnana Khanda*, he explains the Vedantic process of

realization, while in the *Abhyasa Khanda* he outlines in great detail the practical disciplines required to attain such realization. The minute and systematic manner in which Hansaraj Swami analyzed and presented these practices is unparalleled. This unique exposition of “Abhyasa Mimamsa” (the science of spiritual practice) stands out as the hallmark of his contribution to Vedantic literature

Another remarkable feature of Hansaraj’ Swami’s writings is his choice of themes. For his commentaries, he selected subjects that had not been tackled by earlier writers. Among these were the *Upanishads*, the treatises of Adi Shankaracharya, the *Yogavasistha*, the *Shivagita*, *Amritanubhava*, and the *Panchadashi*. By bringing these profound works into focus, he opened new doors of spiritual study for seekers.

As Prof. N. R. Phatak observes: “*The special contribution of this great soul lies in introducing seekers to those regions of Vedanta which earlier writers had, by and large, left unexplored.*”

Hansaraj Swami was firmly rooted in the path of knowledge (Jnana Marga). His unwavering conviction was that liberation can be attained only through pure knowledge, and by no other means. He was uncompromising in this faith. However, this did not mean he rejected other paths entirely. He acknowledged their value during the preparatory stages of spiritual practice. Yet, in the ultimate sense, he declared that “*Knowledge alone is both the supreme means and the supreme goal.*”

This steadfast emphasis on Jnana as the highest path and final realization is a unique hallmark of Swami Hansraj’s contribution to Marathi spiritual literature.

The purpose of this article is to present our readers with a first introduction to this great saint, Hansaraj Swami. Beginning with the next issue, we shall undertake a detailed and systematic study of his rich spiritual literature, exploring his writings step by step.

– Dr. Dheeraj Sarvdnya



Direct Path

While commenting on Gita shloka 7.3 the commentator says:

Most of us, except rarest of the rare ones, are trapped in duality. Doing sadhana in duality is like being trapped inside a jail and doing research on the jail manual which has no chapter on release or escape route. This is a profound and excellent commentary that cuts to the very heart of the spiritual journey. It serves as a powerful metaphor to expose a fundamental flaw in how most people approach their spiritual practice. First, we must understand the “jail.” The prison is *duality*, the world of opposites that we live in and perceive. This is the realm of good and evil, right and wrong, pleasure and pain, success and failure, light and darkness. We are so conditioned to this dualistic existence that we believe it is the only reality. Our ego—our sense of “I”—is built entirely on this foundation, constantly judging, categorizing, and reacting to these pairs of opposites. We spend our lives chasing the pleasant and running from the unpleasant, forever trapped in a cycle of desire and aversion.

The vast majority of humanity is not only trapped in this prison but is content to simply try and live a better life *within* its walls.

The Flawed ‘Sadhana’ (Spiritual Practice)

This is where the “Jail manual” comes in. The manual represents all the spiritual practices and religious doctrines that, while appearing to

be paths to freedom, are actually just *rules for living comfortably as a prisoner*. Consider the following forms of *sadhana* as examples of studying the “manual”:* Doing rituals to earn a better afterlife:* This is simply an exchange within the dualistic system of good and bad, reward and punishment. The goal is not freedom from the cycle but a better position *in the next life*. Following strict moral codes to gain a higher social standing or reputation:* This is a practice aimed at perfecting one’s role within the dualistic world of social approval and disapproval.

Chanting a mantra or meditating solely to reduce stress: This turns *sadhana* into a coping mechanism, a way to make prison life more bearable, but it does not question the existence of the prison itself. These practices, while not without merit in terms of self-discipline, do not contain the one vital chapter: *the escape route*. They teach you how to be a better prisoner – a more virtuous, calm, or successful one – but they don’t provide the knowledge or means to transcend the prison walls of duality entirely.

The True Path to Transcendence

The Bhagavad Gita’s verse 7.3, which states “Out of many thousands among men, one may strive for perfection; and of those who have achieved perfection, one may perhaps know Me in truth,” points to the extreme rarity of those who recognize this fatal flaw. The “rarest of the rare” are those who abandon the study of the jail manual and instead seek the wisdom that lies beyond it. Their *sadhana* is not about perfecting their life within duality but about systematically dismantling the very foundation of duality itself. This path is about non-duality: It’s the realization that pleasure and pain, success and failure, are two sides of the same coin and are ultimately illusions of the mind. The true spiritual seeker does not fight one to get the other; they seek the ultimate reality that contains neither.

This path is about Direct Path of Self-inquiry: The ultimate escape route is the question “Who am I?” It is a practice designed to dissolve

the ego, which is the sole resident of the prison. When the ego is gone, the prison of duality simply disappears

This path is about surrender: Complete devotion (*Bhakti*) that surrenders the individual “I” to the divine dissolves the duality between the devotee and God, leading to ultimate union in essence, it is a reminder that spiritual life is not about making ourselves better inhabitants of the prison of duality. It is about realizing that we were never prisoners to begin with, and that the jail manual was just a story we believed. The rarest of the rare are those who, with unwavering courage and insight, walk away from the manual to find the true and eternal freedom that was their nature all along.

– Hemant Kumar



To see God is to be God. He alone is. When you see
God in all, do you think of God or do you not?
You must certainly ‘think of God’ for seeing God all
around you. You see this and that...why not see God?
All are seeing God always! But they do not ‘know’ it.
You find out what God is.

– Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Revered Sadguru Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj's ॥ Swarupvaani ॥

The most revered Sadguru Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj, the creator of *I AM THAT*, a modern-day Upanishad, is the guiding light and source of divine inspiration for innumerable sincere seekers and enlightened aspirants across India and abroad, earnestly striving to realize the Supreme Truth. With a heart overflowing with profound gratitude, I bow inwardly at the immaculate lotus feet of this great incarnate Siddha Saint and Satpurush. On the auspicious occasion of the launch of the *e-magazine* “Nisargavaani,” I humbly express the innermost feelings of my heart to you, the venerable and discerning readers.

Through each of his discourses, Shri Maharaj earnestly emphasized the awareness of the “Self” and the contemplation of “I Am,” presenting these core truths in his uniquely distinct and richly varied style. He adorned the profound philosophy of Advaita Vedanta with a delicate garland of devotion, ensuring that even the simplest of seekers could comprehend it effortlessly and assimilate it with ease. At several points, one may observe deliberate repetitions and recurring explanations. This, however, was a compassionate insistence to firmly imprint the essence of the teaching into the innermost being of the seeker. All the ideas expressed in the discourses are the luminous outpourings – spontaneous and radiant manifestations of Shri Maharaj’s own direct realization of the Self.

“Realize the Self and Abide in the Self!” – this is Shri Maharaj’s Swarupvaani (divine utterance), the nectar of non-dual wisdom. What indeed is the true nature of this “Self”? To glimpse its mystery, one must reflect upon the immortal words of wisdom bestowed by the Sadguru. That very Self is my complete, auspicious, and self-proven essence. I am immortal. I am deathless. Among the mortal, the immortal — that am I. I am naturally aligned with That. Such steadfast conviction is essential. Then surely, it will be understood — what truly is this “Self”? Sadguru declares: “Soham Hansa Tat Tvam Asi.”

That Supreme Lord is me. I myself am that Supreme Lord. That Brahman—you are That. Beginningless and endless. You are unborn—without birth or death. Beyond pleasure and pain. Beyond sin and virtue. You are pure essence alone. Such is the realization they impart. What are the signs of this knowledge? Saint Samarth Ramdas Swami has described it vividly in the sacred scripture Dasbodh.

एक ज्ञानार्थं लक्षण । ज्ञानं म्हणजे आत्मज्ञान ।
 पहार्वे आपणासि आपण । या नाव ज्ञान ॥
 मुख्य देवास जाणार्वे । सत्य स्वरूप वोळखार्वे ।
 नित्यानित्य विचारार्वे । या नाव ज्ञान ॥

(Listen to the marks of true knowledge. Knowledge is Self-Knowledge. To see your own Self as it truly is – this is called knowledge. To know the Supreme Lord, To recognize the Truth as your own nature, To discriminate between the eternal and the ephemeral – This is called true knowledge.)

Samarth Ramdas Swami further instructs:

सोहं आत्मा स्वानंदघन । अजन्मा तो तूंचि जाण ।
 हेचि साधूचें वचन । सहठ धरार्वे ॥

*(Soham – the Self is the embodiment of bliss.
 It is unborn – know that it is you.
 This is the word of the saints – hold it firmly)*

With firm faith in the Sadguru's words, I must seek the Ultimate Truth by turning inward and discovering my own Self. In this quest for the Supreme Truth, a moment arrives when the seeker realizes the highest truth – that the very one who was searching is himself that Ultimate Reality. As the great saint Tukaram Maharaj says: *“I went to see God, and there I became God Himself.”*

Such realization gently begins to dawn upon the seeker. The practice yields fruit. With the rare grace of the Sadguru, all doubts and uncertainties dissolve. The inner light of knowledge shines forth. An inner confidence awakens, and when the moment comes where one realizes: *“I am the embodiment of Knowledge. I am pure Consciousness. I am that Pure Knowledge,”* the faith in the Sadguru's words becomes even more unshakable. At such a time, with deep gratitude, the seeker repeatedly bows at the holy lotus feet of the Sadguru, and the truth of the verse is affirmed: *“For one who surrenders, the Sadguru acts instantly; no time or delay is required.”* When he turns inward, even the uninvited fear of birth and death dissolves. Like the duck in the song *“Eka Talyat Hoti Badake,”* the storm of fear fled away with the wind. And then, unknowingly, the seeker experiences: *“Time has slipped away; with the Sadguru's grace, joy pervades everywhere.”*

“O rare is this human birth! By the Sadguru's grace, all delusion is dispelled, birth and death have been transcended!”

Thus resounds the *Kakada Aarti* (morning prayers). The essence of devotion to the Sadguru is: as one seeks to know “Who am I truly?” the false Self dissolves, and the direct experience *“I am Brahman”* begins to dawn. An ineffable peace arises when one perceives that everywhere, only Brahman pervades. An indescribable contentment is attained. The one who earnestly searches for his true Self alone understands the true nature of the Sadguru's grace, and ultimately realizes the Self through direct experience. He who holds the Sadguru's word firmly in his heart, with deep reverence, and repeatedly engages in its listening, reflection, and contemplation — he alone becomes eligible for liberation and attains the state of the Supreme Being.

“He who enshrines the Sadguru’s words within his heart is the true heir to liberation. With deep reverence, he listens, reflects, and contemplates them unceasingly”

Gurudas Shrikant Gogate, an elder Gurubandhu, while praising this *Swarupvaani*, says: *“Your radiant words of knowledge, when they enter the ears of the devoted listener, illuminate the eyes with light. You are the great giver of wisdom. The fragrance of knowledge spreads throughout the world, bringing joy to people.”*

The glory of *Swarupvaani*, which bestows joy upon all beings across the world, began to resound everywhere without delay. Numerous seekers, both from India and abroad, drawn to the quest for the Ultimate Truth, were attracted to Shri Maharaj. Among them was Maurice Friedman! From Ramanashram he arrived at the Nisargadatta Ashram, Vanamali Bhuvan. He immersed himself in the close company of Shri Maharaj and engaged in profound discussions. In 1973, recordings of many such precious conversations between Western seekers and Shri Maharaj were published as the immortal classic “I AM THAT”. It was translated into several international languages, and the nectar of Nisargadatta’s *Swarupvaani* spread rapidly in the World. In great numbers, Western seekers and aspirants were drawn to Shri Maharaj. The victory banner of *Swarupvaani* began to wave unflinching across the seven seas. *“Sadguru, the great light of knowledge! Many have been, and many will come, but none like Him!”*

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj encapsulated the very essence of spiritual knowledge with remarkable artistic simplicity in a single sentence: *“Apart from your Self-knowledge, there is no other God, Ishwara, Brahman, Atman, Paramatman, or Guru.” “Know the Self, and abide in the Self!”*

This exquisitely radiant *Swarupvaani* of Sadguru Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj will surely serve as a ray of light for all beings amidst today’s unstable world. When the true awareness of the “Self” is firmly imprinted within, all restlessness and turmoil naturally subside. The seeker of Ultimate Truth, at every level of life, will thus become truly “at

peace”, and this realization will carry him *from the finite to the infinite*. Indeed, it is true – an eternal worship of the True, the Beautiful, and the Auspicious!

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The knowledge which asks the question ‘Who is God and how is He in appearance?’ is itself God!
The Power which is termed as God in general is the Knowledge ‘You are’ itself. Knowledge is God.
God is the ‘Self.’

– Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Missed Opportunity

Mahendra Tevar was a Spanish traveller, who met another Spanish man in Ganeshpuri, disciple of Muktananda. They became friends and he gave him the book 'I Am That'. Previously, the new friend was disciple of Nisargadatta Maharaj, but "I was so arrogant and argued with him so bitterly and fiercely that he asked me not to visit him again". He was longing to meet Maharaj again, but he felt ashamed.

The room where the Master was sitting was crowded at that time of day with disciples. Men and women rested in silence at the feet of the enlightened Sage. My friend made his way through the crowd. I followed him closely. Soon we were standing before Nisargadatta. We humbly prostrated ourselves before him. I listened to the words of introduction that my friend timidly addressed to the Saint.

He fixed his gaze on me. "Where do you come from?"

The Master spoke in Marathi. Someone acted as an interpreter between English and the Marathi language. As best I could, I explained to the Master my recent adventures. Aware that I would not have such an opportunity to plead for my friend, I steered the conversation in that direction as quickly as I could. "Master, the Lord has chosen to use my companion to guide my steps to you. He considers you his guru and needs forgiveness. I therefore beg you to take into consideration his deep regret and grant him your forgiveness." The Marathi translator

poured my sincere words into the Sage's ears. His expression changed as he slowly nodded.

"When I read your teachings," I continued, "it seems to me that I am listening to Ramana Maharshi. My mind then settles in my heart and I enter an ocean of peace." I paused for a moment to allow the young translator to convey my words. Shortly after, he gestured for me to continue. "Surely, God Himself has led me to one of His realized children. Lord, I am very honoured to receive His darshan."

Nisargadatta looked at me intently. The assistant translated his words for me once more:

"I have caught a big fish. Stay with me for fifteen days. That will be enough time for you to understand all my teachings and experience realization." His reply spread a profound silence throughout the room. The Master continued: "Come and see me this afternoon." And he added, addressing the rest of the disciples present in the room, that he did not want to see anyone else.

It was about 4 p.m. when we entered a discreet restaurant in Bombay. A young man dressed in European attire approached us and led us into a small room. My eyes instantly recognized the Master, who was sitting on a mat in the centre of the room, deep in meditation. A vibration of peace, emanating from him, spread throughout the room.

My friend and I prostrated ourselves with great humility. Nisargadatta opened his eyes and looked at us. Then, without a word, he gestured to a devotee, and the ceremony of light began. The purifying fire given off by a thick candle was offered to the great beings framed in paintings hanging on the walls. Nisargadatta kept his gaze fixed on me. Some in attendance began to clap with a repetitive rhythm, and immediately, as one voice, the rest of those present chanted verses in greeting to the deities and yogis. Shortly after, the fire passed before us. I extended my hands toward it and then turned them to caress my cheeks and hair, symbolizing that purification was entering me.

After the ceremony, the Master asked me to come closer. "Tomorrow, I want to see you here. Fifteen days at my side will be enough for your complete awakening." His voice was firm, confident, radiant.

“Lord,” I said, deeply regretting the circumstances in which life had placed me, “I wish for nothing more, but my plane leaves for Barcelona this morning.” There was silence. I felt a heavy heart, as if I were wasting a wonderful opportunity that fate had offered me. “Perhaps another time,” the Master replied, without much conviction.

There was no other time. Nisargadatta died two years later. We never met again.

– Translation: Antonio Plana

Tevar, M. y Martín, J. *Levántate y ruge [Stand up and roar]*.
Sirio Publisher, 2015 (Málaga) Spain



The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him – that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

– Swami Vivekananda

The Treasure of Fearlessness

July 10, 2025... On the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, the first digital issue of *Nisargavaani* was unveiled through an elegant audiovisual ceremony. Two revered guests graced the event: Pujya Shri Yogeshbua Ramdasi, the Principal Secretary of Shri Samarth Seva Mandal, Sajjangad and Shri Sadguru Satam Maharaj (Sahajdatta Maharaj). Both shared their blessings and offered thoughtful suggestions for enriching the magazine.

One significant suggestion was to revive the timeless wisdom preserved in small booklets based on Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj's teachings – booklets which were published decades ago but are now rare and difficult to access. Including them, they said, would greatly benefit present-day seekers. As an example, they mentioned the booklet "*Nirbhayateche Bhandar*" (The Treasure of Fearlessness).

This booklet, compiled in 1967 by Late Machchhindranath Hate – a senior disciple and later an office-bearer of the Shri Nisargadatta Adhyatma Kendra – has its own special place in the history of this lineage. Shri Bhainath Maharaj once described Hate Saheb as a devoted listener who would carefully record Maharaj's words during discourses. I too had read this booklet many years ago and had preserved in my diary a few lines from it that deeply touched my heart. Today, on this occasion, I wish to share those pearls of wisdom with the readers.

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj spoke on the subject of fearlessness not only during those times but across numerous discourses throughout

his life, each time revealing its essence with his characteristic directness and simplicity. Before we turn to what Shri Hate Saheb compiled, let us first glimpse the spirit of Maharaj's teaching on fear.

Fear spares no one. Not a single day dawns and sets without some shade of worry or fear. For a while, it may appear absent, but when circumstances change – there it is again.

Why does one not take poison? Because there is fear of death. Why does another take poison? Because there is fear of living.

What you truly are is vast and boundless – like the sky or Nabh. Na-bh... means No Fear! Just as the sky knows no fear, the knowledge of your own being is also without fear. The fear you experience is of your memory of being. Experiences of pleasure and pain, of gain and loss, arise from the awareness

of "I am." How does this memory of being appear without identification with the body?

"Death" is merely a conventional word. The end of life is actually the treasure-house of all happiness. For the one attached to the body, the end of life is seen as the end of joy. Just declaring, "I am pure light," at the time of death will liberate you! The dreadful end-time becomes a time of peace through devotion to the Guru. Such is the great power of Guru-bhakti.

In this world, apart from death, what else do you truly gain? The irony is, where the fear of death seems to loom, there itself lies an ocean of bliss! One whose mind trembles at the thought of death has not realized the knowledge of his true nature.

Fear is of the snake. But the snake is not there at all – it is only a rope!

What is the cause of fear? ...Ignorance. Once it is known that there is no snake, the fear disappears. Ignorance creates fear – like mistaking a rope for a snake. Once you know the truth, the fear vanishes. Nothing needs to be done. The fear of death is imaginary. It arises within and casts its shadow outside. What is a clock? ...Time! The fear of time belongs to the memory – of "I am." But that is not your true Self!

As long as you identify with the body, all kinds of fears will

*persist – fear of death, fear of sin and virtue, fear of time itself.
But once it becomes clear that Knowledge is your very nature,
then no fear – whether of sin, virtue, or death – can bind you.*

As Sant Jnaneshwar beautifully said:

“If water comes to drown the salt, the salt should dissolve of its own accord. Then, whom will the water drown?” Likewise, when you become one with the Non-dual, fear has no one left to haunt.”

From the booklet “The Treasure of Fearlessness,” the words of Maharaj that left a lasting impression on me are appended:

The mind by nature does not remain silent. Through constant remembrance in various ways, it gradually quiets down. It will not quieten through other means. Saints still the mind through the power of the Name and Mantra, by which the Self is revealed. Slowly, as this becomes a habit, the conviction arises that Knowledge itself is the Self. Then the mind surrenders. For this, one need not abandon or destroy worldly life. There is no conflict between worldly life and spirituality. Only the ignorant have preached renunciation, thus making people wary of the spiritual path. In truth, worldly life supports spirituality; it does not hinder it!

Fear enters the heart through the mind and the eyes, and at times, even casts its shadow over the Self. But when one realizes that before all beginnings, one’s true nature is the Supreme Self, fear loses its grip—for that which is truly you cannot frighten you. Fear arises only of the ‘other’. The lion is not afraid of his own mane and jaws, but others are!

When you recognize that fear is your own projection, you become free. Such conviction dawns only through the grace of the Sadguru. Even one who is fearful, if he begins to live by the Guru’s words, gradually finds courage arising within him. The light of that determination scatters every fear. Such is the power of the Guru’s word.

– Anil Chube, Thane
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Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and Nisargadatta Maharaj's Knowledge of the Self (Swarupajnana Yoga)

Ashtanga Yoga, meaning “the eight limbs of yoga,” is a classification of yoga given in the *Yoga Sutras* of the Indian sage Patanjali. The eight limbs are: Yama (restraints), Niyama (observances), Asana (postures), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption). It is said that the practice of these eight limbs is essential and indispensable for the attainment of yoga.

The aphorisms of this scripture are divided into four sections, referred to as *Padas*: the first is *Samadhi Pada*, the second is *Sadhana Pada*, the third is *Vibhuti Pada*, and the fourth is *Kaivalya Pada*. Not only Indian scholars, but also learned individuals across the world have studied this subject in depth, striving to understand it and to share their insights with readers through various books.

An important insight that emerges from the above reading is the importance of the *Yoga Sutras* in human life. These sutras lay down the discipline of concentrating the mind and merging it into the Divine. According to Patanjali, yoga is the restraint of the fluctuations of the mind (*Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*). In other words, not allowing the mind to wander here and there, but keeping it steady and focused on a single object—that is yoga. The *Yoga Sutras* are renowned for this teaching. In this article, we will consider some of the sutras that are essential from the perspective of the topic under discussion.

As mentioned earlier, Patanjali's *Yoga Darshana* is primarily divided into four sections. The *Samadhi Pada* explains the goals and characteristics of yoga, as well as the means to attain them. The *Sadhana Pada* discusses obstacles, the fruition of karma, and the results of past actions. The *Vibhuti Pada* describes the limbs of yoga, their effects, and the various powers (*siddhis*) that can be attained. Finally, the *Kaivalya Pada* deals with liberation (*Kaivalya* or *moksha*), in line with Hindu philosophy.

In short, ignorance (*avidya*), ego (*asmita*), attachment (*raga*), detachment (*vairagya*), and clinging to life (*abhinivesha*) are identified as the five afflictions that cause suffering. According to the philosophy of yoga, one must take birth and live life in accordance with the fruits of karma.” Patanjali presents yoga as the path to rise above all these and attain liberation. He emphasizes that by gradually practicing the eight limbs of yoga, a person becomes perfected and ultimately attains *moksha* (liberation).

Today, yoga has spread across the world, and the main reason for this is that people have realized its benefits for health and mental peace. In the 21st century, its importance has also been emphasized by declaring an *International Day of Yoga*. It is rightly said: “A *sound mind in a sound body*.” Even medical science acknowledges that many illnesses are rooted in the mind.

This means that apart from the five sense organs (*jnanendriyas*) and the five organs of action (*karmendriyas*), the “eleventh sense” – the mind – creates turmoil in human life. Samartha Ramdas Swami, in his 205 *Manache Shlokas* (verses on the mind), explained in detail how to

discipline the mind and how to train it. Similarly, Sant Poornadas of Vengurla in Konkan, in his work, described the wonders of the mind as follows:

‘मना ऐसा नाही शत्रू । मना ऐसा नाही मित्रू ।
 मनची पवित्रापवित्रू । कल्पितसे ॥
 मनची भयंकरा भयंकर । मनची सुखकरा सुखकर ।
 मन कल्पित संसार । वाढतसे ॥
 मन तपस्वीयांते छळी । मन संसारीकाते गिळी ।
 मना ऐसा महाबळी । दुसरा नसे ॥’

(There is no enemy like the mind, There is no friend like the mind. Purity and impurity belong to the mind, They are mere imaginations. The mind itself is terrifying, The mind itself is comforting. The world imagined by the mind, Keeps on growing. The mind deceives even ascetics, The mind engulfs worldly people. Such is the immense power of the mind, None other can equal it.)

1. Samadhi Pada

Yoga Sutra – 2

Yogaschitta-vritti-nirodhah

In this sutra, the very first definition of yoga is given: Yoga is the restraint of the modifications (fluctuations) of the mind (*chitta*). Generally, *chitta* is referred to as the ‘mind.’ Therefore, to practice yoga means first to learn how to bring the mind under one’s control. In other words, the beginning of learning yoga is the training of the mind.

Yoga Sutra – 5

Vrittayah panchatayyah klistaklishtah

The mental modifications (*vrittis*) are of five kinds; they may be either painful (*klista*) or non-painful (*aklista*).

Yoga Sutra – 6

Pramana-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidra-smritayah

These five types of mental modifications are: correct knowledge

(*pramana*), misconception (*viparyaya*), imagination (*vikalpa*), sleep (*nidra*), and memory (*smriti*).

Yoga Sutra – 12

Abhyasa-vairagyabhyam tannirodhah

The control of these modifications is achieved through practice (*abhyasa*) and detachment (*vairagya*).

Yoga Sutra – 14

Sa tu dirghakala-nairantarya-satkara-asevito drdhabhumih

But that practice becomes firmly grounded when it is continued for a long time, without interruption, and with reverence and devotion.

2. Sadhana Pada

Yoga Sutra – 29

Yama-niyama-āsana-prānāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo’ṣṭāv aṅgāni

The eight limbs of yoga are: *Yama* (restraints), *Niyama* (observances), *Āsana* (posture), *Prānāyāma* (breath control), *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *Dhāraṇā* (concentration), *Dhyāna* (meditation), and *Samādhi* (absorption).

Yoga Sutra – 46

Sthira-sukham-āsanam

An *āsana* (yogic posture) is that which is steady (*sthira*) and comfortable (*sukha*).

The main practices in yoga are dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (absorption). Pranayama (breath regulation) makes these practices easier. While engaging in them, one’s posture (asana) or seated position should be steady and comfortable, such that the body does not experience discomfort even when sitting for a long time.

Our sense organs, which are constantly drawn towards the external world, must be turned inward and brought under control. Redirecting

them from the outer world to the inner self is called pratyahara. However, before this, purification of the body is necessary, for which certain disciplines are prescribed in Ashtanga Yoga, known as Yama and Niyama.

Yama refers to ethical restraints – the things one should *avoid doing*.

Niyama refers to observances – the things one *must consciously practice* in daily life.

To restrain the restlessness of the mind means to regulate its inherent tendencies, and this discipline is emphasized in the sutras. The sutras then classify the different types of mental modifications (*vrittis*), explain their nature, and show the means by which their influence can be reduced. They also guide the seeker on how this practice should be carried out, for how long it must be pursued, and what visible results it produces.

Through such practice, changes take place in the tendencies of the mind. With it, the practice of yoga deepens, and the aspirant gradually becomes imbued with dispassion (*vairagya*). As a result, through the inner disciplines of Dharana (holding the mind steady in one place), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption), the practitioner ultimately becomes fit for liberation in the form of *kaivalya* (absolute freedom). This is what the Yoga Sutras affirm.

Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj was a great Self-realized saint of recent times. In his natural and simple style of speech, he gave seekers the essential spiritual guidance they needed. Just as the above sutras present, in Sanskrit, the path of yogic discipline leading to the ultimate goal, in the same way Maharaj's aphoristic teachings, expressed in everyday language, can certainly guide aspirants toward the attainment of *Kaivalya* (liberation).

Considering the scope of this article and the vastness of the subject, only a few important points from the Yoga Sutras have been included here. How Maharaj defines yoga, and how he explains the transformation of mental tendencies in order to achieve *Yogashchitta-vritti-nirodhah* (restraint of the modifications of the mind), is expressed by him as follows:

Yoga means union. The one who abides in constant companionship with That is a yogi. Consider the word *yoga-sthiti* (the state of yoga). *Sthiti* means a state where there is no further coming or going. Union with such a state is yoga. The simple fact that *you know you are* – this awareness must be held onto. That is called *dhyana* (meditation). That itself is yoga. *Dhyana-yoga* means to remain established in the knowledge of one's own being. In truth, no birth has ever taken place. To understand why and how birth has not occurred, one must practice *dhyana-yoga*. For knowledge to arise, memory (*smarana*) and life-breath (*prana*) must unite. This union takes place through *nama-smarana* (remembrance of the Divine Name). But it must be done with necessity and, above all, with love. For it is only through love that *nama-smarana* becomes genuine. People practice *nama-smarana* in many ways, according to what they have been taught. From our experience, when the remembrance of the Name is synchronized with the breath, the mind becomes calm and *samadhi* arises. One should encourage the practice of *nama-smarana* and, with mind, intellect, and consciousness gathered into one-pointed stillness, remain quiet. This is the yoga that is taught. When it is realized that “my true form is the Self;” and one abides steadily in such contemplation, then yoga becomes complete. It is directly attained as one's own. By experiencing repeatedly, the experience deepens until it matures into fullness. Yet, remember this: only so long as the union of *prana* (life-force) and *kaya* (body) endures does the function of knowledge continue.

In yoga, the supreme yoga is *Atma-bodha* – Self-realization. Practicing *Ashtanga Yoga* is difficult, and many even lose their lives in the attempt. The science of consciously guiding the life-force (*prana*) out of the body while still alive can succeed if one meets a true Guru. Yet, from such practices, various *siddhis* (extraordinary powers) often arise. Then one gains respect, honour, and recognition. He engages in service, affection, and zeal. But he becomes absorbed in that alone—and thus does not become worthy of the meeting with the Supreme Reality, the very essence of *Parabrahman*. Through *Dhyana-yoga*, however, when separation from the Self (*atma-viyoga*) is dissolved, he truly becomes a yogi. Thereafter, he becomes *niyogi* (one established

in the destined union). States such as *nirvana*, *nirguna*, and *niranjana* have been spoken of in this regard. These names are given only because that Reality cannot be captured in words. It is called *nirvana* because it is beyond all description. It is called *nirvana* when one realizes: “I am distinct and separate from everything.

What is *Vairagya* (dispassion)? When one realizes that nothing endures in companionship or association, that is *vairagya*. Going about naked or begging for alms is not *vairagya*. Rather, the one who has understood that everything is bound to perish is truly a *Vairagi*!

Passions and disturbances (*vikaras*) arise as natural qualities of food essence (*anna-sattva*). Remember, the mind flows according to the quality of food consumed. When the very “mind-ness” of the mind is forgotten, that state is called *unmana*. Forgetting is itself the inherent nature of the mind.

Conduct is nothing but attitude (*vr̥tti*). The true meaning of *ahimsa* (non-violence) is not to hurt another’s heart. To bring about a transformation in one’s present tendencies, virtues like *ahimsa* and *satya* (truth) must be practiced. Gradually, this changes one’s conduct.

Attitude itself flows in the form of *prana*. The words spoken through speech settle in the consciousness, and when they rise again, they appear as your thoughts. Without *prana*, there is no separate entity called mind. *Prana* itself is *pranava* – Omkar.

The mind is nothing but attitude (*vr̥tti*). Through the flow of *prana*, sayings and expressions are carried. The mind is *prana*. The mind is the stream of language flowing. All spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is essentially training given to this attitude (*Vr̥tti*).

Thoughts give rise to more thoughts. Which of these to accept or reject – that is the work of *viveka* (discrimination). *Viveka* is like a sieve – it filters out the unnecessary words. You do not have leisure even for a moment’s true rest; thoughts after thoughts, and corresponding actions, continue endlessly. Reflect on this! *Mind* simply means the arising of thoughts. Whatever thoughts suggest, accordingly we speak, listen, and act in all our dealings. Those thoughts which only consume your time and drain your life – causing even your work and duties to be neglected – send them back immediately. A thought arises: *do*

this gossip, pursue that chatter, and so on. At such times, hang up the receiver—just as great people, when they do not wish to engage, simply put the receiver down.

But when a thought arises that awakens the inner intellect (*ātma-buddhi*) and points you to Self-recognition, associate with that thought. Reject all others. If one observes carefully, is this not possible? Is it not true that all dealings happen only because of thoughts that arise? Therefore, pay attention to the quality of thoughts.

Dismiss thoughts of slander, gossip, or idle talk. Learn to remain without mind; do not become a slave to it. Use thoughts only as tools when needed for work. If a thought is useless, set it aside.

Where there are no thoughts at all, there abides peace. Where the mind has been set aside and one remains, that is *living samadhi* – the natural state (*sahaja-avastha*). To be without mind is the *supreme state*.

The Self, apart from the mind, is pure and stainless – clearer than the sky, subtler and yet denser than space itself. Remember: the mind identifies with the body, not with the Self. It is the mind that says, “*This body is me,*” never the Self. Keep in mind – you are not what the mind declares. To live as the mind dictates is degradation. Abide in this awareness – this is supreme devotion (*parama-bhakti*).

Just as a Guru instructs his disciple, or God instructs his devotee, in the same way keep teaching your mind. The mind and the *gunas* are bound to activity. Hold onto what you have heard, but do not get lost in it. All such activities belong only to the mind. You are not the mind. Continue the practice of *nama-smarana* (remembrance of the Name). By it, the mind becomes purified. And once purified, the mind will listen to whatever you direct it towards.

Whatever has been told to you – fear, bondage, or liberation – exists only because of the mind. The body’s form is understood only through the mind; that alone is bondage.

In everything that appears, there is awareness. Whatever is experienced, arises out of awareness. Awareness itself springs from the Knower. Once the knowledge of this all-pervading awareness dawns, the very need for liberation falls away.

When the ego-sense (*ahambhāva*) completely disappears, there is

total rest. By its very nature, the Self is ever going towards liberation—naturally, effortlessly, every day. True rest comes only with forgetting. What must be forgotten?—the ego-sense. When it dissolves on its own, only then comes relaxation, freedom from toil. Knowledge itself is meditation; meditation itself is your true being. And that Being is rest. First, the mental modifications must subside, and then the Self is realized. The Self is never bound by mind, intellect, or body—not even now!

– Anil Chube, Thane



Practice is completely essential. You can sit down and listen to me for hours together every day, but if you do not practice it, you will not go one step further.

It all depends on the practice... !!

– Swami Vivekananda

A Pure-Hearted Yogi: Shri Swarupananda of Pawas



“Yogi Pavan Manacha, Sahi Aparadha Janacha”

– “The yogi whose mind is pure, who forgives the faults of all.”

Thus did Sant Muktabai describe her divine brother, Sant Jnaneshwar. After *Jnaneshwar Mauli*, a saint endowed with the very same divine qualities was active in Konkan Region during the twentieth century. That very motherly affection, that very forbearance, that very compassion for the humble and the helpless – as though Jnaneshwar’s

divine essence had taken form once again.! This great saint was none other than Swami Swarupananda of Pawas.

Swami Swarupanand lived and guided seekers in the small village of Pawas, Ratnagiri district, until as recently as 1974. He was born on 15 December 1903 in the Godbole family of Pawas, to parents Vishnupant and Rukminibai. His childhood name was Ramchandra, though he was fondly called *Appa*.

In the joint household of the Godbole family, young Appa and his siblings received abundant love and guidance from their elders. Their grandfather would have the children memorize chapters from the Bhagavad Gita and other sacred hymns. Their father, Vishnupant, was a man of rare simplicity and uprightness, with the *Vishnusahasranama* ever on his lips. Born into such a virtuous, devout, middle-class, white-collar family, Appa alias Ramchandra Godbole, grew up like any other ordinary child. Yet, in the course of time, this very Ramchandra Godbole came to be revered far and wide as Swami Swarupanand, one of the foremost saints of the Nath tradition in recent times. His life beautifully illustrates the truth expressed by Saint Tulsidas:

“Nar karanee kare to naraka naaraayan hot.” meaning *“When a man acts with sincerity and devotion, the human becomes divine.”* Truly, Swami transformed from *nara* (man) to *Narayana* (God).

Even in his early years, glimpses of Swami’s inner strength and divine qualities shone through. On one journey from Kolhapur to Ratnagiri, Shri Swami encountered a striking incident. At Rede Doh, heavy rains had caused the waters to swell, and the service motor bound for Ratnagiri stood stranded on the far side. Crossing the flood was inevitable. Swami, along with his fellow travellers, resolved to traverse it by boat. But midway, the current grew fierce, the vessel tilted, and soon became stuck in the mire. With a staff in hand, Swami waded ahead, clearing a path through the waters until he reached the opposite bank. Assured that the passage was safe, he then ferried each traveller across, bringing them ashore unharmed. That day, to those weary souls, it seemed as though divinity itself had appeared in human form. And indeed, in the years to follow, his very life bore witness to the godliness within him.

Freedom Fighter and Great Patriot

Like Yogi Aurobindo, Shri Swami too was a freedom fighter in his early life. A devoted follower of Lokmanya Tilak, he initially drew inspiration from Tilak's fiery call for independence. But after Tilak's passing, when the leadership of the freedom struggle passed into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami embraced the Gandhian path of non-violence. He actively participated in the Salt Satyagraha at Shiroda, moved from village to village in the Ratnagiri region delivering stirring speeches, and awakened the flame of patriotism among the people. In his own small village, he established a *Swavalambanashram* – a national school – where he provided the rare opportunity of English education to rural children. Not only was the education free of cost, but Swami himself bore the expense of books. He also set up a gymnasium at Pawas, instilling discipline and vigor in the youth.

At the young age of twenty, Swami received the divine grace (*anugraha*) of Ganesanath Vaidya, revered as Baba Maharaj of Pune. This blessed encounter was made possible through his maternal uncle, the venerable Keshavrao Gokhale. The experience of initiation filled Swami with immense joy and reverence. He bowed before Baba Maharaj with the deepest respect. The Bhagavad Gita enjoins, “*Tad viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā*” – one must approach the Guru with humility, seek through earnest questioning, and serve with devotion. True to this spirit, Swami asked, “Maharaj, it is said that upon receiving initiation a man attains perfection. Yet I do not feel such fulfilment within myself.” The forthrightness of such a disciple delighted Baba Maharaj. Smiling, he replied, “When curd is set, milk does not turn instantaneously. When the sun rises, it is not noon at once. In the same way, the disciple must pass through the stages of sadhana before attaining perfection.”

Sadhana Even in Prison

The spiritual discipline entrusted to him by his Sadguru was guarded by Shri Swami with the utmost dedication, even at the cost of his very



life. He never wavered from his practice—even within the confines of prison. One must recall the prisons of the British era to imagine the harsh and hostile conditions he endured. Yet in that atmosphere of deprivation and severity, Swami continued his sadhana with unwavering resolve.

We, by contrast, often seek excuses—“there is no time,” or “the household is too unsettled”—to evade our practice. Swami, however, proved that true sadhana knows no barriers of circumstance.

During his imprisonment, he shared space with eminent freedom fighters like S. M. Joshi, Raosaheb Patwardhan, and Shankarrao Dev. Witnessing the intensity of his spiritual practice, his companions began

to call him “Swami.” In time, this name became prophetic, for he did indeed ascend to the stature of a true Swami.

A Final Farewell to Pune

Shri Swami had been pursuing his studies in Pune. In 1934, in preparation for his degree examination, he decided to return to his native village of Pawas. He reasoned that staying in Pune would only add to expenses, while at home he could study peacefully and later return to Pune solely for the examination. But destiny had other plans. Though he came back to Pawas, he never returned to Pune again—neither for the examination nor for any other reason.

Soon after his arrival in Pawas, Swami fell seriously ill. The illness grew severe, and for six long months he struggled against excruciating suffering. Death itself seemed to stare him in the face. In his poetic work *Amrutdhara* he later wrote, “*In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-six of Shalivahan, I met with death.*” Recovering from that illness was nothing short of a rebirth. Yet this rebirth transformed his life in a profound way. It was the emergence of a realized yogi—but at the cost of permanent physical frailty. Henceforth, walking, moving, even speaking remained restricted.

Nitya Sanyasi: The Ever-Renunciate

In the conventional sense, Shri Swami never donned the ochre robes of a sannyasi. Yet, as described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, he was a “nitya sannyasi”—an eternal renunciate by disposition. His mind was ever detached: he never harbored hatred, never succumbed to anger, never clung to anything in this world. He abided continually in the bliss of the Self.

Through his own example, Swami demonstrated to the world that one need not abandon hearth and home or flee to the forest to realize God. If the mind is truly renunciate and one worships the Lord with single-pointed devotion, God is attained wherever one dwells.

Swami's path of practice was the Nath tradition's Soham sādhanā. "Soham" means "He am I." Every living being is a spark of the Supreme, and the goal of human life is to return to that Supreme. Beyond this world there exists nothing but the Absolute. All that is seen is but the play of Brahman. This was the Advaitic vision Swami embraced, and he ennobled the lives of many by imparting to them the Soham mantra.

Once, a young seeker, expecting to meet a great ascetic, came to see Swami. To his surprise, he found before him a simple man in ordinary attire. Perceiving the boy's thoughts, Swami said gently:

"Spirituality is not speaking or behaving in mysterious ways. True spirituality is to live simply, to experience God's play with calmness and joy. Spirituality is unbroken cheerfulness and supreme peace. Real religion teaches us the art of living happily in whatever circumstances life places us."

Amānitva: Humility Beyond Compare

Shri Swami never displayed pride in his greatness. His speech and conduct were ever gentle, marked by a sincere desire never to wound another's heart. Though through intense spiritual discipline he had realized the Self and was a true man of wisdom, he would still tell his disciples: *"Whatever my Sadguru has given me, that alone I pass on to you."* In this simple statement shone both his reverence for the Guru and his own innate humility.

In April 1969, when *Deeplakshmi* magazine planned a special commemorative issue on Swami Swaroopanand, one of his close disciples, Swami Amalanand, took responsibility for its preparation. Swami instructed him, *"Take care that no one is hurt by what is written."* At that time, the renowned astrologer Guruvar V. D. Bhat of Pune was present. He expressed his wish to write an article based on Swami's birth chart. Swami graciously permitted it but cautioned: *"Write if you wish, but let it not be in a spirit of comparison, nor to exalt one's own Guru over another."*

What simplicity! What depth of humility! Pride and self-importance could never touch his heart. As the *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims,

“*amanitvam adambhitvam*” – freedom from pride and pretension – is the true ornament of a sage. Many may one day renounce wealth, but very few can renounce the subtle longing for fame. Swami was far removed from all such temptations, standing as a radiant example of egolessness.

Arjavam: Simplicity and Gentle Speech

Sri Swami hardly ever addressed anyone in the singular. Even with his students and disciples, he would always use respectful forms of speech. Never did a command fall from his lips; instead, his words carried the tenderness of suggestions: “*It would be better if you did this... It should be done this way... I feel this would be right.*” His manner of speaking was unflinchingly calm, soft, and considerate.

Sri Swami Amalananda, a close disciple, once engaged in a conversation with him. During that exchange, Swami remarked, “*Let us not allow anything that might lead to dispute. The world is pervaded by the three gunas. One must remember this and act accordingly. This is my humble suggestion to you.*” In truth, Amalananda would have staked even his life to obey Swami’s word, yet Swami, in his humility, phrased it merely as a suggestion.

This tenderness, this transparency of heart, echoes directly the spirit of Jnaneshwar Mauli. Though the world inflicted immense hardship upon Jnaneshwar, his speech and conduct never bore bitterness. In his prayers he pleaded: “*Khaḷāñcī vyañkaṭī sāṅḍo*” – *Let wickedness be washed away!* and not “*let the wicked perish,*” but rather let the crookedness within them dissolve. Just as a mother longs for the faults in her child to vanish, not for the child’s destruction, so too did Jnaneshwar pray. He further implored that people develop a taste for virtuous deeds and cultivate friendship with one another—when goodwill prevails, malice finds no place. Such was the tender, mother-like heart of Jnaneshwar Mauli. The same butter-soft compassion and simplicity resided in Swami as well.

Sarvabhutahiterata: Welfare of All Beings

“Selfless love” was the very nature of Swamiji. Once, in his earlier years, while passing through Ratnagiri, he noticed a young boy sitting sadly on the railing of a bridge. Out of concern, Swamiji went closer and inquired. He came to know that the boy could not appear for his matriculation examination because his school fees were unpaid. Swamiji immediately took out the only ten-rupee note he had in his pocket and placed it in the boy’s hand. In later years, that very boy went on to become a wealthy man! That single ten-rupee note from Swamiji eventually brought him countless notes.

A similar incident occurred later in Swamiji’s life as well. A young man from Mumbai, distressed because he had lost his job, approached Swami Amalananda. Swami Amalananda advised him to go to Pawas and meet Shri Swamiji. The young man wrote a letter to Swamiji. Not only did Swamiji reply to his letter, but he also sent him money through a money order so that he could travel to Pawas. How many such incidents can one recount? They are countless! Swamiji’s heart was like a honeycomb—ever dripping sweetness for others. Even today, Swamiji continues to shower such grace upon his devotees.

Sarvabhuti Samanata: Equality Towards All

Shri Swamiji showered equal love on people of all castes and creeds, men and women, rich and poor, illiterate and learned alike. He strongly disliked superstition and meaningless, rigid customs. The decline of Hindu dharma was something that deeply pained him. In his earlier life, Appa (as Swamiji was then called) once wrote in a letter: “*Our Vedanta has remained only in books.*”

He wholeheartedly condemned customs of that time such as forcibly shaving a widow’s head or treating the so-called “untouchables” – human beings – as if they were inferior even to cats and dogs. He further wrote: “*Our sages proclaimed the ideal of equality, yet we act in complete contradiction to it.*”

Swamiji never belittled anyone. Among his disciples were people from all religions and castes. Even from the Muslim community, Babalaal Pathan was one of his most devoted followers. In fact, Babalaal himself painstakingly hand-copied the entire *Dnyaneshwari*.

Acharyopasanam: The Guru's Place in Spirituality

In spirituality, the Guru holds a place equal to God Himself. A Guru is absolutely essential on the spiritual path, for the divine power manifests in human form as the Sadguru in order to guide us. Our parents care for us only in one lifetime, but the Guru takes care of us through countless births. As Sant Kabir beautifully said:

“Guru Govind dohoo khade, kisake laagoo paav? baaleeharee Guru apana, jisane Govind dikhaay” - *“When Guru and Govind (God) both stand before me, whose feet should I touch first? Blessed is the Guru, who showed me Govind.”* Truly, there is no savior in this ocean of worldly existence greater than the Sadguru.

Shri Swamiji had deep and unwavering devotion toward his Sadguru, Baba Maharaj. Baba Maharaj used to read only a handwritten manuscript of the *Dnyaneshwari*. That copy had become extremely worn with use. Out of pure devotion, Swamiji procured fine paper and, in his beautiful handwriting, began rewriting the entire *Dnyaneshwari*. Every day he would carefully write about a hundred verses. After completing the entire text, he spent nearly a month revising and correcting it. He then offered this lovingly prepared manuscript to Baba Maharaj. Surely, Baba Maharaj must have felt blessed to witness such love from his disciple!

As for Swamiji himself, he never accepted outward forms of service from his disciples – such as washing his feet, offering *charan-teerth* (water sanctified by his feet), or garlanding him. What he truly expected from them was only this: to keep pure devotion in the heart and engage sincerely in spiritual practice.

Stithaprajna: Equanimity

Swamiji had renounced all personal desires. In the words of

Gondavlekar Maharaj, his state was such that – *if something is there, let it be; if it is not there, let it not be*. He remained ever steady.

Just as hundreds of rivers pour their waters into the ocean, yet the ocean never crosses its boundaries—so too was his state. Even when the rains are heavy, the ocean never floods; when rains fail, it never dries up. It is only the ponds that dry up—just like us! We are tossed about by the waves of circumstances, elated in joy and crushed in sorrow. But like the mighty ocean, Swamiji remained calm and tranquil in all situations.

His life saw tremendous upheavals. The national service he had taken up in youth had to be abandoned midway. Just as his household life was beginning to settle, it collapsed. All through life, he had to face physical weakness and limitations. Yet, he was never shaken. He remained ever absorbed in *anusandhana* (contemplation of the Self), ever immersed in inner bliss. So steadfast was his state that he would even sign his letters with the words:

‘आपला आत्मतृप्त’ – “Yours, in Self-contentment.”

The Saguna Darshan

The Lord revealed Himself in a Saguna (form) to this beloved devotee, endowed with many divine qualities. It was around ten o'clock at night. Peace had settled over the small village of Pawas. Swamiji was sitting calmly at his table, mind serene and still.

Suddenly, a sound like the roar of thunder echoed, and a brilliantly radiant, spherical light filled the entire surroundings. It was as if the combined brilliance of a thousand suns shone all at once. Yet, the form was not overwhelming—it was blissful and enchanting. Swamiji looked up in awe.

At that moment, he heard a voice whisper in his ear: “*Where is Godbole who wrote the Dnyaneshwari?*” In an instant, the extraordinary, wondrous, supremely beautiful and joyous form of Lord Vishnu appeared before him. The vision lasted only for a moment, but it left Swamiji's life profoundly blessed and transformed.

Literary Works

Shri Swami authored an extensive body of work. All his writings are devotional and deeply inspiring. Among these, his Abhang translation of the Dnyaneshwari stands out as a monumental achievement. To make the Gita accessible to the common people, Sant Dnyaneshwar had composed his commentary in Marathi, completing the Dnyaneshwari. Over 700 years have passed since then, and the language of that era has become difficult to understand today. Recognizing this challenge, Shri Swami created an Abhang-based translation of the Dnyaneshwari in contemporary Marathi. While doing so, he carefully ensured that neither the poetry nor the philosophy of the original text was compromised in the slightest. Even in publishing the text, he gave practical instructions: the print should be large and the cost affordable. To this day, the Seva Mandal, Pawas continues to sell this work at very reasonable prices.

He also rendered the gist of the *Bhagavad Gita* in a meaningful translation called *Bhaavaarth Gita*, capturing the essence of the shlokas. Similarly, he created Abhang translations of Sant Dnyaneshwar's other works, including Amritanubhav and Changdev Pasashti. By translating Dnyaneshwar's literature into modern Marathi, Shri Swami becomes, in essence, a contemporary Dnyaneshwar.

His original compositions, *Amrutdhara* and *Sanjeevani Gatha*, reflect his unique literary genius. *Amrutdhara*, in particular, mirrors his own spiritual journey. The experiences he gained during periods of illness and intense spiritual practice are vividly reflected in this work.

For example, the lines: "*Jagajjanani, accept the sacred alms of your devotee's devotion, Look at the door, here stands your fortunate pauper!*" reveal both the artistic beauty of his poetry and his exalted sensibility. Indeed, the pauper who seeks the alms of devotion is, in truth, truly fortunate. Shri Swami also guided his disciples through personal letters, which were later published in the form of 'Patra Manjusha.'

Contribution of the Desai Family

No biography of Shri Swami would be complete without mentioning the Desai family. From the time of late Anna Desai to the present day, the Desais have been devotedly serving Shri Swami. In the early days, Pawas did not have facilities for devotees to stay or eat. During that time, devotees of all castes and religions, coming from anywhere, were accommodated in the Desai household. This is indeed a remarkable contribution.

The efforts of revered Tai Atya and the daughters and daughters-in-law of the Desai family were immense. Shri Swami resided continuously for forty years in the various homes of the Desais. It was there, immersed in self-bliss, that he took his last breath. Truly, like Rana (Lord) of Dwarka in the home of the Pandavas, so did Shri Swami's earthly journey conclude amidst the love and service of the Desai family.

The Great *Mahasamadhi* of Shri Swami

From 1971 onwards, Swami's health began to decline steadily. By July 1974, he had started preparations for his final departure from this world. He chose a significant day for this – 15th August, India's Independence Day – a freedom for which he had once fought in his former life. Coincidentally, it was also the birth anniversary of Yogi Aurobindo and the *Mahasamadhi* day of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Swami had expressed his wish to be given subterranean samadhi and had recorded all details about it.

On 28th July 1974, he clearly stated, "My next journey has begun." Thereafter, he entered deep samadhi thrice for 19, 38, and 20 hours. The solemn morning of 15th August 1974 dawned. At 7:30 a.m., devotees were allowed to have darshan from the doorway. At 8:00 a.m., he took barely a spoonful of milk. Between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m., he sipped two spoons of water. At 8:47 a.m., he experienced his final moment. Gangajal was poured into his mouth, and Swami departed

from his body. Before leaving, he offered respect to the photos of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his Guru, Baba Maharaj in the room. He chanted Omkar thrice and, with all due preparation, merged into the Supreme Self, wishing the welfare of the universe — a pure-hearted yogi dissolving into the ultimate reality.

While we attempt to narrate Swami's life through his grace, it is impossible to capture all the nuances of such a towering personality in mere words. One of his devoted disciples, known as Swarup Kanya, expresses her feelings through the words of Yamuna Mataji:

*“How can words sing of such greatness?
To remain ever absorbed at his feet.”*

It is in being ever immersed at the feet that the life of an ordinary seeker like me finds meaning!

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It's beautiful to be alone.
To be alone does not mean to be lonely.
It means the mind is not influenced and
contaminated by society.

– J. Krishnamurti

Shri Ram Mandir, Ayodhya



Image: Courtesy Deepak Singh