

The Aquarian Theosophist

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The monthly journal of the Independent Lodge of Theosophists and its associated websites



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From The Mahatma Letters:

The Daily Practice That One Needs, in Order to Attain Wisdom



Fasting, meditation, chastity of thought, word, and deed; silence for certain periods of time to enable nature herself to speak to him who comes to her for information; government of the animal passions and impulses; utter unselfishness of intention, the use of certain incense and fumigations for physiological purposes, have been published as the means since the days of Plato and Iamblichus in the West, and since the far earlier times of our Indian *Rishis*.

How these must be complied with to suit each individual temperament is of course a matter for his own experiment and the watchful care of his tutor or *Guru*.

(A Master of the Wisdom)

[From Letter 49 (XLIX) in "[The Mahatma Letters](#)", p. 283.]

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Thought Power Changes Destiny **The Most Important Kind of Karma is** **the Karma that You Sow, Not that You Reap**

Swami Sivananda



Man sows a thought and reaps an action. He sows an action and reaps a habit. He sows a habit and reaps a character. He sows a character and reaps a destiny.

Man has made his own destiny by his own thinking and acting. He can change his destiny. He is the master of his own destiny. There is no doubt of this. By right thinking and strong exertion, he can become the master of his destiny.

Some ignorant people say: "Karma does everything. It is all destiny. If I am destined by my Karma to be like this or that why then should I exert? It is my destiny only."

This is fatalism. This will bring inertia, stagnation and misery. This is perfect misunderstanding of the laws of Karma. This is a fallacious argument. An intelligent man will certainly not put such a question. You have made your own destiny from within by your thoughts and actions.

You have a free will to choose now. You have got Svatantrata in action. A rogue is not an eternal rogue for all times. Put him in the company of a saint. He will change in no time. He will think and act now in a different way and will change his destiny. He will become saintly in character.

Dacoit Ratnakar was changed into Sage Valmiki. Jagai and Madai were transformed. They were rogues of the first waters. You can become a Yogi or a Jnani. You can make your destiny. You can make your Karma in any way you like. Use the Power of Thought. Think rightly, think nobly. You will have only to think, and to act. By right thinking, by right desiring, by right acting, you can become a Sage, a millionaire. You can attain the position of Indra or Brahma by good thought and action, by good Karma. Man is not a helpless being. He has a free will of his own.

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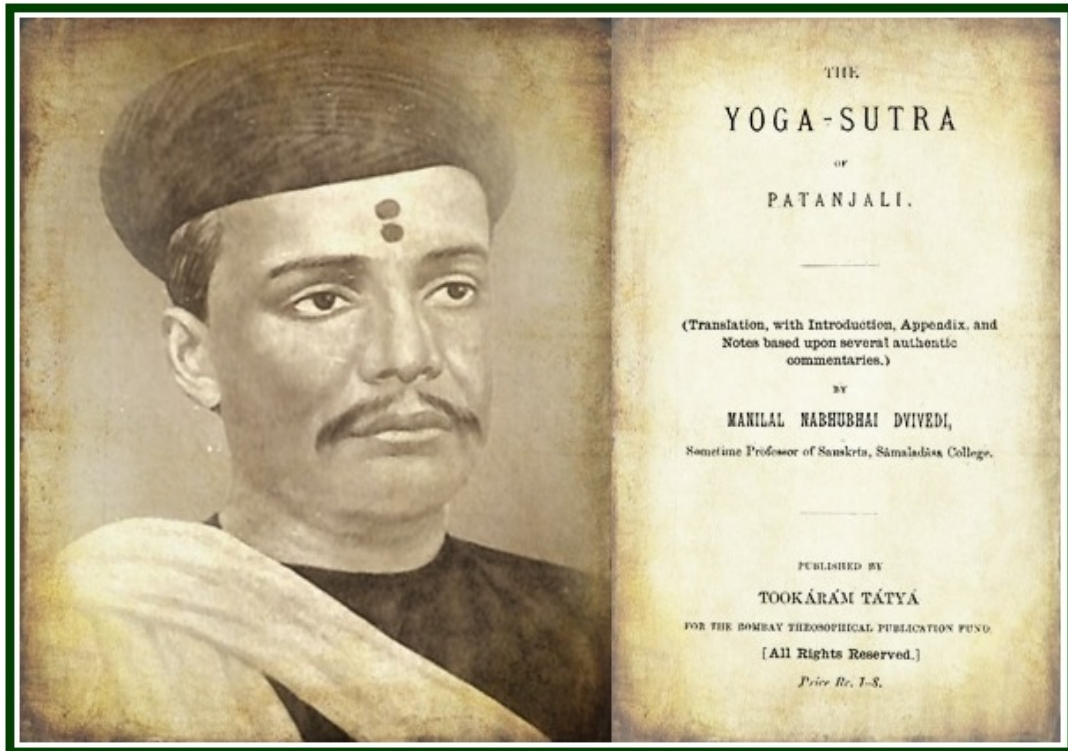
Reproduced from Chapter Four, fourth subtitle, in the book "Thought Power", by Swami Sivananda, various editions.

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[Click to Read:](#)

The Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali
Translation, with Introduction, Appendix, and
Notes Based Upon Several Authentic Commentaries

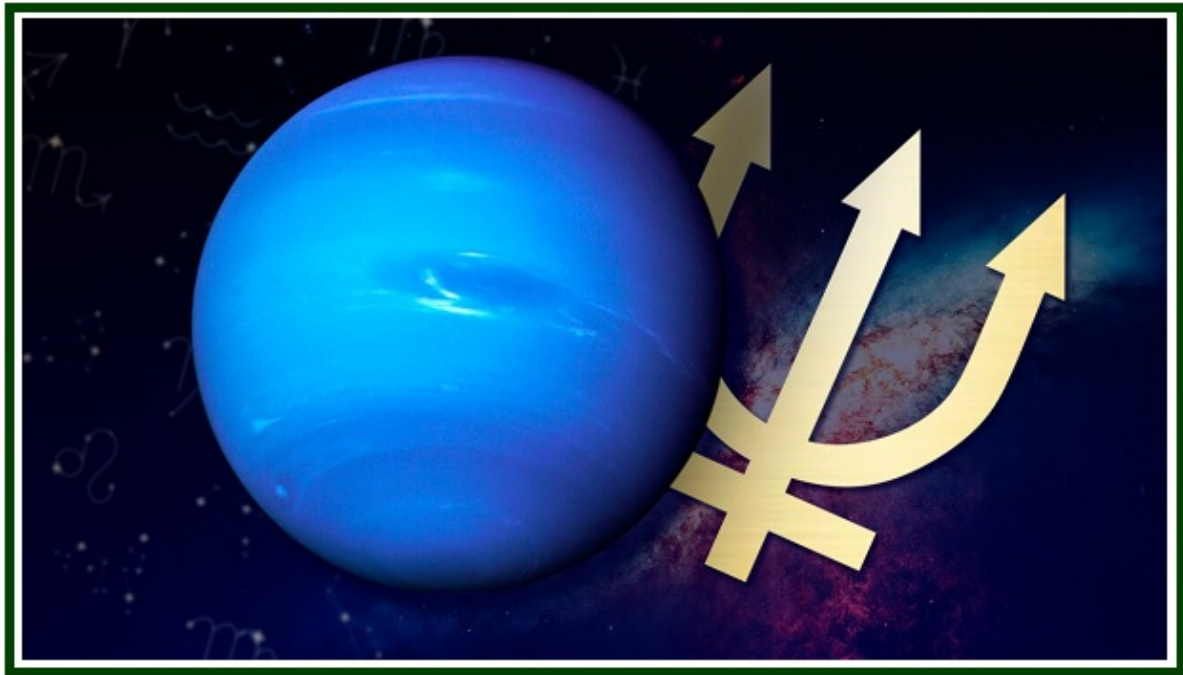
Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi



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Neptune Is Now in Aries

A New Historical Cycle Begins



Neptune entered Aries by the end of March 2025 and started reorganizing this pioneering territory from the spiritual point of view.

When Neptune leaves Aries in the year 2039, it will have powerfully renewed the very substance of human initiatives and innovations. It will have done so from within and seemingly in invisible ways.

Neptunian influence acts through the realm of the spiritual soul. Its effects are often uncomfortable to soulless external structures, and to the merely mechanical routines of the lower self.

The last time the blue planet slowly crossed the territory of Aries was between 1861 and 1875. In 1875, the theosophical movement was created as part of a long-term project to give mankind a stronger experience of universal brotherhood - a Neptunian vibration.

It will be interesting to see what innovations take place in the theosophical movement with Neptune once more in Aries, in the 21st century, the century of the great victory of Ethics announced by Blavatsky.

It is not granted that Neptune brings immediate peace as soon as it enters Aries, and the blog “Aquarian Diary” writes:

“You may have noted that the [North American] Civil War occurred between 1861 and 1865 when Neptune was in Aries. The American Civil War started on April 12, 1861. Remarkably, Neptune entered Aries the very following day on April 13 of 1861. We should in no way jump to conclusions about one astrological event alone, as there are a myriad of ever-changing variables to consider.” [1]

The blue giant is a visitor to our solar system, and not properly a native member of the local village, according to Blavatsky. Some astrologers call it “an ambassador” from the galaxy, just as Uranus and Pluto.[2]

Neptune is hardly understood, except when looked at from the point of view of the higher levels of perception. However, it is impossible not to see that it relates to universal compassion and cosmic unity.

In the absence of the higher self and its spiritual discernment, the Neptunian energy of transcendent unity generates mere confusion (and conflict) in the eyes of the misinformed. Neptune is the ruler of Pisces. It is the main territory of dreams, of universal beauty, of self-sacrifice, of the Christ-energy, of generosity, and - in literature - of romanticism. With Neptune in Aries, the ideal dream of a brotherly humanity ceases to be the passive victim and takes the initiative. The practical actions inspired by it, however, are often far from perfect since spiritual discernment is still scarce in our humanity. Generous initiatives, combined with limited amounts of discernment, are tantamount to a painful yet fruitful learning. Hence the creation of the theosophical project in September 1875 [3], under the influence of Neptune in Aries.

Although blind materialism is still strong around us, the first signs of the idealistic rebirth and springtime are visible already. By focusing on that which is true and correct from the moral point of view, each citizen makes the difference in the reawakening of the nations. (CCA)

NOTES:

[1] See the article “[The Stunning Transit of Neptune in Aries: 2025-2039](#)”.

[2] Read “[Neptune, a Mystery In Front of Us](#)”. On Neptune, see also the good books by Haydn Paul, Marilyn Waran and Steven Forrest. The book by Patricia Morimando, however, concentrates on the painful lower aspects of the Neptunian influence and basically ignores the existence of a higher self in humans, being therefore not quite worthwhile.

[3] Examine “[New York, September 7th, 1875](#)”.

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An earlier version of the above article was published in the December 2023 edition of “The Aquarian Theosophist”, pages 01-02.

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Recommended reading:

* [The Lesson of the Sun in Pisces.](#)

* [The Lesson of the Sun in Aries.](#)

* [Theosophy in the Sign of Pisces.](#)

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The Individual Structure

One's Character as a Spiritual Fortress



The June 1895 issue of the North-American theosophical magazine *The Path* concludes its last page with the following thought:

“By patience and virtue add hourly and daily to the strength of your character, which is all that you will carry into your next life. Farewell Book.” [1]

The point of view adopted by “The Path” is correct and it is classic.

Good character acts as a structure that both protects and expresses the energies of one's higher self. It constitutes a practical vehicle of the spiritual soul. It is the strength and basis of the Monad in the outward world.

One's individual character must be constantly improved as the experience of life is correctly accumulated.

NOTE:

[1] “The Path” magazine, New York, June 1895, p. 104. The magazine was then edited by William Q. Judge.

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[Click and See the Article](#)

The Desertion of Discipline

by B. P. Wadia

Failure to try and to keep on trying is the one and only real failure

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Theodoro D’Almeida And The Goodwill Among Nations



The Oratorian mystic D’Almeida, one of the greatest Portuguese-speaking thinkers of all time, alongside the current presidents of Russia and the United States

Nothing, Sir, is as appropriate for Princes and Sovereigns as maintaining mutual friendship among themselves, which forms the basis of the happiness of their nations, especially [if they are] neighbors.

Theodoro D’Almeida (1722-1804)

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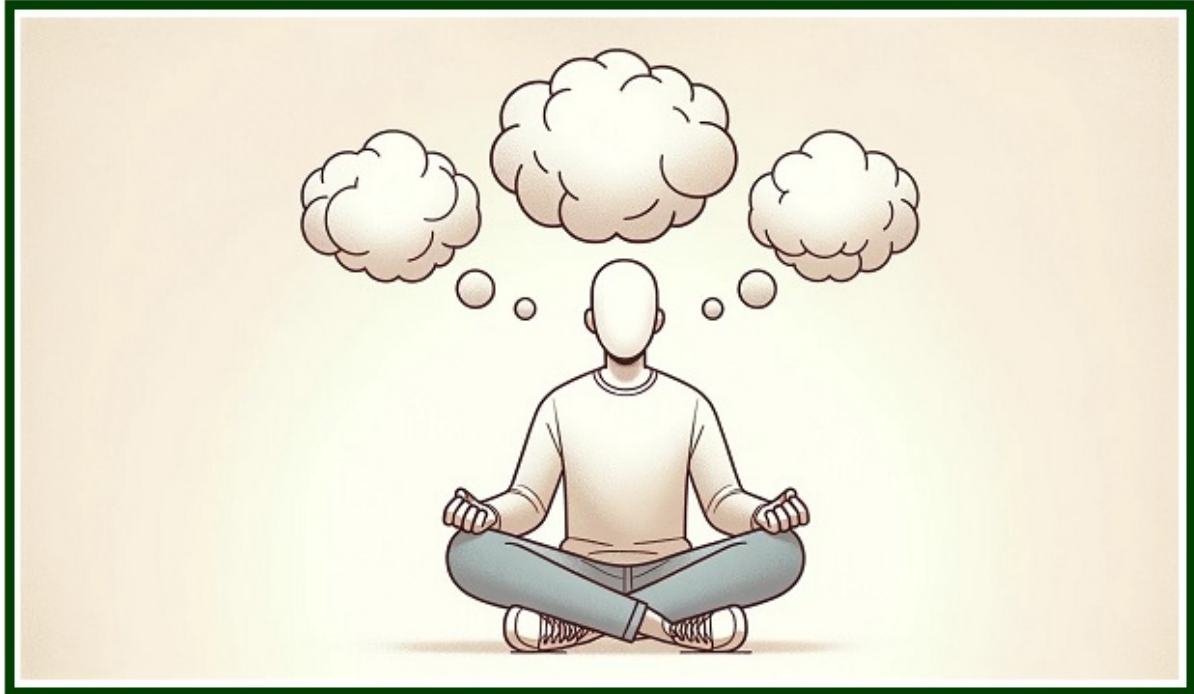
Translated from the work “O Feliz Independente do Mundo e da Fortuna” (“The Happy Man Independent from the World and Fortune”), a philosophical novel by Theodoro D’Almeida. The work was published in three volumes by the Regia Officina Typografica, in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1786. See volume III, p. 103.

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Read and practice “[A Prayer for Our Planetary Community](#)”.

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Swami Sivananda:
**Your Thoughts May Cause
Health Problems, or Heal Them**



Every change in thought makes a vibration in your mental body and this when transmitted to the physical body causes activity in the nervous matter of your brain. This activity in the nervous cells causes many electrical and chemical changes in them. It is thought-activity which causes these changes.

Intense passion, hatred, long-standing bitter jealousy, corroding anxiety, fits of hot temper actually destroy the cells of the body and induce diseases of the heart, liver, kidneys, spleen and stomach.

It is a point worthy to note with care that every cell in the body suffers or grows, receives a life impulse or a death impulse, from every thought that enters the mind, for you tend to grow into the image of that which you think about most.

When the mind is turned to a particular thought and dwells on it, a definite vibration of matter is set up and often, more of this vibration is caused, the more does it tend to repeat itself to become a habit, to become automatic. The body follows the mind and imitates its changes. If you concentrate your thought the eyes become fixed.

(Swami Sivananda)

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Reproduced from Chapter Four, fifth subtitle, in the book “**Thought Power**”, by Swami Sivananda, various editions.

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Independent Lodge of Theosophists

“A group or branch, however small, cannot be a theosophical Society - unless all the members in it are magnetically bound to each other, by the same way of thinking at least in some one direction ...”.

Image reproduced from the original manuscript of Letter C (100) in “Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett”, TUP, Pasadena, California, USA, p. 222:

A group or branch however small, cannot be a theosophical Society - unless all the members in it are magnetically bound to each other, by the same way of thinking at least in some one direction

(The founders of the Independent Lodge obtained from the British Library a complete copy of the original of Letter 100)

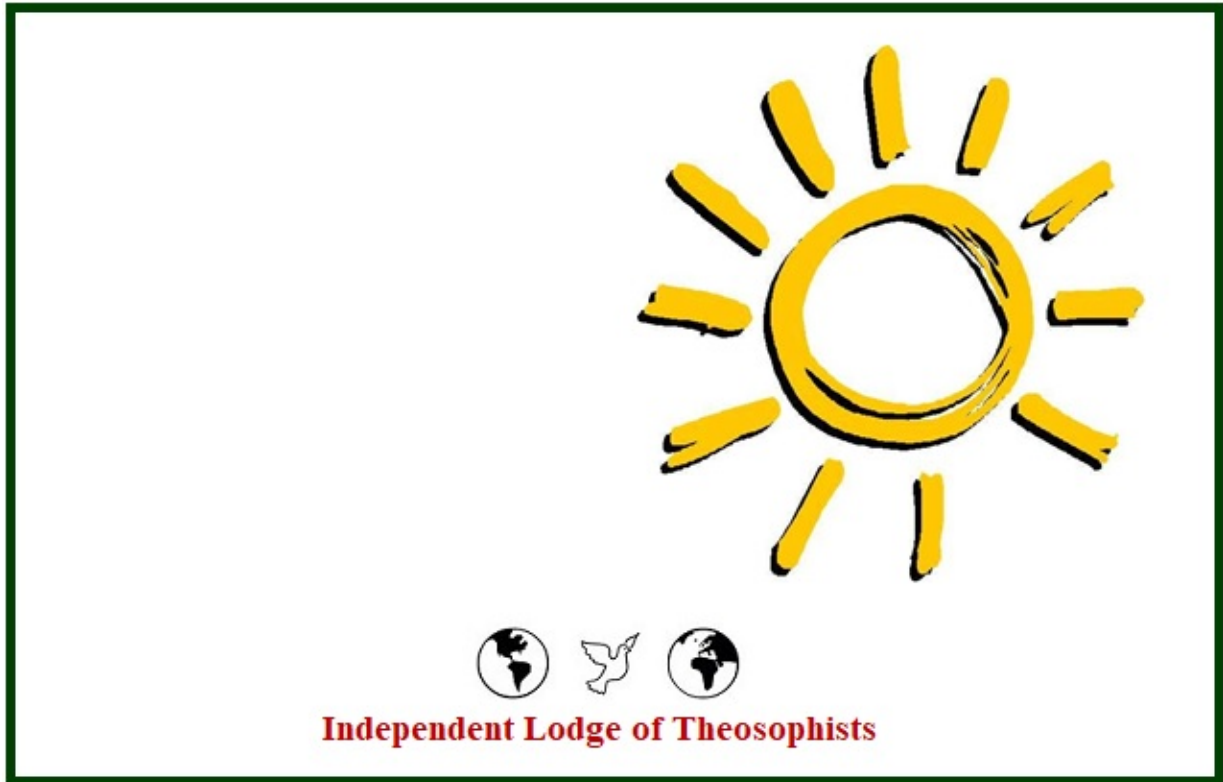
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Join **E-THEOSOPHY** group on **Google Groups**, and study a little bit of theosophy every day: <https://groups.google.com/g/e-theosophy> .

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Thoughts Along the Road

How to Send Peace and Vitality to Every Cell of Your Physical Body



* Wisdom tradition says that there is a direct correlation between our states of mind and our physical health.

* The equivalence between the two factors is not immediate nor mechanistic. An advanced soul will have a poor health, if its mission consists in challenging and fighting the accumulated karma of human ignorance. Many other factors are involved as well. However, the impact of states of mind on the state of physical health is always enormous. Hence the life of HPB was saved by his Master three times with the use of mantra. A mantra is a tool or vehicle through which *mind* and *thought* change *matter*, dense and astral.

The Power of Sound and Thought

* Accordingly, Helena P. Blavatsky writes in [The Secret Doctrine](#):

* “We say and maintain that SOUND, for one thing, is a tremendous Occult power; that it is a stupendous force, of which the electricity generated by a million of Niagaras could never counteract the smallest potentiality when directed with *occult knowledge*. Sound may be produced of such a nature that the pyramid of Cheops would be raised in the air, or that a

dying man, nay, one at his last breath, would be revived and filled with new energy and vigour.”

* Helena goes on:

* “For Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements that produce an ozone, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. It may even *resurrect* a man or an animal whose astral ‘vital body’ has not been irreparably separated from the physical body by the severance of the magnetic or odic chord. *As one saved thrice from death* by that power, the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it.” ([The SD, volume I, p. 555](#))

* One of these healings is specifically by HPB described in “Letters from Blavatsky to Sinnett”, TUP, Pasadena, page 105. However, the influence of mind over a living body is part of life for everyone.

* In different ways, all the thoughts and words of each citizen affect the quality of his own astral and physical life and the lives of those around him. Such effects may be helpful or harmful. They work as repetitive mantras, whose quality and results may be consciously improved.

* Whether constructive or destructive, elevated or selfish, our thoughts and emotions cause an impact on the cells and organs of our own physical bodies, and on the lives of other persons as well. This fact shows our responsibility in life. Every emotion counts. Each word spoken or silently thought has karmic effects upon its creator; and the *intention* of ideas and feelings, not their *appearance*, is the central factor in Karma.

* How do our organs and cells directly feel the impact of our thoughts and sentiments, all the time? Esoteric philosophy teaches that living cells are conscious. They have their own sort of perception. They constantly interact with our thoughts, our attitudes, our modes of vibration. They absorb the energy of our life-impulses. We are responsible for the well-being of our body. In the same way we influence the well-being of others around us.

* Blavatsky writes:

* “... Occultism, unlike modern science, maintains that every atom of matter, when once differentiated, becomes endowed with *its own* kind of Consciousness. Every *cell* in the human body (as in every animal) is endowed with its own peculiar discrimination, instinct, and, speaking relatively, with intelligence.” [1]

* And she expands the idea elsewhere:

* “Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe of itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers. The idea of Universal Life composed of individual atomic lives is one of the oldest teachings of esoteric philosophy, and the very modern hypothesis of modern science, that of *crystalline life*, is the first ray of ancient luminary knowledge, that has reached our scholars. If plants can be shown to have nerves and sensations and instinct (but another word for consciousness), why not allow the same in the cells of the human body?” [2]

Imagination Paves the Way to Facts

* A Master of the Wisdom writes in the “[Mahatma Letters](#)”:

* “As Jean Paul Richter says somewhere, the most painful part of our bodily pain is that which is bodiless or immaterial, namely our impatience, and the delusion that it will last forever.” ([Letter LIII, page 296](#))

* In the text “**Hypnotism, And its Relations to Other Modes of Fascination**” [3], we see these words by Blavatsky:

* “Imagination is a potent help in every event of our lives. Imagination acts on Faith and both are the draughtsmen who prepare the sketches for *Will* to engrave, more or less deeply, on the rocks or obstacles and opposition with which the path of life is strewn. Says Paracelsus: ‘*Faith* must confirm the imagination, for faith establishes the *will*. ... Determined will is the beginning of all magical operations. ... It is because men do not perfectly imagine and believe the result, that the arts (of magic) are uncertain, while they might be perfectly certain.’ This is all the secret. Half, if not two-thirds of our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and give another bent to the former, and nature will do the rest.”

* The last two sentences can be rephrased as positive, healing statements.

* Thus we could also say that approximately “*half, if not two-thirds of our ailings and diseases can be cured by our imagination and hopes. Strengthen the latter and give a constructive bent to the former, and nature will do the rest.*”

Sivananda on Right Thought and a Radiant Health

* In his book “**Thought Power**”, Swami Sivananda writes:

* “The body is internally associated with the mind, rather the body is a counterpart of the mind; it is a gross visible form of the subtle, invisible mind. If there is pain in the tooth or in the stomach or in the ear, the mind is at once affected. It ceases to think properly; it is agitated, disturbed and perturbed.”

* “If there is depression in the mind, the body also cannot function properly. The pains which afflict the body are called the secondary diseases, *Vyadhi*, while the Vasanas or desires that afflict the mind are termed mental or primary diseases, *Adhi*.”

* “Mental health is more important than physical health. If the mind is healthy, the body will necessarily be healthy. If the mind is pure, if your thoughts are pure, you will be free from all diseases primary and secondary. ‘*Mens sana in corpore sano* - a sound mind in a sound body’.” [4]

* A few sentences after this, Sivananda adds under the subtitle *Thoughts Affect the Body*:

* “Every thought or emotion or word produces a strong vibration in every cell of the body and leaves a strong impression there. If you know the method of raising an opposite thought, then you can lead a happy harmonious life of peace and power. Thought of love will at once

neutralize a thought of hatred. A thought of courage will immediately serve as a powerful antidote against a thought of fear.”

* And in Chapter Six of the same book “**Thought Power**”, item entitled “The Gamut of Thoughts” (item 14 in the Brazilian edition):

* “There are various kinds of thoughts. There are instinctive thoughts. There are visual thoughts. There are auditory thoughts (thinking in terms of hearing). There are symbolic thoughts (thinking in terms of symbols). Some thoughts are habitual.”

* “There are kinesthetic thoughts (thinking in terms of movement, as in playing a game). There are emotional thoughts. Thoughts change from the visual stage to auditory stage and from auditory to kinesthetic.”

* “There is intimate connection between thinking and respiration as there is close relation between mind and Prana. When the mind is concentrated, breathing becomes slow. If one thinks fast the respiration also becomes fast.”

The Healing Power We Have

* If we become aware of our responsibility for the whole flow and rhythm of thoughts, we can intelligently regulate their production so as to have a better health and be more effective in noble action.

* On the healing power of good thoughts, we have said elsewhere:

** Whatever I send forth, comes back, in essence. There is no separation in nature.*

** Every time I sincerely wish the best to other beings, a similar kind of healing energy is sent to my own mental, emotional and vital principles. From them, it goes down to my physical body, including its cells, nervous system and main organs.*

** Therefore we all should regularly take a couple of minutes to repeat, once and again, slowly, calmly:*

**** “I send peace, vigour and vitality to all beings and to every cell in my own body. I send life, harmony and strength to every part of my being and to all persons of good will. Om, shanti.”***

** In order to compensate for some suffering, or perhaps to prevent it, one may send the energy of thankfulness to the different parts of his physical organism, and to his fellow beings as well.*

** By expanding the power of good will, our existence is improved. It is an intelligent thing to do, to purify oneself, to wish the best to those around us, and make the Meaningful Journey from ignorance to universal compassion. [5]*

* It is worthwhile mentioning the books by French thinker [Jean des Vignes Rouges](#) (1879-1970). JVR wrote many a significant text on the influence of a bright mind and a persistently correct willpower not only on one’s inner life, but on one’s own physical body, as well as on the life of others. Building a strong goodwill is an art and a science in itself. Since 1875, most

of the numerous spiritual failures in the modern theosophical movement - including some of its leaders - occurred not because people *had not* access to *correct information about the Path*, but because they *had not the Spiritual Will necessary to Act Accordingly*. Hence the teachings themselves were distorted and “adapted” to the unfortunate lack of correct will and willpower. Such a basic mistake will probably be corrected in our century.

(CCA)

NOTES:

[1] From “Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge”, part II, as included in “Collected Writings” of HPB, TPH, USA, vol. X, p. 322.

[2] See the article “Kosmic Mind”, Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 134: the article contains an extensive scientific discussion on the consciousness of cells.

[3] The quotation is on page 11 of “The Aquarian Theosophist”, [February 2024 edition](#).

[4] From the book “Thought Power”, by Swami Sivananda, various editions, Chapter Four, “The Functions of Thought Power”, Item One, “Thoughts Promote Radiant Health”.

[5] See the article “[Thoughts Along the Road - 59](#)”.

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The Power of Thinking

Walter D. Wintle

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't,
It is almost a certain – you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you've lost;
For out in this world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you're outclassed, you are;
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win the prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man;
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the one who thinks he can!

[There are various versions of the above poem. Its first bibliographical source is uncertain. Original title: “Thinking”. See it in one of our [associated websites](#).]

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Sources of Victory:
The Practice of Fasting

Swami Sankardevananda Saraswati



A 2025 Editorial Note:

There is something that often goes without saying, yet may deserve mentioning.

Before starting to practice fasting, it would be a good idea, though not strictly necessary perhaps, to daily practice respiratory exercises for two or three months at least. These could be the slow calm deep breathing of clean air, followed by moderate *pranayama* and *bhastrika*. It is recommended to abstain from Kumbhaka or breath retention.

The reason for respiratory exercises is simple. Besides being present in physical food, *Prana*, or life energy, is also available in the air we breathe. Regular moderate breathing exercises gradually expand one's ability to benefit from the Prana available in the atmosphere. And fasting helps our respiratory system to be more effective in locating and absorbing Prana in the air. This generally allows people to get better results from fasting.

(Carlos Cardoso Aveline)

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The Practice of Fasting

Swami Sankardevananda Saraswati

Fasting is a completely natural process which each one of us does at night while we sleep, and the next morning we break our fast with breakfast. In India many Hindus, especially ladies, practise regular fasting as part of their religious customs. Sometimes they fast once a week or on full moon days. If not a complete fast, they may take only fruits and other light foodstuffs. Fasting is also an integral part of the Muslim faith, with daylight fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. In Buddhism and Christianity fasting is also of great importance. Christ and Buddha both fasted for 40 days before reaching enlightenment and starting their missions.

Saints of every order have used fasting with prayer or meditation to reach higher spiritual states. Other people have used fasting solely as a practice to improve physical and mental health, while natural therapists have suggested that fasting is at the basis of curing many diseases. Fasting combined with yogic practices has been found to be very useful for digestive problems, helping to eliminate even long standing conditions such as amebic dysentery.

What is Fasting?

The word *fasting* comes from the old English word 'fasten' meaning to fix or make firm. Under no circumstances does fasting mean starvation. In effect, the point where the body starts to starve because it has depleted its nutritional reserves is the end of the fast. From the outset it is important to realize the fasting stage only takes place so long as the body can support itself on the stored reserves within the body. Starvation begins when the body's reserves are depleted or are at a dangerously low level.

Fasting, like all other natural cures, is based on the principle that the body itself contains the most efficient healing agents. These agents are most effective when they are unhampered by the process of digestion and assimilation which tend to drain off much of the body's energies. Fasting gives these systems a much needed rest and releases energy for the elimination of toxins and restoring the body to health.

In the optimum state of health, there is no need to fast, however, this is rarely the case. Most people continually overtax the body by eating too much, drinking too much, and living in a continual state of tension. Instead of an adequate supply of natural nutrients, the body often receives a mixture of denatured and devitalized foodstuffs which tend to clog it up. Bodily efficiency is continually impaired by the surplus of food which it is unable to use up or throw off. Fasting gives the body time for a thorough cleansing and expulsion of accumulated wastes.

In the digestive tract, there is a continuous buildup of waste material such as undigested or partially digested food particles, bacteria, and so on. If a person habitually overeats or suffers from constipation, this buildup will be greatly increased. This is the breeding ground for many more serious illnesses as well as general ill-health. The simplest way to clean out the whole digestive system is to miss a few meals. When no food is being ingested, the body can concentrate fully on what is already there. The buildup of waste materials is more effectively expelled via the bowels, kidneys and skin, bringing about a marked purification of the blood. This in turn gives a wonderful feeling of lightness and freshness.

Many people are afraid to miss even one meal as they believe that this will weaken them. The fact is, however, that modern man suffers mainly from diseases of excess (obesity, diabetes, heart disease, etc.). He digs his grave with his teeth. Life insurance statistics reveal that a trim body is conducive to a longer life span.

Fasting and Disease

Have you ever observed an animal, such as your pet dog or cat, when it is not feeling well? In most cases it will try to go some place where it will not be disturbed, lie down and take complete rest. Even if you give food, it will refuse to eat. Human beings, however, find it very difficult to rest and recuperate, and for most, fasting is nearly impossible. Many people think that energy comes from food and so tasty dishes are prepared for the sick person to induce him to eat. This attitude fails to take into account the fact that one of the first signs of sickness is a loss of appetite, a natural warning designed to help nature's repair work.

When bacteria invade the body the immune system is mobilized. All available energy is required and therefore physical activity should be avoided. Eating requires a lot of metabolic energy and this energy must be kept in reserve for fighting the disease. Fasting speeds up the catabolic (breakdown) process which occurs in illness thereby helping to eliminate toxins. This appears to be the opposite view to that proposed by medical science which offers drugs and chemicals to reduce discomfort and suppress symptoms. However, if we allow the disease to complete its natural course, it will be finished and the body will be purified. Many poisons thrown out through the skin via perspiration and through the blood via urine. Taking food is said to allow poisons to be reabsorbed back into the body, as eating food stops catabolism and starts anabolism, the buildup of the body.

Fasting is more important for those who have been on a high meat diet. Those who only take animal products such as cheese, milk and eggs require less fasting. For vegans, people on a pure vegetarian diet, fasting is not necessary, but it can be used occasionally in disease, to rest the body, or to increase the digestive fire.

To claim that fasting is a 'cure-all' no matter what the nature or duration of the disease would be foolish. Fasting is a science and it must be practised under expert guidance especially when utilized as a therapeutic technique. The age of the sufferer, the nature of the complaint (whether acute or chronic), and various other considerations will all have to be taken into account. If an organ is structurally defective, fasting will not bring it back to its original state. However, if there is any functional disorder, fasting is a simple, direct and effective method of cure. It attacks disease at the roots by expelling poisons and also by increasing willpower and inducing a relaxed, meditative state of mind which is very important in the removal of the tensions that cause disease.

Psychology of Fasting

Fasting must be practised under the right circumstances and with the right frame of mind. If one is worried about toxins building up in the body or about becoming too fat, then the fast will be ineffectual. There will be tension instead of complete rest and relaxation. Such fasting is not natural; it arises out of desire or fear rather than need and throws the body's metabolism out of balance. It is better to call this sort of process starvation instead of fasting.

You will know intuitively when it is the right time to fast. Something inside says it is better to miss a meal or two. Perhaps hunger is absent or you feel that you may be getting sick. When

the body tells you “No more food, please!” it is nature’s signal to fast and the process feels good.

Self-imposed fasting can also be used as a meditative *sadhana*. If the hunger is great, you can practise *antar mouna* and observe everything that goes on in the body and mind. Through this you will learn many things about yourself and the importance of food in your life. You will see the psychological pull that hunger and taste exert as well as your habitual approach and attitude towards food. This is a method not only to discover the inner workings of the body and mind but also to develop mental strength and willpower.

Fasting, when approached correctly, is very relaxing. As the body slows down the mind does also and this can be felt in the following ways:

- * Breathing is freer.
- * There is greater ease of movement.
- * That ‘tired feeling’ disappears.
- * Fullness and discomfort in the abdomen are soon replaced by lightness.
- * Blood pressure is lowered.

How to Fast

Preparation for a fast is very important. It is not advisable to make an abrupt transition from your usual diet unless you are very ill. In this case all solid food should be eliminated from your diet and plenty of fluids consumed so as to flush the kidneys. If you are well and able to prepare for the fast, first abstain from meat and heavy foods, then over the next few days switch over to a light fruit diet. After this you can commence the fast.

The following suggestions will help to make your fast more successful:

1. If possible, fasting should be undertaken during the warmer periods of the year. During cold weather, food is converted into energy to keep the body warm. Fasting at this time makes the body more susceptible to cold. Of course in the case of acute disease, a fast can still be undertaken but the house should be kept warm and whenever you go outside be sure to wear plenty of warm clothing.
2. Few people are aware of the benefits of fasting, so before you begin, make sure that your family and friends understand the basics of fasting and your goal. Fasting in the early stages is difficult enough without having nagging relatives trying to force food down your throat. A positive, encouraging atmosphere amidst family and friends is most helpful. If you wish to fast for a long period of time and your surroundings are not suitable, we advise you to stay in an ashram or similar institution where fasting is regularly undertaken with the aid of expert guidance. Most people are a little uncertain during their first attempt at fasting so it is essential that the environment be as congenial as possible.
3. The body itself is the most reliable indicator of how long the fast should be. This applies whether one is fasting for cure of disease or for general cleansing. Also the severity of the disease may determine the length of the fast. As the constitution of each of us is slightly different, the duration of fasting must suit each individual. Rely on what the body tells you rather than on the experience of others.

The duration of the fast depends largely on the purpose for which the fast is undertaken. For a general cleanout, 1 to 3 days per month is sufficient. If fasting is practised once a week the benefits will be greatly enhanced. For more specific purposes the standard duration is 3 days if one is without guidance. This is generally long enough to give the whole system a complete rest.

4. In a pure fast one should take only plain water, nothing else. It is good to drink plenty of water while fasting as this increases the natural process of purification. In a fast of longer than 2 days, one should take water with a little lemon juice (no sugar) 3 times daily to aid the cleansing process.

5. In a one day fast, feelings of weakness (if they occur) are largely psychological. Your mental attitude will make all the difference. People have been known to fast for many days and grow progressively stronger! Some people say that on a 1 day fast it is essential to maintain all normal activities, for if one rests all day 80% of the benefits will be lost due to lack of natural blood circulation. While fasting most people experience a wonderful feeling of freshness and lightness, and many report that they can carry out their daily duties even more efficiently. Others say we should take complete rest. The average person may wish to avoid strenuous physical activities on a fast of 3 days or longer. You must find your own middle way.

6. In prolonged fasts hunger sensations disappear after the first few days even though the hunger contractions of the stomach may persist. This is thought to be due to an adaptive process in the brain. Drinking water helps to relieve the desire for food, but never drink iced water. Also use *bhujangini mudra* to reduce hunger. Keep in mind that there is a difference between hunger and appetite. Hunger is the natural call of the body for food in order to maintain itself while appetite is hunger of the mind.

7. It is beneficial to take an enema or to do *basti* or *laghoo shankhaprakshalana* on the day of or the day after fasting, especially if there is no bowel movement. Do not use laxatives.

8. Bathe once or twice a day with cold or lukewarm water. Inner and outer cleanliness go hand in hand.

9. Keep yourself occupied mentally and do not think about food. One who fasts but spends the whole time waiting for the fast to be over is wasting his time and creating mental tension.

10. Fasting is not generally advised for reducing fat. The average dieter will fast for 1 day, and then eat enough for 3 days the day after.

11. Look upon fasting as a spiritual practice and when you fast never advertise it. Aside from its physical benefits, fasting is a powerful method of developing willpower and self-discipline.

12. The important thing to remember in fasting is moderation. Never fast if the cravings of the body and mind become excessive, and don't fast if you do not feel like it. Be open to the possibility of fasting and use it when the need arises. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:16):

“Yoga is not possible for he who eats too much, or for he who abstains too much from eating.”

Breaking the Fast

There is a great tendency to overeat upon completion of the fast. Much care should be taken to ensure that a proper diet is followed. The method of breaking the fast will depend on the duration of the fast, but generally the first food taken should be liquid-fresh fruit juice or milk. This especially applies for fasts longer than 24 hours. Orange juice diluted with water, taken every two hours is a popular way to break a fast. The first solid food to be taken should be something easy to digest, like melon or vegetable broth. Take only small amounts and chew each mouthful well.

The following diets are suggested after the liquid diet:

Fruit diet - preferably composed of chopped fresh fruits in season (apples and dates or peaches and dates, for example) taken in small quantities every 2 or 3 hours.

Milk diet - take a glass of milk every few hours as desired.

Gruel diet - boil a tablespoon of oatmeal or barley in a pint of water and add a pinch of salt or sugar. Take small amounts at first and slowly increase over a few days.

After breaking the fast, it is well to keep the following points in mind:

- * Drink plenty of water.
- * Your stomach will have shrunk and will require less food so take care not to overeat.
- * Don't overexercise for the first few days.

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The above text is reproduced from the book “**The Practices of Yoga for The Digestive System**”, written by Swami Sankardevananda Saraswati under the guidance of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, and published by Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, India, 177 pp., second edition, 1980. See pp. 44 to 50.

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New Items in Our Websites

On April 11th we had 3500 items in the associated websites, including texts, books, poems, audios and videos.

Of these, 27 items were in [Russian](#), 50 items in [French](#), 372 in [Spanish](#), 1508 in [English](#) and 1542 in [Portuguese](#).^[1]

The following items were published between 14 March and 11 April 2025. The more recent titles are above:

- 1. Our Oneness With Infinite Life** - O. S. Marden
- 2. Thoughts Along the Road - 83** - Carlos Cardoso Aveline

