

YOGA

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Hari Om

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Editor: Swami Shaktimitrananda Saraswati

Assistant Editor: Swami Yogatirth-ananda Saraswati

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Positive qualities

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control . . . is declared to be knowledge.

—*Bhagavad Gita 13:7*

These are the qualities that constitute wisdom or lead to wisdom. Humility is the negation of vanity, the absence of self-esteem or self-praise. A person in whom hypocrisy is absent is simple and modest. Ahimsa means non-injury of any living being in thought, word and deed.

Patience and forgiveness is a true symptom of knowledge and a wise person puts up with everything. A straightforward person has a heart as pure as a crystal. Inner purity is cleansing the mind of the dirt of attachment, anger and other passions by the method of pratipaksha bhavana. No meditation is possible in a body wherein the senses are out of control and distract attention.

—*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

For Quick Success

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Jnana yoga is rooted in discrimination and self-denial,
blossoms as knowledge of Brahma
and bears the fruit of moksha.

* * *

Bhakti yoga is rooted in faith and self-surrender,
blossoms as intense love and bears
the fruit of communion with the
Lord in ecstasy.

* * *

Raja yoga is rooted in yama, and niyama,
blossoms as one-pointedness of mind and bears the fruit of
samadhi.

* * *

Karma yoga is rooted in self-sacrifice,
blossoms as purity and expansion of heart and bears the fruit
of knowledge of the imperishable.

* * *

Kriya yoga is rooted in truth and brahmacharya,
blossoms as the grace of the Divine Mother and bears the fruit
of union with Lord Shiva.

* * *

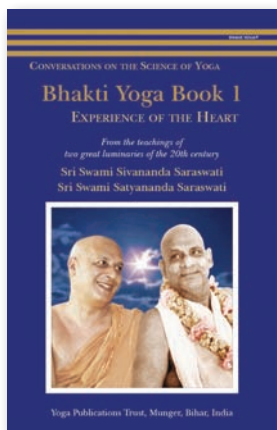
Hatha yoga is rooted in asana and pranayama,
blossoms as restfulness and bears the fruit of perfect health,
long life and awakening of kundalini.

* * *

Therefore, for quick success, the various methods should be
combined.

The Right Proportion

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Bhakti Yoga Book 1:
Experience of the Heart



Swami Satyananda: It is understood that the various systems of sadhanas have to be placed properly. If they are not placed properly, there is going to be chaos in one's expressions of life, personality and behaviour. That is the reason why many spiritual people look very crazy. They look crazy because they are moving through a process that is responsible for lopsided development.

When I talk about yoga I talk about integral yoga, yoga of synthesis. I do not overemphasize just one aspect of yoga because I do not think it is right. One thing is certain. If one is cooking two kilos of vegetables, one does not put in two kilos of salt or two kilos of butter. There is a correct proportion. In the same way, in the practice of yoga there is also a correct proportion.

There must be seventy percent karma yoga; twenty percent raja yoga, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, and so on; five percent jnana yoga and five percent bhakti yoga. If one tries to practise seventy percent dhyana yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, tantra yoga, then one will go to the mental hospital. Or if one practises seventy percent jnana yoga, then one becomes an intellectual giant but remains a pygmy in other areas of the personality. If one practises seventy percent bhakti yoga one will be saying, "Oh God, Oh God, this microphone is working because of God's grace. This flower is red because of God's grace. Oh, today it is not raining because of God's grace." You bring God everywhere, even into the toilet. Too much bhakti

is not good for it brings about an imbalance. Too much raja yoga also causes an imbalance and too much of jnana yoga creates imbalance too. People are gross and therefore they need a greater proportion of karma yoga.

In order to purify the mind, it is necessary to practise karma yoga. Bhakti, raja and jnana yoga are important for a balanced development, but karma yoga should predominate because if the mind is not purified of the dross, if the samskaras are not properly resolved, they obstruct the process of inner as well as mundane experience. With an impure mind there are a lot of mental problems which arise from one's interaction with day-to-day life and the people around.

With the awakening of kundalini or with the practice of tantra the perception changes, intuition changes, and the possibility of discovering deeper forms of knowledge becomes possible. Karma yoga, bhakti yoga and raja yoga are meant to deal with the various problems one faces during this process of transformation.



Bhakti yoga is necessary in order to overcome the hurdles; for the mind in its primordial stage has a lot of crude material in it.

Yoga is a system, a technique for stilling the turbulence of the mind, for harnessing it and maintaining its resilience. It aims at developing an integrated personality. The best way to achieve this is a synthesis of bhakti, karma, jnana and raja yoga. No one should be all intellect or all emotion. There should be a happy blending of both; otherwise one will have no peace in life.

Teaching and Experiencing

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Bihar School of Yoga stopped all the Teacher Training programs that it used to have at Ganga Darshan. For us it was part of the first chapter of yoga, which was yoga propagation. Bihar School of Yoga propagated yoga for 50 years and it had its standard programs which used to be conducted year after year in the same manner, whether it was yoga teacher training, yoga instructor program, health management or any other course.

After 2013, it was realized that the age of propagation was over. There are thousands and thousands of yoga teachers throughout the world in every city, every town and village. I thought, 'If everybody becomes a yoga teacher who will be the student?' So we stopped conducting all training programs.

As teachers you know enough to teach, but not enough to experience.

When we came to the ashram and Sri Swami Satyananda, our guru, was teaching us yoga, the intention was not to make us into yoga teachers. That was very far from our mind. He taught us yoga so that we could experience yoga and he took us through all the aspects of yoga. The first generation of teachers

propagated the original yoga, but when teachers were trained later it was limited yoga, not the original yoga.

Limited yoga

What do I mean by limited? What is the training that is being given? Some asanas, not all the asanas, and even those you cannot perform perfectly. Some pranayama, not the complete series of pranayama, but the few important ones. Some mudras and bandhas which you use in your own practice, some techniques of pratyahara, like yoga nidra and maybe two or three practices of pratyahara and dharana, like ajapa japa or antar mouna. Beyond that there is no other learning in yoga for a yoga teacher. So as yoga teachers you are not even representing one percent of yoga; but even that is plenty.

I am telling you this so you can understand that the teaching aspect of yoga is very limited. You cannot teach more than a few asanas, a few pranayamas, some techniques of relaxation and some techniques of concentration. That is what you learned as a teacher and you will be teaching that: this is very good.

Your yogic journey should not stop after you become a teacher of ten asanas, two pranayama, one relaxation and three meditative practices. You have to embark on the journey of self-discovery, and that will happen when you experience yoga in your life and forget about the benefits of teaching – the economic and financial benefits of having students. If financial benefit is your aim then the 10–15 practices which you know are good enough, but if experiencing yoga is your aim, then even after the teacher training course and after your teaching, you should continue to explore yoga and experience yoga as a sadhaka.

Yoga Chakra for the sadhaka

This will not be part of your teaching but part of your personal effort to experience yoga and deepen your knowledge of yoga. From this year the entire system, the entire course program, the entire methodology of yoga training and teaching has

changed. From 2016, every course and every program is new. It is a total step up from the last 50 years.

In this system we are having the Progressive Yoga Vidya Training (PYVT) for one month. Senior yoga teachers who have been teaching for the last 30 to 40 years have come to participate and have derived a lot of benefit from reconnecting with the yogic experience.

Similarly, in order to deepen your understanding in the Bihar Yoga system, the *Yoga Chakra* concept has been introduced, the system of yoga as developed by Sri Swami Satyananda. The Yoga Chakra comprises of six yogas – three which are practices and three which are expressions. There is a sequence of practices – first, mastery of hatha yoga; second, mastery of raja yoga; and third, mastery of kriya yoga.

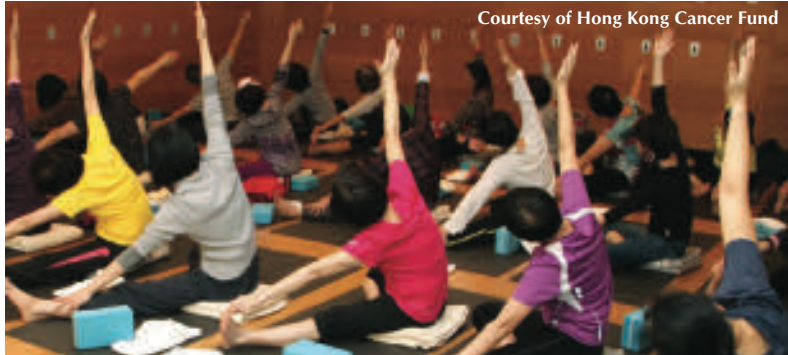
Hatha yoga is for the body, raja yoga for the mind and kriya yoga for special awakening. Body, mind and spirit are covered in these three yogas. They allow you to explore yourself, they allow you to find equilibrium within yourself. They allow you to explore and awaken the dormant potential and prana shakti within yourself. They make you aware of the transformative process that you go through in life with sincere application of yoga. It is not just random performance; hatha yoga, raja yoga and kriya yoga represent the physical, mental and spiritual disciplines.

The expression of these three yogas happens in jnana yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga. They are the six yogas which constitute the Yoga Chakra, the teachings of Sri Swami Satyananda, our guru. Now we are following those teachings of Sri Swamiji which allow us to experience yoga.

The focus is not on training any more. Training is given by people in other places, by strong committed teachers. In Munger, teacher training is over and we are going to another level of yogic experience.

*—25 September 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger
With teacher trainees of Atmadarshan Yoga Ashram, Bengaluru*

Satyananda Yoga for Cancer Survivors in Hong Kong



For many people in Hong Kong, yoga is still only perceived as a way to maintain physical health. However, the cancer survivors, whom I had the opportunity to meet while I was in Hong Kong, were looking for something more – they hoped that through yoga, they could obtain some mental relaxation and peace, as well as other physical and psychological benefits. Even after surgery and treatment, many cancer survivors are constantly facing different worries and fears – about possible relapse and about the impact that they have brought to their families. These anxieties and negative thoughts not only affect their psychological health, but also have a repercussion on their physical health. Many of them mentioned that they always had problem with their sleep, either in the form of insomnia or very light sleep, and this poor sleep quality affected their mood, concentration, as well as physical health.

The cancer survivors were participants of wellness programs offered by a local NGO called Hong Kong Cancer Fund. It provides free programs, such as yoga courses and workshops, to cancer survivors and their families. For the courses and workshops, there were usually about 25 participants in each class, with over 95% being females; and

amongst the females, over 90% were breast cancer survivors. Most of the participants were around 60 to 65 years old, with a range from 35 to 70 years old.

One of my courses focused on pranayama and yoga nidra. I was amazed to see the number of people enrolled and participating. One comment from a male participant says it all: In one particular class, I had introduced the practice of bhramari pranayama. After the class, that participant came up to me and said that he was very grateful that he had learnt bhramari pranayama in that class, because it was the first time in many years that his mind was not occupied with worries or anxieties; and he felt moments of being tension-free and at peace. He also said that he would practise it regularly from then on.

The pranayama and yoga nidra course was structured and organized with the expectations from the participants kept in mind. Pre-pranayama practices, such as breath awareness and abdominal breathing were introduced at the beginning of the course. Then as the course progressed, other practices such as bhramari – a tranquillizing pranayama, and nadi shodhana – a balancing pranayama, as well as yogic breathing were introduced. However, a typical class contained also asana, as well as kaya sthairyam and concentration practices.

During the practices of asana and pranayama, an important element of Satyananda Yoga was being emphasized throughout the course, i.e. maintaining the awareness of the practice – on the physical movement, and then on the movement of the breath. For many participants, it was the first time that they felt that they were connected with their physical body and their breath.

For the yoga nidra practice, in addition to the practice of rotation of consciousness, visualization practices taken from the book *Yogic Management for Cancer* by Swami Nirmalananda, which focus on the visualization of the cosmic prana, were included. These visualizations helped promote an individual's healing capacity and a sense of wellbeing. Many participants commented that they enjoyed the practice as they felt relaxed and revitalized after the practice.

The reason that these Hong Kong Chinese participants were rather receptive to the visualization of prana and found it helpful might be due to the fact that the concept of prana is quite similar to the Chinese concept of 'qi'. Therefore, it was relatively easy for the participants to visualize the movement of prana and feel the benefits of such visualization. The concept of sankalpa was also introduced and included in the yoga nidra practice, and some participants mentioned in the evaluation that they found it particularly useful.

As a result of this course, a few workshops on Yoga Capsule were conducted this year. The aims of the workshops were in line with Swami Niranjan's purpose of introducing the concept of Yoga Capsule: different sets of practices which could be practised at different times of the day, suiting the different needs of the body and mind.

In the workshops, each set of practices would take about 10 to 15 minutes to perform. It was explained to the participants the most appropriate time to perform the different sets of practices. The capsules introduced included: asana, pranayama, yoga nidra and the concept of sankalpa, review of the day, kaya sthairyam, beginners' antar mouna, and yogic attitudes (yama and niyama). Participants found the idea of yoga capsule appealing as the practices were organized in a manageable timeframe and format, and they felt that they could sustain regular practice of the capsules after the workshop. They also felt empowered as they understood the rationale and benefits of different capsules, and how the capsules were suitable for the different needs of the body and mind at different times of the day.

Amidst the turmoil of facing cancer and the various challenges it has imposed on their lives, these cancer survivors found relaxation and peace, as well as a positive outlook through Satyananda Yoga. I am very grateful that I could facilitate this process and bring Satyananda Yoga into their lives.

—Swami Amritbindu

Advice to Aspirants

From Light, Power and Wisdom, Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Vanity, arrogance, a self-assertive nature and rajasic violence are great obstacles on the spiritual path. They take various forms. It is very difficult for the aspirant to detect them. The Guru only can detect them and show efficient methods to eradicate them. The aspirant vainly imagines that he is advanced on the spiritual path. He resents when these defects are pointed out by others. He never admits his defects. Such an aspirant cannot make any spiritual progress.

The aspirant claims that he is a superior sadhaka with psychic powers and great knowledge of yoga. He thinks that

he is free from defects and that he is a perfect yogi. He poses as a yogi with realization. He says that he can influence others and has a large number of disciples, devotees, and admirers. Such an aspirant cannot make an iota of spiritual progress. He is more egoistic and proud than ordinary householders.

If the aspirant is not willing to regenerate his lower nature, he will not be benefited even if he remains for several years with his guru.

Disobedience and indiscipline are great obstacles on the spiritual path. Self-assertion stands in the way of obedience. The ego can be annihilated only by obedience, humility and service. The aspirant has his own ideas, whims, fancies and impulses. He is unwilling to accept any order or discipline presented by his guru. He has his own ways. He promises to be obedient and observe discipline, but the actions done or the course followed is the very opposite of his promise.

An aspirant who conceals facts, who utters falsehood, who is hypocritical cannot hope for the descent of divine light. He does things to keep up his position, to get his own way or indulges in his own habit. He clouds his own understanding and conscience.

It is impossible to correct an aspirant who has the dangerous habit of constant self-justification. He is ready to bring any kind of clumsy argument to justify himself, to keep up his position and prestige.

If an aspirant continues out of self-esteem and self-will or tamasic inertia to shut his eyes or harden his heart against the divine light, so long as he does that, no one can help him.

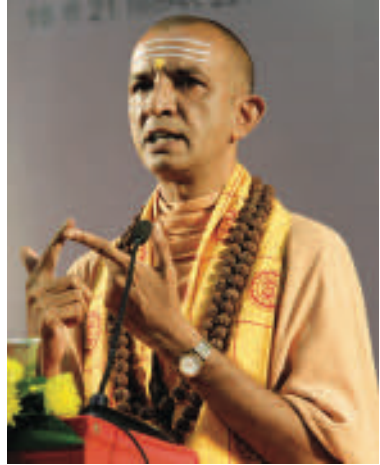
If an aspirant who is arrogant, vain, untruthful and violent says that he is meditating for two hours nicely, he is a hypocrite, he is a deluded soul. No meditation is possible in one who has such traits. Do not believe this deluded man.

Obey your teacher. Follow his instructions implicitly. Be truthful. Be calm. Be serene. Be humble. Be devoted. Be disciplined. You will attain self-realization now and here. May the Lord bless you all, O sincere seekers after Truth.

Spiritual Journey

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The material journey is from the top to the bottom through the chakras and the spiritual journey is the ascent from the bottom back to the top. On this spiritual journey divinity is experienced only when consciousness and energy unite. Many people think of yoga as an atheistic doctrine or system as there is no concept of God or deity in yoga. In yoga the name of Rama, Krishna, Devi or of any other gods or goddesses does not arise. In yoga the universal soul, *Paramatma*, has been referred by only one name, Ishwara.



Nashwara and Ishwara

There are two words: one is Ishwara, the other is nashwara. Both words have 'shwa', one is prefixed with 'i', the other with 'na'. *Shwa* signifies time, whether the past or future time.

Nashwara means, that which was not in the past, is not in the present and will not be in the future. *Nashwara* means human beings for they change every day, each day the state of mind changes. Every six hours the cells divide. The person who was six hours ago, is no longer the same person six hours later; there is a new body. In this constant change there is no permanent state, and that is called *nashwara*.

Ishwara means the energy, the tattwa, which existed in the past, exists in the present and will exist in the future. That which is unchanging, permanent and never changes,

is called Ishwara. According to the *Yoga Sutras*, it is beyond the experience of joy and the experience of sorrow. What is beyond the experience of joy and sorrow is called Paramatma. Whatever experiences joy and sorrow, is not called Paramatma but *jivatma*, the individual soul, which attains this body, and through the medium of this body experiences pleasure as well as pain. Pleasure as well as pain is not permanent.

When Shiva and Shakti unite in sahasrara one experiences divinity, one realizes the eternal nature of one's life. Then one can say with full faith, 'I am unchanging and immortal, in any age I am not destroyed'. The soul exists in the three periods of past, present and future. Time cannot cause the disappearance and destruction of the self.

Sri Krishna imparted this knowledge to Arjuna on the battlefield. He said, "What are you worried about? You are worried about the body, but the body is perpetually changing; and that which changes is also eventually destroyed, and subject to birth. Why are you infatuated with that material form? Why are you ensnared by that material form? Keep yourself free." The message Sri Krishna gave to Arjuna explains the impermanence of life.

The power of union

Ishwara is endowed with special qualities. When sattwa, rajas and tamas become one, there is no difference between them. When no distinction remains, the three gunas united as one are expressed in the form of an unbelievable energy and power. A small branch can be easily snapped with one's hands, two are more difficult to break, and it is a still greater challenge to break three branches. The more branches are gathered together, the more difficult it is to break them, for there is strength in union. Nobody can break that unity. In the same way, when the three gunas unite in that ultimate, *param*, state, the energy of the ultimate is realized in the form of Ishwara.

The identity of Ishwara takes name and form according to one's wishes, and is expressed with a set of attributes.

According to one's emotions and intelligence, one is able to see the essence, *tattwa*, in different forms. According to one's feelings one sees the form of one's deity.

There is a beautiful episode in the *Ramacharitamanas*. When Rama arrived to break the bow at the swayamvar of Sita, he entered the royal gathering: the yogis saw him in the form of light; the other contenders saw him in the form of a mighty warrior; the young women saw him in the form of their beloved; mothers saw him in the form of their child.

All the people present saw Rama according to their own feeling. This suggests that people try to see their deity in the form that is in accordance with their feelings. According to their feeling the deity either takes manifest form or is unmanifest. As long as emotion is absent, the formless can never take form, and that which is with form can never become formless.

Param tattwa

The ultimate, divine essence, *param tattwa*, has a place in life. Some people say that Ishwara resides in the heart of human beings in the form of light. In the Upanishads it is said that Ishwara resides in each human being in the form of a light the size of the thumb. This is a way of saying that one has a gross material form and the essence within, the primal essence, is small and subtle. One is free to express this in whichever form and with whatever name one wishes to.

No matter what name is given, or what description is chosen, one creates it out of feeling, knowledge and faith – it is one's own expression. However, the primal essence has no name, form, attributes or qualities.

Every individual is surrounded by that essence. As a fish is surrounded by water, yet it is not aware that it lives in water. Similarly, each person exists in Ishwara, yet is not aware that he resides in Ishwara. People think Ishwara is distinct from them. They wish to search for Him, they wish to attain Him, and live in the world.

In the fortieth Samhita of the *Yajur Veda* there is a mantra:

Om Ishavasyamidam sarvam, yatkincha jagatyaam jagat.

This entire universe is the residence of Ishwara.

Therefore, where Ishawara resides, there one resides, and that which is given to enjoy, should be taken as divine prasad and enjoyed as such. This is the first mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*.

Like fire and wood

This is not philosophy, belief or any ideology. The sages have tried to convey that one's entire life is steeped in God, steeped in that primal essence. One has emerged from that primal essence or param tattwa. In the end, one has to dissolve back into that primal essence. So where is difference, where is the separation?

Fire is hidden in wood. If the wood becomes wet and one lights the fire, the wet wood will still burn. There may be more smoke, yet the wood will certainly burn. If one lights a match to dry wood, it will burn. Whatever the condition of the wood, whether wet or dry, the *agni tattwa*, fire element, is present in a hidden state. The agni tattwa is present not only in one portion of the wood, it is everywhere, and the whole log of wood burns. However, nobody sees the agni tattwa in wood. Until the time the wood is set on fire, no one is able to know the agni tattwa inside the wood.

In the same way, in this life the individual is always permeated with that Ishwariya tattwa. He is not able to know it, for he does not know how to ignite the fire within. This is done by means of spiritual practice, *sadhana*, rigorous spiritual effort, *tapasya*, and by changing one's expression and behaviour in life. Only then is one able to discover that essence within. This is the aim and purpose of spiritual practice, intense spiritual effort, kundalini and raja yoga. It is the aim of all yogas.

To set oneself on fire means to take one's circumstances and transform them; to take the mentality with which one exists

and change it; to undo one's earlier state and form and create a new form.

When one assumes a new form, the earlier form is given up, is finished and dies. The limitation that a person experiences in life is burnt. The tamasic nature that a person experiences comes to an end, and one tries to establish oneself in a state of *sattwa*.

The aim of *sattoguna*

People often wonder about the meaning of spirituality: is it having the vision of God or the realization of the self? There is a simple way to explain the word spirituality. You have a ruler which is marked in inches. On one end of the scale is *sattoguna*, on the other end is *tamoguna*, and the journey from *tamoguna* to *sattoguna* is the spiritual journey. The journey from materialism to the divine is called the spiritual journey; or *Bhagavat Yatra*, the search for God. When one starts moving from *tamoguna* to *sattoguna* it is spiritual, and the implication of spiritual is to awaken the inner experience

This is the distinction between religion and spirituality. Religion is not only spiritual, it is also material. Spirituality is not material, it is only spiritual. The identity of spirituality is singular and the identity of religion is multiple, and here lies the difference between religion and spirituality. Religion says, 'unite yourself with your deity', and spirituality says, 'travel from *tamas* to *sattwa*'. There is a point where the experience of religion and spirituality becomes the same as the intellect is transformed. Then one no longer perceives religion in the limited manner, rather one begins to experience its universality. When one experiences the universality of religion, then one enters the luminosity. The state of luminosity, *sattoguna*, is where religion and spirituality converge at their final point. Until that final point is reached, the two do not meet.

A person may be of a religious disposition yet in spite of his religious disposition, the spiritual bent may be lacking in his life. When the spiritual *vritti* has awakened in a person's mind, he becomes righteous or *dharmic* on his own.

It is important to know and understand the difference between the path and process of spirituality and religion. Spirituality links a person with oneself, and religion links a person with a belief. Spirituality links a person with the inner self, religion links a person with an ideology, a creed and a doctrine.

Yoga speaks of spirituality, not of religion. When it refers to spirituality, it is necessary to reject all the masks of religion. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (18:66):

*Sarvadharmaanparityajya maamekam sharanam vraja;
Aham tvaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah.*

Renounce all dharmas means giving up your earlier, fixed thoughts and ideologies, then you will know the all-pervasiveness of Ishwara, and you will actually gain an understanding of that essence or tattwa.

Religion does not speak of the universality and all-pervasiveness of the divine principle. It points to the limited state of divinity. In that limited state, a person's work and teaching takes the form of a religious movement which people follow. In spirituality, one follows a practice and sadhana to transform oneself and to awaken oneself. This is the purpose of yoga.

– 19 September 2014, Tyagaraj Sports Stadium, Delhi, India



Foundation of My Faith

Dear Swamiji

I had been thinking for a long time how to write this letter. As you know, I am a Jew. I have neglected this fact and ignored its significance for a long time. When I turned 60, things changed. For my birthday I received as a gift special attributes: Talith and Tefilin, which the religious Jews wear during their prayers. And a miracle happened! My Jewish blood spoke to me.

For so many years I have been away from the Torah given to the Jewish people by God. It began to attract me irresistibly. Everything related to it, like Talmud, Tanach, Prophets, Psalms, has become my daily routine: three times a day prayers, daily readings of psalms and parts of the Torah; its study is a daily duty of every Jew. God has chosen the Hebrew people among all other nations to fulfil His commandments. And they are 613 in number.

For all other nations there are 7 (or 10) commandments, only for the Hebrews – 613. And they must be observed not from time to time, but daily, every hour, every minute, in every action, thought and intent. They are the moral code that every Jew should live by.

I go deeper into the doctrine of God. It takes a lot of effort, persistence and will to do so. The purpose of every Jew's life is to serve the Lord. Thanks to Satyananda Yoga, I find in myself a strong foundation and faith in this service. Without my experience with Satyananda Yoga, without the dozens of satsangs with you, without the many conversations, contacts, guidance, advices, examples from you, I would not be able to build a solid foundation for my faith.

With respect and thankfulness.

– *Sannyasi Sri Ram, Bulgaria*

Become a Saint

From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati



In a certain highland, the stealing of sheep was considered the worst of crimes. When two brothers were caught in this act, the village elders had to decide upon a fitting punishment. They branded on their foreheads the letters S.T., signifying 'sheep thief', and then set them free.

Both the brothers were mortified as the entire village came to know of the incident. Whenever they were spotted, the people jeered and children laughed at them. "There goes the S.T! Look out for the sheep thief!" they would cry out.

The elder brother took the humiliation very seriously, and thought to himself: "Let me get away from it all." He left

the village and wandered through hills and valleys. But alas! Nowhere could he find peace. The staring trademark on his forehead attracted attention wherever he went and he was pestered with many questions. "What do the letters mean? Who branded those letters on your forehead?"

For a while he attempted to evade these inevitable enquiries. But for how long could he succeed? He had to keep moving from place to place. He grew more and more restless, and eventually died of bitterness and frustration. He was buried in lonely soil, away from the warmth of home.

The younger brother however decided to stay on where he was. "There can be no running away from the fact of my crime," he thought, and bore the public insult with a stout heart. He had decided to forget the past and open a new chapter in his life. With pure, undaunted zeal, through many months and years, he gradually built up a very high reputation for honesty and integrity. To his neighbours he became a symbol of goodness and virtue. His sore was healed by the cosmic healer – time – and people forgot about his past in due course.

After many long years, some stranger arrived in the village and found the old man with the letters 'S.T.' branded on his forehead. He enquired of a neighbour what it meant.

"It is an old, old story," said the neighbour. "I do not remember the particulars, but they must be an abbreviation for 'saint'."

The moral of the story? Few are born saints, but with persistent effort even a rogue can become a saint. We cannot flee from our actions. They follow us like shadows. The mind clings to us wherever we go. However, through sincere effort and a determination to succeed, even the most unsaintly nature can be turned to a saintly one. Therefore, no one need feel depressed thinking of their weaknesses. Whatever be our shortcomings, by means of an unflinching will we can get rid of all negativities and become a shining example to all those around us. So, start your sadhana now.

The Presence of Experience

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are two words: non-believer, *naa-astik*, and *astik*, believer. A non-believer does not believe in the existence and a believer believes in the existence: not-believing is a state of mind in the absence of a tangible experience.

From time to time, people have different tangible experiences. Sometimes it is of peace, sometimes it is of divinity, or of the self. It is not important that everyone has the same vision or experience, even with the same object.

There is a beautiful passage in the *Ramacharitamanas*. When Sri Rama goes to Janakpur, the home of Mother Sita, he enters the royal palace with his guru. The passage says that the mothers present in the court saw Rama as their most beloved child. Kings and emperors present in the court saw Rama as the biggest emperor of all. The people with demonical and destructive tendencies saw Rama as their death incarnate. Yogis saw Rama either as a flame or as an experience of peace.

In this manner, according to their nature, everyone had a different perception of Rama. Yogis saw him as peace or luminosity, so for yogis the state of peace or luminosity became the foundation to experience the Rama tattwa. Mothers saw Rama as their beloved child and the outpouring of their love became the medium to experience the Rama tattwa. Everybody experienced something of the Rama tattwa according to their nature. Even peace and luminosity is an experience of the Divine, not only the presence of an image or form. The absence of experience makes one a non-believer, and the presence of experience makes one a believer.

I have not seen God, but yes, I can relate my *shanti*, my peace, to an experience of God, and therefore I believe that this type of power can exist. That is my personal experience and I do not negate it.

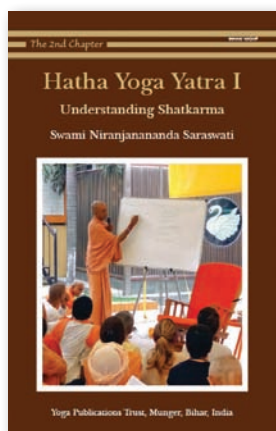
I have not seen God in the form of Rama, Krishna or any devi although I have seen them as statues. But inside with 'inner sight' I have experienced that in the form of tremendous shanti. In that shanti there is bliss, in that shanti there is fulfilment, in that shanti there is contentment.

I can relate that experience to the experience of something transcendental in me, and that experience has become my foundation, my reference point to make me a believer. Therefore, it is not the negation of God and the acceptance of God that makes one a believer or non-believer, but the presence of experience.

—29 May 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Be True to the Yoga Vidya

From Hatha Yoga Yatra 1: Understanding Shatkarma, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



From Sri Swami Satyananda's teachings, hatha yoga has to be mastered first before you embark on the raja yoga journey. Most people don't realize this. Even I used to think in the early days that meditation, pratyahara and dharana are the important practices and hatha yoga can be bypassed. However, I realized that if these are practised without the right preparation which hatha yoga gives, they remain incomplete practices, as the body is not

ready and the pranās have not moved, whereas doing them after the proper preparation with hatha yoga, I could easily observe the difference in the practices of raja yoga and kriya yoga. The body responds, the mental resilience, emotional stability, pranic activity, everything alters when a sequential process is followed, moving from hatha yoga to raja yoga to kriya yoga.

Deepening the understanding

We are introducing different modules of hatha yoga practices or journeys in hatha yoga at the Bihar School of Yoga to deepen the awareness and understanding of the practices. For most yoga practitioners, their practice of yoga is not a holistic practice; it is superficial. It is the primary class, using limited practices of asana and pranayama, one practice of relaxation, and a few basic practices of concentration. For a long time that level has been maintained; however, it is necessary that now we review what we know, deepen the experience, and explore new systems that yoga has to offer.

PADUKA DARSHAN, MUNGER



MUNGER...





MUNGER...





INDIA



OVERSEAS



Therefore, even though there will be different trainings of hatha yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga and other programs at BSY, it is recommended that if you have started with the hatha yoga training, then complete the hatha yoga series, and adhere to each module for at least six months. Practise Module 1 for six months, then stop, go back to your other yoga practices, and you will notice the difference in your own practice.

The intention of these programs is to deepen the experience of yoga, not to make yoga teachers. Sri Swamiji did not teach me or my generation of sannyasins to become yoga teachers. However, the focus of most people who come to yoga today is to become a yoga teacher. To train such people, a syllabus is followed but that syllabus is not complete yoga; what you learn in a teacher training course or an instructor's program is the basics and beginning of yoga. Some people may be competent enough to do advanced postures but then they can't do advanced breathing techniques or advanced bandhas.

You have to ask yourself what has been the level of your involvement in yoga, where you have reached with your practice of yoga. If you have learnt yoga only in order to teach others, then you have gone down the wrong road. That should not be the intention or purpose of learning. The intention should be to learn and experience yoga yourself. That is what we imbibed from Sri Swamiji; the learning that we received was not from the perspective of teaching but from the perspective of practising, experiencing and developing our own understanding. Ultimately, if you teach what you have experienced, the understanding in the students' mind is also that much better.

Yoga vidya

Through the ages yoga has been a *vidya*, a knowledge that has been transmitted. Transmission means something that you experience, not what you practise, for you can practise without experiencing. That is the situation now. People do their yoga and talk about peace, balance and harmony; they talk about

meditation and goodness, but it is only talk, as they have not had direct or in-depth experience of these precepts.

The involvement with yoga is limited to a lot of discussion, but there is no understanding. It is a little practice with no depth. You can talk about kriya yoga for one week, kundalini yoga for another week, samadhi for the third week, but how does that help you? It is all theory, but is it helping you in your daily life? No. Even your practice of kundalini yoga or kriya yoga is superficial. For one month you have the drive so you do it and then everything is relegated to the background. You want to do the advanced practices but you are not prepared to make the commitment that is required to achieve the awakening of chakras and kundalini. So there is no depth. There is sincerity in yoga aspirants, but no depth and no understanding of the practice or what can be derived from the practice.

I will give an example. There are machines that measure the stress of muscles; electrodes are placed over the body and they help to measure the stress level while you are performing an activity. Once, that experiment was done with asanas. The asana chosen was *paschimottanasana*, the back stretching pose in which you touch the toes with the legs extended forward. While doing this asana, the muscular stress reduced by 90 units. It looks like a difficult asana as you are stretching every muscle and trying to touch your toes; your whole body is in a state of chronic tension. However, what is perceived as difficult or causing chronic tension, is actually relaxing the muscular system of the body. When you release the posture and lie down in shavasana, the whole body flops and relaxes more than before, just as you stretch a rubber band and then release it.

Now, if you use this knowledge to create a specific condition in your body, that can counteract stressful situations, then no matter where you are in life, in a profession or in renunciation, you can manage the psychological effects of stress and anxiety in a much better manner. This is an indication of understanding and applying the yogic practices to create a



change in the pattern of the body and psychology. If you can do this, then yoga does not remain a mechanical practice that you are doing every morning or evening; instead it becomes a conscious practice to create or alter a condition in your life.

That is what we learnt from Sri Swamiji and it is this teaching that we are again presenting, for in the last fifty years there has been a significant dilution in yoga teaching. Practices are remembered but not the original intention or the instruction that Sri Swami Satyananda gave. We are reviving that and connecting with the spirit with which he taught us the practices: not to become teachers but to become experiencers of yoga.

Complementary yogas of yoga chakra

Sri Swamiji emphasized the learning of six yogas, which become part of the *yoga chakra*, the yogic wheel: hatha yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga. Generally, we believe that the first three – hatha, raja and kriya – are the practical yogas; while the other three – karma, jnana and bhakti – are the expressive yogas. What is not realized is that each yoga from the first three has a complementary yoga in the other three. Hatha yoga is complemented by karma yoga, raja yoga is complemented by bhakti yoga, and kriya yoga is complemented by jnana yoga.

Although many people define karma yoga as hard work, bhakti yoga as the yoga of devotion, and jnana yoga as the

yoga of self-enquiry, that is incorrect. The external aspects of karma, bhakti and jnana have no relevance in yoga. Yoga is a discipline; karma yoga is a discipline, bhakti yoga is a discipline, jnana yoga is a discipline. All these disciplines are intended to improve the traits of human nature and to fine-tune the human personality.

Karma yoga is not hard work, selfless service, or the work that you do in an ashram; that is one interpretation but not the real understanding. Karma yoga is an awareness, an attitude, a perception of the mind that regulates the effects of one's actions, and that cannot be practised by sweeping or cleaning. That has to be realized and understood, and through that understanding a direction is given to oneself in pratyahara and dharana. The book *Yoga Chakra* tells you about the three goals of karma yoga: atmashuddhi, akarta bhava, and naishkarmya siddhi. These three goals have to be present in every action that you undertake. This has to be attained after you complete your training in hatha yoga. First you attain mastery over the body and the senses through hatha yoga, and then you use every action of the body and the senses with a different awareness and understanding. Thus hatha yoga and karma yoga are practised in a complementary way.

Similarly, raja yoga is where you are working with your mind. Along with that bhakti yoga must be practised – not the ritualistic bhakti, but bhakti yoga as a psychological process of developing the emotional body. Ringing bells and lighting incense is not bhakti yoga, that is bhakti. Ritual is bhakti, not yoga. When we add the word 'yoga' to it, it becomes a personal inner experience, not an outside show. The same kirtan that is sung in a temple is sung in a yoga ashram. However, there it is done with a religious belief and perspective in mind, and here the perspective is to experience the vibration generated by the kirtan. In this manner, what you derive from one practice is dependent on what you want to experience. Thus raja yoga and bhakti yoga, representing mind and emotions, are clubbed together.

Then comes kriya yoga. The psychic awakening is assisted by jnana yoga: understanding, knowing, realizing and living. Jnana yoga is not enquiring 'Who am I?' It is living an understanding and realization. The presence of this jnana is necessary during psychic awakening, so that you don't lose your head but have a proper understanding of what you are experiencing and where to go.

Therefore, never think that karma yoga, jnana yoga and bhakti yoga are separate from hatha yoga, raja yoga and kriya yoga. They are integral parts of each other, and support and facilitate the progression from one into the other state of yogic experience. This is the process of yoga as devised by Sri Swamiji. Hatha yoga and karma yoga balance and strengthen the body and the senses, raja yoga and bhakti yoga balance and strengthen the intellect and the emotions, kriya yoga and jnana yoga balance and strengthen the psyche and the understanding. These are the tools through which the aspirations of yoga and human life are achieved, according to Swami Sivananda, according to Swami Satyananda, and according to my own realizations.

—30 September 2016, Hatha Yoga Module 1,
Ganga Darshan, Munger



Excellence

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



One can develop excellence in everything – from waking up to sleeping to eating to wearing clothes to talking to behaviour to performance to studies. When one is able to give 100% to anything and everything, then gradually one will acquire

mastery over the situation. Attainment of that mastery will indicate one's excellence.

Connecting to positivity

Different people answer questions in a different manner. Some people will answer from the perspective of what they have read and it will be a philosophy. Some will answer from the perspective of what they have experienced. That experience is based on effort. That experience does not come with studies.

Someone was telling me that at one time he was going through a crisis in his head. A thought came to him, 'What is this crisis that you are facing? You have lived yoga for thirty years. You have spoken on the subject of managing a crisis, yet you are unable to face your own crisis'.

When he realized that he had to deal with that situation himself and no other person was going to help, he connected with positivity and transformed the negativity into positivity. The crisis was passed.

Everyone goes through difficulties in life but that person had the ability to look and recognize that what he was doing was incorrect, and then he was able to connect with the right attitude. If he can do this again and again, again and again, he will develop excellence. He will connect with excellence. If he is not able to do that, that will be his failure. It was due to his understanding and determination to be connected to the positive that he was able to come out of the crisis he was going through in his life.

Excellence is always expressing the best and giving 100% to what one does: in speech, thought, behaviour, understanding, in relationships, studies, love, compassion and sympathy. The more one connects with the positive in life the more progressive one will be. The more one connects with the negative in life, the more regressive one will become. That is something that people have to realize.

– 5 June 2016, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Be Fearless

The power of yoga
Lies dormant within the human frame.
This wonderful symbol lies confined
Within the four walls of mooladhara.

O aspirant,
If you want to witness this mahashakti
If you want to be flooded by its unending grace
Remain fearless.

Witnessing yogashakti does not make you afraid.
It makes you fearless.
Fear of this world
Of the seen and the unseen
Of acquiring or being
Of anger and hostility
Of life and death –
All the samskaras of fear
Are hindrances on the path
Of the awakening of yogashakti.
Fear is a personal feeling,
It is an individual's complex.

Hence, O aspirant,
Only if you are fully fearless
Can you tread this path.
Otherwise there is still time
Go back! Go back at once!
For one who fears the fly
Cannot go past the lion's den.
One who trembles
At the thought of human hypocrisies,
Perishable traditions, foolish emotions,
How can such a one stay
In these heavenly, immortal worlds of knowledge?

Children!
If stones are thrown at your head
Stand steadily.
If the influences of this and the other world hit you
Remain firm.
Live like a lotus in the mud.
Stand like a free avadhoot
Like the shirish tree.

If you wish to tread the path, you may.
There you will get no support from anywhere
Except your own soul.
So tell your samskaras – Hands up!

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Bihar School of Yoga, Mungex, presents

Yoga: A sadhana, lifestyle and culture

On the occasion of the third International Day of Yoga, we extend our greetings to all yoga aspirants. This day is of special importance for the Satyananda Yoga tradition, as it marks the fruition of the vision and the prophecy of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, when in 1963 he proclaimed: "Yoga will emerge as a mighty world culture and change the course of world events."

Since 2015 the International Day of Yoga has become an opportunity for people from all parts of the globe and all walks of life to come together in the spirit of yoga and reaffirm their commitment to this ancient science. The Bihar School of Yoga has wholeheartedly supported this global expression of goodwill towards yoga by promoting programs that inspire aspirants to deepen their experience of yoga and adopt it not merely as a physical practice but as a progressive sadhana, a harmonious lifestyle, and a holistic, humanitarian culture.

Progression of yoga

Yoga initially begins as a practice for an aspirant, a set of techniques practised to fulfil a personal need. Once the need is met, one's association with yoga dwindles as well. This indicates a superficial connection with the vidya of yoga. However, in order to deepen one's experience of yoga and reap greater gains, one's personal whims and goals need to be set aside and one needs to strive towards the aims and aspirations set





by yoga itself, with an attitude of seriousness, sincerity and commitment. This is yoga sadhana, where one works earnestly and patiently to overcome the conditionings, limitations and negativities of one's mind and personality. Sincere and sustained sadhana leads to the expression of positive yogic attitudes and awareness in one's daily actions and interactions. One begins to live yoga moment to moment and that is when yoga become a lifestyle. Eventually such a lifestyle blossoms into a samskṛti, a culture where the samskaras are transformed and one becomes a beacon of inspiration and guidance to all around.

In 2013, the Bihar School of Yoga celebrated its Golden Jubilee and at that time it was announced that the first chapter of yoga propagation, which focused on yoga practice, is complete and now preparations for the second chapter will begin. The second chapter relates to developing an understanding of how to go deeper into the experience of yoga; how to connect with Satyan, Shivan and Suncaram, with truth, auspiciousness and beauty in life; and how to progress from practice to sadhana and lifestyle.

The quality of lifestyle is deteriorating across the globe. The stressors in life are reducing the physical and psychological capabilities of every individual. If this is not rectified, humanity will definitely face a crisis. Negativity will become rampant; violence, anger, jealousy, hatred and intolerance will become raging wildfires. This is the society we are going to live in if we don't make the effort to change our lifestyle and mindset, to rectify the imbalances in body and mind and come to a point of balance in our life.





Aim of International Day of Yoga

As we step into the third International Day of Yoga, let balance, harmony and equanimity be the theme. It is only a balanced, equipoised and unruined personality that has the strength and the resilience to overcome the negative and nurture the positive in life. This pursuit of positivity in every aspect of life must become the hallmark of every serious yoga sadhaka.

In yoga, the journey towards positivity is made by practising yama and niyama. They are the eternal principles that define the uplifting traits in life, representing a culmination of the human effort to experience the beauty, peace, bliss, truth and expansiveness of life.

In the program introduced last year, aspirants were inspired and guided to work on the yama of *manahyasad*, or happiness, and *namaskara*, or greeting others with bhava. Let us take a moment to reflect on the depth of our involvement in last year's program and the success derived from it, and approach this year's program with redoubled intensity and sincerity.

In this year's program, we have added the yama of *kshama*, or forgiveness, and the niyama of *maitri*, or goodwill and friendliness. These positive virtues pave the way to experiencing equanimity, peace and calmness in one's life. A conscious and sincere effort to practise these will transform the state of one's own mind as well as the environment around oneself.

In support of the International Day of Yoga and the effort being made by national and international communities to promote yoga, the Bihar School of Yoga is inspiring children, youth, women and other associated Yoga Mitra Mandals to conduct a yoga session of specific practices at a specified time on 21st June. These practices have been specially selected as they promote physical health, mental equilibrium and emotional wellbeing. The idea is also to come together as a family or community in the spirit of yoga.



Your Program for the International Day of Yoga 2017

From 6 am to 7.30 am, people will gather on the rooftops, verandahs, courtyards and other open spaces of their homes and community centres and do the following practices:

1. Kaya sthairyam with a focus on experiencing balance and harmony in body and mind
2. Shanti mantras*:
Om saha naavavatu.
Saha nau bhunaktu.
Saha veeryam karavaavahai.
Tejasvinaavadhiraetamaatu
maa virvishaavahai.
Om shantih, shantih, shantih.
3. Eka pada pranamasana (2 rounds)
4. Tadasana (9 rounds) **
5. Trikonasana, variation 1 (9 rounds)
6. Kati chakrasana (9 rounds)
7. Kashtha takshanasana (9 rounds)
8. Nauka sanchalanasana (9 rounds)
9. Shavasana***
10. Supta pawanamuktasana, stage 2 (9 rounds)
11. Naukasana (9 rounds)
12. Ardha shalabhasana, variation 1 (9 rounds)
13. Simha garjanasana (9 rounds)
14. Shashanka bhujangasana (9 rounds)
15. Shashankasana (static, for about a minute)
16. Sheetal/sheetkari pranayama (10 rounds)
17. Nadi shodhana pranayama 1:1 (10 rounds)
18. Bhramari pranayama (10 rounds)
19. Antar mouna (stage 2) (5 mins)



20. Yama and niyama meditation (10 mins):

For five minutes each, contemplate on and develop the yama of kshama, or forgiveness, and the niyama of maitri, or having the attitude of goodwill and friendliness towards others.

Kshama: Bring to mind one situation from the past when you were not forgiving. To what extent are you holding on to it? Try to identify the feeling that memory generates in you, be it hurt, anger, frustration, sadness or any other. Analyze this feeling to know and understand the root cause of your lack of forgiveness. Observe your thoughts about the other person in this situation and consciously try to change your negative thoughts by focusing on their positive qualities. Now bring in the thought of forgiveness and try to genuinely forgive the person. After doing this, do you feel happy, can you smile at the thought of the person, and are you ready to meet them with an attitude of maitri, goodwill and friendliness?

Maitri: Be aware of your feeling towards others when you interact with them. Do you keep yourself closed or open? Do you walk with a wall around yourself or are you welcoming? Do you radiate hostility, friendliness or indifference? Try to move into the state of maitri, where you are open towards everyone, reach out to them with positivity, and wish them wellness and auspiciousness. Mentally revisit the situations during the day when you walked past or interacted with people and re-enact them from the space of maitri. Resolve to practise maitri from the next day and every day review your day to discover how successful you are.

21. Chanting of the yogic prayer:

*Asato maa sad gamaya
Tamaso maa jyoti gamaya
Mrityor maa amritam gamaya*



Sarveshaam vastirbhavatu
Sarveshaam shantirbhavatu
Sarveshaam poornam bhavatu
Sarveshaam marigalam bhavatu
Loka samastaa sukhino bhavantu
Om shantih, shantih, shantih,

Lead me from unreal to real, from darkness to light, from mortality, destruction and transformation to stability, continuity and eternity. May there be abundance of goodness, peace, wholeness, and an auspicious environment everywhere. May all beings be content and happy.

This final prayer is a resolution and contains the essence of yogic teachings. It represents the personal aim of attaining harmony, equilibrium and balance in one's own life and the social aim to reach out to everyone with a wish for their wellbeing.

- * Those who feel uncomfortable with the chanting of mantras need not do so. They may sit quietly and focus on the aim of overall wellbeing through yoga.
- ** In the dynamic practices, awareness should be directed to the physical movement in the first 3 rounds, breath awareness in the next 3 rounds and awareness of pranic flow in the last 3 rounds.
- *** Shavasana may be practised as per the need of the group.

All yoga aspirants are advised to follow the above practices for one year, and on the next Yoga Day reflect on their success and the changes experienced in the quality of life. We hope and pray that the inspiration of yoga remains with you and in turn, you are able to assist others on the path of yoga and yogic living.

Haré Om Tat Sat

Swami Sivadhyanam

Coordinator



Glimpses of IDY 2017



On 21st June, BSY conducted a program from 6 to 7.30 am at Paduka Darshan on the occasion of the third International Day of Yoga. More than 500 participants attended and were guided through practices of asana, pranayama, relaxation, concentration and a meditation on yama-niyama.



In Munger, 'the City of Yoga', similar programs were conducted by members of BYMM, YYMM and the Ramayana Mandali at over 100 venues, in which thousands of people participated. More than 10,000 people in over 2000 private homes followed the prescribed program on their own as well.

My Experience on the International Day of Yoga



I am Garima Bharati, member of the Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal. On the occasion of the International Day of Yoga I was sent to teach at a juvenile home. I reached there as per the time fixed and I saw about 50 to 60 children present. The age of the boys was between six and twenty years. Dev Datt was sent with me as a demonstrator.

When I started the class with *Hari Om Tat Sat*, they did not respond. I thought, 'Maybe they don't know the meaning of *Hari Om Tat Sat*', so I explained the meaning and asked them to repeat again. After that with Shanti Path

and kaya sthairyam I started giving the practices.

For some time the children did the practices very well but as I started the practice of nauka sanchalasana, they intentionally kept one foot on the other and started laughing. I became sad. What should I do now?

To relax them I started giving shavasana. I realized that these children were very mischievous. When I told them to keep the head towards me and the feet the other side, they did the opposite. Seeing their behaviour, I had understood that in the mischievous mind of these children mischievous ideas had come in. To relax them a very nice idea came to my mind.

I asked them to come out of shavasana and sit up with eyes closed. Some children sat with eyes closed, some kept their eyes

open and started staring at me. Some of them started pinching the children who had the eyes closed, or they inserted grass into their ears to make them laugh or put pebbles inside their clothes.

Seeing their behaviour, I got scared. What should I do? Should I laugh or cry? Then I remembered Swamiji saying, "Complete the work assigned to you with sincerity and commitment. Whether you fail or succeed, you first do your karma. Leave the fruit of karma in the hands of God." This teaching of Swamiji gave me new energy and I put all my efforts to complete the task. I knew that I would not be successful in this but I would not be unsuccessful either.

When I started giving them the practice of yama and niyama, they were also making noises. Slowly practising yama and niyama they became quiet and I realized that there was some effect of the practices on them. These children, who were so mischievous during the class, did the practices peacefully at the end. There is a saying that behind every bad experience, something good is hidden.

– *Garima Bharati, (16 years) BYMM, Munger*



Glimpses of IDY 2017



Programs were conducted by ashrams and centres in Bihar, including Bariyarpur, Bhagalpur, Chhapra, Dharhara, Gaya, Kishenganj, Lakhisarai, Muzaffarpur, Patna, Samastipur, Sangrampur and Suryagarha; nationally in Bhilai, Bhopal, Bhuj, Chennai, Delhi, Jamshedpur, Lucknow, Mumbai, Raigarh, Ranchi, Satna, Sri Sailam and other locations.



... and around the world in many countries, including Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Nepal & Sweden.



Through the Generations

I am 35 years old and I started attending yoga classes at the end of 2016. In the beginning I was quite sceptical and looked with mistrust and I even would say with mockery at people who attended yoga classes. To be completely honest I didn't have any desire to attend the classes – my mother told me that she was attending a beginners' yoga course and so that she would not be alone I joined her for the first class. I was still sceptical.

The first several classes were terribly hard. For an outside observer the movements in yoga are smooth, light and easy – that's at least how our teacher looks, as well as the smiling and athletic people on TV who run such programs. But I truly had a terrible time. Especially in the locust pose. In the beginning I used to become breathless and could hardly manage to take (not always together) my arm and opposite leg off the floor – and that with a lot of groaning and sweating. I would have easily quit, but the presence of the other people of different ages in the group motivated me to continue and stop grumbling.

My whole life I have suffered from migraine – since childhood, since I remember myself. With the years I got traumas on the spine and neck, which added discomfort and tingling to the pulsating pain on the right side of my head. The first ten yoga classes were hardship – somewhere in the middle of the class my vision used to become blurred from the headache and nausea. After the class I could hardly drag myself back home and I would sleep for several hours. With time though, the headache went away – not just during the practices but during the rest of the week when I was not at a yoga class.

I also suffer from insomnia. Before the yoga courses if I slept more than eight hours I again had a terrible headache. With yoga nidra this problem was resolved – now it is enough

just to think of the right foot, big toe, second toe . . . and I am asleep.

I could never bend my legs in the yoga poses, neither squat – I had awful pain in the legs in all positions. At the third level course I do not notice how time passes and I am staying with ease in the positions.

For the last few weeks I have been waking up in the morning with the Gayatri mantra sounding in my head – I do not know how to explain this but it usually happens after I had been more tense the previous day. Somehow while I chant it mentally I stop thinking of whatever has provoked the tension. Maybe this is the desired effect.

In short, yoga definitely helped me cope with long-lasting problems and difficulties on the physical and psychological level. I will definitely attend the next yoga course and would like to express my gratitude towards my incredible and patient teacher.

And here is a letter from *my* daughter:

Hello!

My name is Ema and I am 9 years old. I have attended yoga classes for nearly one year now. I started the beginners' course accompanying my mom and grandma so that we could spend more time together – you know parents – they are all the time busy at work and then tired at home, and don't have time for playing. That is how I hoped to spend more time with mom doing something together. In the beginning it was a little difficult and boring for me – you try to keep quiet more than one hour and not to laugh about the adults who twist into knots. ☺

What did yoga give me? I will tell you now – the confidence that I can do anything that adults can, and even better than them. Our teacher told me that I am flexible and perform postures that mom cannot do. I learnt that although I am the youngest in the group I can be an inspiration for my mother. Yoga gives me the confidence

that I can do anything. With a little effort I can do anything with my body and mind.

Yoga nidra relaxes me and sometimes I fall asleep but with a smile. I do not think of the hard lessons at school, I relax and travel into the world of imagination and beautiful colours and sensations.

I will continue attending the next classes – not because of mom, but because of myself. I love yoga now.

I would like to thank my teacher for having accepted me in the group of adults as an equal. I am looking forward to the next yoga course!

With love, Emi

– *Maya, Bulgaria*



Children are pliable, innocent and devoted. They believe in higher realities, but they need proper training. It is better to give them an education in spiritual life, discipline and yoga from the very beginning.

—*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

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YOGA AND YOGAVIDYA PRASAD

In 2013 Bihar School of Yoga celebrated its Golden Jubilee, which culminated in the World Yoga Convention in October of 2013. This historic event marked the successful completion of 50 years of service, dedicated to the one mandate, to take yoga from shore to shore and door to door. Achieved over a 50-year period with the help of yoga aspirants and well-wishers all over the world, a yogic renaissance has taken place.

The World Yoga Convention also heralded the beginning of the second chapter of Bihar School of Yoga. The hallmark of this second chapter is a new vision, which serves to both revive and uphold the yoga vidya in the tradition of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda for the benefit of future generations.

As one of the aspirations of the second chapter, Bihar School of Yoga is offering the YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines as prasada with the blessings and good wishes of the spiritual parampara. As society moves into the digital era, to facilitate the dissemination of yoga vidya, both YOGA and YOGAVIDYA are available as a downloadable pdf copy and also as a free app for both Android and IOS users.

To access YOGA online:

<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/yoga-magazines/>

To access YOGAVIDYA online:

<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/yogavidya/>

For IOS users both the YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines available as downloadable app:<https://itunes.apple.com/us/developer/bihar-school-of-yoga/id1134424786>

For Android users the YOGA magazines are available as downloadable app:

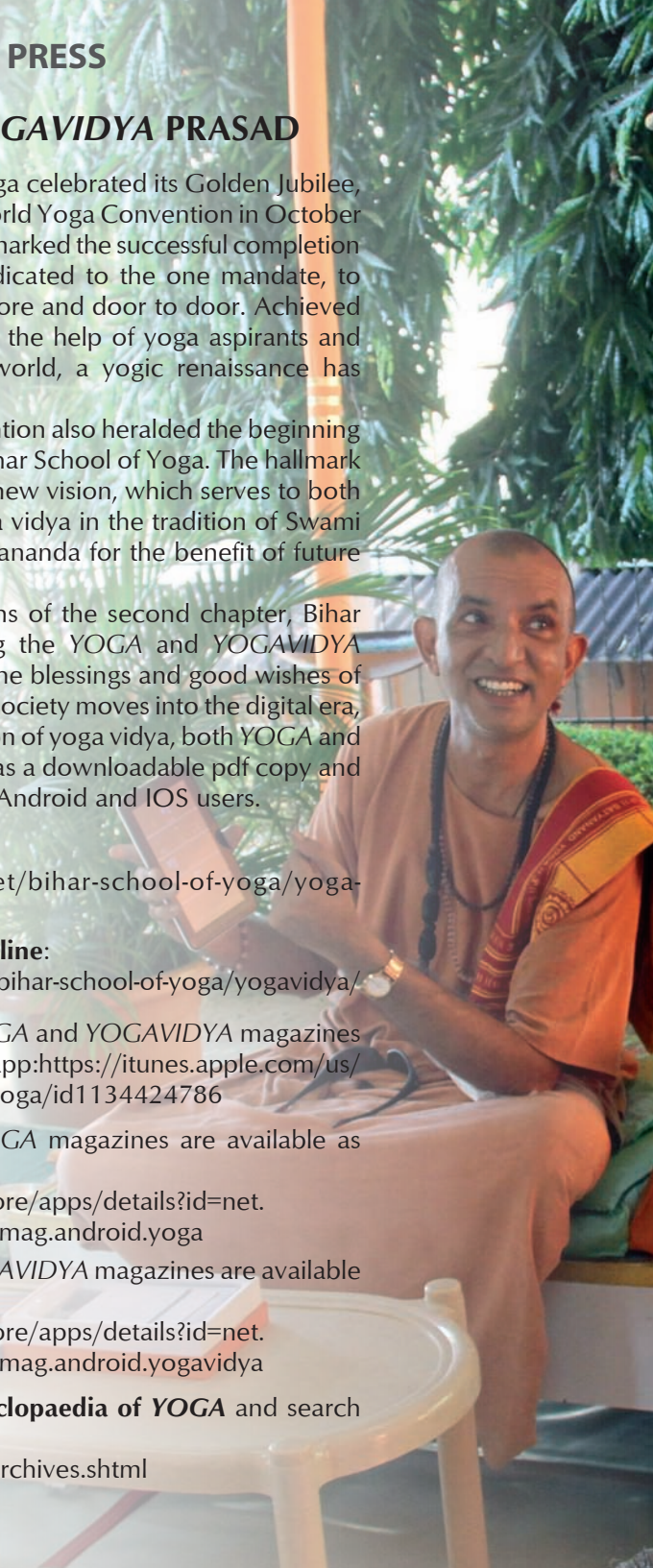
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.biharyoga.yogapeeth.app.emag.android.yoga>

For Android users the YOGAVIDYA magazines are available as downloadable app:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.biharyoga.yogapeeth.app.emag.android.yogavidya>

To access the online encyclopaedia of YOGA and search the archive:

<http://www.yogamag.net/archives.shtml>



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Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2017-18

Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga – Module 1: Shatkarma Intensive (English)
Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga – Module 2: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Nov 1-Jan 30 2018	* Yoga Lifestyle Experience (for overseas participants)
Dec 11-15	Yoga Chakra Series (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga – Module 1: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga – Module 2: Pratyahara Intensive (English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Jan 19-21	Sri Yantra Aradhana
Jan 22	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
Feb-May	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (Hindi)
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Mar 7-30	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training (English)
Apr 8-15	Hatha Yoga Yatra 1 & 2
Apr 22-28	Hatha Yoga Yatra 3
September	Raja Yoga Yatra 1 & 2
Oct 25-28	Yoga Festival: 2nd Chapter of Yoga
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poomima	Sundarkand Path
Every 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans

* Indicates training for overseas participants

Please be aware that mobile phones are NOT permitted in the ashram.
Ensure that you do not bring your mobile with you.

For more information on the above events contact:

Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar 811201, India
Tel: +91-06344-222430, 06344-228603, Fax: +91-06344-220169
Website: www.biharyoga.net

✉ A self-addressed, stamped envelope must be sent along with enquiries to ensure a response to your request