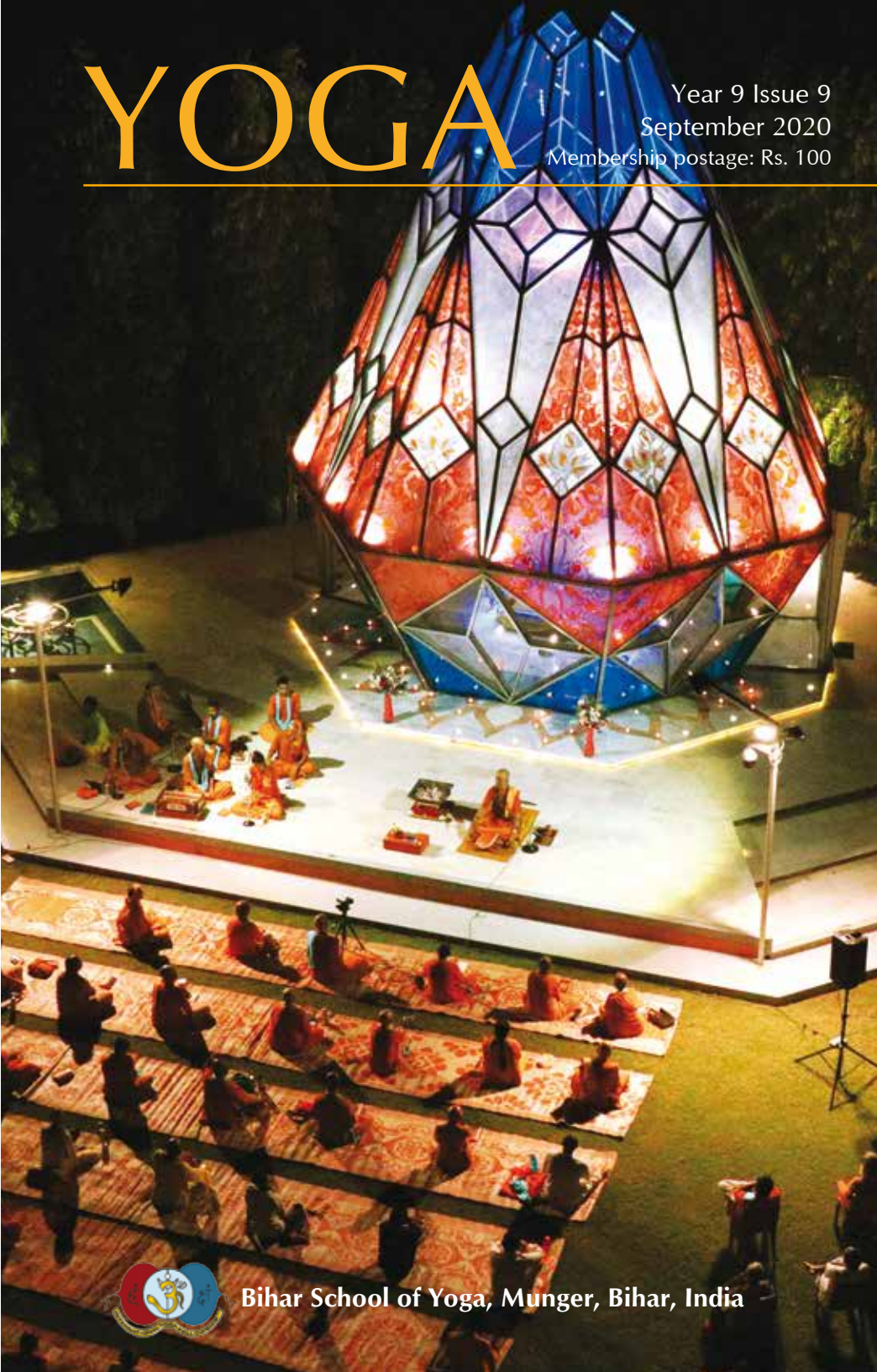


YOGA

Year 9 Issue 9

September 2020

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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Ditwas 2020

Plates: 1–4: Satsangs with Swami
Niranjanananda Saraswati



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Mouna

Observe mouna for a couple of hours daily at any time that suits you. Try to speak little at other times. Avoid unnecessary conversations. Don't talk harsh words and obscene language. Talk sweetly and gently. You must have perfect control over speech. Control over speech means control of mind. The organ of speech, *vak indriya*, is a great distractor of the mind. Mouna gives you peace. It removes anxieties and quarrels. It develops your willpower. It conserves energy.

—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 ॥

Living Yoga with Swami Niranjan

This issue of *YOGA* magazine contains the replies and feedback received to a questionnaire. The basic question was: how did Satyananda Yoga help you manage the situation of Covid-19 and the period of lockdown?

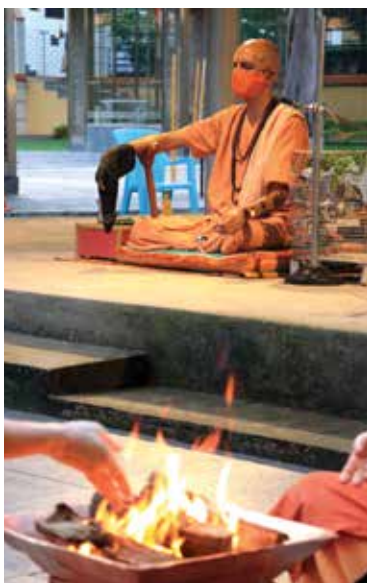
Aspirants from around the globe wrote of their personal experiences and the benefits derived from yoga. Yoga did not only help them to remain calm and focused but led many to a change of perspective, attitude and way of life.

In this unprecedented environment, yoga has been the most useful, practical and beneficial system to maintain balance and attain harmony.

In 1964, Sri Swami Satyananda announced: Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow.

The last few months have shown that his tomorrow has come.

With the inspiration of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, a lifestyle sadhana was designed. You can find the sadhana in the *YOGA* magazine of June 2020, and at www.satyamyogaprasad.net.



Accept This Great Science

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga is coming back to life. The science of yoga is being revived. Lack of insight in man was the cause of the loss, or rather, the disappearance of this ancient yogic culture. It was put aside, hidden and forgotten. It was replaced by materialism, together with pleasure seeking. Man wanted more and more possessions, wealth and status. This materialism has driven man and society to the edge of total collapse.

At this present time, when man is poised on the edge of this crumbling precipice, he is starting to think: 'What have I done?' and it is at this moment that he begins to search within himself and finds that his ancestors, yours and mine, had a way of life, a culture called 'yoga'. We are starting to relive it again. It is nothing new. Neither brought nor implanted

from outside, but something that is already in the collective consciousness of all humanity.

Yoga is a mighty world culture Yoga should be given, not for the sake of yoga, but for the sake of the human being. Yoga is a way to perfect bliss, *anandam*. What is the aim of yoga? Samadhi. What is the effect of meditation? Shanti. What is the effect of dharana? One-pointedness. What is the effect of pranayama? A good brain. What is the effect of asanas; a light and healthy body. What is the result of niyama? A system or science of life. What is the effect of yama? Breaking down the complications in life. Yoga is a science of therapy, a science of self-improvement and a way of discipline. Yoga is actually a science for mankind, for his body, mind and spiritual growth. Besides all this, however, yoga is a culture and every nation must have a culture.

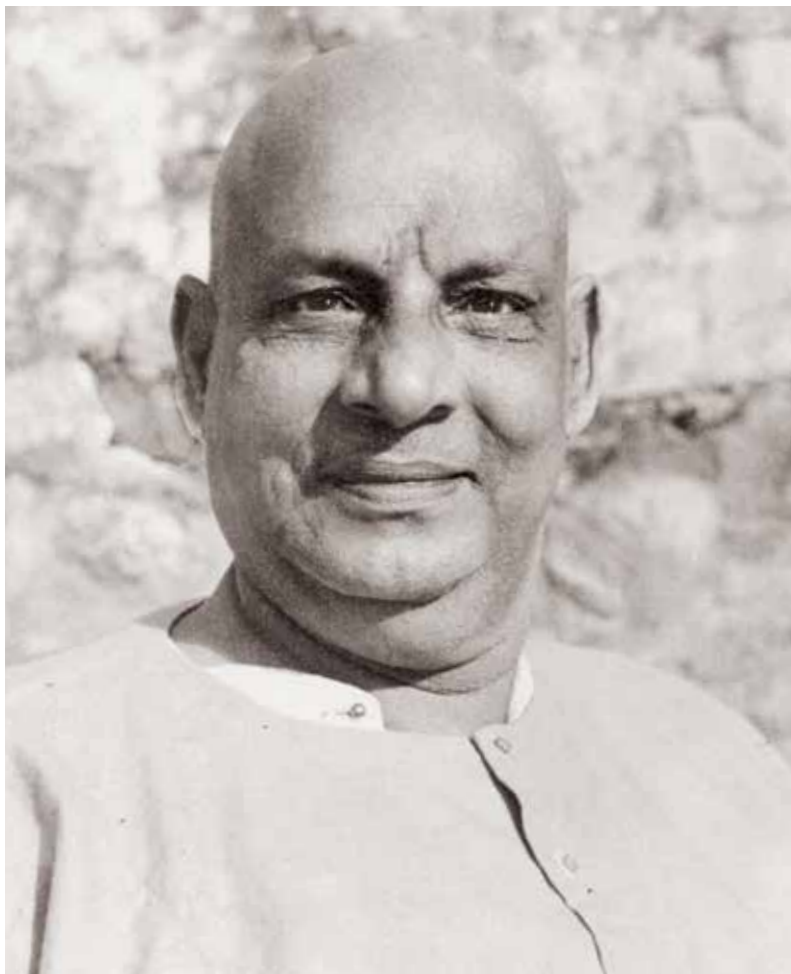
Culture is the backbone of a nation. Races which had absolute power have disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no traces behind them. Nations with military might have been destroyed. Countries with political cultures have failed, but a country with a culture based on yoga has eternal existence. It can survive through the vicissitudes of life, the accidents of history and the ravages of time.

Yoga is not a political matter; it is a science of man's inner personality. It is a subject which is sincere, earnest and great. Yoga can improve relations and create international goodwill. Yoga is beneficial for the individual and, at the same time, it is also beneficial for the whole of humanity because it is a science which has brought natures, cultures and boundaries together, and has brought time and space under one canopy.

Yoga is a mighty culture in the making, and very soon, it is going to direct the experiences, behaviour, thought and perception of mankind. Yoga is a way of life, a culture of tomorrow. In the coming times, yoga is going to direct the events of the world's history, and you have a definite role to play in this. It is up to you to accept this great science with love, with admiration, with hope and with sincerity.

Indicators of Progress

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The experience of peace, cheerfulness, contentment, dispassion, fearlessness and an unperturbed state of mind under all conditions indicates that you are advancing on the spiritual path.

Spiritual progress is not measured by *siddhis* or psychic powers but by the depth of your bliss in meditation. These are sure tests of your spiritual progress:

- Is your interest in inner spiritual activity and outer sadhana increasing day by day?
- Is spiritual life a matter of great delight to your consciousness, a delight far transcending the happiness that the world of material pleasures offers?
- Has your personal awareness come to possess a sense of peace and strength which non-aspirants do not find in their everyday lives?
- Do you feel certain that your power of discrimination and light of thought have been steadily growing?
- Is your life being gradually led to such experiences which reveal to you the operation of a will and intelligence other than your own, the will and intelligence of the Omnipotent Presence?
- Has there come into the conscious activities of your everyday life the active function of a new delightful angle of vision, a new perspective, a strong sense of self-possession, a steadily growing conviction of your dependence on and intimate relationship with the all-pervading Divinity?



If your answer to all or any of these questions is in the affirmative, be absolutely sure that you are progressing, and speedily, on the spiritual path.

Sadhana or spiritual practice should make you ever cheerful, more concentrated, balanced, peaceful, contented, dispassionate, fearless, compassionate, desireless and I-less. Sadhana should give you a rich inner life, introspective inner vision and an unruffled state of mind under all conditions of life. These are the signs of your spiritual growth.

The effects of Satyananda Yoga are also seen in a near zero urge to move out of the house. Even though the morning mantras are done on the bed and surya namaskara within the confines of the room and the entire day is spent in front of the laptop, there is no urge to 'get away' like most of my colleagues and friends are facing. I am not able to ascribe a reason to it, but this is one of the most important observations.



Another benefit of regular sadhana is that whatever is happening around us remains at the level of news even though the social media is so pervasive. It does not affect the psychological state.

– Arjun, Bangalore

Satyananda Yoga practices gave me faith and a tool with which to fight the fear of the pandemic. The emphasis on the mind and awareness in healing the body and improving immunity gave freedom from the fear whipped up by the media. It also gave me something positive to do as everything was shut down.

– Meeta Sinha, Delhi

Online classes and the Bihar Yoga app have benefited me immensely. Practising yoga helps me to keep fit, follow a routine and better my concentration. I find surya namaskara particularly helpful for overall exercise. Nadi shodhana helps me in keeping calm and relaxed. I feel happy and energetic due to yogabhyasa.

– Sonakshi Saxena, Delhi

I have been doing yoga every day during the lockdown. The practice sets the tone for the day and gives a very good start to the day. I feel relaxed in body and mind.

All the practices have really loosened the body parts, but more specifically the butterfly asana has made a big impact on the tightness around the hip area; bhujangasana and *ushtrasana*, the camel pose, helped with the pain and stiffness I was beginning to have in the lower back. Tadasana loosened my ankles and I feel much better.

The sadhana definitely has a calming and relaxing effect on my mind, helping me to connect to my inner self better.

– *Shalu Laktakkia, Delhi*

The sadhana helps in calming the mind and keeps things going as in normal times. For my body all asanas worked well, particularly surya namaskara and all three pawanmuktasana series. Chanting of mantra and pranayama have a calming effect on the mind. For emotional balance mantra chanting, pranayama, yoga nidra and additional chanting like *Om* help me a lot.

– *Meenal Bhargava, Delhi*

The yoga and spiritual practices, which I have been undertaking individually and with family regularly, have been the biggest pillars of strength during this period as well as the impact of improving the depth of awareness of yogic practices.

– *Sannyasi Dharmaprem, Delhi*

These days I have enough time to do personal sadhana which is improving as there is no rush in life, I am also less tired which makes sadhana easier to do. The practice of manahprasad and the collective Mahamrityunjaya mantra in the evening generated a sense of protection for the entire

family. Manahprasad was like a reminder to remain happy, especially when I felt angry.

– Dinesh Chandra, Delhi

For physical health, pawanmuktasana practices and nadi shodhana pranayam with kumbhaka and bandhas were most effective. For mind and emotions, mantra and stotra chanting and Review of the Day were most helpful.

All family members do Agnihotra together both times of the day. We also sit together and chant *Shree Ganapati Athroashirshya*, *Hanuman Chalisa*, *Guru Stotra*, and then I chant *Shiva Mahimna Stotra* and they all listen.

– Sannyasi Mantrasarita, Mumbai

Satyananda Yoga helps me to focus during an hour or two only on myself. It helps me to slow down, introspect more, to stay strong and positive. Asana practice done with body and breath awareness and focus followed by pranayama allows me to cope and reduce increased mental stress, anxiety and body stiffness. Yoga practice boosts my immune system, helps me maintain physical strength and agility. It releases physical blockages and lets my prana flow with ease. It gives me a clear daily structure and roots me firmly, physically, mentally as well as emotionally in these difficult times. Yoga nidra and frequent meditation help me to stay calm, to relax and to let go of extra tension while creating mental distancing. Yoga brings tranquillity and peace of mind to me, my home and my surrounding.

– Sylvia Deschamps, Thailand/Switzerland

I practise Satyananda Yoga, every day at least for one hour and some days for two hours. The practice has enabled me to be calmer when faced with difficult situations, less emotional and angry. The asanas have helped to keep my body moving and

fit during this time, especially as we were not able to walk as much as during normal times. The prayanama practices have been useful to help calm my mind, especially the alternate nostril breathing, the breathing in through teeth and the dog breathing. In addition, the humming bee breathing has helped me to have deeper and longer sleep during this period.

– Sui Lin Teoh, Thailand/Malaysia

I have noticed more clearly the reactions of my body, my emotions and my thoughts to the situations that I experience at work and in my personal life at this moment.

I am eating better quality food, I feel healthier and stronger physically than before. I am strengthening my ability to have discipline to cultivate not only the practices taught by the teachers, but also other practices in which I can monitor my breathing more carefully, such as cleaning the house, taking care of the plants and painting.

– Juliana Batista, Brazil

The Satyananda Yoga practices have helped me immensely to keep my discipline. Based on the fact that I am at home for so long, in social isolation and unemployed, I am having a harder time doing my personal practice without direct guidance.

The Yoga Capsules have been saving me right now! It helps me to have the courage to live each day, especially on a day that I am most discouraged. I can keep my physical, mental and emotional health as much as possible. My body is more flexible and pain free every week. I can focus on my studies and I leave no room for pessimism. I am also improving my self-understanding and being more understanding with my husband and my mother, who are spending this time with me. I have been able to connect more with myself, observing each sensation and each difficulty.

– Paola Ribeiro, Brazil

My sadhana has been intensified, both because I can spend more time at home and because I need to take care of body and mind. Most helpful were surya namaskara, shashankasana and TTK.

My chanting consists of one mala of Gayatri Mantra (x 108) with breath awareness, Mahamrityunjaya mantra (x 108) and *Hanuman Chalisa* daily.

– Sannyasi Gayatri, Brazil



The yoga practices have been really important through this period. In the beginning, when we faced the opportunity to stop the many activities that we were engaged in and gaze within ourselves, the practices were a motivation to face the 'unknown'. As time went by and as the practices got more challenging, there was a feeling of attaining security, strength and lightness. To my surprise, I had a feeling of great contentment.

Especially surya namaskara, mantra chanting and pranayama were helpful.

I delve a little deeper in some pranayama practices. I intensify surya namaskara and it becomes important as a vitality practice. The self-observation process is also an important aspect to me because it helps me to make my understanding and self-confidence more concrete.

– Angela, Brazil

Since we started this process of social distancing, I have made a sankalpa that every request for help that would come to me and considered to be serious, I would contribute to. This has helped me a lot in the purpose of expanding my awareness, sharing my prosperity, and getting out of my comfort zone. I

have noticed the six friends appearing, sometimes stronger, sometimes more relaxed, which has enabled me to learn how to work better in these aspects. I also decided not to wait for any request to arrive. I need to understand people's needs and do something as an opportunity to give.

Recognizing how deep the Satyananda Yoga tradition is and becoming more grateful, committed and regular with our tradition, I am still taking the first steps in this period and your support has helped me to take firmer steps.

– *Sannyasi Atmamitram, Brazil*

From all my heart and soul, I want to express my gratitude for the support we all received during these unordinary times! I practised mostly OMline a few days a week. I was not able to afford going to a studio. This helped me during the isolation as I was feeling the fear of loneliness and the fear of the unknown.

– *Tinka Georgieva, Bulgaria*

People became very enthusiastic with the online classes and some of them were joining every day. Some elderly people who were stuck at home really appreciated this opportunity. It was amazing to see how the people were changing and becoming more confident, happy and relaxed.

People get used to practise at home and establish their sadhana place. They feel more comfortable and safe at home. The best thing is that most of them established a place for their yoga practices and feel connected to it; so hopefully they will develop regularity in their practice. It also gave the opportunity to people who live abroad or in remote areas to join the classes.

We are so grateful for the wonderful online resources and guidelines given in satyamyogaprasad.net for the Yogic Lifestyle Sadhana, the Bihar Yoga App, the FFH Apps and the Guru Poornima digital Prasad. They helped us a lot to feel

our connection even from a distance, keep our faith and stay positive and happy. Thank you Swamiji for the great support, love and care you have been sharing with us.

– *Sannyasis Mudita and Radha, Bulgaria*

The whole beautiful capsule sadhana – asanas, pranayamas, bandhas, yoga nidra, meditations, SWAN, review of the day – every single piece of this wonderful picture is so precious, so perfectly designed for us to grow on all levels.

– *Sannyasi Priyatma, Bulgaria*

I started practising antar mouna and indriya pratyahara twice – morning and evening. Every day for one hour I listened to satsangs and uplifting talks on videos.

All the practices I did really saved me – the most important three were: yoga from moment to moment, japa and *namaskara*, being humble in behaviour, action and thinking. Accept, adjust and accommodate whatever life brings me, to live yoga from moment to moment and the yamas and niyamas from the Second Chapter have become part of my life routine.

– *Sannyasi Beejamantra, Bulgaria*

The Satyananda Yoga practices are definitely beneficial as they ground me and take away any anxiety or negative thoughts. In these times more than ever, they help me to have a soothing and therapeutic asana practice.

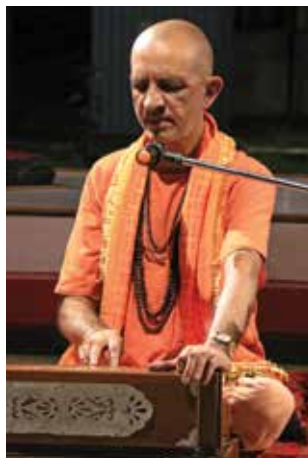
– *Jhilmil Breckenridge, London*

Satyananda Yoga practices have supported me a great deal. They keep me grounded and help me to connect with the positive in life by nourishing my faith, strengthening my body as well as by helping me to manage my mind and emotions.

When there were days where I failed to keep up the whole sadhana, it was singing kirtan in particular that kept my spirits up and created space for seeing life in a positive light and to counterbalance the field of negativity.

Pranayama made me aware of the life-force within myself and helped me to re-calibrate myself to the here and now.

– Sibylle Kratzke, Germany



The Satyananda Yoga practices and way of being is a complete 'partner' of my everyday life. During the lockdown my body stayed healthy, flexible and balanced; my feelings were those of serenity, confidence, compassion and joy. Thanks to the practices, I am full of energy, not only of a vital, physical energy but also of an interior one, which opens my creativity, my humanity, my sense of self-acceptance and furthermore, my consciousness.

– Sannyasi Diti, Greece

I found the Satyananda Yoga practices (chanting, asanas, pranayama, yoga nidra, meditation) all together very powerful. Before, I only did meditation and asanas. I discovered that the chanting is also a very important tool and should be included in the daily practices. I was very impressed how beneficial these practices were for me. Now I do yoga nidra more often and chanting as well

– Woman in her 30s, Hungary

A variety of exercises help maintain my physical and mental balance. For physical health I did exercises for spinal twisting, stretching, dissolving energy blocks; for mental health I

practised full yogic breathing, nadi shodhana and bhramari, mantras and yoga nidra. For emotional health I did the Review of the Day and recalling my joys and happy experiences

– Pensioner, Hungary

Satyananda Yoga practices are helping me to balance emotions, mind, body and to remember to be present in the present moment, living from moment to moment. I have started to begin every morning with a few minutes of thoughts of gratitude for everything this life is giving me.

– Chaitanya, Italy

Having more time I could intensify the sadhana, adding more practices, especially pranayama, mantra and aradhana. My biggest lifestyle change was slowing down the rhythm of my life.

It has been definitely an apt time for deeper introspection. Living completely alone, meeting nobody and having no contact with the outer world. It meant also feeling the pull of the six friends only lightly; I could develop santosha better. All on my own I felt inner peace always increasing.

– Sannyasi Yogasamadhi, Italy

The practice of nadi shodhana pranayama along with mantra sadhana and pawanmuktasana helped me most. I also practised daily the mantra sadhana indicated for this period of the 32 Durga mantras, Mahamrityunjaya mantra and *Hanuman Chalisa*.

– Jignasu Dhyanamitra, Italy

The Satyananda Yoga practices help me to maintain stability and deal with the situation with greater balance. Especially helpful are surya namaskara, naukasana and pashimottanasana, nadi shodhana pranayama, ajapa japa meditation, mantra sadhana

and kirtan. The chanting of 108 Mahamrityunjaya mantra has become part of my everyday life.

– *Jignasu Prembindu, Italy*

I really enjoyed having more time to do my sadhana and I feel I have deepened my practice and acquired a little more knowledge and security in what I know. Asana was necessary for me, and certainly pranayana and meditation. Perhaps the most important aspect is the appearance of the witness at all times.

I feel I am developing more clarity for what is important for my life and at the same time I wish to eliminate the superfluous and useless. Moreover, my contact with nature has intensified.

– *Sannyasi Atmabhava, Italy*

These times have not at all been difficult for me, so I really enjoyed yoga practices and lifestyle, as I had more time. I deeply experienced the benefits of practices and lifestyle; now I better know how and what practices I can use when I face some difficulties in life.

– *Sannyasi Bhaktimala, Italy*

Satyananda Yoga practices help in an ‘invisible’ way. While I’m doing them I do not perceive any flashing effects, but when I pay attention in various situations during the day, I realize how much the practices are helping me, especially on the mental and emotional levels – they promote my mental health, psychological stability, help me handle anger, frustration and bad feelings. They help ‘chase the bugs from my head’.

All asanas, pranayama, kriyas and meditations do help me stay physically healthy. Mantra japa, pranayama, all meditations and awareness of the regularity of sadhana are the strongest contributors to my emotional stability.

– *Divyaratna, Serbia*

Satyananda Yoga practices helped me pass through this period without any difficulty. I don't experience panic attacks, fears, any disturbance at all. Yoga helped me a lot to remain calm, composed and healthy.

– *Ljiljana Stanojevic, Serbia*

Satyananda Yoga practices are helping me to decrease stress and maintain relaxation of body and mind. Surya namaskara, nadi shodhana, ajapa japa and yoga nidra were the most effective practices.

– *Sanja Calija, Serbia*

Satyananda Yoga practices helped me find a focus and new meaning in my life. They strengthened me physically so I can run for 20 km as a routine in my training. Emotionally, they helped me deal with the stress caused by the pandemic and the uncertainties it brought.

For my physical health I practised pawanmuktasana part 1 for six months, and now I focus on pawanmuktasana part 2 for the next six months. Yoga nidra is for my mental health. I do nadi shodhana pranayama daily three times a day for my emotional balance.

– *Goran Gligorijevic, Serbia (jiu-jitsu fighter)*

Satyananda Yoga practices help me maintain balance, emotional stability and give me a feeling of inner peace. I practise mostly bhujangasana, marjari asana, eka pada pranamasana, anuloma viloma pranayama, yoga nidra, and for emotional health shavasana, gomukhasana.

– *Katarina Dasic, Serbia*

It is difficult to maintain calm, stability and clarity in these circumstances, and this defines the quality of daily life and of each moment of the day. Satyananda Yoga helps me immensely to achieve this.



Upon waking up I do the three morning mantras with sankalpas. Then I do asanas for 20 minutes, adjusted to my back pain, and kapalbhati 15 minutes, nadi shodhana 15 minutes, bhramari or anuloma viloma 10 minutes.

In the afternoon I do yoga nidra or yoga nap, and in the evening meditation, and ajapa japa or antar mouna followed by japa 25 to 45 minutes. Before sleep I do Review of the Day.

Apart from this, I also practise the lifestyle yama and niyama pairs which I rotate every two weeks. I do SWAN analysis once in 10 days, Mahamrityunjaya mantra 108 times weekly, shatkarmas (neti daily, laghoo shankaprakshalana every 3 weeks).

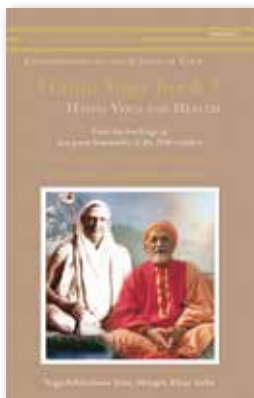
I believe this whole package helps my physical, mental and emotional health a lot.

– *Srecko Pantelic, Serbia*

Satyananda Yoga practices are very powerful for physical, mental and emotional health. Pawanmuktasana series 1-3, TTK, surya namaskara, viparita karani especially benefit my physical health and vitality. The practise of yoga nidra is very beneficial for my emotional health and the practice of swadhyaya (spiritual diary, SWAN, ITIES, lifestyle yamas and niyamas) for my mental health. The practice of pranayama supports equally physical, mental and emotional health.

– *Robin Caratsch, Switzerland*

Necessity of Regularity



How does regular asana practice keep muscles and joints healthy?

Swami Sivananda: Thickened and immovable joints with consequent lack of free movement give a great deal of discomfort and uneasiness. If the joints move freely the ligaments and surrounding tissues will be in a healthy condition. By the practice of asanas, free movement is given to all the joints, including the spinal joints. Free movement prevents

the spine from stiffening and contracting, checking ossification and degeneration of the bones in the spinal column. Muscles of the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions are also stretched and relaxed. The body is thus kept in a fit condition.

If muscles are not properly exercised, they contract. The blood circulation and nerve force are consequently impeded and functional disturbances of the organs and of general nerve-tone result. The muscles atrophy. Practice of asanas keeps the muscles, organs and nerves in a healthy condition. In turn, sound functioning of the organs depends upon good healthy nerves.

Yoga, therefore, is the perfect system of physical culture. It is the king of all exercise systems. By practising these yogic exercises, the body is made strong and healthy. There is no use theorizing; what is wanted is regular, systematic, sustained practice. An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Many people practise these exercises by fits and starts, giving up the practice after some months, hence the full benefits of the system are not derived. Regularity in the practice is a necessity.

– *Printed in Conversations on the Science of Yoga –*
Hatha Yoga Book 7, Hatha Yoga and Health

ASANA AND PRANAYAMA



Satyananda Yoga practices help in many ways:

- Organizing the day
- Improving the ability to deal with uncertainty
- Negating the urge to venture out of home
- Emotional and mental stability
- Looking for opportunity in adversity

Surya namaskara helps greatly. During the practice when I try and mentally run the awareness through the various chakras while trying to be aware of the count and the right posture, the ensuing 23-25 minutes are a journey of imagining the day that lies ahead, the mental preparation of responses to events that are not planned but do occur and reenergize the energy ecosystem. The practice helps to focus on what's important, not get hassled by what's not important and most importantly imagine and create scenarios that eventually unfold. When the scenarios occur, since I have encountered them in the morning, they do not come as a surprise and I mostly respond to them rather than react.

The effect of increasing counts of bhramari pranayama, along with yoga nidra, has been on the subconscious mind.

The quality of sleep has improved, and nervous energy accrued during the day gets washed away again in the evening.

– Arjun, Bangalore

Slow surya namaskara using a video where Swami Niranjana Saraswati paces the asanas gave a boost of energy and set the tone for the day at an energetic note. I also started the lower back asanas in the FFH app which took care of my lower back pain. This helped with my complaints of low energy, feeling bored and body pains. It made me feel capable internally because it re-established my routine.

– Ashwasti Tripathi, Delhi

My sadhana has changed, I was putting more focus on the asanas, but now they became preparation for pranayama. I try to spend more time on my breathing and I like the short practices, that Swamiji shared with us, especially the ajapa japa. It is wonderful to send light with your inner self.

– Jignasu Buddhi, Bulgaria

During the three months of isolation at home, I continued to practise, not so regularly, but when I needed. When I felt that I was accumulating tension or getting into a family conflict situation, I applied breathing techniques (yogic breathing and nadi shodhana breathing 11 times). I found that this reduces the tension and calms me down. After the conscious breathing I felt balanced, and because of this the conflicts around me suddenly disappeared.

After three months of regular yoga practice, the blood tests showed that the insulin levels had come to a normal level, given that I already stopped taking the medicines in December 2019. I believe that yoga helps me to be healthier, to love myself and

to live in harmony with others without judging or becoming angry with them.

– *Stanislava Nikolova, Bulgaria*

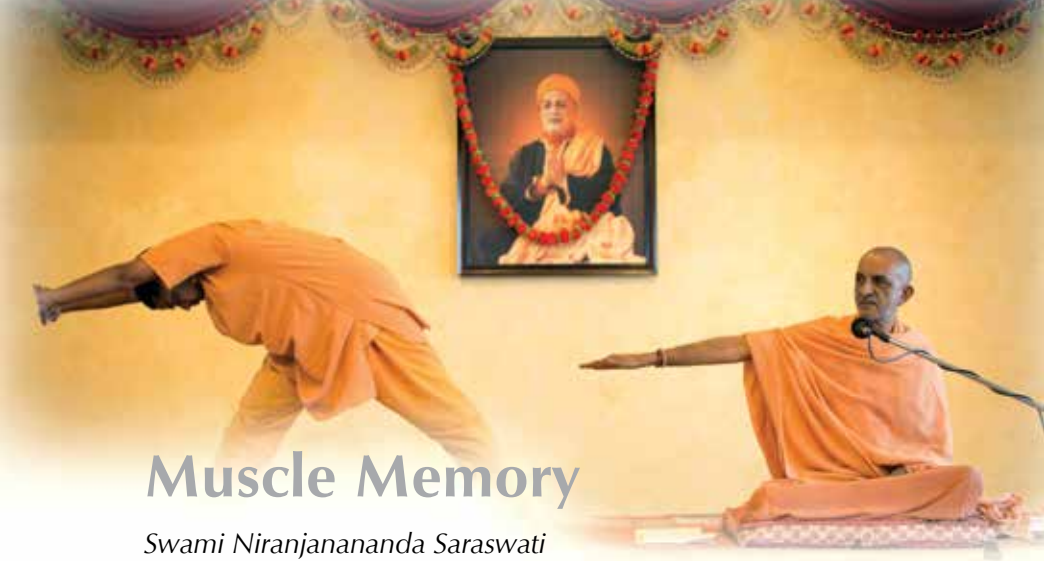
At the beginning of lockdown, I had intensified my sadhana, increased the number of rounds in asanas and pranayamas, and I used that opportunity to do practices more deeply, without rush. Later after a few months, I had a lot of struggle with motivation and regularity, and finally I came back to the normal everyday routine, with moderate number of rounds, and everyday meditation and yoga nidra. I have realized how asanas and pranayamas were important, and the days when I skipped them were full of heaviness and negativity.

– *Jignasu Devamitra, Serbia*



When I do my sadhana I feel a great positive impact on my physical and mental functionality. The strongest impression is how my body moves better and easier, and my mental clarity and speed of thinking increase. I manage challenging situations which call for additional concentration much better. I make better decisions because I have a clearer picture of my goals and the direction I want to go.

– *Miljan Pelevic, Serbia*



Muscle Memory

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Do muscles have memory? Do they have consciousness, subconscious and unconscious memories like the mind? The answer is no. Muscles don't have conscious, subconscious, unconscious memories. They are organic. The memory in muscles is the conditioning. It is not a smriti, it is a conditioning. When you walk around your home for years, you can walk there in total darkness for you know where the steps are, where the furniture is, where everything is. That is due to muscle memory and your own memory.

When you do surya namaskara and it happens with ease, without you thinking what comes next, that is muscle memory. When the body is tuned to do certain things without the participation of the planning conscious mind, then that is identified as muscle memory. It is an autonomic process. It is a conditioning that comes up. When children learn to climb steps for the first few days or weeks they find it difficult. Once they get used to it, they can simply climb and crawl up the steps. They don't use memory or the intelligence to decide, the body is able to do it. That is muscle memory which happens without participation of the conscious planning mind.

*– 17 October 2019, Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 1,
Ganga Darshan, Munger*

Meditation

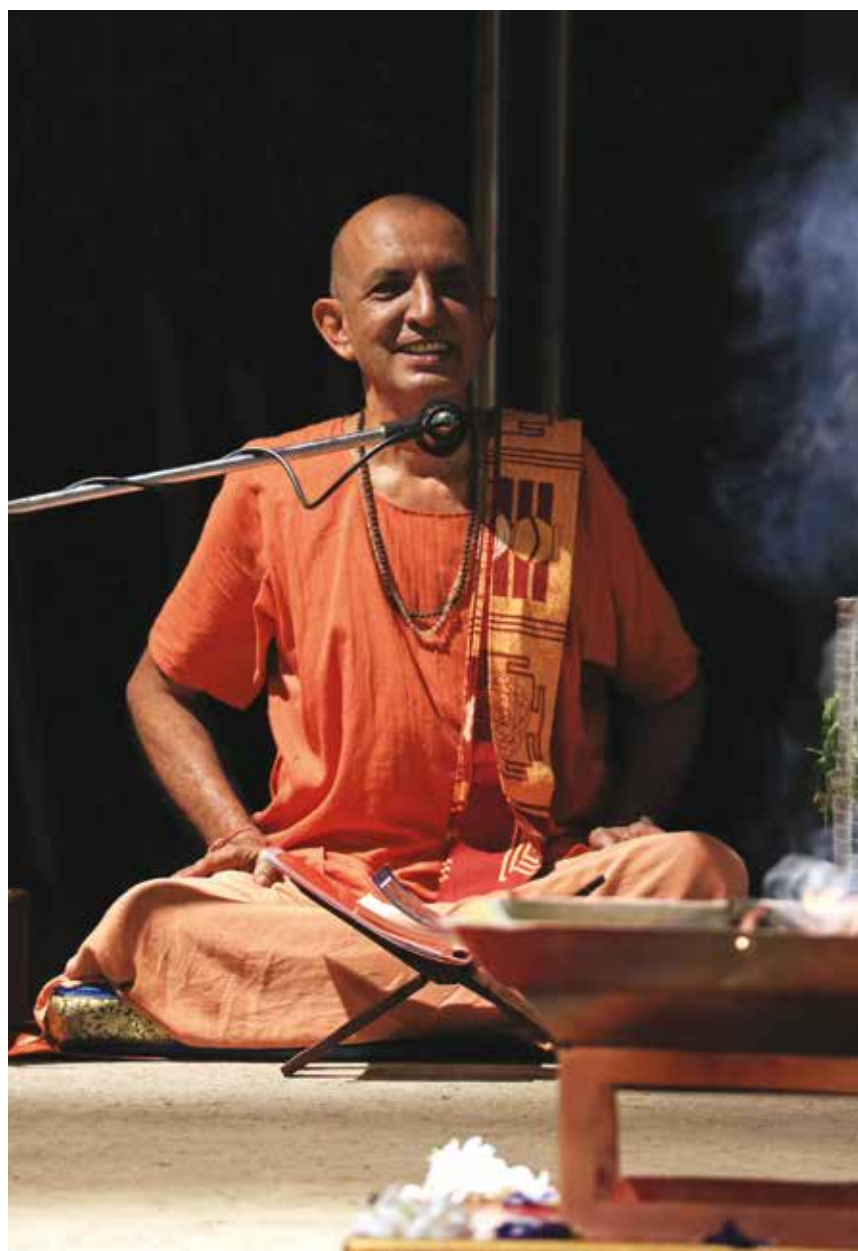
Swami Satyananda Saraswati

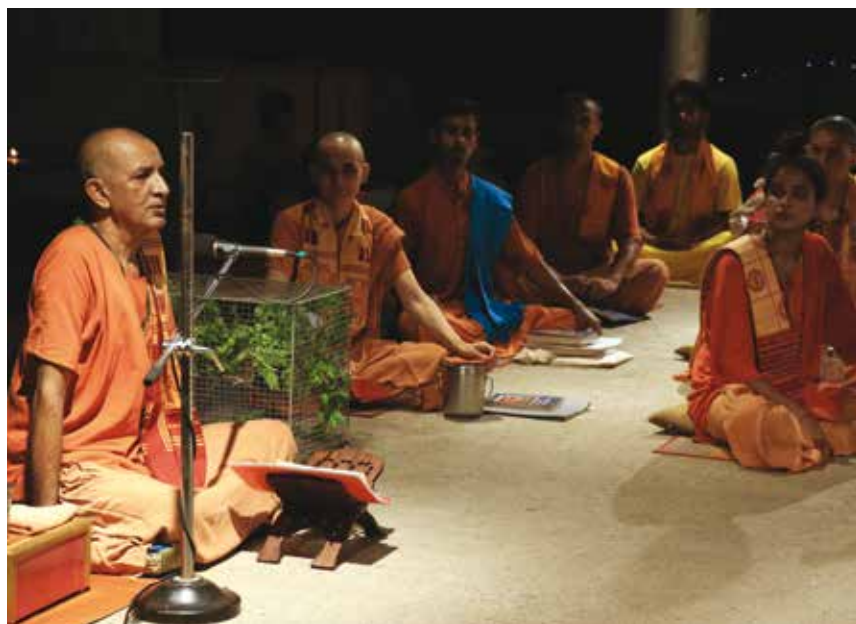


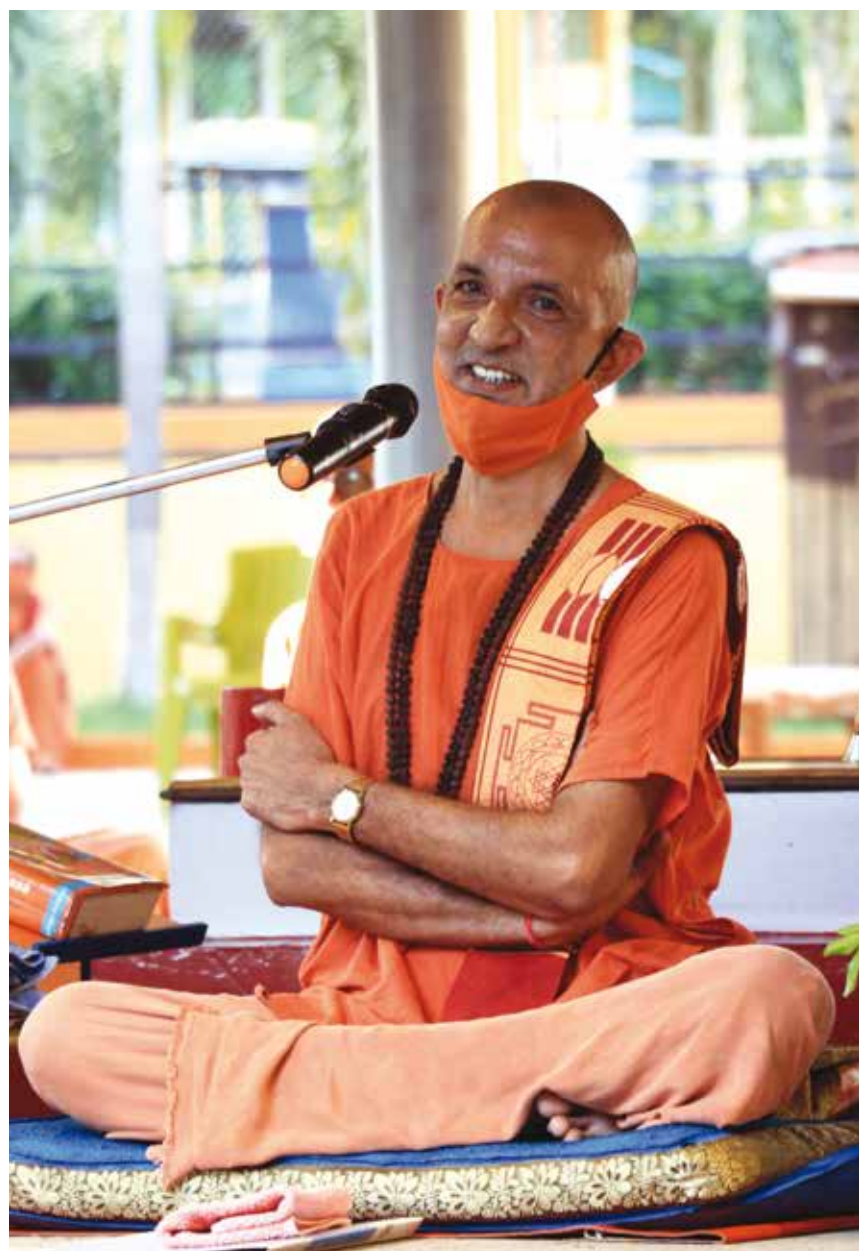
All forms of yoga are preparations for meditation. The practice of hatha yoga purifies the body, the practice of bhakti yoga purifies the emotional personality, the practice of jnana yoga purifies the intellect. After these practices you take to the practice of meditation.

When you close your eyes, what do you see inside? You see consciousness inside. Beyond the body is mind and beyond the mind is spirit. The purpose of meditation is to discover this unseen spirit. Through meditation you are able to transcend the world of name and form, and then you come to a world which has no boundaries and no limitations. Therefore, remember that meditation is like a bridge which takes you from this shore to the other shore.









Review of the Day is now part of my life and daily routine. It helps me to improve my awareness, control anger and emotions. I used Guruji's formula – Do I really need it? Asking myself three times worked, and I found that my needs are very limited. This formula changed my view of life.

– Priyanka, Delhi

The practices of ajapa japa meditation in the FFH app connected me with loved ones despite social distancing. The practice of Review of the Day just before I drifted off to sleep felt like an emotional recuperation that made sure that I woke up feeling more capable emotionally and well rested.

– Ashwasti Tripathi, Delhi

The regular mantra chanting always makes me positive, gives me joy and strength. Yoga nidra saves me from night tensions and sleeplessness – I use it instead of pills. I am very thankful and indebted to yoga.

– Mitra, Bulgaria

Most helpful were the meditation practices, especially antar mouna, the quality of observation and developing the drashta attitude and the qualities of vairagya and viveka.

– Swami Nirvikalpa, Greece





The meditation in which we were sending love, white light, wishes for health and wisdom, caring for all the people of the world, especially for the 'Frontline Heroes' is something that I practised for 50 days daily. It had an extremely purifying effect on me! I continue practising it every Saturday, and whenever my mind is in a suitable state to 'permit' it daily in my everyday life.

– Sri Vidya, Greece

I practised the SWAN meditation, one week for each aspect, this was very beneficial to reconnect with my inner SWAN. The practice of hridayakasha dharana connected me with the heart space, gave me faith, believe, trust and the energy to maintain the quality of my performance as a nurse at the hospital.

– Sannyasi Jyotiratna, Switzerland

Two Mantras

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Three morning mantras, the Mahamrityunjaya mantra, Gayatri mantra and the 32 names of Durga, are the sankalpa mantras. They are enforcing an idea, they are enforcing a thought, a condition that you desire in life. They are trying to build a situation in your life according to your sankalpa.

These sankalpa mantras are repeated when you are mentally fresh, like early morning when you wake in that half sleeping and half-awake condition. Let them enter into your subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is the creative mind, the conscious mind is the interactive, sensorial mind, and the unconscious mind is loss of awareness, knowledge and perception. It is the subconscious mind which is responsible for mastery of life, mastery over mind, over habits and one's nature, behaviour, traits, and the sensorial activity. It is the subconscious mind which trains you. Therefore, the sankalpas are put in the subconscious mind when the mind is in the state of relaxation.

Your personal mantra or guru mantra is according to your horoscope and zodiac sign. It indicates your own natural frequency and vibration. That mantra is practised at night when the mind is tense and agitated, when you come back from your involvement and interaction with society, the family and the world, when you are mentally exhausted and tired, then you do the guru mantra not when you are relaxed and peaceful. The guru mantra will bring the experience of balance, tranquillity, harmony, peace and happiness by disconnecting you from the influence of suffering and dejection. It makes you stable in your own nature.

MANTRA

Mantra sadhana both in the morning and in the evening created a sense of calm in the mind, and a *kavach* or a shield around the turbulent impact of the pandemic.

– Ashwasti Tripathi, Delhi

I incorporated the 3 new mantras in my morning sadhana - *Sri Ganesha Atharvashirsham*, *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Guru Stotram*. I can feel that I am charging myself to the point that I could fly.

– Jignasu Buddhi, Bulgaria

I have started the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* and the *Mahamrtyunjaya* havan daily for about 50 days; it was really an awesome experience for me. So, after these almost 50 days passed, I will continue the *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Mahamrtyunjaya* chanting every Saturday.

– Sri Vidya, Greece

The time available allowed for greater continuity in my sadhana. I have always had a special feeling with mantras, and in this period they have always accompanied me. The morning mantra sadhana is now the constant beginning of my day.

– Jignasu Gambhir, Italy

I have introduced new practices in my daily life: *Sama Veda Shanti Mantra* at sandikal, turning towards the rising and setting sun to harmonize with Nature, Mother Earth and the Cosmos and to express my gratitude towards them. I chant the *Sri Ganesha Atharvashirsham*, *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Guru Stotram*.

– Sannyasi Bhaktimala, Italy

Connecting to Positivity

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



With the yamas and niyamas yoga does not remain an isolated practice, it makes other moments which you live in society yogic moments. They form the concept of yoga dharma which you express in your 'unyogic' moments to make them yogic. Yamas and niyamas are expressions, behaviours and conditionings to fill the mind with positivity and inspiration. People think of yamas and niyamas as ethical and moral teachings, yet they represent the emergence of your connection with the positive dimension of your nature and provide an antidote to negativity. They take you in the most positive direction that you can aspire for. Yamas reach inside and change you from within, while niyamas are the external actions that you perform to experience the positive change internally. Yamas and niyamas are the path that lead to positivity and creativity in normal everyday situations.

YAMAS AND NIYAMAS

Before lockdown I used to spend too much money on clothes. During lockdown I realized the niyama of *santosha*, contentment. Simple living really gives peace to the mind that I could feel.

– Priyanka, Delhi

My new focus is looking attentively at *santosha* and *aparigraha*. I feel it is becoming most important to live a simple life, not only for our own spirituality, but for humankind. Not being greedy and to live happy with minimum requirements is really necessary for our environment and the future of our children. The stillness of the lockdown and *satyamyogaprasad* App reminded me of that.

– Doris Flaender, Germany

I have adopted the IDY program, I keep a SWAN diary, get up earlier, try to use less water and plastic and use used water for cleaning and watering plants. I practise the yamas and niyamas, forgiving others and myself and remembering to be human.

– Swami Kriyamurti, Germany

Besides the yoga practices, I realized it was a time to practise:

- attention – what is the situation, what is the danger
- cleanliness – in general and in regard to the virus
- acceptance – you have to stay at home
- discipline – keep distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, touch only what is essential
- flexibility – there are new rules you have to follow
- adaptation – everyday routine changed significantly
- contentment – we could purchase what we needed, spend this period at home in the countryside, we had beautiful weather and the internet to keep in touch.

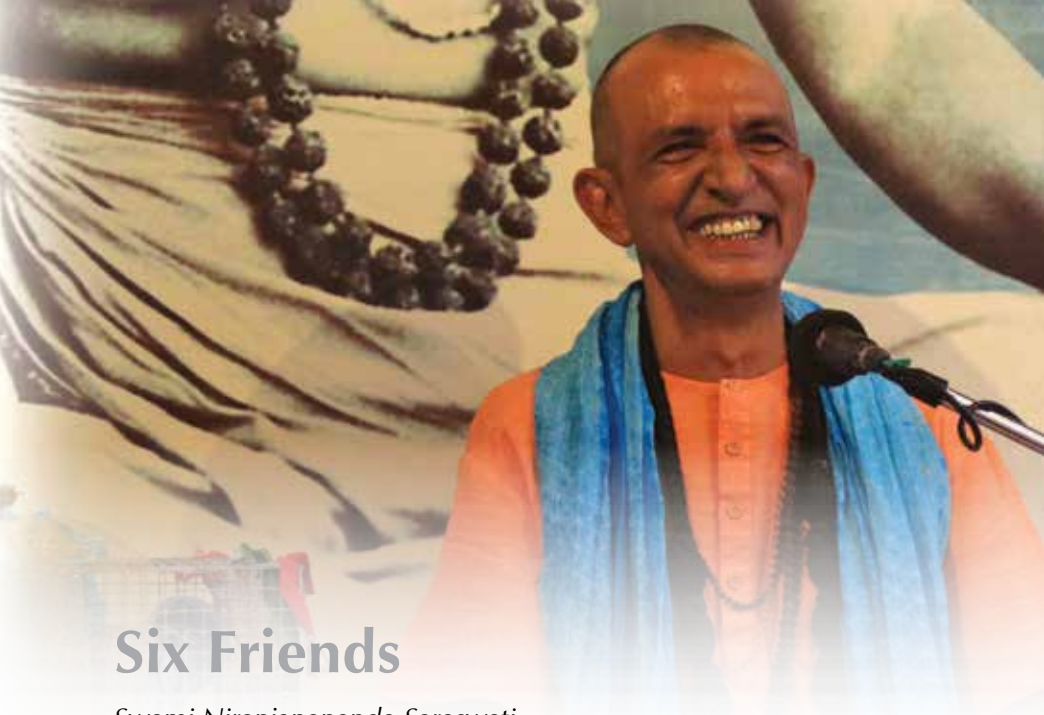


I felt stable and relaxed, because I knew and experienced that yogic principles are showing the way to cope with these hard times.

– *Woman in her forties, Hungary*

When physical movement was decreased and the time spent online was increased, it was vital to practise danti and indriya nigraha. The tendency of the mind was to browse through news and see how the situation developed. There was lobha for news. It was not easy to keep a good measure. The mind wanted information and due to the amount of information available, I could spend lots of time reading information, opinions which also created negativity. The attitude of danti and indriya nigraha helped to keep browsing and the brooding which followed at a healthy level. I will definitely work to further integrate them in my lifestyle.

– *Sannyasi Anandaratra, Switzerland*



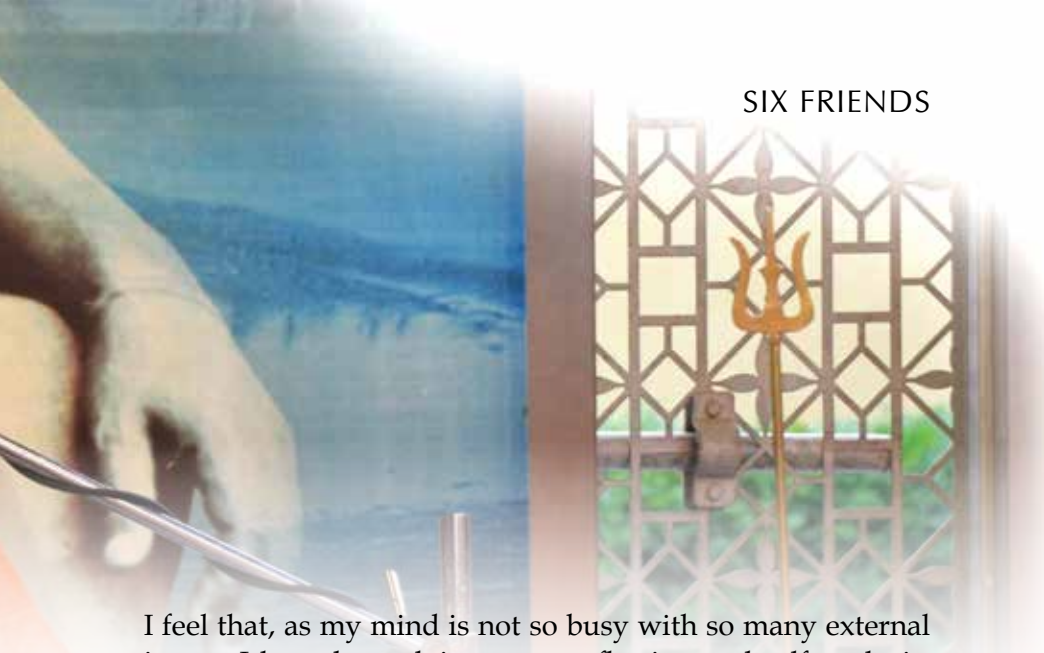
Six Friends

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

All interactions in life are guided by one of the six friends and not by human wisdom. Therefore, negativity rises and develops in the personality. Why do you become more and more tamasic? It is because you fall prey to the influence of the six conditions of mind. The purpose of yoga is to manage the six conditions of the mind, not just the conditions of the body.

People use yoga for health and wellbeing which is physical, and for peace and relaxation which is psychological. Fair enough. However, don't limit yoga to that only. Use it to fulfil your needs, but remember that the aspiration of yoga is to manage the six conditions of the mind, for it is these conditions that lead you into the well of suffering, insecurity, ignorance and negativity.

No matter how good your health is, no matter how much money you have, if you fall prey to these conditions, there is never happiness, contentment or satisfaction. Therefore, application of the *vidya*, the understanding, to improve the lifestyle and bring a qualitative change in the perceptions is necessary. That is the effort of the second chapter.



I feel that, as my mind is not so busy with so many external issues, I have been doing more reflection and self-analysis. The six friends have been present in my consciousness quite often. I still cannot handle them as I would like to, but they are more noticeable when they appear. I have become aware of what I have been feeling, such as patterns of behaviour and thinking in myself. Sometimes I feel that I am in a good process of mental and emotional cleansing, even though many things I still do not manage well. I have seen more clearly the points where I am stuck and I need to let go.

– *Sannyasi Atmamitram, Brazil*

The first few days, I felt krodha coming several times. I am more aware of lobha – how I want to do so many things. This contributes to the eternal lack of time. There are only 24 hours in a day and not everything can be fitted in them, but lobha makes us want to fit in a lot more than possible.

– *Swami Vivekamurti, Bulgaria*

The six friends influenced the mind according to the conditions and played their own role.

- *Kama* – my desires were balanced and prioritized.
- *Krodha* – there was less anger since I had less external stimulations.
- *Lobha* – was present in regard to food and the constant desire for more information.
- *Moha* – expressed itself as worry for the health of my family and friends.
- *Mada* and *matsarya* were not really activated.

– Prem, Greece

I feel my practice of pratipaksha bhavana has been consolidated. I have had more time for introspection and the serenity to recognize the six friends as soon as they arose. Remembering my time at BSY, I have often been able to cope with them in positive, creative and useful ways, and also to transform them into their opposites, or into good energies to do new things in life.

– Sannyasi Bhaktimala, Italy

This period has taught me that in moments when our inner security is shaken, the six friends are coming to the fore. I have noticed krodha in my thoughts and reactions. I felt how one whole situation was making me more irritable and reactive, especially at the beginning when the situation was not yet accepted.

I was very easily disturbed by people not respecting the distance in a closed space, or by politicians being contradictory all the time. I have also noticed many people being angry on the street and less tolerant.

At the same time, some kind of spontaneous and natural pratipaksha bhavana was happening. As much as there was tension, I noticed that people, including myself, were becoming more caring towards others.

– Jignasu Devamitra, Serbia

Yoga and Universal Brotherhood

Swami Shivadhyanam Saraswati

The ancient spiritual and cultural traditions of India have always believed in the idea of unity in diversity. The different yogic traditions and schools of this land are no exception. The ideals of universal amity, fraternity and unity have always been upheld by the yoga shastras, whether it is the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali where the importance of goodwill and compassion towards others has been emphasized (1:33):

*Maitreekarunaamuditopekshaanaam sukhaduhkha-
punyaapunyaavishayaanaam bhaavanaatashchittaprasaadanam*

In relation to happiness, misery, virtue and vice, by cultivating the attitudes of friendliness, compassion, gladness and indifference respectively, the mind becomes purified and peaceful. Be friendly with those who are content. Be compassionate towards those who are in pain. Be happy for those who are virtuous. Practise indifference to the crooked. Cultivate these attitudes and the mind becomes purified and peaceful.

Or the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* of Sage Narada where aspirants have been exhorted to rise above petty divisions of caste and creed, wealth and knowledge (sutra 72):

Naasti teshu jaati-vidyaa-roopa-kula-dhana-kriyaabhedah

Among them (the devotees) there is no distinction based on caste, learning, beauty, family or birth, wealth, observance or profession and the like.

Or the *Bhagavad Gita* where Sri Krishna extols the attitude of seeing oneself in others (6:32):

*Aatmaupamyena sarvatra samam pashyati yo'rjuna
Sukham vaa yadi vaa dukham sa yogee paramo matah.*

He who, through the likeness of the Self, O Arjuna, sees equality everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, he is regarded as the highest yogi.

In recent times, the true intent and purpose of these values seem to have been ignored by sadhaks and scholars alike and relegated to the background.

It is in this context that one must see the evolution and propagation of these ideals in the Bihar Yoga tradition. This tradition begins with Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, who established the Divine Life Society in 1936 and started disseminating his yogic message from thereon.



In the backdrop of two devastating World Wars, it is no wonder that the eightfold yogic path he espoused began with the three cardinal principles of Serve, Love and Give.

Swami Sivananda earnestly believed that man should honour, help and love his fellow men, and therein lay the path to his own evolution and salvation. "Develop universal love," he declared emphatically, "This will help you to live peacefully with all men and all creatures. Send out a steady stream of thought and goodwill to all creation. The energizing motive behind every thought should be service and friendliness."

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, one of the foremost disciples of Swami Sivananda, established the Bihar School of Yoga in 1963 to fulfil the mandate that his guru had given him: 'to spread the message of yoga from door to door and shore to shore'. What happened in the next twenty years was nothing short of a yogic renaissance. The message of yoga spread throughout India and the world. It brought people of different nationalities, cultures, religions, races, castes and creeds under the shade of the *kalpataru*, the wish-fulfilling tree, of yoga where everyone could find succour, shelter and support.



In 2014, when the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to celebrate 21st June as the International Day of Yoga, it was a recognition of the universal, all-embracing scope of yoga and its role in promoting international harmony and brotherhood.

After fulfilling his guru's mandate, Swami Satyananda renounced all his accomplishments and retired into seclusion to perform higher vedic sadhanas and perfect the cardinal ideals of Serve, Love and Give that his guru had preached. Through unswerving commitment and dedication, he reached the state of perfect *atmabhava*, the pinnacle of yogic and spiritual life, where one truly feels for others as one would feel for oneself. Then the concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, the whole world being one's family, does not remain a mere ideal, but manifests in a very spontaneous and natural manner in one's life.

A few words of Swami Satyananda should suffice to highlight the importance of this dictum of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*: "My philosophy is very simple. The entire panchayat is my ashram. Every house here is my house. Their pains and pleasures are my own. Their poverty is my own poverty and their happiness is my happiness." What a poignant yet down-to-earth description of the state of *atmabhava*, and a practical realization of Christ's message to 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'.

In recent years, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, spiritual successor of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, has embarked upon the task of guiding the Bihar School of Yoga into the next phase of its yogic journey. The goal of this second phase is to inspire people towards *sadachar*, righteous conduct and a positive, uplifting yogic lifestyle. In present times, the quality of lifestyle is deteriorating across the globe. The stressors of 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 like raging wildfires; and the ideal of universal brotherhood will remain a distant dream.

According to Swami Niranjan-ananda, the yogic journey towards positivity is aided by the practice of 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. A conscious and sincere effort to practise these will transform the state of one's own mind as well as the environment around oneself, leading to more harmonious interactions and relationships with fellow human beings.



For instance, the niyama of *namaskara*, greeting others with the attitude of acknowledging the divinity in them, develops humility in oneself and a sense of respect for others. The yama of *kshama*, forgiveness, allows one to set aside the emotional baggage from previous unpleasant interactions with others and re-develop a positive connection with them. Similarly the niyama of *maitri*, goodwill, enables one to drop the self-erected barriers of hostility and indifference, and adopt an attitude of goodwill and friendliness towards all.

As Bihar School of Yoga embarks on the second phase of its yogic mandate, it aims to fulfil the prophetic words of its founder and inspirer, Sri Swami Satyananda, "Like the rays of the moon, the light of yoga is expanding. All religions, beliefs and sects are receiving shelter under the kalpataru of yoga. Towards the evolution of man's consciousness, yoga has done unforgettable work. Yoga will become tomorrow's culture, and will show a new way of life for mankind."

Yoga Lifestyle

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The concept of ‘moment to moment yoga’ revolves around lifestyle. Until now, for many people yoga was a practice to be done in the classroom once, twice or thrice a week, for the sake of feeling good physically, reducing and removing stress, and attaining greater relaxation. Beyond this physical wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing, yoga had no other meaning.

When it comes to lifestyle, it means making your whole routine a yogic routine. Not just practising yoga for one hour in the morning as a system or discipline, but living yoga every hour, every minute. It means practising yoga according to the time and the need.

This attitudinal correctness will lead to readjusting your routine, aspirations and efforts in life. There has to be an awareness from morning until night, moment to moment. There has to be an awareness of being able to see ‘what I am doing’ every moment, to check myself and correct myself every moment. This happens when lifestyle is defined and looked into.

Yes, we made a few lifestyle changes. We were working from home and did karma yoga at home as no domestic help was available. We did not go out and moved within the building. We did not allow the situation to affect us mentally. We could devote a lot of time to be with family and with our own self.

We are nearing retirement age and this lockdown gave us a preview of how our retired life would look like. We regularly prayed for universal wellbeing and also helped in kind to needy people.

– *Jignasu Bhavpadma and Sannyasi Bhaktananda, Mumbai*

My positive lifestyle changes have been eating and doing my sadhana on time. Also the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana* with my mother has helped us tremendously. Gratitude, patience, surrender, atmabhava and *anitya bhava*, seeing the impermanence of things, have been the key during this time.

– *Shreya Trivedi, Mumbai*

The change in my lifestyle due to Satyananda Yoga practices helped me become fully responsible for myself. I am capable of taking care of my physical and emotional health and becoming self-sufficient. This boosts my self-confidence and this will stay with me even after the pandemic ends.

– *Ashwasti Tripathi, Delhi*

Lockdown can never be burden. If everyone feels free to be independent, to be a real karma yogi, to enhance the living practices, then this lockdown is the right time to lockdown all our six friends and to introspect and change our own lifestyle in a positive way, in a divine way.

– *Mouna Vilas, Nepal*

One of the most difficult aspects of life to deal with during lockdown is the feeling that you cannot separate work from home life, as there are not the usual barriers that help you to distinguish a clear line between the two. The benefit of practising yoga at home during lockdown was to reinstate the sense of peace and tranquillity into the home, to make that space a place of mindfulness once again. The ability to practise from my living room during this time allowed me to de-stress and restore balance to my daily routine; clearing my mind and allowing me to reflect positively on my day.

– Shoshana Hill, Thailand/New Zealand

The Satyananda Yoga practices promote a higher state of consciousness by positively interfering with the way I express myself in life. I have kept the focus on the present moment, thus working to control anxiety and stress. I respond to challenges and adversities with more balance, which provides me with physical, mental and emotional health. The moment we are living proves to us how strongly we are connected with everything and everyone, and yoga brings me an understanding of this totality through the concept of union. Therefore, experiencing yoga encourages me to focus on the collective good as a motivation for my actions.

– Paula Diniz, Brazil

I am eating healthier and I am realizing how much is possible in solitude and lockdown. In addition, less access to restaurants and junk food makes us more mindful and resourceful. I believe I will keep these as part of my lifestyle.

– Jhilmil Breckenridge, England

My lifestyle changes are that I have slowed down the pace in daily life. I do not rush that much and I am more aware of my



breath. I do not raise my voice so often, I speak less and a little bit slower. I also reduced unnecessary socializing.

– *Gauriroopananda, Greece*

I added more pranayamas, more chanting in the evening and I started working on SWAN more regularly and more in depth. Also I have become very regular in my sadhana. Sadhana has become part of my life and not something I should do.

– *Sannyasi Vishnumitra, Greece*

Practising the asanas, I have observed that they help me to keep my body strong and healthy and my mind focused and relaxed. I also practised nadi shodhana, kapalbhati, bhramari, shatkarmas and yoga nidra.

Now I have understood that Satyananda Yoga is a lifestyle. It is a way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is a way to see the glass half full instead of half empty. You can keep moving when everything falls apart. It gives a philosophy and an aim in life. It is the 'we' instead of the 'I'. It is a modern philosophy. It is the culture of tomorrow as Sri Swamiji said.

– *Sannyasi Devshakti, Greece*

During lockdown and smartwork I have had more time to dedicate to my personal sadhana. I understood that most of my desires for material things were vain. I made donations to poor people. I reflected much upon the opportunity that lockdown could give to society in order to have a better environment, sincere relationships and a different political economy. Yoga during lockdown is a great opportunity to understand what is essential in life and to improve relationships.

– *Sannyasi Mantraroopa, Italy*

Satyananda Yoga practices helped me to stay in contact with positivity and creativity in my daily life. I felt like a member of a great family, where all people were united by a connection, an energy, greater than the virus. I was alone but I did not feel it.

I tried to cultivate regularity and simplicity. I tried to stay in the present, living moment to moment with a yogic attitude and with simplicity and creativity. My sadhana has become more intense and regular.

– *Jignasu Brahmamitra, Italy*

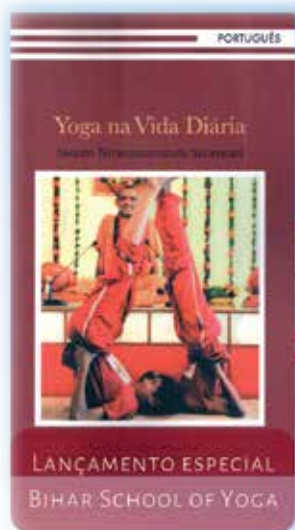
My strongest impression is the new clarity with which I can see my own thoughts, and the insight through which I see those situations when I, or someone else, behave incorrectly. I also see myself when I am reacting instead of acting with awareness. Thanks to all this, my mind is more calm and handles the daily stress with much more ease, in spite of the fact that the stress is ten or one hundred times higher compared to the same time last year.

I am more determined, yet I don't rush forward blindly as I used to do. I tend to act more and react a bit less than before. People around me tell me that I have become a better business associate, a better life companion, and more a bearable relative and friend.

– *Miljan Pelevic, Serbia*

Good News

Swami Aghorananda and Gangadhara, Brazil



ADQUIRA O
SEU!

As Brazil becomes the centre of the pandemic in Latin America, in the midst of so much negative news, we would like to share a positive fact.

We are happy to announce that we have just edited Swami Niranjana's first book in Portuguese, *Yoga in Daily Life*. We organized online study groups with teachers trained by the Satyananda Yoga Center to

take this valuable knowledge to their communities. We are fifteen teachers in different parts of Brazil who meet with their students to study the book. Here are some comments from students:

- These studies cause us great inner impact and break with our truths, our paradigms.
- With these studies we silence the physical body, the mind and we start listening to others and what's inside us.
- Reading this book has given me such a strong positivity that I can no longer let it go! I wish that every word would stick to me like glue so that I would never forget it.
- We see that it is possible to live a pandemic of light, drinking from the source of knowledge of Swami Niranjana.
- We thank you for being part of this tradition and for having the opportunity to bring this valuable knowledge at such a difficult time into people's lives.

One of the new practices I started is planting herbs and different plants on my balcony. I still do enjoy every day my greener balconies. It fills me with joy and great satisfaction seeing everyday my herbs and plants growing and flowering. Watering my plants in the morning becomes an additional morning routine, which my kids enjoy and share with me.

– Helena Hoffmann, Thailand/Germany

I am valuing and prioritizing the practices that connect me with nature by spending more time on the piece of forest that I have in my backyard. I am putting into practice several vegan and raw recipes. Eating only at home, I can eat only organic food and have an even more conscious consumption of all the products I use in the cuisine, not only in food. I am practising physical exercises without having to go to the gym.

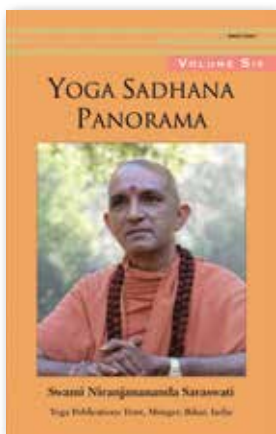
– Paola Ribeiro, Brazil

Working with my hands and earth, caring for beautiful flowers and starting to grow vegetables really gave me a new activity which I definitely want to keep.

– Susanne Spottke, Germany

Stress: Awareness and Management

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

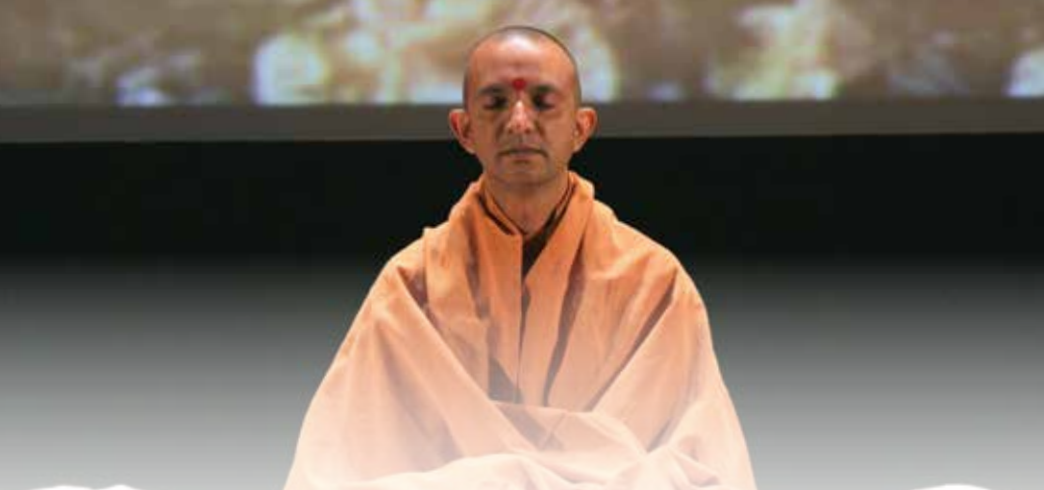


Many people fear being alone for five minutes for then they have to look at themselves. Sitting quietly for five minutes is difficult. There is always some desire, some need to move, to act, to talk, to see. There will always be a need to engage the mind and even one minute of silence becomes an impossible feat. That is a habit of mind.

It is how you have trained yourself. You have trained yourselves in activity and when you follow the path of constant activity, it is natural that stress will become distress. However, if you acquire the ability to relax and observe yourself for ten minutes, your stress level will be better managed. Therefore, the yogic process begins not with the body or asana or pranayama, but by learning how to relax.

Asana and pranayama are physical practices which attract us, but so do other forms of exercise such as aerobics, jogging or cycling. If yoga practices such as asana or pranayama become physical exercises, then where is the relevance of the spiritual component in our life? Therefore, in our tradition, yoga begins with learning how to relax.

Relaxation is a very important aspect of one's life. Tranquilizers and sleeping pills outnumber other medicines, indicating that people have forgotten how to relax and sleep. Imagine their state of mind. We are losing contact with our inner self. We are losing the ability to relax, to concentrate and become one-pointed.



The choice is yours, whether you want to become self-realized or to learn how to sleep. Sleep indicates that you can control and master your life, but relaxation does not mean sleep. Relaxation means being able to disconnect from stressful situations. When you sleep at night, you are disconnected from the world, from worries, stresses and tensions, from society, family and friends. Stress is becoming a silent killer. However, rather than stress, we are concerned with the state of distress that comes after stress, which destroys our tranquillity and harmony.

To tune a guitar each string needs to be tightened. If the string is loose, no sound will come and if the string is too tight, it will break. There has to be just the right amount of tension in the string. The same principle applies in our life too. Finely tuned stress will give birth to creativity and motivation, but if there is too much stress, the string will become too tight and break. Breaking the harmonious state of stress is the cause of distress.

Stress is not bad because it brings forth human creativity and activity. Stress encourages human beings to participate in their environment and society. We have to become aware of the areas in our life where stress is experienced and learn how to manage them.

– May 2008, Brijuni, Croatia,
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Yoga Publications Trust

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Blessed Self
Hari Om

This is to inform you that due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns affecting all, the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, has not printed or dispatched the YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines after April 2020 issue.

However, all current issues of YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines are available online on the **Bihar Yoga, Satyam Yoga Prasad** and **YOGA magazine** apps and at www.biharyoga.net and www.satyamyogaprasad.net free of cost.

The current paid subscribers to the printed YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines will receive their back copies when the situation becomes normal.

Please check out the new books, video and audio recordings which are uploaded and available in satyamyogaprasad.net. Use this special time to discover old and new treasures of spiritual yogic wisdom and live yoga moment to moment.

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With prayers and blessings of Sri Swami Satyanandaji for your health, wellbeing and peace.

Om Tat Sat
The Editor