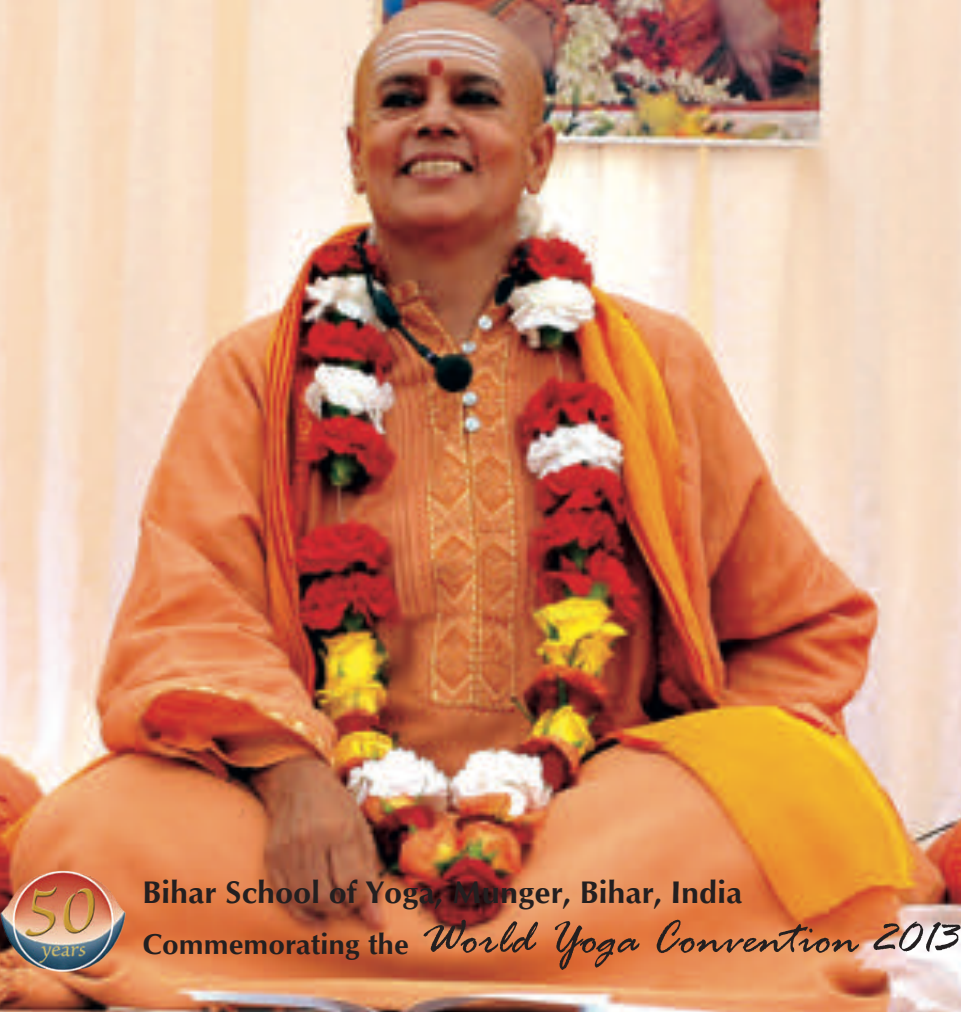


YOGA

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Commemorating the *World Yoga Convention 2013*



Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Beyond Science

Science has analyzed man as a creature composed of various physical and chemical substances. The scientist bombards the atoms, watches the movement of the electrons in his laboratory, spends his whole life in understanding the nature of matter and energy, yet, he is not able to comprehend the mystery of creation, the creator and the meaning of life.

For scientists the ultimate goal of everything is unknown and unknowable. However, Vedanta says that the ultimate goal is Brahman or the Infinite, and that it can be realized through hearing, reflection and meditation. Therefore, spiritualize your activities and dedicate all your actions to God. Practise detachment, self-surrender and live in God.

—Swami Sivananda

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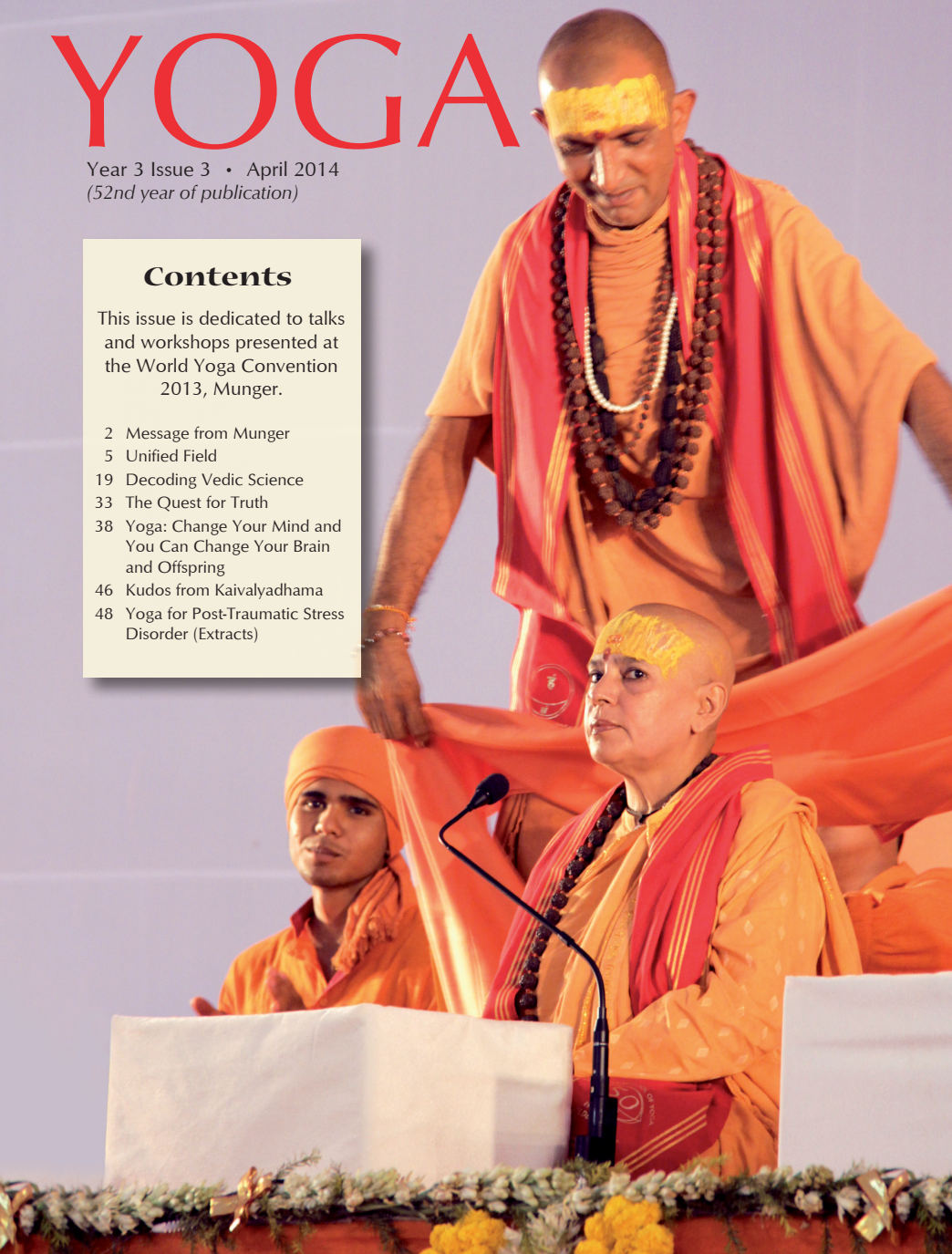
YOGA

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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 ॥

Message from Munger

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Welcome to the morning session of the second day of the World Yoga Convention. For me it is a happy and joyous moment when I come here and see the whole world dancing. Munger has lived up to its name, Munger has brought glory to its name, for Munger is the city of yoga.

Even the citizens, the residents, the denizens of Munger are responding in a perfect manner to all the delegates of the Convention, by hosting you, looking after you, greeting you, respecting you, and caring for you. Many delegates and karma sannyasins who are staying in different locations outside the ashram have told me that as they walk on the road, practically everyone greets them with a "Hari Om, Swamiji!" As you walk through the town, this is the greeting from the public for the delegates who have come from all over.

The celebrations are not limited to the city of Munger, either. Globally, people are watching our sessions at the Polo Ground. In fact, yesterday many people travelling to Munger were watching the proceedings on their mobiles and iPads in trains and cars. We have been receiving phone calls from places like Singapore, Australia, the US, South America and Europe, saying, "We wish we could be there! Everything looks superb, gorgeous, beautiful and inspirational, and we wish we were there physically."

The eyes of the world are on Munger for these five days. Everyone is awaiting a message to be transmitted from this World Yoga Convention. Everyone is waiting to hear what the message of yoga will be, and they should. For, yoga is a science, a process, an experience of unity, a unity not only of body, mind and spirit, but a unity of the creative faculties of the head, heart and hands, as stated by our paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda. This is what we are experiencing here, the multidimensional aspect of yoga. Despite its multidimensional aspect, yoga is a



science of consciousness. Consciousness is the main factor for the development, growth and evolution of every individual, not the senses or the body, but the mind and consciousness. Therefore, yoga becomes the science of mind and consciousness to cultivate the creative and positive faculties, and to cultivate spiritual awareness while living in the material dimension. Just as a bird needs two wings to fly, materialism and spiritualism are the two aspects which allow the growth of an individual in life.

Spirituality is not religion. I wish to make it clear that spiritual experiences and religious experiences are two different things. Here I am talking about spiritual experience. A spiritual experience means to bring out the creative within you, to bring out that which is virtuous, true and beautiful within you. It helps you to express the qualities of *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram*, truth, auspiciousness and beauty.

These are the three aspects of the human mind that have to be nurtured and cared for, and this is the attempt of yoga. The attempt of yoga is not samadhi or moksha, although that is written about too. What is the teaching? Has any guru taught samadhi to their student? Never. All gurus have instructed their students to do karma yoga only. Samadhi is written about as the ultimate goal, which is achieved after the cessation of all activities, external and internal. It is achieved when all external and internal activities stop and when you are no longer involved in karma or with the identity of the self, when you are free, when you are a *videhamukta*, free from the karmas of

the body, or when you are a *jivanmukta*, a liberated soul. Only then is true samadhi experienced. No teacher has taught you how to become a videhamukta or a jivanmukta; every teacher has taught you how to deal with the distracted mind.

What is the meaning of distraction? The prefix 'dis' has come from distance, and 'traction' has the Latin root 'tractus', which means to handle, to bring forth, to put out, to separate, to attract to some other direction. When the intention of the mind is separated from the action, that is distraction. When you find that what you know and what you do are poles apart, that is distraction. The distance, the gap between intention and action is distraction, and everybody suffers from it. Everybody across the board suffers from it.

This distraction is a habit of the mind, and habit is a conditioning that one cannot be free from in a normal manner. You have to use strong medicines, for a habit is deep-rooted. I will give you an example. How do you spell the word 'habit'? H-A-B-I-T. If you want to remove a habit, remove 'h', what will remain? 'A bit' will remain. If you remove 'a', 'bit' will remain. If you remove 'b', 'it' will remain. So you can never actually get rid of a habit, something always remains there. You can reduce it, you can remove the 'h', you can remove 'a', you can remove 'b', you can separate some consonants and vowels, but something will always be left behind. That is the imprint or impression on the mind. When distraction becomes a habit, suffering, uneasiness, tension, stress and dissatisfaction set into your life. It is for this reason that Sage Patanjali says in the *Yoga Sutras: Yogah chitta vritti nirodhah*. He speaks of yoga as the means to stop the distractions of the mind.

In this Convention we are looking at all aspects of yoga: yoga as a science of consciousness, as a science of wellbeing and health, as a science of the mind, education and samskaras, and as a science of life and culture in the family, in society and in the world.

– Welcome Address, 24 October 2013, Polo Ground, Munger

Unified Field

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

Namo Narayana

I do not know who is receiving the blessings and who is giving the blessings. I am a bit confused about that since, as far as I can experience, it is I who am receiving all the blessings. I am amazed at the grace and the blessings that I am receiving in this Golden Jubilee Yoga Convention. If this is the kind of appreciation you get for turning sixty, then I am happy I turned sixty!



Unified energy field

This Yoga Convention is a place that has generated an energy field. It is not just a convention of yoga; it is a force of like-minded people who are gathered here for one common aim. Do you feel the magic? It is the magic of the unified field. This is a field of energy which is created, which is projected on Munger: the 'City of Crime' becomes the 'City of Yoga'. Is that not an achievement?

In the 1960s yoga was started in Munger and at that time Munger was famous for only one thing: crime. I am sure that the people who saw Sri Swamiji here saw him in a different light. They did not see him as a yogi, they did not see him as a siddha, they did not see him exactly as he was, as Kashi Babu was telling us. It is their main regret today that they did not see what he really was, but we see the result, the transformation of the 'City of Crime'. At that time, if you

said you were going to Munger from any other part of India, people warned you. That is how Munger was famous.

Today Munger is the 'City of Yoga'. It is the unified field; however, this field is not restricted just to Munger. From here it is spreading worldwide. There are about sixty to eighty countries who are receiving this unified field, in the form of the messages that are going out of here, in the form of sound, in the form of sight, for it is through sound and sight that energy is conveyed. It is not just a unified field of Munger, it has been spreading throughout the world in these five days, created by the magic of Swami Satyananda, for he stood for that and represented that.

Sri Swamiji was a living expression of the unified field, which you also are. You are also a unified field, and that is why when you enter here you feel so nice. In fact, I was thinking that this is perhaps the first convention where everybody has become a jnani. Everybody is looking so enrapt in ecstasy and if you ask them, "Do you like the Convention? How are you?" They say, "Oh I'm feeling very nice, but I cannot express in words what I am feeling." That is the true sign of a jnani; a jnani can never express anything. That is why in the Vedas and the Upanishads, the ultimate pronouncement is: "It is not this; it is



not this." I cannot explain what it is, but I am experiencing it. That is the unified field, which is being created by the greatest yogi who came to live here. Was it by accident or design? I do not think it was by accident, because to transform an entire place in the span of five days into a unified field requires expertise. That is the challenge you all have to face.

Challenge for yoga today

In the last five days we have heard everything. In fact, I'm wondering what to say, because everything has been said, and said very rightly, correctly and aptly. We are thankful for that, as it is important to know that yoga works from the people who are out there in the field teaching yoga. That is the proclamation from this Convention: yes, yoga does work, and we all know it. It has worked in every field, not just in one field. It has worked in hospitals, armies and mental asylums, with children, adults and the sick. Every sphere of life is touched by yoga.

The person who has guided and shaped this movement of yoga, who has given it a vision, a tradition, a system, who has presented it in the most unique and simple manner is Swami Satyananda. He is giving you the goal of yoga. Remember the goal of BSY: 'Who am I?' That is the motto of BSY. That is the goal and Sri Swamiji is giving you a glimpse of that through the unified field. It is a structured field. It is not a chaotic field. Do you see chaos around you? No. There are thousands of people here. Thousands and thousands of people are eating, listening, enjoying, working, doing seva, or have just come out of curiosity. However, as soon as they enter this field they become organized, structured, aligned. They begin to feel peaceful. The closest description of the experience I received was from a person who said, "I feel immense peace." That is the most wanted commodity: peace.

That is the challenge for yoga today. We don't have to prove that yoga works. We don't have to prove its popularity, but we have to understand what the need of humankind is

today. That is what Sri Swamiji studied when he presented yoga in the 1960s. Being a visionary, he did not limit yoga to just the sixties. He saw into the distant future: how will man live fifty years from now, a hundred years from now, two hundred years from now, five hundred years from now, one thousand years from now. That is the efficacy of a tradition. Fifty years is nothing for an institution. An institution has to last, it has to grow and evolve along with society and the needs of humankind.

The tools that Sri Swamiji has given work for all times, no matter what society demands from yoga and what the needs of society are as it evolves, grows and changes. As the demands of people increase, as the situations become difficult, easy, nice or not nice, what will people expect from yoga? That is what we have to think about, and Sri Swamiji has already given the answers. He has sown the seeds and that is why he is called a visionary.

In the sixties it was getting familiar with the body and a little with the mind; familiarizing with thoughts, feelings, emotions; depriving the mind, isolating the mind, creating situations for the mind, creating difficulties for the mind, because it is only in difficult times that the mind evolves. When everything is nice, comfortable and good, the mind does not evolve. That is why Sri Swamiji always said, "If there is no difficulty, create difficulty." That is why he chose the most difficult place: Munger, Bihar. Even Deoghar was part of Bihar when he chose it. Rikhia was part of Bihar at that time. He left Munger, he travelled the length and breadth of India, and came back to Bihar. I said, "Why, Swamiji?" He replied, "Well, you know, you have to live in difficult situations. That's the challenge, and then there is growth. When there is comfort and convenience, it is the life of hell. You are stupefying yourself, you are stagnating yourself." That is why this civilization, which has reached the epitome of comfort, convenience and enjoyment, is experiencing a need for something more, for comfort does not give people everything they want.



In the sixties it was the body that we were made familiar with, and a little bit of the mind. Now, as we move into the 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th century, you have to think of your children. We have missed the bus. Many of us here have missed the bus. It is the children who have to be the focus of yoga in the future. Yoga for children must be the focus, so that despite the things they face as society evolves, they can remain in control, they know how to manage themselves.

Era of the mind

This is the era of the mind. We are not physical people, we are more mental people. The whole time we are thinking and thinking and thinking. There is not a second when we are not thinking. Imagine if you leave your transistor on the whole day long? What is going to happen? By evening the battery is going to be out and you are going to have to put it in the cupboard or get a new battery. You do not get that recharging because even in sleep you are thinking, and the first thought in the morning when you get up is the thought you went to sleep with, the problem you went to sleep with. That is how you deal with your life. It is the mind that one will have to deal with in the future.

The genie is out of the bottle. The funny thing is that you have brought it out of the bottle. It is there, out of the bottle

and you have to give it direction. You have to transform your mind. That is the challenge of yoga in the future, which Satyananda Yoga will face, and it can definitely meet that challenge, because the entire focus and motto of Bihar School of Yoga is: 'Who am I?' The tradition that it propagates is the growth of the head, the heart and the hands, not just the head. The principles it advocates are serve, love and give.

With the hands you serve. With the heart you love, and with the head you give. These are the three difficult things. We do not want to use our hands, as we have become so lazy; we just want to use them for the computer. We do not like to do physical work; we like to do mental work. As far as loving is concerned, that is a very selfish matter. We love only because we expect something back in return. We do not love if we do not receive something back in return. If you learn that the person you love loves somebody else, how long will it take before he turns into your greatest enemy? As far as giving is concerned, forget it. We are the most selfish creatures. We cannot think of giving. Even when we give, we have a lot of head-trips about it: 'Should I give it? What should I give? Is he really deserving? How much will it cost? If I don't give will it really matter?' We are very miserly in giving. So these are the three principles: serve, love and give, or the development of the head, heart and hands. It is the growth and evolution of the mind.

The evolution of mind is different from the evolution of awareness. They are two parallel evolutions going on within us. The evolution of mind is going on through the interaction with the outer world. The evolution of awareness takes place when you bring alertness and attentiveness to the inner world. They both have to go on side-by-side. We cannot regress, we have to go forward. We have to move forward and think about the evolution of mind. Physically, you are not going to evolve any more. Yes, you may try to become a superman or a superwoman by evolving the mind, but you are definitely not going to grow any more hands, legs or eyes.

Tackling the mind

It is an awakening that has to take place, a mass awakening to the purpose of one's existence and an awareness of that. Right now you are not aware of why you are existing; you simply exist like a robot. You are not aware of why you exist. Whatever happens, you undergo it as a reaction. Our whole life is a reaction to things that are happening around us, to things we see, hear, desire. It is not just a question of 'Should I desire or should I not desire?' No. It is not possible to live without desire. It is not just a question of 'Should I be good? I should be good.' It is not just that. I know I should be good. I know I should not desire. I know I should not be greedy. I know I should not have hatred. I know I should love. I know I should have compassion. But how to have it? It does not happen. Only the thoughts of hatred, envy, greed, desire and jealousy keep coming to my head. They keep coming to me, and how am I to change that? This is what Sri Swamiji spoke about, which was very different from others, for they spoke of what was impossible. If you struggle to be good, kind and compassionate your whole life, you are going to end up with a guilt complex. It is not going to happen, because just by thinking it doesn't happen.

You cannot tackle your mind through the mind. We are trying to tackle our mind with our mind. We are trying to tackle it with the same mind which is jealous, which is envious, which has hatred, which has guilt, which has complexes, which has phobias. That is simply not possible; you will end up in the loony bin. It is sure and certain that the mind cannot handle the mind. If you want to handle the mind, you have to use a superior agency, and that superior agency is the heart. It is the heart that can tackle the mind.

Sri Swamiji has given that indication too. He said that yoga, as we know it, will be relegated to the background. Of course, that does not remove its importance. Yoga is a rung, a step on the ladder, and we do have to practise it in that form. We should not stop practising it in that form, but we have to look

further. After all, when we speak about the bridges on which our gurus will walk when they come back, how will they walk? What will they speak? What will they think? What will they say? Will they be talking the same language as they talked when they walked here now, when they built the bridges? Definitely not. They have moved on and we have to catch up with them. That is the challenge that Satyananda Yoga-Bihar Yoga faces, and all yoga teachers, no matter which tradition they belong to. It doesn't matter because yoga is universal; it is for the growth of humankind. We have to prepare the people to understand the purpose of existence, which is the goal and the motto of the Bihar School of Yoga: 'Who am I?' It is a process of growth and of awareness.

Awareness is expansive, awareness is *atma*, the unified field that you are sitting in now. Even while telling you the goal of the Bihar School of Yoga, Swami Satyananda is giving you its experience. He is not just telling you the goal; he is also giving you the experience of the goal of yoga. Who am I? I am that unified field. I am that *atma*. We know it, we have heard it, we like it, we believe in it, but we have to experience it. That is the preparation we have to make for the future. That is the challenge. We cannot be complacent about it. There is no use revelling in past glory. One has to think about the steps to the



future so that the vast glory remains unhindered, undisturbed; it shines even brighter. Definitely, what I see here points in that direction, for the kind of momentum, the kind of force, the kind of energy that is built here through the magic of Swami Satyananda is in your hearts.

Bhakti yoga

You are that unified field. It is that unified field in you that Sri Swamiji has tapped and brought out in its splendour. That is the goal of yoga we have to accomplish, so there is oneness. And for that, the yoga that he has indicated is bhakti yoga, the yoga of the heart. Bhakti yoga is not just ritual. Please do not understand bhakti yoga to be something where you stand, wave the lights and ring the bells as we do every day, where you stand with folded hands before God or a higher force and tears stream down your eyes. I am not saying you shouldn't do that, you can do it. It is a good thing to do because it purifies your heart, it empties you, it gives you a feeling of faith, devotion and surrender, which are so important in bhakti yoga. However, Sri Swamiji defined bhakti yoga as a wave of the mind, a brainwave – just as anger is a brainwave and hatred is a wave of the brain. There is a wave, and you become angry. In the same way, there is a wave of bhakti in the brain, and that is the yoga of the future.

What is that state of bhakti? Where you can feel peace and oneness. The strength is in oneness, not in duality, although there is duality all around. It is everywhere; there is duality between what I think and what I say and what I do. There is a difference. We have to bring unity into that. That unity is experienced only through bhakti. It is a force, a wave of the brain. The people who have experienced that have a different quality of relaxation and peace within themselves. For them life is not stress and strain, as it is for us. For them, life is joy, bliss, *ananda*, as we have been feeling during the last five days. You have to walk to eat your food, then you have to come back, you have to struggle. You may have to carry many

kilos of prasad that you have been given here, and you may even reach late for your meal and not get your food, yet you are in bliss. Nobody is complaining. Everybody is so happy, so ecstatic and rapturous and full of tears, saying, "We are in heaven, we are so joyful!" That feeling of joy is not only here. Even the people who are watching the proceedings on their screens are experiencing the same. So let us say a big 'Namo Narayana' to all those who are watching us. *Namo Narayana!* Maybe the cameras could go on the audience, and show the vast expanse of spirit that is here and is soaring high.

The path is bhakti. I am not a scientist; I am a traveller, a seeker like you. We are travelling, the path is bhakti and the destination is my Self, within myself, for everything that we are seeking outside is in us. The path is long and hard. It is full of difficulties. Remember, it is only in difficult times that you move forward, you get momentum, you get *gati*, speed. The kind of struggle that everyone involved must have gone through to prepare this orderly and structured program is unimaginable. That is the unity, the unified field that requires seriousness, dedication, commitment.

From selfishness to selflessness

There has to be a feeling of oneness, because we are one, we are not two. We are one big family, we are not two. My thoughts are reaching you; your thoughts are reaching me. Even now, there are unseen links and channels that are connecting everyone to everyone. My thoughts go out, they collide with yours; your thoughts go out, they collide with others. We are creating vast networks of thoughts, energy fields, and that is why it is so important to understand that we have to build the right energy field. It is not a question of being good. It is not a question of being kind. It is not a question of desiring or not desiring. It is: 'What should I desire? When should I desire? Why should I desire? How should I desire? For whom should I desire?' That is the transformation from selfishness to selflessness.

All that was spoken about me earlier in the program, I felt I was not that. I was the most selfish person on earth, only thinking about how I feel, what I like, what I want, and all the rest can go to hell. I did not care. I used to feel that if you could not even earn one piece of bread a day, then you should just be lined up and shot; you didn't deserve to live. How difficult is it to earn one piece of bread a day?

Sri Swamiji used to say, "That is all I need – two rotis, two dhotis." Swami Sivananda sang, "Have no food, have no home, still I will be anandam." You can still be in bliss, in *anandam*, without the things that you are habituated to or cling to. You don't know it. You are a slave to that. You think you can't live without it, but you can.

That is the journey of life: from selfishness to selflessness. For that you don't have to control the mind. You don't have to kill your mind. You don't have to tame your senses. You don't have to finish off your senses. Swami Satyananda has said this so clearly in all his teachings. No, you don't have to do that. If there are two dogs inside me, one is black and one is white, one is good and one is bad, and I have to keep feeding them all the time and make them strong, then my whole life will go by trying to be good, trying to make the goodness in me right and suffocate the bad in me. What will happen with suffocation? I will only have diseases. I will only have complexes, phobias and neuroses, and one day I will explode. For how long will I suppress these inclinations that you, I, everybody has. You cannot say that you don't have greed, that you don't have envy. Anybody who says that is a liar. How long are you going to suppress that?

In society you have to suppress it. You can't keep expressing yourself all the time. However, there can be a transformation. You can transform from selfishness to selflessness. You can transform. You can change those two dogs and you can have a third one. The two dogs are rajas and tamas, the black and the white, but the third one is neutral, *sattwa*.

So get a third dog. Awaken it. That third dog is called the third eye. I am saying 'dog' because that was the analogy

given by the Red Indian master who told his little grandson about the two dogs. However, he forgot about the third one. The third dog is the one you actually have to awaken, which is the 'I' of awareness.

When you go up in a plane, all the structures that normally look so gigantic appear so small and inconsequential. They do not appear intimidating, unlike when you are down on earth as such a small thing. In the same way, all the problems disappear once your awareness is changed, once your awareness is transformed. If you are going to worry about your problems and neuroses, your whole life will go. You will grow old and die, and you will have missed the chance.

Don't think about correcting yourself. You are as good as you are. Just think about transforming and changing: from selfishness to selflessness; from rajas and tamas to sattwa; from misalignment of the head, heart and hands to a total alignment, to the proper expression of your character. Just think of serve, love and give, which was the second vision of Sri Swamiji, which is perhaps most important for all of us, because we have to think about how to evolve. When you think of evolution, the first obstacle that comes in the way is the karmas.

Expressing the energy of yoga

When you practise yoga in any form – even if you only do a little bit of breathing, just five minutes – you will experience an upsurge of energy. You will experience an awakening of energy. You will feel recharged. Then what do you do with that? Nothing. It just dissipates again in all the useless things you do. You walk out of the yoga class feeling nice, fresh and tranquil, and the first person you see is the person you dislike the most, and all the peace and tranquillity goes out the window. You begin to abuse him inside and say, "Why did I have to see this?" All the energy, peace and tranquillity that you built up through the practices of yoga go away.

Energy has to be expressed. This is the most important point, which everybody is forgetting and which Sri Swamiji

has been talking about time and again from the beginning to the end. He has even created a place for that - Rikhia - which is a place for the expression of that energy. Energy has to be expressed; energy cannot be locked up. If you lock up energy, it becomes inauspicious. If you give energy a wrong expression it becomes inauspicious. Bhakti is a way to make that inauspicious energy auspicious, to give it a direction, to streamline it.

You are discovering the energies of the mind as you do the practices of yoga, which make you more mental in nature. The life that you lead has made you more mental in nature. You are an intellectual, you are intelligent, but you cannot handle your mind. You cannot handle your mood. You cannot handle yourself for even five seconds. You are upset if somebody insults you. You are happy if somebody praises you. In every situation your mind is imbalanced, it is never in balance. Even in praise your mind is imbalanced. You lose balance. How to keep a balanced mind? For that we have to awaken bhakti.

Bhakti will link you with your Self, and when you link with your Self you will link with a higher power, and that is to



your advantage. Even to manage your daily life, to understand the difficulties you are facing and to deal with your anguish, sorrow, grief, loss, disease, difficulty and pain, the answer is bhakti yoga. That was the final pronouncement of Swami Satyananda, and that is the way that yoga will evolve. Nobody can stop it, because what a saint says becomes true. It is *veda vakya*, a statement of the Vedas. That is what Sri Swamiji has said, and that is how we have to prepare ourselves. We have to prepare our minds to become more adaptable, more adjustable, more accommodating and more in alignment with our own nature, which is bliss, which is truth, which is peace, which is ananda.

When you go out of this Convention you will feel the difference, and you will know that, 'Yes, I have come out of that field.' You will definitely carry some of it with you, because this is a life-changing event. It is not just a convention; it is a life-changing event.

I am so grateful for all the blessings that I have received in the last five days, spending time with all of you in this wonderful energy field we have been basking in. I hope we can have more and more of these.

Namo Narayana

– Address, 27 October 2013, Polo Ground, Munger



Decoding Vedic Science

Dr Alex Hankey

Brothers and sisters of India, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today, and I am sensible of the immense privilege. Sri Swami Niranananda has been kind enough to ask me to speak to you about my forty years of work spent pursuing the relationship between modern science, which is my training, and vedic science, which is my vocation.



Science of sukshma

The conclusion I have come to from my work decoding vedic science is that the vedic sciences are far advanced than modern science. There is a simple way to explain this: the vedic sciences are the sciences of the *sukshma*, the subtle. The modern sciences, even in quantum theory, are sciences of the gross, or *sthoola*. As we all know, the *sukshma* underlies the *sthoola* and controls it. If you can control the controller, you are far more powerful than actually trying to manipulate the gross physical matter. It is for this reason that modern medicine does not work, and it is for this reason that 145,000 patients die every year in the United States when they are correctly taking the medicine prescribed by the doctors.

The need for ayurveda, for example, is great. When I first started studying ayurveda in a program that I now call 'Decoding Ayurveda', there was a chronic disease crisis. It is like the chronic depression crisis in Australia that Dr Nagendra described to you. It is like the diabetes crisis that afflicts the

countries of the West, China, and particularly India so sorely. Why are chronic diseases so awful? Why are they so persistent? The basic reason is that medical science does not have the theory, the structure, or the tools to deal with them.

What are the tools for understanding chronic disease? The *tridosha*, or three humours of ayurveda: vata dosha, pitta dosha, kapha dosha. Why should these be tools for understanding chronic disease? Simply because when doshas are out of balance, the seeds of disease are sown. The disease does not arise immediately, but the body's environment becomes ripe for disease. If we understand the concept of doshas, then we can actually understand how chronic disease arises, and by decoding ayurveda, we might be able to solve the chronic disease crisis. Gurujii Nagendra and his dear and beloved sister Dr Nagaratna introduced a 'Stop Diabetes' movement, first to India, and then to the world, some three or four years ago.

We are all here together like pearls on a wedding necklace. We are all from different associations, from the Sivananda organization, from the Chinmayananda Mission, from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's organization, from the Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhan Samsthan, with which I am proud now to associate myself. We are like jewels on a necklace; we are here to create a divine realization for mankind. We are here to fulfil the words of Swami Vivekananda or Swami Satyananda and all the great seers who see that man's inner nature is divine, and this is what the Vedas tell us. Now let me tell you how decoding vedic science can bring us that vision.

Nature of the Vedas

When we ask ourselves, in terms of the vedic sciences, what is the nature of Veda, we find that the structure of the Vedas is contained in the *Samhitas*, collections of hymns and prayers. Samhitas are mandalas of anuvakas and suktas. For each sukta of the Veda there is a rishi, a seer, a devata, a process of cognition, a process of knowing, and *cchandās*, the waves of spanda on which those cognitions flow.

The essence of Veda is the wholeness: Samhita, rishi, devata and the cchandas. It is the essence of knower, process of knowing and known. This is one, it is not a trinity. It is the same as that mystifying Christian trinity; it seems three, but it is one. There is a term for that oneness within the philosophy of yoga, it is *kaivalya*. *Kaivalya* is usually translated as isolation, but from his conversations with Swami Lakshmanjoo, the great leader of Kashmiri Shaivism in the 1960s, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi translated *kaivalya* as 'singularity'. The first thing I did when I arrived in India in 2006 was to meet a great scholar from the Institute of the Study of Kashmiri Shaivism in the University of Lucknow. To him, Sanjeevan Rastogi, I asked this question, "Is *kaivalya* possibly translated as singularity?" He said, "That is the best possible translation." Why? Because the root *ka* means 'point'. The root then goes on to express *kevalam*: *Kaivalya yah kaiva* – that which has come to the point. This is the singularity of consciousness that is capable of experiencing Brahman. It is not just a point; it is the totality of everything.

How can we express these things in terms of modern science? It seems an impossible mystery, an impossible paradox. When you look at the structure of Samkhya philosophy, you find there are two distinctions made. Samkhya is a necessary step to understand before you can comprehend the ultimate of Vedanta. The thing about Veda is that within its very structure of Samhita, of rishi, devata and cchandas, it contains the essence of how Adi Shankaracharya explained Vedanta. This is a wholeness; it is a three-in-one structure, where the knower, the process of knowing, and the known are united in one singularity.

From unmanifest to manifest

How do we explain these wonderful ideas? Samkhya introduces the concepts of *avyakta* and *vyakta*, or unmanifest and manifest. Dr Nagendra told you there are many levels of *avyakta*. Underneath the *annamaya kosha* is the *pranamaya kosha*, which is controlled by the *manomaya kosha*. Until you have access to the higher realms through the activation of *vijnanamaya kosha*,

you cannot bring the mind back under control, for it is only your higher understanding of the higher intellect which enables the mind to come to a stop, because otherwise the mind is always minding things. The mind will mind so many things.

When I was taught to bring people to meditation, I learnt that the first step was to create the right attitude, to sit down not minding anything, to take it easy and feel what it means to take it easy; take it as it comes. In this attitude of easiness we begin to experience the silence within, because my paramguru, His Holiness, His Divinity, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Jagatguru Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath, had a master, Swami Krishnananda Saraswati, also of the Saraswati lineage, who was an expert at explaining the most complicated philosophical ideas in the simplest words. It is to this lineage I am supremely grateful for these insights.

Ask yourself, "How is avyakta related to vyakta? How does the unmanifest become manifest, and how does the one become many?" I will give you an example of an experiment I loved to do at home when I was a young boy in my teens. I would take a test tube and fill it with a nice solution of lead salt, lead nitrate, and to this I would add a few drops of silver iodide. Out of this seemingly uniform solution, which at first manifests nothing, you get the most beautiful golden crystals. It is like the sparks that fly from Lord Shiva that form the souls of each and every one of us. You can see it happening.

How does Lord Shiva create each of us out of himself? How do our souls seem to be many, when we are all one?



The same physics applies, and the physics is very simple: you have to have an instability. Once you have an instability, things no longer remain uniform. The galaxies come out of nothing, globular clusters of stars condense out of the gases of inner space and outer space, and these galaxies and stars condense because there is instability. Out of the unmanifest these manifestations manifest.

It turns out that the mathematics of an instability is a singularity. When you achieve singularity, you can create anything, you can manifest things out of the unmanifest. Here I have told you of one insight into vedic science. When will you reach samadhi? This is a state where the creative becomes possible. How can it be achieved? It can't be achieved by you; you cannot do it because you have to go beyond the little ego. As long as the 'I' remains, samadhi is not attained. So you have to make a habit, and I wish to add one more point to the point beautifully made about 'habit' by Swamiji. When you take away the 'h', the 'a' and the 'b', you come to 'it'. You have to go beyond 'it'-ness, which is objective. You have to remove the 'i' from the 'it', to attain the 't'. Meaning, only by removing the 'I' can you attain the transcendental.

Nature's guidance

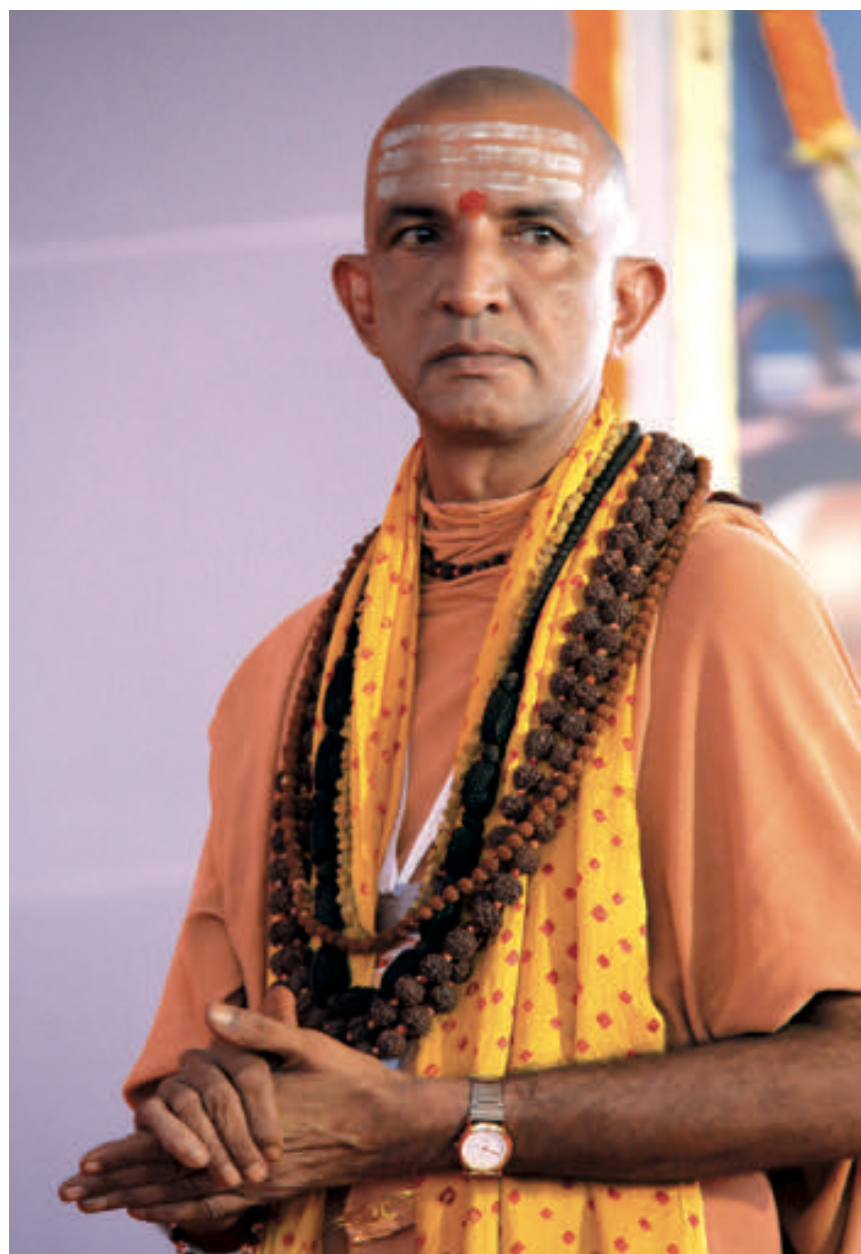
We know from Samkyha that you have pancha indriyas, the bhootas, manas, buddhi, and ahamkara. Underneath the eight prakritis is purusha. To begin to experience purusha, the ego must be shed, and you have to give that instruction to students in meditation, not as a philosophical concept, but as a simple instruction. How do you do it? If you were a lover of nature, as my guru was a worshipper of Kanya Kumari, the Mother Divine, Durga, like Swami Sivananda, then you can let nature do it for you. So one of the key instructions in attaining samadhi – not nirvikalpa samadhi – is to let nature do it. Let nature do it, let nature take over, because we cannot do it ourselves. Everything is under the guidance of Maheshwari, everything, this entire universe is under Mahashakti.

I want to give you one more insight from modern physics as to how this is possible. This comes from complexity biology. Complexity biology is a very modern subject and it is very obscure. It contains extraordinary phrases such as, 'the edge of chaos', 'fractal physiology', 'criticality', and 'self-organized criticality'. As it turns out, these extraordinary terms, which one of my Nobel Prize-winning friends described as being "so obscure that no one is interested in them", actually contain the key to understanding how nature does it. They contain the key to understanding nature cure.

This is why in naturopathic medicine, which is so closely aligned to yoga, rest cures. When you rest the mind and deprive the mind of information, and you rest the body, it will put itself back into a state of health. The mind will put itself back into a state of health by directing itself inward, not outward through the five senses, but inwards towards samadhi. Why? The reason is that this instability turns out to be, in biological systems, a state of optimal regulation. If my regulation is poor, then if I am faced by a pathogen or a germ, my body does not respond. If the regulation is bad, I succumb to disease, for the immune system was not working. If I cannot respond in my individual cells to the insulin in my blood, then I have insulin-resistance, or cortisol-resistance, and I develop the case of insulin non-responsiveness, I succumb to diabetes. How do we stop diabetes? The best way is to give the mind and body the chance to adjust themselves.

Guruji would have told you that by practising yoga, you can instantly cure about thirty percent of diabetes. Thus, I would invite you to take serious interest, if you want to apply your yoga skills to medicine, in joining hands with us and becoming a pearl on the necklace of the 'Stop Diabetes' movement. Stop diabetes in India; bring us back to health. By introducing yoga into education, and by bringing commitment to every yogi and yogini student, you will ensure India and the world a future of health and prosperity.

– Address, 24 October 2013, Polo Ground, Munger

















The Quest for Truth

Sri Shekhar Dutt, Governor of Chhattisgarh

I was thinking of delivering a prepared speech, but having heard the other speakers, I thought I might as well go extempore, and share some of my thoughts in this absolutely fantastic gathering of people, who obviously have great knowledge about and interest in the science, or should I say art, of yoga.

To begin, let me quote our ancestors, who I believe were people of great wisdom.

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah,
Sarve santu niramaya,
Sarve bhadrani pashyant,
Maa kashchit dukha bhagabhavet.*

The first sentence says that everybody in this world should be happy, which is the purpose of man's life. The second sentence, "Sarve santu niramaya", refers to how we could be happy: everybody should be healthy.

The quest of human beings, ever since they evolved from the earlier species and became homo sapiens, has been to search for truth. The purpose of searching for truth is to find happiness; the purpose of discovering truth is to find everything that makes a person, physically, mentally and spiritually happy; to find the truth is to attain the goals a person or society has asked or tasked people to do. The search for truth, I think, is the essential search, a search mankind has been trying to evolve for a long time, and the search for truth and scientific discoveries are intermeshed.



It was not a great surprise for me that, some months ago, I was sharing a dais just like this one, with a gentleman called Dr Luc Montagnier who was sitting on my left. This gathering was at the Science City in Kolkata, and 3,500 delegates from all over the world were in attendance. I was introduced to Dr Professor Luc Montagnier as the discoverer of the AIDS virus, and I became a little self-conscious that I was sitting next to a great scientist. Then they introduced him further and said he is a Nobel Prize winner. I shook hands with him and told him that it was a privilege to be with him. What I thought immediately was, 'I marvel at how you named the virus AIDS – acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome!' If you reverse that, it also suggests that the body is capable of producing antibodies that enhance immunity, sufficient immunity for the body to withstand the invasion of a foreign virus. Now, ladies and gentlemen, this was a huge gathering of a few thousand people and a dais full of people. On my left was Dr Luc Montagnier, on my right was the Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University, to his right was the former President of India, Dr Kalam, and so on. Dr Montagnier said, "I am going to talk about this subject, the body's immune system or the body's immuno-capability." He was the keynote speaker and he went on to deliver the lecture. In a little while, the person sitting on my right, Dr P. N. Ghosh, who was a physicist, started shaking my arm and said, "He is not a medical scientist, he is a physicist. He is talking about physics. He is talking about the electrical charge generated by a foreign body or an immune system, he is talking about resonance and how resonance from our body gets measured, and electrical charges get measured. He is not talking about medical science." So, ladies and gentleman, today's science, at the highest level, is a joining of hands of medical science with physics, biology, mathematics and all other sciences.

If the search for the truth is really on . . . and I am absolutely delighted that Dr Nagendra is here, so I can conveniently quote him to express what I want to say. As our ancestors and all others who are much better versed in the knowledge of our

spiritual volumes say: *Aham Brahmasmi*. The truth is within me, the entire brahmanda is within me, and I am capable. All activities that mankind undertakes in search of truth are ultimately to find the truth within oneself. This truth will reveal an enormous capacity and replenish the belief that mankind can evolve in a manner that these words come true: *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niramaya*.



In this quest of finding the truth, I congratulate this gathering, this body of very dedicated people doing yoga and service, everybody in this organization. They have called people, and have linked and joined hands with people who make a difference, and who will ultimately be able to prevail upon the rest and impress upon them that we are capable, we have the desire, and we shall do it.

My association of linking yoga with health goes back to when I was the Secretary of the Department in the Ministry of Health. How is it that yoga provides better chances of a healthy body and mind? I quote Dr. Nagendra: "Health is not the mere absence of disease or infirmity, but it is a state of wellbeing of the physical, mental and social as well as spiritual."

I am sure that in our quest for truth we shall, by climbing different steps, attain that goal of reaching complete health. Nothing can be obtained without understanding the truth, what is good and what is not good. It must be the good that humankind pursues and that will lead to the other goals of good health.

What does spirituality intend? I am not an overly spiritual person, but I would say its intention is that one should be good. How can you be good without adversely affecting someone else? If it were plain arithmetic, then when you get pluses

there would be some minuses being given to another person, so your pluses are at the cost of someone else's minuses.

Is that what society wants? No! I think good can be attained by some other values: to be kind, to be considerate, and to give the other person dignity, because human beings require dignity. There are so many other virtues that go hand in hand, so that at the same time that you are good, you remain healthy. You can obtain all the pluses in life. While we go into the mechanics, some of the basic philosophical aspects should never be left out.

I am taking another cue from Dr Nagendra, who is a fantastic person. I am sure you have heard or read about the way he has been evolving from space to self and yoga, and yoga's effect on the body, mind and the wellbeing of society. He has given me this, 'Yoga: a solution to manage post-nuclear crisis'. Through this I found that the features of yoga are very similar to what I was talking about: how do we obtain greater immunity to withstand the impact of virus and bacteria.

Immunity is a self-generated systematic improvement within the body, and everybody has been blessed with that system. Now, how do we retain this immunity, how do we ensure that the body will be able to meet the challenge of fresh bacteria and viruses? When we go into the various aspects of cell biology, we will find that although human beings have perhaps mutated long ago to become human beings, no further mutations are happening, whereas other biological systems, like virus and bacteria, continue to mutate. Therefore, ailments are coming in many forms today due to these mutated bacteria and viruses, and the body's immune system must be able to withstand that. We have to provide the ability to the body so that our immune system is able to withstand that.

As Defence Secretary, I had the opportunity of coordinating and getting all these abilities put together, due to the advent of certain pandemics like SARS or swine flu and bird flu. When each of these diseases came to India, they caused panic. A lot of people died because of these pandemics and we had to mobilize

everybody. Scientists had to work and find different vaccines. What do vaccines do? Vaccines provide an outside stimulant to the body so that it can produce antibodies that can contain these bacteria and viruses. Yoga has the capability of inducing this action internally, from within oneself. How? Through the mind. The mind is capable of generating instructions that the body follows, thereby leading to the creation of different immune systems.

Our quest for truth has begun and is ongoing. I would welcome a large number of people like Dr Nagendra to come and see the various scientific aspects so that in collaboration, we can induce these states, absorb the knowledge, and train the mind of the human being through exercises and yogic *prakriyas*, techniques, to concentrate and be able to stimulate the body to generate antibodies, to generate the mechanism providing immunity.

I would also like to discuss another aspect, physiotherapy, the art and science of reflexology, which again does the same thing. It stimulates the nerves, which in turn stimulate the brain, and the direction from within the brain enables the body to cure itself. There are a group of scientists working on reflexology at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, and the subject is being studied in depth. They have also found that our old scriptures and ancient sculptures provide clues to the nerves that have to be stimulated in order to enable the mind or the brain to give those directions. That is yet another science that is being studied, and when it is validated, it will help the body to find a cure for all ailments.

I would say it is a fantastic sort of *paraav*, leg of this journey, the journey of searching for truth, and everybody who is involved in it should experience joy; joy in search of truth. May you have joy, happiness and all the other feelings which arise when one is nearing the truth, as truth is the purpose of our existence. Thank you very much.

– Address, 24 October 2013, Polo Ground, Munger

Yoga: Change Your Mind and You Can Change Your Brain and Offspring

Dr Rishi Vivekananda



Swami Niranjana, Swami Satsangi, my fellow lecturers, guests and delegates. This is a very special occasion for Rishi Hridayananda and myself, because we have grown up in parallel with this organization for most of its life. We joined the Satyananda family in 1969 after we met Swami Satyananda in Australia, and have observed the growth and development,

especially of Satyananda Yoga in Australia, which as you know has been great, but also here and in other parts of the world. It has been a revelation to us, for at the beginning it was all going so slowly.

Slowly, slowly

Sri Swamiji used to say, “Slowly, slowly” and nothing much seemed to be happening. We expected him to be out there advertising and telling everybody, “Here it is, come and get it.” Nothing happened. Nonetheless, while we were not looking, it slowly grew, and it slowly grew from the foundations up. Sri Swamiji was great at building foundations. He was great at building everything actually, as you can see, and Swami Niranjana has taken after him. The foundations are always laid down first and then slowly, brick by brick, it happens. Over all

these years, half a century, we have been observing all of these fast-growing spiritual organizations crash, due to the lack of foundations. Here you are sitting on firm foundations, we all are, and we have been for the last fifty years.

Fifty years ago, I did not particularly want a guru. I remember back in 1969, Rishi Hridayananda came back from a seminar. I was at home and she came in and said, "I met him." I said, "Who did you meet?" She said, "My guru." I said, "Ridiculous! What do you want a guru for?" She said, "Oh, he's absolutely wonderful. You should meet him." I hope you will please excuse me for what I am going to say now; remember, it was forty-five years ago. She said, "He's going back to India on Tuesday." I said, "He's Indian, is he?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Well, he is not getting any of my money!" As some of you know, he got all of it.

When I left Australia in 1977, I had a dhoti, a kurta, a head of hair and that was it. I got into the airplane and Swami Nirnanjan shaved off the head of hair. Of course I shaved off his too. It was a funny little scene actually. Both of us went into the toilet together, and there were two air hostesses looking at the two of us strangely as we walked in, seeing these two men walking into the toilet together. Within about five or ten minutes, us two young men walked out and we were both completely bald. The hostesses just stared at us.

I feel as if Swamiji is my brother or sister, as we have grown up in the same family together. Since those early years, this beautiful being has blossomed into a fifty-year-old fount of wisdom that is so magnificent for everybody he touches and everybody Sri Swamiji touched.

After we first met Sri Swamiji in Australia, a few years went by and we did not even see him, yet there were dramatic changes in us and in all the people around us. Everybody who he touched just blossomed and grew. Every single thing that Sri Swamiji touched just turned to beauty. That is the vision I have of Satyananda Yoga, when I look at it now, after fifty years.

From shore to shore

I have been going around the world quite a number of times recently; in 2005 I spent seven months going right around the whole world to all the Satyananda Yoga centres. Every person I came in contact with is family, and they are all absolutely beautiful people. They all have just one thing in mind: spreading yoga from shore to shore and from door to door, and they are doing a wonderful job of it. It is a very united, lovely community. Many of them are here today, and that is what makes this also a special event; it is family coming together. This is like a big Christmas party, isn't it? There are thousands of us here with one thing in mind: propagating Satyananda Yoga.

I often say to the students when I am teaching them, "The greatest thing you can do for another human being is to teach them yoga. One of the great beauties of yoga is that you always have it." You might do bhramari pranayama, a brilliant practice for dissolving anxiety. It works! I used to give it to my patients. It actually dissolves anxiety. It rattles the brain and something happens down in the limbic system. It improves the patients and they can use it all their life. They do not have to go to the doctor each month to get a prescription for bhramari pranayama. They have it and they might teach it to the lady next door. This is what is called a chain reaction. In this organization we have been seeing this chain reaction going on for the last fifty years, and it has been very inspiring to behold.

Definition of yoga

Back in 1996, Swami Niranjan was in Australia and he gave a definition of yoga in two parts and I thought, 'That is it!' At the beginning of every lecture I give this definition of yoga. It is what you might call a 'functional' definition. A functional definition is something that includes everything that needs to be included and includes nothing that does not need to be included. The definition is: 'Yoga is an ancient system of philosophy, lifestyle

and techniques that evolves the whole person: the physicality, the vitality, the mind, the emotions, wisdom, ethics, a higher quality of relationships and the realization of the spiritual reality within each of us.' It is beautiful. Thank you, Swamiji.

The important word here, of course, is 'evolves'. Evolves meaning changing something from a lesser form to a greater form, or from a worse form to a better form; it is changing something. Swami Satsangi spoke about this the other day, that if we are going to evolve we have to be prepared to change.

Evolution requires change

The first form of change is physical. Is there actually a physical change that goes on? Well, you can develop the physical, you can exercise it, you can make it stronger, more flexible and more relaxed; however, do you actually change the structure of the body? I suppose in some ways you do, but I want to talk about a couple of rather amazing ways in which physical change happens. We know that we can evolve the vitality. We know that we can evolve the quality of the energy that we give out. Are we giving out the black and red energies of anger and vengeance? Are we giving out the energies of anxiety and depression? Can we evolve from that? There is ample evidence, both personal and objective evidence, that this can be achieved with yoga. This kind of



research has been going on since the 1970s. There is an enormous body of this research out there, available on the internet.

We can also evolve the quality of the mind, the quality of our thinking, attitudes and opinions, and eliminate our bigotries. That produces a permanent change in our mental state and that is a typical example of how we can evolve the qualities of the mind. We can evolve the qualities of the emotions. Instead of those anxieties, tensions, angers and such feelings, we can evolve the quality of emotions right up to enormous, outgoing love such as the masters have and give us.

We can grow into the level of wisdom, *buddhi*. We have spoken about manas. Now we speak about buddhi. We can increase the wisdom. Wisdom really means the ability to make the right decisions. Sometimes you need a lot of intuition to do it. We can develop that with yoga. I think the best examples are when we look at the masters and see what they have actually attained and become due to their immersion in yoga and the grace of their guru.

Changes at all the above levels lead us to the higher ethics and the higher quality of relationships, which we see in everybody who is touched by yoga, especially who is touched by a spiritual master. You can see their relationships just blossom. What was once dissension is now cooperation; what was once unhappiness is now happiness; what was once rejection is now acceptance, love and compassion. Since Sri Swamiji first came to Australia in 1969, and what has happened to the people there through his touch is there for all to see.

The idea of evolving the physical is relatively new in science. If, fifteen years ago, somebody thought of as a medico had said what I am going to say now, I would have thought it was rubbish, yet in actual fact it is true. If we change our ongoing mind, our emotional and attitudinal state, and make it a more evolved ongoing state, the paths of the brain that are associated with that ongoing mood state physically increase in size and the paths that were mediating the other lower states shrivel up. They actually shrivel and the other paths actually

grow. This has been observed by looking at people's brains using functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). You can see this in the immediate moment as well.

Changing the state of mind

If you sit in a certain position and focus on a certain mind state, you can give yourself a certain mind state. The Buddhists call it the ongoing love state. They enter a state of acceptance and love, first of all towards themselves, then to the people closest to them, then to the people a bit more distant to them, then to the people who are a bit more distant than that, and they try to develop it so they are giving love out to even the people who are supposed to be their enemies. They call it *meta*.

When this process starts to happen, the activities in the limbic system, which are shown by the lighting up of the neurons on the MRI, quieten down and the ones in the left frontal lobe light up. That is the area associated with positive emotions. Hence, it happens in the immediate. With yoga, you can keep on with those higher emotions, the more evolved state of being and the more evolved level of attitudes to yourself and other people. If you can keep that going continuously over a period of time, that area will grow. There is then more of a tendency for you to always latch in to that. It is a kind of habit. If you latch into that area it makes it more and more difficult to latch into the other area. Somebody insults you and you think, 'Oh, that's funny', instead of thinking, 'I want to hit you.' That area switches on.

This is called neuroplasticity. The brain is plastic. I do not mean in terms of the chemical stuff, I mean in terms of the fact that it can be moulded. Even if you are ninety-five, your brain can be moulded. You can grow new neurons. We used to think that the growth fizzled out at about the age of twenty-five and then you slowly went downhill. You do start to go downhill, but you can make it very slow if you keep your mind active, especially if you keep it in a positive state. There is no avoiding the effect of free radicals and other things getting in and ageing your body; however, the process can certainly be delayed.



Epigenetics and yoga

There is another amazing idea that has come out fairly recently, and that is epigenetics. I do not want to become too complicated here, and this can be a complicated subject. That is why I don't understand it! However, it can be simplified as well. Imagine this: you inherit a set of genes with the first combination of the male and female zygotes, and for the rest of your life you keep those genes. They do not change very much. The genes make the proteins from which the body is made and every cell has the same genes as it divides. Then why do you have a liver, a heart and a brain? What happens there? This is called 'cell differentiation' and it has been a big mystery for a long time. How is it that with exactly the same genes, two cells can become two different organs? It seems peculiar.

It is only very recently that scientists have realized the cause. Initially, when they got the genes out, they found that the genes had a whole lot of protein surrounding them. They cleaned the protein away, cleaned the genes up nicely, and all the genes were the same in the cells. What they did not realize was that the actual activator or the deactivator of the genes was the protein. It is now called 'epigenetic material'. If you have a gene, a part of it will be covered and a part of it will be uncovered. The part of the gene that is uncovered is able to express itself, to produce the proteins that it is the champion at doing. If one part of the

gene is covered and the other part is uncovered, a different protein will be produced. It is the movement and activity of these sheaths of protein around the genes that either cover or uncover the parts of the gene to produce the proteins that are required in that situation. That is called epigenetic material.

What has been found out most recently is that if you get into an ongoing mind and attitude state like a state of lovingness through your life or a state of vengefulness through your life, then the proteins that are required for that particular state will be produced by the parts of the genes that produce it, because the epigenes have opened up and allow those states to be produced. If you are in an ongoing loving state, other chemicals are required to propagate that state throughout the whole of your physiology. Different paths of the genes will be opened up. The epigenes get into the habit of opening the appropriate paths according to your ongoing mind state.

Yoga's power in genetic change

Yoga will change your ongoing mindset for the better. We know it. Therefore, yoga will change your ongoing genetic state for the better. Not only is it a structural change, but it is also a genetic change and the expression of those particular genes becomes a habit. The strange little twist about this is that scientists are finding now that the germ cells in the reproductive system have these epigenes. Before the gametes combine, the epigenes are supposed to be removed. They are finding now, however, that it is not all removed and that sometimes even the epigenetic form goes over to the new foetus.

Not only does yoga change our ongoing mind and attitudinal state, it also changes our brain, it changes our genetic activity, and it might well change the life of our offspring. This is something to think about. All of you people who are preparing to produce offspring, I recommend that you do a little bit of yoga, and if you have not found a good guru I can recommend one to you!

– Address, 26 October 2013, Polo Ground, Munger

Kudos from Kaivalyadhama

Swamiji has been accepted in Kaivalyadhama, and the following appreciation was published in the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute newsletter, Kdham WORLD, Volume 10, Issue 2, Spring 2014, pages 2, 16, 17.



Editorial

I attended the World Yoga Convention at the Bihar School of Yoga. It was a pleasure to witness the mammoth gathering of yoga sadhakas and the symphony of events taking place. The whole affair had the reflection of Swami Niranjanananda, who is learned, experienced, simple and a perfectionist. My great reverence to Swami Satyananda, the founder of Bihar School of Yoga, and his worthy successor.

– Subodh Tware, Administrator

Building stronger ties amidst the celebrations of Golden Jubilee

The Bihar School of Yoga celebrated its Golden Jubilee from the 23rd to 27th October 2013, through a World Yoga Convention. It witnessed a gathering of over 30,000 people. The atmosphere was jubilant with vibrant energy. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati was omnipresent in his energy in the event. Rich tributes were paid to Paramguru Swami Sivananda and founder Swami Satyananda on the occasion. The Convention created a beautiful yoga energy all around, and although there were thousands of people, the event was



conducted with excellent precision, peace, harmony and grace, befitting a yoga convention. Sri Subodh Tiwari was invited to deliver a talk at the Convention on behalf of the institute. It is a step towards stronger bonds between the institutes. Kaivalyadhama has extended an open invitation to Swami Niranjananandaji, whenever he comes to this side of the country.

Spiritual friends, Hari Om Tat Sat.

We have come from Canada to participate in the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga, and to express our solidarity with the mission of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Sri Swami Niranjanananda, and the yogic vision that they have propagated through the Bihar School of Yoga.

When the spiritual awareness soared across the globe in the sixties, many gurus and godmen also came forth. However, very few of them were able to maintain the classical tradition in its purity. Swami Satyananda was one of them, who taught us yoga as it was experienced by the rishis and yogis, combining it with his practical wisdom. And the same approach has been maintained by his successor, Swami Niranjanananda. Our pranams to the gurus who taught us to keep a tradition alive.

—Rishi Arundhati, Canada

Yoga for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Extracts)

Swami Ahimsadhara, Australia



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can occur following an overwhelmingly traumatic, possibly life-threatening experience or series of experiences. There are specific criteria for diagnosing PTSD.

It is most common in groups such as the military, police, emergency workers, firefighters, professionals working in war zones such as journalists, aid workers, and so forth, civilian survivors of war and refugees. PTSD also affects victims of crime, domestic violence, natural disasters and accidents. Sustained psychological abuse can lead to PTSD. Children of abusive parents are vulnerable.

Why does yoga help?

Yoga, correctly understood, is a perfected psychology system. By perfected I mean that it not only includes a complete understanding of the human condition, it also has the tools and techniques for managing and optimizing that condition in all its diverse forms.

More specifically, yoga is good for PTSD because:

- Yoga benefits every system of the body, including the nervous system. Those with PTSD often have multiple physical ailments such as indigestion, pains in the muscles and joints, headaches and high blood pressure. Some of these problems may be due to an unhealthy breathing pattern, which yogic breathing practices immediately relieve. We'll look at this in more detail soon.
- Yoga directly relieves problems that may commonly be regarded as psychological but also have a strong physiological influence and impact, for example insomnia and panic attacks. The relaxation techniques of yoga are key practices.

- Yoga has a powerful, direct and positive influence on the nervous system – this is a key point that will be looked at in detail.
- Yoga gives methods for management of the mind and emotions, which are supported by practices of hatha and raja yoga. These practices are based in an understanding that body and mind are interdependent and interactive. For example, the way you breathe affects the way you feel, think and act.
- Yoga includes lifestyle adjustments, clearly stating that the way you live has a profound effect on the way you experience life.

Bearing the above points in mind, I feel that the most important and unique reason for the effectiveness of yoga in helping sufferers recover from PTSD is the direct effect of certain practices on the nervous system. Put simply, PTSD is a condition in which the nervous system becomes stuck in the stress response, known as the fight or flight mechanism. Yoga specifically activates the relaxation response, thus reducing the dominance of the stress response, which in PTSD sufferers has become overpowering. Psychologists describe this as a ‘sensitized’ nervous system. It is a massive problem because it cannot be controlled just by wanting to control it. Willpower is not enough. The nervous system needs healing, and for that it needs retraining. Yoga, to the best of my knowledge, is the most efficient method for retraining the nervous system. Hence it has immense benefits to those with this incredibly debilitating condition. Understanding and awareness of the breath is one of the most important tools for this aim.

Hyperventilation Syndrome (HVS)

Hyperventilation is also called over-breathing. It means you are breathing faster than your body can actually respire. That is, you aren’t giving your body enough time to process the gases in the air you breathe. Respiration is a chemical process in which your body extracts what it needs to keep, for example, oxygen, and releases what it doesn’t need to keep, for example, carbon dioxide. I have said ‘needs to keep’ because your body does need carbon dioxide, but it does not need to keep it.

Hyperventilation is part of the normal response to danger: the breathing and heart rates go up, adrenalin surges through the body and the muscles become tense as the nervous system prepares to cope with an emergency. This is the sympathetic nervous system swinging into action to help you save yourself from the threat. When the danger has passed, the body should return to normal.

Sometimes, however, hyperventilation becomes chronic, perhaps due to ongoing stress. It becomes a habit to over-breathe, carbon dioxide levels become too low and all the body's systems are compromised. The levels of carbon dioxide give important messages to many of the body's systems.

Symptoms of HVS include: breathlessness for no apparent reason, frequent deep sighs or yawning, chest-wall pains, palpitations, light-headedness and feeling 'spaced out', tingling or numbness at extremities, digestive problems including irritable bowel syndrome, aching muscles or joints, tremors, tiredness, weakness, sleep problems, nightmares, sexual problems, clammy hands, anxiety and phobias.

Counsellors or other health professionals may not recognize the connection of these problems with the way the person breathes. For example, medication is often given for stomach acidity. When such a person comes to me, I examine their way of breathing and ask questions that give me clues about their range of symptoms. If they seem to have a short, shallow breath, I explain some of the effects of short, shallow breathing in simple terms. My rave goes a bit like this:

"When the duration of your breathing is less than three seconds in and three seconds out, and the breathing action is mainly in your chest, your body doesn't actually have the time to respire fully. This causes your body to become too alkaline. This causes certain problems. For example, to compensate for the alkalinity, your stomach secretes too much acid, and you get symptoms of acidity. Elsewhere in the body, lactic acid is produced in an attempt to correct the pH, leading to aches and pains in the muscles. I just noticed you sighing deeply. Does that often happen? Yes. Okay. That's another sign that your breathing needs to change. The good news is that you breathe twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and all you need to do is retrain your breathing mechanism and there's a good chance these problems, and others, will just go away."

Another simple example is a war veteran who woke up multiple times in the night due to headache. Each time he woke he took paracetamol. After the session on HVS he realized that his breath became extra shallow at night. So instead of taking pills he used abdominal breathing. He did abdominal breathing before going to sleep and each time he woke with a headache. The headache would pass and he'd go back to sleep. After some time he stopped getting headaches, stopped

waking and had a good night's sleep. After decades of feeling helpless, blaming the war and the PTSD, he solved the problem by retraining his breathing mechanism. It's so simple if you know how.

Many people with anxiety tell me that they often feel as if they are suffocating. They are! This is called 'air hunger'. Of course we feel anxious if we don't have enough air! Ultimately not enough air means death! The feelings are correct, but the diagnosis of why the feelings are there is often incorrect. In response to low carbon dioxide, oxygen clings to the red blood cells, and the tissues are starved of oxygen. The oxygen supply to the brain drastically reduces. This desperate shortage of oxygen makes us breathe faster, and hyperventilation becomes chronic.

The student needs to routinely practise about ten minutes of abdominal breathing upon waking and before sleep. It should also be incorporated into yoga sadhana and used at any time of the day when shortness of breath or shallow breathing is noticed, by simply taking ten abdominal breaths. In this way the message is repeatedly given to the breathing centre in the brainstem, and just as the man with the night-time headaches cured himself by repetition of the practice, your system will gradually learn and take over so that good breathing becomes automatic. When this happens, you will literally breathe easy. My final word on this point is: breathing is the most important thing you do, therefore it is good to get it right!

Pranayama

Yogic breathing and knowledge of the breath is more involved and refined than the aspect that was just covered, and has much to offer those with PTSD. Sorting out HVS and learning diaphragmatic breathing is first base. Then come the more classical yogic pranayamas. Those with particular relevance here are bhramari, ujjayi, nadi shodhana and breathing ratios. One important thing about all of these techniques is that they activate the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the relaxation response. It is essential that people with PTSD do practices that strengthen the relaxation response, because this is the way to overcome their overactive sympathetic response. That principle applies to the whole of this topic, not just in relation to pranayama.

Bhramari and ujjayi are categorized as tranquillizing pranayamas. Their effect on the nervous system is direct, immediate and powerful. They should be used regularly during sadhana and used as needed at any other time.

Ujjayi normalizes blood pressure. That means it helps low as well as high blood pressure. One of the war veterans had serious problems with anger. For example, if he was watering the garden and the hose kinked, he would grab the axe and chop up the hose! If the lawnmower stalled, he might just throw it over the fence. He is famous for throwing a computer out of the window, something we have probably all felt like doing at times. The stories are amusing, but it's not a pleasant way to live and destroying property is an expensive habit. He also lost his job when he punched the boss, so something needed to be done. He learned ujjayi. He also learned witnessing. Once he had these two skills, he could witness the onset of anger and begin ujjayi before the destructive reaction took place. He thereby short-circuited the reaction, saving himself and those people and things around him from the consequences, and in the process contributed to the overall healing of his nervous system.

Nadi shodhana is unique to yoga and is a major technique in classical hatha yoga. We know today that the process of alternating the breathing in the left and right nostrils balances the functioning of the left and right brain hemispheres. Those with psychological disturbances benefit immensely from this effect, as often they have developed left or right dominance. Many people report feelings of calm and the absence of inner conflict after practising simple nadi shodhana. These are important feelings for those with PTSD to have access to and to make more accessible through regular experience of them.

Yoga nidra

Dr Rishi Vivekananda is an Australian psychiatrist whose patients included many war veterans. I often asked his advice and invited him to spend time with the veteran's yoga group whenever the opportunity arose. Everyone who came to Rishi Vivekananda as a patient was given a yoga nidra cassette that he had made especially for war veterans. I had a copy of that cassette, which we made into a CD and distributed freely to the group. His soothing, kind voice has helped many with PTSD not only to relax, which is normally impossible for them, but to sleep peacefully without drugs, another experience they rarely have. He told me two things in relation to yoga nidra for PTSD that are imprinted on my mind: one, the first thing to do is fix the sleep; two, he never lost a patient to suicide. Statistically that was remarkable and he attributed it to yoga nidra.

The yogic concept of pratyahara is relevant here. Pratyahara is commonly translated as sense withdrawal. Yoga nidra is a technique of pratyahara. As mentioned already, relaxation is next to impossible for people with PTSD. One reason for this is their state of hyper-vigilance. That is, they are always on the alert and their nervous system overreacts to stimuli. The state of pratyahara is specifically intended to reduce responses to sensory stimuli and it achieves this systematically and scientifically. Pratyahara, therefore, is the perfect antidote for hyper-vigilance and yoga nidra is the easiest and most effective method for inducing such a state.

Anyone who has trouble sleeping is missing out on a basic need and their physical and mental wellbeing are affected. Insomnia and nightmares are major issues for those with PTSD. The same man who used ujjayi so effectively for his anger, used yoga nidra to retrain himself into a healthy sleep pattern. When his PTSD was at its worst he took multiple Valiums (a tranquillizer) through the night. He also used to have a cigarette and a coffee and pace the floor when he woke up. He had probably had a nightmare or a flashback and was trying to escape the horror.

Once he discovered yoga nidra, however, he changed his coping methods. Instead of the Valium, tobacco and coffee cocktail, he played the yoga nidra tape. Just as the man with headaches did abdominal breathing when he woke, this man did yoga nidra many times a night. After two or three months, he slept through the night, and he sleeps through to this day. Incidentally, hyperventilation results in nightmares and waking due to panic attack. This is experienced by hyperventilators who have no history of trauma, suggesting that the prevalence of sleep disorders in those with PTSD may be linked to hyperventilation.



Additionally, yoga nidra includes sankalpa, another useful tool for recovery. Sankalpa is a powerful part of bringing a positive way of thinking into life. It brings a beautiful hope into a life of despair. Sankalpa becomes a symbol of what is possible, focusing the mind in this way at a time when it is highly suggestible and open to an uplifting influence.

Witnessing

The practice of witnessing is the final tool I want to focus on in this presentation. It is a prerequisite for management of the mind and emotions. It is also a skill that is learned in any Satyananda Yoga class, simply due to the way the class is taught. Beginning with the teaching of asanas, the process of witnessing is integrated into every practice of Satyananda Yoga. The instructions are rich with lines such as: be aware of this, observe that, witness the feeling here, witness the feeling there, notice any sensations, observe thoughts that arise, and so forth. A good teacher never lets the students lose awareness unless they want to make a point about how easy it is to lose awareness!

This emphasis on witnessing and awareness fulfils various functions. It gives the brain a rest from its involvement in the usual monologue of self-talk and unconscious attraction to external goings on. This in itself is relaxing and internalizing. Witnessing enables the student to learn about their body, their breath and their mind in a new way, so that understanding develops at a deeper level. Of major importance, the witnessing that is practised during class time trains the student to be able to witness their mind and behaviour in daily life, meaning they can start the process of managing their mind and behaviour through conscious effort. For example, the man who used ujjayi to control his anger had to first be able to witness the onset of anger, then use the tool of ujjayi to short-circuit the sympathetic reaction.

Witnessing is therefore an important part of helping those with PTSD. In fact, without awareness, without witnessing, yoga is incomplete. Meditations such as antar mouna actively develop the concept of witnessing for mind management and should be taught to people with PTSD.

One more extremely important point on this before looking briefly at other practices: the state of being the witness implies a degree of detachment from that which is being observed. The witnessing position is one in which emotions and memories can be experienced without being totally identified with or overwhelmed by. This happened to

the hose-chopping, computer-throwing, boss-punching guy when he practised trataka. Trataka on a candle flame caused him to have a type of flashback in which he saw the war scenes in front of him like a movie. Once he had the ability to witness, he could observe these frightful experiences with detachment. They lost their power over him, the memories were processed anew so that they didn't dominate his life, and he recovered from PTSD. That same man became a yoga teacher and poorna sannyasin. He owes his life to Satyananda Yoga.

Other practices

Asanas are always part of classes, and have an important role to play. They need only be simple. Pawanmuktasana part one is a favourite. All beginners' asanas can be used, taking into account contra-indications for high blood pressure and the many other health conditions that people with PTSD tend to have. Shashankasana is number one for settling a busy or anxious mind and reducing anger. Asanas that open the breathing area and take tension out of the abdomen and diaphragm are an effective preparation for breath training.

I have often used hasta mudra pranayama with the men as a meditation. Its effect on the breath is so strong and real that they respond very well to it. Trataka is also a favourite. Other forms of meditation such as chanting the mantra *Om* and ajapa japa are also useful. So much more can be said on these and other beautiful practices.

Yoga is holistic

Yoga is holistic, as it is about connection and creates connections by working with the body and the mind together. PTSD is a state of disconnection in which the person is stuck in past experience. This stuckness is not only mental; it is also physiological, as we have seen in relation to the unhealthy dominance of the sympathetic nervous system. Yoga generates movement at the physical, energetic and mental levels, lifting the practitioner out of stagnation and back into the dynamism of life's flow.

A combination of simple yoga postures, breathing techniques, relaxation and meditation retrains the nervous system, tones all the physical systems and gives skills for management of the mind and emotions.

—Workshop, 23 October 2013, Ganga Darshan

U-stream Convention



Unable to come during the Convention time.
Impatient to be back in Munger.
Trouble in life, trouble in the neighbourhood.
An empty house that no longer feels like a home.
A facebook message with a u-stream link.

My house is transformed.
I am at the Convention.
There is nothing else.
The outside world pales into insignificance.
I am transported to a different world.
My house is a venue of the Convention.
The strength and energy of my past yogic connections blocks
out everything else.
All is transcended.
And I am in Munger, in heart, mind and spirit . . . as I sit before
the computer screen peeling vegetables for my dinner.

—Swami Bhaktipoorna, Australia



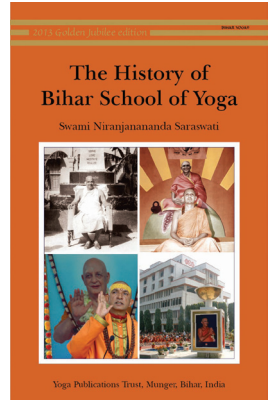
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The History of Bihar School of Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

38 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-93-81620-41-0

In this volume, Swami Niranjanananda, Yogapeethadhish and successor to Swami Satyananda, succinctly sums up the history of BSY: its origins in the teachings and mandate of paramguru Swami Sivananda, its humble beginnings in Munger, the landmarks reached under Swami Satyananda's guidance, and the continuation of the journey during his own time. Swamiji encapsulates the philosophy that has shaped its vision.



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Satyananda Yoga Websites



www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga. Includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Sivananda Math activities, Sita Kalyanam events, Yoga Publications Trust catalogues.

www.rikhiapeeth.in

The Rikhiapeeth blogspot posts a satsang of Sri Swami Satyananda daily on a wide range of topics concerning spirituality.

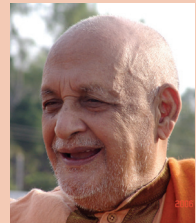


Living Yoga with Swami Niranjan

www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/. Dedicated to the vision and mission of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, the spiritual successor of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, it contains news and articles.

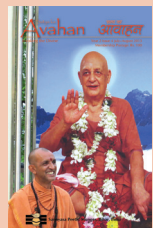
www.yogamag.net

The official website of YOGA magazine. Includes world-wide links to Satyananda Yoga centres and teachers, a brief history of YOGA magazine, news and more.



Avahan Online

www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/. Provides online access to *Satyaka Avahan*, the bi-monthly magazine of Sannyasa Peeth, which contains the higher teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.



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<i>Jun 1-Jul 25</i>	2-month Orientation in Yogic Science & Lifestyle (Hindi)
<i>July 12</i>	Guru Paduka Poojan
<i>Aug 2014-May 2015</i>	Diploma in Yogic Studies (English)
<i>Aug 1-21</i>	Teachers Training Course (English)
<i>Aug 3-20</i>	Yoga HMC*: Arthritis & Spinal Ailments (Hindi)
<i>Sep 15-30</i>	Yoga HMC*: General (Hindi)
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<i>Sep 12</i>	Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas
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<i>Dec 25</i>	Swami Satyananda's Birthday

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