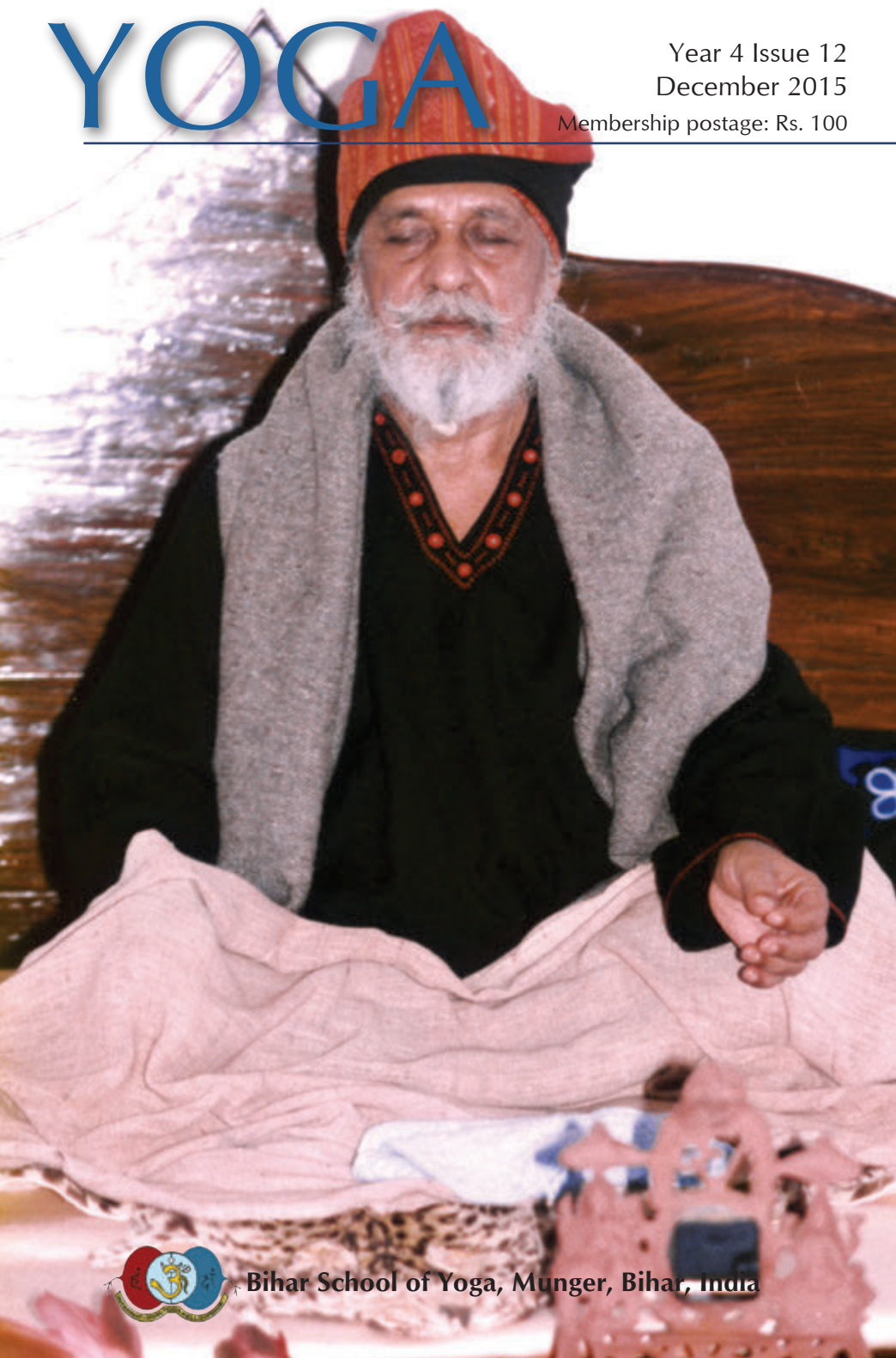


# YOGA

Year 4 Issue 12

December 2015

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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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## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

### Song of Sadhana

Purification, concentration,  
reflection, meditation,  
Illumination, identification,  
absorption, salvation.

These are the eight steps  
in spiritual sadhana.

Self-sacrifice, self-surrender,  
self-denial,  
These are the different ways  
to slay this egoism.

Selflessness, self-restraint,  
self-purification,  
Self-analysis, self-introspection,  
self-examination,  
All these will lead  
to self-realization.

—Swami Sivananda

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# YOGA

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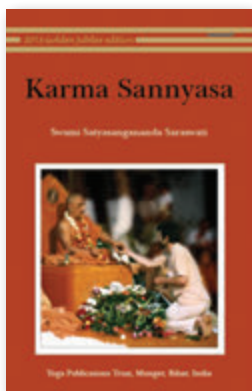


The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

# Evolution and the Laws of Nature

*From Karma Sannyasa, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



**Why should we speed up the process of evolution by practising yoga? Isn't this going against nature's way?**

Nature's laws are flexible. Nature is not a military dictator. Nature has certain laws and you can participate in those laws. You can accelerate the speed of your evolution according to the laws of nature. You are not opposing them by participating in them. For instance, say you have a sixty or one hundred watt bulb but you want more light, what do you do? You take a holder, adapt it, and then connect the cable. But if you have a very big machinery plant which requires three kilowatts of energy and you connect it with that, all the lines will get fused. So, opposing the laws of nature is not good, but you can participate in these laws.

Nature has the possibility of acceleration within its system. An example of accelerating the laws of nature is the conversion of uranium into nuclear energy. Before uranium is converted into nuclear energy, it has to fulfil many conditions of transformation. If you know what those conditions are, uranium can be immediately turned into nuclear energy. Uranium is matter. It has within itself the nucleus of potential energy. It is a type of protomatter. It has space and time, plus and minus energy. In the centre is the nucleus, which we call matter.

Even if you do not produce nuclear energy from uranium, during the course of two or three billion years it will naturally begin to radiate nuclear energy. However, if the process which ordinarily takes place in uranium matter over three

billion years is known by man, then he can accelerate it. This is not opposing nature; it is only exploiting the laws of nature. Similarly, practising yoga is not opposing nature, but exploiting and utilizing the natural laws. Allowing evolution to go along at its natural speed is ignorance of these laws.

### **Is there an end to human development or evolution?**

Human evolution is infinite like a circle. Is there an end to a circle? Itzak Bentov, a scientist who was behind many new and revolutionary discoveries, wrote a book called *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*. In it he agrees completely with this concept. At the ultimate point of evolution an individual goes out of the structure and becomes the creator.

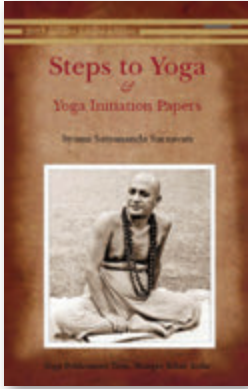
Such individuals are called the junior creators. Gurus are junior creators. When their evolution has reached a certain point, they come out. This is also how evolution takes place in the material universe. When the energy evolves, at a particular point of evolution it issues forth and becomes another creative energy. We call it co-creator energy. This is the theory of avatars and gurus.

There are many mysteries in this life and our generation is not going to unveil them all. We must first develop proper channels of expression to reveal these mysteries and increase our capacity to understand them.



# Yoga Initiation Paper: Four

*From Steps to Yoga & Yoga Initiation Papers, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



The mind is like an ocean. Thoughts are like waves arising therefrom. Your duty is to calm down these thoughts by japa, concentration and meditation on your Ishtam. Concentration will lead you to meditation where there is only one thought of Ishtam. Faith, self-control, awareness, intense practice, surrender and absence of experienced sensations of all types enhance the success in concentration.

It is essential that the meditational object (dhyeya) is one, constant and lovely. You should remember it well that you really believe in the divinity of your Ishtam.

No thought should interfere with rupa sadhana and nama sadhana. The entire attention is to be concentrated on japa and dhyana. When this is practised unceasingly, then the real steadiness comes. You should neither lose courage, nor should you be unpunctual.

Attraction towards painful and pleasurable experiences should be abandoned in toto. Every work is to be done by the body, indriyas and the routine mental mechanism. Every perception is to be limited to indriyas and manas alone. When one dissolves one's atma from the mind and indriyas, he attains real vairagya. Vairagya is not physical inactivity, nor is it absent-mindedness. It is just a topsy-turvy change in one's own attitude towards repulsive and attractive experiences and their bases. Just remain a witness. Then see, work and think.

Normal duties need neither be minimized nor stopped. They do not come in the picture at all. When the atma is separated,

then actions and mental workings do not bind the sadhaka. When the sadhaka brings in the bhava of instrumentality, his mind is not at all affected. It is for *him* and at *his* will and pleasure that the sadhaka should consider himself working, thinking and seeing. Thus he will be able to maintain himself even while working, thinking and seeing. Thus he will be able to maintain normal interest, intelligence and efficiency. What one needs in cultivating vairagya is to consider oneself working at his orders and remain ever balanced in thought, word and actions.

This type of vairagya is essential in order to strengthen the powers of sadhana. This is the only way for a man to work for his spiritual enlightenment.

Physical illness, slavery to the senses and mental disturbances form the *first* obstacle.

Losing interest in sadhana is the *second* obstacle.

Carelessness and hurry-burry in sadhana is the *third* obstacle.

Heaviness in body and mind due to sleep and lethargy is the *fourth* obstacle.

Attraction towards and awareness of enjoyments and sense experiences form the *fifth* obstacle.

Considering one's own method of sadhana as improper is the *sixth* obstacle.

Unattainment of even elementary progress after a long term of sadhana is the *seventh* obstacle.

Instability of mind in any stage of sadhana is the *eighth* obstacle.

Apart from these few obstacles, there are those factors which one should know as impediments, disturbing the peace and bliss of one's mind. The greatest among the obstacles is to consider one's present condition as unfavourable, one's own progress as doubtful, one's own sadhana as defective, one's own life as hellish, and one's own normal avocation as opposed to his spiritual progress.

One should really realize that his meditational object is not merely a photograph, but a platform for the descent of

the divine. He should understand throughout everything that the more he concentrates on the picture, the clearer his Ishtam will become. Let it become a truth of his mind that his Ishtam is everywhere, even though he is encased in a body for the favour of his bhaktas. The first and the last truth is that he should constantly be aware of this fact; that there is every truth in this saying: *"He will appear before thee in flesh and blood, reveal unto thee jnana and converse with thee."*

When all vrittis pertaining to external experiences have subsided, and when one single vritti is prevailing throughout everything, then the sadhaka attains the pure stage of meditation. And when this stage of single vritti alone continues, and when no other thought or vritti is felt in the least, then one is said to have attained samprajnata samadhi. When the entire consciousness of the sadhaka is transformed into the form of the Ishtam to the extent that he is seen as clearly as anything, the ever-glowing darshan is known as samprajnata samadhi.

In the first stage, the form is seen as you see the picture. It means that you are still conscious of the external world. As soon as the awareness becomes single, and the feeling of love reaches its highest stage, and *no other than the beloved* is remembered, then the Ishtam, the immortal form of Ishtam, manifests before you as truly as you would like him to be. In fact, all this takes place in the state of wholesale merger and non-dual awareness. The form is the same whom you know, but so far you have not seen him on account of sensual and mental limitations. Now that you have reached that stage where your atma has become all-pervading because of the absence of sensual and mental limitations, you are able to see him.

As soon as the form is apprehended, he enters in the form. He is in front of you in that familiar swarupa you meditated upon. He is conscious, yet he sits or stands quietly. You keep on looking at him and he at you. This takes time. When you have looked at him for some time, emotions bubble forth, tears flow and mechanically you fall down at his feet.



The sadhaka should see *that* form continuously for not less than seven days. On the following day of manifestation also he should sit for meditation as usual. But instead of meditating on the photo, he should bring into his mind the scene of manifestation and thus awaken his awareness. This process should be continued so long as the deity doesn't come to you at any place instantaneously. If you are able to see him at any time you *will*, then you should start conversing with him, and praying unto him. You can also repeat the mantra along with him.

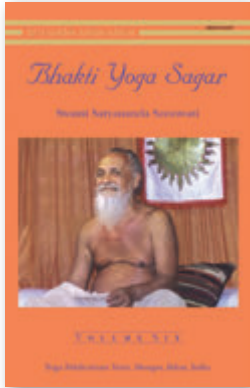
No sooner will you sit for meditation at this stage than you see him in his usual posture in front of you. You look at him and he at you. Suddenly you break into emotions and bow down at his feet. He blesses and disappears. Now you come down to physical consciousness and faintly remember the experience as if it were a distant dream. Joy and ananda become boundless. Mind becomes calm, quiet and serene. The power of magnetism grows intense. The voice grows sweet. Your prayers are fulfilled and your questions answered. Beware that you do not exploit this achievement for personal and petty ends.

And there comes a stage where the lower self is completely transformed and the mental screens (fluctuations) are torn. Pure atma bhava dawns. The sadhaka becomes a siddha - master of his mind, senses and body. Knowledge emerges spontaneously. Revelation after revelation. He becomes powerful, full of wisdom, a kalpa vriksha, and a fit receptacle for Brahma anubhava, which is his final goal.



# All Knowledge Is Within You

From *Bhakti Yoga Sagar*, Volume 6, *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Sometimes I was asked to clean the library and while dusting I would see the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda there. This was a great temptation. The Upanishads and other texts used to tempt me.

I said to Swamiji, "There are so many books. Can I take a few?" He replied, "Satyananda, you are talking of infection, you should talk of education.

Infection is when knowledge comes in from outside. When inner knowledge is revealed outside, that is called education. All knowledge is within you. The knowledge of the four Vedas is within you. The human being is all knowledgeable. Atma, your spirit, is omniscient." He used to say that every creature, not only mankind but every creature, basically, fundamentally is God. There is that seed within it which is called atma and paramatma.

I am repeating the same thing in a different way. Knowledge is within us. What will you achieve by reading the Vedas? I kept working for twelve years and after that I was told to teach yoga. Believe it or not, I have never read a book on yoga. I have written them, but I have never read any books on yoga. I have just turned the pages of a few like the *Yajnavalkya Samhita*, *Gorakh Samhita*, *Gherand Samhita* and Swatmarama's *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. I have seen them all, but I have not read any because I was convinced by Swami Sivananda that it is all within me.

– 30 November 2000

# Tantra (Extracts)

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Kriya yoga has its source and origin in the great system of tantra which was conceived more than 4000 years before Christ. It will be very difficult for the people of the West to accept the reinterpretation, or the correct interpretation of tantra in the light of yoga, which I am going to put before you.

To a great many, in India or in western countries, tantra means a kind of ceremony which includes all those peculiar things which are not very acceptable in a respectable society, such as playing with the skull of an animal or the skull of a man and many other dirty things.

Those who are sincere students of the tantra shastra find that the great system of kriya yoga has emerged out of the vast body of this system. Not only kriya yoga, but even hatha yoga, pranayama, mantra yoga, ajapa japa, kundalini yoga, nada yoga, trataka, yoga nidra and even the practices of inner silence, *antar mouna*, are offshoots and derived from the vast body of tantra. What we know in the West and in the East by the word yoga, the same is meant by the word tantra; rather, tantra is the basis and yoga is an offshoot of tantra. The science of mantra, about which we have heard a lot from time to time, is not a part of *bhakti yoga*, or the path of devotion, but is an essential part of tantra. Without the system of mantra, the system of tantra does not exist.



The word *tantra* literally means stretching, or rather expansion and liberation. Expansion plus liberation is tantra. The etymological structure of this word tantra conveys the ideas of two great processes. The first of these is the process of expansion and the second is the process of liberation or release.

If I say tantra yoga it means the yoga which includes the practices for expansion of individual consciousness and then finally for the liberation of consciousness from the fold of *prakriti*, nature or matter. The whole tantric system can be said very plainly to be the native place or the native home of all the yogic sciences wherever you may find them: in India, Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Anywhere, the tantric system is the native system; it is the father or the mother system.



### **Purpose of tantra**

The ultimate purpose of tantra is to provide a layman with the practices, easy and difficult, according to his social, moral and intellectual structure, for spiritual realization, for the expansion of his personal self, the small self, and finally to make him free from the bondages of *maya*, *prakriti* and unreality.

The tantras suppose, and it is true, that everybody is not the same. Everybody is not capable of great austerity or acts of renunciation and practising a rigorous system of life. At the same time, everyone has the right to become aware of the highest consciousness, the highest truth.

Some people in the western and in the eastern countries, even at the present time, feel that the practices of yoga are not meant for everyone; they are only meant for the recluse, for renunciates,

and for those who are celibate or *brahmacharis*. The system of tantra has brought us the insight that the above statements are not true. Yoga, as an inseparable part of tantra, is practicable and approachable by each and everyone in expectation of attainment.

There are some people who say that in the tantric system of yoga sexual life, wine, fish and meat, and other such things are included, and that therefore this is not a pure system, this is not a pure yoga, this is not a higher yoga, and as such we do not want this tantric yoga, we want something better. This is a wrong conception.

The practices of tantra are divided according to the *gunas*, according to the internal quality of the aspirant which are three in number: the *sattwic* people, that is to say the pure ones, the *rajasic*, the dynamic ones, and the *tamasic*, the lazy, ignorant and thoughtless people. The practices of tantra are divided and practised according to the practitioner's qualifications.

There are practices of tantra for the evolution of the consciousness of the person with sensitive qualities, who will maintain continence and refrain from taking undesirable diets. That does not mean that a person who has not completely adjusted morally and who has not corrected his diet, and so on, cannot practise the system of tantra or tantric yoga; but then the practices are slightly different.

The object of tantric yoga or the object of the practices of tantra is not only to do some ceremonial work or some practices but the ultimate purpose is to identify yourself with the highest consciousness, to realize the highest consciousness and to render this lower mind free from all the limitations that it is subjected to and attached to.

The symbolisms of tantra which you see in the form of yantras or diagrams, and in the form of pictures of animals and men are all indicative of the planes of human consciousness or the states of psychic evolution or involution of man, where he stands during the process of expansion and fusion.

## Yoga nidra

I am going to talk to you about another important item of tantra shastra; that is the system of *yoga nidra* or psychic sleep. Without pride, I must tell you that I was the first, not only in India, but abroad to reveal this type of yoga nidra in 1962. I am not an inventor, this happened to be my first discovery when I was reviewing all the tantric books. It was then that I came to understand that yoga nidra was one of the most powerful methods not only of relaxation but of reawakening the degenerated brain centres.

The yoga nidra that I first discovered in tantra is such a peculiar one that if I were to teach you that yoga nidra I would have to prepare you for some time with the science of sound, the science of mantra. I do not remember exactly at the moment but I think there are about six hundred seventy sounds and you can practise yoga nidra on these six hundred seventy, or a little more not less. When you practise yoga nidra on these sounds it is as good as practising yoga nidra on different centres of the brain of which you have no idea at all. There are various yoga nidras, or different systems of psychic sleep.

Their purpose is first to enable a yogi to practise astral projection, second to enable a yogi to practise long hours of meditation, and third to enable a person to rest, relax and to heal himself. Furthermore they enable him to awaken the centres of the brain by the different sounds or the different mantras, a number of which are very important and very influential.

In the tantra shastra yoga nidra is such an elaborate system, it is something like surveying the whole body on the external physical plane of physical limbs, the internal plane such as the heart, the lungs, the respiratory and the circulatory system, and even the thoughts, emotions, and so on.

Yoga nidra begins with the external body: thumb, second finger, third, fourth, fifth, palm, and so on. Ultimately it goes to that point where you are made so sensitive as to perceive colours, emotions and many other things, which is difficult in

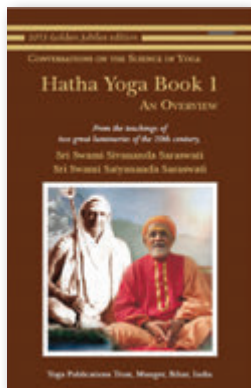
the beginning. Although I am very eager to bring out all the different systems of yoga nidra according to different systems of tantra for the benefit of healing, for the benefit of spiritual revival.

*– 1970, Copenhagen, Denmark*



# Obstacles to Progress

From Hatha Yoga Book 1, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



According to hatha yoga there are six major factors which prevent yoga, or union, from occurring. In hatha yoga, union means uniting the two energy forces in the body – that is, the pranic and mental energy flowing in pingala and ida nadis. Hatha yoga is the process of balancing the flow of these two alternating forces to bring perfect physical and mental equilibrium and awakening of sushumna and kundalini.

When a sadhaka is in the process of uniting the two opposite forces of ida and pingala, he must avoid all activities which waste energy and distract the mind. Therefore, in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (1:15) it is written:

*Atyaahaarah prayaasshva prajalpo niyamagrahah;  
Janasangashcha laulyam cha shadbhiryogo vinashyati.*

Overeating, exertion, talkativeness, adhering to rules, being in the company of common people and unsteadiness (wavering mind) are the six (causes) which destroy yoga.

One major obstacle to yoga, or union, is overeating. When the body is overloaded with food, it becomes sluggish and the mind becomes dull. Over a period of time toxins build up in the body, constipation sets in and the whole physical and mental system becomes blocked. If the body is toxic and lethargic, how can one expect to make progress in sadhana? Whatever sadhana is done will act as a purification, so the sadhana time will just be spent removing toxins and disease. If overeating and its consequences are avoided, however,



the sadhana will help one to progress more quickly. Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and many other yogis have said that the stomach should be half filled with food, one quarter with water and one quarter with air.

The next advice is that the hatha yogi should avoid overexerting or overstraining the body and mind. Hard physical labour or intense mental work taxes the energy system concerned and can create further imbalance between the two energies. The hatha yogi has to conserve and build up his store of energy for spiritual purposes and should not waste it in performing any unnecessary physical or mental feats.

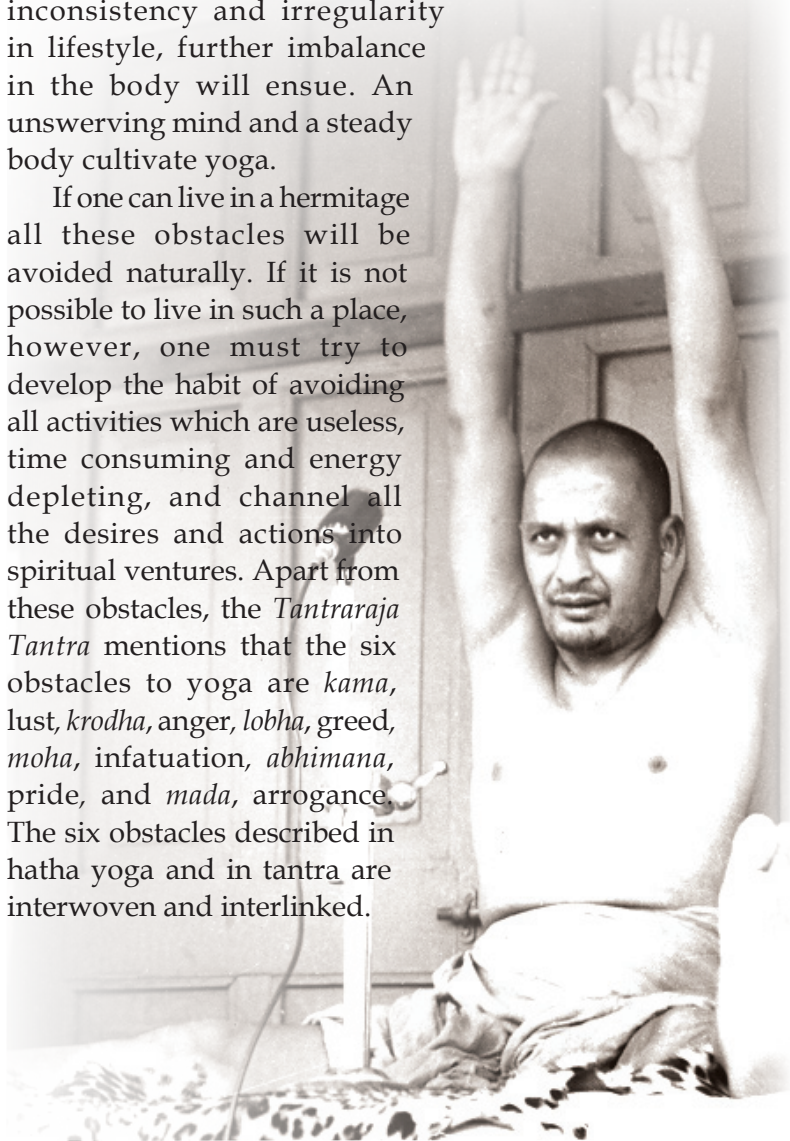
Too much talking dissipates vital energy and wastes time which could be better spent in awakening the inner awareness. Gossiping with people who have low morals, base consciousness and sensuous desires cannot enlighten one's soul, rather, their negative vibrations may have an influence. Social situations and irrelevant discussions definitely distract the mind from sadhana.

Although Yogi Swatmarama advises that a sadhaka should not adhere to strict rules and regulations, the guru's instructions must be followed. As far as social rituals and religious doctrines are concerned, it is unnecessary that they be maintained for spiritual progress. Sadhana is not dependent on social morals nor are its effects promoted by religious practices. Adhering to rules makes one narrow minded. Yoga is meant to expand the consciousness, not to limit it. A yogi should have a free and open mind. If one is accustomed to taking a cold bath every morning before practice, and one day there is no water, the practitioner should not be disturbed. Take a bath when water is available. The mind should be flexible and able to adjust to circumstances.

Unsteadiness means an imbalanced body metabolism, inability to hold one posture for a period of time and a wavering mind. Obviously yoga cannot be achieved under these conditions. When there is physical, mental, emotional and psychic imbalance, the energy is dispersed,

but if the energy is properly channeled all the bodily systems become stable, and physical and mental steadiness develop automatically. Unsteadiness also means wavering willpower, such as rising at three am one day, and sleeping in until seven the next morning due to feeling lazy. When there is inconsistency and irregularity in lifestyle, further imbalance in the body will ensue. An unswerving mind and a steady body cultivate yoga.

If one can live in a hermitage all these obstacles will be avoided naturally. If it is not possible to live in such a place, however, one must try to develop the habit of avoiding all activities which are useless, time consuming and energy depleting, and channel all the desires and actions into spiritual ventures. Apart from these obstacles, the *Tantraraja Tantra* mentions that the six obstacles to yoga are *kama*, lust, *krodha*, anger, *lobha*, greed, *moha*, infatuation, *abhimana*, pride, and *mada*, arrogance. The six obstacles described in hatha yoga and in tantra are interwoven and interlinked.



# Compassion for All

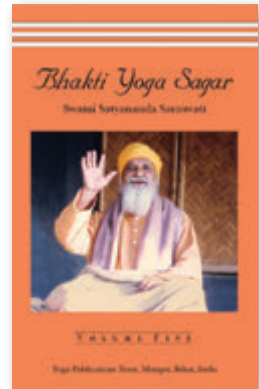
*From Bhakti Yoga Sagar, Volume 5, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

What is true love? Even if a person talks negatively about you and harms you, still you should love them. Saint Francis has also said this. True love does not mean that you love a person because he loves you. You love a person despite his hatred of you. This love is not just emotional, it has to be concrete. If you don't like me, I don't care, but I will still help you. If your house is on fire, I will call the fire brigade. I will not say, "Oh, who cares if that rascal's house is burning. Let it burn!"

True love has no conditions at all. Just because you love me, I should love you; this geometry does not work in spiritual life. Saints say, "If you hate me, I love you. If you don't like me, I like you. If you hurt me, I heal you." But this is very difficult because sometimes a person whom I have been helping for years and years suddenly gives me a boxing. I ask, "What are you doing?" He replies, "You rascal." I say, "Hey, I have been feeding and helping you for many years. When you were sick I helped you. When you were poor I gave you money, and now you are calling me a rascal." He answers, "That is all your fraud." Even then, you should not lose your presence of mind, and your love for that person should not change.

## **Love means sacrifice**

Love is most difficult to practise, but hatred is easy. To be false is so natural. Love gives rise to exemplary behaviour in man, while hatred causes obnoxious behaviour. I am not talking of love between a man and woman here, although that is also an act of love, but of that love which is an expression of



compassion for all beings. Love has to be defined in a wider perspective. Usually when we speak of love, we think of the feeling between two people, a man and woman. I am the lover and you are the beloved. Love is understood in this perspective, which is incomplete.

The love between a husband and wife, mother and son, brother and sister, friend and friend may be very deep. However, the love between a devotee and God, or a disciple and guru, where two hearts unite, is complete. When two hearts are repulsed by each other, there is hatred. Whenever such feelings come to your mind, you must say, "No, he does not know what he is doing," just as Christ said from the cross, "God forgive them, for they know not what they do." That has to be the attitude.

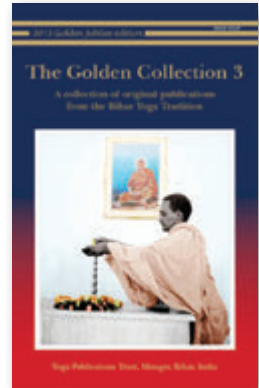
Although you may understand this principle, it is still very difficult to practise. It is so easy to speak of love, but what I have said in five minutes may take you lifetimes to achieve. Those who really want to practise love must be prepared to sacrifice as well, because love means sacrifice. Love is giving, not taking. It is an act of unconditional giving and giving and giving, where you may lose yourself, you may even be completely destroyed. Who knows? In the act of love, even if you are a loser it does not matter. But if you only want to be the winner, then it is better not to try because the lover is going to be the loser. True love is giving and not receiving.



# Chidakash Dharana

From The Golden Collection 3, Swami Satyananda Saraswati

The word chidakasha is made of chit plus *akasha*, which means the inner firmament of consciousness. *Chit* means consciousness and when we say firmament, *akasha*, we imply an infinite space or the expanse of consciousness from its limited horizon to infinity. In other words, the extension of consciousness from the field of the limited objective universe to the infinite realms of the cosmos is the meaning of *chidakasha*. Here it must be remembered that chit is not to be confused with chitta. The latter is one of the constituents of anatahkarana, which is composed of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. Chit here means consciousness. *Chidakasha dharana* is the technique by which the individual consciousness which is playing in and is tied down to the world of grossness is to be made subtler and expansive and taken to the realms of infinite or pure consciousness.



The term *akasha* means sky or space which is endless. The Smritis have described three kinds of *akasha*: the ordinary *akasha*, the *chittakasha*, the sky of the mind, and the *chidakasha*, the sky of the intelligence. The latter is by far the most subtle since it implies pure and absolute unconditioned consciousness. The Yoga Upanishads, however, refer to five kinds of *akasha*. These are 1) the *akasha*, 2) the *parakasha*, 3) the *mahakasha*, 4) the *tattwakasha* and 5) the *suryakasha*. Of these, the first represents the natural sky which is endless and seen objectively. The second, *parakasha*, symbolizes the darkness which pervades inside and outside; the third, *mahakasha*, represents the fire-like glow which is experienced

within and without; the fourth, *tattwakasha*, represents the experience of the essence of the inner individual self enclosed in space; and the last, *suryakasha*, represents the form of the pure Self which is radiant like the splendour of a hundred thousand suns.

These are all the stages of dharana through which the sadhana has to pass from one stage to another. This is a matter of practical realization, but these akashas have been described by way of information for those who wish to pursue the subject from a higher spiritual standpoint. Chidakasha dharana covers in a sense, the *vyoma panchaka*, the five subtle spaces within consciousness, described above and is, therefore, more important.

Here it is necessary to understand the meaning of the word dharana also. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Rishi Patanjali, *dharana* has been defined as the fixing of mental faculties in one region or on a single objective. In other words, the mind has to be one-pointed or in the *ekagra* stage as opposed to its three preceding stages: *kshipta* distracted, *mudha*, inert, *vikshipta*, alternating between steadiness and distraction. To make the mind steady on one objective is the meaning of the word dharana and the yoga sadhanas include various types of dharanas. The *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad* mentions sixteen adharas, three lakshyas and the five akashas. We have described the five akashas which form the objectives of dharana. Besides, there are three *lakshyas*, objectives, which are classified as internal, external and middle. The sixteen *adharas*, foundations, refer to the sixteen psychic centres of consciousness which are comparatively secondary in relation to the other main centres described later. But for preparing the mind by the method of dharana and leading it to the stage of contemplation and thence to samadhi, these centres are regarded as useful. Yoga sadhana requires a patient and assiduous practice to reach perfection, for after all, its goal is union with pure consciousness.

In the practice of this chidakasha dharana, the first step is to chant *Aum* thirteen times. At the end of the sadhana also it

has to be repeated thirteen times. It will, therefore, be of interest to understand the significance of this particular aspect.

### **The significance and importance of *Aum***

In the mantra shastras, *Aum* is regarded as the *setu* or bridge. Whenever any mantra is to be repeated it has to be preceded by *Aum* and ended with *Aum*. Then only the chanting of the mantra is said to be complete. Therefore, *Aum* is regarded as the dam which holds the power of the mantra. It is claimed that the mantra will be *chaitanya*, or alive, and reveal its potency only if it is recited in this way. The chanting in this sadhana has similar import.

However apart from that, *Aum* has a wider and deeper meaning. In Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, *Aum* has been defined as the symbol of *Ishwara*, the supreme reality. It has also been stated that since *Ishwara pranidhana* is a part of *kriya yoga*, the chanting of this syllable with an abiding awareness of its meaning is necessary. Since ancient times, *Aum* has been accepted as the symbol of the *Paramatman*, the Supreme Self. If the syllable is separated and analyzed, it will be found that it is composed of four *matras*, measures, the A, the U, the M and the *ardha chandra*, half moon, with the bindu.



The *Mandukyopaniṣad* as well as some of the Yoga Upaniṣads discuss in detail the meaning of this symbol. The *Aum* is the symbol of pure consciousness and its matras represent the gross or subtle manifestations of the great power of the puruṣa which manifests itself in this universe. The Upaniṣads say that the three matras represent the three *lokas*, dimensions, *bhu*, *bhuvaha*, and *swaha*, the three Vedas, *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Samaveda*, and the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. The fourth matra represents the transcendental state or the eternal Brahman.

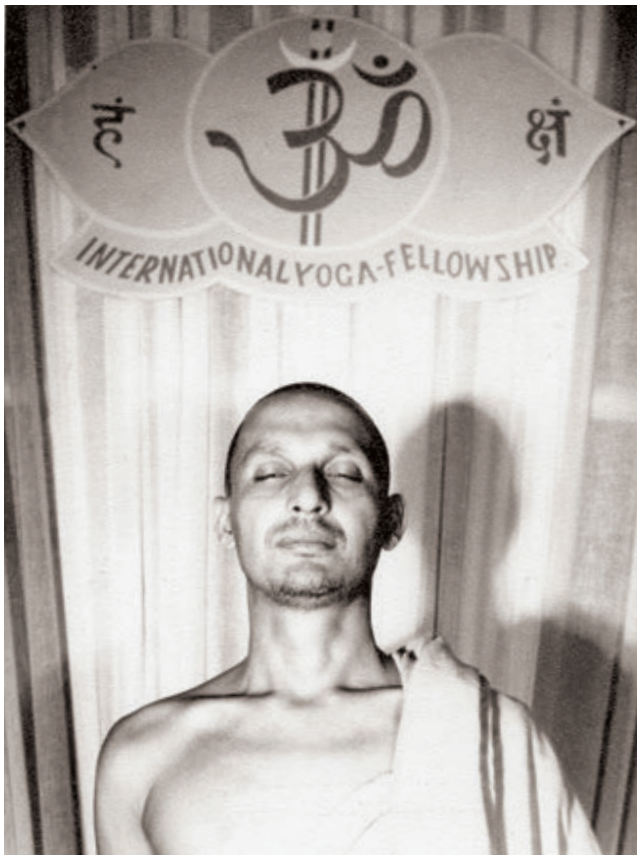
It is said that the *A* is symbolic of the waking state, the *U* of the dream state, the *M* of the sleep state. The places of the matras are in the eyes in the first stage, because it is with the eyes that we see the gross universe, in the throat in the second, dream state, and in the heart in the last stage. *A* represents the gross, the *vishva* or *virat*, the cosmos and the individual self, *U* the subtle or the Hiranyagarbha or *tejas*, the subtle body as opposed to the physical, and *M* the causal state or the *prajna* or the unmanifest.

*A* represents Brahma and the rajoguna because of the activity of creation; the *U* represents sattwa, and Vishnu, the sustainer, and *M* represents Rudra, the destroyer, and tamoguna. The *pranava* or sacred *Aum* in essence being the highest transcendental entity, Brahma merges with the *A* matra, Vishnu with the *U* matra and Rudra with the *M* matra. The gross, subtle and the causal, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra or three states of *ichha*, will, *jnana*, knowledge, and *kriya*, action, are all the gross or subtle form of the self same *puruṣa*, pure chaitanya, or consciousness.

In the body the six centres from mooladhara to ajna represent the five *maha bhootas*, elements, and the five subtle elements. The chanting of the syllable *Aum* from the base, or mooladhara with earth as its element, in such a manner that the vibrations roll on from the psychic passage of sushumna to sahasrara, is prescribed with a view to lift the consciousness from the gross plane of the earth and all that is earthly to the higher, transcendental plane.

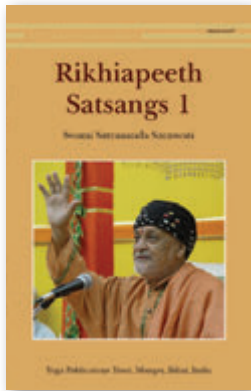


Further, the chanting of *Aum* and the vibrations it creates have the effect of removing sloth, inertia and indolence which a sadhaka may feel in the starting stage of his sadhana. The injunction to repeat it at the end is also done with a view to bring out the sadhaka from the meditative state in a fit, introvert condition with a sense of peace and bliss. The atmosphere and the imperceptible yet definite state of mind which the practice of this sadhana creates have to be kept up and not diffused suddenly by extroversion. The sadhaka will continue to remain in a peaceful, enjoyable and stable mental state even after he finishes the sadhana and goes about doing his normal work.



# Ashram

*From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 1, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Ashrams are a very important part of the Indian psyche. The institution of ashram has existed here for thousands of years. No matter which religion came to India, the ashram tradition was kept alive. Whether it was Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Vaishnavism or Shaivism that became prominent, ashram life continued to be a very important aspect of society. The ashram tradition of sannyasins has continued uninterruptedly.

Even right now, millions of young men and women are attached to one ashram or the other, the Brahma Kumaris, Ramakrishna Mission, Rajneesh, and so on. Adolescents, adults and old people all go to these ashrams and stay there until they find their path. For millions suffering from hopelessness and despondency, ashrams are like hospices. Many people leave their businesses, homes and parents and go to ashrams. But of these millions, sooner or later, most leave. They go away because they find their path. The percentage of those who stay on, shave their heads and live as sannyasins for life is very small. Nevertheless, it is good to stay at an ashram for any period of time and at any age, as it helps overcome one's negative limb of society.

## **Acceptance is the core**

There are millions of ashrams in India, big and small. They are able to survive because the Indian mind by its very nature helps ashrams. Every businessman, corporate house and individual who has a little money will donate to ashrams. It is natural for them, it is ingrained in them. If you were to ask them for

donations, they would not be inclined to give, but when they are impressed with your work, you do not have to ask. This has been my experience. People only see whether Swami Satyananda is doing work which is good for society or not. Whether in Rishikesh, Munger, Rikhia or other places, I never asked.

An ashram is not run on a few dollars or rupees; it runs on people's acceptance. If an institution is not accepted, let it die. An institution which is not useful for, or is not serving society, which does not run on the principles of an ashram, should die. Those who run ashrams should remember that a sannyasin has no private life. He has no private account or land. I have never opened a bank account. I have never signed a cheque. I don't own property. If I have to leave this ashram today, I will leave barely with what's on me. I don't even have the money to purchase a train ticket. That is how a sannyasin has to live. And for such people, Indians will do anything.

– 2004



# Mantra

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

## **Can the mantra act in the case of turbulences stemming from previous incarnations?**

The turbulences which you have inherited will continue. You will have to accept them. Any effort to overcome the turbulence is not desirable. The moment you want to avoid or you want to remove the turbulence you are hitting the mind.

You should think that all your spiritual life, all your yoga is not for overcoming mental turbulence. Whatever you are doing you should not do for overcoming the mental turbulence – this is what I want to tell you.

The mantra you are practising is for the awakening of the universal spirit. You must say, “I don’t care for the turbulence of mind. I care for the mantra. My universal spirit will awaken. Let the turbulence continue.” You must know how to live with turbulence.

*– 9 May 1980, Belgium*







3

Susanna Sahyanandale

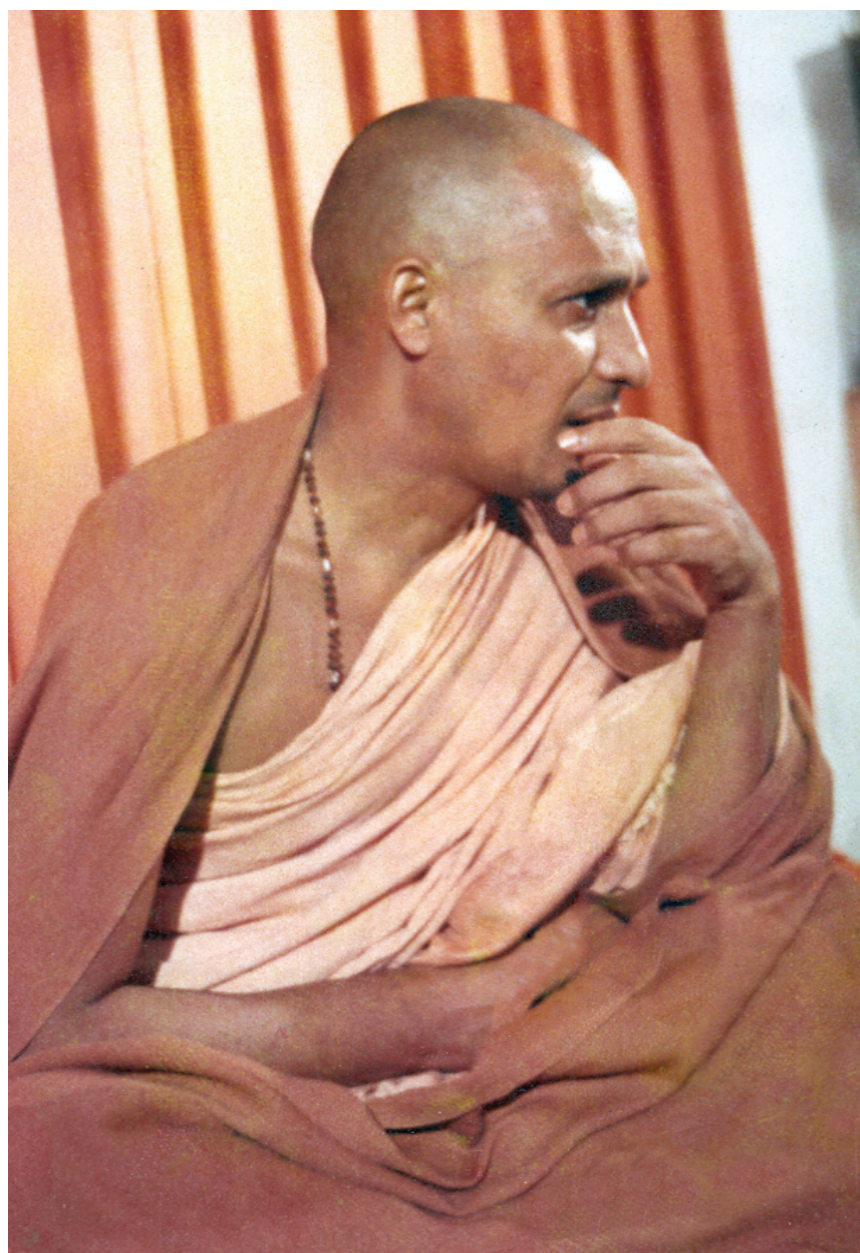
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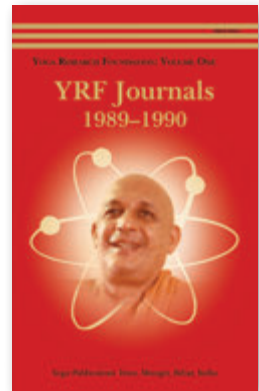


# Yoga and Health

From Yoga Research Foundation: Volume One, YRF Journals: 1989-1990

## Editorial - Volume 1, No. 2, December 1989 (Extracts)

Yoga can manage many diseases, especially the chronic and functional types. When I started the International Yoga Fellowship Movement in 1962, I had plenty of background with yoga therapy. I had lived from 1943 to 1956 in Rishikesh at the foot of the Himalayas with a very eminent sannyasin, Swami Sivananda, who had been a medical doctor in the earlier period of his life. I used to be his secretary, typist, editor and translator.



My contact with spiritual life was through philosophy, Vedanta, and that developed the desire to discover the higher consciousness within myself. When I lived with my guru and did a lot of work for him, especially typing, I used to read about the yoga postures, pranayama and other hatha yoga practices. I wondered if, when you practise sarvangasana, the thyroid is really stimulated, or when you practise sirshasana, if it really is true that the pancreas is stimulated. Frankly speaking, the claims made for yoga did not convince me.

I had my own background of medical studies, not with humans but with animals, because my family were preparing me to be a veterinary doctor. To me, these statements made by an ex-medical man were not convincing, but I kept them in my mind, and during the twelve years of my ashram life I was mainly engaged in studying philosophies, eastern and western, as well as the newer philosophies and psychologies.

People used to write to Swami Sivananda for treatment of their problems, and he used to suggest that they practise

yoga. I used to witness all that, then in 1956 when I was wandering all over India, Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan, Ceylon as a mendicant, people used to come to me to ask what yoga they should practise to become free from their diseases. I did not know very much about it, so I retired again and studied yoga thoroughly. I learned that yoga is not just a series of exercises. The practices are postures or asanas which produce a great change in the body; sometimes in the main organs, sometimes in the endocrine secretions and sometimes in the nervous system.



### **Balancing the energies**

The body is maintained by the life force and the mind is maintained by the mental force; this means that there are two forms of energy in this organism. One form of energy is responsible for the maintenance of the gross organs of the body, and the other force is responsible for the mental activities.

When you practise yoga postures, particularly the major ones, they exert mild pressure on the six important junctions in the spinal passage. Of these six, four distribute the life force and mental force; and disease is caused by an imbalance of the energy quantum of the body.

Now of course we talk about bacteria, vitamin deficiencies, and there is no argument about it. However at the same time, you must remember that a disease does not merely originate in the gross body. Even if a disease does appear to originate in the body it travels straight to the mind and from there back to the body again. Such diseases are known as 'somopsychic'

diseases. Most diseases nowadays originate in the mind; then they travel to the body, then from the body to the mind again. This is how every disease originates, spreads and comes back again. Therefore whatever the origin of a disease, man's body and mind both suffer at the same time.

These two forces are functioning just like material forces; you can say for the time being, positive and negative forces. The negative force controls the mind and its functions, while the positive force controls the body, its temperature, mobility etc. The two forces are distributed throughout the body via the four junctions which are situated in the spinal axis, at the sacral area, cardiac area and cervical area. These junctions are known as *chakras* or psychic centres. For proper health these four energy centres must maintain balance; if the balance is lost then disease of that particular system originates.

I'll explain this a little more. In yoga we call life force *prana*. Other translations are vital force and bio-energy (though *prana* is something more than this as well). In life there should be harmony between the pranic force and the mental force but usually this doesn't happen. If pranic force dominates and mental force becomes subservient, then mental illness occurs. If the mental force becomes predominant and the pranic force is subservient, then physical disease occurs. In modern medical language we speak of the same thing; when the parasympathetic nervous system is subservient or vice versa, we have either psychic or physical disorders. If a harmony could be struck between these two forces, the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, then there would be perfect health in the body.

### **Endocrine glands**

When there is total harmony between these two systems then there are also perfectly balanced secretions of the endocrine glands. These glands are either directly or indirectly controlled by the energy systems, so an energy imbalance directly or indirectly affects that particular gland.

For instance, in diabetes the pancreas ceases to function, insulin is not produced and so glucose breakdown is interrupted. The nervous system goes into dysfunction on account of stress and strain but if proper rest and relaxation can be given to the nervous system it will recommence functioning, consequently the pancreas will start working and that is the end of diabetes.

### **The body makes its own medicines**

Within this physical body there are rich sources of life-giving chemical antibodies, etc. When we need one of them we can take it from outside via pills or injections, but if we revitalize the particular system that produces these requirements we can make them for ourselves. That is what we can accomplish through yoga.

Take the example of adrenalin. The patient who is suffering from asthma can produce adrenalin by simply practising one posture known as shashankasana. The person sits on his feet, bends forward, places his forehead and arms on the floor and relaxes in this position for ten or fifteen minutes. This is the way the Muslims sit during their prayers. In shashankasana the adrenal glands are reactivated, they secrete more adrenalin and the attack passes off. This is especially effective if it is practised as soon as the person knows that the respiratory congestion is beginning to take place. An asthmatic patient can tell very well when an attack is starting. The condition often begins to accumulate from the morning and he begins to feel heaviness in the chest, but if he practises this posture he begins to feel better very quickly, because the secretion of adrenalin is increased. Everyone with asthma knows that if he has an attack and goes to the doctor he is given adrenalin, however with shashankasana he makes it for himself.

This is an example of how a particular endocrine gland is stimulated by the practice of a specific asana. The endocrine glands in their turn then influence not only the body but also the emotions such as anxiety, fear and anger, which can also be controlled by yoga practices.

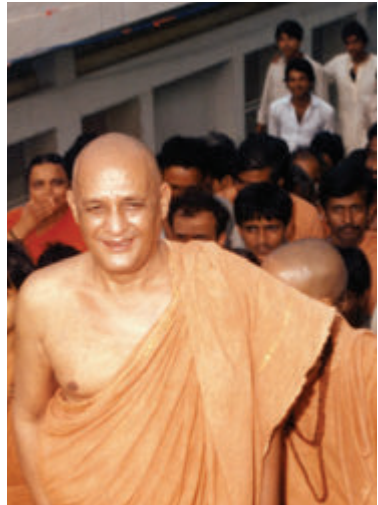


## Peptic ulcer

When I started this movement I had 24 students and one of them was suffering from peptic ulcer. He was a very brilliant advocate and an astute politician. At the beginning his ulcer was very bad and it was hard for me to imagine how yoga could help a condition caused by hyperacidity, anxiety and fear, and irregular lifestyle. 'Exercises' for me were only exercises after all, whether they were dynamic or static. To my surprise however that man got better within fifteen days and he is alright even now.

## Siddhasana and the heart

Recently I met an eminent doctor who is a great authority on transplanting the heart, Dr Christian Barnard from South Africa. We started talking about yoga postures and he said, "Yes, that is what I tell people to do because if yoga postures are done correctly you don't have to worry about heart attacks at all." When I asked him what was the basis of his statement he said, "In the male body testosterone is produced and



these hormones attack the heart." Testosterone is the hormone secreted by the testes in the masculine body. It is secreted every now and then, consciously and unconsciously during sexual intercourse, sexual fantasies etc. If there is a nice dish of food the salivary glands start to work, you know that. Even if I talk to you about something which you like to eat most, the saliva begins to flow; this is a normal body reflex. In the same way, if you look at a picture of sexual activity, for instance, it is not just looking – there is a reflex action set up in the body and testosterone is secreted. I'm not criticizing the sexual



behaviour of man, I'm only defining testosterone in relation to human activities.

If testosterone attacks the heart how can we be sure it is not produced in excess? Dr Barnard said that he had one posture in mind which he described as siddhasana, the posture in which we sit for meditation. In this posture the left foot is placed under the scrotum with the right over the genital organ. If this

is practised for say half an hour maximum each day it will give you complete control over the secretion of testosterone, a primary cause of heart attack. This revelation I am making is from a very respected person in the field of heart treatment, therefore there is no reason why siddhasana should be considered just a meditational posture. Let us call it 'the coronary posture'.

When you are practising siddhasana, what is happening? You are pressing the perineum between the excretory and the urinary organs with your left heel. With the right heel you are pressing the lower abdominal viscera at the root of the urinary organ, or in the female body, just above the clitoris. You are pressing these two points which are very important in controlling the flow of blood through the arteries and veins.

The posture of siddhasana helps in the treatment of abnormal blood pressure too. Anyone who is suffering from high or low blood pressure should just sit in this position for an hour if possible, or for half an hour and the blood pressure will slowly move towards normal. This is because the pressure on the viscera and the perineum is transmitted to the brain centres, which control the blood pressure. High blood pressure is caused by tension and stress reacting

through the brain and affecting the blood vessels and the heart. There are of course other ways of controlling high blood pressure but now I want to emphasize how important siddhasana is to our age.

### **Diabetes**

Here in India, along with heart disease, another important experiment has already been concluded in the management of diabetes. The course was conducted in one of my ashrams for forty people, under the direct observation of doctors. When the course was concluded the patients went home and the doctors followed up their progress. To sum up, this experiment enlightened the whole nation by proving that diabetes is no longer an incurable disease, and if properly handled, before complications have set in, the pancreas can be regenerated and the disease can be checked. The sufferer from diabetes has nothing to worry about provided he knows the correct practices to do.

### **Prolapse of the uterus**

I don't know much about the condition of ladies in the West, but in India many ladies suffer from prolapse of the uterus, where its supports become weak and it comes down. Of course we have a system of surgery for this, but in yoga we use only three postures practised over a period of time, which bring the whole genito-urinary system into working order and make it strong.

One practice is called naukasana, the boat pose. You lie down, raise both legs a bit and tense them, then raise the upper part of the body a bit off the floor and tense it, then stretch the arms in the direction of the feet and make them tense. It has been seen that during this pose the uterus drops back. It may not happen in a few days, it may take a period of time, but definitely this posture helps in prolapse.

The other practice for prolapse is uddiyana bandha. Exhale through the mouth, empty the lungs and contract the abdomen

upward and backward. At the same time the kidneys, the bladder and the uterus follow the same contraction. The entire genito-urinary and digestive tracts are contracted. When at the same time you block the throat by extending the arms and pressing the knees in jalandhara bandha, the blood circulation is concentrated in the navel region, and we know that wherever the blood concentrates, repair work takes place very fast.

## **Cancer**

I don't make very tall claims, it is not my habit, but I have seen for myself how cancer can be successfully treated by yoga therapy. For instance one of my friends brought me a patient, the son-in-law of an eminent medical doctor in India, an FRCS. He had been in London and had to be brought back to India because of cancer of the spine.

He came to us and we only recommended one practice, revitalizing the breathing. He had to do nothing but fold back the tongue toward the upper palate (khechari mudra), then practise a particular pranayama called ujjayi, in which the breath sounds like the steam escaping from an engine. This is known as psychic breathing. With his eyes open or closed he was instructed to breathe this way fifty, a hundred or a hundred and fifty times.

First of all he was very sceptical. He asked, "Will it cure me?" I said, "If there is any other system available which you think can cure you then take that course." He was himself a doctor and he had given up all hope of survival. I said, "Practise it with inspiration and enthusiasm." He practised for one full year or more and he is still very much alive today. He no longer has cancer but unfortunately he is not able to move his head either to the right or the left because of a certain test he had undergone before he met me. I advised him, "Don't worry. If you persist in practising these other yoga postures, in the course of a year or two your neck will be able to move again."

He is still the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in a well-known university. He tells all his medical students that yoga is important, not only as a philosophy or a spiritual science, but because there are certain physical changes that definitely occur.

### **The future of yoga**

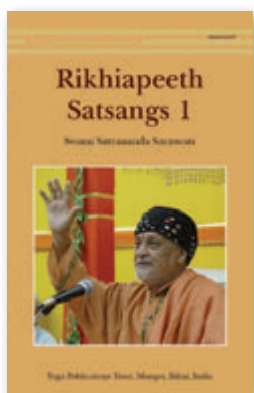
Yoga can move either side by side with medical science or independently. This is because we have a sound system of aetiology, diagnosis and pathogenesis of diseases. We have a complete system by itself within yoga. Unfortunately, people of the East and West have understood yoga as a science of occultism, mysticism, black magic, witchcraft, and many have attributed it to the religious side of life. This is why yoga has been outside the area of scientific exploration and investigation. However,



we are now doing a lot of work within India, not only in our institution but many others. In countries of the West, doctors write down under their prescription: "Practise yoga." They don't know very much about the postures, but they know what yoga can do. Work is also going on in most European countries. I am particularly aware of what is going on in Czechoslovakia and Poland because my disciples there are working in collaboration with the medical authorities. Throughout the whole world, yoga is now becoming recognized as a science in its own right. I hope this systematic approach to yoga will reveal greater benedictions and greater benefits to mankind.

# Balancing the Opposites

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 1, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When you are pursuing pleasure, you experience imbalances in life. The pursuit of sensory objects is the pursuit of pleasure (*bhoga*). This happens to you every day, 365 days a year, throughout your life. The association of the senses with sense objects remains established throughout. When this association persists, negative factors influence the psychological body so that you are subject to diseases.

Life is full of happiness and unhappiness, and changes come about in the human body with the onset of these states. The cardiogram, the brain waves and the blood pressure all display changes depending on your state of joy and sorrow. However, if you practise yoga, balance is attained.

It is not possible to withdraw from the world of senses. You have to stay within their influence, it is your compulsion; you are helpless against them. Every one of us has to stay in this world of happiness, unhappiness, passion, anger, envy and delusion. This is the nature of prakriti. Death is a reality and life is a reality too. It is impossible to experience total fulfilment in this lifetime. That is not the nature of prakriti. If you were to experience nothing but happiness from birth to death, you would go mad. Unhappiness comes to balance out happiness, and happiness comes to balance out unhappiness. Just as the day dawns to balance out the night and the night sets in to balance out the day, in the same way you need yoga to smooth out the imbalances created in the body due to the pursuit of pleasure.

In the state that society exists today, we complain about everything all the time, whether in newspapers, television or

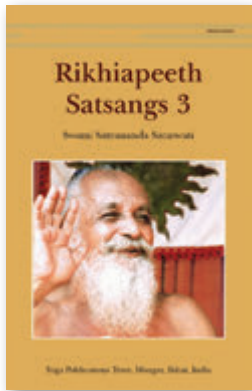
our conversations. No one is happy with anything. This is how life is perceived. However, your perception of life should be such that you develop a sattvic state of mind. This is necessary not just for the individual, but for society, the family and the nation. If, with the practice of yoga, you are able to change the direction of your mind, it is possible that a positive thinking pattern will emerge from within.

– 2005



# Role of Poverty in Spiritual Life

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 3, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In Thailand, anybody who follows Buddhism has to wear *geru*, sleep on a mat, beg for alms, shave their head and live in a monastery for a certain period. He may be a king or a servant; nobody is exempted. What is the use of such a system? Even I have begged for alms, but I never felt the need to beg. Then why did I do so? I did not have any requirements or needs. If I had a wife and family I would have begged for them, but I don't, so why did I beg? I could get two rotis, a minimal meal, easily. In Varanasi, nobody dies hungry. Just sit anywhere and you will be fed. In Varanasi, there are many *anna kshetras*, food houses. Go to any one of them and you will certainly get dal and roti.

Even so, for about four to five years I was seeking alms. Why did I do this? It is essential for mental growth and mental health. Whatever I have received in my life, the credit for that goes to things like these, begging for alms, living in dharamshalas, spending the night under a banyan tree, sleeping on somebody's veranda, all these things have a profound impact on the mental state and spiritual life, and uplift them both. What the real, tangible effect of this is, I also do not understand, but this tradition exists among Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Jains. Begging for alms and wandering like a monk is a tradition of all religions.

I wandered everywhere, from Afghanistan to Burma, and didn't have a penny in my pocket. If I got some money from



somewhere, I would start out once again. On the train, I would tell the ticket collector, "I want to go to Varanasi." He would say, "Okay. Sit down anywhere." I would sit without a ticket, though not without permission. In those days we were under the British rule. In 1945, during their rule, we received a lot of cooperation. Back then it was less difficult for us sadhus; now it is very difficult.

### **Mouse soup**

At that time I travelled extensively; Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Tajikistan. Once I went to Assam on elephant-back. I even crossed the river on elephant-back. In Madhya Pradesh, I stayed with remote tribal people, in areas where no roads could reach; even bicycles could not reach there. Yet I would travel to such places, and stay in cowsheds. They were poor people. One gave me mouse soup, not once, but for two months. I didn't know. I was in Jagdalpur district, doing my *chaturmas*, the period of sadhana during the four months of the monsoon season.

A disciple of my guru was a revenue inspector there. He dropped me at the home of an *adivasi*, tribal person, as I wanted complete solitude. I would spread a few leaves under a tree and sit there all day long. The *adivasi* had a tiny little hut and at night the whole family would sleep in a huddle and I'd sleep there with them. During the day, he would bring me some rice and the mouse soup. At the end of two months, on the full moon, the revenue inspector came to fetch me. The *adivasi* brought the same food for him. He asked, "What is this?" He said, "This is mouse soup." The inspector said, "Oh my goodness! It's sacrilege." I said, "Forget it, he is a poor man." What I am trying to say is that it did not affect me at all. I thought, "It has not affected my mind in any way. I did not get sick. I do not know what people have fed me, I might have eaten anything. At least here I know what he gave me!"

A wanderer's life, poverty and begging for alms, is therapeutic. It cures diseases. Poverty is not a curse; the curse is

the pain, sorrow and suffering. It is a curse when the suffering caused by poverty creates frustration; when you see your child's hungry face. When Dronacharya saw Ashwathama's face, he was shaken. When your wife makes a reproachful remark or the elders say something unpleasant, you become frustrated. If I had a wife and children, I too would be worried. There was nobody to tell me anything, and I enjoyed that.

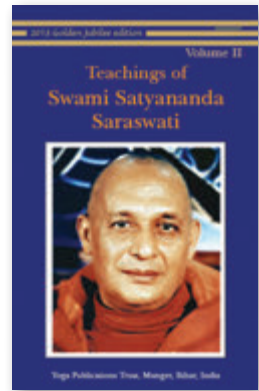
– 13 January 1997



# Thinking Badly about Others

*From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume 2, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Thinking badly about one's own self is a normal behaviour of the mind, and talking and thinking badly about others is an expression of that mental behaviour. If you have a bad smell in the body, that is your bad smell, but it is projected outside and others can smell it. In the same way, if you are thinking negatively, your thoughts are projected outside in the form of criticism. So both these phenomena are interrelated.



In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, there is a sutra: "The most important thing is peace of mind." When you think badly about others, your mind is not at peace, and if you don't have peace of mind, then you can't have good meditation. You may have good concentration in meditation, but at the bottom, the tempest is blowing and it can blow out the light at any moment.

## **Towards peace of mind**

In order to attain peace of mind, you must have the attitude of friendship for the people who are happy and you must have compassion for those who are unhappy. You must be pleased with the people who are virtuous and you should ignore the people who are vicious. These are the four attitudes you should try to develop when you are dealing with the four different types of people. I will elaborate on these.

When we see people who are very happy and prosperous in their lives, we are usually jealous of them. That is the natural reaction. However, according to yoga, you should make them



your friends. If you are a rich person, a great scholar or a renowned person, or if you are happy in every respect with good children, husband or wife, I should not be jealous of you. If I am jealous, then my peace of mind is destroyed. I should make you my friend so that your happiness becomes my happiness. That is point one.

There are many people in the world who are very unhappy. If we see that someone we don't like is facing sickness, poverty, pain or grief, we are very happy. We say, "That's right, he deserved it." When you think like this, you are disturbing your own mind and then your meditation will be affected. The correct attitude is one of compassion. Of course you know he is a bad man, but after all he is very unhappy. That is called compassion. That is point two.

There are many people who are virtuous. They help others, they are philanthropic and they give a lot in charity. What we usually say is, "It's not genuine, he's just doing all this to impress or show up others." Or we say, "He has earned this money through bad means and now he is trying to give it away in charity." By saying or thinking this, you are disturbing the base of your mind and it will affect your meditation. The right attitude is that you should be happy in your heart that he is doing good work. He is helping this institution or that mission; he is very generous and charitable; he is making proper use of his money. If you think like this, you will be happy and that will boost your meditation. That is point three.

Now, point four. When you see a debauched man, a criminal or a thief, you say, "Hey, he is a very bad man. Don't go near him." In any congregation, there is usually one person

who talks badly about others day in and day out. This person always becomes very unhappy and quite abnormal, almost to the point of mental crisis. Maybe a person is bad, but if you keep on talking ill about him, you are only making matters worse for yourself. If he is bad it does not concern you. You should ignore him, that is the right attitude.

### **The best example**

In order to attain peace of mind, your attitudes must be correct. I will give you an example of a person I knew who put these attitudes into practice throughout his life. I lived with this person for many years; he is my guru, Swami Sivananda. He used to serve anyone who criticized, harmed or offended him just like a mother serves her child. He used to treat those people better than he treated his own disciples.

Some of us were very good disciples who were completely devoted to him, but he did not care very much for us. But any disciples who were not up to standard were given special attention. He used to send coffee to their room. Any time fruit came to the ashram, they were the first to receive it, and whenever distribution of clothing took place, their names were first on the list. If there was a congregation or satsang in the ashram, they were always given a special place. And this is how he behaved all the time.

However, there are many people who do not change even if you treat them exceptionally well. Once we pointed this out to Swami Sivananda because there was a disciple who was, in spite of Swamiji's behaviour, persistent in his evil actions. We said, "Your attitude to evil disciples is definitely good, but if they don't want to change, why don't you teach them a lesson?" He said, "No." Then he narrated the following parable.

Once a very good natured person was taking a bath in the Ganges and a scorpion was being swept along by the water. In order to save the scorpion, the man picked it up and held it in his hand. The scorpion bit the man, but he still continued to hold it. Again it bit him. A man who was witnessing this whole

game asked the good man, "Why don't you leave that scorpion to die?" Do you know what his reply was? "When a scorpion does not give up his nature, why should I give up mine?"

### **Most important sadhana**

So, if you want to eliminate negative thoughts, your whole nature must be changed. By attending satsangs you can transform your nature greatly, and this is most important. Satsang means association with people where positive things are being practised. You may be singing together or studying yoga together. You may be reading the scriptures or discussing the problems of day-to-day life. This is called satsang, and after it you start thinking very positively.

The opposite of satsang is kusang. 'Ku' means bad, evil, negative or devilish, and 'sang' means association. When you are in association with negative people or ideas, that is called kusang. So, in order to purify the human nature, the most important sadhana is satsang. If we cannot hold a satsang ourselves, then we can read a positive and inspiring book. When I was a student, I frequently read a marvellous book called *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. Every time I read it, I got some new light. In the same manner, Swami Sivananda has also written some wonderful books which can help you to restructure your whole nature.

We write books on yoga, practical books. Swami Sivananda used to write books on human nature. There is a fantastic book written by him called *Mind - Its Mysteries and Control*. When you read that book, you can see your own self as though you were looking at a mirror. Unless you can see yourself, how can you correct yourself? In order to transform your nature, you have to see yourself naked, you have to have an absolute vision of your entire personality. And besides this, certain basic virtues have to be practised and developed. This is how the whole thing goes.

– September 1980, Zinal, Switzerland

# A Master's Masterpiece



One morning in the Akhara while showing work to Swamiji, I came across a tiny piece of paper with a drawing of something that looked like a diamond. Clear crisp lines, really impeccable symmetry. Curiosity stirred in me when I saw this amazing piece of drawing, thinking, 'what could this mean, where is this going to be?' Of course I couldn't keep the thoughts to myself and I asked Swamiji what this drawing meant. Swamiji just looked at the drawing on

the paper and smiled. Remembering the smile and forgetting the context all together, I moved on with work and daily routine.

It was only after a few months that I saw some construction work taking place at the old fountain. Still unable to put the pieces of the puzzle together, life kept going in anticipation and excitement of this new masterpiece of the master.

When the mere canopy couldn't cover the presence of this creation I for the first time witnessed the real size, the magnitude of this replica of the drawing I had come across months ago. There was a dramatic design unfolding in time, for which only one was chosen to be the catalyst. It was brilliant to see how every angle, every cut, the alignment and the shape were just so perfect as the master had drawn himself.

As the glass and other fixtures came together, it felt more and more



complete and remarkable. Still covered from plain sight of onlookers, no one was allowed near the site. So of course there was no way of finding out what to expect or think.

As we were getting busy and busier with the preparations of Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, with hundreds of guests coming, normal routine was on a roll. We were on a run. It was on 10th, exactly 10th September, that I witnessed something absolutely magical. The magic of gurus was at play. As I was walking towards kutir to return the keys, I came across a sannyasin facing the construction site completely frozen and her eyes awestruck, mesmerized seeing the structure glow. A radiance beyond reality. I joined her, and it felt as if we were in some other place. Words had left us and all that would come out of us was “WOW” with every breath.

Eyes weren't quite done soaking the bigger picture that suddenly my eyes caught the brilliant blue light that was sparkling at the base. This light was just too familiar and it could only mean one thing.

### **A walk to remember**

We found out that there would be a special program on 12th celebrating the Sannyasa Diwas of Sri Swamiji. As it is, the day was special and had an air of joy and happiness as we were dancing at the feet of our gurus, but something in me was jumping up and down waiting for the day to move a bit faster so we could witness this event of a lifetime.

And so it did, and what the eyes saw, ears heard and the heart felt is what words cannot explain.

Even with hundreds of people sitting and participating in the program and chanting there was this remarkable silence around, this peace and joy that I felt inside looking at Sri Swamiji who was smiling at all of us from within the Chhaya Samadhi, this beautiful diamond.

When the program finished we were guided for parikrama. As I walked inside the Samadhi, it felt as if time stood still. The parikrama which lasted exactly 10 seconds felt more,



much longer. I came out of the Chhaya Samadhi as if I had just walked out of a time capsule. And it indeed took me back to all the memories, photos and satsangs of Sri Swamiji, like a flip book it started: all that my mind could remember and that I had come across these many years. I walked out of the time machine completely stupefied by the striking appearance, with a smile on my face and joy in my heart. Everything felt in place and peaceful. Swamiji had brought Sri Swamiji back . . .

Every day since then walking on the rose path looking at Sri Swamiji smiling back at us, is most certainly the bestest moment of the day and “a walk to remember” . . .

—*Sannyasi Atmamaitri*



## *Message to the Sadhaka*



In fact, the power is in you.  
What you need is confidence,  
And a little practice.

Even now, you have that power,  
Though it lies unseen.  
Realize that power  
Through direct intuition.

Within you is the wisdom.  
Dive deep, go in,  
And you will realize the pearl.

If you concentrate and meditate,  
You will see the Truth actually.  
That is siddhi.

Whenever you think,  
Think confidently.  
Be sure that whatever you think  
Must come to pass.

You have to realize the Highest.  
Minor siddhis cannot guide you.  
Hold this knowledge  
To sustain your practices.

Let the form become abiding  
And awareness perpetual;  
Then you will see the Light.  
Form will become conscious;  
This is the symptom of progress:  
This is the key.

*—Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



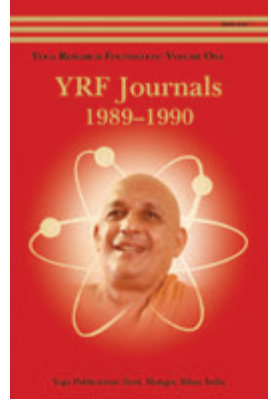
# Yoga Publications Trust

## YRF Journals 1989–1990

### Yoga Research Foundation

175 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-93-84753-25-2

Yoga Research Foundation (YRF) launches its publications with the reproduction of four original journals published in 1989–1990. Mainly dedicated to the YRF five-year study on asthma, this volume reflects the interest and enthusiasm of medical doctors and yoga teachers in opening yoga to scientific investigation. Contributors from around the world participated in this venture and shared their knowledge.



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## Satyananda Yoga Websites



### [www.biharyoga.net](http://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](http://www.rikhiapeeth.in)

The Rikhiapeeth website is a sanctuary for all spiritual seekers so they can stay connected to the cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda, 'Serve, Love, Give', that are practised and lived at Rikhiapeeth. Includes inspiring satsangs, information about Rikhiapeeth, upcoming events, courses and more.



### [www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/](http://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](http://www.yogamag.net)

The official website of Yoga magazine contains an archive of over 30 years of the magazine. This archive is fully searchable and ever expanding.



### [www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/](http://www.biharyoga.net/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/)

Provides online access to *Satya ka 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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## Yoga Peeth Events & Courses 2016

Jan 1	Akhanda Path of 108 Hanuman Chalisa
Feb 2-May 29	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (Hindi)
Feb 9-12	Sri Yantra Aradhana
Feb 13	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Feb 21-27	Yoga Capsule: Respiratory (Hindi)
Mar 20-Apr 3	Yoga Capsule: Total Health (Hindi)
Apr 24-30	Yoga Capsule: Digestive (Hindi)
Jul 15-18	Guru Poornima Satsang Program
Jul 19	Guru Paduka Poojan
Aug 1-30	Yoga Instructors Course (English - Indian nationals)
Sep 8	Swami Sivananda Janmotsava
Sep 12	Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas
* Sep 24-30	Hatha Yoga: Shatkarma Intensive (Hindi/English)
* Oct 1-30	Progressive Training for Satyananda Yoga Teachers (English)
* Oct 3-Jan 29	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (English)
* Oct 22-28	Raja Yoga: Asana & Pranayama Intensive (Hindi/English)
Nov 5-11	Kriya Yoga: Preparatory (Hindi)
* Dec 19-23	Yoga Chakra Series III (Hindi/English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poornima	Sundarkand Path
Every 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitanamas

\* Indicates courses available in English language for Overseas students

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

### **For more information on the above events contact:**

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