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Hari Om

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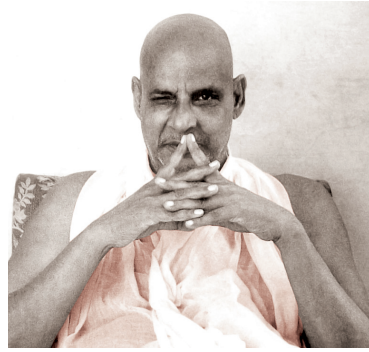
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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Learn the Lesson

Do not brood over your past mistakes and failures. This will fill your mind with grief, regret and depression. Do not repeat them in the future. Just think of the causes that led to your failures and try to remove them in the future. Be vigilant, cautious and circumspect.

Every mistake brings its lessons. Mistakes are your gurus or teachers. Correct your own shortcomings. Do not look into the faults of others. It is not your business. Everyone is evolving. Only God knows the exact position in which one stands.

Strengthen yourself. Arm yourself with new vigour and virtues. Develop your will slowly. You are bound to succeed in every attempt.

—Swami Sivananda

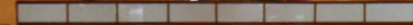
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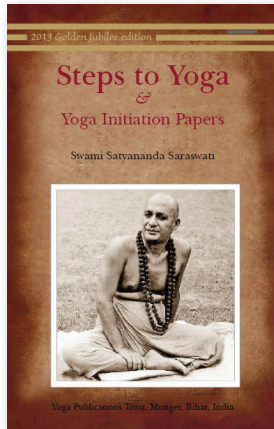
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

The Only Fertilizer

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



Pleasing others, swallowing the poison which someone gives to you, is no less than a divine trait, quite usual to Lord Shiva. Why then shouldn't we too live happily, easily and gladly in this life of various seasons. One should continue the life of a householder so long as he is wanted there. If he wants to take to sannyasa, he must do sadhana. So long as he has not entered in the plane of God-consciousness, let him at least enjoy life in all its fullness.

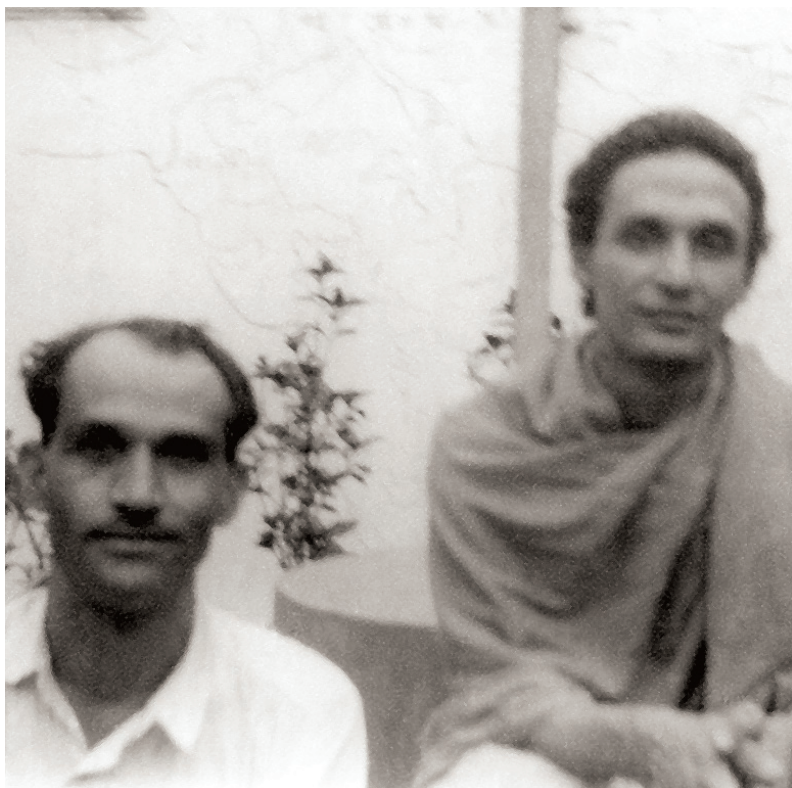
I don't know why we forget this; that we have come to experience the bliss, of which meditation is a higher form, and the world a finite expression. A dhobi's dogs live neither with their owner, nor at the river. They neither live happily in the world, nor control the mind by meditation. They neither do sadhana nor lead the fearless life of a householder. The more one worries, the more one suffers. A boy worries about toys, a young man about women, a father about children, middle-aged men about fast-deteriorating health, old about young, and still older about the forthcoming pangs of death and hell. Still we are in search of happiness.

O brother, in the babool tree one won't ever find mangoes. Love is a divine force to annihilate worries. It is one of those heavenly drinks which frees man from the thralldom of dissatisfaction and spiritual unrest. Love, we have misunderstood it. Love does not demand. It is a dedication. Love knows nothing but sacrifice. Yes, at the altar of love I sacrificed my body, my soul, my all - all that I claimed to

possess. 'Take it' is the real meaning of 'love'. 'Give me' is the watchword of an exploiter. Love does not exploit; love only enriches.

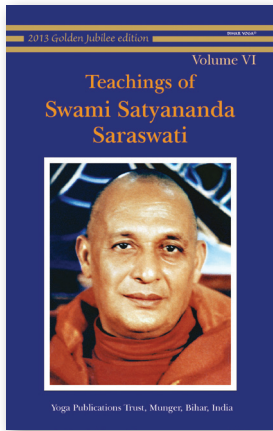
Love is the only fertilizer of the soil of life. Passion is not love. Greed is not love. Romance is not love. Attachment or attraction is not love. Love is an innermost feeling of the soul. Love is a state when our soul relaxes its tensions, when strains and burdens have been set aside, and the soul of man rests in the blissful lap of 'someone' divine. During meditation we can practise this love. When we are all alone, I mean really alone, we are with him. When this condition has materialized, do you think worries would still exist?

– Letter to Swami Satyabratanaanda, April 1958, Bhagalpur



Revitalizing the Nervous System

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume VI



If one has a weak sensitive and exhausted nervous system due to heritage, how can one help it be revitalized?

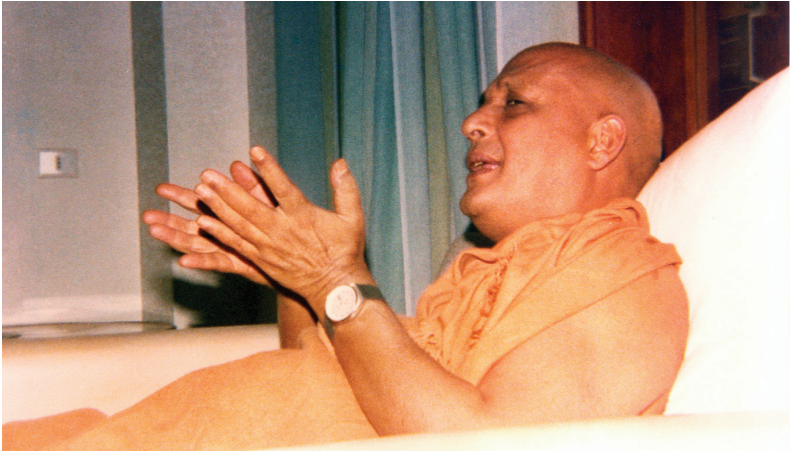
There are two important practices that I can cite at this moment. In fact, one of the most important practices through which you can overcome nervousness for the time being is japa yoga, which has been known to Indians for centuries. Japa yoga is the practice which is done with the mala, based on

your mantra. If the nervousness is acute then you can have a mala in your hand all the time.

Mala means 'garland', through which you can practise mantra. If your mantra is *Om Namah Shivaya*, you repeat, *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya* as you turn the beads. If the nervousness is acute then have a smaller mala and you can go on practising all the time unconsciously. You can talk to your friends, read the newspaper, shave, do whatever you like, or if you take breakfast eat with the left hand while all the time you practise mantra. If you practise mantra as many times as you can, it will be wonderful for coming out of an acute nervous condition.

All about energy

Besides japa there is the practice of pranayama. Nervousness is a breakdown in the system of energy in the body. I'll give you an example: all these lights are burning on positive, negative



and earth. There is an earth wire somewhere in the building. Go there and cut it – what will happen? You may get a shock. In the same way, in our body different movements take place according to the energy.

I have been talking and you have been listening. You eat food and you digest it. You breathe through the twenty-four hours of the day. If you are a typist you are typing the whole day, if you are a housewife you are cooking and looking after the family or driving your motor car. All these actions demand energy. First of all you must realize this truth – the body is not only a physical machine, it is electrical as well. When you think, this also needs energy; anger, passion, worry, anxiety, love, hatred, all these things demand energy.

In this body there are millions of pathways which conduct this energy to remote corners of the body, and they are known as *nadis* or the nervous system. Broadly they are classified as sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Not only the major organs of the body, but also the processes of thinking and feeling are controlled by this nervous system. These nervous systems are known as yin and yang, and in yoga as ida and pingala.

When we overuse the energy in our life, nervous breakdown takes place. For example if you bring a very big heater and

plug it into any normal house plug, it will fuse immediately. If you put in a stronger fuse, the wire will burn. It is the same system in the body. Your body has its own set capacity and limitation. Your nerves have their limit and yet many times you are putting demands on your nervous system. A little emotion is okay, a little passion is all right, a little bit of anger is better, but too much is no good. When you are unnecessarily emotional, too much anger, vengeance and animosity, and too worried about little or big matters, then that withdraws the energy from the nervous system.

Energy breakdown

Remember that the nerves do not produce energy. This electrical cable does not produce energy, it is only the conductor of energy. Within the body there is a point where energy is produced. Energy is produced in different chakras and if there is a breakdown in the chakra your nervous system cannot carry the energy, the electricity, through the body. Even if the wiring is all right in your building, if there is a breakdown in the generating station, will you get energy there? So when you talk about nervous breakdown you must be clear on two points. Sometimes I laugh when people come to me because they don't understand the difference between nervous depression and nervous breakdown. They are not suffering from nervous breakdown, but energy breakdown. There is no breakdown in the wiring; energy doesn't come because there is a breakdown in the generating system somewhere. So people who are suffering from nervous breakdown should remember that they will get nothing from taking a nerve tonic.

Do you know the name of the energy in the body? Inside we call it *prana*, outside you call it electricity. Electricity is generated in the powerhouse. You know how? Hydraulic, nuclear, solar and so many other methods exist. How do you generate energy within the body? The pranas are in the atmosphere in the form of negative and positive ions. These negative ions are plentiful in the mountains, by the side of a

clean river, in forests and gardens, but there are very few in a city room, in the streets. In mountain air they found 5,000 units per 300 cubic feet as against 50 in a room.

When you breathe in, the air enters through the nostrils and immediately messages are sent about the quantity of ions which the air contains, and it affects the brain and nervous system. If the air is polluted the pollution is immediately thrown out in the form of cough or cold because nature wants to stop pollution lodging in the body as much as possible. Sometimes when you begin the yogic practices of neti and pranayama you do get cough and cold in the beginning as the cleansing mechanisms are stimulated. Then the receptivity of the body to the ions gradually increases in a balanced manner. This adjustment in energy and balance is basic in yogic therapy for nervous breakdown or nervous depression.

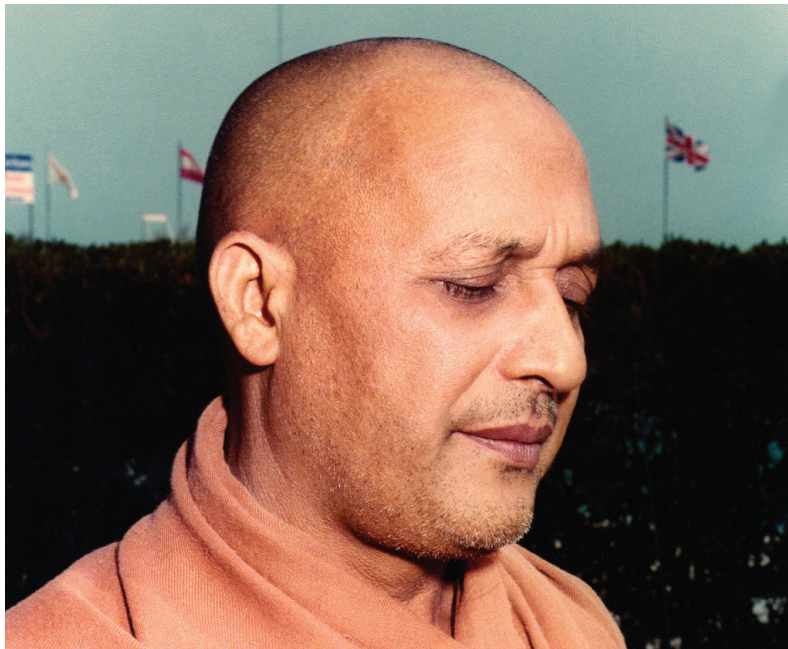
These and other practices of yoga re-adjust and balance the body back to its natural way of functioning. So, even if we are not able to live by the pure river in the mountains, still we begin to move our body and energy back into their simple, natural rhythms.

– 8 April 1981, Hotel Nepheli, Thessaloniki, Greece



Spiritual Awakening

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



People are becoming more and more aware of the need of spiritual life, but whatever opinion or impressions they have about spiritual life they lack guidance, inspiration and the means of transmission. The awakening is there I agree, and from time to time this awakening is being trampled.

In our decade, particularly, in the last twenty or thirty years the awakening has been marvellous. It has been voluntary, whilst in other periods of history we have been obliged to follow a path. We were obliged to follow a way which we did not fully understand. Now boys and girls are discovering and trying to discover a way for themselves. This voluntary discovery of spiritual life and voluntary acceptance of spiritual practices is a very happy moment of our times.

When I think about it, if this goes on, if the voluntary efforts to raise one's spiritual consciousness are genuine and honest, then we can definitely reach the sublime heights of consciousness.

Therefore, many times I tell my disciples not to get into wild publicity. If you make wild publicity then you are compelling people. They accept a way because they are impressed, but spiritual life is not an outcome of impression that comes to you by a beautiful and nice presentation. Even if spiritual life is not presented to you and there were no books or publicity material, if there is a general awakening of the masses it will always take place.

Withdraw all the books and publicity. Do not propagate through newspaper or television or anything, if the mass consciousness is trying to evolve spiritually it will discover its own way.

Therefore, even in our own times, though we have been operating very silently with no fuss, still we find that people are in search of us. They are in search of books on yoga and good yoga teachers. People are in search of good systems. This is a very positive sign of awakening.

I am trying to make one point very clear and that everybody has to understand. A religious institution or philosophy needs publicity and propaganda. But the awakening of spiritual consciousness in everybody en masse does not need any publicity.

If you are hungry you will find your own food. If I want spiritual life I will search. Let us therefore try to create a situation where people remain seekers; let them go to ten gurus and ten teachers. Let them try five, ten, twenty philosophies. Let them read one, two, ten, hundreds of books. Why are you doing it? Because you are searching. What way are you seeking? You are seeking a way which you have somehow realized in your mind will offer a greater possibility. This type of voluntary awakening we are finding in the last two or three decades.

– 18 September 1979, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London, England

Crises on the Spiritual Path

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When you start the spiritual life, you must understand that you are treading a path hitherto unknown to you. The spiritual path means the path of the evolution of your consciousness. The consciousness has travelled so far and has come to represent the human incarnation. Every time the consciousness passes from one incarnation into another it faced a crisis. Whenever transformation takes place, and whenever the transition takes place, there is always a crisis.

Therefore, let us not use the word difficulties; we should use the word crisis. When you make a transition from childhood to youth, you are facing a crisis. The soul's journey through different incarnations is beset with great many crises. These are the experiences that one goes through. Sometimes it becomes so difficult to handle the various experiences which you have during your spiritual practices. If you follow the laws of nature, you may have the crisis but you may not feel the intensity. But

when you make the effort to traverse the spiritual path and evolve your consciousness, you have a lot of intensity in the crisis.

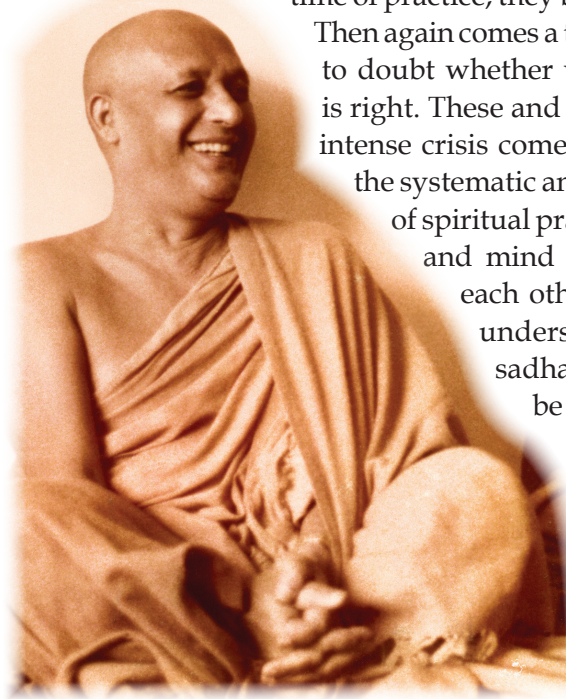
What happens is, when we practise spiritual sadhana, we miss so many essential items related to that. Most of us are in a great hurry to reach the ultimate. Therefore, we ignore the essential preparations and the essential basis. Many a time we involve ourselves in intense meditation, but we have not purified the mind. We have not rectified the elements of the body, so there is intensity in crisis. We feel horrible experiences, we have very unbearable feelings. Many times we are not able to handle the expressions of our behaviours. Therefore, I said the crisis is there but it is so intense that we are not able to handle it properly.

Intense crisis

Then, when we involve ourselves in intense meditation, the temperature in the body alters. As a result of that altered temperature, the digestion process also changes. As a result of that, sometimes diseases pertaining to the digestive system occur. Sometimes diseases pertaining to the respiratory system occur because the inner body temperature is not able to follow the natural process of digestion.

I come across many aspirants of this type, they come with their stomach complaint, they come with the complaint of the respiratory system. They come to complain about the fluctuating nervous depressions, because they believe that if they practise meditation they are practising real yoga. But you must understand that whatever sadhana you practise, it does make some sort of changes in the physical body and the mind as well.

Meditation or the sadhana of kundalini yoga are not merely metaphysical. Many of us are mistaken when we say that asana affects the body and meditation affects the soul. In fact, asanas and meditation have an overall effect on the whole of our personality more or less. So after some time of practice,



people begin to feel sick or ill. After a certain time of practice, they begin to become lazy. Then again comes a time when they begin to doubt whether what they are doing is right. These and many more forms of intense crisis come if we do not follow the systematic and graduated courses of spiritual practice. Since the body and mind are interacting with each other, it is necessary to understand that whatever sadhana you do it should be properly graduated.

The most intense crisis I have seen in spiritual life is impatience. People want to get there overnight. They do not really understand what they want. As a result of that, they want such practices that will give them samadhi in the shortest possible time. If you can understand that we are dealing with the evolution of consciousness in our practices, then it should definitely take more than a lifetime. If everybody realizes in one lifetime there will be another universal crisis.

You must integrate in your sadhana the elements of karma yoga, then that should be tempered with bhakti yoga, then that should be improved by raja yoga, and that should be surveyed properly by jnana yoga. Then there will be less awareness of intense crisis.

– September 1981, Zinal Conference, Switzerland

Overcoming Alcoholism

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

There are many ways to overcome addictions, particularly for alcohol. In action, alcohol is a stimulant and in reaction, it is a depressant. Therefore, to eradicate reliance on alcohol, you must first of all take to those practices of yoga which can give you stimulation and peace of mind simultaneously.

In particular, if you practise pranayama, hatha yoga and kriya yoga, you will be helped a lot. When the body is filled with toxins, it always demands more and more of the same toxins. So, at this time, the body should be purified by the practices of hatha yoga and the science of fasting.

Mental purging

Psychologists have found that alcoholics possess a deep-rooted pain which is unknown to them and ultimately leads them to some sort of narcotic or alcoholic habit. Therefore, what alcoholics should do is root out the cause of their problem by probing into their mind. As they penetrate the mind they must allow everything to come out, not only what is divine and sublime. They may find horrible things, many fantasies, endless passions, criminal thoughts, crazy ideas and so on. However, these negative things must not be suppressed, for to stop them is dangerous. They must come out.

Supposing you are thinking criminal thoughts, you must accept that. If an evil thought comes into your mind, you should not stop it, nor should you criticize it. Do not hate it and do not suppress it, let it develop and it will culminate in another thought. If you are assailed by sexual fantasies, let them continue. Whether you have a regular fantasy or a perverted fantasy, it does not matter. Develop it and you will find that within a few hours, days or weeks, it will culminate in some other thought process.

Society and religion have created deep-rooted guilt in man. If you are having sexual fantasies, why should you say it is bad? When you are angry with someone, why should you think it is not good? After all, a thought is just a thought. If you allow it to manifest, it becomes feeble; if you suppress it, it becomes strong. So, by suppressing a bad thought, you are only committing yourself to a bad action. But if you express a bad thought, you are becoming free of that karma.

There are some people who are very complicated. They have so many things inside but they don't know it. They are mentally constipated. They just cannot think bad things and they don't want to see their bad face or know their negative side. Such people are not normal; they are making a great mistake. Everybody knows that physical constipation is injurious to health, but in my opinion mental constipation is worse. Just as a purging process is necessary to relieve physical constipation, those with mental constipation must also undergo a purging process.

During the practice of pranayama, purging takes place. If you start practising bhastrika pranayama daily, after a few days, some crazy ideas will start coming into the mind and you will have many funny thoughts and dreams. Some people get very frightened when this happens to them. They go to a swami and say, 'Since I started practising pranayama, I've been getting crazy ideas.' If anyone says this to me, I tell them, 'Look here, shankhaprakshalana is going on.' In yoga we call this cleaning of the mind *chitta shuddhi*.

Praise and blame

Alcoholics and other addicts must increase the frequency of their dreams, and somehow they should induce more visions in their meditation practice. It is most important that they do not try to escape from or cover up their own psychological personality. If you are an alcoholic and somebody says you are a bad man, don't deny it. Think to yourself, 'Maybe I am a bad man.' The moment you accept what other people say about you, you are

out of danger. If you dismiss everything people say of you and convince yourself that they are wrong, you will become very arrogant. This is everybody's mistake. When someone makes negative remarks about us, we say, 'Oh, he is a useless man.'

You see, these are things which we will have to correct if we want to substantially change our habits. Supposing a man praises us, we consider him good; if he criticizes us, we label him bad. If a man loves us he is good and if he hates us he is bad. This is a very limited psychological conclusion. What is a more broadminded conclusion? He who criticizes you is your benefactor, he who praises you is your enemy; he who loves you hypnotizes you, he who hates you dehypnotizes you. If you can adopt this way of thinking, you can break your habits overnight.

Gradual program for eliminating alcoholism

Now, let us discuss sadhana. Practise yoga nidra regularly and your mantra every day. Do not take a pledge not to drink; don't think about alcohol at all. Just remember one thing: 'I will practise five malas every day. On a free day, I will practise ten malas more.' Let this program continue for one month.

Then add one more item: 'I will miss a meal one day per week.' It is preferable if you do this on the particular day of the week on which you were born, because that must have been a very unfortunate day, as you became an alcoholic. Therefore, it is important to sanctify it by missing one meal on that day.

Continue this for about two months, then add one more item: 'One day per week, I will have one drink less.' If you normally have ten glasses of alcohol per day, on that nominated day of the week, take only nine glasses.

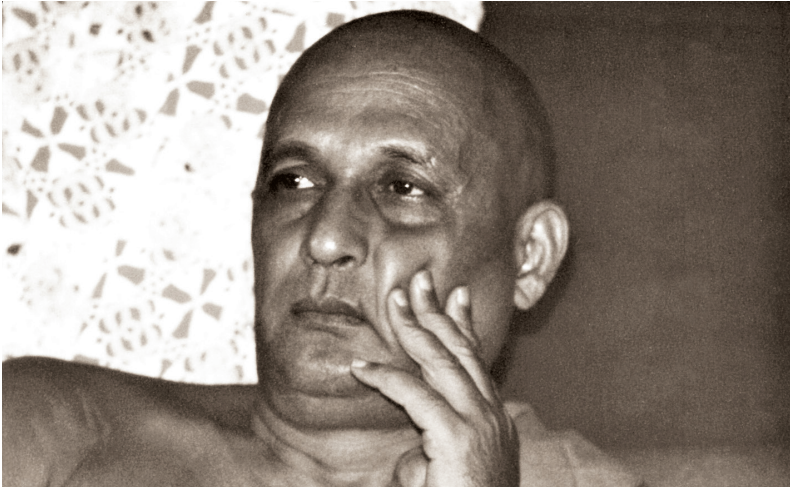
So, gradually, month by month, easy rules must be added. You should not make difficult rules for yourself, because if you say, 'One day per week I am not going to drink any alcohol,' your mind will revolt. It will give you a lot of trouble and you'll end up drinking more than usual. Very gently you must redirect your mind.

Even an alcoholic can die an honourable death

Many years ago, I had a disciple who died at the age of ninety-eight. He was a wealthy man who was always drunk. He used to drink twenty-four hours a day. For him, drinking was a constant process just like ajapa japa. From time to time I used to visit this man and every time I stayed with him, he used to follow one set of rules. The day I stepped into his house, he ordered his family not to prepare meat or cook fish. Nobody was allowed to smoke or take wine in the home, and he purchased from the market a special set of utensils for cooking my food. Hindus have a peculiar custom, when swamis come to their home, they will not cook food for them in their own vessels if they have been used for cooking meat. So, every non-vegetarian family has a special set of utensils for preparing our food. Likewise, this disciple of mine made this rule for himself.

Once I stayed with him for three months. It was so difficult for him because he was a chain smoker and he could not smoke, he was a habitual drinker and he could not drink, and he generally ate meat four times a day but he had to stop this too. He did not know what to do and I was aware of his difficulties. I was only going to stay with him for two months, but one day I told him I would stay for one month more. After some thought, he came to me and said, 'You know Swamiji, one day you should go to Allahabad, have a bath in Ganga and then come back.' I knew he just wanted me out of the way for eight to ten hours so he could drink and smoke and resume his other habits. So I told him, 'No, I am not going.' I stayed for one month more.

One day I told him, 'I am so comfortable with you that I do not want to go. I will stay here for another month. Also, I don't have the money to go.' Then, do you know what he did? He went straight to his bank and withdrew Rs. 5,000 and gave it to me. In those days Rs. 5,000 was such a big amount that you could buy more with that than with \$5,000 today. He said, 'Swamiji, please take this money. You can visit all the pilgrim places and pray to all the gods for me.' I had no option. I left.



When this man was ninety-six years old, I met him again, and he told me one thing that still hovers in my mind. He said that he had been a true disciple to me all these years, but because I did not tell him to give up alcohol, he never did. He put the whole blame on me. He said, 'You did not tell me to give it up and you did not ask me to stop eating meat, therefore even now I still have these habits. Now that I have only a few more years to live, I will not try to give up these things anymore.'

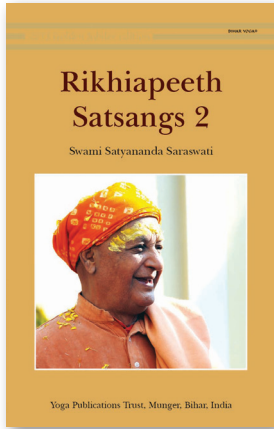
Five days before his death, he called all his relatives from different parts of India, and he predicted the exact time of his death. I also went to his home and on the appointed morning we all gathered at his side. He just sat down calmly in lotus posture, recited two slokas from the *Gita* and then took a deep breath in. The breath never came out; he died at that moment.

So, even an alcoholic can have a very honourable death. If you know when you are going to die and you know how to die, and if you die in front of all your relatives and with your guru before you, what more honourable death can you have?

– Printed in *YOGA*, Vol. 20, No. 6 (June 1982)
September 1981, Zinal Conference, Switzerland

Yogic Principles of Heat and Electromagnetism

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 2, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Each of us belongs to a specific country, but nowadays we have all become international. Finland is the land of saunas. In fact, they have more saunas than people! I have enjoyed the primitive type of sauna in Finland, in which the heat is built up by heating stones from outside. It was very difficult for me to understand this concept, because we Indians are used to heat. It is all around us; we don't need to artificially heat our rooms, they are heated naturally. We are used to sweating and perspiring all the time.

There was an old friend of mine, a highly reputed yoga teacher in Belgium, Andre van Lysbeth. He said, "Swamiji, when I take you to Finland, I will give you a surprise." The surprise was a sauna. He asked me how I liked it. I said, "In India I have it every day. Not only I, but millions of Indians have it every day. But they don't have stylish rooms for that, they have a thatched hut and the heat and the sweat."

A few days ago, when I went to Ludhiana, I stayed in a hotel and they had a sauna in the health club. The manager and owner wanted me to enjoy the sauna. I said, "Why do you have a sauna in your hotel? No! As an Indian I won't accept it because I don't need it. Millions of Indians have the experience of a sauna bath every day. If you want a sauna, go to a poor man's hut for half an hour, you will have the experience of a nice sauna. And you can pay that poor man five hundred

rupees. For him that will be a fortune, he will have his pension." I told him frankly, just go to a poor man's hut, pay him five hundred rupees, stay there for half an hour and come out, your desire for a sauna will be fulfilled at a fraction of the cost you will have to pay at a five-star hotel's health club.

You see, the normal temperature of your body is 37°C. You know what is 37°C of heat? Maybe you don't have that kind of a temperature in New Zealand or Europe. You can experience that temperature in India, Africa, South-East Asia and China. When the heat outside is 37°C, it is absolutely unbearable. However, your body temperature is 37°C all the time and you are bearing it. I am talking from the view point of yoga. The heat of your body is 37°C, the heat which is unbearable outside. If ever you are in India during that period, you will say, "Oh God, I want an air-conditioner." You will get sunstroke, and look here, you have the same temperature, and are you feeling it? No, you are not feeling it. You are very comfortable. The moment that temperature of your body decreases, you will have a fever. If your body temperature falls to 35°C, you will experience the symptoms of a fever. Did you ever think of that?

It is in this country, India, where the temperatures soar to that of the body temperature of 37°C, that yoga was discovered. Yoga was not discovered in the Arctic or semi-Arctic countries. Yoga was discovered in a country where the outside heat and the inside heat of the body are more or less parallel to each other. Therefore, while practising yoga, you should always keep one point in mind: the external heat in the room where you practise should not be very different from or lower than the temperature of the body. That is the first lesson in yoga. If your body temperature is 37°C and you are practising yoga under a temperature of 23°C, there is a difference of 14 degrees. Your body of 37°C is exposed to a temperature which is 14 degrees below its temperature. Therefore, the body will have to adjust. After all, the body has to adjust with the external temperature, and when it cannot adjust, you have problems.

The room temperature for yoga practice should not be less than 25–28°C. But it is better if you practise in a room where the temperature is 30 or 35 degrees. It is hot here right now, but it is ideal for practising yoga. That is why the fans are off in your rooms, because I know that you will turn on the fans and practise, as you are all from semi-Arctic or Arctic countries. The fans are deliberately disconnected and there is a label there: 'Switch Invalid'. Have you read it? Invalid. It doesn't apply. The fan does not apply to your stay here. It is completely contradictory to your purpose of stay in the ashram. Your purpose of stay in the ashram will be defeated, contradicted, if you are provided air-conditioned or fan-cooled rooms for practising yoga, for you have come here to derive maximum benefits of yoga. Now you have the answer why the fans are disconnected. Providing fans is not a big problem for this ashram. The owners of fan companies visit this place every now and then. I can install a few hundred fans right now without paying a penny. That's not at all the issue.

Yoga teachers must remember that the state of this body depends on its temperature. If your body temperature of 37°C falls down to 35°C, what will happen? You will experience delirium and faint, you won't be able to walk or lift your limbs. If the temperature goes up to 40°C, your brain tissues will melt. This body is all about temperature and yoga practitioners have to be very aware of that. That is one point.

The second point is that this body is all about electromagnetic circuits. If there is a short circuit in the electrical system of your apartment, what will happen? Either the fuse will blow, if you have a good fuse, or all your equipment will be damaged. In the same way, if there is a short circuit somewhere in the body, what will happen? Either a fuse will blow and you will get a warning signal or that organ or part of the body will be damaged. It can happen in your heart, your brain, your liver.

You have to maintain a proper system to ensure that the electromagnetic circuit in the body has the right voltage. Where does this energy come from? It comes from simple

food. Not the tasty food, no. Energy comes from a simple diet and pure atmosphere. In this village, for miles and miles, there are no buildings, houses, offices or traffic jams. What you find here is just trees and fields, grazing cows and goats, cool breezes and pure air, and simple village folk. The nights are silent, except for the sound of frogs and crickets. Have you heard them? The carol you sing for the birth of Christ is, "Silent night, holy night; all is calm, all is bright." That must have been written with Rikhia in mind! That is how the nights are here – crisp, clear, calm and silent. The only sound is that of the crickets and nocturnal animals, they are the energizing agents of the electromagnetic circuits or energy circuits in the body. The energy circuits in the body recharge from the environment and atmosphere, the air, trees and animals, from the creatures God or Nature has created, perhaps to give more energy and sustain the electromagnetic field pervading within and around us.

– 17 October 2006



Raja Yoga Training – Module 1



In the Raja Yoga Training Module 1 (asana and pranayama), Swami Niranjanananda covered a wide spectrum of topics. He said that the focus and intent of raja yoga was given in the second sutra of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras: chitta vritti nirodah*. The purpose of raja yoga is not meditation but the improvement of the mind.

Without the preparation of hatha yoga, however, raja yoga cannot be practised. The body must be able to maintain a posture for a long period with ease. The definition of asana in raja yoga is *sthiram-sukham* – “still and comfortable”. Swamiji emphasized that one has to go beyond one's comfort level and train the body to reach this goal.

The two *angas* or limbs of raja yoga, *pratyahara* and *dharana*, are the practices and states that can be attained by the aspirant. *Yamas*, *niyamas*, *asana* and *pranayama* are the support system which facilitates the attainment of these two states.

The disciplines of raja yoga fulfil two objectives: stilling the chatter of the dissipated mind, and clearing the three layers of pratyayas: the karmas, samskaras and impressions. After the process of clearing and emptying, it is equally important to fill the vacuum with positive qualities and attitudes. Here through the practice of pratipaksha bhavana one can increase one's connection with positivity.

Speaking on the antahkarana, Swamiji gave a new understanding of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara and how they are being expressed according to the predominant guna. Many concepts of raja yoga were defined in a clear, precise and practical manner, so that they become relevant and applicable in daily life.

Every yoga journey begins with happiness, *manah prasad* and ends in bliss, *ananda*. The aspirant has to hold on to the string of happiness and move to the state of bliss.



Impressions by participants

The Raja Yoga Training along with seva in the ashram has created a clearer state of mind. It was not at all that I expected. It was better. Body and mind is energized and there is enthusiasm. I shall establish a routine at home when I am back so that the practice can take place. Antar mouna will be added daily to allow unbeneficial pratyayas to move away. Thank you for leading me to the sankalpa of positivity.

– Naomi Lossin, Israel

In this course the challenge, gently given but clear and strong, stated: Shall we stay as we are in the shadow of our accumulated images and live in the fantasy of yoga or are we willing to truly complete the hatha yoga process so that we can take hold of the tools of raja yoga and allow them to bring the change and transformation of the mind – our views, attitude, perception, and behaviour – that will lead us to a newer, happier, more harmonious and useful life, to a connected life.

Swamiji emphasized the process that is raja yoga: a gradual becoming and flowing into the next stage. By guiding our eyes and vision in how to perceive the components, their connection and interconnection, the methods, until now flat and one dimensional, became vibrant, real and practical tools. Yoga can become a 24/7 experience with eyes open and closed.

– *Swami Yogajyoti, Ireland*

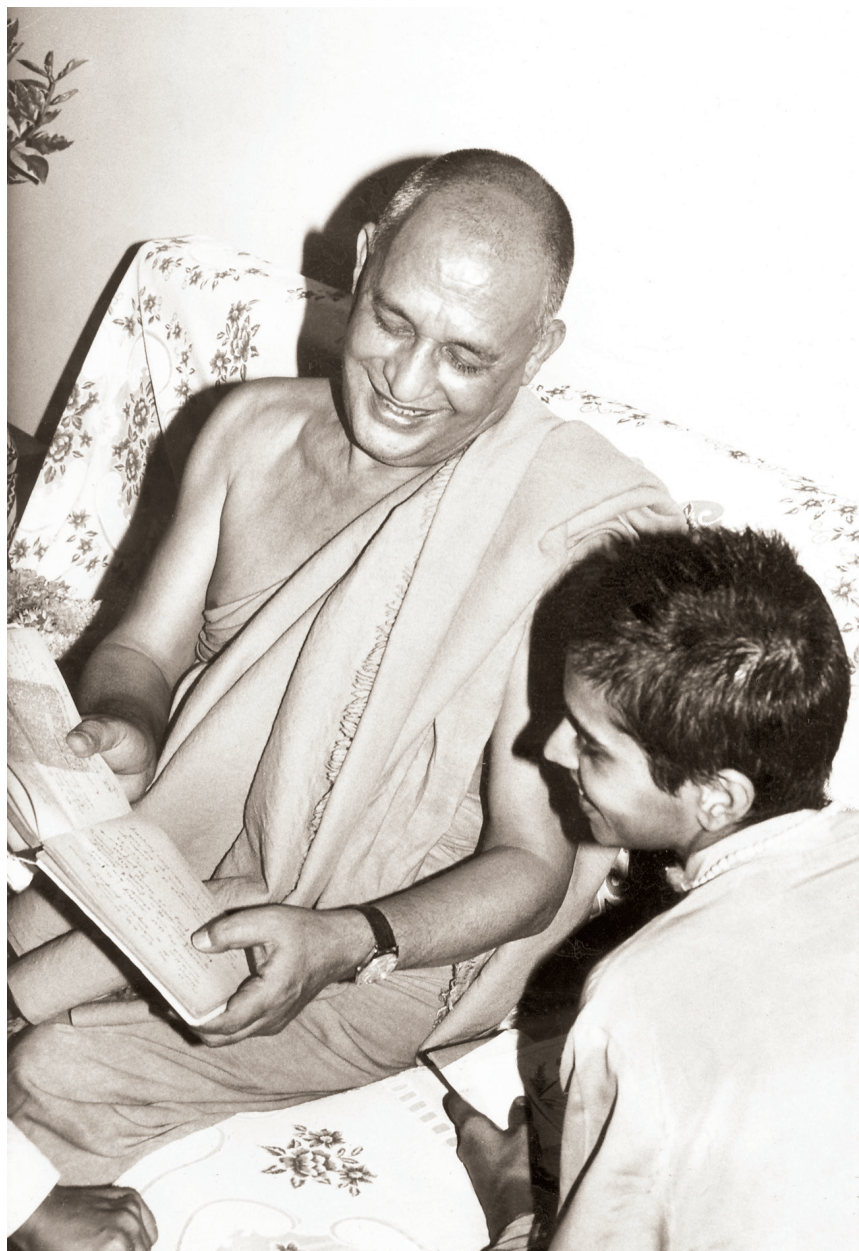
What I had experienced as yoga before coming to the raja yoga training was something like pieces of a puzzle, offering limited understanding. After this training, I feel that the pieces of the puzzle begin to find their place, forming a more coherent and comprehensive image that I hope will continue to guide and inspire me.

– *Daya, Romania*











Kriya Yoga Training – Module 1



In the Kriya Yoga Training Module 1 (Preparatory), Swami Niranjanananda explained the first group of nine kriyas, the pratyahara kriyas. With these kriyas one learns to manage the sense organs and use them for a positive purpose. The practitioners develop their own subtle faculties and use them for psychic exploration.

Pratyahara does not mean concentration or meditation. It means reversing the flow of awareness from connecting with the outside world and beginning to connect to one's internal experiences.

The engagement in kriya yoga allows one to focus on many activities that happen simultaneously, which in a normal situation one is not aware of. The awareness is in constant movement. In kriya yoga it is said that to make the mind sublime one has to keep the mind engaged.

To assist this process, there are the yama and niyama of kriya yoga. The first yama is *indriya nigraha*, which is not

just withdrawing the senses, but also cleaning, clearing and recognizing the associations of the senses. After clearing the positive and the negative they become neutral.

The first niyama is mental restraint, *danti*, where one has to deal with six conditions of the mind which are detrimental and distractive. They are the tamasic traits of passion, anger, greed, arrogance, infatuation and envy. When one feels the rise of anger and is able to nullify the anger with peace, then that is danti. The first yama and niyama will help one perfect the first aspect of the pratyahara kriyas.

Impressions by participants

The best way I can share my impression of the kriya yoga training would be with a prolonged silence, but as that might be misinterpreted I will make an attempt to use some words.

Considering the fact that I am an absolute beginner to kriya yoga I was pleasantly surprised to see the impact of the fundamental kriya yoga practices. I experienced a spontaneous pause of my chronic mental chattering and at the same time an increased awareness to multiple subtle phenomena happening within and around me.

As they say a good teacher is one who makes a complex subject look simple. Swami Yogakanti served us kriya yoga which is considered an advanced branch of yoga like babyfood and every care was taken so that we assimilated the learning without any distortion or confusion.

Every aspect that Swamiji covered in his satsang are potent tools for self-exploration, self-understanding and self-actualization.

Inspiration and information was shared in abundance to be able to integrate kriya yoga in our sadhana.

So I go home now with a heart full of gratitude and the commitment to continue my sadhana with seriousness and regularity.

– *Sannyasi Mangaldharma, Romania*



The structure of the course was very accurate and the kriyas were introduced in a smooth way. We reviewed them many times, then practised them and then reviewed them again.

Through seva we were able to express and use the extra energy in a positive way. We have been taken on a new and unknown path under the guidance and protection of Swami Niranjanananda.

– *Sannyasi Vidyakiran, Colombia*

The kriya yoga experience has been amazing. The short practices were highly energizing and at the same time they took us to very deep and unique experiences. We felt so relaxed and light. I look forward to coming again next year.

– *Venugopalan, Bengaluru*

The satsang with Swamiji were great as they gave a deeper insight into the fundamental of why we are practising kriya yoga. My personal experience was discovering the internal dimension of which I had no awareness and observing the effect of each kriya on body and mind.

– *Sadhana Jaipuria, Bengaluru*

To Live Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



To live yoga is to be in harmony with yourself. You know what your mind is like. At the same time you know what kind of conflicting patterns you are imbibing in life. How unsteady the mind is! How can you teach tranquillity to others while you yourself are disturbed? To live yoga one has to live a harmonious life in body, mind and spirit.

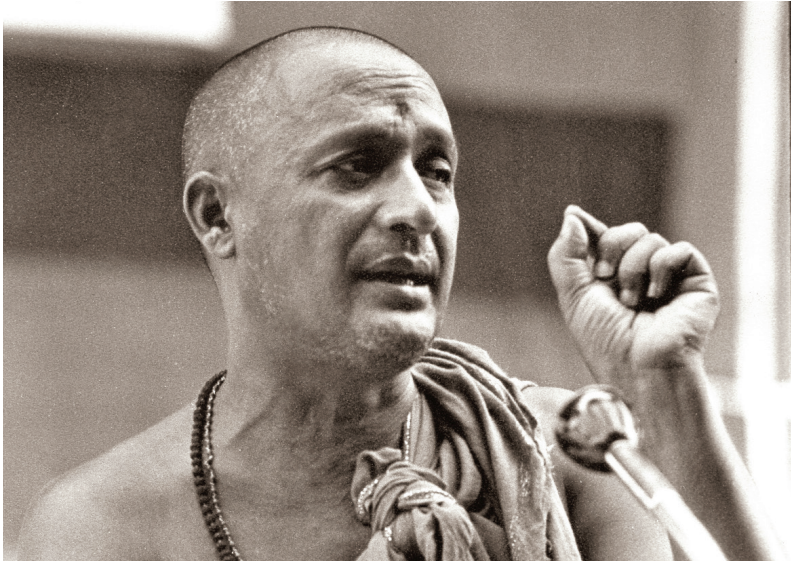
The word 'yoga' represents harmony, unity and coordination. This sense of harmony and unity has to be expressed and practised in relation to your own self first, then with the people you live with.

If you live a life of disharmony within yourself, then you know what types of trouble you are going to create. Living yoga means organizing the patterns of one's own life. If you have no system, discipline or order in your life, you may be a good yoga teacher but you won't be in harmony with yourself. We come across many teachers of yoga throughout the world and some of them live a balanced life, but others live a life of paradoxes. They are unsteady in their determination and inaccurate in their decisions.

Therefore, when I say you should not merely teach yoga but also live yoga, I mean you should create a harmonious pattern in your life.

The Fantastic Science of Yantra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In the tantric system you must have seen the geometrical diagrams of upright and inverted triangles, quadrangles and many other geometrical figures known as yantras. How are these geometrical figures associated with human beings?

Sri Yantra is nothing but a combination or a confluence of triangles. It is supposed to be one of the most powerful yantras, symbolizing the process of creation, the manifestation of energy from the dormant potential state. Even as a plant sprouts out of a seed, in the same manner the whole manifestation of the macrocosmic universe has come out from a state of unmanifested reality. We call it *avitha*, unmanifested. What you perceive now in the form of time, space, objectivity, past, present and future is manifested reality.



Symbol of creation

Sri Yantra is supposed to represent this process of manifestation where life, names, forms, time, all of space and the different dimensions have been evolving. This yantra has been taken as a symbol of our unconscious mind. It is difficult to

explain the exact nature and relationship of the unconscious state of existence. In Vedanta and Samkhya philosophy, it is known as the causal body.

This unconscious state can be experienced by the practice of kundalini yoga, laya yoga, pure pranayama and also kriya yoga. When a yoga aspirant practises these different yogic systems, then the whole consciousness, the whole personality is completely extinguished just as you blow out a candle, nothing remains of what you are. It is not a state of *shoonya*, void, or a state of completeness, it is a state of nothingness. That is the unconscious.

In vedic texts, the oldest books written by humanity, we use the words *hiranya* and *garbha*. *Hiranya* means 'golden' and *garbha* means 'womb'. This unconscious mind, unconscious body or the causal body of the laya state of experience is like a golden womb. The shape and the form of this manifestation is geometrical. Therefore geometry defines the process of the universe.

I am not a student of physics but I can tell you that the whole universe, the whole creation is nothing but circles and triangles, not men, women or children! The creation is a science of mathematical numbers and geometrical figures.

The yantras in tantra are supposed to be very powerful. Take a yantra designed for yourself by an expert who knows the science, put it here, and it starts working positively and negatively. The people who have experienced the miracle of

yantra, will not be able to explain the modus operandi of it. The ordinary yantra, and there are plenty of them, is a receptacle for and a transmitter of powerful energies.

Need for a basis

The moment a yantra is placed near the unconscious body, they come into association, into communion with each other and start working. Therefore in the system of kriya yoga we have the yantras of each chakra. Mooladhara has the inverted triangle and anahata has two intersecting triangles. The inverted triangle is the symbol of Shakti, the straight triangle represents Shiva, and when they intersect or embrace each other, that is the union of Shiva and Shakti.

Therefore, the practitioner of kundalini yoga concentrates on the yantra. I am not talking about bija mantra, my subject is now only confined to yantra in relation to the awakening of the unconscious forces in man.

In order to awaken your great personality or higher personality which we call *anandamaya kosha*, the blissful sheath, you concentrate on each chakra by means of the yantra of each. The students of kundalini yoga should take care to learn, investigate and concentrate on the yantra, then go from one chakra to another, to the third, fourth, fifth, like this, in order to bring the consciousness from the material plane to a different plane where it is more powerful, stretched and expanded.

It is necessary that while you do this you must have a basis. Without a basis the consciousness cannot function. There are certainly very few people among us who can be aware of pure consciousness, who can be aware of pure mind. Most of us cannot think of mind without a thought. We cannot think of consciousness without a symbol, we cannot think of existence without any basis. Therefore, there must be some type of concrete symbolism.

In the context of kundalini yoga there are various forms, right from the bottom to the top. They are encased in the yantra.

Within the form of a circle you have a crocodile, within the form of an inverted triangle you have an elephant. That is the symbol, the basis.

Remember again that the mind cannot be comprehended without a thought; we know the mind because we know the thought. If we want to know the mind only, it is not possible because it is formless, and the comprehensibility of something formless is an impossibility. Therefore, in kundalini yoga we have the symbolic representation of the forces of the unconscious in the form of yantra.

Into the mind

Yantras have an immediate effect on the unconscious body. As I told you yesterday, whatever you have experienced in your childhood is deeply embedded in the depth of your personality. Later when you grow this can become a problem, an ailment or an emotional crisis. It is not easy for a psychoanalyst to bring an individual back to his childhood and put him in touch with an experience which he had during his unconscious period. It is not possible for us to do this. So what do you have to do? You have to design something which will explode the unconscious quietly.

Many years ago, I used to wander as a mendicant from place to place. I was lean and thin. Once I was living in a village during a very scorching summer. After some time I developed a really high temperature, something like 106°F, or 107°F. Somebody took mercy on me and called a doctor. The village doctor gave me some medicine but it did not work. For two full days I was unconscious, nothing existed for me. After the third or fourth day, a very old man came to know that a swami who had come to his village was having a very high fever. He came and looked at me, went back and brought a small piece of copper. On the copper were inscribed only two petals and one circle, that is ajna chakra. He just hung it on my neck, and within half an hour the fever was finished. In the evening I left the village.

This simple but very significant example shows the influence of a yantra. This influence was not conscious; if it had been you could say this is a psychological process. However, it was not a process taking place via the mind but directly into the mind. The yantra does not work through the mind or through faith because you may not believe and still it will work. It is like a bullet, whether you believe in it or do not believe in it, it is still going to act upon you.

I am giving you my experience. When I was unconscious what I felt was that somebody was putting a big triangle on my neck and pulling me up and up and out.

This is not the experience of a solitary individual; it has been experienced by our ancestors and it is a part of our culture. What is that culture? To awaken the unconscious directly. The process of self-analysis, of psychoanalysis has its own merits; we are not trying to discredit it. But to alleviate the suffering of mankind and in order to mitigate the possibilities of further suffering it is very necessary that tantra has to come to our rescue.

Blast of the unconscious

During meditation, oh it is an experience of more than thirty years ago, when I had no idea of tantra. I was just nineteen when I entered the monastery of my guru, I had very little time when I joined Swamiji's ashram; I was in my budding state, and I had to work as a plumber a labourer, a water carrier, chop the fire logs, cook the food, carry all kinds of things five or six miles. There were no cars, no Volkswagens, nothing like we have today. I used to carry everything in my hands.

Tired in the evening by nine or nine thirty I used to sit on the banks of the flowing Ganga in Rishikesh, surrounded by the glorious mountains of the valley. Since I was not yet a sannyasi, I was still a brahmachari, my mantra was Gayatri. It is the mantra for children, the mantra of intuition. So I used to recite Gayatri and while I was reciting it, I used to see peculiar geometrical figures. I always thought that these were coming

up because I was so bad in mathematics. Maybe I was lost in unconsciousness and came face to face with the yantra, but ignorant that I was, I thought that they were the repressions of my mathematical phobia.

Later the geometrical figures gained terrifying momentum, sometimes I used to see the whole play of geometry. I asked many swamis, mahatmas and wise men including my guru Swami Sivananda about this and they gave me one simple answer, "It is your causal body, your unconscious body and your deeper self." I said "Why do I not see my guru, why do I see these triangles, circles, hexagons and quadrangles?" They said, "That is the creation, the great prakriti." Prakriti means the creation of the whole fantastic drama.

So coming to the point of conclusion, the yantras that you see are a blast of the unconscious. No artist, no painter, no poet can ever create that language of the triangle unless the unconscious is blasted completely through. Everything coming out from here, from the bottom, comes from the small golden egg, the causal body, the unconscious body, the anandamaya kosha, call it by any name you wish. Where there is no time, no space, no form and no name, where there is no I and no you, there are no numbers, it is just one homogeneity, no Scandinavians, no Indians, no French people, no man and no woman, just one homogenous consciousness. This mass of consciousness is a totality of existence, as one not as two.

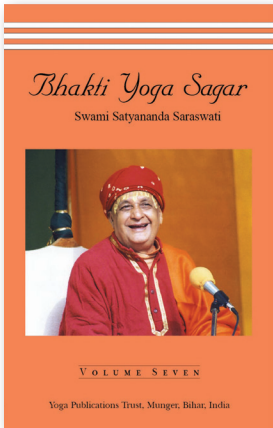
Therefore, the yantra in tantra is a very powerful system of self-culture. It is a very powerful system for redeeming the diseases of the unconscious and also for the formation of our personality.

– 14 April 1977, Lecture given in Stockholm, Sweden



Service Not Moksha

From Bhakti Yoga Sagar, Volume Seven, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Saints are born to help others, to serve others. Saints and ascetics are not born to seek their own liberation; it is not their mission. Householders seek moksha, worldly people seek liberation or final salvation because they are miserable. One who is in bondage needs release. One who feels he is a prisoner wants to be set free. If you feel that this world is a veritable bondage, only then will you seek release from this bondage. If you do so you must get it.

But why should I seek liberation? I fail to understand what I will do in the next world. I may be happy in the next world too where I will serve God. I am also quite at home in Rikha. If I have to shift somewhere else tomorrow I will be happy there. I remain happy in every situation, in every country, in every association, in every garb, in every hue and colour, in every circumstance. I adjust myself to every mode and method. Saints and seers never seek final liberation; they do not need it. Only those need moksha who are in chains, in bondage, who are miserable, who are in terrible agony, who are frustrated and worried. One who is sick needs a doctor.

Does a river drink its own water? Do fruits and vegetables such as mangoes, guavas, apples, papaya, jackfruit, tomatoes or potatoes eat themselves? No, they are for all of us. This is called *paramartha*, the highest service. That which helps others is *paramartha* and that which is of no help to others is selfishness. Man's greatest weakness is miserliness. Devas run after enjoyment, demons are cruel and human beings are

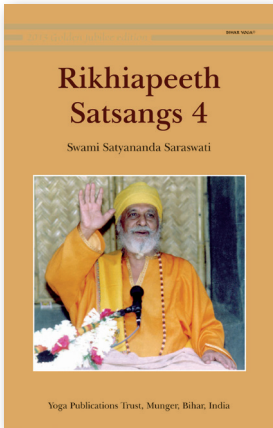
miserly. So devas have to be learn self-restraint, demons have to learn to be kind and human beings have to learn to give.

– 16 December 2001



Introspection

From Rikhiapeeth Satsangs 4, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When there is high atmospheric pressure, it rains. Similarly, when there is high pressure in man's mind, it rains there, too. When the pressure of the thoughts in the mind increases, when too many thoughts crowd into the mind at once, it results in depression. Just as you cannot understand what a person is saying due to the different noises on a railway platform in Bombay, it is the same in the mind when a lot of thoughts come together. It is called *kshudbha avastha*, a numb condition. Fewer thoughts come in a distracted state of mind, but many thoughts come under pressure. The funny thing is that one does not realize it. This is man's greatest weakness. If you ask him, "Are there many thoughts in your mind?" he will say, "No, there are no thoughts."

There is no man in the world that can see himself. Yes, everyone can see the other person. I know how your face looks and how you wear your hair, how your nose is shaped, how you speak, sweetly or harshly, whether or not you sing well. I can know all this, but you will never know it. Everybody is in the same boat. All the creatures in the world are ignorant in this aspect. What a man is like is something others know. Just as one can know one's face by looking in a mirror, similarly one may know one's own nature by listening to criticism: the one who gossips about you and criticizes you tells the actual colour of your face and nature. That is why when someone criticizes something you are doing, you should not react immediately, nor offer a justification. Just agree that it is so, contemplate upon it, and then do some soul-searching.

During self-introspection, a man makes his *viveka*, discriminative faculty, the judge; it does not side with him. An advocate or lawyer will argue on your behalf, but not the judge. You should not be partial to yourself. This is called *swa-alochana*, self-criticism. Christianity says that you must critically inspect yourself. Tulsidas has also said: *Mo sama kauna kutila khala kami* – “Who is as crooked, devious and lustful as me!” This indicates that he has accepted the need for self-criticism.

It is very difficult to truly see your own face. When others praise you, saying how beautiful you are, how humble you are, that you sing very well, you write very well, you are very good-natured, you are a very good worker, very decent, then you accept this as your nature. Yet, when you are being criticized you develop a long face. You try to save yourself by saying, “No, no, I do not behave like that, I do not backbite, it is not my habit to gossip about anyone.” A man will justify himself when he is being criticized, and he will puff up when he is being praised; his ego will come into play.

A human being has two major problems: the tendency to justify upon being criticized and developing egoism when being praised. Say, a girl is a good singer. She receives a letter of recognition for her talent, gets an award of fifteen thousand rupees, and her name also appears in the newspaper. All this causes arrogance and pride. After that, when she hears any criticism, she tries to justify herself. Both are faults. One has to maintain an appropriate attitude on both occasions.

The most helpful thing here is contemplation and *atma-nirikshan*, self-inspection. If someone says that you speak very well, write very well, or you are a very good leader, say to yourself, ‘Yes, if they believe it, it must be so. However, look at the quality of Gandhiji’s leadership, at the kind of singer Tansen was, what a warrior Rana Pratap was, the keen political strategy of Shivaji; there is nothing like this in me, I will have to improve.’

A man should be modest and humble when praised. He may say whatever he likes, but on the inside, he must feel dif-

ferently. Also, there should be acceptance in your mind when you are being spoken ill of or criticized: 'Yes, this is right.' However, when you are being praised, there should be no tacit acceptance. On the other hand, think, 'Okay, I have won a prize at school, but the world is such a big place.' Just as a tree laden with fruit is bowed, a virtuous person is humble because of his good qualities. A man who knows how to take pressure will rule the world. A person who wins under pressure has endurance. What I am saying is not easy. This is a very difficult thing. Kabirdas says:

*Nindaka niyare raakhiye, aangan kutee chavaaya,
Bina saabun paanee binaa, nirmala kare subhaaya.*

Keep those who criticize you in your room, so that your clothes can be cleaned without soap and water.

If you kept your critics near you, then you would not need detergent and water, because the dirt will be churned up by the critics instead. However, this does not happen. Tulsidas continues, saying that a person always ignores his critics, but keeps those who praise him close by. It is the same all over the world.

Socrates said, "Know thyself." It is said in the Upanishads: *Atmanam vijñānīmahi* – "Know the atman." Ramana Maharshi used to say only one thing. He did not even know Hindi, but when someone came to him for instruction he would say: *Nana yara*, meaning – "Ask yourself, 'Who am I?'" Think about this.

Know yourself, recognize yourself. Without recognizing yourself for what you are, these things are difficult in life. Many times you will be tested. In the family, in society and in institutions you will be presented with testing times. Wherever you go, you will find tests and challenges.

How can one become more tolerant towards the shortcomings of others?

To become more tolerant of other people's faults, one should first be able to see one's own shortcomings. When you can see

your own weaknesses, then you will understand. If you see a fault in someone else, also look for it within yourself.

*Buraa jo dekhana maina chala, buraa na milyaa koe,
Jo dila dekhaa aapnaa, mujha saa buraa na koe.*

When I tried to search for bad people, I did not find anyone who was bad; when I looked into my own heart, I found that no one was as bad as me.

Saints and holy men use this technique; instead of looking at another's faults, one should look for faults within oneself, but this does not often happen. If you see too many faults in yourself, then your self-confidence goes down. You will feel as if you are unworthy. That is why self-introspection is not a natural law. It is nature's law that one cannot see one's own face. Nature has made this law for everyone. People are unable to find their own faults and negative qualities even after searching for them within. At first, you see the fault in another: that person is lazy, talks too much, is very egotistic. Then you analyze those faults, ask what is arrogance and what is jealousy. At first, study these things in others, you will not find them within no matter how hard you try. I can openly say to all of you sitting here that no matter how hard you try, you will not find any fault in yourself. You will find faults only in others.

This is the law of nature. First study another, and then you will know about yourself. How do you know that eyes are supposed to be a certain way? It is because you saw another person's eyes; you saw their nose, lips, hair, forehead, and only then did you know that your own must be similar. Nature has created others as mirrors for us to know ourselves. The other person is your mirror. He shows you what anger is. What do you know about anger? You know about it when another person gets very angry in front of you. Then you say to yourself, 'Oh, this man is very angry, so this is called anger.' Looking at your parents you will think, 'My parents love me very much. So this is love.' The people around you are the textbooks from


which you learn about love, anger and hatred. This learning allows you to search for the same fault within yourself.

It is a mistake to look for bad qualities within yourself from the start. That is why at first you gossip about and criticize other people. It is natural to criticize another. It is a law of nature in the process of expansion and evolution of the human mind. How can you state at the start that you are unworthy when you do not know what being unworthy is? That is just forming an opinion, an opinion that you are worthless and of no use at all, without really knowing what it means. This hurts the individual personality. It is the same situation when you praise yourself, 'I am very beautiful, I sing very well, I am very good.' However, do you know what beauty is? What a tuneful voice is? What goodness is? First get to know beauty, music and goodness, and then you will find them within yourself. Otherwise, stating "I am good" will be full of egoism. That is why we have to understand the laws that nature has made while creating life. If someone criticizes you, speaks ill of you, let him. Keep quiet. Do not react. Then, when you are criticizing someone else, look within yourself to see if you can find the same fault there.

The hardest thing in the world is to know oneself. A man can know all things in life yet not know himself. To know one's self is self-realization. This is not an ordinary achievement, but a very high achievement. We say, "You are very good, very wise," but to know one's own self is the greatest achievement in life. The Upanishads call this *atmajnana*, self-knowledge; someone else has called it God-realization. Swami Sivananda used to say that both are the same, to know God or to know yourself is the same.

– 30 October 1997





Showers of Samadhi


When serenity and equilibrium prevail
Not only ideas but dreams also come true
And sleep is converted into samadhi.

Generally, the mind is dull and dissipated
Sometimes it goes in for higher things
But then returns to its lower field.

It is by persistent sadhana and vairagya
That ekagrata, savikalpa samadhi, dawns
And the mind loses its separateness from self.

Freed from its usual patterns of samskaras
Mind is fashioned in the divine pattern
Then the showers of samadhi descend.

At this juncture, true knowledge arises
This is samprajnata samadhi, let me call it darshan
But it takes time to become permanently established.



Soon after its first emergence
There is a revival of vrittis
And the sadhaka returns to his usual state.

Therefore, even after darshan
The sadhaka has to plod on
Let him not slacken his usual zeal.

He must establish the state of samprajnata
Through effort, serenity and detachment
In order to enter the regions of nirvikalpa samadhi.

There he is permanently established in his own self
When the mind has ceased to exist
How can it tune in with the vrittis?

Just as water does not wet a rock smeared with oil
Likewise, the incoming sensations of day to day life
Leave no trace of effect on the mind of such a yogi.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

A Goal Attained

I have started to live a yogic lifestyle after participating in the Yoga Instructor Course in August 2014.

As per the guidance given by my teachers, my daily sadhana was between 2.5 to 3 hours and consisted of:

1. *Morning*: mantra chanting, hatha yoga, pranayama, Guru mantra;
2. *Afternoon*: yoga nidra or antar mouna;
3. *Evening*: study (reading books) and antar mouna.

2013 to 2015 were very challenging years in my life as my country had entered a severe crisis in 2014 and I was without a job. I could not find a job in my field of competence which is investment management.

After visiting the ashram in October 2015, I set up a very clear laser-focused goal to myself: to find a job. A simple job, but a job which would be able to unlock my potential and further improve my skills in the area of investment management.

I started to apply yogic practices in order to realize my goal. On top of my daily sadhana I did the following practices:

1. I used my goal as a sankalpa in yoga nidra;
2. I used my goal during the chanting of the Durga mantra in the morning, asking Durga for help in achieving my goal;
3. I used the SWAN meditation in order to have a clear strategy and vision towards my goal;
4. I used positive imagination (connected to a positive outcome, imagining myself having achieved the goal) in the morning and in the evening.

This was my routine for four consecutive months, from November 2015 to February 2016.

It should be noted that I had set a very challenging goal in challenging times and circumstances. As the situation in my country was and continues to be difficult. The situation in my sector of investment management is very tough as many of

my senior colleagues with ten-year and more experience in the field do not have a job today and people continue to get fired.

After continuing with my routine for four months, suddenly in March 2016 I was offered a job which was not only in the very specific area where I wanted to work in, the conditions and the financial compensations were above my expectations. This is the job which I wanted. It gives me fulfilment and satisfaction, the ability to grow professionally, unlock my potential and hopefully help me to do something positive for the world and the people.

I decided that after this one-month training I will start to teach yoga to orphans and to children who are mentally and physically challenged. I want to give them the tools to improve the quality of their lives and to strive towards a future full of light.

I would like to thank all my teachers.

– Participant of Progressive Yoga Vidya Training, October 2016



Divine Grace

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Grace is a very important factor in the practice of bhakti yoga. It is inherent faith which is responsible for the realization of grace. It is said that nature is always benevolent; that the higher laws are always trying to help us in every possible manner. Man in his ignorance violates these higher laws.

Grace is a higher law or the law of higher nature. It is present everywhere, in everybody, and in order to experience this grace, one has to open one's mind, heart and spirit. The greatest obstacle in the experience of grace is one's limited ego. Human beings are guided mostly by ego. When one loses one's innocence, then one loses the touch with grace.

In order to experience grace one should be as innocent as a child. The mind, the ego is very critical. It always tries to prove the differences. It will try to like one thing and dislike another. Anyone, even yoga aspirants, who have likes and dislikes, are far from grace. For example, the mother is full of love, but the

child is insane. He cannot experience her grace or love. If he has to experience her love, he has to improve his mind.

In the same way, the higher nature is always full of grace and compassion for all living beings, but man has lost his innocence. He has become very intelligent, but the intelligence which man has developed is not the divine intelligence. It is crooked intelligence. It is the intelligence of an evil-minded being. This is precisely the reason why everyone is unhappy.

Closer than your breath

If you conduct an opinion poll of all human beings throughout the world, you will find not one happy person. There will be something which will be causing him unhappiness. Even if he is deeply religious, still he will be unhappy. A priest is unhappy, a clergyman is unhappy, a yoga teacher is unhappy; yoga practitioners are unhappy; a person living in the mountains is unhappy and a person who has no desires is unhappy. Only one person is happy, he who has no ego, who is innocent, who has a very simple heart, because such a person is in direct contact with the transcendental grace.

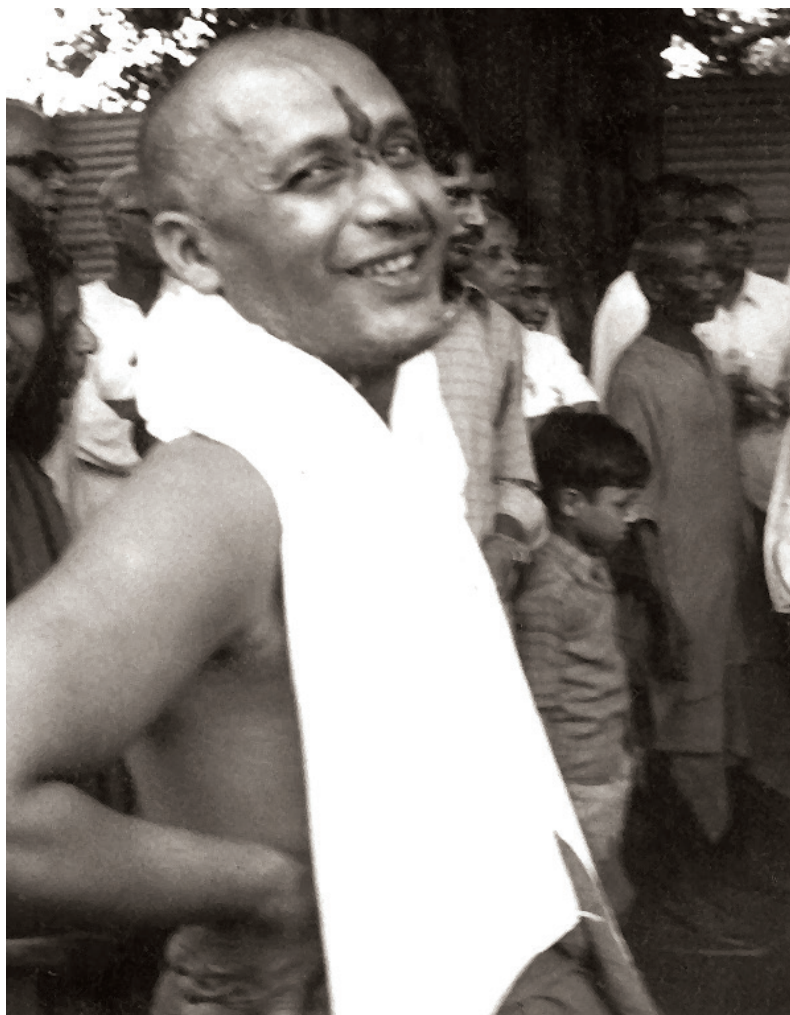
Grace is not like the beam of light, grace is not something which comes to you, grace is not far from you. It is closer than your breath, closer than your mind. It is so close to you that you cannot even think about it, you cannot even understand it.

In fact you are existing because of grace. Not only you, but your earth which is suspended in space, is existing just by the grace of a higher nature. How to experience it? I do not think and I do not believe that people have experienced grace. Once you have experienced grace you have no fear. Those people who realize grace in their lives, they become fearless.

What will happen to my son? What will happen to my wife and husband? What will happen if I have no money? What will happen if I do this and I will be criticized? These thoughts come to one who has no faith, and therefore he has no grace. If you can experience that grace even for a split second, you will become a different person.

When I go to holy men, I hear from them about grace. When I go to see priests they always talk about grace, but they are so worried about their affairs. Therefore, do not talk about grace, instead, try to feel it. Try to become like a child, without taboos, without prejudice, without definitions, without categories. Try to be spontaneous in your expressions, your actions and your feelings.

– 1970s, India

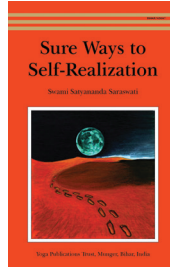
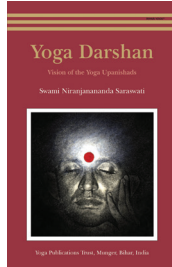




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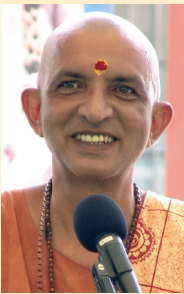


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Websites

www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati and Yoga Publications Trust catalogues.

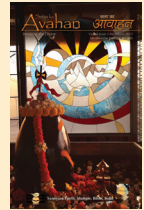
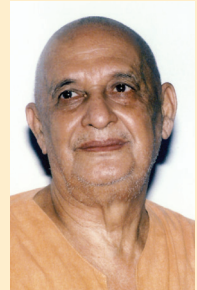


www.yogamag.net

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

Avahan Online

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.



NOTICE

If you would like to come and stay in Ganga Darshan for any event, please inform at least one month in advance. The ashram has mostly double- and triple-occupancy rooms with common toilet and bathroom facilities. Rooms with attached bathrooms are very limited and cater to elderly and sick people only. If you have any special needs, kindly inform us beforehand along with your application.

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Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2016-2017

Dec 19-23	Yoga Chakra Series (English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Jan 28-31	Sri Yantra Aradhana
Feb 1	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day
Feb 6-May 28	Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (Hindi)
Feb 12-18	Yoga Capsule (Respiratory) (Hindi)
Feb 14	Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day
Feb 26-Mar 4	Yoga Capsule (Digestive) (Hindi)
Mar 19-25	Yoga Capsule (Arthritis & Rheumatism) (Hindi)
Apr 9-19	Total Health Capsule (Hindi)
Oct 1-30	* Progressive Yoga Vidya Training (English)
Oct 2-Jan 28	* Yogic Studies Course, 4 months (English)
Oct 16-20	* Kriya Yoga - Module 1 (English)
Oct 16-20	* Kriya Yoga - Module 2 & Tattwa Shuddhi (English)
Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga - Module 1: Shatkarma Intensive (English)
Nov 4-10	* Hatha Yoga - Module 2: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Nov 1-Jan 30 2018	* Yoga Lifestyle Experience (for overseas participants only)
Dec 11-15	Yoga Chakra Series (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga - Module 1: Asana Pranayama Intensive (English)
Dec 18-23	* Raja Yoga - Module 2: Pratyahara Intensive (English)
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poonima	Sundarkand Path
Every 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans

* Indicates training for Overseas participants

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

For more information on the above events contact:

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