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Hari Om

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

The body is the most marvellous and delicate machine in the world. One virulent microbe can destroy the body in an instant. It is surrounded on all sides by enemies – and yet we live. This is a great mystery. Disease is not brought about by outside agencies, but it is the result of the kickings of life. Disease is only a sign of health. Life's cleansing process is called disease. There is only one disease and that is disease or no ease.

Nature tries to keep us healthy. Therefore, we should observe the laws of nature and eat, drink, sleep, think and conduct ourselves in the way laid down by the ancient sages. In the animal kingdom, there is seldom any sickness because animals do not violate the laws of nature.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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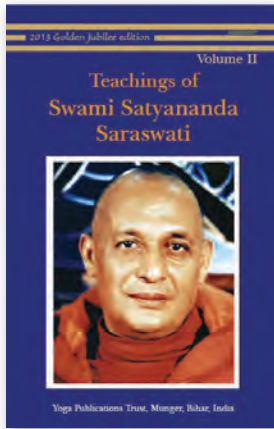
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

What is Good and What is Bad?

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II



As I was born a Hindu, I have heard a lot about good and bad. And I am of the opinion that religions have failed to lead man to goodness. Anyone who has studied history will know that religion has been responsible for the greatest massacres ever committed. Even today you can see it for yourself. Religions have become nothing more than socio-political creeds. But the actual word 'religion' has an entirely different meaning. 'Re' means again and 'ligion' means connect. The individual soul is separated from the universal soul, and when you connect them, that is called religion. But which religion is doing this? Most of them are only trying to increase their numbers. Therefore, religion cannot teach us what is good and what is bad.

Another important point is that there is no ultimate definition of good and bad. All the greatest philosophers of India and the West have tried to define what is good and what is evil, but it is relative. What was good fifty years ago is evil today. One minute something may appear to be good and five minutes later it is absolutely bad. Here is a story which will illustrate the point.

Once there was a farmer who lost his most valuable horse. His neighbour came to him and gave his commiserations, but the farmer said, "Who knows what is good or bad?" His attitude was borne out the next day when the horse returned with a herd of wild horses it had befriended. This time the neighbour came over to congratulate the farmer, but he

received the same reply, "Who knows what is good or bad?" This too was justified because the next day the farmer's son fell off one of the wild horses and broke his leg. Back came the neighbour with his commiserations. Again came the farmer's answer, "Who knows what is good or bad?" The farmer proved to be correct again because the next day the army came to the town conscripting young men to fight in the war, and because the farmer's son had a broken leg they did not take him.

Even though good and bad cannot be defined, there are certain eternal values which are not social but spiritual. And what are they? We have to think about them. The important point is that in order to practise good, you need a different mind. In order to avoid evil, you need a strong mind. If I am suffering from jaundice, everything will appear to be yellow. Even if something is distinctly blue, I will only see it as yellow because my eyes are jaundiced.

With this weak mind, how can you practise virtue? I don't believe it is possible unless you improve the quality of your mind first. If you are going to climb a steep hill, you will need strong legs. If you are carrying thirty or forty kilos of weight to the third floor, you must have strong muscles. You can't expect your two-year-old son to carry that. In the same way, if you want to practise virtue and if you want to resist the evil in your mind, you will have to improve the quality of your mind.

How can you improve the quality of your mind? Just by reading books? No, you have to put your mind through a process of transformation. In tantra nothing is good and nothing is bad. There is a tantric maxim which says, "One must rise through that by which one falls." In other words, what you consider evil or bad can be used as a springboard to make the leap to goodness.

What is evil? It is ignorance of mind. What is good? It is the reality which you can realize within yourself in deep meditation. However, in society, good and bad will always exist; you cannot efface them. Religion will continue to define good and bad, but according to tantra, we can commence our onward march from any point.

Celebrating 55 Years of BSY

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



This year we are celebrating the 55th year of Bihar School of Yoga. The first chapter of the activities of Bihar School of Yoga came to an end in 2013. It was the chapter of yoga propagation. Yoga for health and yoga for peace, that was the first chapter and the propagation period. That was the need of the time. Everybody was looking for some means to experience health and be healthy, and some means to overcome stress and anxiety and experience peace.

For fifty years, health and peace became the focus of the propagation. A lot of research was done by Sri Swami Satyananda and by other people – scientific, medical, theoretical research to see the efficacy of yoga in the management of many physiological, psychological and spiritual disorders. Yoga was also introduced in many industries, departments, private and government sectors, for people to manage their anxieties, stress and pressures, for children to overcome their addictions which they faced, for prisoners to experience tranquillity and joy in the environment of the prison.

Many projects were taken up in the last fifty years during the first chapter of yoga which established yoga as a subject, a science and a way of life due to the efforts of our master, Sri Swamiji, and of course, many others who are no less contributors to the propagation of yoga in India and the world. However, Sri Swamiji is unique for he stands out as the propagator of holistic yoga and an ever-evolving yoga.

Satyananda Yoga

From 2014 to 2017, for four years, we took our time to re-assess the need according to the time now. Even knowledge has to be imparted according to the need of the people. Many other founders of so-called schools of thought like Buddha and Mahavir lived a life of *tyag*, renunciation, they lived a life of *aparigraha*, non-possessiveness, they lived a life of *sadhana*, effort, continuous effort to become better. They lived a rigorous life and their lifestyle, their sadhanas are taught to the followers, not to the public. To the public, they only taught one thing - non-violence. Buddha had his set of practices and sadhanas, disciplines and systems, but to the public he preached only the idea of ahimsa and everything else was for the *bhikhus*, the followers, who had renounced and were living the same life as Buddha. Similarly, Mahavir, who did the same and similarly, Swami Satyananda, he too did the same thing.

I remember in the early days of our training he taught us the whole yoga but when we went out to teach yoga we found that people could not do what we were able to do. Not even sit in lotus pose for half an hour. Who can sit in lotus pose for half an hour? There are limitations. So we had to change the entire system of teaching and only limited practices became known as Satyananda Yoga, not the whole yoga.

What was known as Satyananda Yoga? Pawanmuktasana parts one, two and three, standing, forward bending, backward bending, balancing asanas. Beyond that you can't even do any of the intermediate or advanced asanas. You are happy stretching, so stretch, but you are incapable of doing scorpion

pose, or peacock pose, for example. So simple and basic practices were selected to teach as asana.

Out of the whole range of pranayama, only three or four: nadi shodhana, bhramari, kapalbhati, bhastrika, the common ones. Out of the whole range of pratyahara, only yoga nidra, antar mouna, ajapa japa, trataka, chidakasha dharana. Only these few practices became known as Satyananda Yoga which is known globally, but this is not the vision of yoga that Sri Swamiji had. What you call Satyananda Yoga and is taught everywhere in the world is a limited part of the yoga that Sri Swamiji lived, experienced and taught. Now is the time to deepen that awareness and the experience of yoga. Over the last four years we have worked on it.

Bihar School of Yoga has taken up a big undertaking in the first six months of the year to conduct 350 yoga seminars throughout the country. The process has started; the work has started. In six months, 350 yoga seminars throughout the country is not a small thing. We have started from the south because it is warm there and once the weather changes, the activities will move to the north. Right now, activities have started in Western India and in Southern India. Northern India and North-Western India are left for the season to improve. Then, in the course of time, there will be wandering yatras, *padayatra*, in Munger district, where people will go from village to village, town to town, conducting yoga seminars to present the new dimension of yoga which has been worked out by the Bihar School of Yoga over these last four years, to introduce the concept of Yoga Chakra and to identify those able teachers who can carry forward this new vision of yoga. Those teachers will be given the methodology to teach the new systems of yoga to deepen their own experience of yoga.

This year is a big year for Bihar School of Yoga because the new chapter is starting officially. Until now, research was done. This year we bring it to teachers and from next year, those teachers will propagate it to people in the world. Then every five years, we are having a special program. Every five years



there will be a marker to go another step further. So the scope of BSY is increasing day by day. The research, the investigation, the understanding, the application, the implementation is increasing day by day. At least mine is!

It was said that Maharishi Vedavyasa put up his hands in despair for people were not listening to him. I also put up my hands every day and bring them down every night. I also put up my hands saying, "No. No, it is too difficult for me. Nobody is following it." But then I bring my hands down and say, "No! You are not to look at other people, whether they can do it or not. You remain connected to the vision of your Guru in which you will always do what he wants you to do." That makes me bring my hands down again, every time I put them up.

Cherish your intention

I do notice the limitations of people, more intensely than before. I can read the intentions of people, I can read their efforts and sometimes it is disturbing and dejecting to see that there is no willpower in any person to stand up for what is right, what is correct and what needs to be done. The lack of confidence in people is something that is anti-yoga and anti-spirituality. There is weakness in the lives of people and they

are not able to stand up for yoga and for dharma.

There has to be commitment, sincerity and there has to be seriousness otherwise yoga will not lead you anywhere, sannyasa will not lead you anywhere and your life will not lead you anywhere. Without these three things you are a failure in the material world, you are failure in family life, you are a failure in your profession, you are a failure in sannyasa.



It is the weakness of human nature that has to be looked into now and how that weakness can be strengthened with the principles and practices of yoga. The time of asana and pranayama is gone. That was the need of the 60s and 70s and 80s and 90s. Now is the time to make a commitment to live a better life, a better organized life in which we are able to express the creativity of our actions and mind; that will make us into true human beings, and that is the purpose of Bihar School of Yoga.

I give my best wishes to Bihar School of Yoga, a place where I grew up and lived. I was a part of its management team until 2008. In 2008, I retired and handed over the charge to the future generations. I am happy to see that in continuation to that tradition, the future generations are here. On their shoulders falls the responsibility not to live a whimsical life, but to live the life that Swami Sivananda lived and that Swami Satyananda lived. They have the responsibility to live their teachings so that in future they can be the carrier of the teachings of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda.

I wish Bihar School of Yoga a happy and fulfilling birthday. I wish BSY all success in the future and until now I have seen, the way things have been moving with difficulty, with

struggles but always advancing. That is the trait of a sannyasin and that is the trait of Bihar School of Yoga too. No matter what comes, hail or thunderstorm, rocks or hot winds, you just have to protect yourself and keep on walking. Just as in these adverse conditions, you have to protect yourself to keep on walking, you have to hide your face from the biting winds, cover your body from the biting cold, in the same manner, you have to protect your own spiritual intention in all situations, at all times, in all circumstances.

Don't allow that spiritual intention to wither and die because you are unable to look after it. Your body will wither and die if you don't look after it. Do you want your best inspiration and motivation in life to die because you are unable to look after it? No, don't make that mistake. Cherish that moment which has inspired you to achieve greater heights, greater wisdom. Cherish those moments and then you will become a yogi, and if you become a yogi by doing that, then the vision of the founders of BSY will be complete.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

*– 22 January 2018, 55th Foundation Day of BSY,
Ganga Darshan, Munger*



Yoga and Management of Parkinson's Disease: Case Study

Sanjiv Chaturvedi, Bangkok, Thailand

Parkinson's disease

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder which induces a gradual loss of cells in the mid-brain, substantianigra, responsible for the production of dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter, a chemical messenger, which transmits signals between two regions of the brain to primarily coordinate physical activity and regulate emotional responses. PD impairs the production of dopamine, and as a result, a person inflicted with the disease experiences progressive loss of motor skills and compromised cognitive ability. Tremors in the limbs, joint pain and fatigue are symptoms of the early stage of PD (PD stages 1 & 2).

In the middle stage, a person develops slow movement due to stiffness of muscles, poor coordination resulting in loss of balance, a hunched posture, insomnia, urinary problems, depression, moodiness and general cognitive decline (PD stage 3 & 4). In the advanced stage, a person is confined to a wheelchair or bed, often accompanied by disorientation and dementia (PD stage 5).

Currently, there is no cure for this debilitating disease and causes are not definitive. Conventional medicine temporarily remedies the symptoms of PD by administering drugs and contributes towards delaying its advancement. However, the person often suffers from the medication's side effects and develops a dependency on them.

Patient

In the summer of 2016, I began teaching yoga to a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease. Mr Lojanin came to me only after he had exhausted conventional and other alternative medicine options. This brief article will chronicle the effects of yoga in improving the physical and mental health of this individual to date and its positive repercussions on his family.

Until 2011, Mr Lojanin lived an active and busy life as a business owner, husband and father and enjoyed playing soccer, ran marathons and practised judo. However, when he was 57 years old, his doctor diagnosed him with a hereditary cholesterol problem that exposed him to higher risks of heart attacks and strokes. The side effects of the prescribed medicine masked the symptoms of an early onset of Parkinson's disease, delaying an accurate diagnosis of his condition.

Diagnosis and condition

As his mobility worsened and his body began to feel stiff, he consulted ten doctors at various hospitals without any definitive diagnosis. He tried traditional Thai massage therapy and Chinese acupuncture treatment. However, his muscles had become so stiff and hard that the needle bent when it was inserted into his body. By that time, he was experiencing tremors, debilitating stiffness, insomnia and needing assistance to complete daily life activities. The compromised state that Mr Lojanin was in triggered a depression which was taxing for his entire family. After 18 months Mr Lojanin was properly diagnosed.

Prognosis and medication by conventional medicine

Once diagnosed with PD, Mr Lojanin was prescribed an array of medication to suppress the PD symptoms 24 hours a day. Although prescription levels were adjusted, the following daily allowances listed below give an idea of how heavily medicated he was, and as a result, developed physical and psychological dependency on them. It is possible that the side effects of the

drugs enhanced the PD symptoms and contradicting effects of the medication further taxed his body and mental health. Most PD medication loses its effectiveness over extended use which means either dosages need to be increased or must be replaced by another medication. There are benefits in taking medication to increase dopamine levels in the brain to improve mobility, but excessive use can result in adverse effects. Mr Lojanin experienced numerous side effects of the prescribed drugs such as constipation, nausea, confusion, depression, hallucination and insomnia. Here is a brief list of the daily medication taken:

- *Sinemet Carbidopa 25mg*
- *Levodopa 100mg*
- *Madopar HBS Levodopa+Benserazide 125mg*
- *Seroquel 25mg*
- *Sifrol 250mcg*
- *Rivotril Clonazepam 0.5mg*
- *Neupro 4mg/24h Transdermal Patch*
- *Azilect 1mg*
- *Valdoxan 25mg*
- *PK Merz Amantadine Sulphate 100mg.*

Currently, Mr Lojanin is trying to reduce his dependency on drugs. His doctor acknowledges that the yoga practices are improving his mobility and cognitive abilities but has not come up with a comprehensive reduction plan. He has stopped taking any sleeping aids and voluntarily stopped taking the antipsychotic drug. Hopefully in the near future, integrative medicine incorporating yogic therapy methods will become the norm so that patients need not feel any conflict regarding different treatments.

Management with yoga

Mr Lojan reluctantly accompanied his daughter to Divine Yoga Studio to attend a private therapy session with me in August 2016. The first session was indicative of his physical and psychological condition and that the latest drugs could not bring him relief. Although he was only 61 years old at the time,

with a lean figure, yet he appeared much older with a hunched posture, slow shuffling gait, trembling limbs and extreme slowness in movement. He had difficulty communicating and talked only with his daughter and did not leave her side.

It was evident he was afraid to try yoga and did not trust me at first. Although private sessions are normally 45 minutes in duration, the first session took over 90 minutes. Much of the first session was spent explaining to him how yoga could help him and that practices were accessible, not impossible circus acts. After much coaxing, he entered the practice room with his daughter. Only simple body movements with my help and a few pranayama practices were possible that day.

I dedicated the first three to four private sessions to giving encouragement to Mr Lojanin by praising his efforts, realizing that mental assistance was necessary for him to regain his confidence in his physical ability and the potential to regain his health through his own efforts. By the fourth private lesson, he was able to sleep at night; a big accomplishment for a person who suffered years of insomnia, despite the use of sleeping aids.

After only ten private sessions, I put him in a beginner's group asana class. These rapid successes he experienced at the initial stage helped him to gain trust in me as a teacher and in yoga. Ever since, Mr Lojanin has become a regular practitioner of yoga and attends my classes approximately 3 to 4 times per week, with remarkable improvements in his posture, mobility, mental clarity, confidence and communication skills. His daughter has also become a regular practitioner, bringing her obvious health benefits and also a sense of relief to see her father physically and mentally stronger and emotionally stable and happy.

Challenges as a teacher

Working with a Parkinson's patient was challenging on physical, mental and emotional levels. When I first met Mr Lojanin, he was showing symptoms of PD late stage 3: rigidity of muscles and joints, tremors, slowness in movement (brady-

kinesia), needing assistance in daily tasks, cognitive confusion, insomnia and depression. The initial challenges were mental and emotional. Mr Lojanin felt helpless having lost much of his mobility and having to rely on medication which did not bring complete relief from his PD symptoms. I employed positive verbal reinforcement to empower his confidence, strengthen his will and to gain his trust. The trust between the teacher and student is especially crucial in this type of rehabilitation when a teacher must ask of the student to persevere to do practices which appear difficult at first. The key is to make him want to practise.

The physical challenges were daunting. The PD rigidity was advancing, making it difficult for him to even walk into the classroom. In the beginning, the simplest asanas were tough for him. I had to physically manipulate him and move his body in order to stretch his muscles and loosen his joints. It was also difficult to ascertain how much of his physical symptoms were induced by the side effects of the drugs and how much of it by the actual disease.

Another challenge was to bridge the difference in healing methods between conventional medicine and yoga so that Mr Lojanin could understand how yoga and aspects of conventional medicine could jointly improve the quality of his life. As he experienced the improvement of his mobility, mental clarity and a hopeful outlook on his life through yoga, he began to realize that he need not be completely dependent on the drugs and began to reduce the medication by consulting his doctor.

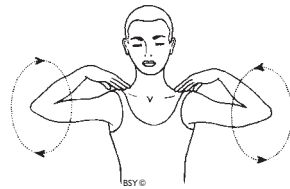
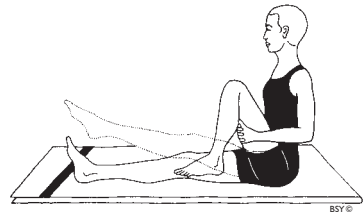
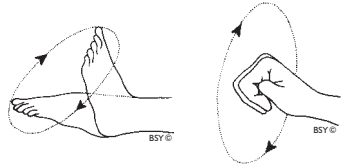
Management of Parkinson's disease through yoga

I have incorporated the following traditional Bihar Yoga practices as well as non-traditional practices in managing and improving the PD patient's overall wellbeing. Simple and clear instructions should accompany the practices to remind the student to practise with awareness, correct approach and a positive attitude (the 3As). Without awareness, asanas will be merely exercise and pranayama, only automatic breathing. Relaxation

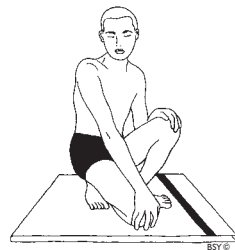
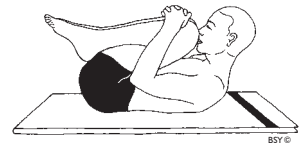
of the body and mind is given primary importance in order to loosen the joints and muscles so that healing could begin.

- *Pawanmuktasana series* (PM 1 & 2)) are yogic asana practices allowing practitioners of all physical abilities to benefit from its healing properties by improving elasticity of muscles in the area of focus and thus promoting healthy circulation of blood and energy.

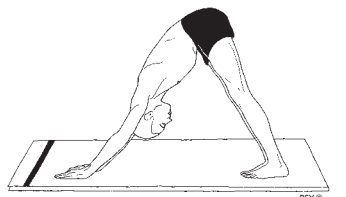
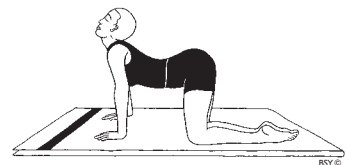
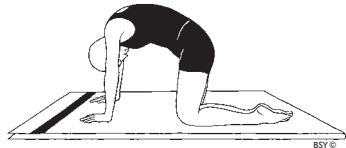
- *PM 1* is a sequence of anti-rheumatic asanas to remove stiffness from the joints through rotational movements. Coordination between bones, muscles, joints and ligaments improves so that they work naturally and spontaneously. Problems in the knee joints, hip joints, ankle joints, shoulder joints and wrist joints can all be remedied by these asanas, which minimize the injuries of different joints. PD patients with stiff muscles and joints would particularly benefit from these asanas.



- *PM 2* is a sequence of anti-gastric asanas focusing on strengthening the abdominal muscles and organs and builds stamina. They improve the digestive system, which is important for the proper functioning of other systems of the body. PD patients suffer fatigue and thus building stamina is crucial for them. I combine practices from PM 3 including crow walking to strengthen the lower body.



- Selected sequence of *standing, stretching and spinal bending postures*, which are physically accessible, gives elasticity to the muscles and the organs.
- Backward bending and spinal movements*: Marjari asana, tiger pose, and cobra and bow poses were practised initially. Once the student's body was little flexible, camel pose and standing backward bending were introduced. Before starting to teach surya namaskara, three poses consisting of parvatasana, ashtanga namaskara and cobra are practised to give him more strength and confidence. This sequence and combination is particularly effective.



- Balancing pose*: It was almost impossible for him to do any balancing pose at first. The wall or my physical assistance was given as support to manage the balance pose. After 2 or 3 months, he began trying the pose on his own and was able to do so with ease. Verbal encouragement was also effective in motivating him to achieve the poses. In time, he was doing almost all groups of asanas correctly and with awareness.

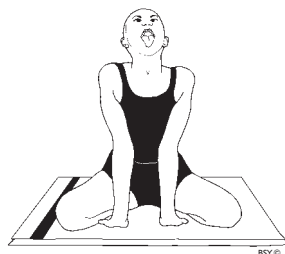
- Nadi shodhana*, alternate nostril breathing: It gives deep relaxation which is much needed by PD patients to relax their stiffened bodies. I use breathing separately like 10 breaths from only left nostril, 10 breaths from right nostril and then alternate nostril breathing.



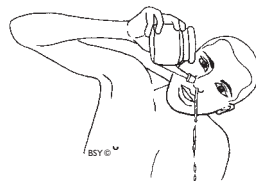
- Swana pranayama*, dog panting breath: This energizing breathing practice builds the immune system and vitalizes the fatigued body. I feel swana pranayama is more effective

than kapalbhati and other heating pranayama. This helps to throw out suppressed emotion and fear and gives more confidence and alertness. On occasion, I also teach bhastrika and kapalbhati.

- *Simhagarjanasana*, roaring lion pose: Stimulates and stretches the muscles in the throat which is important for PD patients facing difficulty in speaking. Throws out fear and builds confidence. Co-ordinated breathing with physical movement: Inhalation from the nose and forceful exhalation from the mouth.



- *Neti*: I taught him neti but he is not doing it every day. Currently, he practises it 2 to 3 times per month.
- *Yoga nidra*: A short yoga nidra practice is effective in relaxing his stiff body and giving him physical and mental relaxation. Most PD patients suffer from insomnia so the inclusion of yoga nidra is important. Mr Lojanin often will start snoring after just 5 minutes of the practice. Once he starts feeling relaxed and fearless he can sleep well and feel fresh.



Ideally, these practices should be done daily. However, even though Mr Lojanin cannot come to class every day due to time and transportation restraints, he is making visible progress. Now he is doing yoga classes 4 to 5 days per week and I ask him to do some breathing practices, at least nadi shodhana, at home.

Effects of yoga on Mr Lojanin

It has not even been twelve months since Mr Lojanin began practising yoga but his transformation is apparent. He looks much younger than when I first met him. He now has an upright posture, a smile on his face and a bounce to his steps. He carries and places his own yoga mat and even does it for

his daughter. He completes an hour group class with focus and determination and has become an inspiration to other yoga members, young and old alike. He has become very sociable and often engages in humorous conversation with fellow classmates. All of these achievements were unimaginable last year.

When asked what he has learned through yoga, he replied, "Yoga defies what conventional medicine teaches us. I know now that yoga helps me to relax my body and mind. When I am relaxed, I can heal myself and the medicine works more efficiently. I am confident again and will not be



scared anymore. I am trying to reduce my medication now. It is difficult at first but I try to distract my mind from the fear of not taking medicine and try to relax." Mr Lojanin's resolve to practise yoga has reaped great results. On days when his medication dosage is reduced, his mobility has a temporary setback but he never gives up. His horizons are expanding again and he is living his life to the full, enjoying social and business events and looking forward to an upcoming family holiday abroad.

Note

Now Mr Lojanin looks and behaves normal and is active in his daily life with more energy and confidence, but sometimes when medicine taking time comes he starts feeling some change in his body. His body starts shaking and he feels mentally disturbed. After 10–15 minutes, he starts becoming normal.

Ashwattha Aradhana

Swami Prembhava Saraswati

The first step in yoga ecology is to connect and communicate to Prakriti. *Prakriti* is the Sanskrit word for nature, and through the tree we start to communicate to Prakriti. Swami Niranjanananda says that trees represent *prithvi*, the earth. Every quality of the tree is that of the prithvi quality. If we think about the trees and what they do, they are probably one of the most generous species on the earth.



Trees purify water and play a vital role in the hydrological cycle of the planet. They provide the oxygen for life, stability, aeration and the nutrient cycle of soil. They provide homes, shelter and shade. They provide food, in the form of fruits, flowers, nuts, and they provide wood, paper and medicines and much more.

The connection between trees and human beings goes right back in time. As the young earth was evolving, it was the plants and trees that provided the atmosphere and environment required for animals including human beings to evolve, so we are indebted to trees for the source and breath of life.

Human beings are such a selfish, self-centred and quite stupid species. We have been chopping down trees faster than they can grow, we are destroying the one thing that actually gives us life – trees and forests.

Through the practices of yoga ecology, we reconnect to the source that has given us life, and that is through the practice of Ashwattha Aradhana. Ashwattha is the name of the

peepal tree, and ashwattha means non-dying, continuous. The ashwattha tree is perhaps the oldest tree on earth, that has been worshipped for over 5,000 years. They are a species of the ficus. The peepal tree has the ability to grow in any environment. I am sure if the human species disappeared tomorrow it would be the ashwattha tree that would start to grow everywhere and take over everything. They are also known as the world tree, and they are symbolized as upside-down, as the roots are reaching upwards, rather than down.

The world tree is known in many cultures as the symbol of life. Tree worship exists in many cultures around the world. It is not a new concept. There is one tree in India which you will find in nearly every house, it is a small plant called tulsi.

Our guru Swami Satyananda worshipped tulsi every day in the morning and evening during his panchagni sadhana. He said that she is the mother of all healing plants, and he didn't have to touch the plant or even eat the leaves for any healing effect, just the simple worship of the tree was enough to keep him healthy day in and day out for many years.

Swami Niranjana also worships tulsi throughout his panchagni sadhana and we notice that if either of them fell even slightly unwell the other would also, that is how close his connection to the tulsi plant is. In yoga ecology every tree has a deity, a spirit residing in it. As you perform the aradhana that spirit and energy awakens and you connect to it and thereby the communication and connection takes place between the person and the tree.

In 1996, Swami Niranjana started the practice of Ashwattha Aradhana in the ashram, and all the residents, students and guests were given a tree to care for during their time in the ashram. We also give the sick or weak trees and we found that after some time the trees would become strong and grow healthy through the daily aradhana, and we saw many people go through personal transformation through the aradhana.

Through the care of the tree and through the aradhana, the connection between you and the tree becomes strong, and you

will protect that tree no matter what, just as you care for the people around you. The same relationship spreads into all of prakriti, nature, and it is a very big step for most people to take.

In Ashwattha Aradhana, or with any aradhana, the five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether – are always represented. The tree is the object we are offering the aradhana or worship to. The tree represents prithvi tattwa, the earth element. We begin by lighting the deepak, and this is the fire element or agni tattwa.

Then we light the incense. Incense represents *vayu*, the air element, and we wave the incense in front of the tree to clear away any negativity, particularly from our human mind. Now we offer one flower to the tree which also represents the element of prithvi and the beauty of nature.

We offer water, the water element or *apas*, to the roots of the tree. This is also a symbolic watering of our own spiritual nature. The tree that we see above ground is only one third of the tree, for the roots travel right down into the ground. They are the main mass of the tree, therefore we offer the water to our own spiritual growth and spiritual self.

At the end, we chant the mantras which represent the ether element, the *shabda*, sound and vibration. We finish the Ashwattha Aradhana with the Shanti Mantras, a prayer of thanks to the tree.

– 29 July 2017, Raquira, Colombia



Many Benefits of Yoga

Sannyasi Mahatmananda, Belgrade, Serbia

It is quite complex to put on paper one's thoughts about something that so deeply permeates one's life and makes it meaningful in many ways as yoga does to me. I am in a relationship with yoga in many ways for over 20 years and it is the only constant thing in my life. I am not a classical yogi type of person. I am not good in asanas and pranayamas, I do not have required self-discipline. I do not know advanced meditation techniques.

The only thing I do have is faith. Enormous and non-wavering, unshakeable, firm faith. My faith is based on the ever-present Hindu gods and goddesses in my mind. My understanding and perception of the world and universe are direct result from this religious-philosophical system, and the feeling of physical presence of God in my life.

Like most people I went through many different experiences in life: sorrow, depression, loss, but also through moments of happiness and success – both in my family life and career. All those experiences I have shared with God. There were moments when I cried and begged for help, and there were moments when I rejoiced with Him in my thoughts. That connection is present even now. Every significant moment I share with Him.

Enter yoga

Through yoga I have experienced richness and the precious experience of my relationship with a guru. Many times I have felt His grace and blessings and I feel grateful for that. His blessings usually came to me through advice of my yoga teacher and that advice and her care literally saved my life several times. Even today, talking with her is like a compass in a sea of temptation that life brings.

When I think of practical benefits of yoga, I would stress mantra and place it in the first place. The moment I received a personal mantra from my guru, not a single day I failed to practise it. I suppose that the mantra, on a deeper level, has guided me on the path of spiritual evolution, with no retrace. In day-to-day life, the mantra calms me, gives meaning to my days and reappears spontaneously in my mind while I am walking, working, before sleep, in the early morning. Mantra comforts me and reminds me that I do belong to a great unfathomed system that wishes me only good. It is sort of my compass.

The other important practice I am regular with is definitely yoga nidra. This miracle technique provides me with deep relaxation and insights into certain elements of the subconscious content. Many important decisions which I have made immediately after yoga nidra practice, proved to be righteous and good for me.

Practising yoga brought me closer to concepts of karma yoga and seva. Doing my daily and professional duties with components of karma yoga, I have achieved both success and harmony.

The ashram

I have had amazing experiences during my two visits to the ashram. First of all, it was due to the meetings with Swamiji and the feelings that I have for Him is like a great, wonderful, elder divine brother who is always somewhere in the air around me and protects me even when I am not able or I do not wish to protect myself.

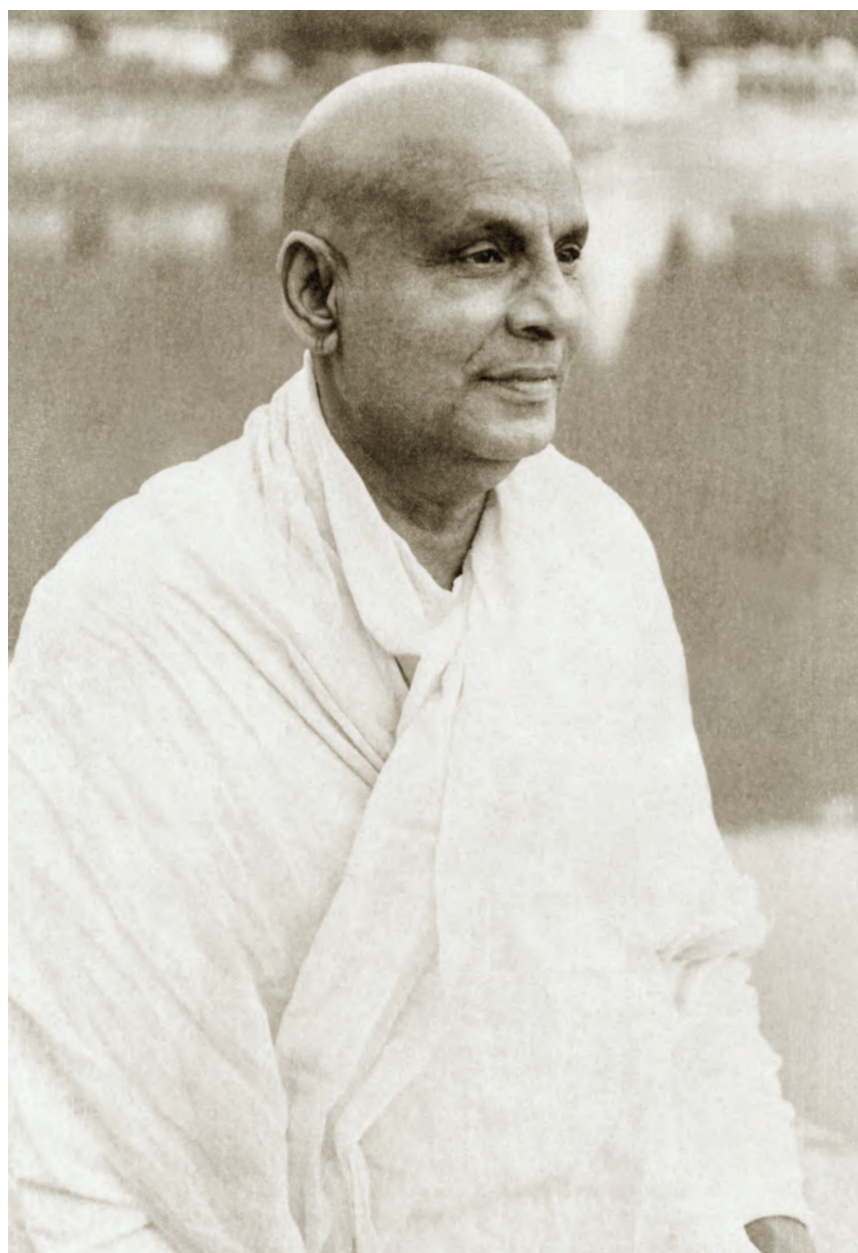
Living sannyasa life, even briefly, in the proximity of the guru, I had the opportunity to personally experience the power of the energetic field that permeates the ashram. I have understood that the perspective from which I usually perceive my life and my problems, is actually not right. Living in the ashram one begins to understand that one's problems and the way one looks at them and the ways one resolves them, is often completely wrong.



One more beautiful thing in the ashram is seva. Usually having a dissipated mind, I gave myself fully to seva with great love, dedication and commitment. I have experienced rare moments of complete peace and tranquillity, all experienced right after a hard day's work in the ashram. Apart from the work itself, the beauty was the communication and friendship with other visitors and residents of the ashram. Positive spirit and brightness that seva develops in people, and the joy of belonging to the same 'tribe' are one of the best memories of the ashram which I cherish.

For me the fact that I came in contact with yoga is one of the most precious experiences of my life. This taught me that life does not only have two dimensions, that miracles happen, and the most important understanding was that we are all just small children awakening spiritually with difficulties and pain, but still awakening and there is a hope. Yoga therefore is hope, faith and optimism. Yoga gives the conviction that we are not all alone and that behind sorrow there is definitely a sun rising again.

(Mladen Maticевич is the author of the documentary film 'Hero')









My Memories of Sri Swamiji

Asha Bharwani, Mumbai

It was in the early sixties (1961–1962) that I first met Swami Satyanandaji. I was about 12 or 13 years old. My parents, my sister and I went to Prem Kutir building in South Bombay to meet a new Swamiji. On the ground floor was a fairly large hall, not very brightly lit. There, on a simple makeshift stage sat Swami Satyananda and by his side sat Ma Yogashakti. This is the scene I remember very distinctly in the several meetings we had with Sri Swamiji. There would be a small group of people, about



10 to 12 persons, sitting on the floor who had come to meet Swamiji and pay their respects. Sometimes, there were more people. We would go to meet him all the days he was there.

Swamiji would speak very enthusiastically about yoga. He would talk for about 15 to 20 minutes and encourage all of us to learn yoga. A few times he showed us a movie of a young lady, Prema Bakshi, doing simple asanas, on a portable screen with a projector. He would explain the postures and benefits of the particular asana being performed.

In those days, people were not at all familiar with yoga or yogasanas. In fact, if someone practised yogasanas, people would think he wanted to become a yogi and did not wish to live in society. So this was something new and interesting for all of us. And thus yoga entered our lives! I met Prema Bakshi

several times as she was a staunch follower of Swamiji and was always around when he visited Bombay.

Sometimes Swamiji gave talks on yogic principles, the yogic way of life and meditation, but as I remember, they were never very long, maybe just 20 to 25 minutes.

Swamiji had a beautiful, gentle smile always for everyone. He would speak to us softly and lovingly and give us his blessings. My father took to him the very first time he met him. He was very much in love with Swamiji. He used to say to us in Hindi. "Main itne saare santan se mila hoon, par pataa nahin kyun, iss swami se mujhe bahut prem ho gayaa hai." Translating this into English: I have met so many saints, but I don't know why I feel so much love for this Swamiji.

My father very much wanted Swamiji to grace our home by his visit. Swamiji graciously accepted and had dinner with us one evening. We lived in a large joint family and the whole family sat with Swamiji and chatted. Swamiji's visit made my father very happy.

My parents continued to visit Swamiji every time he was in Bombay. I don't remember visiting Swamiji from 1965 onwards. Then one day in 1968, my father told us that this was Swamiji's last visit to Bombay. He had to do the Panchagni Tapasya which was a prerequisite for a Paramahansa and also he would like to spend more time in meditation. My father was sad on hearing this. But Swamiji told him that it would please him very much if my father would come to Munger to meet him.

My father longed to go to Munger. Many a time he told us of his deep desire to go to Munger to meet his beloved Swami Satyanandaji. Somehow he never got a chance. My father left us forever in 1975.

I feel I have fulfilled my father's wish by visiting Munger finally in 2018 after so many years. He would be very happy with my visit, I know.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Be a Friend

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Why is it so difficult for parents and children to live and work together? What can we do?

Because parents are neurotic. I tell you very frankly. The mistake is with the parents. Children have no mistakes. They are younger than you. Parents should have more wisdom, patience and understanding. Don't apply your religion on them. Your personal view is called religion. You keep your morality in your pocket. Don't tell children to be this or that. They are your children, but they are another soul. What right have you to develop them in your own image? You go on throughout the world making everybody Christian, because you are Christian. You make the whole world Muslim because you are a Muslim man. People do become Christian or Muslim out of fear. In the same way, you are trying to make your children become like yourself.

You are a bundle of unhappiness, frustration, failures, suppressions and depressions. You have not enjoyed life. When you were married, you became aware of your duties. You could not enjoy. From the years of fifteen to nineteen are the years to enjoy and you don't want them to. You are jealous of them, and that is why your children don't care for you. Because they have to depend on you for money, for protection, so somehow your children keep quiet.

Once my father told me that I should read *Gita* every day, because he was reading it. I said, "No, I'm not going to read if I don't like it." That was the first and last confrontation between us. He said, "If you don't read *Gita*, you don't stay in my home." I told him, "You should not stay in this home, because the home is mine and not yours." His eyes were opened. "Why do I depend on you? You are dependent on me. Tomorrow, if you die, I am going to do your funeral. If you become blind, I am going to help you because I am your child, and I will perpetuate your clan."

So, in my opinion, parents must get out of this neurosis: "My child must be a nice one; my child must be a nice one." You should not be ashamed of your children's liberated mood. Let them eat the whole night. Let them smoke the whole night. Let them do what they want. From fifteen to nineteen is the golden period for children. It is a very transitional period. You must be by their side, and you will see that there is a greater communication between you and the children.

First thing parents must stop is admonishment. You are not a judge of right and wrong. What is right today can be wrong tomorrow. In the last fifty years, every value has changed. What Christianity said was a sin, Dr. Freud said just the opposite. Now, who is right and who is wrong, the biblical parents or Freudian parents.

Morality is relative; it is not absolute. It is subject to political, economical conditions. It changes and it should change, and therefore you should not try to bind your children within the framework of your morality. Let them create their own

morality. If they don't want to practise yoga, don't force them. If they don't want to pray or to read the Bible, don't force them. Don't tell them anything. Don't give them anything. Only one thing you have to give – your confidence. Religious parents, strict parents, cannot give confidence. Disciplinarians can never give confidence.

It is said in one of the books in India, after the child becomes twelve, he is your friend and you should behave with him as you behave with your chum, friend. Therefore, make friendship with your children. Up to the age of twelve, you

are father and mother. After the age of twelve, you are not father and mother. You are just friends. A friend is somebody to whom you can say everything; he will not mind it. When you do something wrong, you can tell your friend, never your parents. Otherwise, the whole night, you will have to hear the Bible.

But still, after saying this, it is going to be a very difficult job, because we are so worried about the children. Read the last poem in the book *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran and keep this idea before you. Also read one of the statements of Plato. Then you will understand what mistakes we have made. Why do the children disobey you? Why do they insult you? Why do they hate you? Why do they want to avoid you? Why is there a difference between you and the children? Because that prophetic relationship between us is absent.

– 21 June 1984, Satyananda Ashram, Paris, France



Children's Lifestyle in Modern Society

Sannyasi Shantachittam, Italy

Today's children are different from those of the past, and their needs have undergone a profound change. The western child grows up in a micro-family, in which there is little interaction with children of the same age; the grandparents still work and the parents are often engaged outside of the house for the entire day.

The child lives in a state of loneliness and real dependence, where everything is ready-made and automated, in which material and human space is limited and inflexible, and where the timetable is governed by adults. The streets, courtyards and squares are considered dangerous spaces and are forbidden.

The modern child needs help with finding a way among the chaotic quantity of information available outside the school, and finding support in making links between mind and body, between words and hands, between images and complex sensorial perceptions. The child needs to live in a place where it is possible to communicate and enjoy tranquil relationships with other children without the interference of an adult. In this way the child can naturally pit his wit against that of children of the same age.

Over a period of continuous observation, the teaching team of our association has noted that children ever more frequently experience problems related to disturbance of attention, difficulties with concentration and remaining seated, excitement, poor motor skills and incorrect grip. There are increasing numbers of children who quickly move from one game to another, but can't play, children who don't accept frustration and have little time to wait. They are accustomed to getting everything at once.

Factors of the external environment which contribute to creating educational disorders and destabilizing a child's behaviour

The causes of childhood discomfort are found predominantly outside the context of school. The leading cause of problematic behaviour is to be found in the environment in which they grow up, beginning from the psychological difficulties they often meet in their development and maturation. Important factors that can cause behavioural disorders include:

- *At prenatal level, habits of the mother:* Smoking, alcohol, drugs, abuse of medicines.
- *In the perinatal period:* Great difficulties in family relationships, psychological and social instability, precariousness of the family (social, economic), mental illness of a parent or a relative.

All of the above may cause or contribute to the development of behavioural disorders and learning difficulties.

Psycho-social discomfort of the family and the quality of relationships which surround the child may be at the origin. Children with behavioural disorders display a deficit of interactions with the surrounding environment.

The quality of interactions helps the child to live a pleasant dynamic relationship, a permanent dialogue with the external world, with mother, father and other members of the family. The affection that is produced provides strong stimulation for the brain.

The quality of the emotional dialogue that the child lives, in constant interaction with the environment, has as its consequence the production of a discharge of hormones, such as dopamine and noradrenaline which help the passage of neurotransmitters to all levels, thereby stimulating the brain.

Observations and research related to the brain show that in troubled children, there is a slowing down of the brain movement, particularly in the zone of the prefrontal cortex. This is the area for the control of movement and motor activity. This leads to the conclusion that the deficit in the quality of



interactions with the environment that surrounds the child, is a limiting factor for the development of certain hormones that promote brain plasticity.

Emotionally incontinent children

Very often the behaviours of children vary in different situations, roles and moments in which they display cognitive or emotional functions. While engaged with building sets, drawings or board games, they perform well; they are smart and productive.

When they are engaged in bodily activities, they often lose control on a primary emotional level. They are triggered, literally out of control, almost like a flooded river that breaks its banks and overwhelms everything. They can hardly interact with others, and don't accept limitations, comparisons, rules or roles. They can be triggered to a dangerous point of hurting themselves or others, or breaking and damaging objects around them.

Changes in tone of voice, posture and gesture become relevant when the child's contact with others and with objects becomes precarious. The control which the child cannot find within must come from the external surroundings.

The help of yoga

Another particular case is of children that we can define as being 'out of time'. These children begin one activity and immediately look around for something else; forgetting what they were doing, they start a new activity.

They are always at the mercy of their fantasies and activities, and each activity overtakes the other so that there is no productive result of any one of them. No realization takes root; nothing can be completed to be remembered as an experience, nothing becomes history, memory.

The emotions take the shortcut of the circuit breaker, of immediate discharge, without taking form through the body, space, time or object. This means that the emotions cannot be transformed into experiences, into history that could build the child's identity. It is necessary for the educator to stand as a solid point of reference, and thus make sense of the activities of the child.

As a teaching team, we keep asking ourselves the same question: what rhythms of life do we offer these children? For some years we have chosen to privilege the aspect of learning to 'stay'. This means slow time, made of repetitiveness, of shared rituals, a time of observation, a time to get dirty, a time to use one's hands, a time for listening and being astonished.

Yoga is one of the activities which has entered the school with full rights, accompanying the child in growing up. It supports the development of the child's potential, including a balanced personality, independent and free from conditioning; it joins together body and mind, movement and learning, reality and fantasy, immediacy and reflection. The purpose of bringing together these opposites is to discover their conjunction and transform it into serenity, tranquillity,

freedom, harmony, happiness and joy of being alive, awareness and concentration.

By the end of our time together I notice that almost everyone in the group has learned, after some initial difficulties, to respect the rhythms and spaces both of the individual and of the mates. They have demonstrated a progressive improvement in self-esteem, strengthened relations with others, evolving socialization and cooperation, in addition to perfecting the postures thanks to a growing awareness of their own body, and recognizing their own emotions, thanks above all to an awareness of the breath.

Classes for groups of parents and children

Yoga lessons addressed to parents and their children have been offered to give the opportunity to the parents to understand the importance of contact with their children, and to recognize how perceptive children are to the internal state of their parents.

Each year for the past four years, we have been holding meetings for parents and children between the ages of 4 and 10 at the headquarters of our association. Almost all the parents who have been practising yoga for any period of time typically attend. It has been possible to notice a difference; parents who regularly practise yoga are closer to their children, do not have abrupt manners, feel the contact with their child, and their children can follow the practices without difficulty, even yoga nidra.

This year, after having offered eight lessons in a nursery school, with children of the age of four, to help parents address some teacher-related problems, we decided to offer two sessions for parents and children in the school.

We split the class into two groups, together with their mothers. The mothers in the first group were particularly stressed. This could be seen from their attitudes, from their troubled breath, and difficulty in managing their children who in turn were very restless.

During the yoga nidra practice, despite the fact that the children were accustomed to it, it was difficult to calm them in the presence of their mothers. This was the case particularly of two of the children.

I had to intervene, to separate the children and their mothers. Simply by putting my hands on the children's bellies they calmed down and could follow the rest of the lesson.

One mother told me that she was surprised to see her son relaxed with the simple touch of the hand.

In the second group the mothers were less stressed and could play and practise asana with their children, live the awareness of the breath, enjoy the final yoga nidra, everything in harmony.

At the end the mothers expressed their gratitude because they felt good and relaxed even though they came to the session after a day of work. They had never practised yoga before.



Educating for Peace

Sannyasi Atmakiran, Caxias do Sul, Brazil



Using yoga techniques for prevention and health promotion in schools is a project which started at the end of 2012, when a school teacher asked us for help. She didn't know what else to do with the agitation and aggressiveness of the students.

Knowing that stress in teachers is a big health problem in Brazil, we knew that we had to help them also. We also knew that we couldn't teach yoga to the children ourselves, because in this way we would reach only a few children. With this aim in mind – working with the children and the teachers we decided that the format of *Educating for Peace* should be:

- Weekly yoga practices for the teachers, with the aim of decreasing the stress level and increasing the quality of life.
- Monthly workshops with the teachers, with the purpose of teaching them techniques which they can apply daily with the children in the classroom.

Results

The project was implemented in three public schools, and more than 700 children were benefited. We started the implementation process in a fourth school in 2017 and the teachers are being trained to use the yoga techniques with the children.



The children have yoga techniques three times during the school day, for five minutes each: asanas at the beginning, relaxation techniques after the break (when they are very agitated) and meditation techniques at the end of the school day.

Besides the teachers, children were trained to use yoga techniques with their classmates. Results are visible and verbalized by teachers and students.

Disseminating the results

Reports about *Educating for Peace* were made through newspaper, radio and television and we presented the project at an international scientific event, in the health area, that happened in Brazil. Lectures on yoga showing the experience of this project were conducted for psychology students at a university and for health professionals.



Yoga in Schools

Sannyasi Samatamurti, USA



Here is a glimpse into my experience of introducing yoga to a vast variety of children. I teach yoga at six different schools in about thirty different classrooms each week in Newark, New Jersey.

Bruce Street School

I teach three classes at a school for the deaf. Students are 7 to 17 years old, in 2nd to 8th grade. Classes are 50 minutes and have 16 to 20 students in each class. We use yoga mats in an empty classroom arranged in a circle. I also use visuals, have a translator and I have learned more sign language. These classes are going so well – good participation and children progressing steadily.

14th Avenue School

I also teach at a school for children with special needs. These students are 5 to 13 years old and have a variety of special



needs including Down Syndrome and autism. I go into seven different classrooms at this school once a week. Each class is 15 minutes. Classes have 2 to 11 students and yoga is either practised in a circle on the rug, or the students stay at their seats.

Camden Street School

I go to this school twice a week. There are eight classes each day. There are four small group yoga classes for selected students in 1st to 3rd grades. These students need extra support and are at risk of failing. The classes are about 15 minutes and have 3 to 7 students in each class. I have seen a lot of improvement in these students during yoga class over the last seven weeks. It is always unpredictable, but the students are learning yogic



tools because they are interested in the yoga practices and the class routine. Most of these students have yoga twice a week. The last four yoga classes, 15 minutes each, are done in the classrooms for the Kindergarten to 4th grades. I see each class about once a month.

Happy!

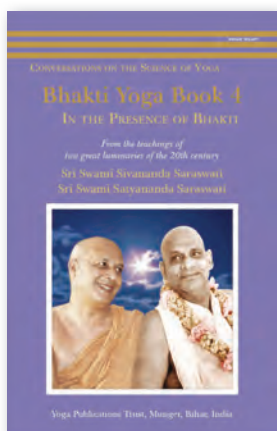
I teach seven 15 minute classes once a week at 14th Avenue School, a school for students with special needs. In one class there are three students, two boys and one girl, each 6 years old. All students are nonverbal and have mild aggressive behaviour. In our fourth yoga class together, one boy had been sleeping during the previous class. He was awake now, sitting across from me, and we were singing the song we sing in every class: "I am happy, I am good." Dancing in our seats, with our pointer fingers up we say over and over, "I am happy, I am good."

The volume progresses from normal singing, into whisper, into silence and then back to whisper, then to normal. When we all went silent, this boy said softly, "happy" and then a little louder, "happy" and a third time loudly, "happy!" It was his first word! His first word, loud and clear, "Happy!"



Mantra with Feeling

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Bhakti Yoga Book 4,
In the Presence of Bhakti



Is it necessary to have feelings when practising mantra?

Swami Niranjanananda: How can one even think of practising mantra without *bhava*, without the quality of feeling? To think of any action or thought without emotion is hypocritical. When one is angry or feels frightened, is it without *bhava*? When one is under stress, is it without *bhava*? Any mental state, whether it is hatred, jealousy, frustration, anxiety, stress or passion,

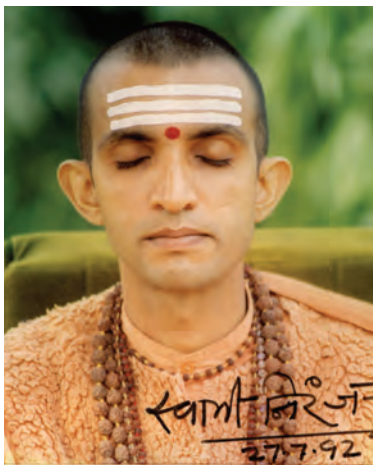
cannot exist without *bhava*, the associated feeling.

There has to be passion in mantra. In the beginning of mantra practice, the mantra is repeated mechanically as one does not know how to connect with the *bhava*. However, when one knows how, then by combining the mantra with the *bhava*, the energy of the mantra intensifies. That potency has the capacity to invoke God in a physical form in front of the *bhakta*, which means it can change any rule in creation. Mantra performed with *bhava* has the potential and capacity to make God take a physical body and appear. Mantra is so powerful that it has the capacity to command God to give *darshan*. Even God is subject to the power of the mantra. It is not the human mind that makes Him or Her appear. It is this declaration of God in the form of mantra, and God is bound by that declaration. Therefore, if God can accept the supremacy of the mantra, cannot the power of mantra change every kind of natural law? Those who have practised mantra with *bhava* have been able to perfect this quality and realize the full potency of the mantra.

Mantra will become fruitful only when bhava is associated with it. Just as a feeling is associated with a state of anger, jealousy, stress and tension, or with what one eats and drinks, or with a friend or enemy, similarly, a feeling is associated with a mantra. How then is it possible to keep the practice of mantra separate from the feeling associated with the mantra? It is not logical. Therefore, whenever one practises a mantra as part of mantra sadhana, or sings kirtan, one should also try to project the emotion associated with the mantra into it. Then when one chants or sings the mantra one is able to channel the emotions with full control, and that is quite an achievement for any human being.

Normally, logic follows a predetermined path and emotion follows a different path. Many times emotions cloud logic, and many times logic can suppress an emotion. However, when they complement each other, logic becomes an experience and emotion becomes an insight which gives wisdom. Therefore, one should try to feel the emotion of the mantra when repeating it. That is the real practice of mantra.

Mechanical repetition occurs in the first stage of mantra practice to stop the natural dissipation of the mind. Once the dissipation stops, then to awaken the state of consciousness and to experience the transformed condition inherent in the mantra,



the bhava, the emotion, has to be added. Mechanical repetition of mantra is recommended in the first stage to create a pattern of mind and develop an awareness of the mantra for longer periods of time. When one is able to do that, then, in the second stage, the component of emotion should be added to the mantra and the result will be beneficial and uplifting.

Purity of Heart – Divinity of Voice

From The Secret of Mohan Murali, Music as Yoga, Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The gopis addressed Murali with their question, “Murali! Tell us the truth. Please do not keep it a secret. What merits does our Lord see in you that He holds you so lovingly and tenderly day and night?”

Murali's answer

Gently smiling, Murali replied, "My dear friends! I know neither magic nor any arts of attraction. Neither do I possess any merits. Dead ignorant of them all, I am a simple forest reed, all hollow within and bereft of any beauty. Krishna, my Lord, Lover and Bearer calls this attitude of mine the greatest virtue and is extremely pleased with it. He, over and over again, whispers into my ear His excellent teaching, "Empty yourself and I will fill you." I have realized its truth, and I obey it to the very letter.

This is magic, if magic you will call it. This is my strength. It is He who sings through me and enchants you all. My dear friends! If you too empty yourselves of all the arrogant airs of your beauty, excellence, family pride and possession, He will fill every nerve and atom of your body with His Life and Love. Does the pervading air not fill a jar once it is emptied of other impeding objects? He will not leave you even for a moment, I tell you, and will ever sing through you the sweetest, soothing melodies of harmony and peace to the whole world.

As I understand, every creature here is His flute or *Bansi*, the instrument of expressing His divine voice. You too are His Murali. The sockets, or seats of organs in the body, such as eyes and ears are his blow-holes. He blows through them various notes. To speak poetically, he sings sweet melodies through your tongue, beauties through your eyes and fragrance through your nose. Every heart is *Madhubana*, the seat of all his lilas, the rendez-vous of all the Gopis, the centre of all the vrittis. There the only Purusha is Sri Krishna. All others have to make a passive surrender to Him."

His various expressions

All sounds are His voice. Para, pashyanti, madhyama, and vaikhari are the various gradations of the one sound, the gradual and materialized expressions of His voice. *Vaikhari* is the physical sound well known to us, while *madhyama* is the intermediate, unexpressed state of sound.

Clairvoyants say that sound is associated with colour and form and, accordingly, the pashyanti state of a word is an object of internal vision. The more we trace the inner origin of different languages, the closer we come to discovering the vibratory homogeneity of sound behind them. Birds, beasts, Indians, Africans, Americans – all, in the pashyanti state of His voice, experience the same *bhavana*, or feeling of a thing. Just as one and the same shakti working through the ears becomes hearing, through the eyes becomes seeing, and so forth, so also the same pashyanti bhavana assumes different forms of sound when materialized. As gesture, being a sort of mute subtle language, it is one and the same for all people. Any individual of any country when thirsty would make the same gesture of holding his hand to his mouth in a specific manner.



Ishwara, or God, with the help of his mayaic power, incarnates Himself first as para vani in mooladhara chakra, then materializes himself as pashyanti in manipura chakra at the navel, then as madhyama and, finally, as vaikhari. Such is the divine descent of His voice.

Disconnect to connect

He, as *paratpara*, the transcendental, stands above and beyond all the *koshas*, or bodies, states of consciousness and sound. From there with a mere will, He sets the vibrations of sound into motion to extend out to the grosser planes. To us on the physical plane, this divine voice of His is known as vaikhari, or the physical speech. This is our Lord Krishna's blowing of the flute. The most inward-minded can hear that inner voice and feel His divine being.

Close your eyes. Withdraw the *indriyas*, or senses, and concentrate. After long and constant practice, the voice will become audible to you. First, retire into perfect seclusion and silence. Try to hear it alone on the beach of the roaring sea, on the high peak of a mountain, in the dead silence of dark starry nights, in a dense forest or a lonely cave, and then try to hear it within yourself when you command good concentration. Retain this experience and try to hear the voice in the busy hours of your daily life as well.

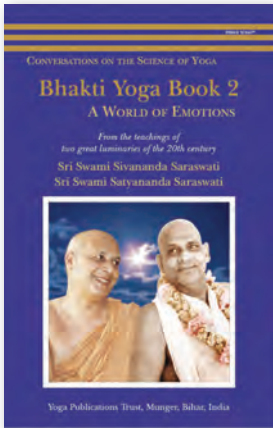
A pure heart

The heart is naturally pure. It is made up of the sattwic portion of the five elements but, like the pure waters of a lake, its purity and transparency are ruffled and muddled by our crude and earthly attractions and repulsions and such other pairs of opposites. Thus, the free passage through which the vibrations of His voice are constantly streaming forth is blocked, as it were, and like the clogged and roughly handled reeds of a harmonium, begins to emit discordant notes of envy and anger, hatred and censure, and so forth. Then it is said that we do not allow the inner Lord Krishna to blow uninterrupted the Bansi of our hearts.

Therefore, my friends, keep your heart ever unalloyed and pure and the Lord within will be highly pleased to manifest His voice through you. Then, ambrosial words will be dripping from your lips and your talk will mesmerize and magnetize the people with its modesty, respect and love. Their woes and sorrows will be washed away. Your word will not go unheard. Nobody will have the strength to contradict your opinion. Your speech will be a Murali to them. Your words will soothe thousands of wounded, bleeding hearts and radiate joy and peace. Thus, the purity of one's heart expresses the divinity of His voice.

Love for All

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Bhakti Yoga Book 2, A World of Emotions



What is an example of a bhakta engrossed in love?

Swami Satyananda: For many years in the Rishikesh ashram I suffered from diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, paratyphoid and many more illnesses, but still I did not think of leaving. I used to work very hard. That was the early period of the ashram. In order to get food, I had to walk four to five kilometres in the hot sun every day and come back, and there was only one

meal a day. I did not take tea and could not even get it, but I never noticed this at all, I never thought about it.

When one loves someone, difficulties are not difficult. One becomes aware of the difficulties only when there is no one to love. If one loves the guru, or anybody, even if the whole world kicks or criticizes him, he doesn't realize it. Swami Sivananda was so compassionate and peaceful that I never felt the diseases and sicknesses I suffered from. How did this happen? Was I dreaming or was I under hypnosis? When there is deep and abiding love for someone, how can one be aware of the extraneous experiences? When one is in the warm embrace of one's lover, one does not even notice the passage of time. When one is in the grip of passion and violence, one does not



think of anything else. So, when one is in the presence of the guru, how can there be awareness of oneself?

What is the ultimate of a bhakta's love?

Swami Satyananda: Love is constant remembrance and awareness of the beloved Lord and a keen longing to unite with Him. Love is expressed in the language of feeling and experience. If one can explain the psychological reactions one obtains from worldly love, one can also explain divine love.

It is very difficult to love. Every time man has loved he has stumbled and failed to assimilate it, and still humankind has not understood exactly what it is. Love is an experience in which the vision of inseparability can be achieved, where there is none whom one does not love.



YOGA AND YOGAVIDYA PRASAD

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

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

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

To access YOGA online:

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

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

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

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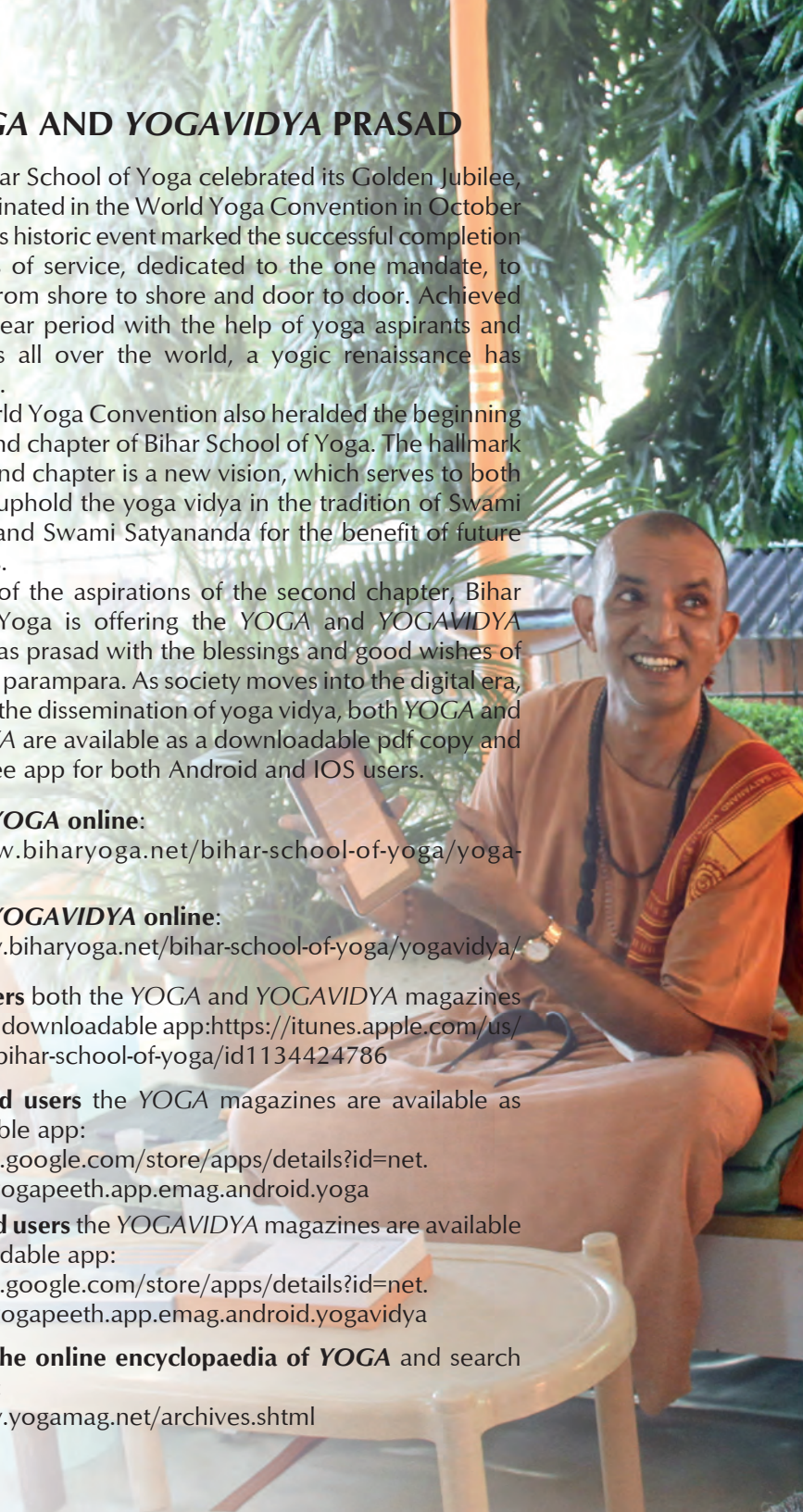
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Kriya Yoga Yatra 1

Kriya Yoga Yatra 2 & Tattwa Shuddhi

Aug 20-25

Kriya Yoga Yatra 3 & Tattwa Shuddhi 2

Sep 17-23

Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2, 3

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 Ramacharitamanas

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