

# YOGA

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## Hari Om

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

The first wealth is health. It is the greatest of all possessions and the basis of all virtues. One should have physical as well as mental health. Even for spiritual pursuits, good health is the prerequisite. Without health, life is not life. The person who has good health has hope, and the person who has hope has everything.

The instrument must be kept clean, strong and healthy. This body is a horse to take one to the goal. If the horse tumbles down, one cannot reach the destination. If this instrument breaks down, one will not reach the goal of atma-sakshatka, self-realization.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

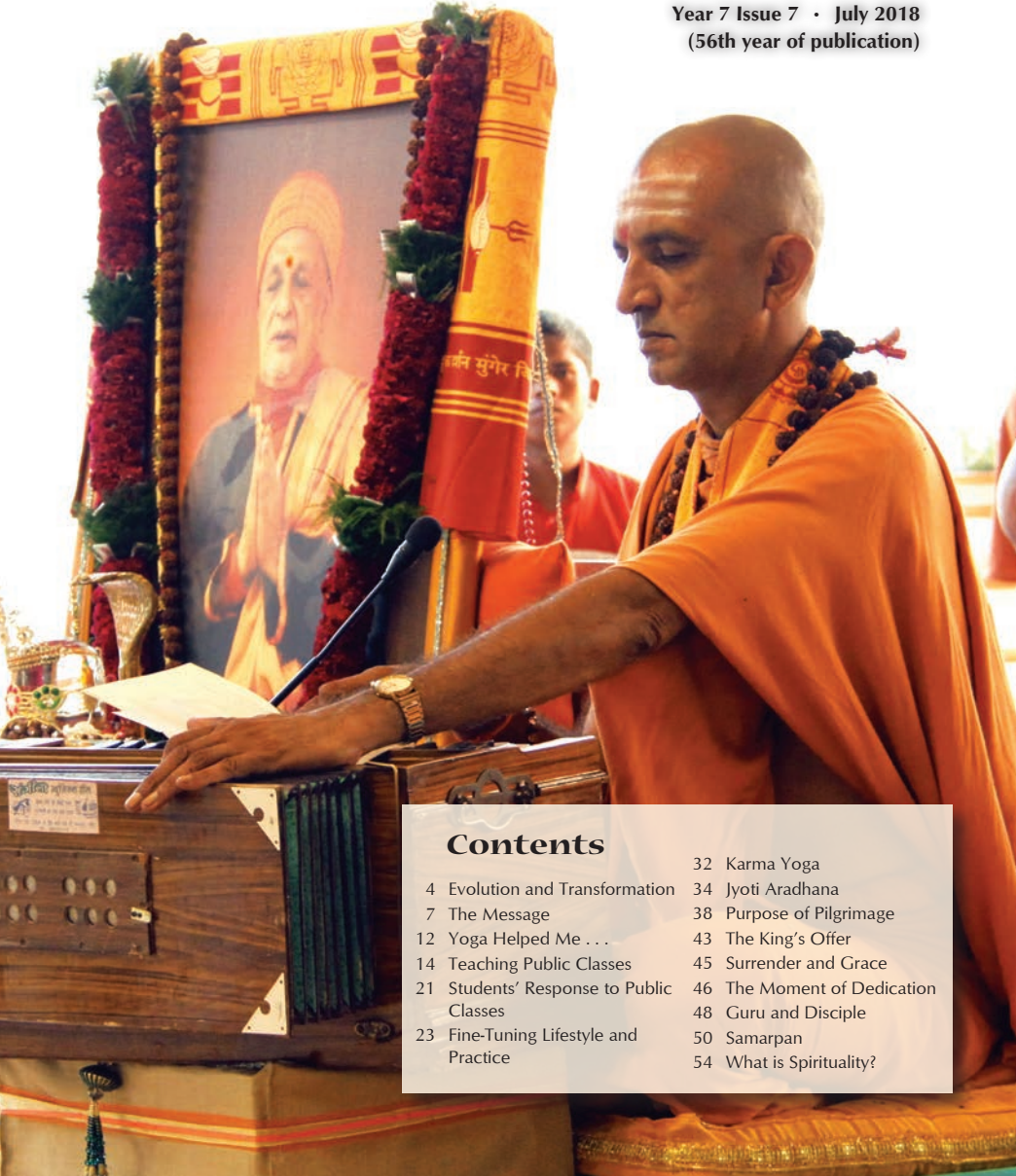
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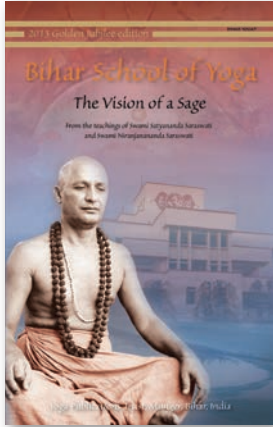
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

# Evolution and Transformation

*From Bihar School of Yoga, The Vision of a Sage, From the teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati and Swami Niranananda Saraswati*



*Swami Satyananda:* I feel that the time has come when the world will change. The emphasis on material things will diminish and more emphasis will be put on a higher, spiritual life. This can be realized through yoga. When awareness grows, man's thoughts, concepts and values also change. If humanity as a whole is going to change, whether due to time as it has been destined, or through certain practices, then we are heading into the era of the

psychic, the supramental race.

Even if we do not practise yoga, the process of unfolding the awareness is going to take place, and it is taking place. From the beginning of time to this day, awareness has evolved through the laws of nature. Nature's scheme is that all men shall rise above instinct. The consciousness shall rise above instinct, then above the body, senses, mind and intellect. Ultimately, it will operate on a higher level. This higher level is the spiritual level, the level of yoga.

Before this psychic race is accomplished, man will have to fight a grim battle with himself. The psychic race will not be established so easily. One has to be careful because the first explosion or awakening of the psychic consciousness is complete anarchy, a complete non-acceptance of material values, complete detachment from the established values of life authorities, and so on. This happens in spiritual life, when

the development of awareness takes place and we come to a point when we think, 'What is all this nonsense?' Of course, the time also comes when balance returns. This balance must be brought about through evolution or through the practice of yoga.

### **Transformation**

If yoga is neglected or rejected by the West just because it is considered Hindu and not Christian, then the whole structure of those nations will be on the brink of disaster. The West has progressed because it has a well-organized society, but the individual is not organized. In order to discipline the mind at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels, there ought to be a science. No politics, no military, no law can save a country unless the individual is disciplined. Individual discipline is a result of continued practice of yoga.

A warrior like Arjuna had to carry a bow and arrow in his hand. A man in the battle of life must also carry a bow and arrow in the form of yoga. You are riding in the chariot that is the physical body. It is being driven by five horses, the senses. The chariot is being guided by the spirit or *atman*. Do not put down your bow. Yoga has to be heard and yoga has to be practised, not only in a hermitage, monastery or ashram, but also in the face of difficulties, conflicts and possible defeat.

For many years, I lived with my guru, Swami Sivananda, in the Rishikesh ashram and had the divine opportunity to serve him. During this period, I had time to reflect over the matters of body, mind and spirit. After I left the ashram, I wandered all over India,



Nepal, Afghanistan, Burma and Ceylon on foot, by rail or by bullock cart. I realized then that it was necessary for every individual to follow a path. It is not that people do not need faith or belief, they do, but today they need something more than that. Yoga can fulfil this long sought-after need. Yoga is one of the holiest mantras of humanity and it is going to be the foundation of the future world communities. It is a culture for humanity, for everyone, regardless of religion, caste or race, for those who believe in God and also for those who do not.

Unless we find the way, the purpose for existence, we will not be able to experience the greater side of our lives, the ultimate dimension of our consciousness. The most practical and the easiest way for each and every individual to contact the substratum of his existence is through yoga. People are searching for the purpose of their life. Yoga will give them a path to discover this.



# The Message

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Sri Swami Satyananda has given to all of us two gifts: yoga and yajna. Yoga is the subject of discovering peace, realizing the beauty and experiencing the divinity in our personal life. Yajna is the means, the medium, by which we can perceive, support and nurture the positive qualities and divinity inside other people. Yoga represents the personal aspect, yajna represents the communal aspect. These were the two gifts



that Sri Swamiji gave to us and which have a clear direction. They are not just rituals being performed, or yogas being taught without any aim or purpose. There is a definite direction, a path, laid out before us by our gurus.

The work of our master is seen in Munger and Rikhia. Rikhia is being led by Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, who is in her own right an authority on the subject of spiritual life. She has been the medium by which the teachings and the messages of the gurus are conveyed.

Munger comes in the jurisdiction which at present is mine. My only contribution is to maintain and nurture the spirit of yoga. To maintain and nurture the spirit of sannyasa, and to play around with the children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal for they are the future of our society. I salute all the grown-ups for their contribution and wish them well in their life, to lead a stress-free life. That is my job. I am not at the helm of an institution, but I do work for yoga and I do work for sannyasa.

The intervention of guru in one's life, in my opinion, is the most important and critical intervention, for it gives focus and a purpose and it changes the destiny of a human being. When people ask me, "What is the role of guru in one's life?" I only feel one thing: the association and interaction with guru changes one's destiny. That is true. If we look at our lives and see how it has changed, developed, become better, or we are more at peace with ourselves, we have a focus in our life, due to what? There is better understanding and appreciation of life, due to whom? There is an expanded perception of how we can live our life and beautify our environment. From where does this idea come? This idea comes from associating with those people who are spiritually oriented.

### **Science predicts**

In every session of this Guru Pournima celebration, I have been referring to one incident, one statement given by one of the greatest astrophysicists in the world, Stephen Hawking, who only recently made a statement that in this present scenario, in this present environment, humanity has only two hundred years more to exist. After that, human life will be extinct from the planet, as many other life-forms have become extinct in the past. This is something we have known, that one day we are going to be gone, yet the proximity to our extinction is so close now.

Why has that happened? Earth has taken millions of years. Homo sapiens appeared on the face of this planet two hundred thousand years ago. We were foragers and hunters then and there was no exploitation. When the agrarian society took over, humans did not become the master of their destiny but grain became the master of their destiny. We became the servant to grains. Looking after them, caring for them, growing them, consuming them, for what? For our needs. Gradually we became servants to the things that are now essential for us today.

We are not masters of our own destiny, we are dependent on many factors. Many other factors decide what our destiny is going to be. These factors become activated when the mind



is absolutely material, involved in bhoga. Bhoga is perfectly all right, but excessive bhoga is detrimental to human health and to global health.

Due to excessive bhoga there is problem in life, there is problem in family, there is problem in body, there is problem in society, there is problem in the nation, there is problem in the world, there is problem in nature, there is problem in water, there is problem in air, there is problem everywhere.

In this exploitative materialistic mentality, we are looking at a time period which is our own time period and not beyond. 'What can I do to enjoy life now?' Nobody thinks what we can do to improve the quality of life for the future generations. In our quest for comfort, pleasure and prosperity, we are destroying so many essential tattwas of our planet which are necessary for our survival. It is only three hundred years ago that we had the Industrial Revolution, the time when humans started to exploit nature and the environment. Now scientists are predicting that the result is so dramatic and drastic that within two hundred years we shall be extinct.

### **Become spiritual**

This is the outer, materialistic reality, but can this reality be altered? Can this condition be changed? Yes. How? By becoming spiritual yourself. Spirituality is the antidote to materialism. And if they can go hand in hand, human life is complete. If they do not go together hand in hand, then there is always conflict, confusion, destruction and deviation in human life. Swami Sivananda said that if anything can save humanity, it is spirituality. Many decades later Sri Swami Satyananda made the statement that the goal of life is to cultivate spiritual awareness through which we can manage better the influences of the materialistic life. That has to become our aspiration, if we want to see the continuity of our future generations. Two hundred years is how long? Your grandson, your great-grandson, not beyond that. The only way this destructive nature can be rectified is by becoming spiritual.

For this, Sri Swamiji did not stick to a philosophical idea, that 'you are God, God is in you'. He gave us a practical path: to experience the transformation of the human nature and personality, and to be a witness to that. To be the experiencer of the transformation that happens, by converting the negative into positive. Therefore, be a witness of the transformation that takes place within you, and do not just follow anything in a mechanical manner. When you become the witness of the transformation that happens within you, then you identify with it and it becomes part of your expression in life. When the spiritual awareness sets in, the materialistic greed takes a backseat. We all know that there is enough given to us by nature to survive, yet there is never enough to satisfy the human greed.

Greed leads to manipulation. Manipulation leads to altering the natural law of nature and human beings, and that is where conflicts come in. With spiritual awareness, the greed is observed and greed is converted into a positive need.

My need is four chapatis a day. My greed is four hundred chapatis a day. If I follow the path of greed, then no amount, no volume of grains in the world can ever satisfy my greed. If I follow the call of my need, then I find that there is everything in abundance all around me. There are rich people, who go to New York, and in one day buy goods worth six million dollars. There are rich people, who go to New York to buy, in one day, one million dollars worth of shoes. This is not a joke. What does it indicate? Greed. And what does contentment indicate? Absence of greed. Spiritual life leads you to contentment. And material life leads you to greed.

Both can be balanced and checked by each other. They both can counterbalance each other. The practical method of this was taught to us by Sri Swamiji, whose teachings we are propagating. We are only postmen, the letter has been sent by the writer. The writers are Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda. They have written the posts, they have written the letters, they have written the books.



Swami Niranjan is only the postman who brings their correspondence to you. You open that correspondence, you read that correspondence, you like it, you accept it; you don't like it, you throw it in the rubbish bin. That is your choice. My job is only to deliver the goods that have been packed by Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda. It is your job to either receive it with dignity or ignore it. One thing is definite, if we want to see the continuation and the evolution of human life, we have to become spiritual. Not tomorrow, not today, but now.

The way to become spiritual now is not by thinking about God, but by connecting with goodness in life. In that expression of goodness, you will feel and experience the grace of God. Therefore, choose one idea, one quality, and develop it in your life. Once you feel that you have come to a point where nothing more can develop, choose another one, pick another one. In this way, go on fine-tweaking your nature, your personality. One day, you will realize that you are what you were searching for. That is the message of Sri Swami Sivananda and Sri Swami Satyananda.

– 8 July 2017, *Guru Poornima, Paduka Darshan, Munger*

# Yoga Helped Me . . .

## **Light and yoga**

I started to practise yoga in 2010. Slowly the changes in my life started to happen.

I stopped eating meat, I stopped drinking alcohol, I drank less coffee and I stopped chewing gum. Passion transformed into divine love towards a woman who I met. I stopped watching TV.

I met positive people and moved far away from negative people, negative influences and tendencies. I felt even in the beginning a divine force, like a light and protection in my life.

Yoga helped me to come out of deep depression and despondency. I felt blissful and happy and in many ways open and full with light. A chain of small miracles happened and I started to feel protected and having wings. I could not believe that so beautiful things could happen to me and I am very thankful for all of this. I feel a new divine strength in my life.

– *Chaitanyadeva, Bulgaria*

## **What yoga gave me**

With yoga I became calmer and a better person. More and more I put myself in the place of the person in front of me and I try to understand his position or to accept it as it is – without commentary. I always try to help if I can and share my knowledge and experience. Sometimes I notice the signs, which the universe sends to us (not every time at the first glance).

I learned to do everything with the maximum of my abilities, which I have at the moment and I rarely think for the result. Often I ask myself what stage have I reached regarding expectations and desires. Sometimes I say some bad words to myself and others, but I quickly understand this and take back my words.

Yoga helped me to manage three slipped discs, to overcome three years of depression and to enjoy life as it is. I can do more

and I continue to search and discover myself again. I try to change myself so I can love myself more and I try to discover the divine spark of goodness in everybody and to be aware that 'I am You and You are I'.

For all this I am thankful to my teachers – for the knowledge, patience and inspiration which they give us.

– *Atma Jaya, Bulgaria*

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Yoga teaches us to come out of the personal shell. Before a seed can sprout, it has to die. Only when the shell of the seed is broken will the sprout be seen. In the same manner, yoga helps us to break the shell of selfishness and egocentricity in order to allow spiritual sprouting to take place where there is beauty, calmness and peace. This is what we look for in our life in today's society.

– *Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

# Teaching Public Classes

*Swami Omgyanam, Belgrade, Serbia*

It was one cold winter 4 years ago when I first visited the volunteers' office at the municipality of Belgrade, Serbia. Homeless people of the city were in need of warm clothes and when we delivered a full trunk of coats and jackets we had collected in our yoga centre 'Bihar Yoga Club', we asked them how we could be of more use. Industrious and hardworking young volunteers soon arranged for us to teach public classes, free of cost, in their municipality.

## **Public in the yoga class**

People who come to a yoga centre or an ashram have chosen yoga in preference to another physical activity. They usually come with certain information about yoga if not with a spiritual inclination. In my public classes the majority of people were not familiar with yoga. They did not know what yoga was. They came just because it was offered for free.

At our first class about 70 people appeared. I soon learned that most of them were ageing, some were ill, some post-operative convalescents, some were mentally unstable and some had behavioural problems.

There is no chance to have an interview with a new student to ask about their health, medicine taken and other necessary details, as we normally do with students before they commence attending classes. The class was scheduled in between other activities of the sports centre and there was no possibility to set a time even for distribution of a questionnaire. Even a questionnaire would not serve the purpose as in every class about 30 percent of the students are new.

Well, it was a peculiar situation and peculiar yoga classes they were.



### **Adapt, adjust, accommodate**

Soon the class had grown to 85, 100, 110 students. The classes were scheduled in the morning, so working people and young people were in the minority. The majority of the students were in the 50+ and up to 70+ age group, and to some of them the sense of hearing had started weakening. The municipality could not provide the sound system so I had to learn to project my voice, to shout and maintain peace within and without. Not to mention that I have no platform to sit on, so in order for everybody to see me, I have to teach standing all the time – so standing and moving around and shouting, peacefully.

Even during the yoga nidra practice, every instruction had to be said at the top of my voice, but in such a way to still enable relaxation and withdrawal into oneself. The trick is to be calm, steady and very relaxed from within, and let the voice come freely with full force from the core of the stomach. Then the voice is loud but the vibrations are not disturbing. I found out that in that way teaching leaves me full of shakti after every class, as if I had churned my own manipura chakra, by shouting in shanti.

People have lost the habit to listen to each other, it was impossible for the absolute beginners to understand my simple instructions. My instruction, 'Lift your right leg' had different results: lifting the left arm, head, left leg or the whole body into

standing position. Practices done in the lying position with the head turned towards the teacher were difficult to follow. It was much easier to watch my face talking to understand the practice. I had to perform practices and show them how to do them, over and over again.

I soon came to know that people cannot sit on the floor for more than a few minutes, that they cannot even lie on a hard floor for a more than ten minutes, and that they cannot stand for more than five minutes. I had to develop the new skill of making my class plan in such a way that the students in one class do asana in sitting, lying, and standing position in appropriate sequence and amount of time.

As the time allotted to us by the sports centre was just one hour, I had to make a plan for every class in minutes, so that they have the right amount of asanas (about 25 minutes), pranayama (15 minutes) and yoga nidra (about 17 minutes). So if I have to introduce a new asana the asana segment of the class would take 35 minutes, then pranayama would be adjusted to 10 minutes, and yoga nidra should be 15 minutes.

Maybe you will think that I am a perfectionist, but believe me, with such a big group of people from all walks of life, coming right from the street, you have to be on top of it. The plan should be fixed and stable so that there is no space for insecurity. Every moment of insecurity in the teacher, every slight nervousness or impatience in the voice, every irritability revealed in body movement will be detected and the commotion within and eventually from without will start. At the same time, you must be spontaneous and also free, within the borders of the class plan.

### **Discipline the masses**

It took them quite a while to understand that it is not appreciated to speak during the yoga class. People were making comments, shouting to me "Louder!" They were laughing like little kids about some asana, they were pointing at someone, or just chatting. Sometimes the students would start a fight



over a space, or they would attack the person who was able to relax deep enough to start soft snoring. Some people would check their bags and make continuing noise due to the inbuilt nervousness. Once a lady during yoga nidra secretly took from the bag a packet of snacks and placed it on her abdomen and continued munching from it until it was finished.

To find the right measure of implementing a discipline, to be firm but gentle, to avoid being policeman and harsh, was a challenge, but soon I discovered that to maintain a decent amount of discipline was necessary.

Even today, after 4 years, there is always someone coming late 15, 20, 25 minutes. The late-comer usually comes with a bundle of covers and yoga mats in plastic bags and adjustment lasts for the next 10 minutes with all the noise. Not to mention phones ringing occasionally testing the level of everyone's pratyahara in yoga nidra.

### **Spiritual yoga**

As soon as we started with public classes I learned that those new students, peculiar as they are, would become my teachers. Many yoga teachers would like to see some spiritual aspirant entering their class, some seeker who want to study the *Bhagavad Gita*, learn mantras, meditation and come to the ashram. Well, my public class students have no such inclinations but they have taught me what spirituality was.

None of them came for any spiritual purpose. They came basically to fill the long hours of the day, to do some exercise and to make friends with someone. But they genuinely experience and feel how with yoga they feel better, they become better and they keep on coming. They simply love the Satyananda Yoga practice of yoga nidra. They clap after the practice, some still in lying position, each time. I tried to ask them not to do that, it did not work. Then I understood: they do not clap to me, my teaching, but to that peace or inner space they are connecting with, after who knows how long. They cannot find the way to that peaceful inner space anywhere else.

I can see how they change over time for the better, outwardly and inwardly. That is for me spirituality.

### **Testimonies**

One lady was very keen to teach her husband who would not come to a single class himself. He had severe allergies and he was sneezing and using tissues all the time. He stopped going out and meeting people, even family gatherings and dinners, as his condition was very uncomfortable. His eyes were red, his nose red, and he had running nose and had to blow the nose every now and then. With neti he considerably reduced symptoms and now he is visiting his friends happily.

One lady had high level of cholesterol since youth. She has her GP medical check-up every month as she comes in the group of high risk for cardiovascular diseases. First she noticed how her sleep considerably improved with yoga. Her doctor asked her what was the new thing she had introduced in her life as he noticed the level of cholesterol was reducing. At first she could not remember, then she remembered that yoga was new, but thought it was just a coincidence. Now her cholesterol is within the normal level and she practises yoga nidra at home.

My favourite reported benefit came from two sisters over 70, heavy built, leading 100 percent sedentary life. One of them, the cheeky sister, teased the other saying to me, "You know, after every yoga class she walks home in fast tempo, and always does some cleaning, but heavy stuff, like cleaning windows, the store or carpets. And you know, she is basically lazy and she just watches her TV shows all day."

Many students reported how they sleep better and feel more peaceful and less irritated with the issues that usually gave them strong reactions.

Some back pains were lessened, some disappeared. Many elderly students reported how they walk better and feel more confident in the snow and on slippery pavements in winter. Pawanmuktasana and some utthanasana, on a regular basis,

made knees, hips and muscles of the legs strong and also with other standing or balancing postures the balance and stability improved.

The best of all benefits is to see them smiling and joking like school girls and boys after every class. They say that yoga makes them happy, and the day when they go to yoga class is their happy day.

### **Outdoor classes**

Last year we moved from the hall on to the lawn outside, to have classes in the open air during the summer months. That was definitely my best experience and I believe their good memories as well.

The yoga meadow is just next to the sports centre where we normally have classes and it is by the Danube river with a beautiful view all around. We have to adapt, adjust and accommodate every single class. We meet many challenges. The cleanliness of the lawn, the level of noise or silence, the weather, the amount of people passing by – are all subject to change, day by day.

The sun, and therefore the shade, is moving during the class; the day is getting hotter, so we have to change places



and adjust. The grass is not always cut nor always clean; it has some bugs and bees. A stray dog comes along from nowhere and licks someone's face or foot during nadi shodhana or yoga nidra.

A mentally-deranged citizen occasionally decides that my students are his audience willing to hear his teachings. Or a trance techno party, leftovers of the previous night, is still in full swing around 8 am in the boat house club just next to our meadow. The old freight train, happily blowing the horn, passes 15 metres away from us usually right in the middle of yoga nidra, just to overpower my instructions . . .

. . . but the eye exercises in nature, pranayama in the fresh morning air by the river, antar mouna with all the beautiful sounds of nature, and overall recharging with early morning prana and sunrays - make those classes very special.

## **Conclusion**

Fifty to over a hundred mostly senior citizens, our students in each class, twice a week, with 30 percent students being newcomers in each class, make a great exposure to yoga in Belgrade. Many of our students have their children all over the world as in the 1990's many people emigrated to Sweden, Germany, UK or USA. They usually come to Belgrade during holidays and their parents make sure they are introduced to Satyananda Yoga. This takes them by surprise with its classical, traditional, integral and systematic approach. Many people have been exposed to our system and all of them reap great benefits.

For myself I can tell only that these are my favourite classes. I walk to every class with great joy, and very gladly meet new and every time different challenges. I see obvious benefits of yoga as I have never seen before. I see appreciation of every class in the eyes of my students and tangible genuine joy after every class. This is the best reward for my teaching.

*– August 2017*

# Students' Response to Public Classes



With the classical yoga I have great benefits from the practices for the digestive system. Recently I faced a great health problem. At New Year's Eve I was admitted to the emergency ward for an inflammation of the colon. The doctors suggested an immediate operation, but I refused. After leaving the hospital, I continued with my yogic practices focusing on the practices for digestive disorders. Now when I feel discomfort in my stomach and pain starts developing, I take a glass of warm water and gently do the yoga practices. After a short while the pain disappears. Not only that, everybody has noticed how I have become much more positive since I attend yoga classes.

Yoga is medicine! Due to my work as a flight attendant and 40 years of smoking, I have developed HOBBS chronic bronchitis and I use sprays, medication and I feel weakness. When I started attending free yoga classes I have seen that the practices are not demanding and after them I do feel better. I have noticed that I have difficulty to pass the six blocks of houses on my way to the yoga class. I have to stop and sit

down, take a shortcut or use the inhaler. However, after the class, I have no difficulty to walk back home and to breathe.

– *Dusica Antic*

I am 80 years old and I function much, much better than my friends who are not practising yoga. I had problems with sinusitis and now they are gone with pranayama. Especially nadi shodhana is very pleasant and beneficial. I make an effort to practise yoga every day.

– *Zdenka Glisic*

After many years of back pain (neck spondylitis) and many physical therapies, my friend brought me to yoga, which is one of the best things that happened in my life. Yoga has helped me to move about and live without any help and assistance at this advanced age of 86. I am happy to be able to do some asana under the competent guidance of our teacher. After her classes we all feel relaxed and smiling. Apart from detailed and clear instructions and guidance in the practices, she gives us a lot of love. We all, more than 100 of us, feel so grateful for the opportunity to have such good quality recreation as yoga.

– *Juvanc-Gerden Ana Nusha*

Yoga has changed me. I have started to love people and I am no longer leading other people's lives. I feel healthy and young in spirit. I love all!

– *Slavica Korunoski*



# Fine-Tuning Lifestyle and Practice

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Spiritual scriptures do not talk about enlightenment or realization, but instead begin with a basic thought: how to overcome suffering in life. Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva and the first disciple to whom he taught yoga and the tantras, poses this question to Lord Shiva. She says, “In this world, in this creation, there is suffering. How can a person overcome suffering; is there a method?” The instructions that Shiva gave to Parvati about overcoming suffering in life are the instructions of yoga and tantra. In this way, the foundation of yoga and tantra has been understanding the suffering of human life and making the attempt and the effort to overcome it.

Even Buddha started his journey with the same basic questions. The questions which motivated him to explore spiritual life were, "What is suffering; how can one understand and overcome it?" The philosophy of Buddha is based on overcoming human suffering. Similarly, the philosophy of Mahavir, the exponent of the Jain philosophy, also began with trying to understand human suffering. If you look at the life of Christ, he was also concerned with human suffering; people say that he died for our suffering, for our sins. When I look at all these different examples in history and the original ideas behind every philosophy and system of spiritual practice, nowhere do I find any statement that says that spiritual life is realization of God. Instead, the idea that comes forth is that spiritual life indicates a life free from suffering, where you are in a state of bliss, happiness and fulfilment, and all the faculties of your life manifest homogeneously.

### **Three causes of suffering**

Suffering has been classified into three groups: *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic*, and *adhidaivic*. One type of suffering originates from within the self. You are the cause of your suffering. Your mind is the cause of your suffering. Your association with the world of sense objects is the cause of your suffering, as are your expectations. That is one category, one group, and in this group you can include things like stress, tension, anxiety, fear, phobias, inhibitions, complexes, neurosis, psychosis. Everything can be put into this first category of suffering, *adhyatmic*, which originates within oneself. The mental, psychological, spiritual and social problems that you face are self-created, as you do not know how to manage the distorted conditions and states of mind or emotions. The first category of suffering stems from oneself.

*Adhibhautic* suffering comes from the world, and that also affects you. The suffering which comes from the world predominantly affects the physical body, creating problems such as fever, asthma, diabetes or cancer. The root cause of these illnesses is the environment in which you live: how



you cope with your environment, how you deal with your environment and with what attitude you live your life.

*Adhidaivic* suffering is destined suffering: what you are destined to go through in this life. This category is more related to past actions, past karmas, and your responses to the world and to events, circumstances or situations that you are exposed to, but over which you have no control. That it is the destined suffering.

Sages classified suffering in these categories: 1. *adhyatmic*: something that comes up from within yourself, 2. *adhibhautic*: something that you receive from your environment and the world in which you live, and 3. *adhidaivic*: something that is destined to happen.

### **Combining abhyasa and vairagya**

What is *sadhana*? People say *sadhana* is a spiritual practice, but if you look into the concept and idea of *sadhana*, you will discover that it is constant practice leading to harmony and balance at the physical level as well as the psychological level. The two components of *sadhana* are *abhyasa*, practice, and *vairagya*, dispassion.

Why is *vairagya* important in *sadhana*? It is the mental association with this world of sense objects that creates attachment, and attachment distorts the clarity of the mind. Once clarity of mind is gone, discrimination is lost and you get sucked into the attraction of the sense objects. When you get influenced by the power of the sense objects, attachment is experienced, identification is experienced, desire and expectation are experienced, and when you are caught in the vortex of desires and expectations, an obsessive-compulsive nature manifests. Therefore, *vairagya* comes in to free the mind from its obsessive identification with sense objects.

*Raga* is the result of an association with a sense object that you feel will give you pleasure and comfort. The *Yoga Sutras* state (2:7): *Sukhanushayi ragah*, meaning that wherever you feel you shall attain comfort and happiness you are attracted to that place, that object, that person. In this way, attachment

comes when there is an identification of something pleasant and beautiful which you can have, experience or acquire. When desire does not exist, then attachment also does not exist. If you do not identify with the object, thinking that it is going to give you happiness, then raga will not exist. Vairagya, therefore, means absence of the obsessive-compulsive behaviour of attachment. You can keep the mind free from that intense desire, from that intense expectation, from that intense craving, and when the mind is free, it is at peace.

Next is abhyasa. Abhyasa is the practice that leads to a state of restraining the senses and mental forces which flow outwards. That is the purpose of abhyasa: to restrain energy, to hold back the energy which is flowing outward from yourself into the world, and which is the cause of your association and connection with the world, the environment, people and sense objects. Abhyasa and vairagya together constitute sadhana. Just abhyasa, practice without vairagya, can never be considered sadhana. That is a karma, a kriya, an action.

### **Aim of sadhana**

Sadhana is needed when there is mental and physical suffering, as it allows one to disconnect from the feeling of suffering. During suffering fear also manifests. Suffering induces fear, disease induces fear, and that fear restricts the powers of the mind. Therefore, sadhana becomes the medium by which you can overcome these fears and insecurities that are normal in life.

What is the aim and the direction of sadhana? How do you know that you are on the right track and that your sadhana is giving you the desired result? The way to know is by observing your vairagya. Observe your own vairagya, observe your own raga. When asked how can you know that you are progressing in spiritual life, the masters give only one answer. The lessening of sensorial and sensual identification is an indication that you are progressing in your spiritual sadhana. Your mind is becoming more and more balanced and it is gravitating less and less towards fleeting and temporary situations where you can have a









momentary glimpse of happiness or sadness. The reduction of desires, attractions, associations and attachments is, therefore, an indication that your sadhana is giving the desired result.

Vairagya is not negation. You do not negate anything in vairagya; rather, it is acceptance of the situation and knowing how to come out of the maze created by the mind in relation to the sense objects. This suffering is caused by the tamasic nature of the mind. A sattvic nature knows no suffering; it is the tamasic nature that experiences suffering. Sattvic nature is free from all the attractions and repulsions, raga and dwesha, and experiences harmony and contentment. The craving mind is the tamasic mind, the desirous mind which seeks self-gratification and self-fulfilment, and it is this craving mind, the tamasic mind, which becomes the root cause of human problems. The aim of sadhana is, therefore, to go from the state of tamas towards the state of sattwa. Sadhana should lead you from tamasic conditions to sattvic conditions. Only then can the quality of life improve.

*-8 April 2011, Ganga Darshan, Munger*







detached, disinterested observer. Though seemingly a paradox, the karma yogi is able to work more efficiently in this manner without being swayed by personal whims and prejudices, or motivated by likes or dislikes. He does what is necessary in the given circumstances from the core of his being, the inner self.

### **Does the practice of karma yoga require a particular way of life?**

*Swami Satyananda:* Karma yoga is a wonderful yogic path that is open to everyone. It is an easy yoga which anyone can practise as everyone is performing action, whether internal or external. The brain and nervous systems are acting as well. Writing, digging or washing are external actions; thinking, the flowing of blood, the functioning of glands are interior actions. One becomes aware of actions through which this reality, this universal consciousness and perception can be realized. The personality evolves in each and every performance in life.

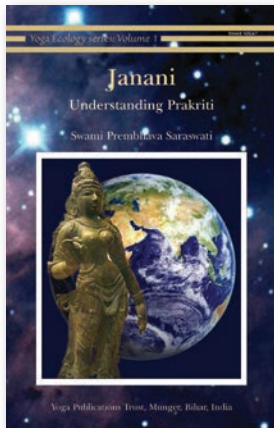
Therefore, everybody should try to transform life and the actions performed in the spirit of karma yoga. Whether one is a householder or an ascetic, it makes no difference. The practice of karma yoga purifies. A person can do any action in this way and it will not bind him. There is obviously no need for renunciation, for giving up or accepting something.

Karma yoga only requires training the mind in a certain way. It is a mental renunciation that can be done in any profession. Through karma yoga one can practise yoga twenty-four hours a day, using actions as a means to gain higher awareness.



# Jyoti Aradhana

From Janani, Swami Prembhava Saraswati



Aspirants require divine light and inspiration in their lives to help them on the spiritual path. Jyoti aradhana, simply lighting one small flame, is a way of invoking the divinity into one's life. It is a five-minute practice that can be done daily or during special times of sadhana or remembrance. By lighting the flame with feeling and sincerity, you connect with your own source of divine inspiration.

In many religions around the world, the candle flame is associated with light and divinity. In the Christian faith the symbol of the flame represents the light of Christ and candles are placed at the church altar at the time of prayer.

Traditionally, since vedic times, a clay, brass or silver deepak is used to burn the flame. A *deepak* is a vessel specially designed to hold oil and a cotton wick. A natural cotton wick is used along with natural oils, such as mustard, sesame, olive or vegetable oil. If oil deepaks are not available, then tea light candles may be used. If available, an incense or essential oil burner can also be lit to purify the air of negative thoughts and vibrations. Sweet, natural earthy scents of flowers and wood relax the mind and influence the environment of a room immediately.

The practice of jyoti aradhana is very simple. In your sadhana room or a quiet space indoors, place and light the prepared deepak or candle. You may like to keep the flame in front of a photo of your guru, ishta devata or any source of inspiration that you wish to connect with through love and

respect. Once the jyoti is lit light the incense and say a prayer of thanks and gratitude to the object of your worship and sit quietly for a few minutes. The jyoti may be left to extinguish naturally, which may take a few hours depending on the size of the vessel. According to vedic tradition a flame symbolizes the eternal, everlasting atma and is therefore never blown out.



Soon, you will find that the room in which the jyoti burns becomes a place of sadhana, bathed in the energy of peace and beauty; and through this flame you begin to feel and create the link between the individual consciousness and the cosmic consciousness. In this way, you begin to communicate with and invoke the divine into your life.

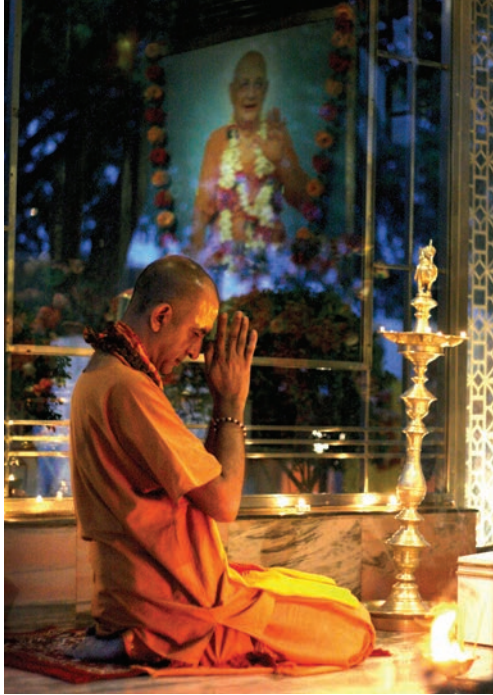
### **Akhanda jyoti aradhana**

*Akhanda* means 'unbroken'. *Akhanda jyoti aradhana* is the practice of keeping a jyoti burning continuously for days, months and even years. The akhanda jyoti in Jyoti Mandir at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth has been burning continuously since 1964. People from all over the world come to have darshan of the akhanda jyoti. Every year its light spreads more beauty, peace and auspiciousness.

At Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth, akhanda jyoti and aradhana jyoti aradhana are performed on a daily basis and at



special occasions as a practice. You may also wish to perform jyoti or akhanda jyoti aradhana in your home as it is performed in the ashram in order to maintain and strengthen the connection between you, the ashram and your source of inspiration.



*If you wish to follow a similar tradition, to keep alive your connection and your memory, the cherished moment of the time you have spent with the most beautiful person in your life, then light one deepak in your home, an eternal flame for 24 hours, from 5th to 6th continuously.*

*That will be your personal tradition, to keep your connection alive with this transcendental being who gave us everything in abundance. Light a candle, light a lamp, light a deepak in your home, or wherever you may be, and meditate for a few moments, on those cherished moments that you have spent with Sri Swamiji, and the moments that have inspired you.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

## Jyoti aradhana at Ganga Darshan

- *Guru Bhakti Yoga*, every 5th and 6th of the month, ashram residents, students and guests remember the life, inspiration and maha samadhi of Sri Swami Satyananda. From 12 noon on the 5th until evening of the 6th, akhanda jyotis are lit in the sacred places of the ashram. Throughout this period the burning jyoti magnifies the connection to Sri Swamiji, his life, teaching and the tradition. It is this simple practice of regularly lighting the akhanda deepaks that will continue to inspire aspirants for years to come.
- *Twice a year on Navaratri*, an akhanda jyoti burns for nine days in the sacred places.
- *Every Poornima and Ekadashi*, jyoti aradhana is performed before the chanting of the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavad Gita* respectively.
- *Every evening at sunset*, special garden jyoti aradhana is performed to the trees and garden murtis of all deities in Satyam Udyan.

Since the time jyoti aradhana started at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth, the residents have been witness to many miracles. Deepaks have been seen burning unattended for days without oil or against all odds in wind, rain and storm. These phenomena indicate a connection and communication between the ashram and the divine. They help remind us of the grace that flows through our lives and strengthen our faith, filling us with inspiration and guidance.



# Purpose of Pilgrimage

*From May I Answer That, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



**Why is so much sanctity attached to a pilgrimage, and not to a mere sight-seeing trip or an official tour?**

It is because the very idea of 'going on a pilgrimage' prepares your mind to be in a highly receptive mood, in a highly prayerful mood. It shuts out the worldly grooves in the mind. You leave the cloak of your official life in your office room. You abandon the cumbersome apparel of social life when you leave your town or city.

Even if you travel with your family, you gradually begin to look upon the family members as co-pilgrims and not so much as personal relations. If you are alone, perhaps you live

completely in a spiritual world of your own, with little or no family cares, worries and anxieties. This is the mental condition that is most conducive to the greatest reception of the spiritual vibrations that surround you on all sides in holy regions like Uttarakhand.

The pilgrim who goes as a pilgrim is conscious that he is engaged upon a sacred mission of gathering spiritual impressions and will therefore gain the greatest blessings by a pilgrimage. He will be a thoroughly changed man when he returns from the yatra.

### **How are people benefited by a pilgrimage?**

This question has to be answered by each pilgrim for himself. The spiritual benefit always depends entirely upon the heart's faith. Faith is the life-breath of the spirit in man. No spiritual endeavour can be fruitful without it. With it, no spiritual achievement is impossible. If a pilgrim heartily believed, was convinced, and was certain at heart that all his sins would be washed away, that he would attain moksha and get beyond the wheel of samsara, there is absolutely no reason why it should not actually prove to be so.

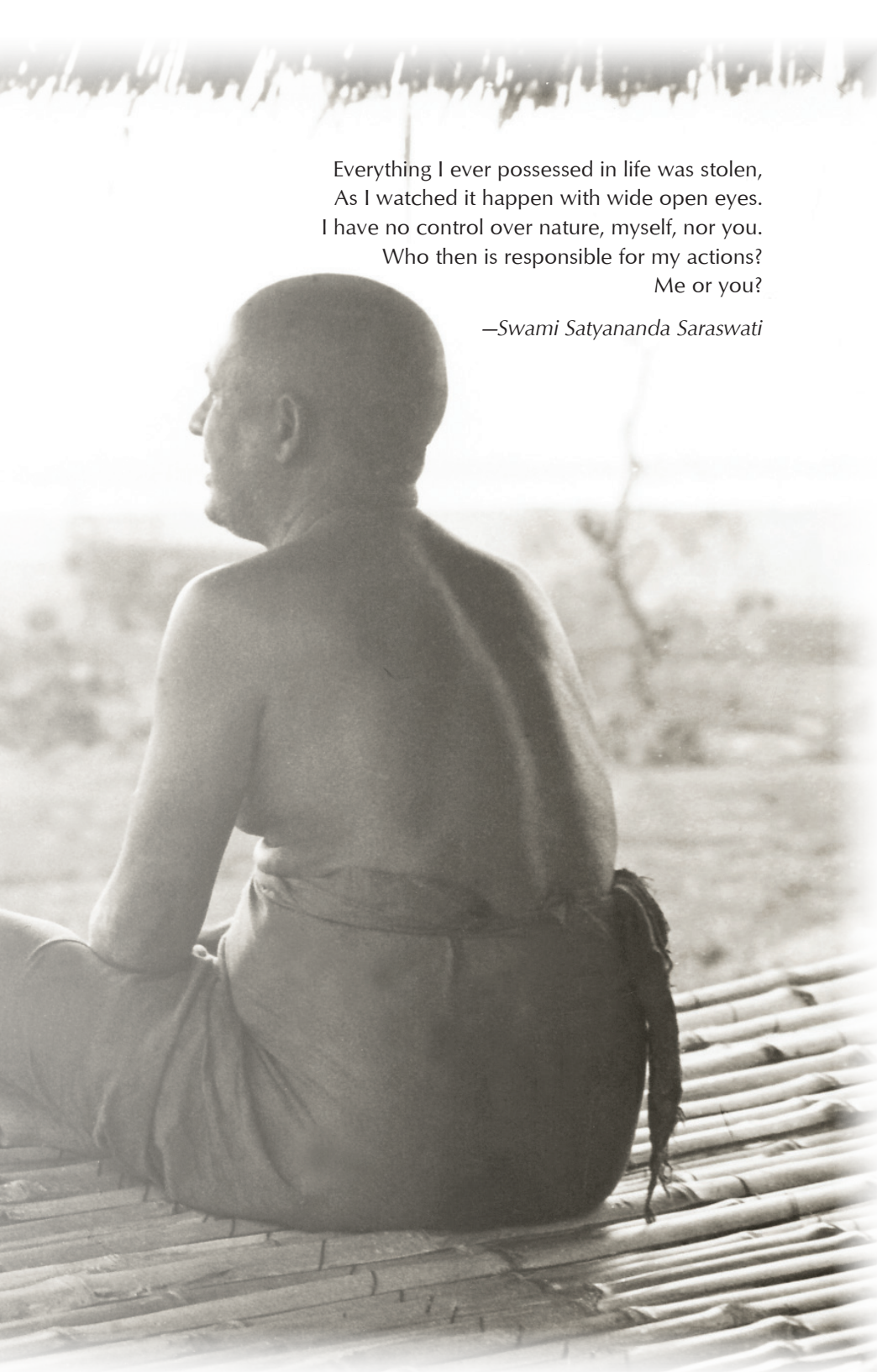
A pilgrimage like Badri-Yatra can wash off all your sins and enable you to take great strides towards the Great Goal, Self-realization, if you have firm faith in its glory. But, remember, the test of this faith is what you are after you return from the pilgrimage; if, after the pilgrimage, you prove that you have been thoroughly purged of all your sins, that all the evil samskaras have been washed away by the holy waters of the rivers you have bathed in, and that you have been filled with the spiritual vibrations of the sublime atmosphere you have sojourned in, and if you live a pure life of righteousness, devotion, truth, love and purity, you have certainly been liberated. The pilgrimage has served its supreme purpose.

Some pilgrims do rise to such spiritual heights, though their number may be small, and though they may not advertise their achievements.

# *You Gave Me Light*

I was wandering in darkness.  
You gave me light, showed the way.  
You aroused emotions; I was excited.  
You gave me voice; I started to sing.  
You gave me inspiration; I progressed.  
You pointed out the direction; I turned.  
You gave me beauty; I lost myself in it.  
You gave me a desire I couldn't satisfy.  
You gave me all the love I wanted.  
You gave me detachment  
To renounce the world and follow you.  
You held me close and I merged into you  
Actually, you have done everything.  
What have I done, can you tell me?  
This body of five elements,  
Birth in the world of sensual enjoyments,  
The many activities  
Which result from different situations,  
Inspiration which leads to progress in life,  
The power of logic, discourse,  
Acquired knowledge of the self,  
Infatuation with different theories,  
Success and failure,  
All were given by you,  
Nothing was mine.  
I desired wealth, but you have given me poverty.  
I wished for success, but you have given me failure.  
I wanted love, but you have thrown me out.  
I wanted friendship, but you have given me enmity.  
I wanted life and joy, but you gave me suffering and death.  
I had ambitions, but they were not fulfilled,  
Due to the fluctuations of time.





Everything I ever possessed in life was stolen,  
As I watched it happen with wide open eyes.  
I have no control over nature, myself, nor you.  
Who then is responsible for my actions?  
Me or you?

—*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

# BSY Foundation Day

And Sivam said, 'To others I give other tasks,  
But of you, Satyam, an arched bridge made of light I ask.

For the people on earth all suffer and strain,  
They will come to the bridge to ease their pain.  
Make a bridge of yoga across the depths and dark  
That shines forth its glory in a radiant arc.'

And Satyam said, 'They will come with heavy boots  
And mud on their soles.

How will I build a bridge so bright and whole  
That their feet will not tarnish and wear into holes?'

And Sivam said, 'With the best of yourself alone:  
Your heart is stronger than granite one-hundred-and-eight fold.  
Put a piece of it in the foundation and the bridge will hold.

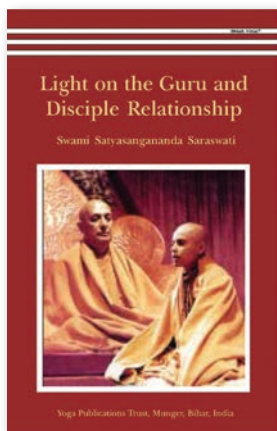
Put a piece of the hearts of those you love,  
They will surely forgive you for the radiant bridge above.

Make a bridge of yoga in a luminous arc  
That constantly shines its light in the depths and dark.  
Then teach the Yoga Vidya to your followers  
Who will maintain it bright for all travellers.'

*-Jignasu Mantramala, Finland (adapted and translated from  
'The Arch Bridge' by Aale Tynni, poet from Finland)*

# The King's Offer

*From Light on the Guru-Disciple Relationship, Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati*



**The following story was told to me by my guru.**

One day a rishi came to the court of a king. The king said, "What can I offer you?"

"Whatever is your own," was the rishi's reply.

"Very well," said the king, "I offer you ten thousand cows."

"But they are not yours," said the rishi, "they belong to your empire. I will only accept something which is your very own."

"Then I will offer you one of my sons," said the king.

"Your son is also not your own," replied the rishi.

The discussion continued, the sadhu declining all the king's offerings on the grounds that he did not really own them.

"All right," said the king at last, "I offer myself."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the rishi. "You do not even know who you are. How can you offer yourself to me?"

"Then I will give you my mind," said the king after some deep thought, "that is my own."

Still the rishi was not satisfied. "If you give your mind to someone, it means that you will think of that person and nothing else, unless it is specifically permitted. What is the point of giving away five hundred gold coins and then spending them on yourself?"

So the rishi left the court. After a few months he returned.

"Tell me honestly and seriously," he said to the king, "whether you are now ready to give me your mind. I don't want to hear about your property, your empire, your queen or your children."

The king thought deeply and replied, “No. I’m not ready yet.”

So the rishi went away again, and came back a third time. During his absence the emperor had prepared his mind through yoga.

“I will try to offer you my mind this time,” he said, “If I fail, forgive me.”

The rishi accepted the king as his disciple, and from that day on the king’s mind stopped thinking about everything except his guru. He did not care for his own welfare or for the welfare of his kingdom, he only wished to be with his guru.

The people reported this to the guru, who called the king to come to him. “Now it is time for you to get back to the business of ruling the kingdom. This is my command,” he said.

This story illustrates clearly how total surrender forms the core of the guru-disciple relationship. The disciple offers his or her limited self to the guru, completely merging the mind in him, and then receives it back in its fullness. This is the true concept of surrender. But how many of us can hope to achieve it? The life of every disciple should be dedicated towards the attainment of this goal.



# Surrender and Grace

*From Guru Tattwa, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

If you want to drink water at the tap, you will have to bend yourself. Even so, if you want to drink the spiritual nectar of immortality which flows from the holy lips of the Guru, you will have to be an embodiment of humility and meekness.

The lower nature of mind must be thoroughly regenerated. The aspirant says to his preceptor, "I want to practise yoga. I want to enter into nirvikalpa samadhi. I want to sit at your feet. I have surrendered myself to you." But, he does not want to change his lower nature and habits, old character, behaviour and conduct.

One's individual ego, preconceived notions, pet ideas and prejudices, and selfish interests should be given up. All these stand in the way of carrying out the teachings and instructions of one's Guru.

Lay bare to your Guru the secrets of your heart. The more you do so, the greater the sympathy, which means an accession of strength to you in the struggle against sin and temptation.

The aspirant, before he desires the grace of the Master, should deserve it. The supply of divine grace comes only when there is a real thirst in the aspirant, and when he is fit to receive it.

Guru's grace descends upon those who feel utterly humble and faithful to him. Faith is confidence and trust in Guru. Faith is firm conviction of the truth of what is declared by the preceptor by way either of testimony or authority, without any other evidence or proof. The disciple who has faith in the Guru argues not, thinks not, reasons not and cogitates not. He simply obeys.

The disciple's self-surrender to Guru and Guru's grace are interrelated. Surrender draws down Guru's grace, and grace of Guru makes the surrender complete. Guru's grace works

in the form of sadhana in the aspirant. If an aspirant sticks to the path tenaciously, this is the grace of the Guru. If he resists when temptation assails him, this is the grace of the Guru. If people receive him with love and reverence, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets all bodily wants, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets encouragement and strength when he is in despair and despondency, this is the grace of the Guru. If he gets over body-consciousness and rests in his own *ananda swarupa*, this is the grace of the Guru. Feel his grace at every step, and be sincere and truthful to him.



Throughout the ages the world has been guided by spiritually illumined people who come from time to time to raise man's consciousness and to remind us of the path we must traverse.

Swami Sivananda was one great soul who was born to give the world of spiritual life to thousands and thousands of people all over the globe. He never came to the West and he never went to the East, but today he is everywhere.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

# The Moment of Dedication

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Paramahamsaji has always said, *“The greatest and most sublime moment in my life was the precise moment when I surrendered myself before my Guru, Swami Sivananda.”*

Now, if we were in his place we would probably say, *“The most happy moment of my life was when I became realized.”* Would you not say that? However, Paramahamsaji does not say that. His dedication to his Guru has a greater place in his life than every kind of realization which he may have attained in the course of his future life. This shows the clarity of his vision, and that he never became caught up in the ego play of his attachments.

This beautiful expression coming from within him has been phrased very simply, *“The moment of dedication is the moment which I cherish more than anything in my life.”* Through this statement he is trying to make us aware, *“Look here, do not be caught up in the ego trips which come after you attain something. Do not be caught up in the euphoria, in the happiness and joy that comes after attainment, but remember that you have a path to walk, and many miles to go before you rest.”*



The most important thing is the drive, the motivation, the determination which you have, and which you had at the precise moment you started walking that path. Carry that spirit all the way through, until the very end, and go with that spirit for ever and ever!

– Printed in YOGA Vol. 5,  
Issue 6 (November 1994)

# Guru and Disciple

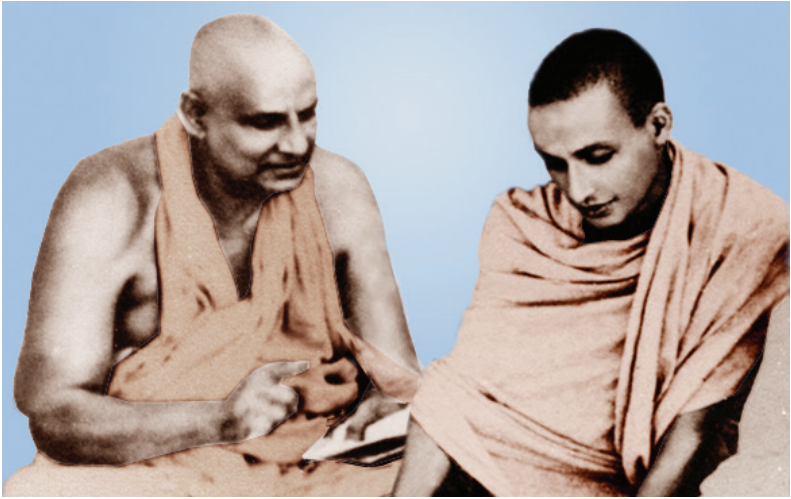
*From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



The guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant. The grace of God takes the form of the guru. To see the guru is to see God. The guru is united with God. He inspires devotion in others and his presence inspires all.

The guru is a link between the individual and the immortal. He is a being who has raised himself from *this* to *That* and thus has free and unhampered access into both realms. He stands, as it were, upon the threshold of immortality and, bending down,





he raises the struggling individuals with one hand, while with the other he lifts them up into the imperium of everlasting joy and infinite truth-consciousness.

Guru is the door to liberation, but it is the aspirant who has to enter through it. The guru is a help, but the actual task of practical spiritual practice falls on the aspirant himself.

A disciple is one who follows the instructions of the guru to the very letter and who propagates the teachings of the guru to less evolved souls on the path until the end of his life.

A true disciple is concerned only with the divine nature of the guru, the guru's actions as man not being his concern. He is totally oblivious of it. To him the guru is guru, even if he acts unconventionally. Always remember that the nature of a saint is unfathomable. Judge him not. Measure not his divine nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. Criticize not your guru's actions which are based on universal vision.

True discipleship opens the vision and kindles the spiritual fire. It awakens the dormant faculties. It is most necessary in one's journey along the spiritual path. Guru and disciple become one. The guru blesses, guides and inspires the disciple. He transmits his spiritual power to him. He transforms and spiritualizes him.

# Samarpan

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Surrender is a misunderstood word. When people use the word surrender, it means to let go of everything that they identify with, when they think 'this is me'. This is not really the meaning of the word surrender.

The word in Hindi is samarpan, which has been translated as surrender. The Hindi word 'sam' is complete or total; and 'arpan' is offering. So samarpan means total offering. When you go to a temple or to some religious event and you have to offer something there, whether it be flower or fruit, do you pick up any flower or fruit, or do you pick up the best that you can find? Do you pick up the trampled flower from the

ground to offer? Or do you take the best and budding flower to offer?

### **The best and most beautiful**

Samarpan actually means offering your positivity, not your negativity, offering the best that you can offer – your creativity, optimism, joy, happiness. That has to be offered to the divine, to guru, to God. Once that is offered a connection takes place between the two based on the purity of offering. Then God or guru comes alive in you. Otherwise the word surrender has no meaning. Rather it is always taken in a negative way: ‘Oh, that person has surrendered, now he is brainwashed, gone from our grip’. Surrender always denotes a negative meaning. In reality it is offering the best, the most beautiful that you have inside you to God or to guru for it to be enhanced and returned.

Surrender does not mean dependency. Some people think of surrender as a negative term, as control, brainwash, and also as dependency: ‘I don’t have to think anything about myself from today on, the guru will think about it. For my sickness, for my health, for my happiness, for my position, for my power, for my status, for my upliftment, for my downfall, for everything guru is responsible’. That is dependency.

That dependency is something which is not accepted in spiritual life. People may thrive on it; gurus may thrive on it for they are ordinary people. They may think, ‘I am the advisor to a person as to when to sleep, when to eat, when to do this, when to do that’. People like it for nobody wants to take responsibility for their own actions. Then it is easy to put the blame on some other person.

Surrender is not a word which I use to indicate a positive connection that can develop when you offer the best. Even to a stranger, if you smile, you will get a smile in return. It creates a connection. If you look at a stranger and frown, what will you get back? Will that create a connection? On the contrary, it will create separation. So, the word is samarpan – positive offering, and not surrender.

## Responsibility

A true person or true disciple should be a person who is not dependent on anything, who takes responsibility and charge for their own life, health, welfare, upliftment and growth. To take responsibility for one's life is the biggest challenge for everyone, not only for a disciple, but everybody in this world.

Nobody believes in themselves and therefore people generally ask confirmation to other people; 'Shall I? Should I? I am planning, what do you think? What is your opinion?' They spend months talking about it to their families and friends before actually taking any step, as they themselves are not convinced. This is an indication that nobody wants to take charge or responsibility of themselves and of their failures. They want success but they don't want to face failures.

A disciple is somebody who stands alone from this mind-set, who will accept the responsibility, who will accept the challenge, and who will not be dependent on guru but be true to the teachings of the master.

– 8 December 2017, Ganga Darshan, Munger



# *My guru has shown me the path*

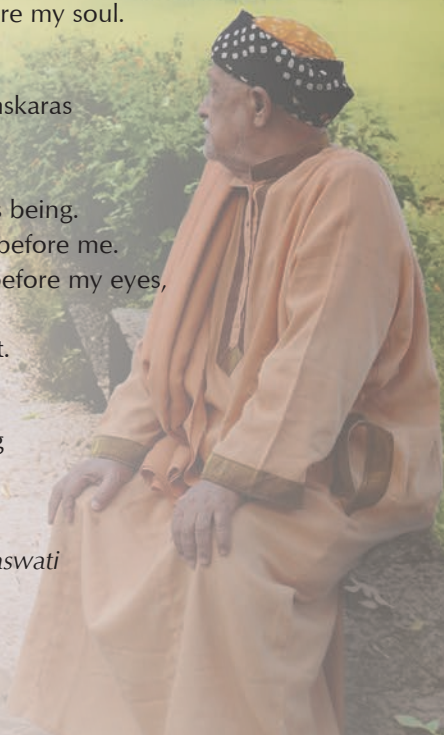
My guru has shown me the path.  
He desired my body,  
I gave it to him unflinchingly.  
He asked me for my prana,  
I offered it unhesitatingly.  
He said, "Will you give me your mind too?"  
I replied, "It is yours forever."  
I was left with nothing,  
Empty and desolate.  
The dark blue sky, dotted with stars, and the moon,  
That was all I had now.

Then all at once  
The sun burst upon me with a song.  
The restless ocean bathed me with its waves,  
The thundering clouds burst upon me with rain,  
The snow white swan danced before my soul.

My guru came to me once again.  
He said, "Will you give me the samskaras  
You have collected life after life?"  
I looked into his deep brown eyes,  
Into the dark and deep abyss of his being.  
For what seemed aeons, he stood before me.  
Everything else began to dissolve before my eyes,  
To melt and fade away.  
There was unity within and without.

It is the grace of my guru,  
He who has extinguished my being  
And absorbed me into himself.  
My guru has shown me the path.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



# What is Spirituality?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



**What will be your answer if I ask you, 'What is spiritual? What is spirituality?'**

You cannot equate spirituality with *atmajnana* or self-knowledge. You cannot equate spirituality with *moksha* or liberation. You cannot equate spirituality with self-realization. Spirituality is something and self-realization is something different. They do not come together at all.

The answer is straightforward. The moment you make the attempt, the effort to change the destructive and the negative in your life to become more positive and constructive, you become spiritual. The moment you negate the negativity and associate with positivity, you become spiritual. The moment you stop perceiving yourself as an individual unit and begin to experience yourself as a part of a greater system, you become more spiritual. The moment you are able to soften the sentiments, feelings, thoughts, aggressions which contain within them specks of hatred, anger, frustration, jealousy, ego, the moment you reduce them, you become spiritual.

So, spirituality is connecting with the positive and the creative aspect of life, not moksha, not self-realization, but becoming good, doing good and these are the spiritual lessons.

– 3 April 2015, Ganga Darshan, Munger

## 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/>

### **To access YOGAVIDYA online:**

<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>

**For Android users** the YOGA magazines are available as downloadable app:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.biharyoga.yogapeeth.app.emag.android.yoga>

**For Android users** the YOGAVIDYA magazines are available as downloadable app:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.biharyoga.yogapeeth.app.emag.android.yogavidya>

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<http://www.yogamag.net/archives.shtml>



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## Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2018

<i>Aug 6-11</i>	Kriya Yoga Yatra 1
	Kriya Yoga Yatra 2 & Tattwa Shuddhi
<i>Aug 20-25</i>	Kriya Yoga Yatra 3 & Tattwa Shuddhi 2
<i>Sep 17-23</i>	Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2, 3
<i>Dec 25</i>	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<i>Every Ekadashi</i>	Bhagavad Gita Path
<i>Every Poornima</i>	Sundarkand Path
<i>Every 5th &amp; 6th</i>	Guru Bhakti Yoga
<i>Every 12th</i>	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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Website: [www.biharyoga.net](http://www.biharyoga.net)

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