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## Hari Om

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Through sadhana one is able to remove the disturbing elements from the mind. Regular spiritual practice can help in business life as well as in daily life, and it gives restful sleep. Sadhana will infuse the aspirant with new strength, confidence and self-reliance.

Sadhana should make one ever cheerful, more concentrated, joyful, balanced, peaceful, contented, fearless, courageous, compassionate, angerless, selfless and desireless. Seeing visions and lights or hearing transcendental sounds does not have much spiritual value. Sadhana should give a rich inner life, an introspective inner vision and equilibrium under all conditions of life. These are the signs of spiritual growth. Sadhana is a lifelong process. Self-discipline is essential.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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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 ॥

# For Body, Mind and Spirit

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

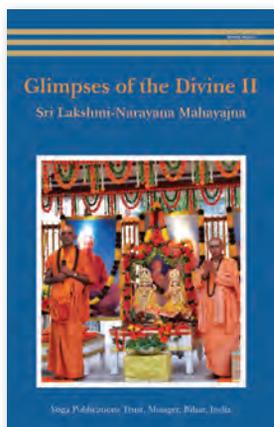


What is the meaning of spiritual awakening? You are mesmerized by the material world and thus think of material life as the basis of existence. When materialism becomes the basis of life, the spirit becomes weak. Note this carefully. The body becomes weak when it does not receive food and nutrition. The mind becomes weak when it does not receive joy. When it undergoes suffering continuously and cannot see a way out, the mind becomes negative, weak and narrow.

Similarly, the spirit becomes weak when there is lack of restraint, *sanyam*, in life. Unchecked indulgence and involvement in the material world diminishes the strength of the spirit. Just as the body needs nutrition from food to remain strong, the mind needs joy and the spirit needs *sanyam*. *Sanyam* means following disciplines in life.

# The Power to Align

From Glimpses of the Divine II, Sri Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna



*Swami Satyangananda:* Sri Swamiji was totally dedicated, and still is totally dedicated to the evolution of mankind. This was his main teaching: that man has to live a type of life by which his evolution is started, accelerated, and enhanced.

Maybe you are not evolving at all. You are just stagnating. How to give it a push? Sri Swamiji gave two tools for that: one was yoga and the other was yajna. Both are tools of self-evolution by which you can evolve your awareness. There are two processes of evolution going on in each person: one is evolution of mind and the other is evolution of awareness. They are different. They are not the same thing. The mind is evolving through your interaction with the world. You are becoming more intelligent, more intellectual; however, are you becoming more spiritual? That is the evolution of awareness. When you awaken to the reality and to the existence of something that you did not even know existed, and that exists within you, this is what he termed as 'evolution'. It is not a question of becoming good, better or more efficient. No, it is a question of your evolution, movement, growth and development.

Sri Swamiji said that the basis has to be *bhakti*, devotion. Bhakti is the medium by which you can practise the esoteric part of yajna or yoga. Bhakti has to be the medium. By bhakti he did not mean religion, where you go to the temple or you cry before God. No. By bhakti he meant a state of awareness, just as anger is a state of awareness. When you are angry, you are in a state of awareness. When you are grieving, when you



are stressed, when you are confused or agitated, these are all states of awareness. In the same way, you can have a state of awareness called 'bhakti'. It is a brainwave, a pattern of the brain. And it is so necessary to have this state of awareness.

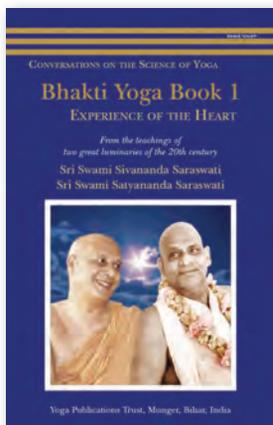
It is with this bhakti that you can experience peace, and in order to progress peace is essential. Peace in society, peace in the nation, peace in the world, and most importantly peace within yourself, because you have to live with yourself despite all the noise around you and the noise within your own self. That is what Sri Swamiji taught us, the evolution of man and the two tools of yoga and yajna.

Sri Swamiji says that the future belongs to bhakti. It is through bhakti that the problems and difficulties that you are facing will be solved. There is no other way. When in society there has been unrest, agitation, absence of peace and an increase in restlessness, it is always the bhakti movement and the divine mystery of bhakti that has come to the rescue, because bhakti has the power to align your awareness in the right way.

*– Lakshmi-Narayana Mahayajna, 12 September 2013,  
Paduka Darshan, Munger*

# Bhakti Yoga

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Bhakti Yoga Book 1, Experience of the Heart



## What is the process of bhakti?

*Swami Satyananda:* When bhakti overpowers the devotee, this physical body is converted into another material. In the beginning bhakti transforms emotions, then it transforms the mind, then it transforms one's attitudes, then it transforms one's perception; and maybe it transforms the physical body. The body can be disintegrated into the form of light. The body can be transformed into the form of flowers.

The power of bhakti is great. It is not only going to a sanctum sanctorum. Of course one can go, it is good; it is better than going to a pub, but it is not the ultimate.

This body is the temple. Krishna, or God, resides within. The devotees start from outside first, then go inside, then develop love. They go on developing it more and more. First they forget all their difficulties, then they forget all their relationships, then they forget past, present and future, and finally, they forget themselves. This is how the divine metamorphosis takes place.

## What is the meaning of the word bhakti?

*Swami Satyananda:* The word *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaja*, which means 'to adore, serve, love; to be devoted'. This is exactly what bhakti yoga is all about. It is the path of devotion. The word *bhakta* comes from the same root and means 'a person who practises bhakti yoga, who feels devotion'.

## **How does love transform into bhakti?**

*Swami Satyananda:* Bhakti means love, but this love contains an important element called *shraddha*, faith. Love with *shraddha* is bhakti. One may love one's guru, one may love one's disciples or children, or one's brother, sister or wife, anyone – it can just be pure love or it can be love with *shraddha*. When the love is mixed and synthesized with *shraddha*, it becomes bhakti.

Real love and bhakti are one. Sufi saints call it *ishq haqiqi*. Real love and bhakti are the inner path, which everyone can think of. Worries are a constant bother. Just as one is constantly surrounded by sorrow, love, hate, likes and dislikes, similarly, the thought of God should be constantly with one, as much as possible. This is the only truth, the rest is nothing!

In bhakti yoga, the most important thing is to be able to love God and if one can do this, one should follow the bhakti path. The intensity of love for God has to be such that the total energy, the total awareness and the total mind are consumed. The moment there is awareness of the beloved, all one's energies are consumed and one forgets one's surroundings. That is bhakti yoga, the yoga in which the mind is given to awareness of the Supreme Being.

## **How can one practise bhakti yoga?**

*Swami Satyananda:* The *pandas*, temple worshippers, perform pooja in the temples, but their heart and feeling is not in it. On the other hand, although a mother does not chant the names of her family while she is cooking their food, she is always conscious of them. She feels that she is cooking for her child or husband, and that they will like it in a certain way. That remembrance is constantly at the back of her mind. This has to be the attitude towards God while performing all one's worldly duties and actions.

Bhakti is a feeling. It is not the religious act performed in a church or temple. That is a ritual, a physical action which may be necessary for one reason or another, but that is not the definition of bhakti. It is the feeling the mother has for the



child. It is the feeling the lover has for the beloved. It is the feeling of one enemy for another, where the hate becomes an obsession, and even while eating or sleeping, one can't forget!

Bhakti yoga is not a practice; nothing has to be done. With kriya yoga the external practices have to be done. In bhakti there is just love for God. It is not even necessary to sing His name. Bhakti is true love, divine love, and for that there are no practices, neither asana, nor pranayama, nor mudras, nor bandhas, nothing. It is a feeling, an awareness, like passion, hatred, anger and attachment. What does one do? One feels it.

Bhakti yoga is the easiest path because here one operates with emotions, with faith and belief. It is not the path of pranayama, or kundalini, or hatha yoga, karma yoga or jnana yoga. It is the path of 'self yoga' – everything is within me. I mobilize my willpower and the God within me is awakened.

### **How does one make the leap from faith to higher awareness?**

*Swami Satyananda:* Bhakti is both the means to and the expression of higher awareness. It is both the practice and the spontaneous expression of higher knowledge. One



leads to the other. Until a certain point on the path of bhakti yoga, there is more faith than experience, but once one has had a definite experience then the whole situation changes. One comes to know that there is indeed a direction to one's aspirations and practices. Bhakti becomes an experience. From then onwards, one knows that one is not chasing a mirage like a person in the desert.

This bhakti increases, increases and goes on increasing. This bhakti spans the infinite chasm between mere faith and divine realization, and it covers the period when the bhakta attempts to live and express this realization in everyday life. Bhakti bridges the abyss between lack of divine knowledge backed by faith, and the personal experience and knowledge of divinity.

Bhakti is not a subject for discussion; it must be felt, known and experienced. Real bhakti arises spontaneously through higher awareness and knowledge due to realization of something not known before. Bhakti is the expression and experience of joy at realizing the impossible, at being confronted with direct perception of that which is beyond words. Real bhakti cannot be created artificially, for it is an expression of bliss, of something beyond the wildest flights of the imagination.

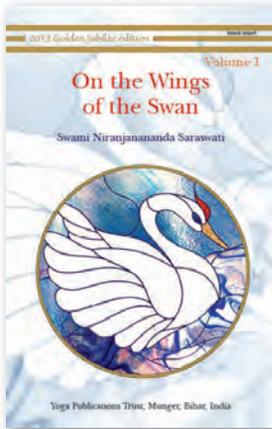
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In my opinion, the greatest achievement of a man in his life is bhakti.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

# Kriya Yoga

*From On the Wings of the Swan, Volume I, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Kriya yoga is considered to be an advanced technique which is geared for the awakening of the psychic centres and the creative energy in the form of the inherent kundalini, which lies dormant in every individual.

Prior to the practice of kriya yoga, there has to be mastery over other yogas such as hatha yoga and the cleansing practices or shatkarmas. The body should have attained a certain degree of purification. One has to be aware of the pranic flow within the body, of the chakra system, and how the chakras influence the various manifestations of the personality.

One must be able to practise the techniques of raja yoga as well as have a certain amount of control over the body: the ability to sit in a particular posture for a certain length of time, and to retain the breath in order to create physiological changes in the cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and endocrinal systems. The ability to convert the normal parameters through the practice of pranayama and asana must be achieved. There also has to be an understanding of the various practices for the awakening of the mental faculties, the techniques of pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. Unless and until we understand the processes of hatha and raja yoga, it is not advisable to go deeply into the kriya yoga practices.

Often in kriya yoga we encounter psychic experiences which alter our perception of the body, and which change our behaviour, affect our emotions and make us more sensitive.



If we are surrounded by some kind of positive or negative influences and we do not know how to observe them, but dwell in the experiences of those emotions, it can restrict our growth and the awakening of the chakras and kundalini.

Anybody can practise kriya yoga. Everyone is entitled to awaken the kundalini and the chakras, but there has to be a basic understanding of the hatha and raja yoga techniques. After that the process becomes much easier as kriya yoga is a combination of many techniques which have evolved through the experiences of the awakening of prana, of lifetimes of karmas and samskaras, and of the awakening of kundalini.



# The Psychology of Yoga Practitioners: A Cluster Analysis

Jeremy E.C. Genovese and Kristine M. Fondran, Cleveland State University, USA (Extracts)

The following are extracts from the original article, published in *International Journal of Yoga Therapy* No. 27 (2017)

## Introduction

In his book *Integral Yoga*, Chaudhuri tells us “it is believed that different yoga systems are particularly suitable for different individuals who belong to different psychological types” (Chaudhuri 1965). This seems fitting as there are many different styles and systems of yoga, each one emphasizing different goals.

Two general currents seem to emerge in discussion of yoga styles. One current emphasizes physical benefits, such as health and fitness, the other focuses on spiritual factors. For example, the classic text *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* barely mentions the yoga postures (asana) and emphasizes spiritual concerns, while some modern yoga books deal almost exclusively with the postures and their putative health benefits. These differing motivations for practice, physical and spiritual were explicitly addressed in a 2015 study. The authors surveyed 235 yoga practitioners and found that while physical concerns dominated, spiritual concerns were also important (Ivtzan & Jegatheeswaran 2015).

In 2008, Henrichsen-Schrembs identified four motives for yoga practice: “1) The Exerciser: yoga practised as a tool for physical and mental wellbeing only; 2) The Explorer: yoga practised in order to foster self-development as well as physical

and mental wellbeing; 3) The Self-Helper: yoga practised as a form of self-help/therapy to various degrees; and 4) The Yogi: yoga practised as a lifestyle, life philosophy and as a form of spirituality.”

The purpose of this study is to take a more integrative quantitative look at the factors that motivate yoga students. By having participants complete surveys that measure physical and spiritual concerns, we hope to create a classificatory framework using cluster analysis.

Cluster analysis is a systematic quantitative technique used to discover groups in data (Kaufman & Rousseeuw 1990). A typical procedure is to treat variables as axes in a multidimensional space and each individual is plotted as a point in that space. In such a space similar individuals will be closer to each other, while dissimilar individuals will be further apart, and more homogeneous groups can be discovered.

### **Physical aspects of yoga**

Modern yoga promises many physical benefits. These include increased strength, improved physical appearance and longevity. In addition, yoga claims to be an effective treatment for many physical ills. McCall, in his book *Yoga as Medicine*, lists 43 health conditions where there is scientific evidence of benefit from yoga. The list includes arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and chronic pain (McCall 2007).

### **Spiritual aspects of yoga**

MacDonald has noted a tendency of researchers to focus on the physical benefits of yoga practice, while ignoring its spiritual component. He argues that by incorporating measures of spirituality we may come to a better understanding of how yoga’s spiritual and physical components interact to produce benefits (MacDonald & Friedman 2009). Following MacDonald’s suggestion we are trying to create a typology of yoga practitioners using psychometric measures of physical and spiritual concerns.

## **Participants**

Surveys were distributed at yoga studios and at university based yoga classes in northeast Ohio. The survey was posted online, and participation was invited through national online yoga and meditation message boards and yoga newsletters. Two hundred sixty-one individuals participated in the survey. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 77, with a mean age of 40. Fifty-five (21.1 %) were male, and 206 (78.9 %) were female. The higher representation of women reflects national trends. Experience practising yoga ranged from 1 month to 43 years. The participants practised yoga an average of 3.71 times a week.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

### **MBSRQ**

The MBSRQ is an instrument measuring 10 scales, including seven dimensions of body image: Appearance Evaluation, Appearance Orientation, Fitness Evaluation, Fitness Orientation, Health Evaluation, Health Orientation, and Illness Orientation. Evaluation factors capture an individual's self-assessment of that trait. Orientation factors measure an individual's investment of time and effort into trait related behaviours.

### **ESI**

The revised Expression of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) is an instrument that measures five dimensions of spirituality, of which four were included in the analysis: 1) Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality refers to the strength of beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about the relevance and importance of spirituality; 2) Experiential/Phenomenological is concerned with the experiential component of spirituality and is related to peak and transcendental experiences; 3) Existential Well-Being captures the participant's general sense of contentment and ease with life; and 4) Religiousness measures the extent to which an individual's spirituality is expressed through religious channels.

## Results

Cluster analysis produced three clusters, designated A, B, and C with 88, 84 and 89 members respectively. The table below reports the results.

Cluster A scored high on all four spiritual constructs. They had high positive evaluations of their appearance, but a lower orientation towards their appearance. Cluster B tended to have lower scores on the spiritual constructs, and a higher fitness and appearance orientation. Members of Cluster C had low scores for all spiritual constructs. They had a low evaluation of, and general unhappiness with their appearance. They felt unfit and tended not to invest in exercise.

**Table 1. Cluster A (n = 88)**

| Variable                                   | Mean | SD  | Median |
|--|------|-----|--------|
| Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality | .79  | .16 | .84    |
| Experiential/ Phenomenological Dimension   | .79  | .18 | .81    |
| Existential Well-Being                     | .69  | .23 | .72    |
| Religiousness                              | .67  | .22 | .73    |
| Appearance Evaluation                      | .66  | .23 | .73    |
| Appearance Orientation                     | .45  | .27 | .43    |
| Fitness Evaluation                         | .53  | .29 | .52    |
| Fitness Orientation                        | .52  | .24 | .51    |
| Health Evaluation                          | .62  | .24 | .66    |
| Health Orientation                         | .67  | .23 | .71    |
| Illness Orientation                        | .59  | .28 | .62    |
| Body Areas Satisfaction                    | .68  | .23 | .74    |
| Self-Classified Weight                     | .44  | .26 | .37    |

**Table 2. Cluster B (n = 84)**

| Variable                                   | Mean | SD  | Median |
|--|------|-----|--------|
| Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality | .38  | .21 | .37    |
| Experiential/ Phenomenological Dimension   | .38  | .21 | .38    |
| Existential Well-Being                     | .50  | .28 | .51    |
| Religiousness                              | .44  | .28 | .41    |
| Appearance Evaluation                      | .53  | .26 | .54    |
| Appearance Orientation                     | .58  | .27 | .64    |
| Fitness Evaluation                         | .69  | .22 | .72    |
| Fitness Orientation                        | .73  | .21 | .77    |
| Health Evaluation                          | .57  | .27 | .56    |
| Health Orientation                         | .60  | .23 | .64    |
| Illness Orientation                        | .54  | .27 | .55    |
| Body Areas Satisfaction                    | .54  | .27 | .58    |
| Self-Classified Weight                     | .41  | .24 | .37    |

**Table 3. Cluster C (n = 89)**

| Variable                                   | Mean | SD  | Median |
|--|------|-----|--------|
| Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality | .35  | .26 | .30    |
| Experiential/ Phenomenological Dimension   | .36  | .27 | .27    |
| Existential Well-Being                     | .36  | .29 | .25    |
| Religiousness                              | .40  | .30 | .35    |
| Appearance Evaluation                      | .31  | .26 | .24    |
| Appearance Orientation                     | .47  | .31 | .43    |
| Fitness Evaluation                         | .33  | .25 | .28    |

| Variable                | Mean | SD  | Median |
|-------------------------|------|-----|--------|
| Fitness Orientation     | .27  | .21 | .21    |
| Health Evaluation       | .31  | .26 | .20    |
| Health Orientation      | .24  | .19 | .20    |
| Illness Orientation     | .38  | .28 | .32    |
| Body Areas Satisfaction | .29  | .22 | .25    |
| Self-Classified Weight  | .66  | .26 | .69    |

We found a significant difference in years of practice between the three groups. Members of Cluster A have the most years of yoga experience and members of Cluster B have more yoga experience than members of Cluster C. Perhaps, as yoga practitioners persist they pass through a set of stages (C to B to A). It is possible that the significant difference in years of practice between the three groups is simply a matter of survivorship. Those who have the traits associated with Cluster A may simply persist longer in their yoga practice.

## Discussion

Our analysis identified three clusters. Cluster A has both spiritual and physical health goals. Members of Cluster B are less interested in spirituality and are more exclusively focused on the physical-health goals. Cluster C differ dramatically, having low body satisfaction, low evaluation of health and little orientation towards fitness.

The results we report here provide some support for the model suggested by Henrichsen-Schrembs. Cluster A clearly resembles the group she describes as Yogis, who have adopted yoga both as a lifestyle and a spiritual practice. Cluster B resembles those she describes as Exercisers. Swami Niranjanananda also identified two similar types. One he calls *sadhaks* (spiritual seekers) resembling Cluster A. He also describes a group mostly concerned with the physical benefits of yoga, similar to Cluster B (Swami Niranjanananda 2012).



None of these writers acknowledge practitioners similar to Cluster C. Since this group was large, it would be good to know more about them. We would certainly want to know if these individuals change over time and become members of other clusters or if they simply pass out of yoga practice.

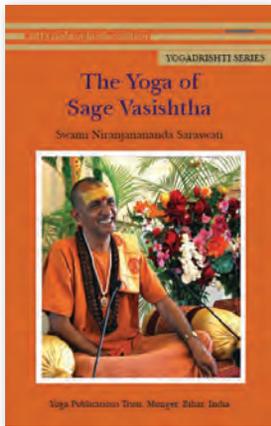
In his classic text, *Light on Yoga*, Iyengar describes the traditional eight limbs of yoga not as alternative practices, but as a set of stages (Iyengar 1966). Our results suggest that yoga should be viewed developmentally. We have found evidence of a relationship between years of practice and the spiritual and physical attributes of practitioners. A particularly interesting finding is that while body area satisfaction increases with yoga practice, appearance orientation declines. This suggests that practitioners become less attached to judgements about their appearance and more accepting of themselves.

The developmental model is supported by other research. For example, Ivtzan & Jegatheeswaran found that “spiritual intentions increase over time, from when practitioners initially take up practice.” Other studies show that over the course of a yoga practice, orientation shifts from physical concerns to spirituality (Buessing et al 2012; Park & al 2016). Our findings suggest that a developmental trajectory may well exist, and further research is needed to confirm and better understand this path.

*For full article and bibliography please see International Journal of Yoga Therapy No. 27 (2017), [www.iayt.org](http://www.iayt.org).*

# Four Guards to the Kingdom of Moksha

From The Yoga of Sage Vasishtha, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There are four gates to the kingdom of shanti or moksha. At these four gates stand four guards. If you become friends with the guards who are guarding the doors to the realm of peace and liberation, you may enter it. If you are not friendly with the guards, no matter how high and mighty you may be, you will not be permitted to enter. The only condition to enter the realm of moksha is to become friendly with the guards.

The trick is that if you can become friendly with one guard, he will introduce you to the others too, and you will become friendly with all four. That applies to the family too. If a stranger becomes friends with the son, the son introduces this friend to his parents, sisters, brothers and other friends, "Look I have a new friend here." In the same manner, if you are able to become friends with even one guard, he will introduce you to the other guards. They will also become your friends. Who are the guards? The first guard in the realm of moksha is shanti, peace; the second guard is *vichara*, reflection; the third guard is *santosh*a, contentment; the fourth guard is *satsang*, positive association.

Attainment of shanti in this dimension is the first guard. Reflection is another guard, so that you can strain out the unnecessary stuff. Just as you strain your tea and the strainer catches the tea leaves and only the liquid comes out into the cup, in the same manner, through reflection you can strain

your behaviour. Keep the rubbish in the strainer and allow the pure water to come out through reflection. Become friendly with contentment and satsang.

## **Shanti**

Sri Rama says, "What do you mean, shanti is a guard? How can shanti be a guard?" Sage Vasishtha says, "Shanti is always the first guard. It is not the last to be attained; it is the first to be acquired." You think that shanti, peace, is something that comes at the end, however, this is wrong. Change your idea today. Shanti is the first requirement. Shanti becomes your friend when there is serenity of mind and the emotions are calm.

In your life, whether you are active in the family, society or profession, what are the two things that are always affected? The mind and the emotions. If there is a difficulty or strife in a relationship between a husband and wife who may be otherwise compatible, the emotions and the mind are affected. In a profession, stress affects the mind and also the emotions. In regular interaction in society, the mind and emotions are involved. Therefore, you first have to find a way to calm your mind to experience serenity of the mind, and a way to calm your emotions. If you can do that, then the serenity of mind and the calmness of emotions will give birth to the experience of peace and harmony. Always work for maintaining mental and emotional balance as the first step, no matter what situation you are facing in life. This is the theory and description that Sage Vasishtha has given to Sri Rama to discover shanti in life: management of the mind and the emotions.

## **Reduction of desires**

Sage Vasishtha further says, "Serenity of mind is attained with the reduction of vasanas." You might have heard Sri Swamiji make a similar statement in his satsangs. People ask him, "How do we know if we are making progress and growth in spiritual life? What are the milestones, the indications of our progress on our spiritual path?" Sri Swamiji answers by saying, "When

you are able to manage the ambitions, the desires of the mind, and there is a gradual reduction of them, then you will know that you are progressing on the spiritual path.”

The same question was asked of Mahatma Buddha, and he gave the same answer. He said, “Elimination of desire is an indication of growth in spiritual life.” This does make sense, as desires are what connect you with the world of senses and sense objects. Whenever you encounter any kind of mental or emotional problem, you will discover that the root of that problem is always a desire, a desire to be something, to have something, or to be recognized as something. Desire or *vasana* is always there, and it is the cause of mental and emotional imbalance. Therefore, serenity of mind and of emotions is acquired by understanding the desires, aspirations and ambitions. That is step one.

The moment you are able to work through your mind and emotions by managing your *vasanas*, the guard whose name is *Shanti* becomes your friend and comes to your aid. If you can become good friends with *Shanti*, he will stand beside you at all times. In all the difficult situations he will be beside you, and you shall never be disturbed or affected by the external situations. Therefore, analyze your *vasanas*.

### **True reflection**

The second guard is reflection, enquiry, *atma vichara*. The purpose of reflection is to dispel the cloud of ignorance. Its purpose is to cultivate a better understanding. Generally, when you reflect, you begin to brood on the problem and don't search for a solution. It is the normal condition of life that if there is a thought process or any kind of reflection, it is usually about your suffering or what you do not have, which I call 'the worry factor'. In your life, reflection is not pure. Reflection takes on the garb of worries.

When reflection takes on the garb of worries, then you go deeper into a state of mind from which you cannot extract yourself naturally, freely and spontaneously. You get caught in

the vortex of that thought, idea, feeling, sentiment or emotion, and it sucks you down; it takes you down. As you get sucked into that feeling and vortex of worry, wisdom and knowledge disappear and you encounter more darkness. It is like diving down deep into the ocean. If there is a vortex in the ocean and you are caught in it, you simply go down. You leave the sky, the sun and the wind above and are surrounded by water and you suffocate there. That is *avidya*, ignorance. The negative side of reflection always pulls you down into a deeper state of ignorance.

Instead of worrying about something, reflect upon it to discover the solution to that problem. Instead of worrying, "I am like this and like that", reflect on how you can cultivate your strength to avoid being like that and instead be something different and better. Through reflection, guilt and ignorance and all such things can be avoided. The clarity of mind can be maintained. With clarity of mind comes wisdom and knowledge. That wisdom and knowledge become *atma vichara*, reflection on one's own self.

I will give one example from Sri Rama's life. In the *Ramayana* it is described that when Sri Rama was living in the forest with Lakshmana and Sita, his father died in Ayodhya. The younger brothers of Sri Rama, named Bharata and Shatrughna, came to him in the forest to request that he return to Ayodhya and take charge of the kingdom. They came with the entire court, the army and the family to supplicate Sri Rama to return. As the army, the courtiers and the family members were marching from Ayodhya to Rama's place of dwelling, all those who saw them on the road felt that Bharata was out to destroy Sri Rama so he could inherit the kingdom. Lakshmana was out in the jungle collecting fruits, and from the top of a tree he saw a dust cloud, and realized it was the army of Ayodhya marching towards them. He said to himself, "Bharata is coming to kill us so he can inherit the kingdom." He ran to Sri Rama and said, "Hide! Bharata is coming with the army to kill you." Sri Rama was sitting quietly. He said, "What do you mean, he is

coming to kill me?" Lakshmana replied, "Yes, he is coming with the entire army. Father is dead; you, the oldest prince, are the successor now. If he kills both you and me, he will become the king. That is his intention. His mother Kaikeyi must have poisoned his mind. Quick, let us hide."

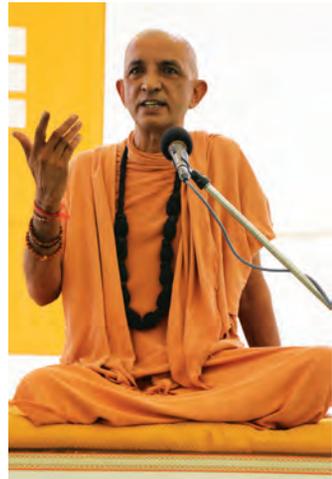
At that moment, Sri Rama reflected. He did not go by what was said by his closest brother, Lakshmana. He reflected, and analyzed the nature and character of Bharata and of all the people accompanying him. He arrived at the conclusion, "No, their intention is not bad; there is no need to hide. He is coming to meet me."

Now, put yourself in his place. You would have believed other people, you would have worried about the situation, you would have taken out your AK-47 and said, "Okay, let him come, I am going to shoot him first." There would not have been any reflection on your part. There would have been a reaction, not reflection.

Many times, the in-charges of the ashram come to complain about something, and they say, "This person is like this and like that. You should tell them something." I say, "Do you want me to react like you are reacting, or do you want me to act as a guru?" Then I think, I reflect, and I find a way to manage the situation in which everybody is happy. This is an example, but something which can be emulated by everybody.

In worry, anxiety and frustration there is always reaction and no reflection. Reflection takes place when you are able to see the situation in a different light. When you are able to analyze the nature, then it is possible to discover that something is being said out of jealousy and not genuine concern. Often, it is not the other person who is at fault; it is the one complaining who is at fault. That is reflection. The idea of reflection, however, goes much deeper. Reflection is where you keep your focus before you all the time and you do not get swayed by the influences that surround you. Utilize your wisdom and knowledge, and dispel the cloud of ignorance from your life which makes you do the wrong thing and reap a negative result. If you

can become aware and cultivate this understanding, this quality of knowing and observing, they become the stepping stones which lead you to a reflection between you, the nature and the divine. You discover a connection and link among the three, and the sensorial links are severed. In the course of time, this reflection becomes jnana. It becomes the realization of, "What I am." With this realization, *avidya* or ignorance disappears.



### **Santosha, expression of a harmonious mind**

The third guard to the gate of moksha is contentment, santosha. Contentment is an expression of a harmonious and balanced mind. One who does not desire or crave anything, one who is satisfied, yet active and dynamic, is in a state of santosha. Often, contentment is seen as a negation of effort. Often, people say, "If I am content, it means that I don't have to make any effort. I don't have any desire, I don't have to want anything, I don't have to like anything; I just have to be satisfied with what I have." That is wrong, as it goes against the very principle of contentment. Contentment does not deny effort. Contentment emphasizes *purushartha*, the effort that you make to become better. It is not just an action or performance of life, but it is a continuous effort to become better each day.

To illustrate this idea, look at your own life. What effort do you make each day to improve a shortcoming of your character, nature, mind and personality? You read scriptures; you listen to sadhus, saints and satsangs. You also eulogize people who you hear and say, "Oh, what a wonderful speech." However, at a personal level, have you made any effort to improve yourself even half a percent on a daily basis? Even a quarter percent on a daily basis?

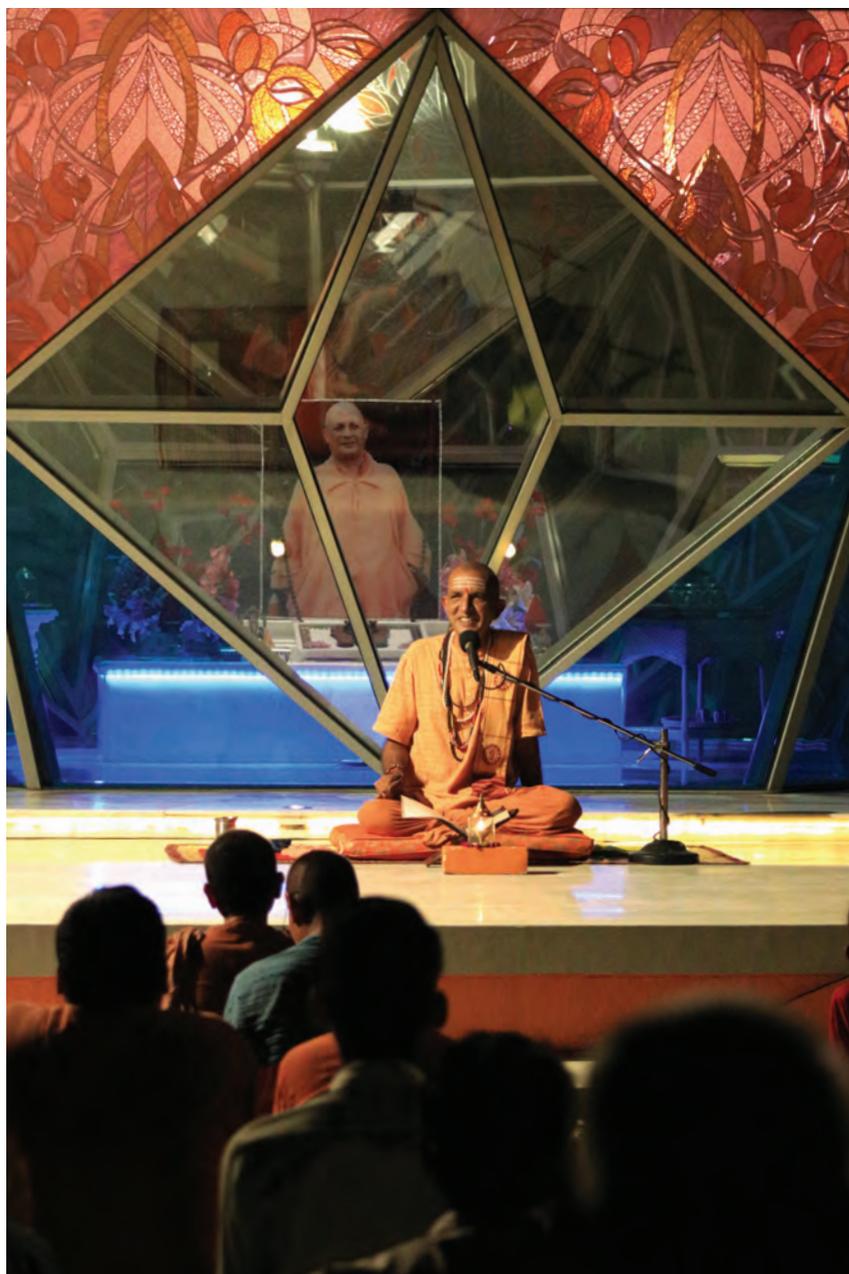
Nobody makes that effort, and yet everyone wants to have the attainment. Contentment does not deny purushartha. It is an attitude, an awareness that "Yes, I am happy." Just as you are aware of your suffering on a day-to-day basis, on a moment-to-moment basis, you have to be aware of your happiness on a day-to-day and moment-to-moment basis. If you have a fight with somebody, the whole day you will be aware of that person, right? The whole day the thoughts about that person will go around and around in your head about that person; about all the awful things said and done. Just as you are aware of your pain and suffering constantly and continuously, can you make the effort to become aware of your happiness constantly and continuously? If you can do that, then you are santosha, then you are contented. It is an awareness, an attitude.

Identify, maintain and sustain for extended periods of time, for as many days as possible, your connection with internal happiness, and minimize the experiences and projections of pain and suffering which emanate from you. That is contentment. If you develop friendship with the third guard, no situation in life can adversely affect you.

### **Satsang is inspiration**

The fourth guard is satsang, which means to be in the company of truth, in the company of good people. A discourse or discussion is not called satsang. Many people give discourses and answer questions, but that is not called satsang. Satsang means an inspiration which you receive and maintain within. When you encounter a sage, and he looks at you with his benevolent, peaceful and compassionate eyes, that look is also satsang. With that look, something changes in your mind, something changes within you; you identify with a positive quality. Whether it is positivity, compassion or love that you find in that look, you say, "Just the look transformed me." You say, "What a beautiful feeling it was when he looked at me." This means that something inspired an energy arousal within you, which made you happy. Therefore, no matter what your

GANGA DARSHAN, MUNGER



## PADUKA DARSHAN, MUNGER



# INDIA



## OVERSEAS

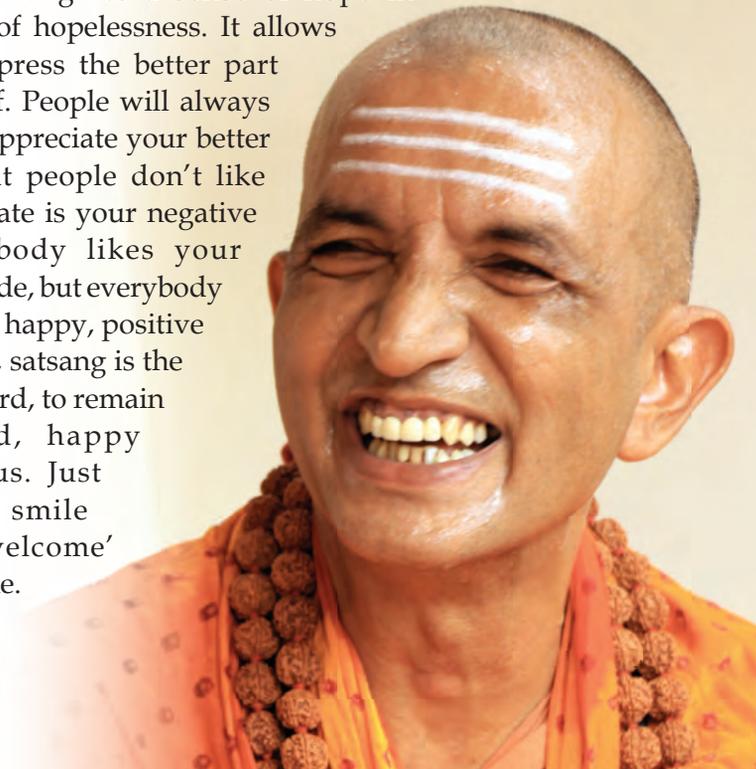


mood is, smile at everybody every morning and say, “Good morning.”

What harm is there if you look at someone, smile and say, “Good morning”? That creates a positive feeling, does it not? A happy look and a happy smile can create a positive feeling more so than a frowning look and face. Even that is satsang, sharing of your happiness, your optimism, your contentment with everybody, uplifting each one as you go.

I am giving you two different ideas of satsang. Satsang is sharing of your happiness, wisdom, love and compassion. Satsang is sharing the light and not spreading the darkness. Understand this properly. A positive, appropriate communication, which can motivate and inspire a person to be more active, optimistic and positive, is called satsang. Whether it is a sentence, a lecture, an answer to a question, a simple glance or simply being in the presence of an enlightened master, satsang transforms the inner nature.

Satsang removes the depressions of the heart and brings joy in the emotions. It removes confusion of mind and gives a sense of hope in the place of hopelessness. It allows you to express the better part of yourself. People will always love and appreciate your better part. What people don't like or appreciate is your negative part. Nobody likes your negative side, but everybody loves your happy, positive side. Thus, satsang is the fourth guard, to remain contented, happy and joyous. Just a simple smile means 'welcome' to everyone.



# Essence of Yoga Vasishtha

From Essence of Yoga, Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The four sentinels that wait at the gates of moksha, salvation, are *shanti*, peace, *vichara*, spiritual enquiry, *santosha*, contentment, and *satsang*, association with the wise. If they are befriended, then there will be no obstacle in the attainment of the final emancipation. Even if one of them is befriended, he will introduce you to the rest of his companions.

If you attain knowledge of the Self or *Brahmajnana*, you will be freed from the trammels of births and deaths. All doubts will vanish. All karmas will perish. It is through one's own efforts alone that the immortal, all-blissful Brahmic seat can be attained.

## About the mind

The slayer of *atma*, the soul, is the mind only. The form of the mind is *sankalpas*, will and ideas. The true nature of the mind consists in the *vasanas*, subtle desires. The actions of the mind alone are truly termed *karmas* or actions. The universe is nothing but the mind, manifesting as such only through the potency of Brahman. The mind contemplating on the body becomes the body itself and then enmeshed in it, is afflicted by it.

The mind manifests itself as the external world in the shape of pains or pleasures. The mind subjectively is consciousness; objectively it is this universe. The mind attains, through its enemy of discrimination, the quiescent state of Para Brahman.

The real bliss is that one which arises when the mind, diverted of all desires through eternal jnana, wisdom, destroys its subtle form. The sankalpas and vasanas, which you generate, enmesh you as in a net. The self-light of Para Brahman alone is appearing as the mind or this universe.

### **The way to bliss and perfection**

Persons without spiritual enquiry will see as real this world which is nothing but of the nature of sankalpa. The expansion of this mind alone is sankalpa. Sankalpa, through its power of differentiation, generates this universe. Extinction of sankalpas alone is moksha.

The enemy of atma is this impure mind only which is filled with excessive delusion and hosts of worldly thoughts. There is no other vessel of this earth to wade through the ocean of rebirth than the mastery of the antagonistic mind.

The original sprout of the painful *ahamkara*, egoism, with its tender stem of rebirths at length ramifies itself everywhere with its long branches of 'mine' and 'thine' and yields its unripe fruits of death, disease, old age, pains and sorrows. This tree can be destroyed at its root by the fire of jnana only.

All the heterogeneous visibles perceived through the organs of sense are only unreal but that which is real is Para Brahman or the Supreme Soul. If all objects which have an enchanting appearance become eyesores and present the very reverse of the former feelings, then the mind is destroyed. All your properties are useless. All wealth lands you in dangers. Desirelessness will take you to the eternal blissful abode.

Destroy vasanas and sankalpas.

Kill egoism.

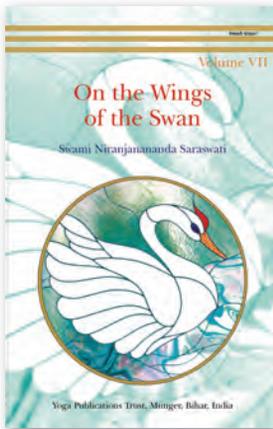
Annihilate this mind.

Equip yourself with the four means.

Meditate on the pure, immortal, all-pervading Self or atma. Get knowledge of the Self and attain immortality, everlasting peace, eternal bliss, freedom and perfection.

# Mumukshutva

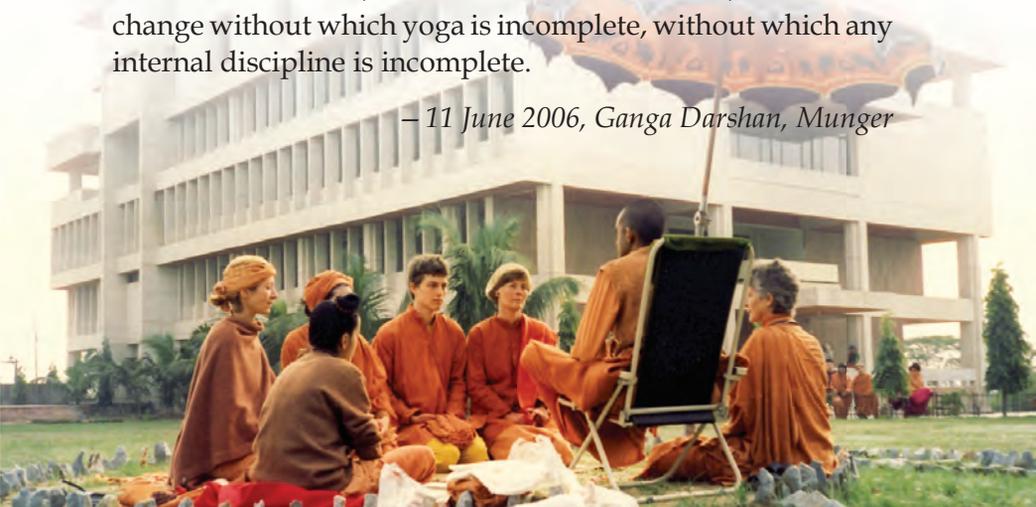
*From On the Wings of the Swan, Volume VII, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



*Mumukshutva* is the desire to be liberated, the desire to be free. This concept of *mumukshutva* is not only spiritual, it is also social, physical, emotional and mental; it is the need to be free from the existing negative conditioning and restricted knowledge. No journey begins without the undercurrent of *mumukshutva*, the desire to change. If there was no *mumukshutva*, yoga would have no meaning. There would be no interest or attraction to spiritual subjects or even to religion or philosophy, let alone changing one's lifestyle or belief.

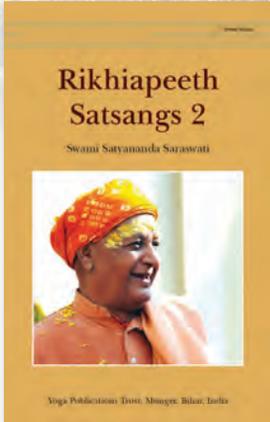
When *mumukshutva*, the desire to change, to become better, to transcend one's limitations, mature in life and evolve spiritually, comes from within, that is the motivation for *sadhana*. One is attracted to the practices of *asana* because of *mumukshutva*; one is attracted to meditation because of *mumukshutva*; one is desirous to change the quality and the condition of life only because of *mumukshutva*. *Mumukshutva* is the undercurrent, the force of transformation, the force of change without which yoga is incomplete, without which any internal discipline is incomplete.

– 11 June 2006, *Ganga Darshan*, Munger



# Life is a Mixture

*From Rikhipeeth Satsangs 2, Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



Life is a mixture of events. When I say mixture, it means both good experiences and bad experiences, both the desirable and the non-desirable. You only want love. You cannot accept hatred. But life is a mixture of both love and hatred. When a child is born, you are happy and when somebody dies, you are sorry. But life is a mixture of both life and death. You like to be my friend. You don't like to be my enemy. You don't like a mixture. That is the problem with every human being and that is why he is unhappy. Unhappiness is experienced because you do not want to accept the reality of nature, the reality of life and eternity. God did not only create light. He also created darkness. Whether you believe in God or not does not matter, when there is a creator. You may not say God; you may say nature or accident. It does not matter. Accidents created love and nature. Accidents created love and hatred, not God. When accidents created both love and hatred, you have to accept them both. When money comes, you are happy. When money goes, you are sorry. This is the attitude, the approach that you have to change if you want to experience happiness.

**Swamiji, yoga schools have been accepted as an important channel of bringing peace to the world, and we are often asked to talk about establishing peace. So, again we wonder how to establish peace in the world where there is such a mixture of war and strife?**

War and peace are interrelated terms. You cannot think of war without thinking of peace. There is no existence of peace if

there is no war. The end of war is peace. The reason for peace is war. So, war and peace are interrelated, like birth and death. If you are not born, you will not die. And if you don't die, you will not be born. A tree dies, another tree is born. Therefore, the question of war and peace is an eternal question.

The answer which you are thinking of is only for peace and not for war. Why do you only want peace, why don't you want war? Everybody wants peace. Nobody wants war. Isn't it funny? It is impossible! You should think of war, because war is cause for the death of a civilization. If there is no war, civilizations will not die. There was a time when there existed the vedic civilization, the Chinese civilization, the Islamic civilization. They are all finished. How did they finish? War, war and war!

Now, if we who exist in this world today do not die, what will happen? Just imagine. You do not die and new children are born. You do not die. I do not die. What will happen, just imagine! The world will become an intolerable place. Therefore, death is necessary. War is necessary. So, let us talk about war and let us talk about peace. In yoga, there is both. In yoga, there is destruction of ajnana and birth of jnana. In yoga, something dies and something else is born.

Europeans do not like wars because they have faced two great wars in the last century. Therefore, they have created a European Union, so that Germany will not fight with France, France will not fight with England, England will not fight with Belgium. They will be one. But you should remember that it is only because of war that Europe prospered. Everything that you find in Europe today, whether in the field of science, technology, education, medicine, governance, parliament or communication, is because of the two great wars that Europe fought in the last century. Therefore, don't fear wars. Everyone is afraid of war, but they don't realize that all the accomplishments in the world have taken place only on account of war.

People say that the economy will regress and growth and development will halt if there is a war. Do they not say that?

This dictum itself is wrong. It is the dictum of cowards. We have been misguided; the *Bhagavad Gita* says that if you die in war you will attain glory in the other realms, and if you win in war you will attain glory in this realm (2:37):

*Hato vaa praapsyasi swargam jitwaa vaa bhokshyase maheem;  
Tasmaaduttishtha Kaunteya yuddhaaya kritanishchayaha.*

Slain, you will obtain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth; Therefore, stand up, O son of Kunti, resolved to fight.

It is not at all possible to avoid death, war and destruction, because death and destruction is a law of *prakriti*, the cosmic nature. Death is a cosmic law made by the creator. Disease is also a cosmic law, and so is darkness. Just as God has created light, he has created darkness too. Just as he has given birth, he has also engineered death. Just as he has created happiness, he has also created the notion of unhappiness. You did not give birth to the notion of joy and suffering. They are eternal concepts that each individual is subjected to and has to undergo because they are cosmic concepts born out of the creator.

You only want happiness. You don't want the other side of happiness, which is also God's creation, unhappiness. You only want birth and no death. That is a wrong idea. It is only on account of suffering that you can understand the importance of joy. It is only on account of the devastation of war that you can understand the necessity of peace. After all, who will crave for peace if there is no war? The necessity of peace becomes relevant only on account of war. The necessity of war is to enforce peace and bring about a change. Where is the question of experiencing peace if one does not experience the onslaught of war? If a man does not die, then how can he be born? This is a firm and conclusive dictum of the cosmic laws that govern the universe. But when man forgets or ignores these basic well-defined dictums, he suffers and faces difficulty. Otherwise, there is no cause for suffering in this world. Death

and disease are not the cause of suffering. It is their impact on your mind that is the cause of your suffering.

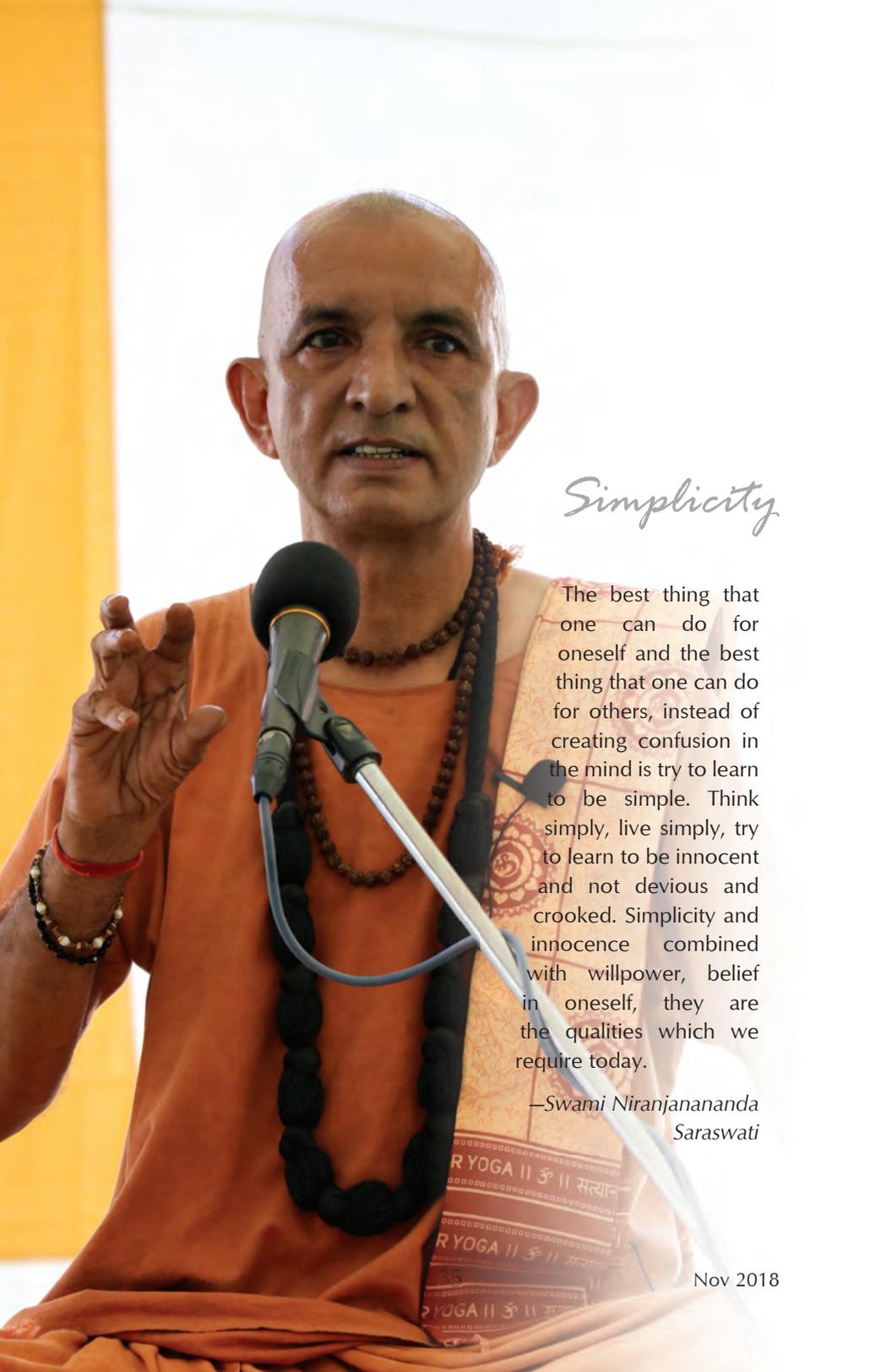
If you start a business and it fails, you may face some difficulty, but you will not suffer if the failure does not have an effect or impact on your mind. If your mind is not affected by failure, then it is always easy to recover quickly and start again. It is such people who are happy in life. Abraham Lincoln stood for the presidency eleven or twelve times before he succeeded. He did not suffer from the impact of rejection. Therefore, one day he did succeed. Each failure made him stronger in his resolve.

If your old grandmother, who is bedridden, dies, it hardly makes any alteration in your life, but still you suffer mentally because her death leaves an impact, a mark on your mind. If there is no reaction to her death because you understand that it is a natural event which is inevitable and also beneficial for her, as her life was just restricted to the bed and at the mercy of others, then it will not leave an impact.

If you are free from the impact, you begin to flow with the current of life, because you begin to understand that what is destined and inevitable by the cosmic laws of the creator, has to happen and will happen, for they are events beyond your control. They are events that take place due to determined laws that govern the universe just as a judge operates within the ambit of judicial laws. Even though he may send criminals to the gallows, he remains unaffected because it is the law that decides the verdict, not him. Or a doctor who may see many patients die each day, remains unaffected, because he is aware of the laws that govern the body and that he cannot do anything if the time for the patient's death is close at hand.

– 18 February 2009, Rikhiapeeth





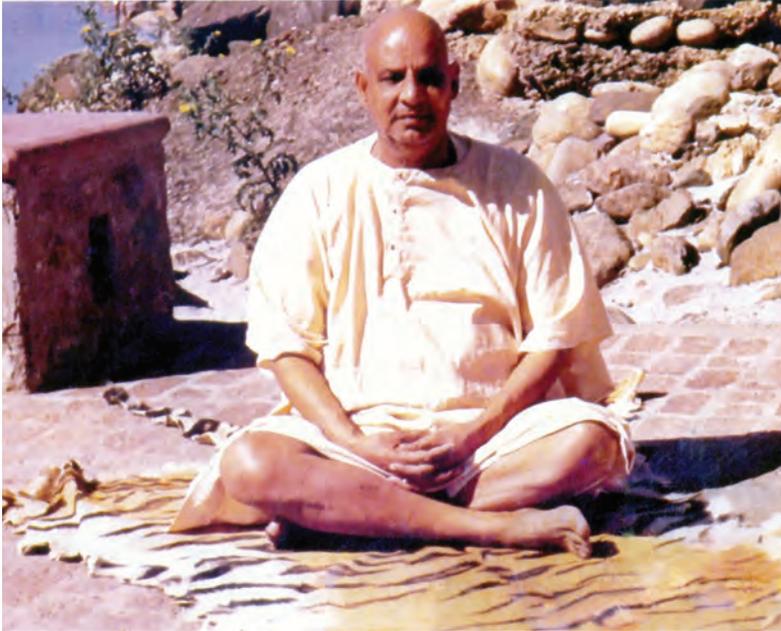
## *Simplicity*

The best thing that one can do for oneself and the best thing that one can do for others, instead of creating confusion in the mind is try to learn to be simple. Think simply, live simply, try to learn to be innocent and not devious and crooked. Simplicity and innocence combined with willpower, belief in oneself, they are the qualities which we require today.

—Swami Niranjanananda  
Saraswati

# What Life Has Taught Me

*From Autobiography, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



It was, I should say, by a flash that I came to the conclusion early in my life that human life is not complete with its observable activities and that there is something above human perception controlling and directing all that is visible. I may boldly say that I began to perceive the realities behind what we call life on earth. The unrest and feverish anxiety that characterize man's ordinary existence here bespeak a higher goal that he has to reach one day or the other.

When man gets entangled in selfishness, greed, hatred and lust, he naturally forgets what is beneath his own skin. Materialism and scepticism reign supreme. He gets irritated over little things and begins to fight and quarrel; in short, man becomes miserable.

The doctor's profession gave me ample evidence of the great sufferings of this world. I was blessed with a new vision and perspective. I was deeply convinced that there must be a place – a sweet home of pristine glory, purity and divine splendour – where absolute security, perfect peace and happiness can be enjoyed eternally. Therefore, in conformity with the dictum of the Shruti, I renounced the world – and felt that I now belonged to the whole world.

A course of severe self-discipline and penance endowed me with enough strength to move unscathed amidst the vicissitudes of the world phenomena. And I began to feel the great good it would do to humanity if I could share this new vision with one and all. I called my instrument of work "The Divine Life Society."

Side by side, the stirring events since the advent of the twentieth century had their effects upon all keen-minded people. The horrors of the past and possible wars, and the consequent suffering, touched the minds of people. It was not difficult to see that the pains of mankind were mostly brought on by its own deeds. To awaken man to his errors and follies, and to make him mend his ways so that he may utilize his life for attaining worthier ends, was felt to be the urgent need of the time. As if in answer to this need, I saw the birth of the Divine Life Mission, with its task of rescuing man from the forces of the lower nature and raising him to the consciousness of his true relationship with the cosmos. This is the work of rousing the religious consciousness, of bringing man to an awareness of his essential divinity.

Not by mere argument or discussion can religion be taught or understood. Not by precepts or canons of teaching alone can you make one religious. It requires a peculiar atonement with one's vast environment, an ability to feel the deepest as well as the vastest. It requires a genuine sympathy with creation. Religion is living, not speaking or showing. I hold that whatever be one's religion, whoever be the prophet one adores, whatever be one's language or country, age or sex,

one can be religious provided the true implication of that hallowed term *tapas*, which essentially means any form of self-control, is made capable of being practised in daily life to the extent possible for one, in the environment and under the circumstances in which one is placed.

I hold that real religion is the religion of the heart. The heart must be purified first. Truth, love and purity are the basis of real religion. Control over the baser nature, conquest of the mind, cultivation of virtues, service of humanity, goodwill, fellowship and amity, constitute the fundamentals of true religion. These ideals are included in the principles of the Divine Life Society. And I try to teach them mostly by example, which I consider to be weightier than all precepts.

The modern thinker has neither the requisite time nor the patience to perform rigorous *tapas* and austere religious practices; and many of these are even being relegated to the level of superstition. In order to give the present generation the benefit of real *tapas* in the true religious sense, to reveal to them its real significance, and to convince them of its meaning and efficacy, I hold up my torch of divine life, which is a system of religious life suited to one and all, which can be practised by the recluse and the office-goer alike, which is intelligible to the scholar and the rustic, in its different stages and phases. This is a religion which is not other than what is essential to give true meaning to the daily duties of the human being.

The beauty of divine life is its simplicity and applicability to the everyday affairs of the ordinary man. It is immaterial whether one goes to the church or the mosque or the temple for offering one's prayers, for all sincere prayers are heard by the divine.

The average seeker after truth is very often deceived by the caprices of his mind. A person who takes to the spiritual path is bewildered before he reaches the end of his journey. He is naturally tempted to relax his efforts half way. Many are the pitfalls, but those who plod on steadily are sure to reach the goal of life, which is universality of being, knowledge and joy. I

have laid great emphasis in all my writings upon the discipline of the turbulent senses, conquest of the mind, purification of the heart, and attainment of inner peace and strength, suited to the different stages in evolution.

I have understood that it is the foremost duty of man to learn to give, to give in charity, to give in plenty, to give with love and without expectation of any reward, because one does not lose anything by giving. On the other hand, the giver is given back a thousand fold. Charity is not merely an act of offering certain material goods, for charity is incomplete without charity of disposition, of feeling, and of understanding and knowledge. Charity is self-sacrifice in the different levels of one's being. Charity in the highest sense I understand to be equivalent to *jnana yajna*, the sacrifice of wisdom.

Similarly, I consider that goodness of being and doing constitute the rock-bottom, the solid foundation, of one's life. By goodness I mean the capacity to feel with others and to live and feel as others do, and be in a position to act so that no one is hurt by the act. Goodness is the face of godliness. I think that to be good in reality, in the innermost recesses of one's heart, is not easy, though it may appear to be simple as a teaching. It is one of the hardest things on earth, if only one would be honest with oneself.

There is no physical world for me. What I see I see as the glorious manifestation of the Almighty. I rejoice when I behold the Purusha with thousands of heads and thousands of eyes and feet, that Sahasrarasirsha Purusha. When I serve persons, I see not the persons, but Him of whom they are the limbs. I learn to be humble before the mighty Being whose breath we breathe and whose joy we enjoy. I do not think there is anything more to teach or to learn. Here is the cream of religion, the quintessence of philosophy that anyone really needs.

The philosophy I hold is neither a dreamy, subjective, world-negating doctrine of illusion, nor a crude world-affirming theory of sense-ridden humanism. It is the fact of the divinity of the universe, the immortality of the soul of

man, the unity of creation with the Absolute, that I feel is the only doctrine worth considering. As the one all-pervading Brahman appears as the diverse universe in all the planes of Its manifestation, the aspirant has to pay his homage to the lower manifestations before he steps into the higher.

Sound health, clear understanding, deep knowledge, a pure, powerful will and moral integrity are all necessary parts of the process of the realization of the ideal of humanity as a whole.

To adapt, adjust and accommodate, to see good in everything, to bring to effective use all the principles of nature in the process of evolution towards self-realization along the path of an integrated adjustment of the human powers and faculties, are some of the main factors that go towards building up a philosophy of life. To me, philosophy is not merely a love of wisdom, but actual possession of it. In all my writings I have prescribed methods for overcoming and mastering the physical, intellectual, mental and vital layers of consciousness, in order to be able to proceed with the sadhana for self-perfection.

To behold the Lord in every being or form, to feel Him everywhere, at all times and in all conditions of life, to see, hear, taste and feel everything as God, is my creed. To live in God, to melt in God, and to dissolve in God, is my creed.

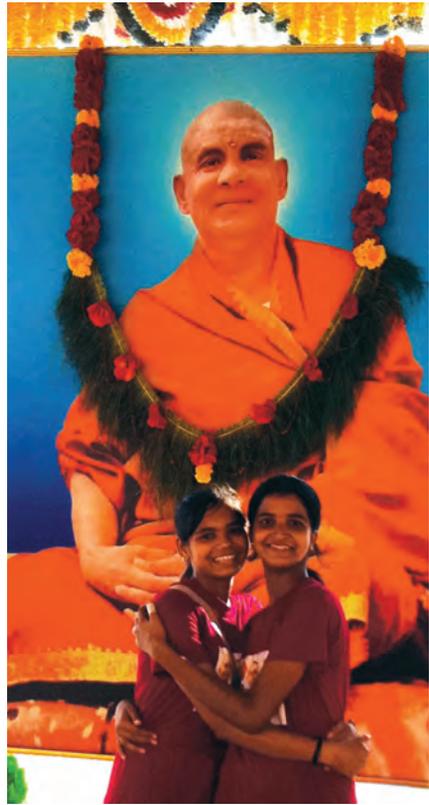
By dwelling in such union, to utilize the hands, mind, senses and the body in the service of humanity, to sing the names of the Lord, to elevate devotees, to give instructions to sincere aspirants, and disseminate knowledge throughout the world, is my creed, if you can call it one.

To be a cosmic friend and cosmic benefactor, a friend of the poor, the forlorn, the helpless and the fallen, is my creed. It is my sacred creed to serve the sick, to nurse them with care, sympathy and love, to cheer up the depressed, to infuse power and joy in all, to feel oneness with each and everyone, and to treat all with equal vision.

In my highest creed there are neither peasants nor kings, neither beggars nor emperors, neither males nor

females, neither teachers nor students. I love to live, move and have my being in this realm indescribable.

The first step is often the most difficult one. But once it is taken the rest becomes easy. There is a need for more courage and patience on the part of people. They usually shirk, hesitate and are frightened. All this is due to ignorance of one's true duty. A certain amount of education and culture is necessary to have a sufficiently clear grasp of one's position in this world. Our educational system needs an overhaul, for it is now floating on the



surface without touching the depths of man. To achieve this, cooperation should come not only from society but also from the government.

Success is difficult without mutual help. The head and heart should go hand in hand, and the ideal and the reality should have a close relation. To work with this knowledge is karma yoga. The Lord has declared this truth in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

I pray that this supreme ideal be actualized in the daily life of every individual. I pray that there be heaven on earth. This is not merely a wish, this is a possibility and a fact that cannot be gainsaid. It is to be realized if life is to mean what it ought to mean.

# Dive Deep

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

The yogic concept as being propagated now goes beyond asana, pranayama, hatha yoga and other yogas. Yoga is too deep and too sacred a subject. It is a way of transforming the totality of life. Once you dive in and immerse yourself in water, no part of the body remains dry, not even a single strand of hair.

Likewise, if you dive into yoga then even your hair will become enlightened. The consciousness in your hair will vibrate with happiness and joy. However, you must have the level of understanding that yoga is not simply asana, pranayama, ajapa japa, chidakasha dharana, prana vidya, nada yoga. Separately, they are like candy in the mouths of little children. Yoga must be understood in its entirety.

Yoga should be used as the tool to enlarge the scope of your understanding and to deepen the awareness of how you can develop your own spiritual life. Using the awareness gained from yoga, one can learn to manage the enemies of the mind and begin the spiritual journey towards living the divine life, the discovery of truth.

*– 9 March 2011, Ganga Darshan,  
Munger*



❧ 4th INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA 2018 ❧

*Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, presents*

## *Yoga for developing inner awareness and potential*

On the occasion of the fourth International Day of Yoga we offer our good wishes to all sincere seekers and aspirants of yoga. It is a day to honour the ancient yoga vidya, a science of spiritual evolution perfected and handed down by the seers and sages of humanity through all times.

The science of mantra is an important component of yoga, which according to Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, "is an incomparable gift by the Indian seers to the world, for in no other culture will you find such an elaborate system of mantras. They are the medium through which, by understanding the connection of one's life with Nature and the Supreme Reality, one can act in accordance with Nature and make the effort towards self-evolution and self-realization."

"Mantra is defined as *mananat trayate iti mantrah* - as the power, force or energy through which one is able to liberate the mind from its obsessions. Many people see mantras as religious words or try to understand their literal meaning, but in essence the mantra is a sound vibration, and in mantra yoga one needs to identify with the vibration as much as possible. It is for this reason that mantras are always repeated, not just chanted once. When the mantra is sustained for a period of time, and you merge your consciousness in the feeling, chanting and articulation of the mantra, and begin to identify with the vibrations that you are creating while chanting the mantra, then you begin to experience what is called mantra meditative awareness, and attaining this awareness should be the aim of sincere yoga aspirants."

This year's program has been designed keeping this theme in mind. A conscious and sincere effort to integrate mantras into one's yoga sadhana and lifestyle will transform the state of one's own mind and unlock its dormant potential.



# Your Program for the International Day of Yoga 2018

From 6 am to 7.30 am, people will gather on the rooftops, verandahs, courtyards and other open spaces of their homes and community centres and do the following practices:

1. Kaya sthairyam with a focus on experiencing balance and harmony in body and mind

## Mantra

2. Shanti mantras:

*Om saha naavavatu. Saha nau bhunaktu.*

*Saha veeryam karavaavahai.*

*Tejasvinaavadheetamastu maa vidvishaavahai.*

*Om shantih, shantih, shantih.*

3. Mahamrityunjaya mantra with sankalpa for healing, energy, power, immunity and strength (11 rounds):

*Om tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam.*

*Urvārukamiva bandhanāt mṛtyormukṣīya māṃṛtāt.*

4. Gayatri mantra with sankalpa for wisdom, inner clarity, intuitive knowledge and learning (11 rounds):

*Om bhūrbhuvah svaḥ tatsaviturvareṇyam.*

*Bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt.*

5. 32 names of Durga with sankalpa for overcoming distress in life; experiencing peace and harmony (3 rounds):

*Om durgā durgārtīśamanī durgāpadvinivāriṇī. Durgamachchedinī durgasādhinī durganāśinī.*

*Durgatoddhāriṇī durganihantrī durgamāpahā. Durgamajñānadā durgā daityalokadavānalā.*

*Durgamā durgamālokā durgamātmavārūpiṇī. Durgamārgapradā durgamavidyā durgamāśritā.*

*Durgamajñānasamsthānā durgamadyānabhāsinī. Durgamohā durgamagā durgamārthasvarūpiṇī.*

*Durgamāsurasamhantrī durgamāyudhadhāriṇī. Durgamāṅgī durgamatā durgamā durgamāśvarī.*

*Durgabhīmā durgabhāmā durgabhā durgadāriṇī.*



## Asana

6. Tadasana (9 rounds)\*
7. Tiryak tadasana (9 rounds)
8. Kati chakrasana (9 rounds)
9. Shavasana\*\*
10. Pada sanchalanasana, stage 2 (9 rounds)
11. Naukasana (9 rounds)
12. Chakki chalanasana (9 rounds)
13. Vayu nishkasanasana (9 rounds)
14. Vajrasana (with abdominal breath awareness, 1–2 minutes)
15. Marjari asana (9 rounds)

*These asanas comprise a short and easy-to-practise capsule for toning the entire digestive system.*

## Pranayama

16. Sheetalī/sheetkari pranayama (10 rounds)
17. Nadi shodhana pranayama 1:1 (10 rounds)
18. Bhrāmari pranayama (10 rounds)

## Yama-niyama

For a few minutes each, contemplate on and develop the yama of *manahprasad*, or happiness, and the niyama of japa.

19. *Manahprasad*: This yama was introduced on IYD 2016. To what extent have you been able to practise this and what have been the effects? Observe your mental states over the last few days and identify moments when you were truly happy. Connect with the energy and positivity of those moments and try to bring yourself into that state now. Strive to increase the duration of this state each day. If you are still in a state of unhappiness, try to find its underlying cause. Identify the negative, limiting quality in yourself that it reflects. Next, focus on the opposite positive and uplifting quality and try to strengthen it to become happy.
20. *Japa*: We are connected with the senses and sense objects all the time. Japa becomes a method to disconnect the mind for a little while and connect with something different. The connection between your mind and the senses and sense objects is broken. In that break you direct your attention and



awareness towards discovering your inner nature, and that is where you find peace. With this aim in mind, practise *Om* chanting for 5 minutes remaining fully focused on the sound of the mantra. Also make a resolve to practise mental japa of *Om* or your guru mantra whenever possible during the day.

### Pratyahara

21. Ajapa japa (*So Ham* awareness in frontal passage, 5 minutes)
22. Yoga nap (*basic yoga nidra* with stages 3 & 4, 10 minutes)
23. Chanting of the yogic prayer:

*Asato maa sad gamaya  
Tamaso maa jyotir gamaya  
Mrityor maa amritam gamaya  
Sarveshaam svastirbhavatu  
Sarveshaam shantirbhavatu  
Sarveshaam poornam bhavatu  
Sarveshaam mangalam bhavatu  
Loka samastaa sukhino bhavantu  
Om shantih, shantih, shantih.*

This final prayer is a resolution and contains the essence of yogic teachings. It represents the personal aim of attaining harmony, equilibrium and balance in one's own life and the social aim to reach out to everyone with a wish for their wellbeing.

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\* *In the dynamic practices, awareness should be directed to the physical movement in the first 3 rounds, breath and pranic awareness in the next 3 rounds and mental visualization in the last 3 rounds.*

\*\* *Shavasana may be practised as per the need of the group.*

All sincere yoga aspirants are advised to follow the above practices for one year, and then reflect on their success and the changes experienced in the quality of life. We hope and pray that the inspiration of yoga remains with you and in turn, you are able to assist others on the path of yoga and yogic living.

*Hari Om Tat Sat  
Swami Sivadhyanam  
Coordinator*



# Glimpses of IDY 2018



On 21st June, BSY conducted a program from 6 to 7.30 am at Paduka Darshan on the occasion of the fourth International Day of Yoga. More than 500 participants attended and were guided through practices of asana, pranayama, relaxation, concentration and a meditation on yama-niyama.



In Munger, 'the City of Yoga', similar programs were conducted by members of BYMM, YYMM and the Ramayana Mandali at over 100 venues, in which thousands of people participated. More than 10,000 people in over 2000 private homes followed the prescribed program on their own as well.

Programs were conducted by ashrams and centres in Bihar, including Abhaypur, Bariyarpur, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Gaya, Haveli-Kharagpur, Lakhisarai, Maranchi, Patna, Sangrampur, Sheikhpura and Suryagarha; nationally in Bengaluru, Bhilai, Bhuj, Bilaspur, Chennai, Delhi, Dhanbad, Jamshedpur, Mumbai, Satna, Vijayawada, and other locations.





. . . and around the world in many countries, including Bulgaria, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and USA.



## 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>

**To access the online encyclopaedia of YOGA** and search the archive:

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



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## Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2019

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Feb 6-8</i>                  | Sri Yantra Aradhana  |
| <i>Feb 4-May 26</i>             | Yogic Studies, 4 months (Hindi)                                  |
| <i>Feb 9</i>                    | Basant Panchami Celebrations/Bihar School of Yoga Foundation Day |
| <i>Feb 14</i>                   | Bal Yoga Diwas, Children's Yoga Day                              |
| <i>Feb 18-24</i>                | Yoga Capsule - Respiratory (Hindi)                               |
| <i>Feb 18-24</i>                | Yoga Capsule - Arthritis & Rheumatism (Hindi)                    |
| <i>Mar 1-30</i>                 | Yoga Training, 1 month; (Hindi, for nationals)                   |
| <i>Mar 9-17</i>                 | Total Health Capsule (Hindi)                                     |
| <i>Mar 11-17</i>                | Yoga Capsule - Digestive (Hindi)                                 |
| <i>April 2-6</i>                | Yoga Lifestyle Capsule (Hindi/English)                           |
| <i>April 22-28</i>              | Hatha Yoga Yatra 1, 2  |
| <i>May 13-19</i>                | Hatha Yoga Yatra 3, 4  |
| <i>Jun 2-6</i>                  | Yoga Lifestyle Capsule (Hindi/English)                           |
| <i>Aug 16-22</i>                | Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2   |
| <i>Aug 23-29</i>                | Raja Yoga Yatra 3, 4   |
| <i>Oct 1-30</i>                 | Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 1, 2 (English)                   |
| <i>Oct 1-Jan 25</i>             | Yogic Studies, 4 months (English)                                |
| <i>Nov 4-10</i>                 | Kriya Yoga Yatra 1, 2  |
| <i>Nov 11-17</i>                | Kriya Yoga Yatra 3   |
| <i>Dec 18-22</i>                | Yoga Chakra Series   |
| <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 4th, 5th &amp; 6th</i> | Guru Bhakti Yoga   |
| <i>Every 12th</i>               | Akhanda Path of Ramacharitanas                                   |

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