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## Hari Om

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## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

One should observe regularity in all one's duties. Wasting time for many days and working hard for a few days to make up puts a strain on the functions of the body. Heart ache, dizziness and constipation result. One should always manage to take a little rest for a few minutes in the intervals of the various kinds of work and business. Always use common sense.

The best mental and physical tonic is cheerfulness. If one is cheerful, the cells, tissues and nerves are also cheerful and healthy. Therefore, one must cultivate this virtue again and again and be always cheerful. Laughter and cheerfulness increase the circulation of blood. They are blood tonics. Cheerfulness expands the heart and the brain, and fills the system with harmony and peace.

—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 ॥

# Yoga Education in Schools and Colleges

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



It is the general belief that yoga vidya is only for householders who have always had a spiritual leaning or for those who have renounced the world. As you know, it is our mission to bring knowledge of yoga to every home and we should not be surprised if in time to come it becomes part of the curriculum in every school also.

There is no reason why this should not be so. Yoga promises an all-round development of our personality, it gives physical and mental power, and that is the reason why everyone should learn this vidya. Not only does yoga do this, but it also teaches us how to harness our mental and spiritual forces and use them to tackle the challenges of life, how to remain serene and undaunted under adverse circumstances, nor get elated when fortune smiles on us. It is because yoga teaches all this it should have a place in our children's school and college education. They should have intellectual development, physical development, and yogic development. The last includes moral and spiritual development, and has a wholesome influence on the entire personality.

Psychologists declare that when you go in deep meditation, the layers of samskaras which cause abnormal behaviour

are uprooted and destroyed. The personality then becomes normal. To put this in scriptural parlance – Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram within you then begin to express through you. Your true personality blossoms out. A positive attitude towards life develops. Social obligations are no longer shirked, worries, fears, anxieties go, and a quiet confidence takes over. Yoga can do all this, and if the individual gains in stature, in the final analysis the nation, too, gains in stature.

A time may come in our mission for the propagation of yoga when our voice will be raised to such a pitch, that the leaders will have to take notice and begin seriously to give yoga its rightful place in our national life. Even the man in the street has begun to realize the importance of yoga. Each according to his needs can gain from this wonderful science and overcome his deficiencies.

We shall have to devise yoga textbooks to suit elementary, high school and college students. There are many religious books but there is a singular lack of books on yoga. Practise of yoga nidra, which is so simple, can remove our children's neuroses. It also reduces the normal hours of sleep and thus increases our active life. Khechari mudra, ujjayi pranayama, trataka, all these, so simple yet so effective, increase mental powers tremendously.

People have false notions about yoga. Yoga is not a fad. Yoga is not charlatanry. Stopping heartbeats or lying buried underground is not yoga. Yoga is a rational science. It makes you a useful member of society. The curse of the modern age is upon us and it threatens to make our children more and more irreligious and abnormal. Let yoga bring back a spirit of religion and good behaviour in them. Then when they grow up, they will lead a purposeful life and play their individual role for the greater glory of our nation.

– *Delivered at 1st International Yoga Convention, Munger, 1964*  
*Printed in YOGA Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1965)*

# Yoga for the Prevention of Depression, Anxiety, and Aggression and the Promotion of Socio-emotional Competencies in School-aged Children (Extract)

Ana María Velásquez, María Adelaida López, Natalia Quiñonez & Diana Patricia Paba

*The research was conducted by Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá and the Colombian non-profit Dunna Corporation.*

Children and youth coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are at risk of developing behavioural problems. This study examined the efficacy of a yoga program implemented in a low socio-economic status school, for the prevention of depression, anxiety, and aggression. After-school workshops were delivered twice a week during 12 weeks to 125 students in 5th, 8th, and 9th grades, enrolled in a school in Bogotá, Colombia.

Participants were randomly assigned to an intervention and to a control group. Children's anxiety, depression, aggression, and some socio-emotional competencies (specifically empathy, anger management, and prosociality) were quantitatively assessed before and after the intervention, by means of self- and peer-reported questionnaires. Qualitative data were also collected to assess children's perceived benefits from the workshops. Results suggested a potential of the program to reduce children's anxiety problems, in particular. Results are discussed in terms of recommended improvements to the program and its future evaluation.

**Keywords:** Yoga; intervention; prevention programmes; depression; anxiety; aggression; socio-emotional competencies

## **Introduction**

Children and youth raised in lower socio-economic contexts face many challenges that demand abilities for coping with stressful situations. These situations often put them at risk of developing mental and behavioural problems. In fact, research has shown that perceived chronic stress is related to anxiety, depression, and aggression (Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008). Anxiety and depression can lead to maladaptive development given that children who exhibit these problems are more prone to be victimized by their peers (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001), which puts them at risk of psychopathology (Widom, 2000).

On the other hand, research on aggression shows that children who are repeatedly aggressive in school have a higher risk of getting involved in violence and criminality later in life (Farrington, 1993; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984). Given the consequences and relative stability of these problems across life, especially when the onset occurs in childhood and adolescence (Fombonne, Wostear, Cooper, Harrington, & Rutter, 2001; Weissman et al., 1999), researchers and educational practitioners have looked for intervention alternatives to prevent them early in life (Shonkoff, Boyce, & McEwen, 2009). Helping children to develop coping strategies to deal with stressful contexts can be an effective way to prevent depression, anxiety, and aggression.

According to Harper (2010), yoga might give children a “framework for processing and handling their emotions, helping to defuse anger and stress” (p. 101). In light of this, the present study explored the potential benefits of a school-based yoga program for the prevention of anxiety, depression, and aggression, in low socio-economic status (SES) children and youth.

One of the main concerns for children’s development has to do with school violence. This problem affects between 9% and

54% of children and youth worldwide (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). In Bogotá, Colombia, a survey study conducted by the Secretary of Education of Bogotá (Chaux, 2013) revealed that around 35% of students in Grades 5 to 9 reported being victims of physical aggression, and around 25% reported being victims of exclusion in their schools.

Previous research has shown that aggression can be attributed to the exposure to stressful environments, for example, community violence, family maltreatment, and aggressive peers (Saldarriaga, Velásquez, Bruce-Santo, Bukowski, & Chaux, 2009), which are more characteristic of public schools (Chaux, 2013). This could be related to the fact that, in Bogotá, 66% of public schools are below the mid-level of socio-economic conditions (Secretaría de Educación del Distrito, 2013).

In addition to these contextual factors, aggression has also been associated with a lack of socio-emotional competencies such as empathy and anger regulation (Chaux, 2012). Empathy refers to the cognitive and emotional capacity to experience feelings that are congruent to the situation of another person (Hoffman, 2000), and anger regulation refers to the capacity to modulate the degree of emotional reactivity (in this case, anger) to cope with the demands of the environment (Saarni, Campos, Camras, & Witherington, 2006). This has led to the development and implementation of interventions aimed at preventing school violence through the promotion of socio-emotional competencies (Chaux, 2012).

Another concern for children's development is depression and anxiety, given that children who exhibit these problems also experience social withdrawal (Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009), peer rejection (Harrist, Zaia, Bates, Dodge, & Pettit, 1997), and victimization (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Perry et al., 2001), all of which impair their social development. In Bogotá, a survey study showed that 52% of school-age children report moderate to high levels of social anxiety related to school activities (Chaux & Velásquez, 2008). Another study conducted by the first author in the same city with 1,346 elementary



school students showed that 78% of children reported having experienced depressive feelings, from sometimes to always, in a period of 2 weeks.

Taking into account the association between these problems and chronic stress (Suldo et al., 2008), one way to prevent these problems in school-aged children is to provide them with tools to cope with and reduce stress. One promising alternative for the prevention of violence and the promotion of psychological wellbeing is yoga training (Lamb, 2004).

Yoga is defined as a “holistic system of multiple mind-body practices for mental and physical health that include physical postures and exercises, breathing techniques, deep relaxation practices, cultivation of awareness/mindfulness, and meditation” (Khalsa, Hickey-Schultz, Cohen, Steiner, & Cope, 2012). The practice of yoga is considered to benefit individuals in different ways, exerting a positive influence on the individual’s physiological and psychological systems. It has been explained that yoga influences the nervous system by triggering the parasympathetic nervous system, which inhibits the sympathetic nervous system responsible for causing the stress response (Lamb, 2004; Vempati & Telles, 2002).

In line with this, Steiner, Sidhu, Pop, Frenette, and Perrin (2013) state that, through calm breathing, postures, and meditation, yoga might help to regulate the autonomic nervous system, to calm down, and to focus the mind. Based on this, yoga may have an effect of reducing depression and anxiety by enhancing adaptation through the improvement of self-regulatory capacities (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007) and by acting on the neural circuitry associated with stress reactivity function (Davidson et al., 2003). Also, yoga training may be an effective method to reduce aggression (Steiner et al., 2013) by helping children and youth to develop abilities such as emotional regulation and empathy (Khalsa et al., 2012; Serwacki & Cook-Cottone, 2012). Steiner et al. (2013) pose that improvement in these skills may be achieved by yoga training insofar as it increases the individual’s cognitive capacities such



as attention, concentration, and awareness of one's emotional states.

Studies on the beneficial effects of yoga have suggested that it has a positive impact on individuals' wellbeing (for a review, see Silva, Ravindran, & Ravindran, 2009). For example, research findings have shown an effect of yoga training on the reduction of anxiety (Kirkwood, Rampes, Tuffrey, Richardson, & Pilkington, 2005; Li & Goldsmith, 2012), depression (Shapiro et al., 2007), physical aggression

(Berger, Silver, & Stein, 2009), anger control (Khalsa et al., 2012; Yoshihara, Hiramoto, Sudo, & Kubo, 2011), and perceived stress (Bayne, Aten, Smith, Greer, & Francisco, 2007; Granath, Ingvarsson, von Thiele, & Lundberg, 2006). However, most of these studies have been conducted in adult populations. Given the importance of preventing problems early in life, more attention needs to be paid to intervention programs during childhood and adolescence.

For this purpose, school settings become efficient contexts to intervene. On the one hand, the school is one of the settings where most of children's and adolescents' social life takes place; therefore, within this setting, they face challenging experiences, deal with stress, and manage anger. On the other hand, the school system and its organization provide adequate facilities for the implementation of prevention programs. Therefore, this study sets out to examine the beneficial effects of yoga interventions in school-aged children from low-income families. Some studies have already explored the efficacy of yoga training on children's school behaviour.

For example, a recent study showed that yoga reduced trauma-related distress in children (Culver, Whetten, Boyd, & O'Donnell, 2015). A meta-analysis conducted by Serwacki and Cook-Cottone (2012) showed that although participation in yoga training may have beneficial effects on emotional regulation, attention, anxiety reduction, reactivity, and physical aggression for children in school settings, there are several methodological limitations that need to be addressed such as randomization, greater samples, and statistical clarity.

A few studies, however, can be used as good models of rigorous research. One, conducted by White (2012), examined the effect of an 8-week yoga program, where 155 fourth- and fifth-grade children attending public schools were randomly distributed in experimental and control groups. Results showed improvements in self-esteem and self-regulation for children in both groups, but those in the experimental group reported having better coping strategies for stress, compared to the control group.

Another study, conducted on seventh-grade students by Khalsa et al. (2012), evidenced positive results of yoga training for the improvement of anger control. In this study, 121 participants were randomly assigned to physical education classes and yoga classes during 11 weeks. At the end of the intervention, the students that took yoga classes showed statistically significant differences when compared to the students who attended regular physical education classes.

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# Yoga for My Whole Life

*Irina Tsvyatкова, Sofia, Bulgaria*



My first yoga class was enough to understand that yoga is what I need. I will never forget the dominating feeling in me after the yoga classes on Fridays, light as a feather and with a smile, no matter how exhaustive the week had been, the amazing feeling of the flexibility and endurance of my body, the possibility to calm down my mind and my emotions and to concentrate myself.

The course 'Yoga for Pregnant Women' was one of the most wonderful presents which I could give to myself, while I was pregnant with my first child. I soon understood that the gift was not only for me but for my baby, for my husband and for all the people around me. This course gave me calmness, confidence and knowledge for the coming event. I was free of fear. Until the last day of my pregnancy I didn't feel any heaviness in my body and was in an amazing mood. One of the things which inspired me very much was the way our teacher spoke about pregnancy and childbirth, as the most

sacred experience (it really was like that) and of the woman as a connection between God and humans. Day by day I realized the miracles yoga does and I feel very grateful.

On the day of the delivery everything went off smoothly, I was calm and by means of breathing I managed to control the pain during the contractions. On this special day I was together with my husband. He helped me with the asanas which we had practised at the course and the truth is that we really had fun ourselves. The day our child was born was the most sacred and happiest day of my life. I don't remember pain, only happiness!

The most precious thing yoga gave me was the awareness of how important a peaceful mind is, free of excess emotions and how important the correct care of the human body is as an instrument.

Now, when I am taking care of my child, I feel even more tangibly the benefits of the yoga practices, they help me to assist myself to be a healthy, rested and well-balanced mother and wife.

I believe that yoga will always be part of my life, because it is close to my heart and has a positive influence on my thinking, health and my whole life.



# Fear Management

*From Conquest of Fear, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Fear is a great enemy of man. It is the enemy of his progress. It disturbs his peace and harmony. It sucks or saps his vitality and energy. It drains the nervous system of its reserve of energy. It produces weakness.

Fear is of two kinds: natural or rational fear, when there is a threatening situation to endanger life; and unnatural or unusual fear which has no objective reality.

The origin of most neurotic fears can be traced to childhood. The seeds of fear may lie dormant in childhood in the subconscious mind. They sprout forth after some time during some period of crisis or stress.

Panicky fear is more contagious than typhoid or cholera. The atom bombs cause terrible panicky fear. People leave their houses and move to villages.

Anxiety and worry are the effects of fear. Some sort of fear gets buried in the subconscious mind. So man worries himself. There is continued strain and tension in the mind. If the fear is released or dispelled, he will have peace of mind.

Normal fear is healthy. It paves the way for one's progress. It preserves life. A headmaster is afraid of the inspector of schools. He takes a very keen interest in training the boys. All the boys get success in the examination. An engine driver of the railways is afraid of his superior officer. He is very careful in the discharge of his duties. No collision occurs. A physician is afraid of getting a bad reputation. He takes great care of his patient. He conducts research and saves many lives. He becomes a famous physician also.

Psychologists are of opinion that there cannot be absolute fearlessness and that only determined effort can be made to conquer fear. This is incorrect. Psychologists have no transcendental experience. A perfect sage who has knowledge

of Brahman is absolutely fearless. The *Brihadaranyakopaniṣad* declares in a thundering voice:

The knower of the fearless Brahman becomes himself absolutely fearless.

There can be fear only where there is duality. How can there be fear for one who experiences non-duality? Such a person is the most courageous of men. The courage of a soldier in the battlefield or of a dacoit is only tamasic courage. It is not courage at all. It is only brutal ferocity born of hatred or jealousy. That sattvic courage born of wisdom of the self alone is real courage.

As a matter of fact, fear exists to glorify courage. A timid man exists to glorify a courageous man. There will be no value for goodness if badness does not exist. One side of a thing cannot have significance without the existence of the other side. Hence everything in this world has two sides. *Dwandwas*, pairs of opposites, exist to keep up the flow of the world.

## METHODS TO ERADICATE FEAR

### **Pratipaksha bhavana method**

As you think, so you become. As you think, so you develop. As is your ideal, so gradually your life will become. This is so, because there is a great transforming power in thought.

Take, then, the life of perfect men like Bhishma and think of their deeds and their life and ideals. Your life will be filled by purity, courage, etc. You will become a noble, perfect man. The thought will transform you into its own likeness. Man becomes like what he worships. Man becomes like what he thinks. This is indeed true.

Sit with closed eyes in the early morning. Meditate on courage, the opposite of fear, for half an hour. Think of the advantages of courage and the disadvantages of fear. Practise the virtue during the day. Feel that you actually possess courage to an enormous degree. Manifest it in your daily life. In some weeks or months fear will be replaced by courage.

Repeat the formula 'Om courage' mentally, daily several times. Meditate and assert:

I am all courage	OM OM OM
I am an embodiment of courage	OM OM OM
I am like Bhishma	OM OM OM
I am a great hero	OM OM OM
My will is very powerful	OM OM OM
I am not afraid of anything	OM OM OM
I am bold and chivalrous	OM OM OM
Courage is my birthright	OM OM OM

It is very difficult to attack fear directly. It is very strong. You are a victim to this negative trait in hundreds of lives. It has taken deep root. Put the seeds of courage in your heart. Allow it to grow. Fear will die by itself. The positive always overcomes the negative. This is an immutable psychological law.

This is the pratipaksha bhavana method of raja yogis. Try this method again and again. You are bound to succeed.

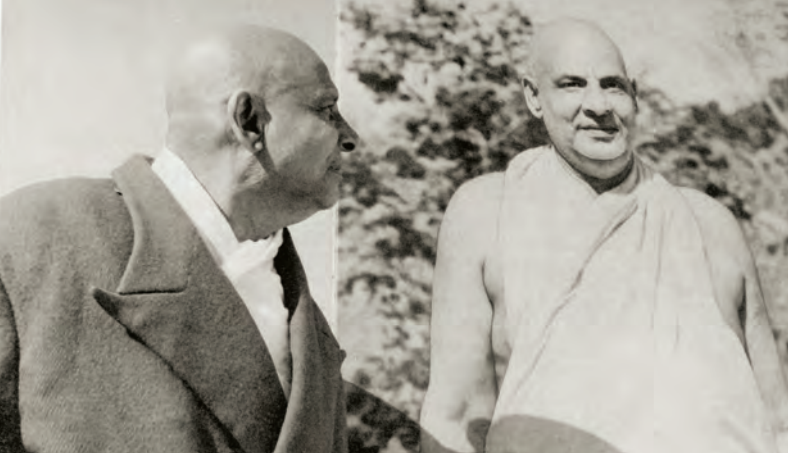
May you attain triumph over fear by cultivating courage through the pratipaksha bhavana method or the method of thinking on the opposite.

### **The method of jnanis**

Meditation on the fearless atman removes all sorts of fears in toto. A sage beholds the immortal fearless Self only everywhere. How can there be fear for him then? There is fear only where there is duality. If one feels that there is a second object besides himself, at once fear is generated. He is afraid of the other man. Separation, duality, perception of objects are all due to *avidya* or ignorance.

Start the anti-current from today. Deny the body, and identify yourself with the all-pervading, immortal, fearless atman. Entire denial of the body cannot come in a day or a week. Constantly think of the atman. Gradually you will become fearless. You will have to fight against the samskaras of *anadikala*, beginningless time.





The more you think of atman, the more courageous you will become. By constant hammering only can you entirely drive the nail into the wall or a plank. Even so, by constant and protracted thinking on atman alone you can become absolutely fearless.

Meditate, assert, recognize, realize:

I am fearless, all-pervading atman	OM OM OM
I am not afraid of anything	OM OM OM
Courage is my birthright	OM OM OM
I behold the one Atman everywhere	OM OM OM
Everything is my own Self	OM OM OM
Who is to be afraid of whom?	OM OM OM
There is no duality for me	OM OM OM
I see the non-dual essence only	OM OM OM
My will is very powerful now	OM OM OM
My power is irresistible	OM OM OM
I have no enemy	OM OM OM
Enemy, tiger, cobra, are my own Self	OM OM OM
They cannot do harm to me	OM OM OM
I love them as my own Self	OM OM OM

A jivanmukta or a sage hates none, fears none. May you all be established in that supreme non-dual fearless Brahman.

# Yoga Pura Vida

*Jignasu Dharmajyoti, Spain/Tanzania*



In 2002 I was exposed to a book by Swami Sivananda and started to practise yoga daily to relieve the stress of working as a commercial trader between Southeast Asia, Europe and South America. This initial exposure led me to many other Bihar School of Yoga books, mainly those written by Swami Niranjanananda. Inspired by the stories of his guru, Sri Swamiji, and what he had accomplished in Rikhia based on Swami Sivananda's mandate to '*Serve Love Give*', the seed to create an organization to share the ancient yoga practices with people was planted in my mind. In 2012 when I was completely burnt out from my various businesses, I met a benefactor from Tanzania, by Guru's grace, who invited me to use his property to teach yoga. It was a sign. I decided to divest from my businesses and focused on spreading Satyananda Yoga.

In 2013 I came to Kikokwe, Tanzania, a little town of 700 people, to share simple yoga practices with the locals. Initially, most people did not have any concept of yoga. But from a 1980s National Geographic photograph of an indigenous Masai doing a headstand, we know that the locals have been exposed to asanas in the past. In a short period of time, the locals from diverse background such as Christians, Muslims,

Rastas, Masais, and other indigenous tribes, realized the physical and mental benefits of yoga. After joining our class, the adults would eventually send their children to us to learn yoga. Today, Yoga Pura Vida (YPV) has trained eight native Tanzanian teachers, four of whom are Muslims, to lead yoga classes in the Satyananda Yoga tradition in their own language – Swahili – throughout the country: in Arusha, Pangani, Dar Es Salaam, Bagamoyo and Zanzibar.



### **Our mission**

In 2015 YPV became a legal non-profit organization in Tanzania. Our mission is inspired by the life of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda to '*Serve Love Give*'. The focus of the organization is to spread yoga to people of different communities through classical yoga practices as well as holistic, artistic, professional, academic and environmental activities. By spreading yoga knowledge, we hope to strengthen the society by increasing the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of all people, especially those with little or no economic resources. YPV still has very little of its own resources; we have 15 yoga mats, one APMB book, two books on *Yoga Education for Children* and two laptops. We have no office or studio. We have no car, motorbike or bicycle, but we have a lot of heart. My capital is faith.



### **YPV activities**

YPV connects with institutions, organizations, entrepreneurs, yoga teachers, holistic therapists, artists, professionals, academics and all who want to contribute in the exchange of knowledge, skills and materials with those who can benefit from their teachings. We support people by organizing yoga teachers' training and promoting different types of activities related to yoga lifestyle, including social and cultural events.

From the beginning of the project, the children loved practising yoga. Sometimes on Sundays in Kikokwe over 80 children participate in different yoga activities, including music and dance. Their families enjoy seeing their kids having fun and doing healthy exercises as well as receiving positive teachings for their life.





In the Moivaro community of Arusha every week, the yoga teachers would walk around the neighbourhood to collect the kids from their homes, and after class they would bring them back. When we first started the project, we had about six children. After eighteen months, as many as 50 children would attend.

Given our limited resources, YPV focuses on a small number of communities allowing us to invest our efforts to build trust and recognition of our work inside and outside these communities. Our goal is to foster lasting relationships to ensure the future sustainability of our participation in each project. For example, on Zanzibar Island where the population is 90% Muslim, Ayda, a trained YPV teacher, is herself a Muslim. A few years ago, she reported encountering obstacles from local fanatics; but nowadays, most people understand the benefits of yoga and realize that yoga is not a religion! Ayda's courage to spread yoga in her community strengthens each day as her classes increase in size.





Some of our teachers have started teaching to foreign tourists in hotels, studios and other locations to earn a source of income in order to become financially independent from YPV. Earning a small stipend, three rotate teaching at an orphanage – the Ujamaa Children’s Home in Arusha. Our teachers continue to look for more places to give free classes, whether it is at the beach, in the park or in an open public space.

We also support the residents of an alcohol and drug detox clinic. The teachers want to spread the benefits of yoga everywhere.





### **Children and youth – the next generation**

YPV has been focusing on introducing yoga into the school system. One of our teachers, Karim, successfully integrated yoga as part of the curriculum in the Marjal Wolf Primary School in Bagamoyo since the 2017 academic year. Karim is the only teacher at the school who does not use a stick to keep the children quiet. All the kids love him. When asked what they like about yoga, the children enthusiastically responded that they feel “peace and joy.”

In addition to teaching yoga, YPV is empowering the yoga teachers with English courses and computer instruction. The training enables them to connect with people from other cultures. Each month, YPV teachers and volunteers from their respective local communities gather to clean up the streets. The young ones learn how to minimize the negative impact of plastic. Soon we will help them plant trees and learn other positive environmental activities, linking yoga and ecology.



During the 2017 International Day of Yoga in Tanzania, the Minister of Education announced that he would like to bring yoga to the schools. YPV is poised to participate in that effort.

### Next steps

The need in Tanzania is great. YPV is very small. The overwhelming majority of the work and finances depends on me. However, YPV is beginning to attract positive attention. In 2017 a sannyasin from England came to teach the first teachers' training course for children and teenagers. The Rotary Club of Arusha has tentatively agreed to fund a year-long project to teach yoga in an orphanage, a community centre, and a youth soccer club, while training one yoga teacher. In addition, funding will also be provided to study the effects of yoga on the mental, social and physical wellbeing of the participants. YPV is currently organizing the second TTC for children and teenagers in August–September 2018 with the help and support of Swamis Gangadhara and Aghorananda from Brazil. With Guru's grace, our activities will continue to grow and spread positively throughout Tanzania.

Just as in the example of Swamiji building an 'army of red shirts', the Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal, can we sustain the development of Satyananda Yoga in Tanzania. As we all know, instilling positive samskaras at an early age, the children, who will



be future parents and leaders, will shine like the sun and the whole society will benefit from their awareness, knowledge, skills, and kindness. Just seeing the bright smiles of the children at play has encouraged me to continue with the work of YPV to bring peace, health and happiness. I am just glad that I can be a small part of that evolution.



# Intellectual Barriers in Sadhana

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



Intellect has always been a great barrier and a great boon for mankind, both at the same time. In discipleship, you have to be innocent like a child, you have to forget the intellect.

In everything we do there is a process of understanding, and this process is of two forms: one is critical, the other is accepting. Critical understanding is the process which is usually adopted by disciples who are highly intellectual. They open up the storeroom of their minds and compare everything with the 'Why?' attitude.

They compare what I am saying with what others have said, with what the books have said, with what their grandfathers have said. They start thinking, 'Why is Swamiji saying this, when in the scriptures it is written like that, or why is it written in the scriptures like that if Swamiji said like this? And why did Swamiji say this, because in the research they have found something else.' So, this critical mind, critical intellect, is also necessary for those with an intellectual temperament.

There are four different types of people in the world. The first type is defined as a dynamic temperament, the person who is active physically, mentally, emotionally and intellectually. The second type is defined as the emotional or devotional temperament. Such a person has faith, whatever he does, in God and guru. The third type is the intellectual temperament, which is always thinking, comparing and trying to understand why the difference. The fourth type is the mystical temperament. This type of person can meditate twenty-four hours of the day without any problem, totally lost in the contemplation of whatever he is doing.

So, for different forms of understanding, different types of methods are adopted by these four different temperaments. The first type, which is dynamic in temperament, will understand things very well, will listen to what you say, will do everything, and file it all away in the memory storehouse for future reference, if there is any need. If it is all insignificant jargon, then he will simply pass it out from the other ear and that is the end of it.

The second type is of mystical temperament. Whatever you say he will take it as a guidance, as a help, for his evolution. The third type is the emotional person. He uses the intellect as a means to develop, to further, to transcend his own emotions. The fourth type, the intellectual person, uses the intellect in a positive way, as a jnana yogi, and in a negative way, as a critical yogi; and they are both acceptable.

In the process of sadhana, temperament is important, depending on what type of sadhana you are doing and on who is guiding you, because really this question is of a personal nature. So, for each person there will be a different process. In general, when you are involved in a particular sadhana which is given by your guru, you have to try hard not to use the intellect. Sometimes the intellect does pop up in the middle; it can make you say, 'Oh, why am I doing this; I am not really getting anywhere', or 'It is all a waste', or 'What I have been doing is wrong according to different people'. It is something









which has to be understood and clarified by you at a later stage.

When you become aware, when you have gone beyond the level of intellect, then you can say to yourself, 'The practices, the sadhana that I am doing needs to be done by developing childlike qualities, and not many qualities', because before our evolutionary process, we are all children no matter how intellectually evolved we are.

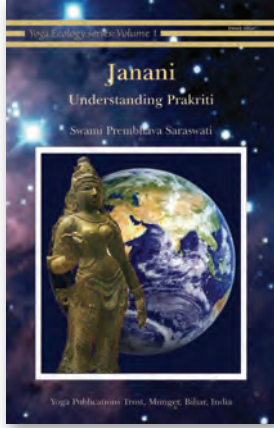
Einstein was highly evolved intellectually, but his final statement was 'I do not understand anything'. So in many ways, you have to become the Einstein. The same thing applies to Mirabai, Kabir and Tulsidas. They were very well versed in all forms of knowledge, but they chose one path, the path of simplicity, and overcame their intellect. Today my suggestion is that although you may find difficulties with your mind, with your intellect, try not to worry about it, but take it lightheartedly.

*– 21 March 1983, Ganga Darshan, Munger,  
printed in YOGA Vol. 21, Issue 9 (September 1983)*



# Yoga Ecology

From Janani, Understanding Prakriti, Swami Prembhava Saraswati



*Om dyauh shaantirantarikshagvam  
shaantih prithvee shaantiraapah  
shaantiroshadhayah shaantih  
vanaspatayah shaantiroishvedevaah  
shaantirbrahma shaantih sarvagvam  
shaantih shaantireva shaantih saa maa  
shaantiredhi.  
Shaantih shaantih sushaantirbhavatu  
sakalaarishtasushaantirbhavatu sarve  
grahaah sushaantirbhavatu.  
Om shaantih shaantih shaantih.*

May there be peace in the heavens (celestial plane), peace in the sky (astral plane), peace on earth (physical plane), peace on water, peace among herbs, plants and trees, peace among the ten cardinal points of the planet, peace upon Brahma, peace everywhere, peace upon me, peace and peace alone. May there be peace and auspiciousness, may all the misfortunes and tribulations be pacified, may all the planets be pacified.

– *Shanti mantra of the Sama Veda*

From a yogic perspective the relationship between humankind and planet Earth and all its ecosystems is the path of yoga ecology. Yoga ecology is the yogic and vedic way of ecological living. A yogic and vedic life is a balanced and simple life attuned to the forces of nature that support and sustain life. With a yogic ecological lifestyle one adopts the practical and applicable understanding of yoga, which includes techniques for environmental and individual purification and the enhancement of positive cosmic energy all around.



*Yoga ecology is not a separate subject to yoga, it is a way of living and recognizing the positive contribution of nature to the development of human life. The quality of nature is always to give and the quality of the individual is always to take. A tree does not eat its own fruit, the fruit on a tree is meant for another person, the cow does not drink its own milk, it is meant for another being, the river doesn't drink its own water, it is meant for others. Nature, Prakriti, is a very selfless state of existence, and the human being is the most complicated life form ever created, it lives totally opposite to the natural laws. If nature is selfless, the human being is selfish, if nature is unconditioned then the human being is conditioned.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Yoga ecology consists of ancient vedic and yogic practices and concepts that have been brought forth into the modern era by Swami Satyananda and are presently being explored and developed by Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda. This subject is being made accessible at a time when society needs it the most. It is a very practical, simple and restorative path for all those wanting to connect to the divine nature of Mother Earth and to ensure that she remains in all her beauty and magnificence for generations to come.



*Yoga ecology is not just about planting trees, watering the plants, listening to the birds and sitting on the lawn. No! Yoga ecology is respecting, understanding and living in accordance with the laws of nature.*

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

### **Beginning with the basics**

A student of an asana class for beginners, a middleclass 55 year old woman, said, “After the first class I walked to my car and felt the whole world around me like never before. I could feel the cool evening breeze on my skin, and smell the evening flowers and scents and I saw the stars sparkling so clearly in the sky. It was as if the world had opened up to me for the first time in my life.”

When people begin to practise yoga, such as asana and pranayama, they will immediately feel a change in their awareness. Even by simply being aware of one’s right hand or one’s breath, a new experience dawns. The lives of most people are busy, hectic and full of distractions, and there is little time for simply being aware of oneself and one’s environment. As one continues to practise yoga the awareness begins to expand. Yoga ecology begins when the awareness has extended beyond oneself to the world around. Only then can one really begin to communicate with and understand nature.



*Through yoga, all the diverse aspects of man's personality – of his outer and inner life – can be purified, harmonized and regulated. Once this has been achieved with even a small group of people, the effects of internal harmony will automatically be transmitted to the external environment. Yoga aims not only towards sustainable growth, but also towards universal harmony and development.*

– Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The practices of hatha yoga, such as asana and pranayama, were revealed to yogis through their study of nature, animals, birds, trees, the cycle of the sun and moon, and they have taken names from the realm of Prakriti: *bhujangasana*, the cobra pose, *majari asana*, the cat pose, *garudasana*, the eagle pose, *surya* and *chandra namaskara*, salute to the sun and moon, *tadasana*, the palm tree pose, *tiryak tadasana*, the swinging palm tree pose, *swarna pranayama*, the panting dog breath pose, plus many more.

Yoga ecology is not just performing asana and pranayama at a beach, park, forest or on a surfboard. This is merely exercise in a beautiful location. Yoga by its very nature, whether inside a hall or at the beach, aligns and connects one with nature through the body, breath and one's awareness, guiding one towards a yogic life of ecological living.

Pranayama enables one to absorb *prana*, energy, from the surrounding air. It connects one to the prana, the life force of Prakriti, invigorating and purifying body and mind. A clean and pollution-free environment is a requirement for practising pranayama, thus illustrating the yogic understanding of the importance of clean air for breath, health and life. It is the breath that connects all beings. The air and atmosphere cannot be held by borders for it connects everything on this planet.



The lungs of Mother Earth, the tropical rainforests, have been destroyed to such an extent that now the earth breathes as a cigarette smoker would – the lungs are clogged with carbon monoxide, ash, chemical dust, poisonous gases and toxins – the waste of our modern materialistic life. People are breathing the same air, and as they breathe, the poison fills their body and mind. Yet people don't even realize it. Pranayama helps to make one aware of the breath and its role in maintaining health of body and mind.



## Interconnection of all life

*The basic concept in yoga ecology is that everything is interconnected, for yoga means unity, the unified field.*

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

Yoga ecology teaches that everyone is an integrated part of creation. When one can see that all is one – that the birds, bees, trees, the family of humans are all united – then this is the union which is yoga.

*Om eeshaa vaasyamidagvam sarvam yatkincha jagatyaam jagat;  
Tena tyaktena bhunjeethaa maa gridhah kasyasvid dhanam.*

The whole universe together with its creatures belongs to the Lord. No creature is superior to any other, and the human being should not have absolute power over nature. Let no species encroach upon the rights and privileges of other species. However, one can enjoy the bounties of nature by giving up greed.

— Isha Upanishad

*To understand nature, we have to rise above duality. We have to be able to understand the oneness of ourselves with creation, and there is no science other than yoga that can give us that knowledge in such a perfect systematic way.*

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



## Prakriti as the Divine

In yoga ecology, the forces of nature are respected as all-powerful, and prayers and worship are offered to that force through the trees, the rivers, the wind, the sun, the earth and all ecosystems and species within them.

Just as gods and goddesses are worshipped, one can worship the spirit of nature, and see oneself within that divinity. This leads to the awareness of oneness with nature and the ability to see the same spirit in all. Naturally and spontaneously a deep love, respect and appreciation of nature unfolds.

*God is everywhere; in all things and in nothing. God is in the trees and seas; in birds and in beasts, in the soil under my feet and in my soul. Why am I wandering from temple to temple looking for God? When I stop searching I realize that God is in me and I am in God.*

— Kabir

If one can make an effort to transform oneself through the practices of yoga, to become more sensitive to the spirit which is Prakriti, and the forces that govern everything, then there will be a change towards living in a more harmonized world, with respect for all of creation.



*Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow.*

— Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1964

# The Teachings of Atmashuddhi

*From Glimpses of the Divine III, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Swami Sivananda had only one aim in life. When people come to spiritual life, they have different aspirations. Some come with the idea of attaining moksha, enlightenment, self-realization, some come with the idea of experiencing samadhi, some come with the idea of encountering God in their dreams. Everybody has a different idea of what they want to experience as their spiritual attainment. Swami Sivananda made a very simple sankalpa for his life. He wanted to experience *atmashuddhi*, purification of the self.



Why did Swami Sivananda choose *atmashuddhi*, self-purification, as the aim of his efforts in yoga and spiritual life, why not self-realization, God-realization, samadhi or moksha? If you think about it logically and study the sequence given in the scriptures as well, then you will discover that the main focus of a sannyasin and a spiritual aspirant is to cultivate the state of purity inside, and not to search for God.

A blind man may have the desire to see the sun, but that is not his need; his need is to acquire sight. Once the sight is acquired then he will be able to see not only the sun but the entire creation in its multi-coloured glory. Need and desire are two different things. The need is acquisition of sight and then the desire to see the sun is fulfilled. In your life, you put

desires first and needs second, and you chase your desires without having the skills to attain them. You don't have the eyesight but you want to see the sun, and you go from ashram to ashram, guru to guru, hoping that you will get instant shaktipat, instant peace, instant moksha.

Nothing in life is attained instantly. That is not the nature of creation. In creation, everything takes time to grow, develop and mature. We are part of that *srishti*, that *prakriti*, that cosmic nature, so nothing is instant. Even God, when he incarnated as an avatara, he had to live according to his age. He did not come as the Lord Almighty from day one. He lived the life of a child, a young person, an adult, and when the destiny unfolded, then he became active. Until then he was an ordinary person.

In the same manner, in your search for spiritual awareness, you have to give yourself time. Giving time does not mean that you let go of efforts. Efforts have to be continuous and constant. If you plant a seed in the ground and take it out every day to see if it is sprouting or not, then the seed will never sprout. If you leave the seed in the ground, water it and provide other nourishments on time, then it will eventually sprout one day. If you keep taking it out every day to look at it, it is not going to sprout ever. The same principle applies with your spiritual effort too. Your intention, sankalpa and effort have to be cared for. That is where the focus has to be, in doing things at the right time, in the right manner, and not in what you can achieve by doing. Therefore it is said in spiritual life, "Don't have any expectation, but persevere in your effort."

Don't have any expectation, don't connect with the *vasanas* of the mind, the desires of the mind, but know that 'This is my aim and I have to keep on walking', and keep on walking, making the right effort, doing the right sadhana, having the right intention and the right attitude. That is your achievement. Moksha is not your achievement, but correctness of attitude, action and behaviour is your achievement. The rest happens spontaneously.





This idea and instruction was given by Swami Sivananda. He said, "Self-purification is a must for spiritual growth." With this, he took the idea of yoga to another level. His philosophy begins with 'serve'. The second precept is 'love', the third is 'give', the fourth is 'purify', the fifth is 'be good', the sixth is 'do good', the seventh is 'meditate', and the eighth is 'realize'. These comprise the eightfold path of Swami Sivananda's yoga. If you can understand this sequence, you will discover that it comes after the yoga of Patanjali.

Patanjali's eight limbs consist of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi. After this attainment, this transformation of the human personality, the interactive nature is seen in the teachings of Swami Sivananda. First you improve yourself and then you come out to serve and improve the outer environment. To do that, there has to be attainment of *shuddhi*, purity.

# A Happy Blending

From Ishavasya Upanishad, Swami Satyananda Saraswati



## Mantra 11: From Death to Immortality

*Vidyaam chaavidyaam cha yasadvedobhayam saha;  
Avidyayaa mrityum teertvaa vidyayaaamritamashnute.*

### Anvay

Yah: he who; Tat ubhayam: both of them; Vidyaam: knowledge;  
Cha: and; Avidyaam: ignorance; Cha saha: simultaneously;  
Veda: knows (he); Avidyayaa: through ignorance; Mrityum:  
death; Teertvaa: having crossed; Vidyayaa: by knowledge;  
Amritam: immortality; Ashnute: attains.

## Translation

He, who knows both vidya and avidya together, crosses death through avidya and attains eternal life through vidya.

On this teaching Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh has said: Mrityu or death here refers to 'work and worldly knowledge', in the sense that these lead to mortality or death. Teertvaa means 'having crossed over'. Ashnute means 'attains'. To have communication with the deities is amritam or 'immortality'.

Those who know karma and dhyana, action and meditation, and practise them both together do not enter into the path of darkness. They cross over death due to their practice of avidya, and enjoy immortality due to their practise of vidya. By following the path of both vidya and avidya, something strange happens; the individual crosses over death. What is this death that is spoken about? Death is the dark passage in the realm of the personality, the barrier between the conscious and super-conscious life. The river that flows between two realms, the realm where we are and the realm beyond, is the river of death. The realm of absolute unconsciousness is the realm of death.

In Hindu mythology only one person can cross that river of death, and he is known as Yama. People wrongly interpret Yama as the god of death, but I call him the all-pervading and all-powerful spiritual consciousness of man. The 'river' is known as Vaitarani, which is also misunderstood, even by Hindus. They think that the soul crosses a particular river after death, but the whole idea is misconceived. Death here does not mean physical death, but the complete dissolution of consciousness.

This state of consciousness is very difficult to pass through. The doer of good actions, the performer of tapas or hard penance, the person who has lived a spiritual life, alone is able to cross this river of consciousness, where all the dimensions of consciousness are dissolved. This state of consciousness is called mrityu, death. It does not mean the death of the physical body. As long as one remains in this physical body, he is aware of everything. However, the moment the soul is

out of the physical body, the consciousness dissolves until it is born again in a new body.

The state of dissolution of consciousness is called *mrityu*, which may be explained in two ways. Firstly, it is the death of the physical body in that the awareness is withdrawn from the physical dimension to the innermost centre, which may be *anahata* or any *chakra* in the body. The awareness is withdrawn, as if it were sucked up, from all the parts of the body and concentrated at a particular point within. This is a kind of death to the world of the mind and senses, so it is true to say that by *avidya* one crosses death.

Secondly, by *karmas* one exhausts *samskaras*, and the accumulated *karmas*, known as *karmashaya*, are destroyed. When the storehouse of *karmas* is absolutely empty, and the awareness is passing through the unconscious state, there will be no difficulty in crossing the river of death or unconsciousness. Only a man of ignorance or *avidya* will find it difficult to go beyond that river. If *samskaras* are annihilated, it is easy for the spiritual aspirant to go through the states of *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

What is *amritam*? It is a state beyond mortality. Some call it *turiya*; others call it *samadhi*, self-realization or God-realization. This *Upanishad* calls it *amritam*, which means 'no death'. It is the refraction of consciousness. It is a state where consciousness revives again, but in a different dimension. These states are achieved in meditation, and not outside.

In meditation one goes through different phases of awareness, according to one's capacity. One who has no *karmas*, desires, ambition, or fear of losing anything, will cross that realm of death easily. When his awareness revives again, he will enjoy immortality. *Amrita* means 'immortality'; it is a state where the soul goes beyond death.

Therefore, the *mantra* states that *karma* and meditation should be practised side by side. One should neither postpone meditation for *karma*, nor *karma* for meditation. In the personality there appears to be some grossness. In the subtle

dimension of consciousness there appears to be some gravity or rigidity. This grossness of the personality makes it impossible for a sadhaka to go beyond the realm of darkness, before actually working out the samskaras in life.

This mantra is an important guide to spiritual life. One can understand that karma and dhyana are both necessary and go together. There should be a happy blending of the two. A synthesis between the two paths of karma and dhyana, a compromise between extroversion and introversion, is necessary in life.



# The Doors of Yoga

*Sannyasi Maitridharana, 67 years, Sofia, Bulgaria*

Whoever has said that 'when one door closes in life another opens' has been right. I know it from personal experience.

Seven years ago when I retired I closed the door of my forty years' work service behind. Several months of fear, insomnia and stress passed before I opened the next door. It felt as if I was in a narrow dark corridor with many doors but when I opened them there was nothing there – just darkness. I didn't know where I was and what to do. I was in despair.

Luckily a door half opened and I saw some light coming out from there. On it was written 'YOGA'. I showed the door to some friends too. Together we boldly stepped through the threshold met by the teacher. I thought that the contact with yoga would be temporary. But, no! It is said: there is nothing more constant than the temporary. It was the same in my case. Luck continued to smile at me. I had my teacher who with time took me on a road with many doors. After each door that I opened it was becoming more and more light and bright.

As a result of opening the many doors of yoga I started changing. Depending on the type of people who were noticing the changes in me I would classify them in two groups. The first: the significant changes noticed only by those for whom yoga was a way of life. The second: changes noticed by all who approve them knowing that I have achieved them thanks to yoga but not accepting yoga itself. Very strange!

## **No smoking and no cheating**

My first visit to the Greek ashram. Not knowing anyone except my teacher and with no idea about havan, chakras, kirtan, shatkarmas, I entered through the door of the ashram for a ten-day seminar with a shameful quantity of cigarettes. I was still smoking more than twenty cigarettes a day.

On the third day of my stay something happened. Something that I had wanted but had no idea how it actually happened. During a meditation session I imagined that I did not smoke. That was it, it happened, I stopped smoking. I was so impressed from my experience in the ashram that I took an important decision to visit the ashram again next year with the money saved from the cigarettes, and the sum was not at all small.

This way with the money saved I have visited the Greek ashram every year for the last six years. I have even followers to the initiative 'Quit cigarettes, come to the ashram'.

The memory of my first visit to the ashram makes me smile at the mental picture - I had to remember 108 people during the havan on the first evening. Each Mahamrityunjaya mantra had to be chanted for the health and prosperity of one person. This way I remembered all my close people, relatives, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. To reach number 108 I added the sellers from the shops I went to and people whom I met without knowing their names. It was nice. I do the same sometimes when I am at a havan with my Guru in India and I think of those who would have also liked to be there at the havan but couldn't.

Then in the ashram I heard and sang for the first time kirtans. I liked this practice so much that right after the seminar I joined the kirtan and Mahamrityunjaya havan program at the centre in Sofia. Since then I have attended it nearly every Saturday. Everyone around me knows that Saturdays are my yoga days. The door of the yoga centre became the open door to yoga. I opened it myself. How many things started from there!

Another example of the visible change in me is that I quit the bad, unworthy habit of travelling gratis by city transport. The insight came when one Saturday evening I was coming back from the yoga centre. I realized that I cannot chant kirtan, apply yoga (I already knew about the yamas and niyamas) and at the same time cheat and travel gratis. I said to myself,

enough! I will travel only with a ticket and if I do not have money I will walk. That way the city transport won one more regular passenger and I won peace and health by walking more.

### **The game 'Apply Me!'**

When I attended a satsang for the first time, Swami Sivamurti kindled my interest towards the science of yoga. For all the last seven years I did not miss a single seminar organized by the Bulgarian Yoga Association. My knowledge broadened but the amount of the unknown also increased. Exactly this unknown took me to India. I visited several times the ashrams in Munger and Rikhia. I met my Guru, got initiations and am a karma sannyasin now.

My new pleasant duty now is to work in the name of yoga and learn. This is the reason to start studying English at 65, so that I could read the books of our Satyananda Yoga tradition in the original language. I have read several already. In them our Guru and the masters of the tradition reveal the spiritual way of life to me – how to live and experience the material and spiritual life together.

I make an effort to manage without tension with the help of my natural resources and skills. Using the new spiritual knowledge I play the game 'Apply Me!' I discover time and space where to apply what I have learnt and become aware of. This game requires attention and often the help of a friend, and these are my teachers, the friends from the yoga centre, the experiences in the ashrams.

I ponder, what makes me practise yoga and walk this path. My humble experience tells me – everything – Guru, the teachers, the spiritual knowledge, the experience in the ashrams. I think it is the doors which I open on the way of yoga. When I open a door everything becomes clear, but after a while I have to open another door, then another and another so that it becomes clearer and brighter each time. I don't lose interest, I do not get tired, I am happy that there are doors to



open. I do not know what is there behind each door and what will happen, but I continue.

I mention so many times the word door. Maybe because in one of my favourite photos of Swami Niranjan he stands in front of a door with his wonderful smile. I know he is smiling at me!



# Bhakti and Bhakta

*From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Bhakti Yoga Book 5,  
A Bhakta’s Joy and Discipline*



## **What is the advice given by the scriptures to bhaktas?**

*Swami Niranjanananda:* Bhakti can be attained through the right conditions in life, rather than through structured sadhana. By cultivating discipline and order in life, bhakti develops. The effort in bhakti yoga is to be alert and aware of one’s character and behaviour, and develop excellence in thought, feeling and action by nurturing the sattvic, creative, positive nature.

Bhakti will be realized when the attempt is made to eradicate the negativity, cunning and deception from one's life and mind. If the mind and emotions can be fine-tuned, there is no need to sit with the eyes closed in front of a statue of God. If one can make the mind and heart sensitive and connect them to the positive, uplifting, creative qualities and traits, then that is bhakti.

The scriptures say: *Shraddhaya satyamapyate* – "Truth can be attained through faith." In other words, bhakti can be attained through faith. It is said in the *Rig Veda: Shraddhe shraddhapayeha nah* – "Mother Shraddha! Make my heart your abode." According to the *Rig Veda*, one should first invoke *shraddha* or faith, then practise satsang. *Satsang* means keeping the company of a person who is generous, pure, without fault, discriminating, thoughtful and wise. If an ordinary piece of wood is kept with a piece of sandalwood, after a period of time the ordinary piece of wood will take on the fragrance of sandalwood. This is the effect of keeping good company.

The *Rig Veda* further states that there should not be any ill-will towards anybody. The *Shukla Yajur Veda* says: *Mitrasyaham chakshusha sarvani bhootani samikshe* – "I am benevolent, looking at all creatures with a loving gaze. There is no trace of hostility or ill-will towards anyone. My sight is benevolent and loving towards all." This is the mental and psychological attitude of goodwill.

To do good to all beings according to one's capacity is bhakti. The *Atharva Veda* says: *Shatahasta samahara, sahastrahasta sankira* – "Gather wealth and gold with the enthusiasm and effort of a hundred hands and distribute with a thousand hands." Take with a hundred hands and give with a thousand hands is the rule of bhakti. Without generosity and a giving, charitable nature, one cannot perfect bhakti. People have been ringing bells and doing japa for a thousand years, yet has anyone actually experienced bhakti? People confine their bhakti to the four walls of the temple; they do not practise it as a lifestyle, as a condition of their life. When bhakti becomes a

lifestyle, the behaviour and interactions are full of bhakti. It is only when all interactions are full of bhakti that one is uplifted.

The *Rig Veda* says: *Madhviringavo bhavantu nah* - "There should always be restraint in life. May no unbalanced, indiscriminating act happen through me. May there always be restraint in life." The yoga texts say that in order to practise restraint, there must be awareness. One must meditate, and become a witness of one's thoughts and the master and director of one's actions.

### **What are the three attitudes a bhakta has to cultivate in life?**

*Swami Niranjanananda*: Three attitudes have been given for a bhakta to identify with: *Satyam*, that which is truthful; *Shivam*, that which is always auspicious; and *Sundaram*, that which is always beautiful. By cultivating these three attitudes in the mind one will become a bhakta. In order to cultivate these three conditions of mind, one has to move through the nine stages of bhakti yoga, in which the first is satsang.

*Satsang* means what is happening now: becoming aware of something different to the usual, to the normal and making the effort to experience it. The change of one's thought process begins with satsang and until and unless there is satsang there is no change of thought process. Books do not give satsang. Satsang gives an understanding of something beyond the conditioned perception, to make one aware of another possibility, and when one becomes aware of the other possibility and makes the effort to connect to it, then satsang becomes the first step into attaining this change and transformation.

The second attitude is to have always a positive attitude and a pious and happy disposition in life. I have made a Niranjan Challenge, which is: 'Can you remain happy for one day without getting any blue mood?' To be happy from morning to night, from the time one wakes up until the time one goes to bed is the challenge. To maintain one state of happiness, to avoid and shun disagreements, aggressions, envies and jealousies, to hold



onto one feeling of happiness even when screaming at somebody is the challenge. One is screaming with a smile, not really frowning, for the moment one frowns the mood changes. Who can be angry in a state of happiness? Who can be efficient in the state of happiness? Who can be pleasant by maintaining that state of happiness?

The third attitude is channelling the emotion away from the experiences of hatred, anger, arrogance, jealousy, passion and infatuation. It is leading the emotion away from those attitudes and towards the peace and luminosity within. The connection with the negative or the association with the world lessens, and positive association develops. That is bhakti yoga. In Chapter

12 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna defines bhakti yoga not as devotion but as a state where there is no duality. There is a feeling of oneness, *adveshtha sarvabhootanaam*. There is no feeling of being a stranger; one is a friend to everyone.

One who is compassionate, like Christ, and one who lives that compassion. One who is always happy and joyous and never frowns. In this manner a person who is endowed with the lightest and luminous qualities in life is the real bhakta, one who has perfected bhakti yoga. Bhakti yoga is the discovery of the pure self inside.

# Learn to be Wise

*From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

The mind always flows outwards, and to turn it inward, to stabilize it in the consciousness of God, is the purpose of sadhana. Turn the gaze within and introspect. Find out your faults and remedy them by practising their opposite positive quality. It is easy to find fault with others and condemn them, but that will not enable you to progress. You should find fault with yourself. Thoughts have great power to mould your life. Therefore, cultivate good thoughts.

Evil is a mere appearance. It exists to glorify good. An evil person is a saint of the future. See good in everything. Destroy the negative fault-finding quality. Develop the good-finding quality. Rise above good and evil. One who sees his own faults as he sees those of others will become a great soul.

Be patient and persevering.

Serve untiringly,  
Serve selflessly,  
Live truthfully,  
Remain cheerful.

Speak sweetly,  
Speak softly,  
Speak lovingly.

Learn to be wise.

Make the best use of this human birth.

Realize the oneness of existence.

See God in every face and in everything.

## 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>

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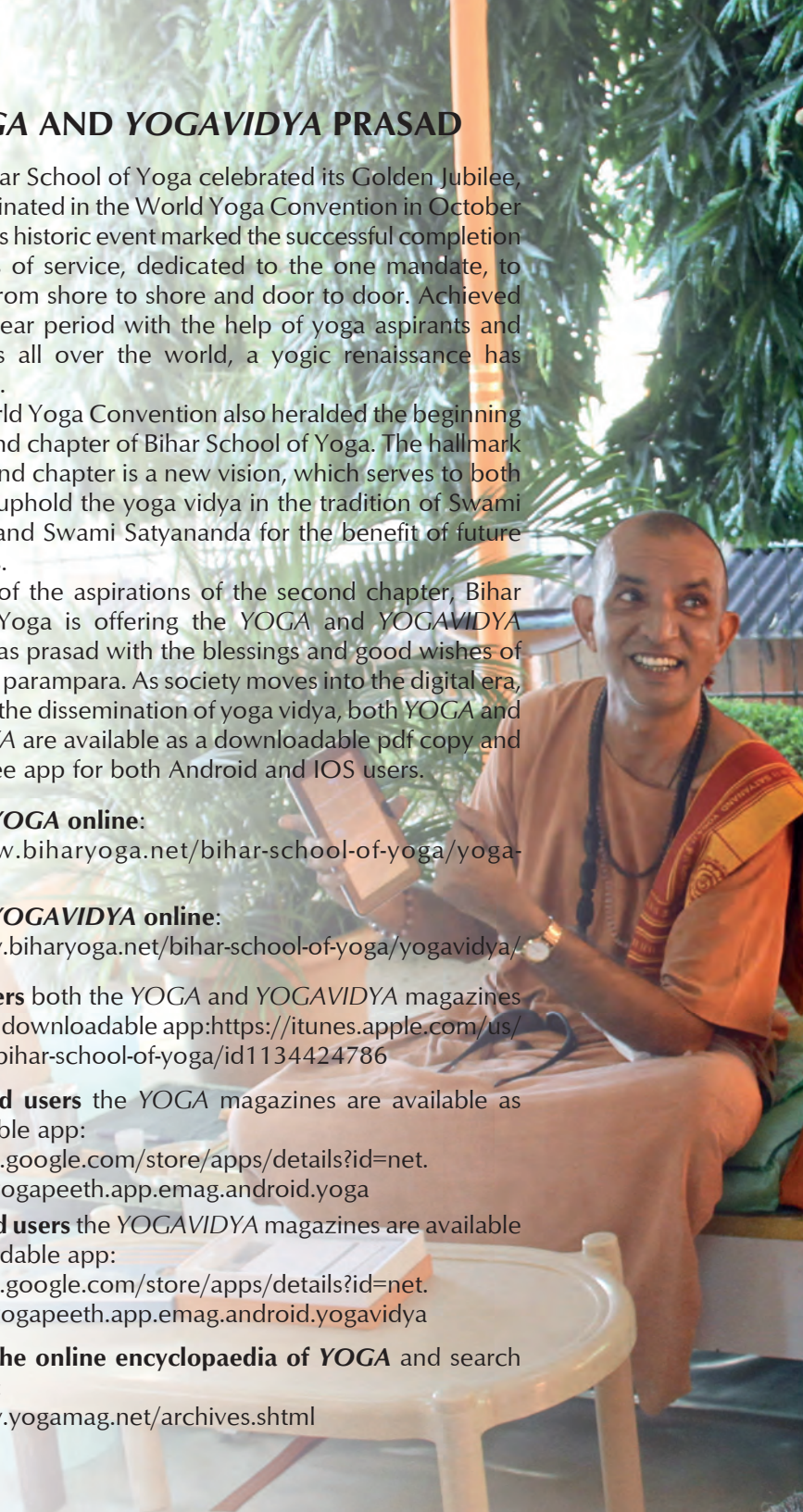
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## Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2018

Sep 17-23

Raja Yoga Yatra 1, 2, 3

Dec 25

Swami Satyananda's Birthday

Every Saturday

Mahamrityunjaya Havan

Every Ekadashi

Bhagavad Gita Path

Every Poonnima

Sundarkand Path

Every 5th & 6th

Guru Bhakti Yoga

Every 12th

Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans

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)

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