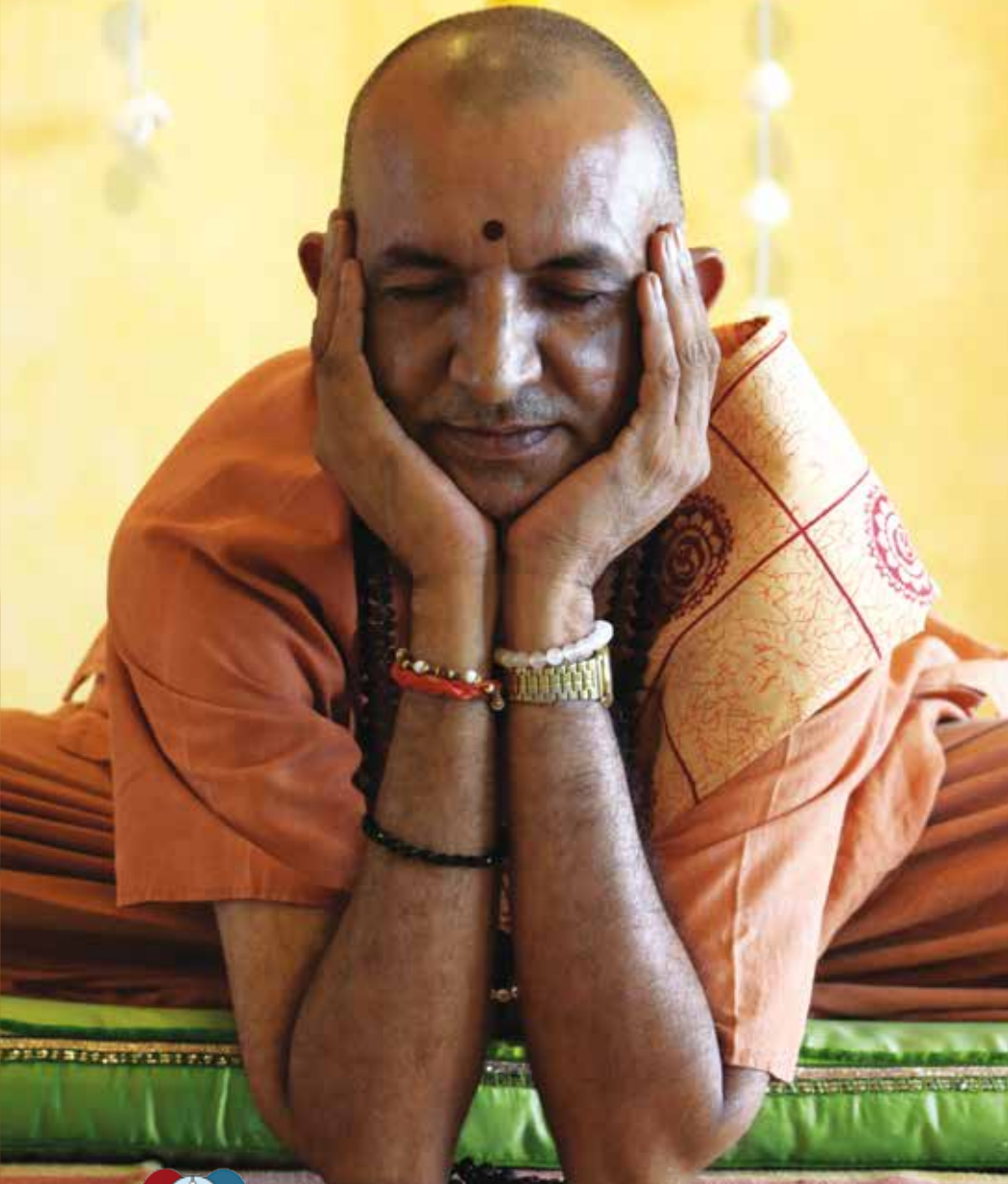


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Hari Om

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Hatha Yoga Yatra 3 & 4 2019



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Do pranayama a little

There is no danger in practising pranayama and asanas, if you are careful, and if you use your common sense. People are unnecessarily alarmed; there is danger in everything if you are careless. If you are careless in going down the steps of a staircase, you will fall down and break your bones.

There is no purificatory action greater than pranayama. Just as a goldsmith removes the impurities of gold by heating it in the hot furnace, by strongly blowing the blow-pipe, so also the yogic aspirant removes the impurities of the body, the senses and the mind, by blowing the lungs, through the practices of pranayama.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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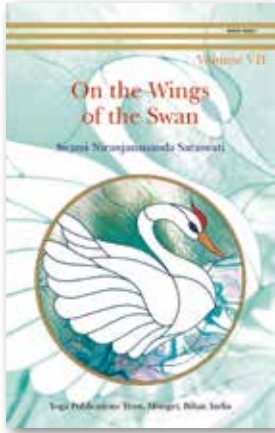
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

To Make the Boat

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



A map indicates something which has already been discovered. You cannot make a map of that which is undiscovered. What has my discovery been? What has Swami Satyananda's discovery been, and what has the discovery of Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, or any other person for that matter, been? It has been the expression of each one's potential, not yours. Swami Satyananda came to a point of realization because of his inner potentials. Swami Sivananda came to a point of realization because of his inner potentials. Christ came to a realization because of his inner potentials. Prophet Mohammed came to a realization because of his inner potentials. Guru Nanak and Ramana Maharshi came to a realization because of their inner potentials.

So the chart which they have made is not going to be applicable to us. They can only give us the main tools like, 'This is how you build a ship which will not sink as you sail the uncharted waters', and that is all. Getting the right tools and the right equipment is important because once you begin sailing, you are discovering your own inner oceans: your own inner whirlpools, your own samskaras, your own karmas, your own joys and sufferings, and your own interpretations. They may be right or they may be wrong, but you have to chart your own path. The only guideline that can be given in this life is how to make the boat.

– December 2006

Sunday Satsang

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



I am easily influenced by others - if they are positive and happy I become that; if they are arrogant and angry I become like that. How can I protect myself from a negative person?

When your body gets dirty you go for a shower. When your mind gets dirty you also have to go for a shower. You have to remove the dirt from the mind just as you remove dirt from the body. We cannot choose our associations but we can definitely choose how we wish to live. If there is negativity all around and you feel you are affected and influenced by people, the environment, the negativity and criticisms, then there has to be one part of you the *drashta*, the witness-mind, which says, 'Enough is enough, now go and take a shower, clean your mind of all the dust that has accumulated'.

Then you do your meditation: you connect with positivity, remove the grime of negativity, put on the soap of creativity and use the waters of purity. Use the soap of creativity and the water of purity and just clean the mind in meditation.

The next day, when you see the person again, salute and say to yourself, "I am ready to face you again today." You don't have to avoid the person, or become friends with that person, yet you keep on taking a shower every evening before bed.

How can we, as householders, practise detachment from loved ones, and from our own positive desires that include desires for the benefit of humanity?

There are two things *raga* and *dvesha*, which are often translated as attraction and repulsion. Attachment and detachment mean something specific: to come together and to separate. However, *raga* and *dvesha* do not just mean not coming together or separating. *Raga* is natural attraction, not a conscious attraction, not a forced attraction not a willed attraction. *Dvesha* is natural repulsion, not only because you have had enough. It is a natural process like a magnet. One side of the magnet simply pulls, and the other side of the magnet simply repels. The side of the magnet which pulls is known as *raga*, and the other side of the magnet which repels is known as *dvesha*. This is an ongoing activity of the mind.

You may order three pizzas due to greed yet you can only eat one because of the size of the stomach. When the stomach is full what will happen to the remaining two pizzas? You won't be attracted towards them. You will say, "Pack them, I'll take them home in the doggy bag." First there was attraction, "No I want more, I want three," but when the stomach was filled then there was a natural repulsion, "No I can't have this anymore. Pack it, I will take it with me."

It is a natural process like the magnet - one side pulls the other side repels. It is this that one has to become aware of as the *drashta*, the witness, to become the observer of *raga* and *dvesha*. Becoming the *drashta* of *raga* and *dvesha* eliminates all the hassles and problems of detachment like when to detach and when not to detach.

Asakti is the name in Hindi for attachment and *virakti* is the name in Hindi for detachment. *Asakti* means something

which can influence you and virakti means something that has lost all its blood. When life loses blood it becomes dead, when a memory loses prana it becomes dead. That is virakti or *bina rakta*, without blood. Virakti, without blood, means detachment in the sense that the thing from which you disconnect is dead, there is no further association, and that is the final stage of dwesha – out of sight.

Of course it is sanyam which helps us regulate the effect of raga and dwesha. *Sanyam* is conscious control, voluntarily control, not involuntary control.

What describes the state of sattwa? I can think of three options: 1. The six friends have been overcome and there is no ego anymore; 2. The six friends have been overcome, however, there is still ego; 3. The six friends and ego still come up, however, there is enough awareness to identify them and turn them into the positive.

All the three options represent the three syllabi. The third option that the six friends and ego remain but you are able to better manage them, that is the novice option – the jignasu option. All right, I struggle, I can overcome them, and sometimes they can overcome me, and both ways have to co-exist together, that is the jignasu option.

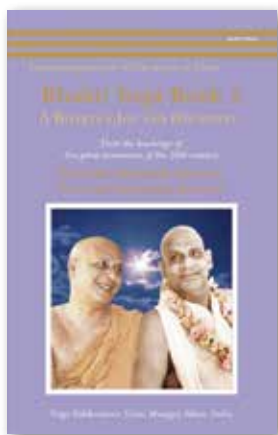
The second option that all the six friends go but the ego remains is the karma sannyasa option for you have to continue functioning, working, surviving in the world. With a better, positive, peaceful mind yet still with ego – you continue with ego, for ego is necessary in your life.

The third option is for the sattwic person and that is the real option and description – you are able to overcome the six including the ego, the seventh one. Then you are continuously in the state of *sukham* and *anandam*, comfort and bliss. When there is no ego there is total comfort, and when there are no six friends there is total anandam, and that is the final sattwa.

– 14 April 2019, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Kirtan Bhakti Yoga

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



What are some of the benefits of kirtan?

Swami Sivananda: The mind is a peculiar combination of various kinds of moods, temperaments, whims and fancies. It is a strange mixture of various sentiments and emotions. Therefore, the rishis of yore have designed methods to control the mind. Control of the mind forms the most important and major item of spiritual sadhana on the path of God-realization.

Melodious music soothes the nerves. In America doctors cure diseases by music. Shakespeare says in *The Merchant of Venice* (V, 1):

The man who hath no music in himself or is not moved by the concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treason, stratagem and spoils. The motions of his spirit are dull as night, his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted.

Vedanta and jnana can only be understood by a microscopic minority. The vast majority are fit for sankirtan bhakti only. Even the majority of highly intellectual people derive immense benefit by doing *sankirtan*, singing God's name with a group of people. Their minds are elevated for practising meditation. The tossing of their minds is removed. Even so, one has to work hard in the practice of kirtan if one wishes to realize fully the fruits of kirtan bhakti yoga.

There is infinite shakti in God's names. It removes impurities from the mind. Vedantins say that there are three

kinds of obstacles to Self-realization: impurity, restlessness and ignorance. To remove them they prescribe selfless service, worship and meditation. Sankirtan alone can achieve these three together. Kirtan removes the impurities of the mind, steadies it and checks its tendency to vacillate, and ultimately it tears the veil of ignorance and brings the sadhaka face to face with God. Kirtan enables the devotee to realize the Infinite here and now. Kirtan saves one from delusion.

God is a mystery. Mind is a mystery. The world is a mystery. How sankirtan transmutes human nature into divine nature, how it overhauls the old vicious samskaras, how it changes the mental substance, how it transforms or metamorphoses the *asuric* or negative nature into pure sattvic nature and how it brings the devotee face to face with God is also a mystery. Science and reason can hardly explain the modus operandi of sankirtan.



What is naman sankirtan?

Swami Sivananda: The Sanskrit verb *krit* means 'praising'. Kirtan is commonly known as a certain type and method of melodious singing, particularly singing Sri Krishna's name and *lila*, the stories of his playful acts. Only praising the name of God and his *lila* in melody for the purpose of keeping the flame of bhakti burning in one's heart can be termed kirtan.

Kirtan can be classified as naman sankirtan and *lila kirtan* or *rasa kirtan*. 'Singing the names of the Divine in melody' is named naman sankirtan. The main sadhana in the nine kinds of bhakti is naman sankirtan. The influence and utility of this are highly appreciated among the Vaishnavas of Bengal and among all religious cults of India. They think that the essence of religion in Kali Yuga is naman sankirtan – *kalau namansankirtanaat*.

Singing Hari's name aloud is sankirtan. From this *prema*, love, blossoms and a devotee forgets the existence of the outer world while he sincerely sings the name of God. This is called *avesha*. A bhakta attains samadhi by singing God's names just as a yogi does through yoga sadhana. The primary aim of naman sankirtan is to attain *prema* and the main aim of the Vaishnava cult is to generate this *prema*. It is said that when Chaitanya did naman sankirtan dipped in *prema* thousands accompanied him.

When the mind is attracted towards the Lord, the heart experiences a selfless, blissful state and this is called *rati*. When this *rati* or intense attachment attains a greater hold, it is termed *prema*. The devotee does not wish for *moksha* or liberation because even asking for or wanting *moksha* is a type of *vasana* or desire and selfishness. When God is the only object of attainment, what else can be desired? The purpose of naman sankirtan is the purification of the heart and it is both the method and the goal as the Name and the Named are one and the same.

Music

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

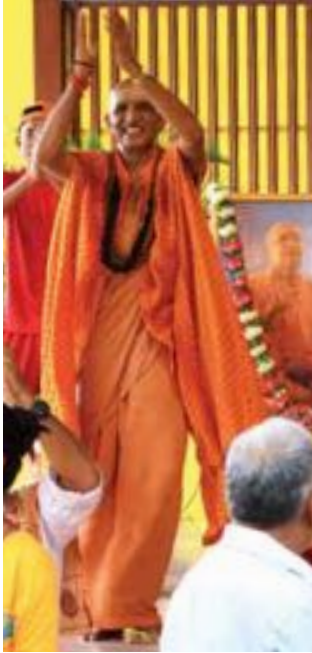


When the Rishikesh ashram was still in its infancy, Swami Sivananda started *akhanda kirtan*, unbroken naman sankirtan. There was always a person instructed to sing the naman sankirtan. This kirtan has been sung continuously until today.

When Swamiji delivered his inaugural address on the day of starting the kirtan, he said, "This kirtan will continue as long as the world lasts." The *akhanda kirtan* is still going on in the Rishikesh ashram and it is the greatest accomplishment! As far as I know, the ashram was developed around this resolve of Swami Sivananda. This great *sankalpa* of Swami Sivananda, to keep the kirtan continuous for as long as the world lasts, was the nucleus for the great work, the great establishment, the great creation that has taken place in Rishikesh and around the world.

To Watch or Flow

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There is a word in Sanskrit, *rasa*, which generally means liquid, but *rasa* also means the best taste, *raso vai sah*, having the best of the taste. The best of the taste is engulfing oneself in that experience. When you are engulfed by the experience, you come to a stage of mind which takes you into a state of deep meditation called *bhava samadhi*. That is being engulfed by the experience. *Rasa* happens to everyone at different times.

Music also creates a *rasa*, a feeling, an engulfment, and if you become part of the music and it begins to vibrate in you, then you can actually feel the power of music. The *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamasic* experience is there, however whatever *sattwic*, *rajasic*, *tamasic* experience there may be, they are happy *tamasic*, they are happy *rajasic*, they are happy *sattwic*.

You have to understand that carefully. There is happy *sattwic* and unhappy *sattwic*, there is happy *rajasic* and unhappy *rajasic*, there is happy *tamasic* and unhappy *tamasic*. Happy *tamasic* is someone who does everything naughty, enjoys doing all the naughty things and does not regret it. A sad *tamasic* person regrets doing the bad but cannot control the actions. It is the same way with *sattwic* and *rajasic*.

The mood which is evoked by music is that of happiness at *sattwic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* levels. Even in hard metal you find, you experience that ecstasy. You experience the vibration of

your own hairs on your body, all the hairs stand upright and straight. There is a physical reaction to it and you enjoy it. When you come out of that mood, the music will be less pleasing.

The most important point is that we are interacting at the level of vibrations as the sound is creating a *spandan*, vibration. Sound is not a continuous wave of energy; it is vibratory energy. It is like pellets being fired very fast, so that it looks like one stream but in reality there are thousands of different pellets – that is vibration, that is the imagery of vibration.

Vibrations do have an influence on the body as the body itself is vibration. If you look at your own body with a super microscope, what will you see? You go through the outer layer, the skin, into the muscles, the bones, the bone marrow. If you go deeper into the subatomic level, there you will see the atoms, go deeper and you will see the nucleus. Go deeper and you will feel the pulsation of energy until you realize that what you considered to be solid is nothing but pulsations of energy, vibration.

When there is tuning of our physical vibration with the outer musical vibration, then there is enjoyment. When the tuning of the outer with the individual vibration is not there, you can't tolerate it. You want to get up and leave. Vibration is what we are interacting with the whole day through speech, which is an interaction of vibration. Music, is an interaction of vibration. Thought is an interaction of vibration. Everything is an interaction of vibration. This vibration can intensify and highlight the mood in which we are, or change it, alter it, pacify it or activate it.

That is known as *rasa*, something that engulfs you and gives you the total experience. If you can become one with the flow you will experience a higher state of your own mind, a more sensitive, a more transcendental state of your own being. If you become the *drashta*, there is no individual participation. So it is better to flow and become part of what is happening.

– 24 March 2019, *Ganga Darshan, Munger*

Swadhisthana Chakra

From Janani: Water the Sustainer of Life, Swami Prembhava Saraswati



The Sanskrit word *swa* means 'one's own' and *adhithana* means dwelling place or residence. Thus swadhisthana means 'one's own abode'. It is the vortex or control centre of *apas tattwa*, the water element. It is regarded as the basis of individual human existence. Swadhisthana is associated with the unconscious mind and with its storehouse of mental impressions and samskaras. It is the abode from which most people express themselves to the world.

The *jnanendriya* of this chakra is the tongue for the perception of taste and the *karmendriya* are the reproductive organs.

In the human body swadhisthana is located at the base of the spine in the coccyx. Sexuality is one of the main expressions of swadhisthana, as it controls the endocrine glands of reproduction, the basic drive of life.

Swadhisthana chakra represents the level of being where one is principally concerned with pursuing pleasurable sensations. One is motivated to obtain pleasure through the sense organs in the form of food, sex, pleasant environment, friendships, and the material wealth required to attain these

desires. At mooladhara chakra these desires are sought in order to satisfy the need for security and safety. However, in swadhisthana pleasures are sought after to simply satisfy desires, here the whole aim of life is to attain the pleasures peculiar to the individual. Nature, all things and other people are viewed according to the amount of sensual satisfaction that they can offer, regardless of the impact or cost. It is said that most people in the world today predominantly function at this level of swadhisthana

Fears and insecurities are also expressed through swadhisthana. We perceive the world and our place in it according to our samskaras. Due to our fears and insecurities, we want to live in a world that is safe and that makes us feel satisfied and content. We are unknowingly conditioned to believe that this contentment will be fulfilled by satisfying our sensual desires. If we spend our lives aiming to satisfy the senses, we will be caught in a 'catch 22' for our senses can never be satisfied, as it is their nature to always be in a state of agitation; and there will always be something that we crave in life.

There need not be renunciation of the level of living that we have attained, this would not work. In yoga there is no renunciation only attainment, but attainment of a different kind. It is the attainment in spiritual life that allows you to drop the unnecessary items of life and live spontaneously and naturally.

– *Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Trying to satisfy our sensory desires has resulted in consumerism and overconsumption, in particular of fossil fuels, soil, water and forests, these excesses are rapidly depleting the planet's resources, and creating massive waste and pollution. If the consumer societies' exploitation of these resources continues at its current rate, we threaten the very ecosystems that we and all other species are an integrated part of and depend upon.

The sexual energy of swadhisthana is one of the strongest instincts in humans. If this energy is not channelled and expressed properly it creates damage and conflict within the individual and in society. Much of our society today is based on the need to prove our worth as sexual beings. The material possessions and advertisements for such things as cars, clothes, mobile phone, are all expressions of our sexuality.

Overpopulation of the human species is one of the greatest threats to our species and the resources of the planet. We humans have the knowledge and the ability to stop reproducing at such an exponential rate. However, if we are unable to keep our population growth in check we will suffer the consequences. The choice is up to us. We know that every ecosystem has a population carrying capacity. To maintain the optimum level of population, nature employs control of numbers through disease, predators, competition, climatic changes, environmental disasters such as floods, drought, earthquakes, fires, storms, or tsunamis. The more human numbers increase, the more destructive are nature's controls. The choice is up to us.

Through yogic practices, lifestyle and awareness, a balanced state of swadhisthana chakra can be achieved. This balanced state is a deep understanding and realization that we are more than just a physical body with sensual desires that need fulfilling. We have emotional and spiritual needs that we must discover and fulfil by living in an environment that is conducive to these needs.

A balanced swadhisthana is expressed through a sense of contentment, wellbeing, and enjoyment of life. Along with self-confidence, endurance, strength and patience, there will be a feeling of wellness, abundance, pleasure and beauty in the simple things in life.

An imbalanced swadhisthana causes emotional problems such as irritability, guilt, shyness, sexual disorders, eating disorders, laziness and oversleeping, depression and addictions. We are never content or satisfied so we are continually trying



to find happiness in material possessions. We must change our attitudes and way of living to be able to let go of the constant desire for more possessions.

Consumerism and virtual water

Nearly everything we do and everything we use in life has been possible through the presence of water. For example, it takes:

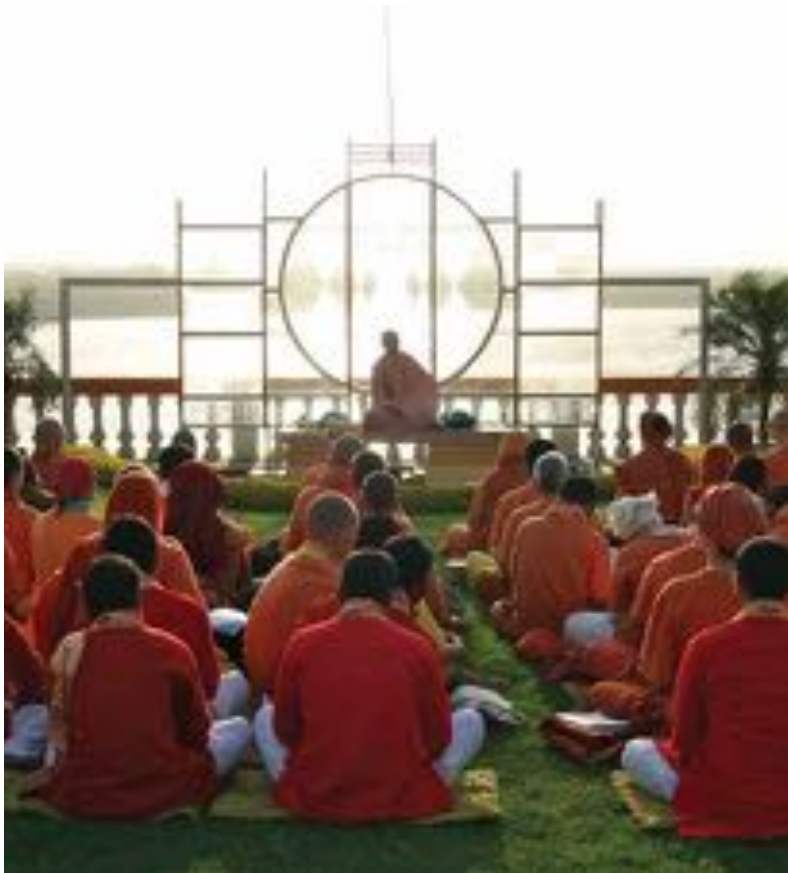
- 9 litres of water to make 1 litre of soft drinks
- 50 litres of water to make one tomato,
- 255 litres of water to produce a glass of milk,
- 170 litres of water to produce a pint of beer,
- 1700 litres of water to produce a chocolate bar,
- 2700 litres of water to produce a cotton shirt,
- 2000 litres of water to produce 1 kg paper,
- 8200 litres of water to produce leather shoes (as cows require 16,600 litres of water to produce 1 kg of leather),
- 39,000 litres of water to produce a medium sized car.

This is called virtual water, the amount of water used to produce the product, from agriculture, to industry, transportation and packaging. The food we eat contributes to the amount of water we use daily. A natural vegetarian diet needs less water to produce it than a processed or meat diet.

The modern consumer society must make a change to their lifestyles, and be aware of the impact of everything they do

on the waters of the Earth. This level of awareness will come spontaneously and naturally as the swadhisthana chakra is awakened.

Living simply with less is the best way to purify one's life. Clear the clutter that stops the flow and vitality in life. Flow through life with determination and resilience to achieve your goal. This is the power of *apas tattwa* in your life. Your desires and cravings can be observed from an understanding of need not want. When you know that you can never fulfil your desires, you can begin to manage the mind's responses and live with less. Then life becomes less complicated and more fulfilling.



The Rice Experiment

Swami Yogagnana and Swami Vivekamurti, Bulgaria

We are sending you an experiment, which shows very clearly the power of the positive and negative energy of words and thoughts on material substances. Those who do not believe that such energies exist, can do the experiment themselves. The Japanese scientist Masaru Emoto proved that water reacts to words and thoughts. He suggested this experiment with boiled rice at home, no need of scientific instruments. We did the following:

On 20th February we put boiled rice in 3 jars and closed them.

1. To the first jar we spoke nice words a few times every day, like: I love you. Thank you. You are beautiful. We sent our love to the rice in the jar.
2. The second jar was put away, and we did not look at it at all.
3. To the third jar we spoke harsh words like: I don't like you, rice. I hate you.

After a few days, gradually a difference began to appear in the two jars that we looked at. You can see the results after fifteen days and after one month.

The second jar shows us what happens when there is no human intervention – the natural processes. The first and third jars show us what happens when we intervene in a positive and in a negative direction.

Our bodies are about seventy percent water. We should not forget that the thoughts and words, which we think and speak, have the most powerful impact on us.

Suggested practical part:

Choose which jar you would like to be. And adjust your mind accordingly.



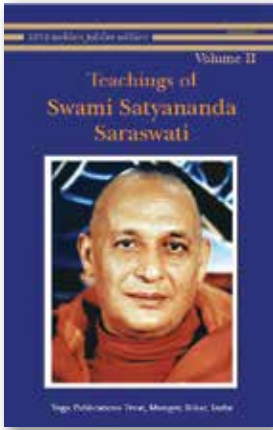
Water Crystals

Japanese scientists have found that water is very sensitive to vibrations of sounds and words. They have been able to isolate the actual ice crystal structure of a water molecule and then compare the shapes of the crystals after exposing them to different sound vibrations and words. What they found was astounding: the shape of the water crystal exposed to hard rock music was jagged, rough and scattered; the water crystal exposed to operatic music was evenly formed and fully shaped; the water crystal exposed to rude swear words created messy, irregular crystals; and the water crystal exposed to the chanting of Buddhist prayers and mantras was even, regular and beautifully formed.

*Extract from Janani – Understanding Prakriti,
Swami Prembhava Saraswati*

Is Life on Earth About to End?

From Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II



There are many new sects springing up all over the world which do not have a very clear concept of the yugas. The age of this Earth is divided into four eras. The first is Satya yuga whose age is 1,728,000 years. Then comes Treta yuga whose age is 1,296,000. Then comes Dwapara yuga whose age is 864,000. Then comes Kali yuga whose age is 432,000 years. Out of that, only 5,088 years have gone by. That means 426,992 years remain. There is no possibility of Earth colliding with another planet and being destroyed. However, shortly, a few disturbances will occur here and there, just as happened many thousands of years ago when the subcontinent of Atlantis sank into the ocean and the Himalayan mountains came up.

Since the beginning of this earth, up to the present day, the geographical map of the world has not been the same. One million years ago there were different islands, different oceans and different continents. Changes have always been occurring and they will certainly continue, but for the destruction of this whole planet you must wait 34 million years.

According to this geological calculation, the life potentiality of this planet is also great. It may continue for even more than 34 million years. Although the distance between Earth and the sun is decreasing and the temperature of the sun is also lessening, it will still take millions of years before the sun becomes sufficiently cold to affect Earth. Even then, Earth has



its own internal heat. It has its own atmosphere and oxygen, so therefore the end of the earth is not a matter of a few hundred years. Thus we should not worry about it at all.

Supposing Earth is destroyed tomorrow, why should we worry? There will not be anybody left to grieve, so why have unnecessary fears? Nature created Earth and we have been living here for the last few million years, and it is really quite a nice planet. There are good people also, and as far as I can see, our future is bright.

This doesn't mean there will be no difficulties, but the future of mankind will certainly be better because nowadays more and more people are evolving spiritually.

Throughout the world people are beginning to think in terms of equality, and there is an ever growing movement towards non-violence. The nations of the world are coming together, and although there are still fights and wars, things are much better than they were in the past. I am an optimist; I see the silver lining on the horizon, and whenever I hear these horrible predictions, I think their proclaimers are influenced by their own personal cults.


In India there are also people who make prophecies like this. They claim the past was good and the future will be bad, but I don't agree. I have studied history and I know about the great wars that have taken place in the last 5,000 years. People were oppressed and suppressed and many were enslaved and tortured. There was no education, no physical freedom, no intellectual freedom, and there were no democratic governments. There was only the revolver and the sword. The king was a dictator and the masses had nothing. Now the

masses can think. We make the laws, we make the governments and we install the presidents and prime ministers. Things can only improve. There should be democracy in politics, in the family, in religion and in yoga also. We shouldn't have to accept any central authority; we should be free to decide things for ourselves. So we are definitely approaching a brighter future.

What was the position of women one hundred years ago? Hopeless! Women were only meant to be one thing, sexual objects, and of course they were babysitters too. That's all. Now do you see the great changes that have occurred? So we have a very bright future and we should see that there are fewer destructions and massacres. In the course of many decades, the national boundaries will also vanish. You know, in India we have no frontiers with Nepal. Although Nepal is one country and India is another, we can cycle over to Nepal each morning, purchase something and come back. There is no need for a passport or a visa. The same thing should happen throughout the world.

This world belongs to man and man is one race. Africans live in a hot country so they have become very black. Scandinavians are exposed to a cold climate so they have become very white. People living in Mediterranean zones have become brown. Why should colour and language create barriers between man and man? Religions should also not separate people. What I find in Hinduism is the same in Christianity. The only difference is that the churches are made one way and the temples are constructed another way, but this is external. There are no differences in spirit. Hindus believe in one God, Muslims believe in one God and Christians believe in one God. The only difference is that Christians call him God, Hindus call him Ishwara or Deva, Muslims call him Allah and you people call him Dios. So, mankind is one, and because the world belongs to man, we can go anywhere from the North Pole to the South Pole, from Peru to Japan. Let us live as one.

– May 1980, Satyanandashram Barcelona, Spain



Hari Om, I am Prasiddhi Singh. I study in class 1 at Mahindra World School in Chennai.

Today I want to share about my 'magical friend'. Do you know who my magical friend is? Do you know why he is magical? He is so magical that even if we give any bad things to him, from his goodness he converts it to positive. Like when we give pollution to him, he converts it into fresh air; when we give food waste to him, he converts it into fresh fruits and flowers. From head to toe, from his leaves to the roots - his every part is very useful to us. Isn't he magical?

Can you guess who my magical friend is? Yes, it is the tree. He is so helpful to us, and yet our elders keep cutting him, and do you know what? Every minute ONE forest is getting cut down in some part of the world. Forests are a big source of fresh air and water which is so important, and still our elders are cutting it. Our elders say that we are advancing but what kind of advancement is this when we have to pay for fresh air and water which was free at the time of our ancestors?

Our ancestors drank water from rivers, our grandparents drank water from the well, our parents used to drink water from the tap, and today we are drinking water from distilled water, the next generation will drink water from water capsules, and maybe the next generation will drink water from tears.




To save our Mother Earth, I have a dream to plant fruit forests in schools and create a kid's army to feed the squirrels, birds and butterflies and give fresh fruit to everyone. You know why only fruits? Because when my parents were kids they had fruit trees in schools and they used to pluck and eat them directly, but now all the fruits are waxed and infected and we can't eat them directly.

A few days back, I created a fruit forest in Anjur Government School and planted 500 fruit trees. I have also created my kid's army where we collect fruit seeds for plants. We use tea dust and clean eggshell for manure and we will create a nursery in our society.

Recently our Guruji has also joined my army and every year I come to the ashram and I try to learn as much as I can. Last year Guruji said, "If you have patience, everything is possible, if you lose patience, you will become a patient." So patiently I am also trying to do my contribution to make Mother Earth green. This year I learnt to live yoga moment to moment and I will try to make a difference.

I want to ask all of you: Do you also want to join my army? Then take the pledge that you will start collecting seeds and plant them to make a difference. *Jai Ho.*

– 14 February 2019, Bal Yoga Diwas, Paduka Darshan



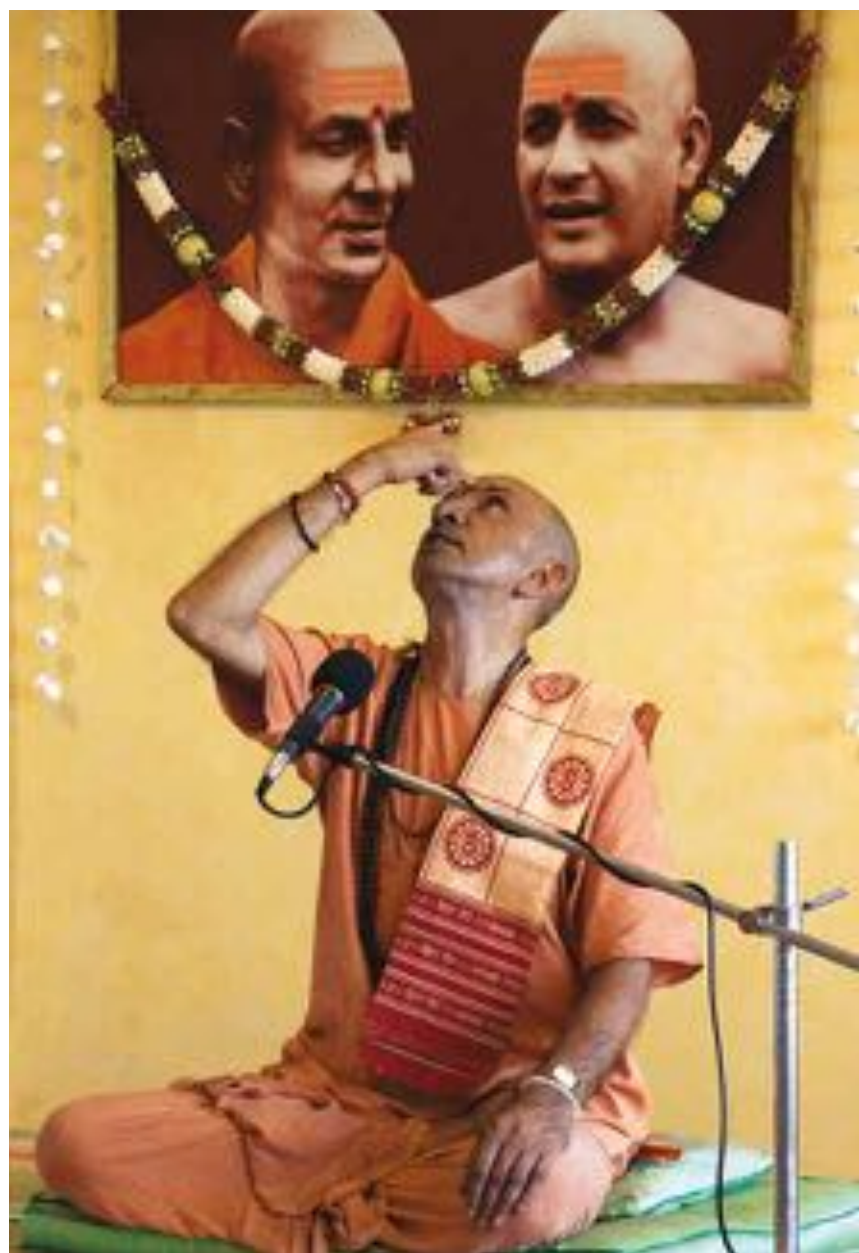
It is tea time at Ganga Darshan. Five-year-old Satyam from Bulgaria, with his younger sister Shanti in tow, is out in the kitchen compound with a cardboard box that reads 'Biscuit Machine'. Their mother has devised this game for them in which the biscuits they get for breakfast are to be shared with all at tea time. "It's to teach them to give," she says. Ashram guests and residents with afternoon tea in one hand put a play-card in the machine's slot and out pops the biscuit tray, as Satyam pushes it with a wide grin on his face. One can pick as many as one likes. Once the kid's own stock is over, others chip in with theirs, and then there is always the benevolent swami in the kitchen as the lender of last resort.

Swami Sivananda said, 'Serve Love Give Purify Be Good Do Good Meditate Realize'. Ashram incubates us to enact all of these qualities, but practising 'giving' here can be a challenge at the material level, since everyone has just enough of what they require and money does not function. The humble biscuit packet, however, is a rare daily indulgence. Loved by old and young, sannyasins and students alike, on many days it forms the only sweet offering in the ashram's diet. And so, for my sweet-addicted self, it has been quite a task to emulate little Satyam. To say nothing of the immense sankalpa that will be required to follow the teachings of Swami Satyananda, the Paramahansa Satyam!

As the last of the tea gets served from the tilted jar, the kids count their trophies for the day - empty packets that contained an indulgence they have defeated.

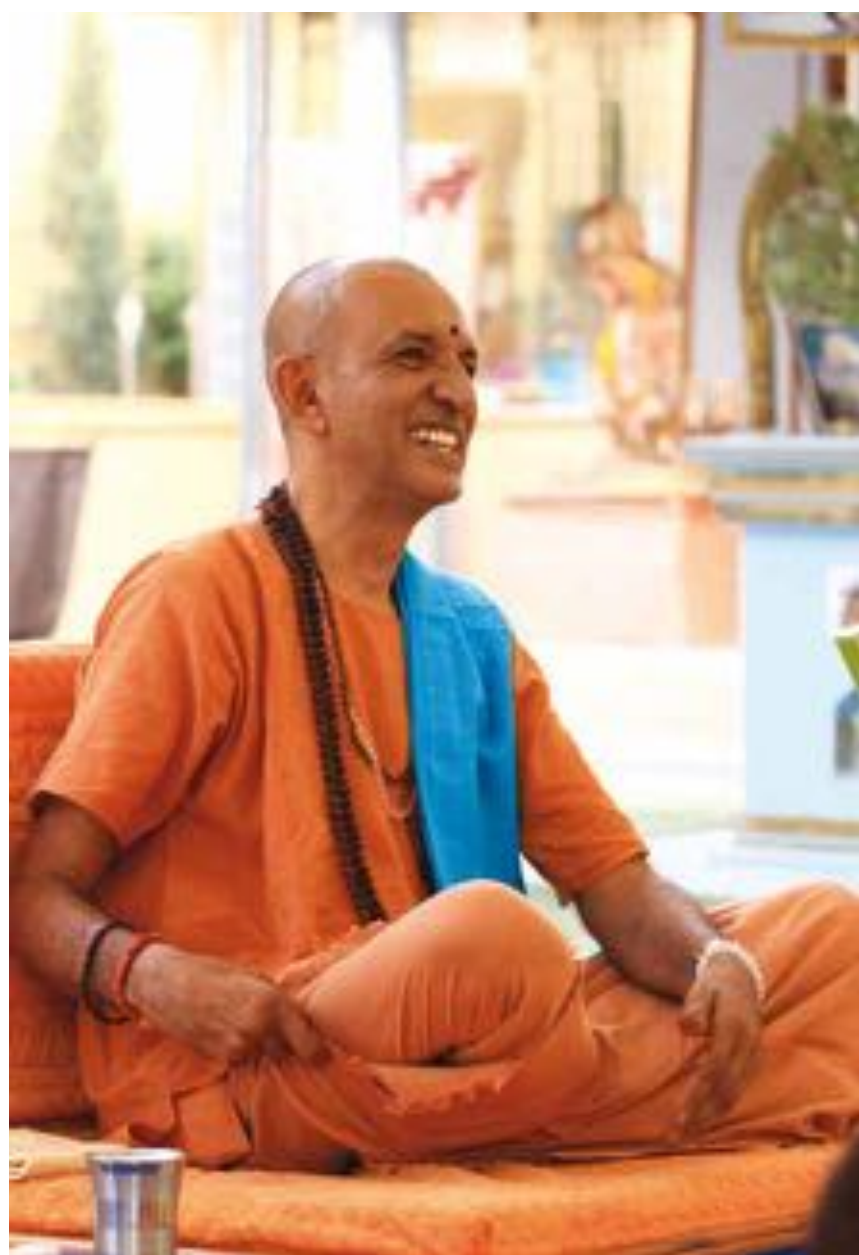
PS: The last day of his visit is Satyam's birthday, and humble he gives his biscuit machine to Swamiji.

– Rishi, Gurgaon (*Yogic Studies Hindi*, 2019)









Pranayama

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

According to yogic theory, breath retention is an important part of yogic sadhana. There is one retention which is known as kevala kumbhaka. This kevala kumbhaka is said to be the aim one has to attain with the practice of pranayama. Most of the yogic literatures, whether it be Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* or pre-Patanjali yogic scriptures, speak of kevala kumbhaka as the final attainment of pranayama.

Prana is associated with breath yet prana is also separate from breath. An example is of Swami Nadabhramananda who was my guru uncle and guru brother of Sri Swamiji. He had mastered kumbhaka. He was the only one in the world who could hold and retain the kumbhaka for one hour. He could hold the breath for one hour whether he held it in or he held it out, it made no difference to him for he had mastered the subject of pranayama. A lot of research was done on him too.

A famous research was done at the Meninger Foundation in the United States. In this research the sannyasi was put in an airtight chamber, his whole body covered with wax. All the orifices were plugged, and for one hour he was asked to play tabla in this airtight chamber, without breathing. Up to that point it is acceptable, yet the research further showed that when a microphone was put on different parts of his body, the scientists used to hear a sound vibration like the last part of *Om, mmmmmmm*. If they placed the microphone on the thigh, the sound would be recorded by the tape recorder, on the back the sound would be recorded, on the head the sound would be recorded. Place the microphone on any part of the body and that humming sound would be recorded.

The sannyasi explained that even without breathing, if the pranas are active they take over the physical autonomic functions of the body. That happens only in kevala kumbhaka.

External retention is the most difficult retention to hold. Internal retention you can hold for longer periods but external you cannot hold for long, for the body craves oxygen, the body craves the air intake. In this condition if you are able to hold your breath out, then you are perfecting kevala kumbhaka. Through kevala kumbhaka the pranas begin to be activated. Pranas are not activated in internal or external kumbhaka.



That is training the lungs and breath, however, pranas are activated only when there is kevala kumbhaka, effortless or spontaneous kumbhaka, even of the outer retention.

In the *Yoga Sutras* (2:50) Patanjali has played a clever game. He has mentioned three types of pranayama. He calls inhaling one pranayama, exhaling one pranayama and retention one pranayama. Patanjali does not give any practice of asana, pranayama or even pratyahara. He has not given a single practice in the entire book, yet he has given descriptions of many stages of samadhi. We cannot deal with the basic mind and we are going to deal with eight stages of samadhi?

In the pre-Patanjali scriptures of yoga you discover that the aim of pranayama is to reach external retention. Inhalation, exhalation and internal retention train the body. They train and facilitate the absorption of oxygen from the body. However, the movement of prana, the awakening of prana and the utilization of prana happens when kevala kumbhaka has been mastered, and this comes after mastering external retention.

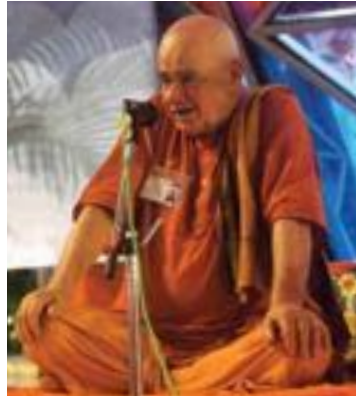
If you can master external retention without pranayama just by holding your breath out during the day, then that will also facilitate the experience of pranayama.

– 31 March 2019, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Pranayama with Sri Swamiji

Rishi Nityabodhananda, Australia

In the three-year sannyasa course, we started with pranayama in the cooler months. We started on the roof, 4 am, bhastrika. Two hundred left, two hundred right, two hundred both. Internal kumbhaka, jalandhara bandha, moola bandha, then relax, then meditate for half a minute. Then again two hundred left, two hundred right, two hundred



both, and again kumbhaka. Release. One minute meditation. And again. And again, and again, and again. We were flying. You know, two hundred is a lot of breath, but as soon as you'd think, 'Oh, I'll have a little rest', Swamiji from the front, I can hear his voice even now, "Continue. Continue." It was dark on the roof. He couldn't see anything, but he knew. He knew. He had an intimate connection with each and every one of us, each of our troubles and each of our difficulties.

Then we went to nadi shodhana. It took us one whole month to do the four stages of nadi shodhana. You cannot believe for how long we inhaled through the left. Slow, slow, slow, slow up, then down, down, down, down. Hours and hours and hours. Finally we got to the final stage with pooraka, kumbhaka, bandhas, rechaka, kumbhaka, bandhas. Then he said to me, "You will do 12:48:48:48." And I did. (*applause*) Don't clap for me, clap for Swamiji. (*bigger applause*) I tried later on, I couldn't. I never had it. I couldn't, it was his power. He was right with us in the pranayama.

– 21 October 2018, Munger Yoga Symposium

Focus on Prana Shakti

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Remember that whenever you are practising something, two components have to come together: awareness and relaxation. Even if you are in the most difficult of postures, you have to relax in it, not remain tight and tense. Plus, you have to be aware of what is happening, not by putting your mind into a body part but by visualizing and observing it from above. A few days ago I gave the example that when people talk, they move their hands and body. I am also moving my hands while talking to you, yet I am aware of those actions, and that is due to the fact that I am not looking at my hands, I am looking at myself from somewhere above my head. I can see the whole picture.

When you are doing something with your body, you try to bring your mind into a specific part. By doing that you actually limit and confine your awareness, from broad to narrow. You have to be aware of the movement and the experiences it is creating, sure, but then move up and see the whole body, not just one part which is moving. Just as you can see my whole body and also the finger that is moving, I see myself in the same way. That is the awareness you have to develop in yoga: to be able to see the whole self while you are engaged in something. Even if you tie yourself up like a pretzel, be aware of the whole body and remain relaxed. That was the focus of our practices yesterday.

Today we are going to focus on prana. How do we experience prana at the time of performing an asana? Some people will say the movement of energy in the body, others will say heat, tingling, and so on. I differ from all those views.

Take the example of *eka pada pranamasana*, single foot standing salutation pose. It is a practice of balance. Where is the awareness of prana in this posture? Everywhere? Wrong. Ajna? No. Here the entire focus is on the foot, for it is the foot that is supporting the body, it is the foot that has to be firm and strong. If the foot is firm and strong, the body remains unmoving. If there is fluctuation of prana in the foot, you will be swaying. So the focus comes at that point of the body from where stability is being created and experienced. Here the entire force and power of prana is on the foot on which you are standing, not in the whole body. The prana is focused and centred in the foot. If the pranas were not focused and centred in the foot, you'd be unable to stand on your single leg. You do not focus on the swaying of the body and try to reduce it, that only increases the swaying. You have to focus on the foot and the ankle, and be firm and immobile.

The stability, the firmness, the stillness, that is the control of prana, not feeling little sensations travelling from head to toe and getting electrical shocks. You have to become aware of prana in an asana by becoming aware of the strength that you

are using to make a movement or hold a posture. Where the pressure and the force is, that is the area you need to stabilize. Wherever you are using your strength or force, it is in that region that you have to focus.

Another example: if somebody has to do *mayurasana*, the peacock pose, then the focus of prana shakti will be in the wrists and hands, as they are using that prana shakti to keep the body in that posture. Once the awareness of prana shakti comes there, the wrist and hands will become firm. Therefore, you have to direct the prana shakti, like they do in martial arts – punching with the breath – there is a power, strength and firmness in the action. In the same manner, in yoga too, wherever you are feeling the pressure or the force, that is where you have to concentrate to experience the prana shakti.

One final point should be clear. Even if you are focusing prana shakti in a specific part, the form of your awareness continues to be of the whole body.

– 26 October 2018, Munger Yoga Symposium



Many Learnings

Swathi, Bangalore, India



I was very impressed with the smooth flow of procedures and events from the moment we arrived to the moment of departure. I can only imagine how much thought and planning must have been involved. And the execution of the same by the sahayogis and other sevaks deserves a round of applause.

The Pre-Symposium satsangs with Swamiji set a strong base and gave us an idea about what to expect and also what is expected of us. It was interesting to learn about the vedic raja yoga, which is pre-Patanjali, and how jnana yoga is not about 'Who am I?' As Swamiji mentioned, yoga has gone from door to door and shore to shore and that concludes the first chapter. To know that the next chapter of BSY is deepening the knowledge (yoga vidya) and how to incorporate yoga in our daily life was enlightening.

Asana practice with awareness of the movement, breath synchronization, visualization, chakra awareness and mantra was a new experience and I realized that to further this aspect I need to master the asanas first. As Swamiji said, muscle memory needs to be developed in order to gain mastery over asanas. We were fortunate to have a class of yoga nidra with Swami Niranjana. I learnt many other new things. The most

helpful thing was that we can break down the practices and do them in parts as yoga capsules. This is very useful for those who live outside the ashram and have time constraints.

It was also wonderful to learn about the work of different people across India and the world to spread and establish Satyananda Yoga. The stay at Munger was a reminder of how people in the ashram and elsewhere are selflessly dedicating their time and energy in order to help fulfil the aspiration of their guru. The short film on the life of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda was fascinating. I also enjoyed watching the 5D movie 'Awakening the Kundalini'.

I thoroughly enjoyed singing and repeating kirtans and it made me realize that singing releases endorphins, which makes one feel elated. This reminds me of the Manganiars whose soulful music against the full-moon backdrop is etched in my memory. The children's play and the message it contained will always be remembered.

Apart from the learning, the experience was enriched by the people I stayed, interacted and spent time with. I am grateful to all those who gave an ear to me, were kind and genuinely concerned about my wellbeing. Every time I see goodness in someone, I see God! Above all, as rightly said by a fellow delegate, a lot was given to us without us asking for it, and we tend to take things given to us freely for granted. I would try my best for that to not happen. I hope I will be able to imbibe at least a part of what we have received.



Simplicity

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



It is important for you to understand that as you progress in yoga, your practices need to become more and more simple. When you are starting yoga, your practices can be complex. At that time you are learning yoga, so you go through the whole range. That is the learning process, but when it comes to personal sadhana then it is not the complex practices of yoga that you need to do but the simple ones, to realign and balance the forces in the body and mind.

Simplicity in asanas refers to the selection of practices with regard to the requirements of the body. Generally speaking, your body requires only a few major movements: stretching or traction, such as in *tadasana*; twisting, which is seen in *kati chakrasana*; bending from side to side, that is *tiryak tadasana*; forward and backward bends, which are seen in *surya namaskara*. If your practice covers this range of movements, it is enough for a normal practitioner.

– 27 October 2018, Munger Yoga Symposium

Yoga Training at Ganga Darshan: Impressions and Experiences



Respiratory Capsule

The teachers were very good and had a clear concept and presentation to help the students; and they were loving. Inside the campus of Bihar School of Yoga, life is very disciplined. Everybody gets up at 4 am and lives a healthy and peaceful life.

The meals were beyond my expectation. It was a delicious and well-balanced diet. Everyone was washing their own plates and glasses. No outside servants are kept for washing or cleaning the hostels. Everybody is contributing their own services in their own way. It is a very beautiful approach which I appreciated a lot.

I learnt a lot here and will share the experience of this kind of life with my children, relatives and neighbours.

– Kishore Kumar Verma, Deoghar

Total Health Capsule

It was the first time I attended any session of yoga by the yogis. For the first time in my life I have attended any session of yoga by true yogis. The environment of BSY campus is itself a teacher. Here, food, the prasadam we had, was also a lesson in some way. Through karma yoga I came to know how to work to manifest or see yoga in every walk of life. The bhakti yoga helped attain spirituality and mental harmony. I kind of realized greater mental, physical, emotional and spiritual consciousness during the sessions. The restrictions and disciplined routine made sure we got the complete yogic experience.

– *Aditya Gaurav, Patna*

Digestive Capsule

Objective: the purpose of my visit to the Ashram was to learn and develop a way to live conducive to health and life. This of course includes learning some asanas and pranayama. The lifestyle disease has assumed gigantic proportions and has taken in its grip the entire mankind. A solution to this problem is the challenge to human endeavour and ingenuity. The ashram life seemed to be a way out.

Achievements: the ashram life devoid of TV, newspaper, mobile and fast food taught us that living without them is possible. The food in the ashram, devoid of the spices and oil was sufficient for our requirements. The timings for serving food was scientific and is worth following in our family life. Attending our hatha yoga classes at 5.30 am required that one had to get up early in the morning, finish the morning chores before the scheduled time. Three hours of karma yoga required us to do physical labor. raja yoga classes were the icing on the cake.

The ambience of the campus was about perfect for a sanatorium. The friendly atmosphere in the ashram premises, among the residents coming from the different parts of the globe was exemplary.

– *Arun Kumar Mishra, Patna*



Yoga Lifestyle

It was an uplifting, soulful experience. While I was expecting to get a deep understanding of asanas, what I have learned is significantly more than that.

The course introduced me to a more balanced, healthy and disciplined lifestyle that can be incorporated on a daily basis. The mantra chanting helped energize as well as calm the mind. The morning class helped me learn the necessary asanas that I will try to practise daily. The afternoon session was more about deep relaxation and chanting.

Most enlightening part of the camp was the daily session with Swamji where he enlightened us about multiple topics – reason and basis of yogic lifestyle, importance of yoga, preventive care and positive attitude along with right diet, sleep, and exercise pattern.

I also enjoyed the evening sessions which were managed flawlessly, had some exceptional singing talents, outstanding aesthetics and most importantly complete investment of heart and soul by everyone involved. The two sessions I attended at Akhara were also ethereal and soul touching.

The food was also sumptuous and every meal was carefully planned and full of nutrition.

All in all, it has been a wonderful experience for me and I will nurture and cherish what I have learned here. I will also do my best to implement it and live yoga 'moment to moment'. Thank you for organizing this camp which has made me connect with myself better. God bless you all. Among the many thoughts I have with me, this is one by Sri Swami Satyananda: 'Every action should be intense, enthusiastic, concentrated with joy and spontaneity'.

– Charu Kaushal, New Delhi

Hatha Yoga Yatra 1

I came to the ashram to learn new things and to relearn old things, and to unlearn some things. Hatha Yoga Yatra 1 provided exactly that opportunity to experience the shatkarmas under guidance of Swamiji. I really feel blessed for such an incredible opportunity to have Swamiji teaching us these 'simple' asanas in a systematic and clear manner. All in all, I would say that the week was 'fun' in the yogic sense of the word. How can one forget the sound of 70+ students doing kunjai together! Along with all those special memories, I will leave with new tools and renewed enthusiasm "not only to live but to love yoga moment to moment."

– *Sannyasi Anandaroopa, USA*

Hatha Yoga Yatra 2

The structured six-week program given by Swamiji during Hatha Yoga Yatra 1 helped me to discipline my practice for the last year. I was able to follow the program regularly and was looking forward to attend Hatha Yoga Yatra 2.

The experience of Yatra 2 was quite different and deeper. It was a progressive experience in all the practices of asana, pranayama and yoga nidra. In the satsang, my understanding of Swamiji's teaching was enhanced. I am going back with a lot of learning to make yoga my lifestyle.

– *Rajesh Sehgal, New Delhi*

From ignorance to vidya – what a long journey!

Thank you for guiding us a few steps along this path . . .

From self-oriented perception to Self-oriented – what a challenge!

Thank you for showing us the direction . . .

From the stormy sea of raga and dwesha to the safe harbour of letting go – like a light house you shine and illumine our adventure.

Thank you for being with us.

– *Jignasu Tyagbodh, Czech Republic*

Surya Namaskara

From Conversations on the Science of Yoga – Hatha Yoga
Book 4, Asana



What is surya namaskara?

Swami Satyananda: Surya namaskara is a series of twelve physical postures. These alternating backward and forward bending asanas flex and stretch the spinal column and limbs through their maximum range. The series gives such a profound stretch to the whole of the body that few other forms of exercise can be compared with it.

What is the meaning and significance of surya namaskara?

Swami Satyananda: The Sanskrit name *surya* here refers to the sun and *namaskara* means 'salutations'. Surya namaskara has been handed down from the enlightened sages of the vedic age. The sun symbolizes spiritual consciousness and in ancient times was worshipped on a daily basis. Worship of the outer and inner sun was a religio-social ritual which attempted to placate those forces of nature beyond human control. In yoga the sun is represented by *pingala* or *surya nadi*, the pranic channel which carries the vital, life-giving force. Surya namaskara is composed of three elements: form,

energy and rhythm. The twelve postures create the physical matrix around which the form of the practice is woven. These postures generate *prana*, the subtle energy which activates the psychic body. Their performance, in a steady, rhythmic sequence, reflects the rhythms of the universe: the twenty-four hours of the day, the twelve zodiac phases of the year and the biorhythms of the body. The application of this form and rhythm to the body-mind complex generates the transforming force which produces a fuller and more dynamic life, and a greater appreciation of the world we live in.

What are the origins of surya namaskara?

Swami Satyananda: This dynamic group of asanas is not a traditional part of hatha yoga practices as it was added to the original asana group at a later time. However, the origins of surya namaskara date far back to the earliest epochs of history, when human beings first became aware of a spiritual power within themselves that is also reflected in the material universe. This awareness is the foundation of yoga. Surya namaskara can be seen as a form of worship of the sun and all that it represents in the micro and macrocosmic levels. In yogic terms this indicates that surya namaskara awakens the solar aspects of an individual's nature and releases this vital energy for the development of higher awareness. This can be realized by the practice of surya namaskara each morning, as well as being a fine way to pay tribute to the source of creation and life, thereby carrying on the solar tradition.

What is the purpose of surya namaskara?

Swami Satyananda: Surya namaskara is an effective way of loosening up, stretching, massaging and toning all the joints, muscles and internal organs of the body. It is an excellent group of asanas with which to start morning practice. Its versatility and application make it one of the most useful methods of inducing a healthy, vigorous and active life, while at the same time preparing for spiritual awakening and the resulting expansion of awareness.

Surya Namaskara

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Amalsad is a beautiful place. It is neither a city nor a village. There is only one cinema house here, even that would find lesser and lesser cinema-goers from today, for today you have practically experienced the glory of sankirtan.

Civilization has not contaminated this town. It is, therefore, pure. The people are simple and noble. Fashion, cunningness, crookedness and other symbols of modern civilization have not touched them. It is a very healthy place because sanitation is ingrained in the people.

You should all strive to maintain good health. Good health is very, very necessary for spiritual and material progress. Surya namaskara is a unique system. All that is good has been combined in surya namaskara. The genius of the sages has evolved this perfect synthesis of culture of body, mind and soul – surya namaskara. The sage had intuitive insight into the nature of the mass mind. He therefore cleverly wove into

every man's daily routine this unparalleled system of all-round self-culture. Along with faith in the religion of the ancient seer, the system of culture evolved by him has also been forgotten by the modern civilized man. You should revive this faith. It is the need of the hour. From today, be regular in the practice of surya namaskara.

Physical culture

A harmonious development of the body, mind and soul alone can enable you to fulfil the glorious role for which you have taken this birth here; you can attain self-realization. A sickly body acts as a dead weight preventing the mind from soaring high into the divine realm. An excellent, well-built body, strong and healthy, if it serves only to house an undeveloped or diseased mind, is capable of much harm and little good to anyone. A good body and a keen mind, with the soul entirely dormant, is likely a lovely mansion without foundation; it is bound to topple over any moment. A perfectly harmonious development of the body, mind and soul makes one a sage, a seer, a saint and a godman. Surya namaskara achieves this harmonious development.

As a system of physical culture it is beyond comparison. It is a combination of vigorous physical exercise, yoga asanas, pranayama and sunbathing. One round of surya namaskara done in the open air facing the sun would do you more good than hours at a gymnasium. The external muscles and the internal viscera are nicely exercised. The lungs are made to work rhythmically and fully. At the same time, the sun's life-giving rays play on your body, sucking away the toxins along with perspiration, invigorating circulation, and imparting life to the human organism – the life that only the sun can give you.

The influence of the sun

The sun is the presiding deity of the eyes. Practising surya namaskara facing the rising sun strengthens the eyes, removes all sorts of eye defects, and you enjoy good eyesight even in

old age. There is some peculiar affinity between the sun and the eyes that the scientist cannot discover in his laboratory or by vivisection. It is known to (and seen by) only the rishis who possess the eye of intuition. Then you will enjoy the incalculable benefits of their wisdom which no amount of vain argumentation will bestow on you.

Facing the morning sun, you are witnessing the daily miracle of God's creation. Night follows day and day follows night. The sun rises to dispel the darkness that enveloped the earth; all people rise with Him and feel thankful that God has granted them yet another day of health and strength to serve Him and His children. The mind is at once elevated to the realm of the divine. What a glorious example the sun sets before us! He shines equally upon all. He is unaffected and unattached to anything. He is regular and systematic. He does the Lord's will unquestioningly and with perfect self-surrender. As you perform surya namaskara, meditate on these sublime ideas. Pray to the sun to illumine your intellect and enable you to lead the divine life.

Before you commence the practice, recite the *Surya Dhyana* and the upanishadic prayer to the sun. Before doing each namaskara, recite the names of the Sun and, while you do the namaskara, repeat *Om* or your ishta mantra. This is very important. This provides the foundation for the magnificent edifice of surya namaskara. This is the culture of the soul. Pray to the sun: 'O Lord! Kindly illumine my intellect. Remove the ignorance that veils the true nature of myself. Let me behold my own self.' The Lord who indwells the sun will listen to your prayer. Your prayer will be answered. You will realize that just as there is not a pinpoint of darkness in the sun which is Absolute Light and Light alone, so also the self is Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Truth, Absolute Bliss, Perfection, Immortality, Infinity. So, kindly be regular in the practice of surya namaskara from today.

(From Sivananda's Lectures, During All-India and Ceylon
Tour - 1950, chronicler Swami Venkatesananda,
Address given on 30th October 1950, in Amalsad, Gujarat)

To Manage Emotions

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



There is lot of talk about empathy and sympathy, about feeling this and feeling that. From my understanding, we are subject to a bombardment of influences from all sides the whole day. Let us forget sensitivity, emotion, pain, pleasure and suffering, forget all that for a minute. Just think of this bombardment of influences on the human nature from all sides – environmentally. All the signals of WhatsApp and mobiles are entering your brain. There is bombardment of opinions and talks of other people which influence you and disturb your peace and harmony of mind; pressures of the family, of society and profession are there.

Your mind and brain is continuously being bombarded. If you are an emotional person, your emotions will be highlighted due to this bombardment. If you are an intellectual person, your intelligence will be bombarded. If you are a psychic person, your psyche will be bombarded, and if you are a dynamic person, your pranas will be bombarded. It is the inability to manage the external bombardment which makes you say, “I can’t deal with the pain, I can’t deal with this situation, I can’t deal with this loss of stamina, strength, motivation, energy.”

Meditation

It is, therefore, not a question of how you can deal with emotions but how you can manage this bombardment better. This is possible through meditation. Clear the mind, clear the influences, clear the pressures and tensions. Just connect with your own true, inner nature which is totally free from the bombardment of outer influences. When your body is dirty, you go for a shower and clean your body. When the mind is dirty you also have to shower the mind. Applying soap, removing the grime and dust happens through meditation. By cultivating self-observation, the witness or *drashta*, you clear anxiety, tension, stress and influences and you come to a state of peace and harmony. Maintain that state and discover what your nature is.

An emotional person, intellectual person, psychic person have different traits of psychology and one aspect is always more predominant in your life. However, you should see yourself as a whole unit which has to be cleared of tensions. Not just one aspect of the self – emotions – has to be cleared; look at the whole being, clean the whole being. Just as you clean your annamaya kosha, clean your pranamaya and manomaya koshas and you will be fine.

The cleaning of pranamaya and manomaya koshas happens through meditation for there are two important components in life. One is *vasana* and the other is *prana*. *Vasana* means desire and *prana* means motivation, energy. We all have, desire, *vasana*; we all have *prana* which becomes the medium through which we fulfil our desires. That *prana* is physical, mental, it is complete *prana*, and desire is also complete, physical, psychological, spiritual. Therefore, both have to maintain their purity – purity of desire and purity of *prana* – then overload will not happen. When we are not in this state, there is always confusion and conflict. If the purity is maintained, then we are continuously, constantly in a state of peace and harmony.

– 21 April 2019, (Hatha Yoga Yatra 1 & 2)

Swabhava and Sankalpa

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The practice of *pratipaksha bhavana* means you are dropping a negative quality, thought or feeling and replacing it with a positive quality, thought or feeling. Sometimes it is possible to do it even instantly; at other times it is a struggle, and the identification with the positive comes and goes; and sometimes it is difficult to do.

Swabhava means the normal human nature that we live every day, every moment, and that we express and that is identified as our mindset, our nature. This individual nature is guided by the predominant mood which can be either tamasic, rajasic or sattwic. When you are in a sattwic mood

or are guided by the sattwic mood, at that moment you can develop pratipaksha bhavana easily and connect your mind with a positive thought and a positive idea.

When you are in the rajoguna state of mind, connecting with the positive will always remain a struggle - it will come, then it will slip, then again you will have to grasp it, and again it will slip. In the rajasic mind there is continuous effort. If you are under the influence of the tamasic mood, then despite your wisdom, pratipaksha bhavana will not be there; tamas will be more predominant. Therefore, you are looking at your swabhava, your real nature.

The second aspect is *sankalpa*, intention and determination. You can have the intention and you can have the determination to be good, proper and correct. However, if you are under the influence of the tamasic mood, the intention and determination will not take you anywhere. If you are in a sattwic mood, this sankalpa will take you far.

Swabhava and sankalpa both have to come together in order to succeed. You have to work to develop a better mood, and despite failures you have to continue making the effort, and that is where the strength of a sadhaka lies. Despite failure there is a drive of continuous effort to overcome the failure. There is no dejection due to failure. Sankalpa and swabhava have to come together, if you want to create long-lasting change. Just by tweaking the swabhava or dealing with sankalpa without managing the swabhava is not going to give benefits.

Lifestyle to change your swabhava

We are all trying to change the swabhava from tamasic or rajasic to sattwic. For that it is not just effort which is necessary but changing the lifestyle. In 2013 at the World Yoga Convention, we said that the age of propagating yoga is over. For 50 years we propagated yoga from door to door and shore, to shore and that chapter closed. Last year in the month of October, five years after closing the first chapter, the second chapter was written.

For the second chapter we called teachers, who came from 40 countries and 22 states of India, and we launched the second chapter of yoga with 'yoga from moment to moment', not 'from door to door and shore to shore'. That is finished. This concept of moment to moment yoga revolves around lifestyle.

Until now, for many people yoga was a practice to be done in the classroom once, twice, thrice a week, for the sake of feeling good physically, for the sake of reducing and removing stress, for attaining greater relaxation. Beyond this, yoga had no other meaning than physical wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing. When we are talking of lifestyle we are talking about making our whole routine a yogic routine, not just practising yoga for one hour in the morning as a system or discipline, but living yoga every hour, every minute and practising yoga according to the times and the needs.

Lifestyle is an important aspect which we are focusing on now. We have started to conduct lifestyle training programs. The first one being conducted is the vedic lifestyle course of Sannyasa Peeth. It is interesting that each kind of lifestyle is dependent on something. Today the modern lifestyle is becoming more and more dependent on technology and information. Any question people have, they are instantly on the net googling to find out the meaning of this, the meaning of that, trying to find out what this is, what that is. The modern society is very much dependent on the technology and on information available. If the technology and information available disappears overnight, the modern civilization will collapse.

In the same manner, during the vedic times, the dependency of the vedic civilization was on attitude, not on technology. The attitude had to be right, proper and correct. This attitude was connected to the discovery of *sat*, the truth, the right, the appropriate and the correct. This was reflected in the civilization, in their culture, their lifestyle, their practices. Everything was revolving around the discovery of *sat*. It was



not only an intellectual process but something that people could live. Sat became part of their life in the form and expression of *satkarma*, right action, *satvyavahar*, right behaviour, and *satvichar*, right thinking.

The mainstay of the vedic civilization was attitudinal. The mainstay of today's modern society is technological and information. We are not saying this is correct or incorrect, we are saying that along with the modern technology and information, there has to be focus on attitudinal correctness. This attitudinal correctness will lead to readjusting our routine, our aspirations and efforts in life. There has to be an awareness which is there from morning until night, moment to moment. There has to be an awareness of being able to see what I am doing every moment, to check myself and correct myself every moment. This happens when lifestyle is defined and looked into.

In the second chapter of yoga, from this year new programs and courses are being conducted. Nothing of the old that was happening for the last 50 years continues from this year onwards. It is a new journey and people who have become part of the new journey are feeling the benefits of it. There are many steps that we can walk and we are walking on that path.

– 24 March 2019, Ganga Darshan, Munger



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Hatha Yoga for Everyone

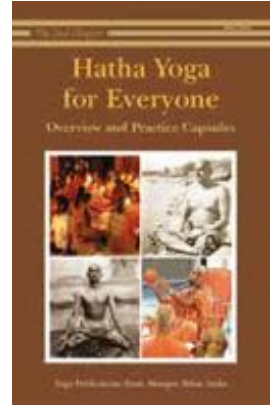
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179 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-81-938918-8-9

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Oct 1-30	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 1, 2 (English)
Oct 1-Jan 25	Yogic Studies, 4 months (English)
Nov 4-10	Kriya Yoga Yatra 1, 2
Nov 11-17	Kriya Yoga Yatra 3
Dec 18-22	Yoga Chakra Series
Dec 25	Swami Satyananda's Birthday
Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poornima	Sundarkand Path
Every 4th, 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
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