

YOGA

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyanasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Contentment

Contentment can never make you idle. It gives strength of mind and peace. It checks unnecessary and selfish exertions. It opens the inner eye of man and moves his mind towards divine contemplation. It transmutes the gross energy, such as greed, that is forcing man towards selfish exertions into spiritual energy. That man who is contented is full of sattwa. He is more energetic. He is always peaceful. He turns out more work calmly and with a one-pointed mind. All the dissipated rays of the mind are collected.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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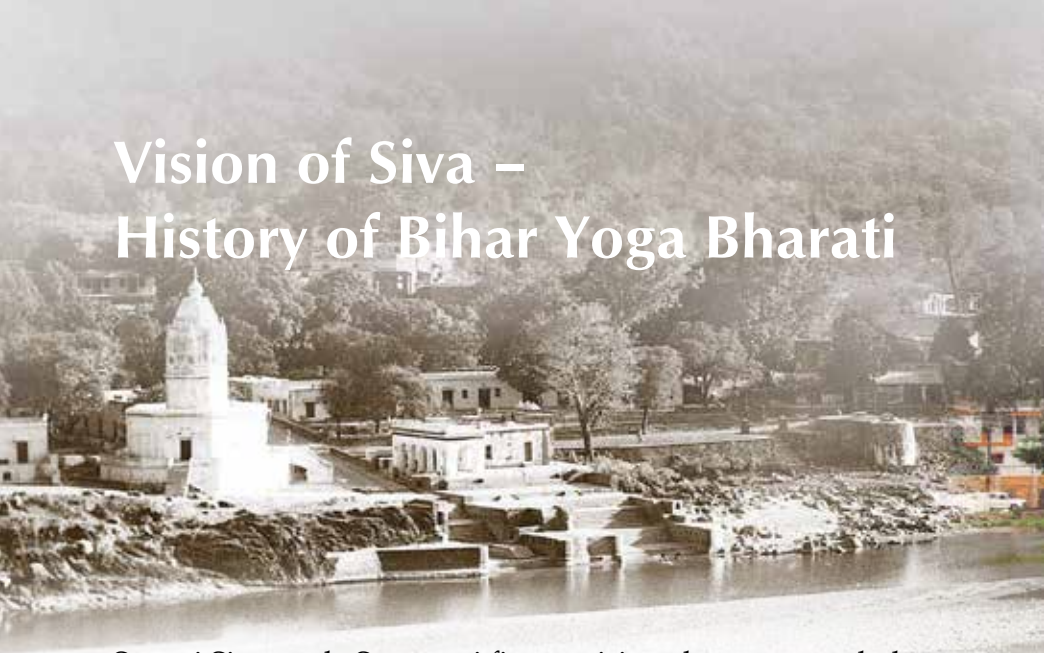


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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥



Vision of Siva – History of Bihar Yoga Bharati

Swami Sivananda Saraswati first envisioned a yoga gurukul when he established the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy in Rishikesh. This inspiration was carried forward by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who established the Ganga Darshan complex in Munger. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, with the blessings of his predecessors, went on to found Bihar Yoga Bharati.

A natural continuation

Bihar Yoga Bharati has its roots in the ancient past. Thousands of years ago, the state of Bihar was the home of two great spiritual universities. The university at Nalanda at one time housed more than 10,000 students, monks and scholars, many coming from far-off lands to study there. It was also famous for its library, which was ten storeys high. The university at Vikramshila, near Bhagalpur, emphasized the study of tantra.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati founded the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY) in 1963 in order to carry out the mission given to him by his guru to spread the message of yoga from door to door and from shore to shore. Under the banner of BSY, he propagated yoga for people of all ages from all countries, races, religions and cultures. Under his guidance, the ancient



science of yoga was taught on a scientific basis with clarity and vision. Today BSY has become internationally recognized and respected as a teaching institution of the highest standard. Bihar Yoga Bharati is thus a natural continuation of the teaching activities of BSY.

After Swami Satyananda Saraswati entered the stage of *kshetra sannyasa* (renunciation of the establishment) in 1988, the responsibility of realizing the vision of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda was passed on to Swami Niranjanananda. For five years he developed Ganga Darshan and laid the groundwork for the realization of his guru's vision. In 1994 he founded and established BYB as a registered and accredited institution for yogic sciences at Ganga Darshan.

The institute was formally inaugurated on 8th September 1995, the 108th birthday of Swami Sivananda, and the first courses started soon thereafter. The institute was granted the status of a deemed university by the Central Government in 2000, thus becoming the world's first yoga university offering postgraduate courses in the faculties of Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Psychology and Applied Yogic Sciences, along with diploma and certificate courses. Since 2006, BYB has been functioning as an institute for advanced studies in yogic sciences in its own Yoga Vidya campus adjoining Ganga Darshan.

Yoga-Vedanta Forest University

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

In 1948, the Yoga Vedanta Forest University came into existence when regular classes began to be conducted on all branches of yoga. To help the students all over the world, the University Press was established for printing necessary works on the practical side and half a dozen periodicals, with a number of machines to do the work automatically.



THE YOGA VEDANTA
FOREST UNIVERSITY
PRESS

The Critical Juncture

Students became irreligious,
They lost faith in religion,
Under the influence of science,
They neglected dharma,
They began to smoke and gamble,
Girls became fashionable,
Officers became materialists,
Health of people deteriorated,
People shunned the scriptures,
Materialism had its sway.
At this critical juncture,

To revive the Glory of the Lord,
To disseminate knowledge of yoga,
To preach the yoga of synthesis,
To instil devotion and faith in people,
To work for the spiritual uplift of mankind,
To bring peace and bliss to every home,
I established the Divine Life Mission,
And founded the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University,
In a sacred, charming spot in the Himalayas,
On the banks of the Holy Ganga in Rishikesh.

A centre of dynamic spiritual regeneration

Many foreigners come to the Ashram and spend some weeks or months and admire the wonderful work turned out at the Ashram. The inhabitants of Shivanandanagar, young and old, men and women, enjoy the peace and bliss of this holy centre and help the world in a variety of ways. They all receive my careful, personal attention. I provide them with all comforts and conveniences and help them in their evolution.

There are a number of buildings, kutirs and guesthouses for their stay. Over thirty typewriters work day and night attending to correspondence and book work.

The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University trains a large number of students through able and qualified professors and teachers. The students become well-versed in all the scriptures. The University Press is now equipped with several electrically operated automatic machines for composing, printing, folding and binding. For the dissemination of knowledge among youths, essay competitions are conducted and scholarships offered to advance their studies in colleges and high schools.

I trained my students in organisational work, typing, maintaining proper accounts, managing the affairs of the Society and in attending to the devotees, visitors and the sick. Thus even in the early stages, the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University was vigorous in its working.

– *From Autobiography, Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

A Vision Come True

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



I want to do research in yoga, but have been told that a minimum knowledge of yoga is compulsory to do an MA. How should I proceed in this direction?

This problem has existed for a long time. It has been discussed for several years and the decision has been taken to convert the Bihar School of Yoga into a yogic university, which will eventually receive accreditation from the University Grants Commission. This university will offer both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. There will be four faculties: Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Psychology, Applied Yogic Sciences, and Yoga Ecology and Environmental Science. A faculty of languages, which would include Sanskrit and Pali, is also planned for the future. First of all, we want to begin with these four basic faculties and then we will expand.

After completion of a two-year postgraduate course, an aspirant will be able to obtain a post as lecturer in another university. The chances are greater abroad because yoga is

highly respected in foreign countries. We are looking at yoga from the point of view of its development. What do educated people who have done their MSc do afterwards? In India, no university offers yoga as a postgraduate course. The truth is that those who are teaching yoga today have no in-depth or background knowledge of the subject. They do not know the philosophy of yoga, nor do they know the historical connections. What is the connection between yoga and the Indus valley civilization? What is the connection between yoga and the Scandinavian countries? With what tradition or school of thought was yoga linked: Kashmir Shaivite, Lingayat Shaivite or Veera Shaivite? Where did Vaishnavism originate?

Yoga teachers have no knowledge of all this. They only know how to teach asana and pranayama. That is how they manage to earn a living. In India, we lack qualified teachers who have studied yoga systematically. Even sadhus and mahatmas who have studied yoga systematically, and who would know the origins of the word yoga, are difficult to find. Was yoga first referred to in the *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda* or in Buddhism? Every era has attributed different meanings to yoga. In sannyasa, there are also references to yoga. When the *Bhagavad Gita* was written, yoga had different meanings: vishad yoga, samkhya yoga, karma yoga and so on.

Many texts have been written on all these particular yogas, which people have not read. What is the relationship of yoga with tantra? How did hatha yoga emerge? Was it a part of yoga or was it taken from another tradition? What were the conditions when hatha yoga was extracted from that tradition and joined to yoga? Despite being such a great science, why was tantra responsible for the decline of so many great religions? Tantra was responsible for the decline of Buddhism and also the decline of other religions.

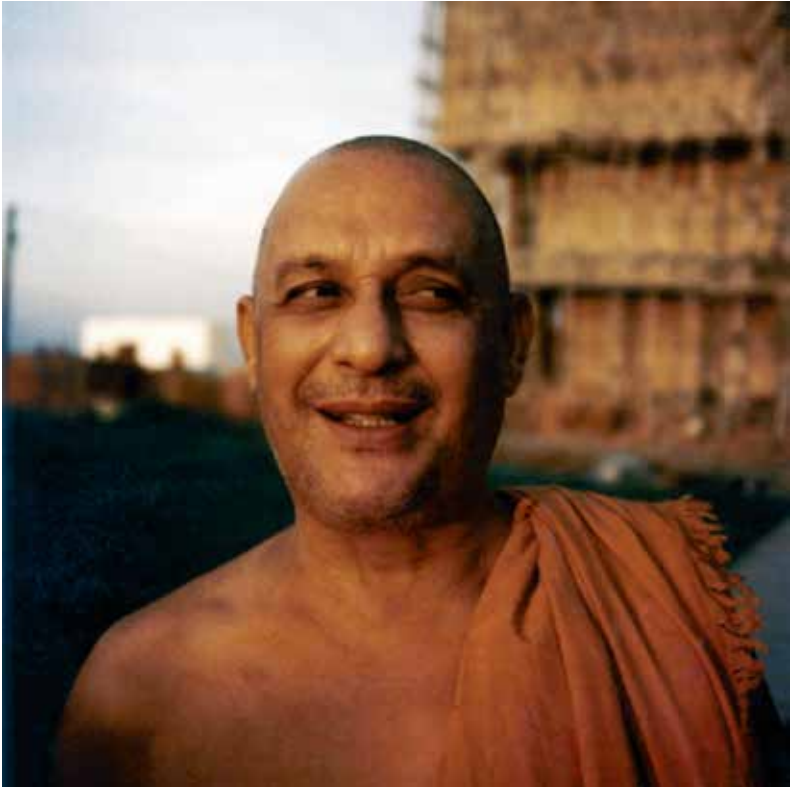
Tantra is a great science and there are no two opinions about that in the shastras. It is said that the best path for awakening kundalini has been given in tantra. However, those religions and religious teachers who propagated tantra

were rejected by society. Buddhism declined for this reason. Due to its connection with tantra, yoga was also rejected. The bandhas and mudras were all part of tantra. The tantric kriyas were based on the practices of uddiyana bandha, nauli, maha bandha, sirshasana, vajrasana etc. Then people saw that society was rejecting tantra, although it encompassed many positive aspects. So chapters on hatha yoga, describing ida, pingala and sushumna, were added to the yogic science, whereas Sage Patanjali has not written about this anywhere. In Sage Patanjali's yoga it is only written – *Sthiram sukham asanam*: the meditation posture should be steady and comfortable.

Where did sirshasana, vajrasana, padmasana, vrischikasana or mayurasana come from? There is no reference in Ashtanga yoga or in Samkhya, but there is in Buddhism. Lord Buddha used to sit in padmasana with his hand raised in abhaya mudra. Mahavir, the Jain guru, sat in padmasana. The coiled locks on Lord Buddha's head are a sign of the sahasrara chakra. The study of this is essential for yoga because it seems to have united several civilizations. Did yoga originate from the Indus valley civilization? There is not only the Indus valley civilization, there is also the Ganga valley civilization, the Brahmaputra valley civilization, the Narmada valley civilization and the civilization of the Cauvery Delta. Yoga belonged to these five civilizations.

The Indus valley civilization was dynamic and mobile. It was engaged in trade and warfare and had an army. Out of this emerged a vibrant civilization, the Ganga valley civilization. There the rishis and munis created a whole literature, wrote the Vedas, Vedanta and the Upanishads, gave a direction to society, performed religious practices and rites, and understood the goal of spiritual life. This was the Ganga valley civilization. The Narmada valley gave birth to esoteric knowledge, magic, tantras and mantras. From the Cauvery Delta arose the arts, architecture, literature, dance and music.

Which Indian civilizations was yoga taken from? Evidence of padmasana and siddhasana have been found in excavations



of the Indus valley civilization. Evidence has also been found in Colombia, a faraway South American country. There is a huge forest in Colombia called San Augustin, where I found ancient statues of pre-Colombian figures doing yoga postures. I published these pictures in *Yogavidya* magazine. One is doing nauli, another vajrasana, another sirshasana, another sarvangasana, another neti. Where did these statues come from? How did this civilization disappear? So you must wait and pray that Swami Niranjan's resolve to establish a yogic university will be fulfilled. Many people, like you, will then be shown a path.

– 11 December 1994, *Rikhiapeeth*,
published in *Bhakti Yoga Sagar Volume Two*



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Sri Swami Shankarananda Saraswati
Mukhya Nirdeshak
Bihar Yoga Bharati Sansthan
Ganga Darshan
MUNGER-811 201 (Bihar)

23rd August, 1995

Blessed Immortal Atman!

Om Namō Narayanaya.

Revered Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj has requested us to convey that he is happy to note the establishment of "Bihar Yoga Bharati" for the teaching of the ancient Science of Yoga, for research and work in this field, for systematic imparting of instructions and for holding seminars, etc. with this objective and presenting Yoga in a new and fruitful manner according to the requirements of the upcoming generation of our present modern age that is coming towards the 21st century. Revered Swamiji Maharaj is happy to know that you are inaugurating this deemed university Bihar Yoga Bharati on the auspicious 108th birthday anniversary of Sadguru Bhagawan Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Swamiji Maharaj greatly appreciates this step you are taking because it clearly indicates the dynamic progressive nature of your valuable work in the field of Yoga which your holy founder of Bihar School of Yoga, your worshipful Gurudev Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati declared as the Culture of Tomorrow. Revered Swamiji Maharaj sends his very best wishes for the inauguration ceremony of the 8th September, 1995 and earnestly prays to the Lord and Gurudev to confer choicest blessings upon Bihar Yoga Bharati for its success in the years ahead.

Revered Swamiji Maharaj sends loving Pranams to all the resident Sannyasins, Sadhaks, yogis and devotees of Bihar School of Yoga Mandir.

With regards, Prem and Om, Om Namō Bhagawate Sivanandaya.

Yours, in the Service of Holy Master

Swami Atmajnanananda

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION**
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110 016

ANIL SINHA IAS, *Joint Director*

7th September, 1995

Respected Swami Shankaranandaji

Hari Om

It is very heartening to learn that the inauguration of Bihar Yoga Bharati is taking place on 8th September, 1995 in Ganga Darshan. I feel so very happy and excited about this moment. But at the same time I feel rather disappointed that I am unable to join this momentous occasion. How I wish I was with you all!

8th September, 1995 also happens to be International Literacy Day which is being celebrated at the national level by National Literacy Mission, with which I was involved so very closely earlier. And that is holding me back, alas!

But I will be with you all with heartiest sentiments, emotions and regards wishing all success and glory to Bihar Yoga Bharati in the days and years to come. I feel very strongly that BYB will be chiefly instrumental in translating the vision of Swami Satyanandaji that Yoga will determine the direction and culture of the 21st century.

I beg sincerely to be pardoned for my absence (physical only) I will definitely try to come in the near future.

With deepest regards to Sw. Niranjan.

Yours sincerely,

Anil Sinha

Three Foundations of Bihar Yoga Bharati

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Bihar Yoga Bharati was established about twenty-five years ago. This was the first Yoga University in the world. Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Psychology, Applications of Yoga and Yoga Ecology were the four subjects taught.

Over a period of time, since it was not possible to meet the requirements prescribed by the University Grants Commission, the status of a university was given up, yet BYB has continued to work as an institution devoted to higher studies in yoga. Bihar Yoga Bharati has been involved in the propagation of yoga and inspires students to imbibe yoga vidya and has also been making the effort to take the experience of yoga to another level. During the foundation of Bihar Yoga Bharati, it was said that the institution was dedicated to the Indian rishi tradition, vedic lifestyle and the eternal culture of yoga. These continue to be its foundation even today.

Rishi tradition

What does 'rishi tradition' mean? Our rishis also adopted a certain way of life, but what was their basic intention? The awakening of positive qualities through exploration into life.

You must be familiar with the story when devas and asuras came together to churn the ocean which yielded many gems and divine riches. The intention of our rishi tradition is the very same – to awaken positive qualities by churning our own lives. That is why the rishi tradition has always been associated with research, exploration and a quest. Our rishis researched into life to discover the methods by which one could attain the highest state of consciousness and life.

To continually make discoveries in life, go deeper into the understanding of life and develop good qualities, live life with peace and understanding, carry out the activities of living with restraint and faith – this is our rishi tradition. Research into what? Research into the subtle elements of life' – the mind, emotions, consciousness. Exploration into these areas and bringing them into an organized, balanced and measured form has been the work of our rishis. An exploration into the purpose of life, a search for truth – this has been Bihar Yoga Bharati's first area of work. In short, study and research.

Vedic civilization

The second foundation of BYB is the vedic civilization. What is the foundation or basis of vedic civilization? Lifestyle. The foundation of modern lifestyle is desire. It is our wish, our desire to become someone, to do something and we set off on that path to make the attempt to become something. Whether it is medicine or engineering, we go into a profession. Apart from this external profession, there is no other basis for inner life.

You live with the family and go to work, there are only these two parts to your life, nothing else. When you are not at home, you are at work and when you are not at work, you are at home. This is your lifestyle today which is why there is tension, limitations are faced, you experience depression, fear,

disappointment, anger, ambitions – all this has to be faced and you end up losing your balance and focus, you often become dissipated. This is the modern lifestyle.

We see the way in which people in cities live. In big cities and metropolises there are many conveniences, big buildings, more wealth, many opportunities, yet there is really nothing for man except loneliness. Whether it is Delhi or Mumbai, there is loneliness in people's personal life and there is also a lot of dissipation and distraction. 'What should I do? What shouldn't I do?' It is difficult to make sense of things. Children shirk their responsibilities at every step and so do adults. Both are lost in dilemmas and delusion. This is the state of our lives all over the world today.

When we talk about vedic civilization and vedic lifestyle, we are not referring to some ancient lifestyle of ages gone by but to a systematic lifestyle in which there is understanding and balance of head, heart and hands. That is when life receives a positive direction. One is eager to undertake hard work and makes an effort to achieve goals with enthusiasm. Vedic lifestyle is a systematic and organized lifestyle in which there is awareness of oneself, one's own duties and one's duties to family and society. When we are able to work effectively and systematically for ourselves, and fulfil our social and familial duties diligently, then the family benefits and society flourishes.



In these modern times, it is necessary to adopt a vedic and yogic lifestyle in order to improve our lives. Recently a sannyasin from the ashram had travelled through four countries in South America. Before embarking on the journey, when I was asked what message did I have for people there, it was just one sentence: 'Try to see the sunrise every morning', that's all. The sannyasin went there and shared this message that Swamiji would like everyone to make the effort to see the sunrise every morning. You won't believe this but they went crazy about it - 'We have to see the sunrise!' This meant that one had to wake up early and people made the effort to wake up at six or five-thirty in the morning instead of at eight o'clock.

Some shared their experience that it was the first time they had seen the sunrise in forty years! Another person said that he has lived in the same town for forty years; he walks to work every day but after attending that seminar for the very first time he noticed the trees lining the road and how beautiful they were! For all these years, he had never noticed the trees or their beauty though he walked along that road every day.

This is an indication of how our intelligence and consciousness are swamped with tensions, troubles, fears and strife to such an extent that we are unable to connect with the beauty of nature around us. Just one sentence, 'make the effort to see the sunrise', made such a huge difference to their lives as if they had received a pronouncement from the scriptures. Now tell me, is this not yoga or is it something else?

This is neither asana, not pranayama, not mantra or meditation; it is an exercise to bring discipline into life. Instead of getting out of bed at eight-thirty or nine o'clock, make the effort to see the sunrise - isn't this a great achievement? If this brings joy to a person, all the better. After all, it is necessary to like or love whatever one does.

When I performed the panchagni sadhana, if my mind had not been engaged in it, I would not have been able to do it. I had to develop intense love for fire, for without that love

I would not have been able to sit there for even five minutes. I said to the fire, '*Twameva Maata cha Pitaa Twameva*' – you are my mother and father, you are my everything and so stay with me and stay with me lovingly. Neither will I oppose you and nor should you be aggressive towards me. Understanding and love developed between us. In the experience of this mutual love, temperatures of over eighty degrees went unnoticed. I mean to say that unless there is total absorption in something, nothing is attained.

In lifestyle it becomes necessary to discover the workings of the mind, for restraint and discipline do not begin with the body but start with the mind. Someone smokes cigarettes and says, "I want to stop smoking from today." Will the body stop or is it the mind which has to want to stop? First it is the mind. Which is why lifestyle is directly connected to mental behaviour. To make your daily routine and lifestyle positive, uplifting, creative and simple there has to be union between three elements: intelligence, emotion and action. When these three are in unison, harmony and divinity will follow. As long as these three are separate from each other, one will be engulfed by strife and dissipation. This is why vedic lifestyle is the second foundation of Bihar Yoga Bharati.

Yogic culture

The third foundation of Bihar Yoga Bharati is yogic culture. Yogic culture implies the attempt and effort to adopt a yogic attitude and approach to life. If someone is able to live according to yogic attitudes, what will their life be like? Someone whose life is imbued with the best behaviour and character. When we look at the lives of great saints, that is what we see. If one has to speak about Swami Vivekananda, it is his behaviour and character that one will talk about. One will not talk about the clothes he wore or the kind of food he ate but his character, the work he did and the philosophy he followed.

In the same manner, when you make the effort to know more about others, it is their character and behaviour that you

will ask about. If they are soft-hearted, you will be attracted to them, if they have a hard, harsh nature, you will stay away. One who adopts the yogic culture has exemplary character and behaviour.

Our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda, said that people only express harsh emotions in life. Anger is harsh, arrogance, envy, hatred are all harsh emotions. All the negative, limiting and tamasic states are harsh and it is these harsh emotions which also make the pranas hard and rigid. Sri Swamiji used to say that it is these harsh emotions which have to be softened. Love, compassion, mercy, empathy – these are tender emotions.

One always wants to drop the harshness and move towards tenderness in life. Nobody wants to be harsh, one ends up becoming like that due to harsh conditions. When one's wishes are not fulfilled, the mind and heart become hard. So what is to be done? If we try and bring a yogic attitude into our lives, then we move away from the harshness and closer to tenderness, softness and the gentle emotions in life and this is where life finds its completion. These are our Guruji's words.

Residential training

These are the three foundations, goals and aims. The first is the rishi tradition which means becoming aware of oneself and searching for truth within oneself, in nature, in the entire creation. The second is vedic lifestyle, an organized and systematic emotional, mental and behavioural existence, living with restraint and having a direction in life. The third is yogic culture through which we make the attempt to attain the best character and excellent behaviour.

When will it be possible to imbibe these three things? When Bihar Yoga Bharati was established, there was no provision for day scholars where students could come, study and then go home, like it is in other colleges and universities. The residential facility is something which was decided upon by Sri Swamiji himself. He used to say that if yoga is to be imbibed in the right manner, it has to be a fully residential training and not



something where you go and attend a yoga class for one hour and then go out for a smoke.

In the absence of discipline, there will be no perfection in yoga. Keeping this principle in mind, Sri Swamiji gave the instruction not to have any day scholars at Bihar Yoga Bharati but to only have residential participants who could spend three or four months in an ashram environment and imbibe new samskaras, discover new ways of seeing and thinking – and that is exactly what happened.

When there are many pots and pans in a kitchen, there will also be a lot of noise made by the utensils being picked up and put down – yet the purpose of these things can only be realized in a kitchen. They are needed for boiling water, cooking dal and rice. Similarly, when someone is new to ashram life, of course many difficulties arise – mummy is not close by, there is no fridge at hand full of goodies that you can open whenever you feel like having a snack.

Gradually when one settles in and becomes accustomed to the lifestyle, one starts to like and enjoy it. One feels, 'Oh, wow! I can do this!' Until today one was dependent on mummy to do things but now, one can do them for oneself – from washing clothes to everything else. Initially there was resistance to it, for sure, yet over time one gets used to it and then one also starts

to like the independence. Sri Swamiji had intentionally given this instruction to impart yoga training in such a residential setting. It is only then that people can begin to understand yoga as a sadhana and as a mental attitude.

That is the reason why I am saying this to all the citizens of Munger, especially to the children, that you should be proud. Whenever you have the opportunity to go and live outside you will experience for yourself the difference between the life there and what we live here. Yes, though we may only have two dry rotis for dinner and we may not have sumptuous feasts that can be enjoyed in grand homes yet the samskaras, sanyam and the potential which we have here cannot be found in big cities.

In the cities, people have become accustomed to many addictions. Where there is wealth, indulgence follows, yet where there is no wealth to be had, people are always engaged in good work. One should only have enough money so that one is not lacking in one's needs and one should also have the faith that one's goals can be attained. If these two aspects are a part of our life and we can maintain a positive and creative outlook in our behaviour, samskaras, attitude and philosophy, then that will be a great achievement for us and that will be the identity of our 'City of Yoga' in the future.

– 30 June 2019, Ganga Darshan

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BOMBAY, SEPTEMBER 10

First yoga varsity launched in Munger

The Times of India News Service Munger, September 10: The Bihar Yoga Bharati Institute (BYBI), proposed to function as university for yogic studies, was inaugurated by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati in the premises of the famed

Bihar School of Yoga here on Friday. It will be the first yoga university of its kind in the world.

The Swami, addressing the gathering on the occasion, said that the organisation was dedicated to the cause of humanity.

Logo of Bihar Yoga Bharati



Garuda

The eagle, is the king of the birds, and the vehicle of Vishnu.

Garuda

- soars high up in the endless sky, representing the flight of the individual consciousness in the vastness of cosmic consciousness.
- has sharp and keen vision, representing the effulgence of *viveka*, a sense of discrimination and right understanding.
- faces towards the left, symbolizing peace, companionship and universal vision.
- sits on a branch of wood, representing the inner potential which manifests as the fire of knowledge when ignited.

The mantras

Nasti yogat param balam.

Nasti jnanat parah bandhuh.

There is no power equal to yoga.

There is no friend greater than wisdom.

The mala

The symbol is encircled by a mala of rudraksha, representing the third eye of Shiva which opens after transcendence of gross awareness and gives perception of supreme consciousness.

Bihar Yoga Bharati

Swami Yogakanti Saraswati

Around 1996, Swami Niranjanananda explained to us in a satsang that establishing the Vedanta Forest Academy had been part of Swami Sivananda's aim of setting up an international university on yoga and spiritual life. It was part of the mission that he passed on to Swami Satyananda. Along with 'Spread yoga from door to door and shore to shore', the mandate was to provide a deeper and more integrated understanding of yoga to qualified and sincere aspirants, irrespective of race or creed.

This had inspired Swami Satyananda to establish the great Ganga Darshan campus, which was so much more extensive than the needs of a humble ashram on the banks of the Ganga seemed to require. Now it was his duty to carry out that vision of establishing an international university, and we were to be his team.

I felt a thrill at his words because I remembered when I had first come to the old BSY ashram in 1977 Swami Satyanandaji had pointed out to me a nearby hill with what looked like a ruined fort or palace on it, and said, "That is where I will establish the university of yoga. People from all around the world will come to live there and study."



He had called for Sukhdev, a strongly built young man, maybe from Indonesia, and told him to escort me there so I could look around. I protested that I could find my way there alone, but Swamiji insisted, explaining that I would attract attention from children and packs of wild dogs, and that sometimes dacoits, thieves hung out up there at present. We went. I was awed. What a site, overlooking the Ganga, the Munger town, green lush fields stretching towards far away hills, all under a huge sky.

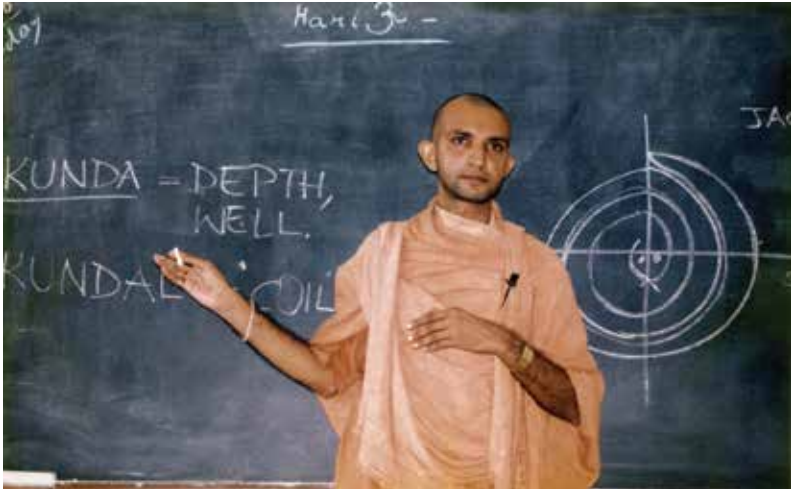
And now, we were going to see that sankalpa of establishing a university here materialize.

The work was inspiring, working with the Department Heads, Swamiji and Swami Shankaranandaji, who was going to be the Vice Chancellor, decided we would start off with dual four-month Certificate Courses which would be offered one in Hindi and one in English. After that we would offer a one-year Diploma Course in Yogic Studies. Once that was established, each of the three Departments: Philosophy, Psychology and Applied Yogic Science, would offer a two-year Post Graduate course in their field of specialization. For each of these courses we had to design syllabi suitable for residential students, for each and every course was residential.

I worked with Swami Gyanbhikshu, head of the Yoga Philosophy Department. Along with classes, the students would live in the ashram 24/7 and imbibe the yogic lifestyle as we aimed to replicate the ancient gurukul system, where one became part of the guru's family.

Besides inspiring us as the guru, Swami Niranjanananda was the main lecturer for each of the above courses for the first year. Many of the lecture series that he delivered at that time were recorded, transcribed, and published as books which are now famous, like the *Gherand Samhita*, the *Yoga Upanishads*, *Prashnopanishad*, *Ishwaropanishad*, and commentaries on the *Gita* and on the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali.

I was especially lucky. Not only was I a student in each pilot course, but also looked after the transcription department



at that time, so I would hear the lectures again and again. It was an intense period of learning as the philosophical, psychological and practical aspects of the scriptures were revealed to us as clear skeins of thought based on experience, we could experience them for ourselves within the gurukul environment.

There were hatha yoga classes each morning before breakfast, raja yoga classes each afternoon, and kirtan and satsang in the evening. There would be one or two lectures during the morning and again in the afternoon. Saturday mornings were for project work. Seva was packed in everywhere, but Sunday was free. It was a wonderful opportunity given continuously, day after day, and we developed so much due to the ashram lifestyle.

Later besides lecturing, I was given the post of Student Counsellor. This was a wonderful opportunity to get to know the students better. Rather than waiting for problems to happen, the strategy was to call each student at least once each semester. At that time, they would be introduced to two friends that they had to live with for the rest of that semester at least. Then they could choose to move on or to stay with that friend. Sometimes they were encouraged to choose their

friends (friends not masters), or sometimes a lottery system was used. We would discuss how helpful or difficult they found their friends.

One friend would come from the group Ahimsa, Satyam, Asteya, Aparigraha, Brahmacharya, the second from Saucha, Santosha, Swadhyaya, Tapah or Ishwara Pranidhana. The results were marvellous and long-lasting too, some people still speak of how those friends helped them through and actually transformed their whole experience. If you want to practise living with these friends yourself, please feel free.

If students needed something lighter, they were encouraged to adopt one of Swami Sivananda's 18 ITIES for a day, or week, or month, trying to live the following qualities: Serenity, Regularity, Absence of vanity, Sincerity, Simplicity, Veracity; Equanimity, Fixity Non-irritability, Adaptability, Humility, Tenacity; Integrity, Nobility, Magnanimity, Charity, Generosity, Purity. I practised, and remember having trouble with 'nobility' until, in one of our discussions, a student explained that being noble meant that one served others.

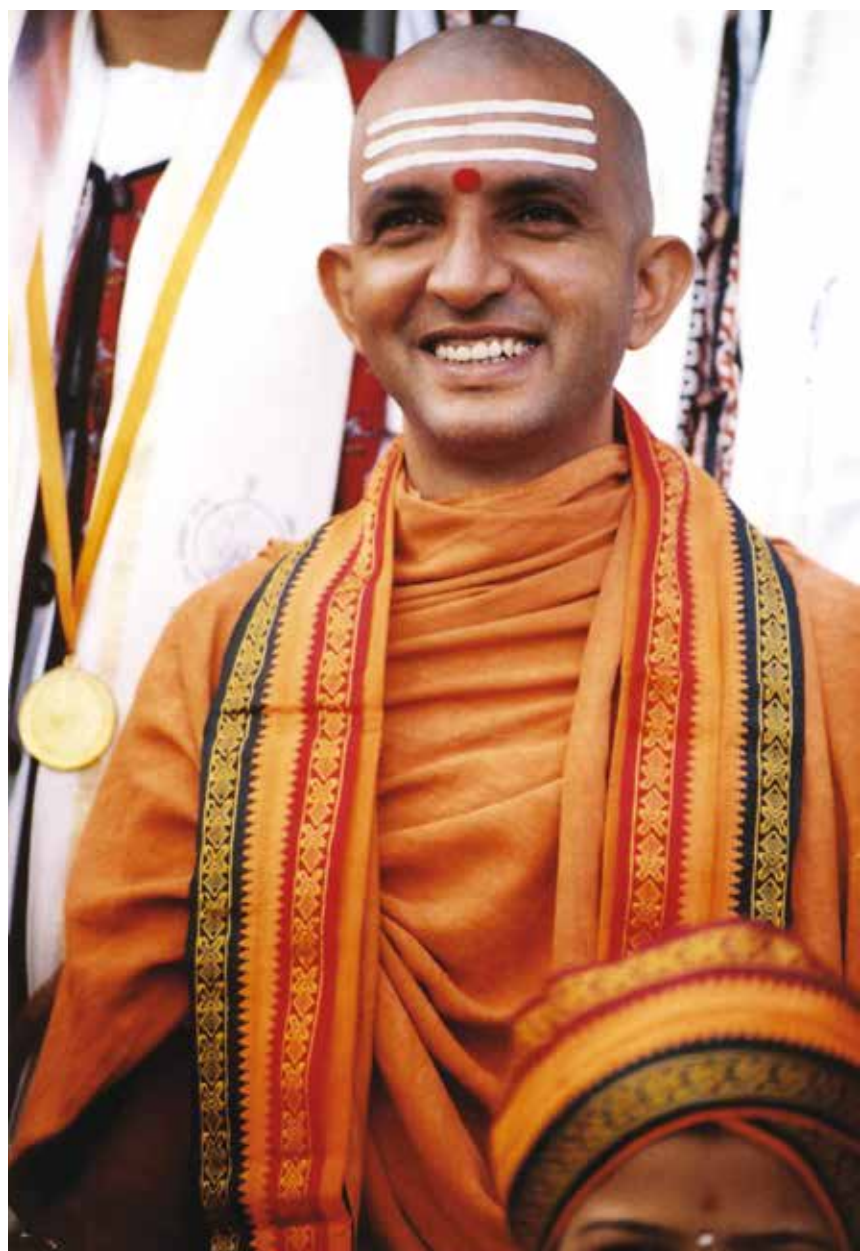
Besides the lessons with Swamiji, one of the best times in the course, for me and many students were the Saturday morning sessions which lasted about three hours. They were often for group work and were held in the classrooms and also outside on the lawns. The group would be formed by lot, and topics given for presentation – for example the characteristics of the tattwas or the yamas and niyamas, or the kleshas to be presented by short plays. There were discussions on how people were progressing with their new 'friends', debates, examination of yogic terms through yogic crossword puzzles. Learning became a joy.

The whole Bihar Yoga Bharati experience was very beneficial and successful. After graduating from the post graduate courses, the students found it easy to get good jobs teaching yoga in India and overseas. Many of them return to Ganga Darshan regularly feeling the ashram as their second home, and they are welcomed wholeheartedly.









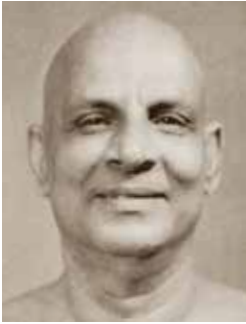
Seva

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Seva is serving others and helping others with compassion, serving not for personal gratification but to uplift others. Seva is an offering. When an action contains your best thoughts and feelings, your love and affection, sympathy and compassion, and when it uplifts others, that is seva. Seva is serving others with compassion and with the best you can give. In the course of time, seva becomes a way of life. Living for others becomes a way of life, not living for oneself.

Education



Education is not the amassing of information and its purpose is not mere career hunting. It is a means of developing a fully integrated personality and enabling one to grow effectively into the likeness of the ideal that one has set before oneself. Education is a drawing out from within of the highest and best qualities inherent in the individual. It is training in the art of living.



Education is not injecting knowledge or information from outside. It is creating an atmosphere in which you will be able to awaken and express the knowledge which is already in you. Education must be designed so that it can serve two purposes. Firstly, to enlighten the intellect, to purify the emotions and to improve the quality of social awareness, and secondly to awaken and express the inner knowledge.



At Bihar Yoga Bharati students are exposed to three different environments - the ashram or gurukul, yoga and spiritual life. Education has to be imbibed; it cannot be learnt just through books or lectures. The aim of BYB is to provide the right samskara or impression for imbibing the yogic sciences and lifestyle, so that learning is not only an intellectual concept, but becomes a part of one's life.

10 Years on – Looking back at Yogic Studies 2009–2010

Swami Amritbindu Saraswati



One Sunday morning in January 2020, as we were singing kirtan and seeing the Yogic Studies students receive their certificates, the picture of exactly ten years ago, when my fellow batchmates and I received our certificates for the completion of our four-month Yogic Studies 2009–2010 flashed in my mind.

Walking through the main gate of Ganga Darshan for the first time in 2009, with a heart full of excitement about learning yoga, being in the presence of Guru and living in the ashram, little did I know that the subsequent four months would change my life forever.

For the first one and a half months of our Yogic Studies, I was astonished by the scope and profundity of the tradition, even though what we were exposed to, from the hatha yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga classes, to karma yoga sessions and evening sadhana, was just a small glimpse of the yogavidya. I

thought I knew a bit about yoga before the start of the course, but as the course progressed, the more I learnt, the more I realized that there was much more that I did not know, and it was a really humbling experience.

One of the biggest realizations that I gained early on was that we don't necessarily get what we want in the ashram, but what we really need. Being an academic and a researcher, I thought I would be able to contribute most to the ashram by giving karma yoga in more intellectual work. Therefore, when I was assigned to do karma yoga at the GDO, even though I enjoyed the seva, I had a feeling that I was not really using my skills. However, as time progressed, I realized that it was an opportunity for me to develop the skills that I lacked: to communicate with people instead of just with paper or data, to solve problems instead of just giving critical comments. It was a valuable learning experience, to learn to be a better person than I was before.

As we were living in a gurukul, it was important that we live the yogic lifestyle and follow the ashram discipline, so that we could live in harmony. However, it was at times challenging to maintain that harmony as our class comprised of 70 plus students from all over the globe and various parts of India, each one of us had different cultural backgrounds and different ways of expressing ourselves. Yet, it was the real learning and experience of the spirit of yoga – to live with understanding and acceptance of one another. Our different habits and different ways of expressing our views or needs sometimes inadvertently press the buttons of each other; yet at the same time, that gave us the opportunities to learn to understand each other and cultivate pratipaksha bhavana, instead of letting our frustrations, anger or other negative emotions run amok and fight all the time. We succeeded sometimes and failed sometimes, but at the end, we all appreciated this beautiful time that we got to spend together and grow together.

The most special experience that we had in our course was undoubtedly the Mahasamadhi of Sri Swamiji. It was a time

when we could see the bhava and devotion for the Guru, the binding force of the tradition, and individuals' karma yoga at their best. Having overcome the initial shock of the news, all the students plunged into the seva that was required at the time: to prepare for the programs, to assist with the departures of the ashram guests. Without asking what would happen with our classes and other routines, we participated fully in the Shraaddhanjali for Sri Swamiji.

As the Yogic Studies came to a close, our hearts were filled with gratitude, for the learning and inspirations, for the care and support that we received in the four very special months. For myself, this special experience had given me a glimpse of the parampara and a new direction in life, for I have decided to stay on – to continue to learn and grow in the ashram, and contribute what I can to the mission of the Gurus.

This year, I am especially grateful for being given the trust and opportunity to lead the hatha yoga class of the Yogic Studies course. As I was watching the Yogic Studies students receive their certificates on one Sunday morning in January 2020 as one of their teachers, my heart swelled with gratitude and inspiration – to continue to tread the path that I have started 10 years ago.



The Higher System of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga is a very old science. The main purpose of yoga is to bring higher enlightenment to all mankind. The word yoga literally means 'union' and this means that the individual consciousness expands gradually and becomes infinite. Attainment of infinite consciousness by shutting off the empirical and objective personality is the main purpose of yoga. However, everybody is not ready and fit for this aim, and thus we have other aspects such as hatha yoga, karma yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga.

If a man has achieved control over his mind and is able to dive deep into the innermost recesses of his personality, and if the winds of thought do not disturb him, then there is no yoga for him except meditation. However, when the body is ill, you need hatha yoga and when the mind is ill, you need raja yoga, bhakti yoga, karma yoga. Nevertheless, these are all the means, and they do not represent the higher system of yoga.

The ultimate aim of yoga

When you are able to close your external awareness and attune yourself with a different state of consciousness, then yoga begins. Sometimes it is said that yoga begins when someone starts doing karma selflessly, but this is not true. Some people feel that yoga begins when one starts to achieve concentration of mind, when the mental tendencies begin to become one-pointed, but this is not true. Union begins when the notion of duality is completely lost for the individual who has been trying to experience this state of oneness.

Yoga does not mean duality. Yoga means unity. Duality is a kind of hallucination and in order to correct this mistake, the practice of yoga should be done. In the practice of yoga the lower consciousness, which operates through the body, the senses, the mind, the intelligence, the ego, is negated through the process of meditation, which develops and illumines the inner part of your personality.

It has been said that the light is within, but there is an infinite realm of consciousness in man. We call it superconsciousness, expanded consciousness or higher consciousness. Through the practice of meditation, the lower consciousness is made to ascend and commune with this superconsciousness, and this communion is established for all time. This is the ultimate aim of yoga, but it is not possible for everybody to start practising yoga with this purpose, therefore, yoga has often been misunderstood. It is true that we practise and teach yoga asana and pranayama, as well as other aspects of yoga. These are important but, at the same time, there is a higher state of consciousness in every individual which he should realize. This realization is the ultimate purpose of yoga.

In order to achieve this purpose one must have a strong and healthy mind. Therefore, in order to bring about mental health, we practise other yogas of relaxation, sensory withdrawal and concentration. These yogas are not at all difficult and everyone can practise them.

A matter of awareness

Such things as infirmity of will and the concept of sin dissolve the moment one knows that it is only consciousness and nothing else. This is the subject matter of yoga and when we practise yoga, we deal with our consciousness. This consciousness seems to be in the form of awareness, rather than as it is philosophically or metaphysically understood by eastern and western philosophers.

This awareness in man is not manifest in animals. It is through this awareness that you know you are and I know I am; that you know you are listening and I know I am speaking. This awareness is completely dormant in animals, therefore they do not know that they move and live. Sometimes animals do great deeds, but they do not know what they are doing. Self-awareness and the ability to develop the state of witnessing are completely absent in them, but these have become developed in every man.

In our case, this self-awareness is associated with sensory knowledge, intellectual knowledge, mental knowledge, etc. The awareness is functioning through the lower media and therefore in Vedanta we say that this awareness is associated with the senses, the mind, prana and so on. Is it possible, however, that this awareness can be freed, can be made independent, insofar as its function is concerned, from these lower, limited and finite instruments?

Is it possible that my awareness could function without the help of any medium? Is it possible that I can know without the mind? Is it possible that I can see without the eyes? Is it possible that I can hear without the ears? Is it possible that all kinds of knowledge, every form of knowledge can develop within me, without depending on these material instruments?

This is what yoga achieves and it has been proven from time to time by those people who have developed the supersensual, the transcendental knowledge within them. There have been people in every period of history who have been able to know things without the help of any medium at all.

The nucleus of our personality

Therefore, first of all, let us try to understand something about this awareness that is within us, through which we know we are, through which we are aware of the consciousness and through which we are aware of the functions of yoga in relation to our personality. Is this awareness an expression of our brain, expressing itself through the senses, or is it completely distinct from the brain waves? Is the brain the origin of consciousness, of awareness, or is the brain independent of awareness?

Eastern philosophy, especially Indian philosophy, says no, the brain is not the basis of consciousness and awareness is not the action of the brain. The awareness that I am existing, you are existing and everything is existing, is not an offspring of the brain. The brain is not the source of consciousness. When a man dies the consciousness does not leave the brain. This consciousness or awareness in man is the nucleus, the centre or the hub of his personality.

If you see a spider busy spinning a web, you can understand that this spider is the cause of the whole web and that this web again goes back inside the spider. The web is the manifestation of the functions, of the abilities and the qualities of the spider. In the same way, within us there is consciousness which is the nucleus of our personality. Some call it atman, the self, or pure being. In Vedanta it is known as Brahman, which is the existence, the knowledge and the bliss. Actually it is nameless, but some name must be given so that people can understand this concept.

The process of involution

This awareness which is in man is also in the animals and minerals. It is in every vegetable and in every visible and invisible object, but this awareness is sleeping, it is dormant. In Vedanta and in yoga, the sleeping consciousness is known as *purusha*, which literally means, 'the consciousness sleeping in the city'. This body is the city of nine gates and the awareness is sleeping inside it.

In man this consciousness has started functioning or expressing itself through the very limited means of the hands, eyes, ears, mouth, touch, etc. These are the finite media through which the awareness is functioning in the seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, thinking, acting and so forth. This potential is in animals as well as in every sphere, visible and invisible. All that is taking place is because of the awareness of the power of consciousness, but they are not aware of it.

As human being we have become aware of the consciousness in a gross sense, but when we become aware in the spiritual sense, that awareness becomes what we call God for us. It is here that the concept of God begins, when man begins to feel that awareness of God is within him. In ancient times man asked, "What is that awareness in me?" Those people who were interested in inner awareness were not the same ones who were afraid of thunderbolts, of terrible rains, great floods, the rising sun or the setting moon, and who created their concept of God around these phenomena.

On the other hand, these people began to ask, "What is this awareness in me? How do I know that I am? How do I know that it is? And what is this awareness which continues in spite of my death every night? I die every night, but again the next morning I am aware, I am the same man and it continues." So they began to explore the possibility of the fact of continuity and ultimately they came to the conclusion that this awareness, through which I know I am, is only a partial expression of that supreme consciousness in every being.

They began to experiment in order to find out the finite scope, but they found that the consciousness is infinite, so they stopped the investigations. Then they asked, "From where does it spring?" So this started a process of involution or returning to the source and this process was actually and practically started by the process of yoga.

– 10 May 1968, University of NSW, Sydney, Australia

Lifestyle Teaching

Swami Yogatirtha Saraswati



In 2013, during the Golden Jubilee celebrations and the World Yoga Convention the Bihar School of Yoga launched its second chapter of yoga. The mission of yoga propagation had been fulfilled. The aim of the new chapter is to deepen the understanding and experience of yoga as a vidya. This change is reflected in the teaching at Bihar Yoga Bharati where the emphasis of its courses shifted from an academic approach to the vast topic of yoga to living a yogic lifestyle as an expression of yogavidya.

The students learn, experience, express yoga throughout the day, while participating in all their ashram activities. Theory is covered in the hatha yoga and raja classes along with the practices. Bhakti yoga is experienced in the evening sadhana of chanting and kirtan, and the daily chanting of Sundarkand. Swamiji's satsang and video satsangs of Sri Swamiji become jnana yoga along with the emphasis on self-study through samiksha or the Review of the Day, the SWAN meditation and the application of Swami Sivananda's 18 ITIES.

Family members

No more than three hours are spent in the classroom. Many more hours are spent in full participation and involvement through karma yoga. With the unique blend of yoga, the

gurukul system and resident sannyasins, students can only be recognized by their red and blue uniforms. Otherwise they live, work and laugh alongside guests, participants of other trainings and courses, and the short and long-term residents. They are integrated in all the ashram activities, departments and projects. Like everyone else at Ganga Darshan, they are students of life, of living a yogic lifestyle.

Sometimes more than thirty nationalities are represented in a BYB course and almost forty years lie between the youngest and oldest student. Some students never had to share a room before coming to the ashram, others are used to living with a close-knit family. The surprise at what they are offered at BYB, soon gives way to acceptance, adaptability and even more enthusiasm in their participation. Students who wanted to know about Patanjali and Vedanta, soon line up at the karma yoga desk and ask for more duties and responsibilities.

A generation born with the omnipresence of mobile phones and social media connectivity, are relieved at not being available and wasting time; they relish the freedom of choice and independence. In a world of competitiveness and insecurity, the joy of being able to express potential and be part of a community which has no interest other than the students' growth and learning is seen on every face.

Real education

The students value yoga differently and give it a novel meaning. As relevant as *sirshasana*, the headstand, is the ability to look at situations from a new angle. As relevant as the twelve rounds of surya namaskara is the willingness and discipline to get up early and see the rising sun. Raja yoga becomes the skill to be aware throughout the day of head, heart and hands, koshas and gunas, the six enemies, likes and dislikes, and the inexplicable mood swings. Bhakti yoga is the effort to develop acceptance and contentment, to create and live in harmony with roommates, classmates and everyone in the ashram; and to know that this effort has to and can be made once back in



society, at home and at work. For them the relevance of bhakti yoga is maintaining positivity no matter where and what.

Instead of speculating about Brahman and the mysterious ways of Maya and asking 'Who am I', jnana yoga is the journey into the 'real life within'. By exploring conditionings, limitations, potential and the scope for change, jnana yoga emerges not as a distant goal but as the foundation for understanding and the continuous experience of the beauty inherent in life.

The most tangible and pertinent learning is of karma yoga as a possible way to define one's interactions. Be it the positive attitude to all circumstances, the ability to adapt, adjust, accommodate, the willingness to give one's best in every situation, or be it Sri Krishna's teaching - karma or action has a purpose, meaning and a way to contribute to the upliftment of others and society.

Students learn and experience for themselves what is appropriate and inappropriate, the consequences of their choices for themselves and others. With the yama and niyama of happiness and japa, they take with them the two tools which will help them manage life in a positive, optimistic manner and thereby live a yogic lifestyle.

BYB gives the students the experience to apply yoga moment to moment and thereby enhance the quality of their own expression of head, heart and hands. Thus BYB endeavours to bring alive Swami Sivananda's definition of education that 'real education is the training in the art of living'.

The Role of Bihar Yoga Bharati

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Today is the first anniversary of Bihar Yoga Bharati which is the academic wing of Bihar School of Yoga. It is also the 109th birthday of our Paramguru, Swami Sivananandaji. What should the role of Bihar Yoga Bharati be for future generations? Previous speakers who have worked during the past year for the growth and development of yoga on an external, social level have presented three main ideas. Firstly, yoga should be taught in a more experiential way than occurs in a classroom situation. Secondly, the education which is given to everyone should have the purpose of developing humbleness, faith and compassion. Thirdly, there should be a recognition of the needs and requirements of every individual who comes here for personal reasons, whether their purpose is to obtain another qualification which could help them socially and financially, or whether they have come with the purpose of learning yoga for their own personal use and sadhana.

Balancing the academic and personal aspects

My ideas are slightly different. We all have different aspirations towards something we wish to do, perfect and achieve. People come to yoga for different reasons, with different aims, whether it is for health or mental peace or the desire to awaken kundalini or to attain samadhi. We are talking about two different things: the aim of the institution and the aim of yoga. The aim of yoga is both personal and universal, but the aim of the institution is social and academic. Therefore, at least in our case, the academic and the social aspect has to be balanced with the personal and the universal.

The modern trend of education in society is to educate a person in a skill which provides a qualification to get a job; and to use the skills in the job – whether it is maths, chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, science, arts, commerce – all the different subjects which are at present taught uniformly across the globe. This is job-oriented education. It is not a form of education which enhances the mental completeness, fulfilment and achievement of an individual.

The existing system of education is geared to providing status and stability in material life in the form that you choose to live yet there is an absence of basic discipline. When achieved, this discipline brings a sense of inner fulfilment, happiness, peace and contentment. Without discipline we do not feel these things in our lives, and when we do feel them they are circumstantial and not permanent.

Yogic discipline

The aim of yoga, being both individual and universal at the same time, is to provide an experience of perfection. It does not matter how you express that perfection. You can express it while studying, while serving others, while laughing, crying, sleeping, drinking, enjoying life, denying life. Why not? After all, the entire gamut of our experience must have a meaning behind it. Some people say evolution, some say enlightenment and some say perfection.

Patanjali has described the practical process of yoga. He says that it should begin with discipline – “*Atha yogaanushasanam*”. Cessation of the activities of the mind, the *chittavrittis*, will be the result of this discipline. Once the *chittavrittis* stop, you can attain *samadhi*. But in order to develop the ability to stop the *vrittis* of *chitta*, you have to follow the process of yoga, you have to discipline yourself through the process of yoga. The way to discipline yourself is through the *yamas*, *niyamas*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, ultimately leading to *samadhi*. Patanjali has been very clear in saying that in order to experience perfection in your life, in order to have a glimpse of perfection in your life, you should discipline yourself, and through discipline experience the perfection of each quality which you may have, and express that. At Bihar School of Yoga and at Bihar Yoga Bharati this is the purpose which we believe in. As a disciple of Paramahamsaji this is the purpose I believe in.

Providing a samskara of yogic life

The same awareness has to exist also at an institutional level. Bihar Yoga Bharati aims at providing the right *samskara* for imbibing education. Education has to be imbibed. It cannot be learnt through books. It cannot be learnt from a teacher in a one-hour lecture. It cannot be learnt in a one-hour practical session of yoga. It can be learnt by each one of us making an effort to be open in our interactions, and also by applying what we have learnt in a classroom environment and believe in, in practical life.

One should not have a dual life. One life which can be lived fully, optimally, constructively, creatively and simply is more than enough. The aim of Bihar Yoga Bharati is to provide a *samskara*, an impression, of what a yogic life is and how it can be led. For that, close interaction is necessary through the various departments which we hope to open eventually – Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Psychology, Applied Yogic Science, Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Languages, and Indological

Studies. In the future with these six departments, we hope to provide a sense of appreciation of nature, a sense of protecting the environment in which we live, a sense of interacting with the various communities, both local and global, a sense of communicating with them and a sense of leading a happy, tranquil, peaceful and simple life. This is the thrust of Bihar Yoga Bharati.

Applying yoga in society

An awareness is slowly developing throughout the world that there are methods of self-help which we can adopt according to our need, our personality, our cultural demand and so forth. One method of self-help is yoga. There is a demand for bringing yoga closer to the social structures. Since 1994 we have seen many things happen with the application of yoga at various social levels. We have taught yoga in the army to the troops in Siachin glacier, in Ladakh, for the management of high altitude problems. We have also taught yoga to desert divisions so that they can learn to manage the problems of heat better. It seems to have worked because the army is adopting yoga, choosing what they feel is necessary for their survival in extreme climatic conditions. Yoga is available, anybody can do it.

We are teaching yoga in prisons. We have just completed teacher training courses in the eight central prisons in Bihar, and we have taught yoga in twenty-four district level prisons in Bihar. The group of prisoners who underwent the yoga teacher training course have, voluntarily, all expressed a desire to be yoga teachers. They also noticed certain changes within themselves: an increase in feelings of joy and peace, a decrease in feelings of anger and revenge, sleep and digestion improved. Many parameters were covered.

We are not seeking to reform a criminal mentality into a socially acceptable mentality. We are there to help prisoners maintain their sanity, health and peace. If, as a result, the revenge mentality diminishes, so much the better. If they decide to become honourable citizens of society, so much the

better. However, we are not aiming for that, we are aiming for their welfare. The other things can be a by-product, the result of our providing them with a good service.

We have taught yoga in medical institutions, in medical colleges, in medical wings of the universities in Bihar, in hospitals, teaching the students and doctors the principles of yoga therapy. We have been teaching yoga in industry - in the coal sector, natural gas sector, the paper sector, the steel sector - how to improve one's creativity at work. As a result, labourers become more efficient, administrators feel relaxed and more in command of their decision-making ability, and achievements are improved.

I am telling you this to give you an insight into how society is bringing yoga closer within its fold; and of course, not to mention the thousands of students like us in different countries throughout the world studying yoga for their own personal reasons. So the aim of the BYB institute is to make yoga available for such applications in society, wherever they may be.

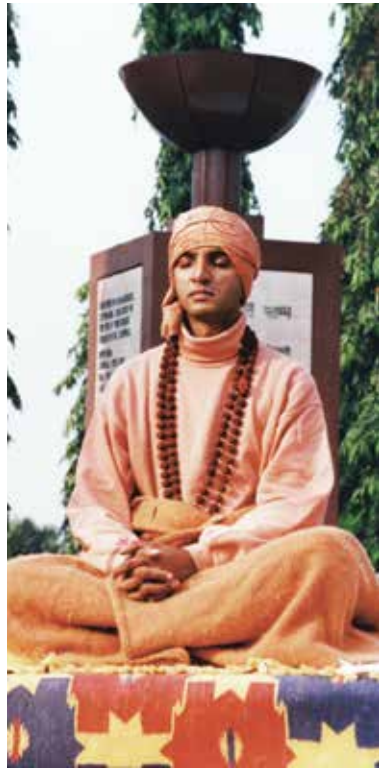
Combining yoga with a sannyasa lifestyle

Although Bihar School of Yoga conducts yoga training, yoga seminars, yoga conferences and conventions in different parts of Bihar, India and the world, and Bihar Yoga Bharati is bringing yoga to the academic level, there is a third aspect of this yoga institute - the lifestyle. The lifestyle is based on the ideal, the concept of sannyasa. The majority of the residents here are sannyasins, karma sannyasins or householder sannyasins, and jignasu sannyasins who are just testing the water before jumping in. Then there are the well-wishers. But the entire system, the discipline, the lifestyle, is based on the principles of sannyasa.

In an institute such as BYB, I feel that the structure of sannyasa should also be maintained. Why? Because sannyasa seems to be a lifestyle which is much closer to the yogic concept of lifestyle. The yogic concept of lifestyle does not say that

you have to be a renunciate or a householder; it says that there has to be discipline in life, and that discipline can also be communal.

Now, it becomes difficult for householders to maintain such disciplines. Imagine practising mouna from six pm to six am. in your own home. After a week you would be put in a mental asylum for not speaking between six and six! Imagine not speaking during meals in your home. People would think you had gone into a state of depression. There are many other items such as discipline at mealtimes – breakfast at 6.30 am, lunch at 10.00 am, afternoon tea at 1.30 pm, and dinner at 5.00 pm, nothing in between and nothing after. Yoga says that if you can practise these disciplines, so much the better.



Such disciplines seem to mix very well with the discipline of sannyasa. That tradition has to be kept alive and therefore we are teachers of yoga although, as sannyasins of Shankaracharya, yoga is not our path. Our path is Vedanta, jnana. However, we have made jnana into our personal pursuit in life, and yoga as the main pursuit in life, in order to contribute to society. Therefore, combining yoga with sannyasa life will be and should be encouraged.

– 8 September 1996,
on the occasion of the first anniversary of Bihar Yoga Bharati,
printed in YOGA Vol. 7, Issue 6 (November 1996)

Learning to Accept and Adapt

Swami Shashwatananda Saraswati

When I interview the students before their BYB course starts, I ask, “Why do you want to learn yoga?” Most students answer ‘to become a yoga teacher, a yoga guru or to go abroad to teach yoga’, some reply that they were told by friends or teachers to go to a yogashram and learn yoga the proper way, the real yoga vidya, the authentic yoga. Very few answer that they came to learn yogic lifestyle or ashram life.

After admission to the course, for a few weeks it is very tough due to the timetable and hard work. Their lifestyle at home is totally different to the simple ashram lifestyle. The students have to try hard to adjust to the ashram. Some ask why there are no servants in such a big institution, or why sannyasins work so hard, or why there is so much karma yoga, but slowly when they realize the importance and the purpose of ashram lifestyle, they enjoy it and start to learn.

Their most important query is about Swamiji. Will we meet him? Will he teach us? Will we have his blessings? After the first satsang with Swamiji, we can see the impact it has on their behaviour and attitude to karma yoga. It is totally different and very positive.

Some students come back for further yoga vidya training and to maintain their connection with the ashram.



The Thirst for Knowledge

Jignasu Dharmapriya, Sri Lanka



My journey to BSY began with a spiritual quest. I live in a culture which gives importance to spirituality. My interactions with monks and the teachings of Lord Buddha inspired me and gave me a thirst for vidya. I knew it existed but I did not know how to go about it.

When I was able to retire from my work, I came to BSY for the Yogic Studies in 2015. It was my first experience of BSY and it was something I had never imagined in my life. Here are some observations:

Many students found the pawanmuktasana series too simple, but for me it was the most amazing experience from the micro to the macro levels. My medical background as a nurse told me that these practices were the best for the body and mind.

Karma yoga was the best part for me . . . working hard has been a part of my life since a very young age. I loved all the different duties and would try to give my best. So much so

that my friends called me 'Colombo Express'. I learnt so much more about myself and life by doing karma yoga than I had during my working days.

My first darshan with Swamiji was during a Sunday satsang. That moment I understood that my thirst for knowledge disappeared and my whole perception of life changed. I became blank. Later I had the opportunity to connect with my guru through mantra diksha.

When I went home, I discovered a different me. I realized how our gurus' teachings inspired me to be a better person. The teachings and the tradition provided me with an opportunity to find my path as an aspirant and to understand my samskaras.

Above all, I learnt about the *Mahimna* or glory of the guru and how through his teaching and life's situations he enables us to understand and deepen our experiences. What I have taken with me was the inspiration to change and to help others in need as an act of gratitude for the vidya imparted to us by guru and tradition.

Since the Yogic Studies course, I have been coming regularly to Ganga Darshan. I have participated in the Progressive Yoga Vidya Trainings 1 and 2, and followed the sequence of the four levels of Hatha Yoga Yatra and Raja Yoga Yatra. Yes, my thirst for knowledge which brought me to BSY has been more than quenched.



A Sanctuary

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The present system of education needs a thorough overhauling. The ancient gurukul system should be revived and adequately revised according to the needs of the time, so that the students might be able to derive the maximum benefit from it.

The highest education is that which inculcates in the students pure love, courage, a sense of duty, balance of mind, devotion, faith, discrimination, tolerance, dispassion and knowledge of the Self.

Education makes or mars civilizations. Universities are really custodians of the character, culture and civilization of a nation. Universities should not be mere cramming institutions, they must be sanctuaries of light and wisdom.

A Turning Point



Over the past twenty-five years, students from around the world and every corner of India have entered the gates to join Bihar Yoga Bharati. They learnt, imbibed, experienced and lived yoga according to the ancient tradition of sages, seers and masters, and wherever they went, they were able to enhance the quality of their lives.

Course	Medium	Duration	Years conducted	No. students
Yoga Training Course	Hindi	1 mth	2019	20
Yogic Science and Lifestyle Course	Hindi	3 mths	2011–13	51
Certificate Course in Yogic Studies	Hindi	2–4 mths	1996–2020	1193
Certificate Course in Yogic Studies	English	3–4 mths	1995–2020	1306
Diploma Course in Yogic Studies (Undergraduate)	English	1 year	1996–2004 & 2014–16	130
Diploma Course in Yogic Studies (Postgraduate)	English	1 year	2001–04	45
MA Yoga Philosophy	English	2 years	1996–2005	55
MA/MSc Yoga Psychology	English	2 years	1997–2005	87
MSc Applied Yogic Science	English	2 years	1997–2005	58

Total: 2945

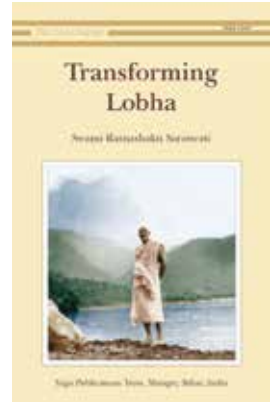


Transforming Lobha

96 pp, soft cover, ISBN: 978-81-938918-0-3

The six conditions of the mind are *kama*, desire; *krodha*, anger; *lobha*, greed; *mada*, arrogance; *moha*, infatuation; and *matsarya*, envy or jealousy. These conditions prevent the free flow of positive emotion and your expression of the best human qualities.

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



Websites and Apps

www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati and a listing of titles published by Yoga Publications Trust.

Satyam Yoga Prasad

Available at www.satyamyogaprasad.net and as apps for Android and iOS devices presenting the collected publications of Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda online.

Living Yoga Lifestyle Sadhana

This program is released aiming to improve and enhance health and total wellbeing. Available from biharyoga.net and Satyam Yoga Prasad.

Bihar Yoga Wiki

www.yogawiki.org. An online encyclopaedia of the Bihar Yoga system.

YOGA & YOGAVIDYA Online

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

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

YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines are available as free apps for Android and iOS devices.

Other Apps (for Android and iOS devices)

- *APMB*, the bestselling yoga book from YPT available as an easily browsable mobile app.
- The *Bihar Yoga* app brings to the user ancient and revived yogic knowledge in a modern medium.
- *For Frontline Heroes*, designed for people who are active in the fight against Coronavirus, presenting simple yoga practices to help alleviate tension and stress caused by the pandemic.

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Blessed Self

Hari Om

This is to inform you that due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns affecting all, the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, has not printed or dispatched the *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines after April 2020 issue.

However, all current issues of *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines are available online on the **Bihar Yoga, Satyam Yoga Prasad** and **YOGA magazine** apps and at www.biharyoga.net and www.satyamyogaprasad.net free of cost.

The current paid subscribers to the printed *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines will receive their back copies when the situation becomes normal.

Please check out the new books, video and audio recordings which are uploaded and available in satyamyogaprasad.net. Use this special time to discover old and new treasures of spiritual yogic wisdom and live yoga moment to moment.

Bihar School of Yoga apps (for iOS and android devices) now available:

<i>Bihar Yoga magazines:</i>	YOGA (English) YOGAVIDYA (Hindi)
<i>Bihar Yoga publications:</i>	Satyam Yoga Prasad
<i>Bihar Yoga educational:</i>	Bihar Yoga Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha
<i>Bihar Yoga lifestyle:</i>	Yoga Lifestyle Program For Frontline Heroes

With prayers and blessings of Sri Swami Satyanandaji for your health, wellbeing and peace.

Om Tat Sat
The Editor