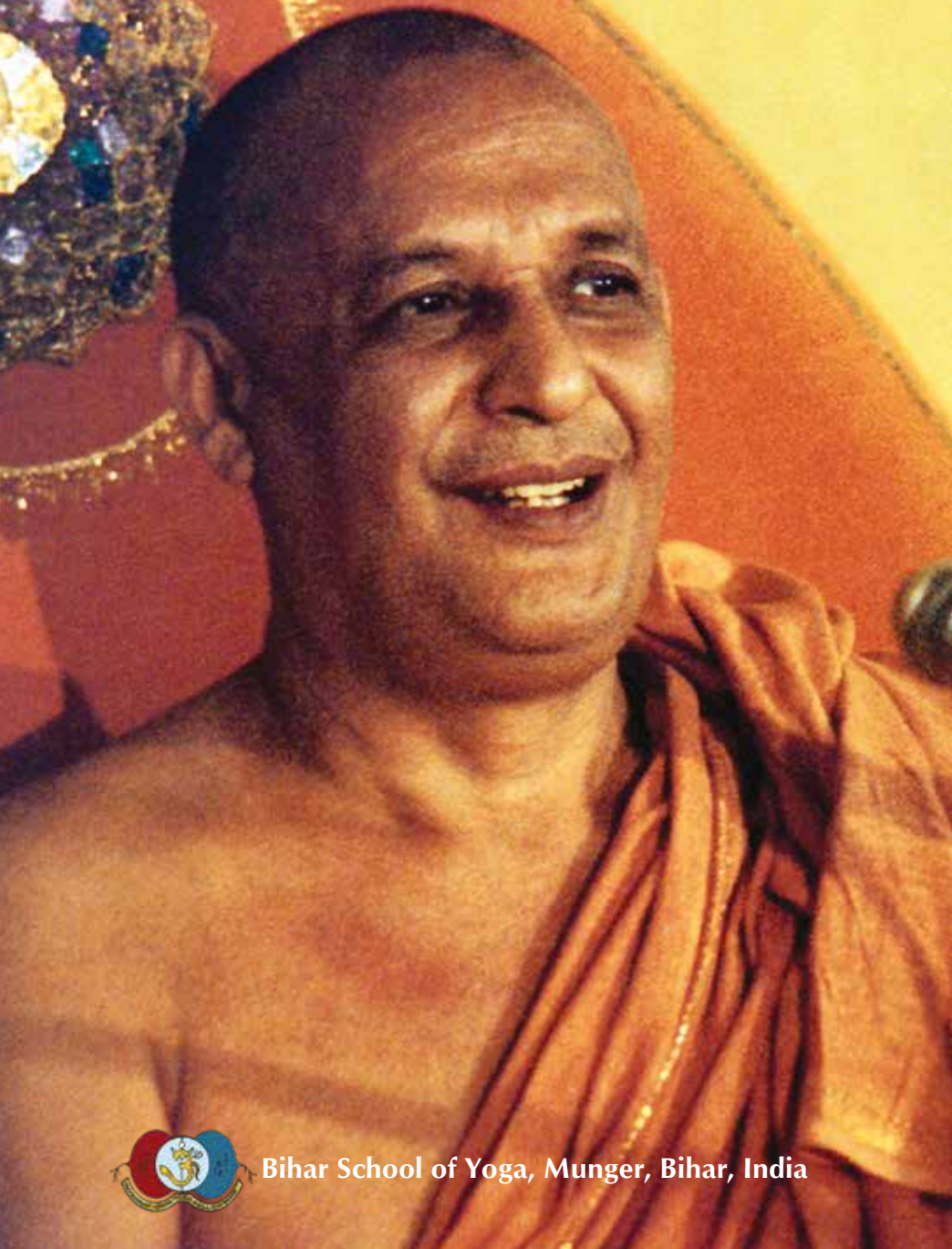


YOGA

Year 12 Issue 4
April 2023



Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin 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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www.biharyoga.net
www.sannyasapeeth.net
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Apps:

(for Android and iOS devices)

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APMB
YOGA (English magazine)
YOGAVIDYA (Hindi magazine)
FFH (For Frontline Heroes)

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Swami Satyananda Saraswati



TRIBUTES BY SWAMI SIVANANDA TO SATYAM

Satyam is indeed:

Adhyatama ratna –

The Jewel of spirituality

Jnana yajnopabhr̥it –

Committed to jnana yajna

Press stambh –

Pillar of the press

Pravachan Praveen –

Eloquent orator

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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

Unity

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



We have divided humanity into many fragments. We should try to stop this. Humanity is one. I am not different from you and you are not different from me because the growth of nature is evolution. Nature has made all human beings with one universal law. Whether you are in Greece or India, Russia or America, the law operating on all human beings is the same. The process of birth is the same, the systems of digestion, etc., are the same.

Therefore, we must try to improve this crisis of humanity. When you render help to people, you render help to human beings, not because he is Greek or Indian, but because he is a human being. Today, the human being needs help. Modern education has not

taught him unity. We see today that every country, every nation is torn into fragments. You don't feel one with even the person staying in the next flat.

There is so much fear in our minds about other people. We always feel that the other person might be a thief, a robber or a bad man. Therefore, the science of meditation and the science of karma yoga must be taught to as many people as possible.

Do I need yoga?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In the modern structure of society man has been moving at great speed like a motorcar racing along the road. As long as the car is all right it is not dangerous, but if something goes wrong with the car then the speed will create a disaster. Man has been thinking very fast, and the environment, the atmosphere and the general trend of world civilization exerts a compelling force on us. Our minds are totally under their influence. Therefore, it has become necessary to teach man how to conduct the affairs of the mind.

In affluent countries there are an amazing number of health problems. Why? In affluent countries where there is no poverty, where everything is comfortable, people are not able to sleep without sleeping drugs. When there is a comfortable bed, centrally-heated rooms or air-conditioned rooms, why should there be a problem with sleep? Why should there be insomnia?

We can very well understand that in countries where people are beneath the poverty line, there should be anxiety, but why should there be anxiety in affluent countries? If one has nothing to eat and one has no social security, and one has no medical facilities, then there is some reason behind anxiety. But when everything is available: social security, established social system, a well-organized government and highly sophisticated technical and medical facilities, where is the reason for anxiety? Still, statistics suggest that more cases of anxiety are reported in affluent countries, and not in those which are below the general poverty line.

This means that the nucleus of the problem is the human mind. A mind which can think properly, which has a philosophy of its own and which is able to create a balance in different situations of life can cope with anxieties, tensions



and pressures. The purpose of initiating the project of a yoga ashram is to create a base and to provide such facilities where man may know a little more about the mind, body and himself.

Within the last three hundred years we have undergone the industrial revolution. It seems that in his hectic activities man has forgotten himself. The tragedy is, the centre has been forgotten and the circumference has remained. Man is the centre of civilization; civilization cannot be the centre of man. Culture is not the centre, it is the circumference; society is not the centre, it is the circumference. Man is the centre because he has created the circumference. I am the centre and I am the nucleus, you are the nucleus. During these past centuries, man has neglected the laws that rule the body and the mind. He has not been able to create a situation which is congenial for the body-mind complex.

There was a time when the science of yoga was popular and well known all over the world. History has it that in Latin American countries, in the south of France, in Italy and Greece, in the Middle East and Afghanistan, in India and further East of India to Japan, there were many that followed the science of yoga.

Sometimes people are confused as to how yoga can fit into the materialistic structure of modern western society. Then there are people who ask how yoga can fit into the structure of occidental society. You may be occidental or oriental, materialistic or spiritual, a Hindu or a Muslim, a Christian or

a Buddhist, but you are a human being first and everything else next. You have a body and you have a mind, and the laws of the body and mind are similar. A Christian does not have Christian anger and a Hindu does not experience Hindu anger. Passion is not a Christian passion, a Hindu passion or a Muslim passion. Worry is the same. Anxiety is the same and depression is the same, neurosis is the same. The causes are the same and the symptoms are the same.

If an oriental or an occidental, a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian were to lose his livelihood would they react differently? No. Loss of wealth, loss of children, loss of husband or wife, loss of friend, or the achievements of these people and circumstances creates unhappiness and happiness respectively. No matter where you come from, you may be a Greek, I may be an Indian, and if I get one million dollars I won't be unhappy and if you get one million dollars you will not be unhappy. It is the natural reaction of the mind towards pain and pleasure, towards attraction and repulsion, towards desires and frustrations, towards neurosis and psychosis.

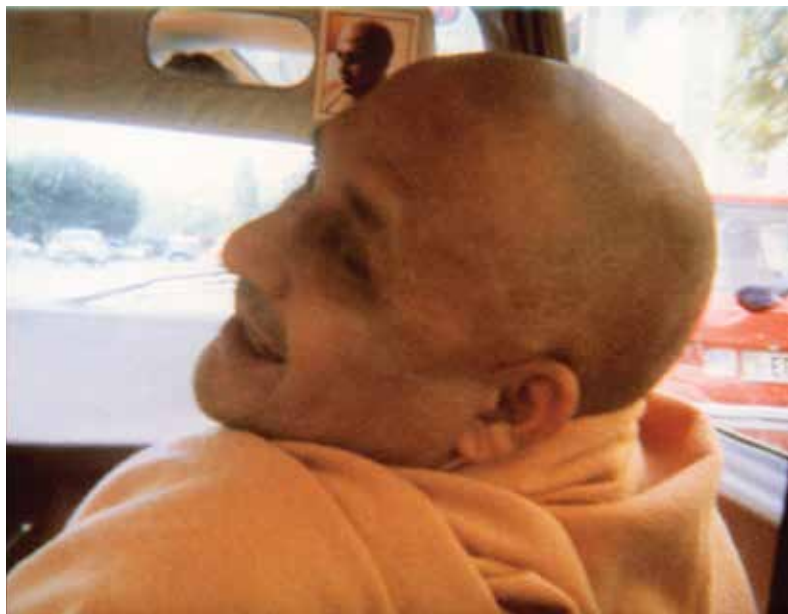
Therefore, yoga has nothing to do with oriental or occidental culture, nor with Hindu, Christian and Muslim culture, with Indian, Greek or European, with rich or poor, or with men or women. It basically has to do with the natural human being, who has a mind and a spirit. Yoga is the culture of the totality of humankind.

When I was in Russia two years ago, one of the passengers travelling with me asked, "Do I need yoga?" I said, "Do you ever feel unhappy?" He said, "Yes, often." I said, "Definitely, you do then." He didn't ask, "Do I need Hinduism?" If he had I would have said, "No." He could have asked, "Swami Satyananda, should I become a Hindu?" I would have said, "No." But he asked, "Do I need yoga?" Yoga transcends the barriers of religion, culture, sex and political ideologies. So I said, "Yes."

– 19 August 1979, Yoga Centre, Drosopoulou Street, Greece

Leaving us dumbstruck

Swami Aparokshananda Saraswati



We crawled through the Athenian traffic, approaching the centre of Athens, finally reaching gridlocked Syntagma Square, when we were approximately three hundred metres away from Sri Swamiji's hotel.

Sri Swamiji suddenly flung the door wide open and flew on to the road, darting and weaving through the traffic with the delicate footsteps of a fox and the profile of a panther, all the while his head tilted back towards us offering a beautiful smile of innocence, purity and playfulness, leaving us all dumbstruck.

Again, playing with the projection of our rigidly inflexible presumptions, rules and procedures. He offered the beauty and spark of the unexpected, the uncommon, the unforeseen, which mysteriously was also always the most practical solution!

The Yoga of Balance

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga is divided into four sections. One is for the physical body, the second is for the life force, the third is relaxation and the fourth one is meditation. What does yoga mean? It means physical posture, breathing exercises, relaxation and meditation: these are the four sections of yoga.

Now, what is the first one? It is called physical postures, *hatha yoga asanas*. By holding a particular physical posture your glands are influenced. There are many glands in your body which have a great role to play in your health: thyroid gland, thymus gland, adrenals, pancreas, etc., and if there is an imbalance then physical and mental diseases take place.

You must have seen little boys and girls who suffer from epileptic fits; that is due to glandular imbalance. By the practice of these yoga postures you can bring about a balance in the glandular secretions. If the body's nervous system is weak, one has a lot of problems. You must have seen a lot of people suffer from hysteria. Many people suffer from nervous breakdown or nervous depression. There are certain ways in *hatha yoga* by which you can strengthen your nervous system.

The many *asanas* of *hatha yoga* can be learned from your teacher, and I will be frank and say that by *hatha yoga* many, many diseases can be completely cured; it is a very effective system. It is necessary, therefore, that every one of you should make a study of *hatha yoga*. If you practise *hatha yoga* for a period of one month or two or three, you will find that you are becoming energetic.

The second section is known as *pranayama*, which means the yoga of breathing. In this you breathe in such a way that you inhale more of *prana*, life force. This body is living on life force; if there is less of it we become weak. Therefore, in order to have more life force in the body, you must do the practice of *pranayama*.

The yoga of relaxation

The third section is relaxation and this is very important for all of you: for the doctors, engineers, businessmen, housewives, politicians, whose minds are under constant strain. At the end of the day, these people are tired and then what do they do? They are so tired that they can't sleep. They take alcohol, but after some time that also doesn't work. Then they take tranquillizers. After some time that doesn't work. Then they take strong tranquillizers, and then the heart is involved, the nervous system is involved, and what happens? After taking these tranquillizers for years, they have heart disease.

In yoga there is a system of relaxation. You do not sleep; you just lie down and do some practice mentally, and within ten minutes you are relaxed. Relaxation is important. Please remember, sleep is not relaxation. You have to learn this art.

Yoga of the mind

The fourth section is meditation; how to concentrate the mind and make it steady and one-pointed. When you pray, your mind is not steady. When you go to the sanctum sanctorum, your mind is wandering. Meditation teaches you how to concentrate your mind on one point. Once you learn how to meditate, you learn the art of life.

The most difficult thing in life is meditation, but once you know how to meditate, once you know how to concentrate, you are fortunate. The mind is very powerful, but when it is dissipated it is weak, just as the rays of the sun when they fall on the earth are weak, but when concentrated by a fine lens they are capable of burning anything. When the mind is scattered it is incapable, but when the same mind is concentrated by meditation it becomes powerful.

Yoga has many systems of concentration. You can concentrate your mind through breath, through a sound, or by fixing it on any of the centres of the body. You can concentrate your mind by fixing it on a particular symbol, but the easiest one I can tell you about is by fixing your mind on the natural breath.



How to practise

Coming back again to section one; how long to practise hatha yoga? Maximum fifteen minutes. Section two; how long to practise pranayama? Five minutes. Section three; how long to practise relaxation? Maximum half an hour. Section four; how long to practise meditation? Maximum ten minutes. Now a question: should we practise all four or should we practise one of them? If you are tense, if you are tired, you must practise sections one and two. If you want to concentrate your mind, practise section four for ten minutes. Section three can be practised by anybody at any time for any length of time.

This was a very short introduction to yoga for all of you. Finally, yoga has come up as a science; it is not a religion but pure science. Yoga is the science of the body and the mind. It has no restrictions. Whether you are a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian, married or not married, young or old, it does not matter. Whether you smoke or not does not matter; but it is important that you must learn yoga from a very competent teacher.



A competent teacher means that he lives the life of yoga and that he knows the science and then he can tell you what you should practise. If you are suffering from sciatica or a slipped disc, he should know what you should practise; he should know what a diabetic must practise and he should also know what he should not do. This is very important: yoga should be learned not from a book but through a competent teacher.

– 19 January 1978, Epimeliterio, Kalamata, Greece

The Higher Mind

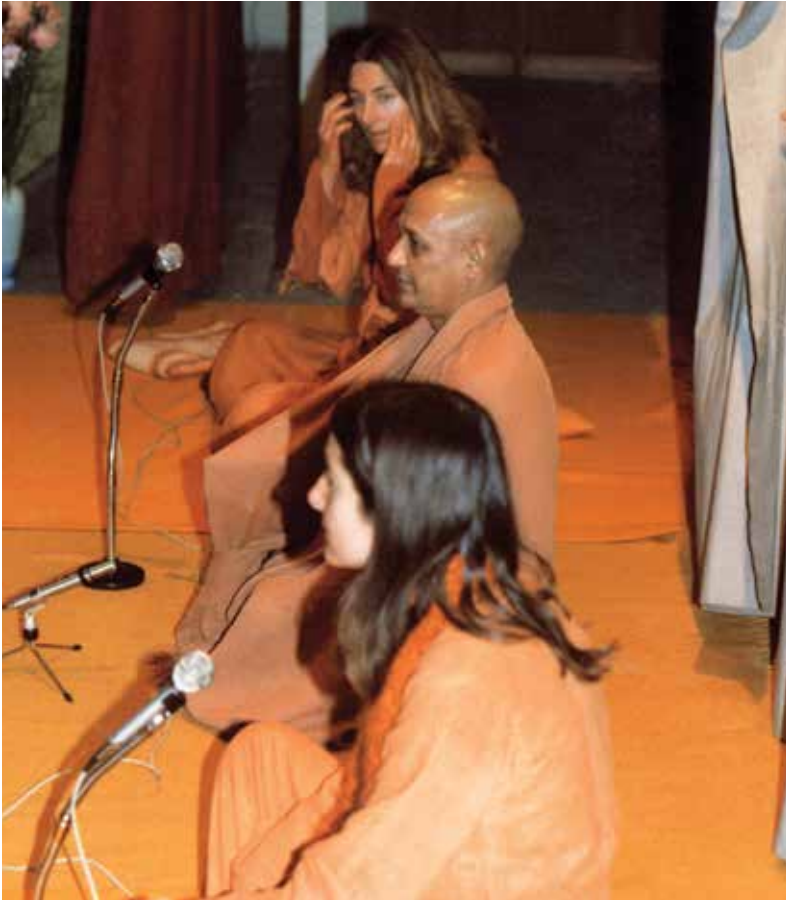
Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Kindly listen with attention to the yoga of the new age. Man has already outgrown his material philosophy, and is beginning to think that he is much more than what is known and what is seen. We have also understood that this present state of mind is not the ultimate state of mind. We can transform and transmute this present state of mind to any extent, to any degree. This mind is not the true mind. This mind is a combination, a collaboration of consciousness and the sensory impressions. It is very limited. If you cut off the sensory communications, the mind will be paralyzed. Isolate the mind, and see what happens.

If, however, you can develop the mind behind the mind, then you can never isolate it. In the science of kundalini yoga, this mind is replaced by a greater mind, because this mind cannot serve our life's purpose any more. It has awful limitations. Despite everything that we have, this mind still feels unhappy. Even if you give it everything, it will never be satisfied.

The higher mind is known as the 'supermind', or otherwise the 'spiritual Self' and it has to be awakened with the practices of kriya yoga. Of all the sciences known to us, kriya yoga is the most powerful practice for the awakening of kundalini. The location of kundalini is at the base of the spinal column. You practise pranayama and direct the force into the spinal column which in turn influences the consciousness of man. This awakening of kundalini may put us in touch with other dimensions.

Then one is not just a man, but becomes the man behind the man, and the mind behind the mind. The purpose of human existence is to discover and awaken that. You can be sure of one thing that when you are able to develop the



higher consciousness in you, you will experience a completely different version of life and creation, and you will no longer be an ordinary human being.

What has been presented here is only a glimpse. This science is accessible to those who practise it. Even if you practise a little, it will help you a lot. It does not take hours, it takes minutes. If you can devote just ten minutes a day of your precious life, you will realize, in time to come, that you have made a very worthwhile investment.

– 30 April 1980, Dionyssios Areopagitis Hall,


Yoga and Hypertension

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

All you see during concentration and meditation are expressions and manifestations of your samskaras, the archetypes. Then you understand that each and every experience is imperishable, everything you cognize is registered in you. You register these impressions through the ears, eyes, the nose, taste and touch. These things are registered in your subconscious mind just as whatever I am saying is registered in the tape recorder. Right from the day you incarnated inside your mother's womb up to this day, everything and every experience is registered by you in your subconscious mind.

Nothing is going unregistered, please remember that. Even in the night when you are unconsciously sleeping, the process of registration is going on. Even when you are unconscious under morphine, ether or chloroform the registration is going on because the subconscious mind is constantly active. The subconscious mind in yoga is known as the subtle body or the astral body. Even a child who doesn't understand anything has a completely natural astral body. Therefore, from the moment when you incarnated in your mother's womb, right up to the point where you go to the grave, the constant process of registration of every experience is going on whether you know it or not.

These impressions sometimes become too much for an individual, especially for people who have a suppressed personality. Very suppressed personalities are known as introverted personalities and many people in the world today belong to this category, particularly in the western countries. In the eastern countries there are lots of chances for communication and expression, of vomiting out what is in the mind without any verbal etiquette, but our modern society, I will not say western society, our modern society,

<p>ΠΡΩΤΟ ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ «ΓΙΟΓΚΑ ΚΑΙ ΥΓΕΙΑ» ΥΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΕΔΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ PARAMAHAMSA SATYANANDA SARASWATI</p>	<p>FIRST NATIONAL GREEK SEMINAR ON «YOGA AND HEALTH» CONDUCTED BY PARAMAHAMSA SATYANANDA SARASWATI</p>
	
<p>ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟ «ΝΕΦΕΛΗ» ΠΑΝΟΡΑΜΑ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ 7. 8. 9 ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ 1981</p>	<p>HOTEL «NEFELI» PANORAMA THESSALONIKI GREECE 7. 8. 9 APRIL 1981</p>

is a suppressed society. We cannot even communicate with our family members openly and unassumingly. Therefore, everything is piled up within us.

The yogic keys

When you practise meditation or kriya yoga or some sort of raja yoga practices, then during meditation you have so many experiences. Sometimes you hear a sound in your ears, sometimes you see a lot of light, a lotus, a cross, or you see

your guru, Christ, a temple or a church. Sometimes you see a monster also or dirty animals. Sometimes you see beautiful gardens, sometimes death and violence, sometimes you hear celestial music. Then you have the feeling of heat or cold or have shocks in the body. Then you think like Christ or God, you feel like repenting for all you have done in the past. This is called an outlet. This is called manifestation of karma. This is called working out of the archetypes and this is called expression.

Now there is another important thing that you have to note. Whatever you experience in life has a symbol in the subconscious mind. If you experience pain, pleasure, comedy or tragedy, the same picture is not in the subconscious mind, it is immediately converted into a symbol, just as a sound in the transmitter centre is transformed into radio waves and then transmitted through the radio field, then again reconverted into the sound that comes in your transistor. Throughout your life you have created millions of symbols in your subconscious mind, but nobody understands which symbol is for which particular karma.

There is another important thing: the karmas are endless. Every moment of your life you are going through experiences, even if you do not work, still you are creating karmas. Even if you live alone you are creating karmas because the whole of life is nothing but a manifestation of karma.

Simple living and high thinking

How to get out of this hypertension? We have found during our world tours that most people suffer from hypertension in the modern world. In the developing countries you have less cases of hypertension. In the developed countries you have a lot of hypertension. The more the country is developed, the more cases you have of hypertension. Another aspect that has come to our notice is that the people who have less material problems have more hypertension, therefore hypertension is not necessarily due to material worries. When you don't have

to think about money for living, when you don't have to worry about retirement or mental treatment, why should you have tensions? However, we have found that among these people there are many more people suffering from hypertension.

From this, one point is very clear. It is important that a person must have material problems to get rid of hypertension, because material problems keep a man within a certain space. We have studied the statistics of people suffering from coronary thrombosis. Why should the people who have succeeded in life, in business, in politics, have coronary thrombosis? Now here come the emotions into the picture. A man who succeeds has one type of emotion. The person who fails has a quite different type of emotion. These emotions immediately affect the glands and hormones and the metabolism.

Successful people become very dull, they become great show-offs, they become careless and contented. They think they can do anything with their success; they can fly to America this very afternoon and come back tomorrow morning, because they have a fat bank balance. This particular process of thinking immediately affects the critical organic process; they have diabetes, blood pressure, coronary thrombosis. If you have difficulties, then sometimes you have cold and cough, sometimes fever, diarrhoea or dysentery, sometimes headache or pain in the body, but not blood pressure or hypertension, because the problems are being worked out then and there.

In the practice of yoga, there is one particular aspect that is emphasized every time: simple living and high thinking. No matter who you are, you may be rich or poor, you may be a big factory owner or a labourer in the streets, you will have to simplify the whole process of living. Simple living is one of the most important ingredients in yoga. Complicated living contributes to hypertension. Complicated living creates a lot of distress in the emotional personality. However, in order to live a simple life, you should have a simple mind as well.

*– 7 April 1981, First National Greek Festival,
Hotel Nepheli, Thessaloniki, Greece*

A Lesson for All

Swami Bhajananda Saraswati

The premises of the ashram at Eptanisou Street, Kypseli, outside of Athens, expanded to include the second flat on that floor, which had a beautiful veranda that we decorated with flowers and plants. When you were inside, you completely forgot about the traffic and pollution outside. When you were outside, approaching the centre, you could feel the vibrations change from a block away. Such a powerful spiritual effort was being made here in a quiet humble way.

It was here that Swami Satyananda came in May 1980 to give lectures, satsangs and diksha. I recall an incident very clearly on one of the days that Swami Satyananda spent in this ashram. We were all very busy before his arrival with cleaning, painting and ensuring everything was fresh. We emptied all the cupboards, cleaning from the kitchen to the bathroom. We were preparing the whole ashram for him. Swami Sivamurti had just trained the first kitchen-in-charge on how to make sabji, rice and dal. So, the recently appointed in-charge made the first meal for maybe five or six people.

We sat down to eat and as the meal was served, I immediately tasted the dal. I was quite new and not aware that you usually wait for Swami Satyananda to start first. The dal I had tasted was so salty that I got a shock. It was like the saltiest sea water. I thought, 'Oh no, we are not going to serve this to our guru. This is too salty!' Just as I was about to say something about the dal, Swami Satyananda immediately picked up his dal, drank it and said, "Oh, it's so sweet," with a delighted expression.

The cook felt so good about being praised! What a lesson for me, seeing how Swami Satyananda turned a difficult situation into a positive one. He spared the cook's feelings and he taught us all a lesson.

Integral Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

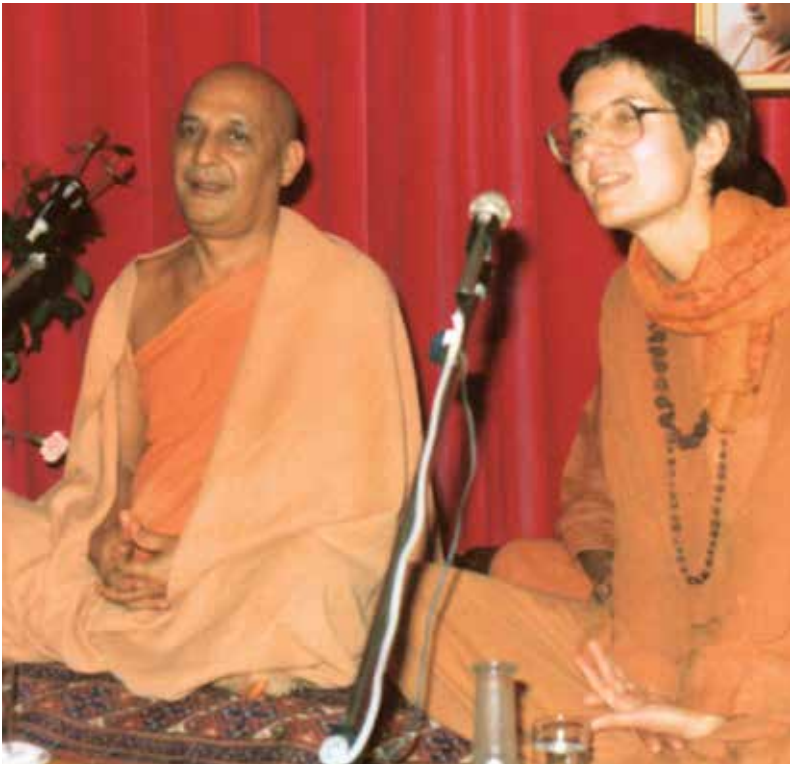
The need for yoga has arisen from the very facts which surround man's life today. We have never been apostles of yoga. We live our life in the solitary mountains in order to perfect our own mind and body, that is all. We never thought that in our life we would be preaching yoga to the rest of the world.

In India we live very far from modern civilization, we have no ulterior motives in our life. The purpose for which we dedicated our lives many, many years ago was to realize the fountain of perfection within us.

The modern world did not leave us in peace, however. Doctors, scientists, scholars, philosophers kept on chasing us. Thousands and thousands of young boys and girls come to our country in search of peace and recovery of their identity. You cannot imagine how many millions of boys and girls, men and women from the modern society have come to my place, sleeping on the bare floor. The questions they asked were, "How can we obtain peace of mind?" "How can we realize our true nature?" We said to them questioningly, "But you have plenty in your country, you have affluence and security, you have everything that the body needs."

The need for yoga

Thousands of years ago India developed a science of life. This science of life was intended for a monk like me and a layman like you. Whether you are a great man or an ordinary man you face similar problems in life. The problems in the life of a theist and an atheist are not different. We all have the same mind, the same body and the same type of limitations. Thousands of years ago, India discovered the science of life known as yoga. Yoga means harmony, though everybody is in disharmony.



Ask the doctors of psychology, ask the great men who know about the mind, they will say that one hundred per cent of the human population is suffering from disharmony. That means everybody is in disharmony; one hundred out of one hundred have conflicts. There are only a few people on the face of this earth who don't have conflicts. There is hardly any personality beyond confusion, there is hardly anyone who is not a victim of tension, and this is the imbalanced personality of the human race.

Inner experience

Yoga is not a philosophy; it is a practical science. Philosophy gives you knowledge, yoga gives you experience. Every one of you knows what happiness is, but you have no experience. Everybody knows what peace of mind is, but they have no

experience. The beauty of yoga is that it gives you experience. That experience is a manifestation of your inner being; so the process of yoga depends upon your own personality.

The main hypothesis of yoga is that what you are seeking in your life is in you and not outside. Do you need peace of mind? Search it out from within yourself. Do you want to be happy? Realize it within yourself. Happiness and unhappiness are expressions of your mind. When your mind is unrestrained you are unhappy, when your mind has a lot of turbulence you are unhappy, but when you control and concentrate your mind, you can experience happiness.

Yoga recognizes four facets of your personality. You have a body, emotions, intellect and you have a deeper mind. All these four constitute you and me. If you can develop all these four parts of your personality through yoga, then you can develop them in an integrated way. Therefore, the practices of yoga are constituted in a manner which can be helpful for these four facets of your personality.

Integral yoga

Even as you need different vitamins for the normal development of the various organs of your body, in the same way you need a synthesis of all the forms of yoga. It will not be possible for me to deal with all forms of yoga tonight, but I will mention them and then talk about one or two systems. The integral yoga system consists of four forms of yoga. They are known as karma yoga, the yoga of dynamism; bhakti yoga, the yoga of balanced emotions; raja yoga, the yoga of the deeper mind; and jnana yoga, the yoga of the intellect. These are the main faculties of yoga. Then there are the smaller ones and it is not possible for me to tell you all of that. I will just say a few things about hatha yoga and meditation.

It has been realized by the yogis that this physical body is very important for mental development. There are two forces which constitute this body, known as life and consciousness. When there is a balance between life force and the force of

consciousness there is perfect health, but when there is an imbalance between them, you have physical diseases or mental diseases.

One of the most important forces in your body is called *prana*, the life force. This prana is not just oxygen or air which you breathe in, although it is present in your body in the form of oxygen. It can be compared to the energy flowing through electricity cables. Scientific investigations have measured the voltage of the energy in the body and it has been found that through the practice of pranayama you can increase the energy in the body.

The healing aspect

Due to faulty lifestyle and mistakes in thinking, many times this force of prana loses its highest frequency. This vital force, this life force penetrates the whole body, but if there is a block in its flow, then physical disease originates. Through the practice of yoga postures and breathing techniques you can increase the frequency of life force in the body. This is the reason why today, throughout the world, yoga postures and breathing techniques are used for curing many chronic and previously incurable diseases. The investigators are coming to the conclusion that most of the psychosomatic diseases can be effectively controlled by yoga postures and pranayama.

Hundreds of scientists are now working on this project. In America, Europe, India, Japan and Australia they are trying to study the effects of yoga postures on the human body and the effects of pranayama on the human mind. Throughout the world, yoga centres are now teaching yoga for what we call complete health. These yoga postures are known as asanas. In the West they are known as hatha yoga.

Before the scientific investigations, people thought they were just exercises and it mattered little if you did yoga, went jogging or did other physical exercises, it was all the same. Now scientists say something else: that in all other practices you use maximum energy, maximum oxygen, you exert maximum

pressure on your cardiovascular system, but in yoga you use minimum energy, minimum oxygen and there is the least strain and stress on the coronary system.

They have also come to another conclusion, that the yoga system creates a balance in the endocrine system. By regulating certain endocrine secretions, asanas create an influence on the nature of disease. Therefore, disease born of hormonal deficiency can be perfectly checked through the practice of yoga postures. There are certain yogic postures which exert influence on the adrenal glands. As a result of this, adrenalin is produced to cope with diseases that are respiratory in nature, like asthma. There are certain yoga postures which improve the thyroid secretions and as a result of this you are able to maintain emotional balance during fear and anger. There are certain postures which improve the activity of the pancreas and so you can fight diabetes.

This is just a glimpse I am providing you with. I have found a system of my own for yoga therapy which is acceptable today throughout the world. I have been writing volumes and volumes of books on the scientific investigations of yoga. Therefore, all of you who are present here this evening should not feel that I am just giving tall talk.

Meditation

Another force in the body is the mind. You can call it consciousness, mind or whatever you like. This mind is a great force, no doubt. It controls your body, it destroys your body, it kills a man, it spoils the family and it influences society. This mind is very powerful. It can make you great, it can make you wretched, and the most important thing in the life of man is that he does not know the mind. What you know about the mind is not the mind. You know you are worried, you know you are angry, you know that you are remembering and you know that you are nervous. This is not the mind; this is the pattern of the mind. The light is not electricity; it is the manifestation of electricity. Anger, passion or thought are not the mind.

A little of the mind you know and the rest you do not. The mind is like an iceberg and only the tip is seen by man. You have to know the mind if you want to improve the quality of your personality, your thinking, your behaviour and your society. The most beautiful thing about yoga is that it gives you a glimpse of the total mind, but of course, gradually.

What is meditation? Just think about it, what is meditation? To close the eyes, to close the mind, to stop thinking? No, that is not meditation. Meditation is opening the doors to the mind. Meditation is diving deep into past, present and future. Even as you go into an ancient treasure house and see so many jewels there, in the same manner, when you go into the mind you can find infinite faculties and infinite beauties.

This science of meditation has been perfected by the yoga system. As you go on successfully meditating, changes take place in the body also. I can give you a glimpse or idea about that; when you sit in the lotus posture with your spine upright and straight and with your eyes closed, what happens? Scientists have found brain waves altering, oxygen consumption changing; the respiratory system behaving differently, the metabolic rate and the metabolic process undergoing great change, and the muscles of the heart improving. They have also found changes in the rate of cell regeneration of the body.

Mantra

Meditation can be practised by each and everybody, but of course in order to practise meditation you must have some sort of basis. The most important basis for successful meditation is sound. When you want to meditate, please remember that you will succeed only if you have a symbol for meditation. There are three symbols for meditation: one symbol is known as sound, the second symbol is known as yantra and the third symbol is known as mandala. These three form the basis for your meditation. It is not necessary that you should have all the three symbols. I can tell you

which is the best and the easiest for everyone. The best is the sound symbol.

This sound can be given a higher frequency, so much so that this sound can be transformed into explosive energy. You know there are various forms of energy in the universe: you know about electrical energy and nuclear energy. I am talking about sound energy. This sound can be made very powerful. When it is repeated and repeated and repeated, it attains a high frequency. Therefore, everybody who wants to achieve success in meditation must discover a sound for themselves. This sound is known as mantra in yoga.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not mean a holy name. I am not dealing with a religious matter. I am dealing with the phenomenon of sound. I know that even in modern science, sound can be made to pierce matter. Sound knows no barriers. Sound waves travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres across continents. They can be transformed into electrical waves and again transformed into sound waves.

One must discover a mantra for oneself. The discovery of the sound depends upon one's quality of elements and you can realize the quality of your elements by your astrological sign. According to the astrological sign, one has a sound for oneself. The sound must be practised every morning and night when you listen to it with rapt attention for just ten minutes. You should practise your mantra either audibly or mentally. Start with ten minutes in one stretch. When you begin, do it once a day and when you like it, later, practise twice a day.

Whether your mind is calm or not, you should keep your body calm and quiet. The mind cannot become quiet in one day or even in one year. It is not even good to compel the mind to become quiet. In fact, in the beginning of your meditation your mind will purge more thoughts. If thoughts come into your mind you should not worry at all. You should be constant with the practice of the mantra, but at the same time you should not try to concentrate because sometimes when you try to concentrate you are creating unnecessary stress and strain.









Yantra and mandala

In order for you to concentrate it is necessary for you to choose another symbol for yourself. Mantra is not intended for concentration. Mantra is intended to facilitate a passage for concentration. Mantra purifies your consciousness, but for concentration you must have another kind of symbol. It should be either a yantra, a diagram, or it should be a mandala.

The yantra reaches the depths of consciousness without any difficulty and can permeate both your consciousness and dreams. Now remember what I said, mantra is not for concentration. If you try to concentrate during mantra you will have to face repressions. Let it take one or two or three years, but the mantra must purge more and more of your mental impurities. When by constant practise of mantra the mind becomes tranquil and equipoised, you should practise concentration on yantra.

There are many thousands of yantras and you can choose any one of them. The science of mantra and the science of yantra are very old. Every culture of the world, Aryans, Babylonians, Egyptians and the pre-Hellenic cultures, knew all about it, and the Kabbalists among the Jews knew about it very well. They knew the power of the mind and that the mind can make life hell or heaven. It is precisely for this reason that people all over the world want to practise yoga.

Tonight it is definitely not possible to teach you all about yoga, but it is my humble submission to all of you here that for yourself, for your coming generation, for posterity, you must discover the science of yoga yourself. It will not interfere with your modern way of life, your system of thinking or your religion. It will not interfere with your culture, for yoga has two important qualities: it is a curative science and it is a creative science. Curative science because it cures the ailments of your body and a creative science because it improves the quality of your thinking.

– 30 September 1982, Kapsis Hotel, Thessaloniki, Greece

Winning Hearts

Swami Sivamurti Saraswati



Paramahamsaji's mission takes him all around the world to most countries. I recall that in Crete, Paramahamsaji had lectures in the four major cities of the island: Chania, Rethimno, Iraklio and Agios Nikolaos. We didn't have a car in those days, so we arranged for a taxi to take him to the next lecture. One day, he and Swami Satsangi were in the backseat and I was in the front with the driver. It was close to midday and the temperature must have been over 40°C. The driver arrived fresh and cool in his air-conditioned taxi, but when we got in Paramahamsaji indicated to me that he preferred the air-conditioning to be turned off. "Would you mind turning the air-conditioning off?" I asked the driver, who wasn't happy with this idea. He complied but immediately rolled down the windows.

Paramahamsaji let me know that the windows should be closed. I asked the driver to do this. He said, "Do you want to kill your visitors?" He had already taken off his shirt because of the rising heat. I said, "I'm sorry, but the gentleman in the back is used to living in high temperatures and this temperature is

cool for him." All this time the driver was getting hotter and hotter, temperature-wise and anger-wise. He told me over and over that I wasn't a good example of Greek hospitality.

Paramahamsaji asked, "What's he saying?" I explained that the Greeks naturally talk a lot, and Paramahamsaji said, "Ah, he's saying his mantras." Then the driver asked me, "What are you saying? Are you telling him what I'm saying? Are you showing a Greek guy in a bad light?" He kept going on and on and I said eventually, "No, I just told him that you were repeating the name of God."

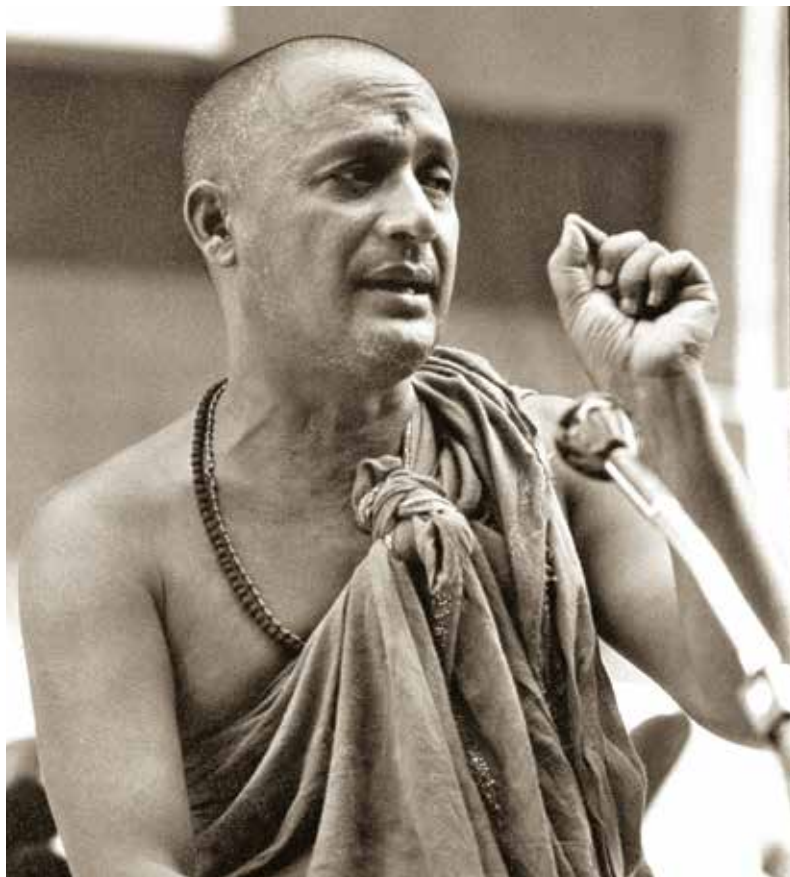
The temperature in the car continued to rise and then Paramahamsaji started to wind down the back window. As he did, the driver got a blast of cooler air and I looked around. Paramahamsaji said, "Oh," and quickly wound the window back up. So it appeared to the driver that my action was one of disapproval and confirmed to him that turning off the air-conditioning and keeping the windows closed was my idea.

That was enough for the taxi driver. He stopped, got out of the car and got me out of the car and said, "You have no right to treat your guests like that. They won't ever come back to Greece if you treat them like that." Paramahamsaji sat with no expression on his face and asked, "Sivamurti, is there something wrong?" The taxi driver got Paramahamsaji and Swami Satsangi out of the car, opened all the windows, got everyone back in the car and we travelled the rest of the way with the windows open.

The transformation in the driver was remarkable. After having got the anger out of his system, he became a different person. Of course he thought I was the wicked one in the story, and he went out of his way to make Paramahamsaji comfortable. His attitude turned into that of a disciple. He offered tea, water and other refreshments. He opened the car doors and he helped Paramahamsaji out, he carried his luggage. By the end of that journey, Paramahamsaji had won another heart. He won hearts wherever he went in the most extraordinary ways.

Play of Gunas

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



While I have been in Africa, people have been asking me about yoga and diet. Mostly they are concerned that their attempts to purify and awaken their subtle energies through yoga will all be useless because they are not vegetarians. Every day they revert to the same tamasic non-vegetarian foods. This problem is not only peculiar to Africa; it has been a problem the world over since the dawn of history. Yet we can find a solution to

this problem in yoga, for yoga is evolved from tantra, and tantra has the answer.

In yoga we are clear on one thing – there should be no conflict in your personality. What is a conflict? A mind holding two opposing ideas is a mind in conflict. Suppose I want to drink alcohol and at the same time I believe it is bad. This creates a conflict and when it becomes more powerful it can cause mental derangement. This is why in some countries there is such a high incidence of schizophrenia.

I have come across people who were alcoholic and non-vegetarian but they were very good devotees of Shakti, the goddess who personifies the active power of the universe. They were sattwic in mind and absolutely rajasic in their day-to-day life. They had no anger, no passion, no hatred or jealousy, but they were often intoxicated with alcohol and were totally non-vegetarian. However, when they sat for the ceremonial worship of Durga or Kali (aspects of Shakti) they would not move. Even if a snake or a scorpion were to bite them, they would not break the meditation by moving the body.

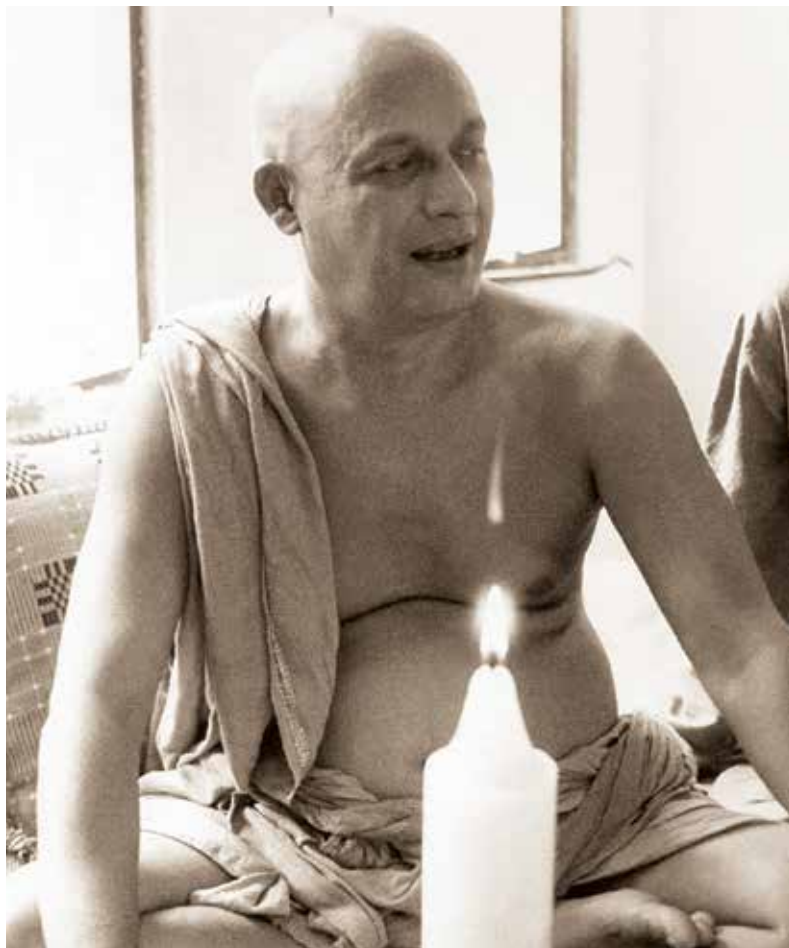
I can give you one example of a man in India who was my host once during the religious festival of Chaturmas. At one time during his worship of Shakti his dhoti caught fire! He was in meditation and his body was badly burned. I asked later why he did not get up to put out the fire and he said that he simply had no idea it was burning. That's how deeply he was involved in the ceremony. This shows us how a sattwic mind can have rajasic habits, how a sattwic mind can also have rajasic and tamasic elements.

I know as a yogi that food plays a very important part in life, but at the same time I have a different way of thinking as well. I know that evolution is not only open to those who are careful about food, but that it is also open to those who are pure in mind, no matter who they are.

– Liberia, Africa,
published in YOGA, Vol. 15, No. 12 (December 1977)

Breath and Pranayama

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Everyone hopes to enjoy a long, active and useful life, free from disease and immune to the damaging effects of nervous stress and tensions. In this light yoga has something unique to offer and therefore it is most important that everyone knows and practises certain pranayamas and asanas on a daily basis.

The system of hatha yoga has undergone thorough scientific investigations in European, Communist and American countries. Pranayama which was once translated as 'breathing exercises' is now recognized by scientists throughout the world as a means of invigorating, enhancing and accelerating the revitalizing processes in the body.

Tube lights require a certain voltage to come on. If the voltage is supposed to be 220 and it goes down to 180, what happens? No light. Air-conditioners have a booster attached which completes the circuit so that they can continue to function even when the voltage is low. However, if the voltage is very high, say 440, the tube light and the armature in the air-conditioner will burn out. Similarly, in our bodies there is energy, shakti, which can be increased or decreased. When this shakti is decreased, the mind-body and all of its functions are impaired. On the other hand, when the energy level is raised too high, the brain becomes hyperexcited or manic.

Prana is not the breath which you inhale; prana is shakti, subtle energy. But with the help of breath we can recharge the prana shakti in our body. In scientific investigations it was found that most people do not breathe correctly. Tests performed all over the world have shown that most people do not breathe enough to fulfil the needs of their body and brain. We live on prana and oxygen, supplied through the medium of breath, through the nostrils. Usually both nostrils do not flow at the same time; they flow for about eighty minutes, and both flow together for only one minute or two in between. This is the cycle of ida and pingala.

Both nostrils are directly connected to the left and right brain hemispheres, each of which controls certain functions of the body. Paralysis occurs when the brain is unable to direct nerve impulses to the body. When a man thinks or worries too much, if he becomes excited or emotional, his breath will automatically be affected.

Breathing affects the heart; a person having a heart attack can stop it immediately with correct breathing. You may have

read about scientific investigation of yogis in India and abroad who can stop their heart at will. It was found that when they stopped their heart, they stopped their breath as well, but still continued to live. This means that with the help of pranayama it is possible to gain complete control over the voluntary as well as involuntary functions of the heart.

Pranayama is based on the three stages of respiration: *pooraka*, inhalation, *kumbhaka*, retention, and *rechaka*, exhalation. By permuting and controlling these three, different pranayamas are obtained. Kumbhaka is a very important part of pranayama, especially for those who suffer from nervous breakdowns, poor memory and incorrect breathing habits like inhaling in short, quick or shallow breaths. When we do not breathe correctly, the brain is not supplied with sufficient oxygen and therefore breathlessness is experienced.

During pranayama the bodily secretions are arrested and controlled. Therefore, the right time to practise pranayama is in the morning on an empty stomach. It should not be practised on a full stomach, not even after tea.

Pranayama is for all people regardless of age, physical or mental condition. Anyone can learn and practise it. However, pranayama should be taught by a master, individually not collectively. Each person has his own physical and mental constitution. Therefore, the teacher has to study his student's particular makeup and according to that the pranayama and its ratio has to be adjusted.

Preliminary pranayama practices

Breathing is a natural process; its normal rhythm is 15 rounds per minute, 900 rounds per hour and 21,600 rounds per 24-hour day. When the breathing rate is increased, longevity is decreased. Fifteen rounds per minute is the rate which correlates to 75 or 80 years of life. Ten rounds per minute lengthens life to about 100 years. However, more than 15 say 30 to 35 rounds limits the lifespan, as with a dog for example, to 10 or 15 years.

Quick, shallow breathing is an ageing factor and not really beneficial for emotional integration and balance. Therefore the first prerequisite in pranayama is conscious breathing. Learn to maintain the normal breathing rate of 15 rounds per minute. Relax your body and become aware of the breath. Stop thinking and worrying for one minute and the breath rate will drop down to 15. But if you continue to think, the breath rate will be higher. The thinking process affects the breath and the breath affects the thinking process.

By freeing your mind from emotional tension for half an hour, you can become aware of how you breathe. Psychophysiological experiments have proved that during moments of stress and strain the intake of oxygen is very high while consumption is very low, only about one tenth of the actual need. This means that the greater portion of oxygen intake goes unused. Thus after learning to breathe consciously 15 rounds per minute, it is necessary to learn to breathe completely, to the full capacity of our lungs. This is the second prerequisite of pranayama.

Chest breathing is incomplete. In yoga the complete breath consists of abdominal (diaphragmatic) breathing, chest (thoracic) breathing, and shoulder breathing. This has to be practised for some time until you are able to train your system to breathe correctly. Complete breathing is done through the abdomen. In the beginning, practise with your hand on your navel. Relax all the tensions in the chest and shoulders. Breathe a little deeper than natural and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting. When this is perfected, inhale, first expanding the abdomen and then the chest in one slow, smooth motion. When the maximum amount of air has been drawn into the lungs, the shoulders will raise automatically. Complete breathing will free you from colds, cough, allergic asthma, sinusitis, migraine and many other problems.

*– 12 May 1977, Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa,
published in YOGA Vol. 17, No. 11 (November 1979)*

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I would like to know if during your trips across the Middle East and Arabian countries you find that people can become better practitioners of yoga than westerners?

I have found Muslim people much better than Hindus, because there is a great tradition with them. There is the tradition of guru and discipleship which is absent in the West, the total devotion to the master, whether it is orthodox Islam or the Sufi philosophy. Some people are purely religious or orthodox. Some people are philosophical by mind. In every religion there has to be the philosophical and ritualistic path. People can think very well, there is mental clarity.

During my trips I have met many people, heads of many of the states, Muslim people and religious leaders. I don't have any difficulty in communicating with them, nor have they. There is just one barrier of language, but if they speak English it is perfectly all right, because our philosophical basis is the same.

Even the sadhana, the practicals of the Sufi cult, is very close to yoga. Sufis talk about kundalini, about the raising of consciousness, the practices of concentration on one point. Concentration on the ingoing and outgoing breath in Sufism is the same as in yoga. If we bring the Sufi saints and yoga together, there is great compatibility. However, it is important that there is greater communication between these two systems from time to time.

In order to experience spiritual life, does one have to change one's lifestyle and meat-eating habits? Is meat detrimental in spiritual life?

Frankly speaking, in order to experience spiritual life, you need not make any change in your life because it is a direct



relationship between yourself and the higher self which is only a matter of awareness. This is the truth but in relation to your spiritual quest you are following there are other problems. For instance, the body and mind are impediments. So, to help certain disciples, *yamas* and *niyamas*, disciplines and self-controls have to be adhered to. It is for this purpose that a diet has to be regulated and purified.

I have made certain studies on these subjects. I have come to the conclusion that animal protein is not conducive to human health and to the human mind. Whenever you take animal diet, it creates excitement in the body hormones which are very important as far as our wellbeing is concerned. It may not harm you now in this generation, but a molecular transfer of elements from one body to another, or DNA, to your child, will take place. That animal diet will, in the course of a few generations, be detrimental to the whole of humanity. I am not carnivorous or herbivorous, that is not my sect but I am telling you as a scientist as I made a lot of studies on this.

Whether you believe in God or do not believe in God, whether you want to lead a spiritual life or you do not want to lead a spiritual life, whether you are a sadhu, sannyasin or a married householder, I think the first important point is that animal diet is not made for us. Then there are other general rules which should be followed, not necessarily for spiritual life but for your practical life.

– April 1982, Casablanca, Morocco

Mind and More

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Every human being has a mind, and through this mind we operate, work and understand. Tantra has somehow realized that this mind can be developed. This mind, the powers, the capacities of this mind can be amplified. You can think through the mind, you can imagine, remember things, you can permute and combine. There seems to be a certain limit of the capacities of the mind which we utilize in our day-to-day life. The science of tantra visualized the mind to be more capable than you think. Here comes the concept of weak mind, strong mind and supermind.

The weak mind is a mind which cannot handle thoughts, emotions and situations. The weak mind cannot handle either happiness or unhappiness. The weak mind can be compared to a weak body. A weak person cannot work, carry a load or exert. The behaviour of the weak mind is the same. The weak mind is a manifestation of animal awareness. It has not got the capacity to see itself. This mind sees the external object, but does not see itself. In order to have a greater vision of life, it is necessary that the weakness of mind, the infirmity of the mind should be taken care of.

Tantra says that you must try to expand your mind. Now we come to one important point called expansion of mind and I have been talking about it well over thirty years. As a result of this, many people in the world have tried to understand the behaviours of the mind which cannot be logically understood.

First of all, you have to understand that you do not know the mind. You do not see your mind at all, what to talk about knowing it. Sometimes you are happy and unhappy, that is not the mind. Sometimes you love, sometimes you hate. That is not the mind. You see the light, it is not electricity, it is a manifestation, an account of electricity. A thought is not mind, emotion is not mind, memory is not mind. They are patterns or modifications of the mind. It is very hard for any average person to have a vision of the mind. It is said by a great thinker, Aldous Huxley, 'Mind is like an iceberg, a little bit you can see of the top, and the rest of it is underneath.'

The homogeneity of the mind is beyond man's vision, and once you have the vision of the mind you know it is a fantastic vision. It is a powerful experience. After that you are no more a homo sapiens, you may still have two legs, but you are not a human being, you are something more than that.

This mind is an element which has to be extracted, developed and used. Yoga has said very clearly that mind is seen by us through its modifications. In meditation you block those modifications. When you close your eyes you begin to remember things, you recapitulate, you see things. Stop

them. You are not stopping the mind; you are only blocking the modifications. When you stop the process of mental modifications, you can see the mind.

The expansion of mind is a very important topic in tantra. After the expansion of mind, the mind is no longer a mind, it is a supermind. When the mind attains expansion, some sort of energy is released. These two events take place simultaneously – expansion of mind and liberation of energy.

This liberation of energy is a fantastic concept. It is nothing psychic, abstract or philosophical. This energy is inherent in matter. It is not an abstract thing. This matter is based at the root of the spine where there is matter. It is like an ordinary gland, just as you have in many parts of the body. When expansion of mind takes place, awakening takes place. When awakening takes place in matter which is situated at the base of the spine, that awakened energy moves towards the higher centre through the central canal in the spinal column. This energy ultimately invigorates, energizes and revitalizes the brain centres.

All the minds are circuits, but energy is one. By different lights you do not say that energy is different. Mind is just one called universal mind. There is one homogeneity, one totality and unity of minds of which you are a part and I am another part. My mind and your mind are not two minds. Why don't you connect your mind with me? But how to do it?

It is a wireless connection. There is no cable. It is not necessary, because we are part of one. This universal mind has two poles, called time and space. Time, space and object are categories of the universal mind. In physics we say time, space and object are the categories of the mind, but they are two opposite poles: time and space, positive and negative, plus and minus. So bring them together. In meditation and samadhi, time and space come closer and there is a moment when they join each other. At that time, there is an explosion, known as the awakening of kundalini.

– April 1982, Casablanca, Morocco

To Find God

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



What do you think about the effect of religious integrism which is now becoming the fashion?

You don't have to go very far; your namaz itself is yoga. You just see how many asana are there. Izakat is one exercise of yoga, a mudra. You have in it shashankasana which is

very necessary for stimulating the adrenal gland. Then you have padahasthasana which is very good for the stomach and digestive system. I need not go into detail.

Every religion has the scientific base behind it and Islam is no exception to this because the wise people who developed the religions were not ordinary minds and they wanted to integrate the practicals of life into the body of religion, so that prayer, that is higher life, and yogasana, the physical wellbeing could go hand-in-hand in coordination. In the last 200 years or so, a lot of changes have taken place in the world which never took place in the last 5,000 years. Man has suddenly come in confrontation with fast developing ideas, cultures and situations, and he is not able to handle them properly.

In the last fifty years, our developing countries are facing terrible stress, and we have to attend to the requirements of life exactly and accurately. We are not travelling on horseback. Even if we go a little bit like this or a little bit like that, it does not matter. If we travel by plane and something goes wrong, it is finished.

In this age of stress, where many new problems are coming in, it is necessary that every religion must look into what should be brought in for the welfare of its people. Hindus who only wear dhotis have brought pant and coat. Muslims who wore a big long gown have changed to a new dress, because that is our requirement now. In those days there was no high blood pressure and no heart attacks. I don't know if our ancestors ever knew what was cancer and what was a tumour. Such great maladies we have, the mental hospitals are full and drug addiction is so high. As a result of this, practices such as yoga and Zen have to be integrated in our lives.

Whether you are a Brahmin, a Shmiterr, Madian, Hoshiy or Suni, a Muslim, Protestant or Catholic, even if you do not believe in anything and be a sceptic and agnostic, your problems are not different. The Hindu does not have a Hindu heart attack, and a Muslim does not have a Muslim heart attack. If I get a heart attack, you are not going to give me

one medicine and a different medicine to him. It is the same treatment, because everywhere we are facing the same culture, situation, political, economic distress, congestion, the same passions and desires. Naturally, the diseases will also be the same.

Zen also has got a very important role to play because it brings out the deep-rooted complexes. You see we have a lot of problems. We do not know them. Nobody knows them. At certain moments they come out. When they come out you start crying, talking, seeing things, or having some sort of psychic experiences. It is very necessary for you to get them out, because they create the diseases, like cancer.

In the same way, yoga is also very important because in our day-to-day life we go to the office at 7 o'clock and by the time we are back it is evening 7. Is life mechanical? Day in and day out, seven to seven, you are out. If you are addicted to night clubs, you are out even more and never in the house. After some time, you have a problem, the problem of a human mind.

What am I doing? What is the purpose? What is the value of all this? What is this substance? You start questioning yourself. Then there comes inner guilt. The guilt of a philosophical man. Everybody has got it I know, but if you practise yoga a little bit every morning, this guilt will not come. You will have the consolation that you are doing something for yourself. It is important that these sciences or cults must be given to our people in a very compatible state, because every practice has a cultural background.

For instance, Islam is an oriental system. If you bring a culture or a cult from the occident like psychology, it will not work with them, because Islam is basically oriental in structure. We may believe in the philosophy of the modern psychology, but it will not be benefiting and beneficial to our culture.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen are oriental systems, and the cultural clarity is there. There may be philosophical differences. Islam is monotheistic, Hinduism is polytheistic. There may be

philosophical imbalances, but there is no moral and cultural imbalance and disharmony. So we can take the elements of Islam into our cultural life and Islam can take the elements of that system into their cultural life. For instance, getting up in the morning 4 o'clock and singing Ajam. It has nothing to do with the culture of Scandinavians, where it is so cold at 4 o'clock, but in India we can do it, because 4 o'clock is a very convenient hour for us. So, this element from Islam we can take, and Islam can take yoga. This is called a very happy cultural blending. I wish that those who have been doing yoga and Zen, should be allowed to practise in peace.

Every religion especially the Muslim religion insists that the real presence of God is found in the heart of the believer. So it seems that techniques like Zen and yoga deal with the deeper areas of the mind where God is manifested. Can these Zen and yoga techniques help people find God?

When you clean the mirror, you can definitely see your face. When the mind is composed, you can definitely feel God in your heart. When the mind is clouded by anxieties, you cannot even see yourself and the vision of God is too far. Just as the sun is covered by clouds, or the embryo is covered by membrane, in the same way, this *maya*, the illusion of the mind, stands between myself and reality. The practices of yoga go very far. They take an aspirant right up to samadhi where the ego does not exist, where the trace and the link with karma do not exist anymore, where there is total silence, and during these silent hours you can commune, you can feel God.

This is also said in the books of Islam. It is written in almost every religious book. The nearer you get to that land of silence, the clearer you can have the vision of the divine. So you can use any method which is practical, tangible and effective.

– April 1982, Casablanca, Morocco

Vriksh Sankalpa – Nature Our Teacher

Prasiddhi Singh

Vriksh Sankalpa – Nature Our Teacher is an eco-yogic series talking of nature, culture and learning to inspire everyone not just to think but also to act.

A lesson from the Sandalwood Tree

Hari Om. I am Sandalwood Tree. In India I am known as the Chandana and Srigandha. My botanical name is Santalum album or S.album for short. I am known for my heartwood. I have a huge family called Santalaceae with 1,000 species mostly found in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Northern Australia. I grow in a temperature between 0 to 38C^o (32 to 100 F). We are dry deciduous trees. We are small tropical trees that can grow about 20 m high. My family and I have a fair lifespan of about 80 to 100 years. I originated in the South Western Ghats of India, especially from Coorg (Kodagu) in Karnataka but I am everywhere!

Trivia – Did you know?



Around 1792, the great Mysorean king Tippu Sultan announced the sandalwood tree as a royal tree and established a proper monopoly on the state's sandalwood commerce and trade. Moving forward, the future Maharajas of Mysore carried on this sandalwood tradition, and later the Karnataka Government did too. This is followed until today.

Starting from when you use my soaps and cosmetic products to actually make yourself feel fresh by my perfumes, incense sticks and air freshener, you even use me as a tilak on your forehead. You can use my oil best as diffusing frankincense, cleansing sprays to avoid negativity and obviously you can use my oil on your body. You can use my wood for multiple woodwork and carving items and even make my japa malas. My powder when scattered around a place helps to clear it of negativity. My paste can be used on your neck or chest to help align with your heart chakra and when you worship the deities I can be your best friend.



Trivia – Did you know?

When a snake, representing negativity, curls around the branch of a sandalwood tree the tree does not get effected by the negative vibes of the snake but rather makes its positive vibes so high that the negative energy does not matter.

But I am more than just a good-smelling oil, powder or paste I am your benefactor in multiple other ways. Let me share the Top 7:

1. *Protection:* Termites tend to eat the outer layer (sapwood) of mine but the inner layer (heartwood) remains safe because of the leathery quality that protects my heartwood which cannot be eaten by the termite or other insects. I also have a powerful energy that offers powerful protection against negative energy.
2. *Calmness:* The fragrance of my wood has a deeply calming effect on your body, mind and spirit, and this is why I am used in multiple meditative and contemplative practices in many cultures across the world.

3. *Prosperity*: It is believed that my family and its trees are abodes of the Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity. My Sanskrit name is *Sriganda* which means 'The scent that is dearest to the Goddess'.
4. *Worship*: The wood of my tree has been used in prayers and offerings to the divine. My wood has also been used to build temples, statues of deities and other valuable things used in spiritual rituals. In East Asia including China, Japan and Korea, my incense is used during worships.
5. *Spirituality*: The cooling properties of my wood are an aid to spirituality which helps you feel more mindful, which is why in Hinduism there is a tradition to apply my sandalwood paste on the forehead, neck and chest areas.
6. *Positivity*: The atmosphere you are in matters and I can help you enhance it. A great way is to use my wood by burning it on hot charcoal, and then take the smoke around the place while feeling the positive vibes.
7. *Creativity*: I can help you to stimulate the pineal and pituitary gland by bringing clarity, promote intuition and make the best use of your creative energy.

But I am sad. Despite my uses and benefits due to the global sandalwood boom my species is going extinct; for instance, currently, 95% of the global production comes from India, yet 90% of this enters the market from wild and mostly uncontrolled jungle harvesting, which is why I need your help to protect my family and yours as well. So please think about me.

When sandalwood is ground into a paste, it reminds the devotee that he should, in his difficulties, be as patient as the sandalwood. Sandalwood emanates sweet odour when it is made into a paste. So also the devotee should not murmur when difficulties arise, but on the other hand should remain cheerful and happy and emanate sweetness and gentleness like the sandalwood. He should not hate nor wish evil even to his enemy.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Sankalpa - LOVE

So that was the Sandalwood Tree telling its story. While understanding about how useful and beneficial it is, I also realized that love or bhakti is something that we can learn from sandalwood. During the process of cutting the sandalwood tree to create the sandalwood perfume, the tree leaves the fragrance of sandalwood on the axe as a symbol of love. The more we rub sandalwood against a

stone, the more its fragrance spreads. Even when you burn sandalwood it wafts its glory into the entire neighbourhood. This is the enchanting beauty of LOVE and bhakti that we can learn from sandalwood. Similarly, we should have unconditional love towards the planet, community, ourselves and the Sandalwood Tree.

Now I will request you to please recite the pledge as you read; don't forget to fill in the blank.

I _____ promise to LOVE the planet and help in protecting the Sandalwood tree. I will hereby take good care of the environment and protect planet earth by planting more trees, spreading environment awareness and living a yogic-sustainable lifestyle.



I hope you are following your Eco-Resolution Diary for the Palm Tree – SERVE.

To help you, here are some questions for you to check how well you understand the importance of the Sandalwood Tree and its sankalpa – LOVE in your life and how well you fulfil your pledge. Remember, you should not only think but also act. This is your weekly Tick Box for you Eco-Resolution Diary:

- Did I plant, water or take care of a tree?
- Did I talk about the environment to friends and neighbours?
- Have I been practising LOVE to live a yogic-sustainable lifestyle?
- Have I started practising the beauty of forgiveness like the Sandalwood Tree?
- Have I been mindful about the Sandalwood Tree for enriching my life through its spiritual products?

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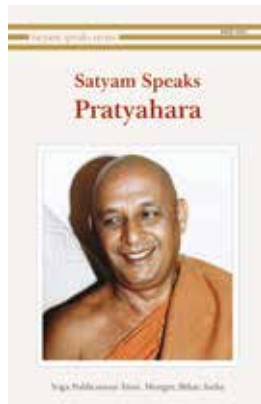
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<i>Jul 2022-Jul 2024</i>	Ashram Life Training
<i>Apr 4-10</i>	Pratyahara & Dharana Training
<i>Apr 18-24</i>	Pranayama – Breathe for Healthy Lungs Training
<i>Jul 1-Dec 31</i>	Yoga Chakra Experience
<i>Sep 20-28</i>	Hatha Yoga/Karma Yoga Training
<i>Oct 4-12</i>	Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training
<i>Oct 15-29</i>	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
<i>Nov 20-29</i>	Kriya Yoga/Jnana Yoga Training

Bihar Yoga Bharati Yogavidya Training

<i>Apr 15-Jun 15</i>	Yogic Studies, 2 months (English)
<i>Aug 7-Oct 7</i>	Yogic Studies, 2 months (Hindi)

Events

<i>Nov 4-15</i>	Munger Yoga Symposium II
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Monthly Programs

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<i>Every Ekadashi</i>	Bhagavad Gita Path
<i>Every Poornima</i>	Sundarkand Path
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