

# YOGA

Year 13 Issue 11  
November 2024



**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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### Useful Resources

*Websites:*

[www.biharyoga.net](http://www.biharyoga.net)  
[www.sannyasapeeth.net](http://www.sannyasapeeth.net)  
[www.satyamyogaprasad.net](http://www.satyamyogaprasad.net)

*Apps:*

(for Android and iOS devices)

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

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### GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Even while travelling in trains I taught yoga exercises to the passengers and gave them simple lessons on japa and meditation. I carried a chest of medicine with me always and gave medical aid to the sick. Let me work as long as my eyes are good, as long as I have new messages and lessons for seekers after truth. My love to serve mankind is so great that I will continue the publication work with the help of able stenographers and secretaries even if I lose my eyesight. Let the divine work grow and bring peace and bliss to the world.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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# YOGA

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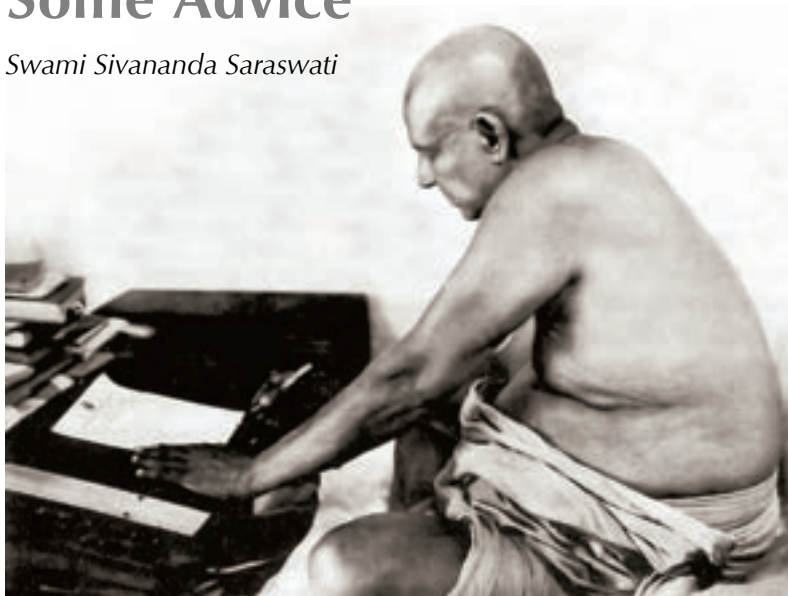
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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)  
तपस्विभ्योऽधिको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

# Some Advice

*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



Have patience and perseverance.

Never leave the practice even for a day.

Maintain daily spiritual diary and record correctly your progress and failures.

Stick to resolves.

Do not complain that there is no time for sadhana.

Reduce sleep and tall talks.

Never postpone a thing for tomorrow if it is possible for you to do it today.

Do not boast or make a show of your abilities.

Be indifferent to things that do not concern you.

Be alone for a few hours daily.

Give up greediness, jealousy and hoarding.

Beware of reaction.

Find out your own faults and weaknesses.

Be prepared to suffer any amount of pain.

Develop your heart by giving.

Develop contentment.

# Sanyam

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Indriya nigraha and danti represent control and restraint of the *indriyas*, the physical senses, and *danti*, the mental desires. It happens spontaneously, when you are able to cultivate concentration, focus your mind and be in a meditative state, not with eyes closed but in your mind, in your consciousness. In that state, *indriya nigraha* or the sensorial restraint, is natural. There are no spikes, no agitations, no distractions and diversions. You feel that control of senses and mind is difficult. It is not. Too many distractions dissipate your energy and focus. Your mind jumps from one branch of the tree to another like a monkey, having a bite of one fruit, throwing that to the ground, grabbing another fruit, plucking another fruit, having a bite of that fruit, throwing that to the ground. That is how we live in life, like a monkey, jumping from branch to branch, plucking a fruit, tasting it, saying, 'I like it. I don't like it. The other one is redder. The other one is greener. The other one is bigger. The other one is smaller.' You pass your life in this distracted way.

The focus is gone from consuming, eating. We eat one bite, one morsel from many fruits rather than one whole fruit. Indriya nigraha means eating one whole fruit and not one bite from many fruits. That is the restraint. That is the *sanyam*. It is the same with danti, which is the mental component of desire. In the meditative state, there is no need, no want, no desire, only an awareness, 'I need it or I don't need it.' The need is there, not the desire. When the need is there, we can have what we desire. If a need is not there, then the desire will not come up. Focusing of awareness and focusing of mind will help a great deal in going through this process of sensorial and desire control or restraint.

Before sanyam becomes part of your daily routine and life, every night before you go to sleep, review the entire activity



of the day from morning till night time. See where you faced conflict, stress, anxiety. See where you had some discussion with somebody which was unpleasant. Then recognize the good things that happened during the day. Appreciate them. Acknowledge them. In the third part, think, 'If I encounter the same restrictive situation tomorrow, can I deal with it in a different and better way?' Start with that. It will also be a big help to create inner balance and harmony, sanyam.

A lot of your agitation and conflict arise from the subconscious and unconscious dimensions. You are not aware of them. If you can recognize where you have slipped during the day; and what the options are for you to stop yourself slipping again when you come to the same situation, then that will also help you recognize things where you get caught up and things that you can free yourself from. The review of the day is another helpful component for indriya nigraha and danti. Gradually you scrape away at the cumulative desires, greed and infatuations to experience the purity, clarity and luminosity of your nature. Then sanyam will become perfect.

– 23 November 2023,  
*Kriya Yoga-Jnana Yoga Training, Ganga Darshan, Munger*

# How to Eliminate the Ego

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Men do not love beauty, they love quality. In the same way, women do not love strong men, they do not love wealthy men; they love a man who is a man. However, it is not possible to be perfect in life. If one expects perfection throughout, there is going to be a great disaster. First of all, perfection is an impossibility because it would completely destroy the laws of nature. Secondly, if everybody became perfect there would be so much uniformity that nothing would seem beautiful.



Therefore, the most important thing is to extricate and eliminate the ego. But how to do it? Can one remove the ego by psychoanalysis? Can one do it by self-analysis? Can one do it by repentance? No, people have tried but they have failed. In western countries throughout the world there are so many people who are going to psychoanalysts and psychotherapists, but still the ego is destroying family life and social life.

Therefore, there must be an emphasis on the practice of bhakti yoga. If one just practises hatha yoga, selfishness will not go. If one only practises jnana yoga, selfishness and the ego will not go. There are two yogas which are important for properly treating egocentricity. One is bhakti yoga and the other is karma yoga.

# Jharkhand

From 18th May to 2nd June, various yoga camps were organized as Dhanbad Yogotsav by Satyananda Ashram Dhansar, Dhanbad. Swami Gorakhnath conducted all the sessions.



- 19th to 28th May, a ten-day morning camp at Shree Maa, Chanchani Colony, Dhaiyya, Dhanbad; the age range of the participants was between 22 and 80 years;
- 19th to 24th May, a five-day evening camp at Shree Maa, Chanchani Colony, Dhaiyya, Dhanbad;
- 24th May, an evening session at Shree Maa, Chanchani Colony, Dhaiyya, Dhanbad, for the Marwari Vikas Trust;
- 25th to 27th May, three days at the IIT ISM, Sport Activity Center, Dhaiya, Dhanbad
- 28th May, at the Satyananda Ashram Dhansar, Dhanbad, kirtan and bhajan.
- 28th May, an evening program was conducted at Bera Ashram
- 29th May to 2nd June, five days of morning class at the Yoga Center, Community Hall, Koyla Nagar, Dhanbad, for CISF & BCCL officers



- 29th May to 1st June, four days of evening yoga camp at the Yoga Center, Community Hall, Koyla Nagar, Dhanbad, for ladies

*Feedback of participant*

We understood the seven 'S' while doing yogasanas;

*Sthiti* - be aware of starting and ending position

*Sithilta* - practise in a relaxed manner

*Sthirta* - maintain the final position and observe the effects

*Saavdhani* - be aware of precautions

*Swaans* - coordinate breathing with the movement

*Sajagta* - be aware of the effects of asana and pranyama

*Seema* - know your limitation, like how many rounds and duration of practice time.



# Asana

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

When you are in the final posture, first the focus is on the physical stillness and second on the physical comfort – *sthiram sukham asanam*. An asana is not just a practice done by the physical body; it is a practice which engages the body, the mind and pranas. Hatha yogic practices are not physical. People consider them to be physical, yet in reality they are not physical, they are pranic. Hatha yoga is not the yoga of physical exercises, it is the yoga of ida and pingala to bring about a balance in the vital forces of the body and mind.

The word hatha yoga indicates the focus, purpose and intention of the practice, balancing the ida and pingala energies, the vital forces of the body. You may look at hatha yoga as physical, but yogis have looked at hatha yoga as pranic. That is the difference between the practice of yogis and the practice of common people. Yoga remains a physical gymnastic for the common people, whereas yogis can utilize the asana to change the flows of prana, to create a balance in pranas and utilize that energy for other purposes, like meditation or other inclinations that they may have in life. The asana should not be practised mechanically without awareness. In every pose, try to attain two things – stability and comfort.

To do all that will be difficult. So, we proceed in groups. The first three rounds will be done with breath awareness. That will loosen up your body movement. Do not focus on stability and comfort in the first three rounds. Just allow the body, the joints and muscles to open up. In the next three rounds, focus on physical stillness in the final pose. If you are on your hand and one knee, you may wobble a bit but the intention should be to remain firm and stable. This will develop over a period of time. Then in the next three rounds your focus will be comfort. Take away your mind from those areas of tension

and pain, which you can experience during the performance of the asana. Try to put a feeling of comfort in those areas which you are feeling stretched or tight. In this manner, create comfort in the whole physical body.

When people and yoga teachers are practising yoga, they generally say that whenever one feels tired, to lie down in shavasana and rest. This is for people who are doing yoga as an exercise. If we cannot practise ten to fifteen rounds of an asana, we are not practising yoga. It is an indication of the weak condition of the body. With each practice, the body becomes more fit and strong. Stamina and strength will be in your body. For that, you need to practise an asana, not for five times and then lie in shavasana; but ten times, eleven, up to twenty-five times. Imagine yourself, doing vyaghrasana and marjari asana twenty-five times. What will be the condition of your back and spine after a month of that practice?

The trend in yoga teachers is to teach yoga as relaxation. More focus is given on relaxation, not on posture. The people who say yoga is relaxation are absolutely wrong and they have never studied yoga. Yoga is working with oneself to increase the capacity of the physical systems, the pranic system and therefore shavasana has to be done only when you are physically tired, not for the sake of resting but to rest when the body is tired. The lazy man's yoga is shavasana. I am not negating shavasana, but when it comes to practice, it is only to be done in between asanas, when the body gets tired. If the body is not tired, do not do shavasana, continue with the asana practice. That is one rule which you have to remember.

– 5 November 2023,  
*Munger Yoga Symposium II, Ganga Darshan, Munger*





## Practical Spirituality

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati – Yoga-Vedanta, February 1956*

You may have attended many philosophical lectures but how much of what you heard have you been able to apply in your day-to-day life? There is a fact with which you must be well acquainted: if an object just lies about your home without being put to use, after some time it ends up becoming totally unusable. This same state applies to lectures as well. Dissemination of knowledge is of no avail if it is not applied and used in the most appropriate manner.

Knowledge that does not benefit others is meaningless. That is why if we are not able to put into practice what we hear in lectures, they have no value or meaning. Nor is such knowledge retained by us beyond a few days. We may pay lip service to 'Spirituality, Truth, Virtue', but unless we express these qualities by living a good and pure life, they remain



merely empty words. We may observe humane behaviour in animals and there are vestiges of animal instincts in humans as well. We cannot deny the fact that there are traces of animalistic instinctual behaviour in us and it is our duty to clean them out.

We have to develop more and more humane qualities in our life and make the effort to eradicate animal instincts. What are these animal instincts and behaviour? If we study the life of animals, we will discover that an animal eats, sleeps and is fearful of others. Their lives revolve around seeking security and comfort. Take the example of a dog. It will eat wherever it finds food. If a human being also does the same, it will not be considered as anything laudable. Human beings are the highest of life forms. When humanity develops in any creature, then it takes on the form of a human being. Similarly, when divine qualities find expression in a human being, the birth of a saint manifests. When a saint surmounts the peaks of spirituality, it opens the doors to liberation.

People may say that spiritual lectures and discourses make our lives auspicious and pure, however that is not enough. The life of a householder is a test. Those who pass this test with flying colours attain liberation; others are like a bull tethered to an oil mill who goes round and round in the cycle of life. Our daily life is full of challenges at every moment. We have many friends and many enemies. Don't we look at them with distaste, dislike, jealousy, envy, hatred? Never mind just that, we even plot and scheme to bring about their destruction.

Human society is reflected in the state of the world. If the homes and society are fraught with discord and fights, how can we have a peaceful world? Humankind must become aware of and fulfil its responsibility by adopting mental peace. Mental peace is only attainable when we are entirely successful in defeating anger within ourselves. Merely abandoning thoughts of strife does not imply that we will find peace. In order to attain peace, it is absolutely essential to connect with spirituality. Ridding one's mind of sloth, carelessness, negligence and so on through spirituality allows a new consciousness to dawn.

Nothing is a greater folly than believing that one can attain peace through an indifferent attitude to society. This is an untenable and impossible fantasy. Rather those who work towards establishing new directions that society can follow and who conduct research into ways and means to establish a healthy, balanced society truly attain peace in their life. Those who can bring happiness and peace to others and who make every effort to bring joy to people find true peace within themselves.

What is the real definition of 'spirituality'? Peace. Not to cause the least trouble to anyone. If we hurt people through so-called spiritual, political or social ideas and behaviour, we will never find peace. If the intention behind any of your actions is positive and the goal is to bring peace to others, your inner peace will be irrefutably complete. It does not matter if it is the most insignificant of actions. Always remember that we will never be able to please anyone with bad or wrongful

acts. The true definition of *dharma*, spirituality, is the happiness of each and every person. Society is always happy with those who do not cause any trouble for others and with those who do not harm anyone.

In all of his teachings, Swami Sivanandaji always spoke about making others happy. He did not talk about this in the jungles or while sitting alone in isolation, rather these were the teachings he imparted while living in the midst of people. If one's principles cause harm to anyone's happiness, one must be definitely prepared to consign those principles to the fire and abandon them. Swamiji believed that sadhus and sannyasins have no need for flowers. Of what use is it to them if their feet are offered flowers and worshipped?

However, along with this idea he also realized the truth of life and it is important for us to understand that – and that truth is *bhavana*, feeling. He recognized the true value of love. When devotees, overcome with their deep faith, lit the lamps of love and wished to offer worship at his lotus feet, should Swamiji refuse and hurt their soft, tender feelings? If only one person wished to worship Swamiji's feet, perhaps we can say that the person is being silly but not everyone can be silly, right? On such occasions, spiritual principles need to be put aside. It does not harm anyone by doing so, instead it is only beneficial. That benefit is bringing joy and happiness to others. This is the practical and applicable form of spirituality.

One day when a beggar came to me and asked for a blanket, someone said that only last year he was given a blanket. Why is he again asking for another one today? Sri Swamiji said, "Look here, my friend. If you do not want to give a blanket, that's okay but do not disrespect and insult the beggar. It is your duty to bring peace to him. Behave with him in utmost peace and courtesy." One encounters innumerable opportunities to express peace and happiness in life; however, on how many occasions do we pass those tests? The world is a school in which we can learn a lot from our personal experiences and studying the behaviour of others as well.

Countless saints have attained many experiences while living in the midst of people. In general, most people believe that sadhus and saints are not bothered by mundane problems. It is people who are ensnared in problems of all sorts and only they know whether the world is real or not. What do sadhus have to worry about? Sri Swamiji established his ashram right in the middle of such a place where he could provide answers to the questions people had about practical, day-to-day life. The ashram is situated in an area where all kinds of people come and all manner of worldly problems have to be grappled with and resolved.

Drawn to Sri Swamiji's exemplary life and ideal conduct, people throng for his darshan from all corners of the country. People from far and wide come and live in the ashram. We may appear in the garb of sannyasins to you, yet when we came we were all strangers to each other, we were not acquainted with anyone. We had never even seen each other before. Do you know how far my hometown is? But today we are all connected with each other by the bonds of love. Swamiji accepted us all as his very own children. He loves us all so much, even a father might not express such love for his own son. When householders come to the ashram for Swamiji's darshan, they offer some gifts or the other, but when we came here, we brought nothing with us.

Swamiji has taught us that while being sannyasins, always engage in work. Swamiji himself wakes up at four o'clock in the morning and is engaged in his work till late at night. In fact, due to their busy schedules and many duties, most ashram residents hardly ever get the opportunity to take time out for their personal practice of japa, meditation, kirtan etc. Swamiji maintains that do not give a moment's rest to the mind or the body. Do not let the mind wander about freely. Always keep body and mind engaged in work which will make them both tired and yet maintain the unbroken connection with the feeling of spirituality. There should be no separation at all. This is such a beautiful answer to the challenges faced by householders!





Despite being engaged with duties from morning to night, sannyasins are never unaware of their spiritual flow for even a moment. A sannyasin neither desires material objects nor does he chase after them. Turning away from all temptations, a sannyasin simply forges ahead. Of what use is any activity to householders which does not have a spiritual component? While living in the world of practical reality, Sri Swamiji has offered a unique perspective and understanding to the world. Those who pursue the path of life shown by Swamiji never face spiritual dilemmas or conflicts.

When the train of our life runs along the twin tracks of *dharma* and spirituality, it will certainly reach its designated destination. If either of these tracks are not totally accepted, the train of life will definitely have to face obstacles and accidents. The fruit of this is disturbance and chaos. This is why the balance and coordination between *pravritti*, engaging with worldly life, and *nivritti*, a spirit of renunciation, is called yoga. The union of altruism and practicality is called *dharma*.

In a life of this kind, there are no differentiations of friend and foe nor is there any disparity between high and low. One should not feel repulsion towards any person from society. What we feel for one person should be extended towards everyone. If life and *dharma*, altruism and practicality do not go hand in hand, then we must change such a life and such behaviour; otherwise they will end up in conflict with each other leading to discord and unrest.

*Summary of a satsang given by Paramahansa Parivrajacharya Sri Swami Satyanandaji at a public program on 27 January 1956 during his tour of Gujarat and Saurashtra*

# USA

A ten-week yoga workshop was conducted by Sannyasi Anandarooopa at the local high school Burr and Burton Academy (BBA), Vermont. The students range was from 14 to 18 years old. The Yoga Outreach project was appreciated by all and had a great impact on the teenagers, who asked to have such workshops more often.



When I came to Hawaii, I could just smell the hunger, the aspirations, the search. I came across teenagers and aged people who are trying to find out the method through which they may be able to experience greater awareness. I do not know how, but somehow or other people have come to know that there is a higher form of awareness where they can experience supreme bliss and complete contentment, and they are trying to achieve that state.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1968

# Spiritual Journey

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



You can look at the two components, raja yoga and bhakti yoga, in this way: raja yoga is clearing the negative, restrictive and limiting, and bhakti yoga is connecting with the positive, the good, joyous and happy. Bhakti yoga does not look at the negative; dharana does not look at the negative. It is only pratyahara which makes you aware of the restricting, limiting conditions of the mind. You have to work through that in pratyahara itself. When we come to bhakti yoga, where we are connecting with the positive qualities and experiences of our life, there is no question of using the practice to look at our negatives.

The reason is simple. There are two poles, positive and negative, and we have to go from the negative towards the positive, from *tamas* to *sattwa*. We are looking at the *tamasic* when we are practising *antar mouna* and other techniques of *pratyahara*. After that, we cut our connection with the *tamasic*. In *dharana*, it is only fixation of the mind, and when you move into *bhakti yoga*, it is only connection with positivity and negating the awareness of the negative, so that you are able to fully experience and immerse in the opposite behaviour of the mind. The natural behaviour of the mind is *tamasic*, and therefore the opposite of it is *sattwic*. This is an important principle that *yoga* believes in.

*Sri Aurobindo*, one of the great masters of India, made a statement, 'In the beginning the intellect was my friend and it remained my friend as long as I knew, what I was dealing with. When I come to unknown dimensions, the intellect becomes a barrier, not a friend.' This statement applies in *raja yoga* and in *bhakti yoga*. In *raja yoga*, you are dealing with the interactive mind: the mind, the senses, the world, the sense objects. Their influence and your response, everything is there. You are going through a process of self-awareness, self-observation and self-correction. Then that stops there. When we go into *dharana*, into *bhakti yoga*, we are not dealing with the interactive mind. We are trying to access the positive, *sattwic* content of our life and let it flower. In these negative and positive dimensions, we have *raja yoga* and *bhakti yoga*. That is one point.

Point two. People generally translate *bhakti* as devotion. When *yoga* is added to the word *bhakti*, they call it *yoga of devotion*. Everybody has done it. If you analyze the word *bhakti*, then it means an expression of pure love. That can be expressed when the heart is pure, not when the heart is tainted, not when the heart is self-centred, self-oriented, not when the heart is closed. When the heart is closed and we are desiring things for ourselves, there is no faith, no devotion, there is only demand and expectation. You confuse your demand and expectation with faith and devotion.

Suppose, I have this inner, social problem, and I go to a temple and pray to God, 'Please help me overcome my problem.' Is that devotion or is that filing the petition to the higher government to help me overcome my difficulties? The municipal corporation says, 'You have to pay your electricity bill, you have to pay your water bill,' so I file the application to the district authorities, 'Please help me and cross out all that I owe.' That is not faith, devotion or even a prayer. Everybody does it. Why? They do not look to anything beyond themselves.

Happiness is something which is shared. You cannot hold it within yourself. Happiness is something you share, for you are already bubbly and little bubbles are exploding. You share that happiness. With sadness, when you contract and withdraw, you go to your room and lie down. You say, 'I don't want to see anybody.' Individual pain closes the person and individual happiness opens the person. If we apply the same principle in raja yoga and bhakti yoga, the path will be clearer. Raja yoga allows us to see our closed mind, our closed heart, our closed nature, and the reasons for them being closed. Then we work with it to open up. While we are doing this opening and observing them closely, we are continuously aware of the problem, the difficulty, the negativity, which is the reason why it is closed. So the tamasic state is at the forefront of the mind all the time.

Imagine two scales, not digital ones, mechanical ones. On one scale is the weight and on the other side is the product, and both have to be equal. In your own life, if you put all the good that you have on one scale and all the negative and bad on the other scale, which side will be heavier? Nobody is going to answer that. I can assure you that it will be the negative side which will be heavier. I do not know why you have to hide from yourself and not be straight and say, 'Yes, the negative side will be heavier.' Everybody wants to hide from the negative while living in the negative, and that is the paradox of life. So, we have these two scales: negativity and positivity. Negativity is greater, positivity is light and less.

What do you do to balance it? Do you remove the negative? No. That is not the yogic thinking. Think outside the box. You do not remove the negative, you keep on adding things to the positive. The more you add, the heavier the positive side will become, and the negative will become lighter and lighter.

The purpose of bhakti yoga is to make the positive side heavier, without bothering about the negative. For that reason, in dharana and in bhakti yoga we do not look at the negative. Only in pratyahara we look at the present structure in which we are living, and if there is a defect in that structure, we correct it.

Make the house appropriate to your needs, requirements and comfort. Right now your house which is your head is not geared for comfort, and you do not know how to make it comfortable. Remove things that are of no value to you from your mind, and only keep those things which add value to your mind. Can you analyze, can you see what things add value to your life, what things do not add any value to your life, yet are still there?

In your own home, there is so much clutter that you never clear. Do you think that clutter and possessions add value to your life? No, they do not, it is just clutter. If you remove that clutter and only keep those things that add value to your house, to your life, you are a happier and better person. The intention of the raja yoga and bhakti yoga program is to know the clutter through raja yoga, to know the value of items through bhakti yoga, to get rid of what has no value to you in your home or in your life, and what is just rubbish being kept. That is the path of yoga, not closing the eyes and hiding from the world, but confronting that which limits, restricts, is bondage, negative and confining. Then you come to the state of expansiveness of mind and expansiveness of understanding and wisdom. Then you will begin to experience the spiritual nature of your life. Now you are experiencing the material nature, yet there is also the experience of the spiritual.

If you continue with this, soon you will change and notice a change in your lifestyle, behaviour, mind-set, responses and



reactions. They will become more positive, better, harmonious and less conflicting, more satisfying and fulfilling.

That is the start of the journey for each one of us, the connection with truth, which is known as satsang. Satsang does not mean having the gift of gab, the gift of yapping. Many people love to talk and can talk continuously without stopping. That is not satsang; satsang is not speech or discussion. *Sat* is truth and *sang* means in company of. If you are in company of truth you are in satsang and experiencing that satsang is the first outcome of the raja yoga and bhakti yoga experience. Experiencing positivity, experiencing the truth inside will be the first experience of raja yoga and bhakti yoga combined; and that will start your spiritual journey.

– 12 October 2023,  
*Raja Yoga-Bhakti Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Munger*

# Dreams Come True – Tamil Nadu



On 8th March, *Atma Niranjana Yoga Vidyalaya* celebrated the International Women's Day with a yoga session at a home and free school for rural children in Thiruvallur, 60 km from Chennai. The women were very keen to continue with regular yoga sessions. The shivir was conducted by Sannyasi Yogasharan.

After the program many participants wanted to share their joyous experience with everyone. Tamil Selvi came forward and started crying. She said she was a single mother and her daughter who was studying in Class 3 in the Sevalaya school asked her to come. She is a tailor who uses her hands and legs too much and is in constant pain. Our pawanmuktasana series miraculously helped her get relief and our visualization helped her strengthen her resolve to stay healthy.

A young girl who is doing a short-term course said, she never believed that she had any dreams. Our yoga practices helped her unearth her hidden vision of becoming an ethical entrepreneur and she could even visualize herself be one during the practice.

– *Sannyasi Yogasharan*





Ongoing projects are yoga sessions:

- at the Sri Arunadhayam Charitable Trust, for children with special needs
- at the Central Prison, Chennai
- in Erode with tribal village children, through an online platform
- for students at the Adiparasakthi Dental College, Anna University and the Agarwal Vidyalaya
- in Thirunindravur village with the NGO Sevalaya for village women

In one of my yoga sessions with the corporation conservative workers and public conducted by Chennai corporation, I was contacted by a gentleman who was in a Safari suit. He introduced himself as a senior manager of the Conservative agency. He asked me whether I am the same yoga teacher from the Bihar School of Yoga tradition. I could not follow. He said that the support and practices provided had helped him to be where he was now. He did not want to divulge where we had met. Later he called me and said that he had been a convict in prison and regularly attended our yoga sessions. It was the sankalpa planted during meditation and yoga nidra that helped him renew his life. It was a special moment.

– Sannyasi Yogasharan

# Humility

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



When the clouds are full with water they come closer to the earth. When the trees are full with fruits the branches swing low. Those people who have outstanding qualities become humble, but those people who do not have those qualities, pose as though they have them. They become egoistic and arrogant. They make a show of their qualities. This is the tendency of most people.

In fact, if one analyzes the whole affair psychologically, one will find that real humility comes through the understanding of one's negative personality. When one looks within one's own self impartially, when one tries to judge oneself impartially, one sees the qualities and what one does not have. Therefore, in order to achieve humility, one has to judge one's own self mercilessly. If one wants to succeed in this life and in spiritual life, one will have to see one's own personality thoroughly. No man is perfect, and no man is united in himself. Everybody has









a duplicate personality, not only with others, but even with himself.

Can anyone make a confession about himself to himself? No, no one can. First of all, there is no knowledge about oneself. "I am a good man," that's what one knows. "I am a wise man," that is all one knows. "I am a strong man; I am a capable man," that is what one thinks. When one fantasizes, what does one fantasize? When one imagines or when one builds castles in the air, what does one do? One becomes a great man, the richest man, the most powerful man. Is there knowledge that this is not oneself? One is just a limited human being and has many traits of imperfection.

Even a boy who is in primary school should know his limitations. They are his intellectual limitations. He should not make fun of a professor who teaches at a university. This is precisely the reason there is quarrel in the family. This is precisely the reason there is quarrel in the market place, because everyone thinks they are right, but the fact is that everyone is wrong, because if one person was right, the quarrel would not have started.

There is a joke related to two drivers in Japan. Two drivers were driving in opposite directions. Suddenly, at a U-turn they collided with each other. It was not a great accident, yet it happened. Both of them came from behind the steering wheel and greeted each other. One said, "I am sorry, it was my mistake." The other driver said, "No, not at all, it was my mistake." He said, "No, it was my mistake." That was their quarrel.

Both of them had to report to the police. When they went to the police, one driver reported, "I made a mistake, I was at the wrong side and I collided with this car," and the other driver also put in the same type of report. The policeman said, "What am I going to do?" Then one of the drivers said, "Please tell me what fine I should pay." When there is understanding of oneself, then humility comes. Humility is not a cowardly nature. A coward also looks humble, however humility is a dynamic nature in a person.

Humility is having a nature in which one tries to understand one's mistake in relation to the other person. When there is a quarrel between husband and wife, parents and children, the boss and the subordinate, it is a crisis in humility. The wife is trying to say that the husband is wrong, and the husband is trying to prove that she is wrong. If they go to their mother-in-law and father-in-law, they are trying to press their own argument. Then the quarrel multiplies and amplifies. If one of them would withdraw, it would be painful in the beginning, yet at the end it would pay substantial rewards in the form of happiness in the family, however the ego comes in between. Sometimes the thoughts do come in the mind, 'Ah, all unnecessary, I should not have done it.' They know that this is not the way to happiness, yet they do not tackle the problem through humility. If one of them or both of them could search their own selves and try to find out their own contribution to the quarrel, they would gain humility and understanding.

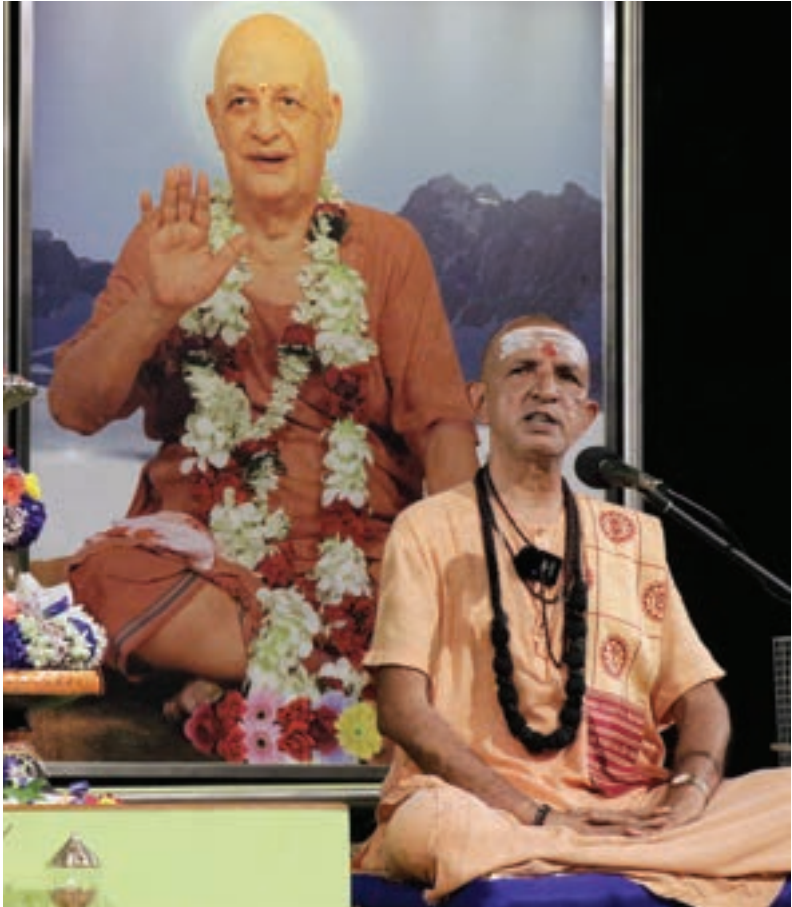
Therefore, humility is dead; it is dead due to one's hard ego. One has a personality problem, is suffering from inferiority, or the feeling of superiority, or one sees a certain mistake in one's husband or wife, or they become careless about each other for too much intimacy breeds contempt.

There are definite ways of developing the virtue of humility. Aspirants should start with the guru, as it is before the guru they bow the head. They have to practise humility with someone first. They can practise humility with God, yet with God there is no problem as he is not there, so they don't clash with him. With the guru they have to come into a clash for he does exist and he is going to crush their ego. He presses the head and says, "Sit down." For some time, aspirants do what he says; after some time, they begin to raise their ego a little bit, for ego does not want to be subdued by anybody. Ego is man's support in life and therefore, to develop humility one has to train one's ego.



# Excellence

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



**How can I disconnect my idea of identity from achievement and the need to achieve success in finding the best job or prove to others that I am good?**

I only have one thought about this. Try to excel in everything that you do and forget everything else. This is not only an advice; it is something which I have lived in my life. I do not



care about achievement, success or failure, for that is part of my natural life. I don't expect everybody to like me. There are many who dislike me too. That is part of the natural life. I do not want to achieve anything, because achieving, or trying to achieve something, is a natural expression of my mind. I am not elated in success, nor deflated in failure, as it is all part and parcel of the life that we live. If I can focus on doing the best I can, in whatever things I touch, then I am a better man than everyone else. That is my belief, and that is my life.

We are identifying with success and failure because of *vasana*. *Vasana* and *kamana* are desires, infatuations and expectations. If we simply focus on excelling in everything that we do, in the best manner possible, this problem will never come. Ultimately it is my life which I have to live, and I am responsible for my life. I have to enhance the qualities, strengths and expressions of my life, and for that I do not have to have the opinion of other people, who are not living the life that I am living. No opinion influences me.

By trying to do everything right and excel, whether it be manual work, intellectual work, yoga work or any other type of work, I have to become better than what I was yesterday. That is my inspiration. In this situation, there is nothing which becomes a barrier or an obstacle in my life. It is continuous achievement every day. If today is a failure, tomorrow that failure will become my launchpad to become better than yesterday.

– 28 May 2023, *Ganga Darshan, Munger*

# Africa

For the last ten years, *Yoga Pura Vida* has been spreading the teaching of Satyananda Yoga in Africa. It is present in Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. The projects reach out to: refugees of all ages living in the Dzaleka (Malawi) and Nakivale (Uganda) refugee camps; schooled and unschooled children; teenagers in cities, small villages and slums; children undergoing chemotherapy, autistic children, abused children, street children, and children in orphanages and schools; also elderly survivors of the Rwandan genocide, hospital caretakers, vulnerable adults, Muslim women living in very traditional Muslim communities, and other vulnerable communities and individuals. The other project coordinated by Sannyasi Dharmajyoti is the training of yoga teachers who will be able to teach yoga in their own community.

## Sierra Leone

In 2023, free weekly yoga classes were held for homeless street youth at two alternating locations in Freetown, Sierra Leone. After each yoga session, participants receive a warm nutritious meal, and once a month they are visited by a mobile nurse. The classes are usually offered by a team of four yoga trainees; from April to June two, members of the team were at Ganga Darshan, Munger, for the two-month Yogic Studies course. The remaining team members carried on offering classes in Freetown to inspire homeless street youth with free weekly yoga classes, followed by a music and poetry jam, and a warm nutritious meal.



# Nothing But Love

*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

This world has come out of love. It exists in love and finally dissolves in love. Love is the motivating power of the universe.

Love is life. Love is joy. Love is warmth. It is the golden tie which binds heart to heart and soul to soul. Love is constructive and creative. Love binds and builds. Love is the principle of regeneration. It is an actual substance that you can use with confidence. Love is a positive, concrete thing. One who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work wonders.

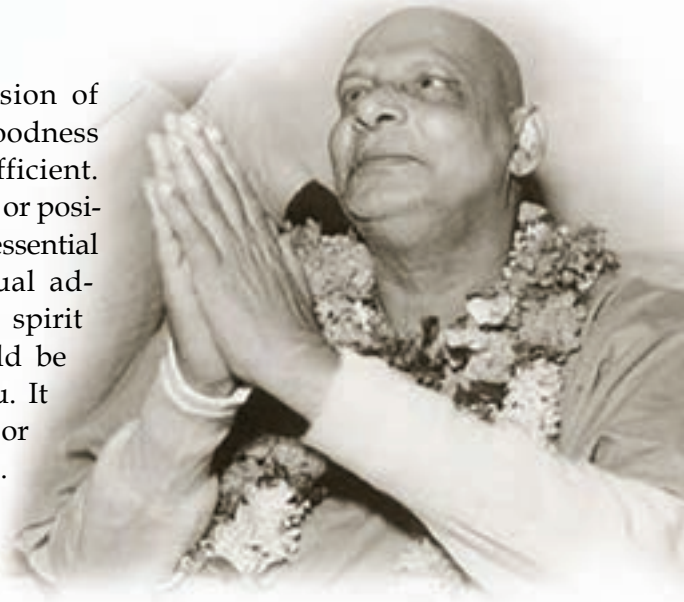
To live is to love. To love is to live. You live that you may learn to love. You love that you may learn to live in the Eternal. A life without faith, love and devotion is a dreary waste. It is real death. There is no virtue higher than love; there is no treasure higher than love; there is no knowledge higher than love, there is no dharma higher than love; there is no religion higher than love because love is Truth; love is God. God is an embodiment of love. In every inch of His creation, you can verily understand His love.

Love of the body or skin is passion. Love of God is *prem*, spiritual love or devotion. It is pure love; love for the sake of love. To love anyone for attaining a selfish gain is selfish love and binds you to this earth. To love all beings as manifestations of the Lord is pure love. It is divine love and leads to liberation.

Earthly love is hollow. There is a jarring note, a hidden doubt, a flaw. But true, pure love is rich, profound, full and flawless. Pure, divine love is eternal, unchanging and infinite. Selfish passion seeks gratification through others, but pure love only seeks to make the beloved happy and derives happiness from the happiness of the latter. Love is sacrifice. To love is to share.

Love vibrates in the form of service, charity, generosity and benevolence. Compassion is active benevolence. It is the

positive expression of love. Passive goodness alone is not sufficient. Active goodness or positive goodness is essential for one's spiritual advancement. The spirit of service should be ingrained in you. It must be innate or inherent in you. There should not be a mere show. All service is empty if there is no love, affection, sincerity and feeling, *bhava*. If you serve with *bhava* and love, God is behind you.



### **Atmabhava**

Serve, love, give. One who practises these instructions can live through hard times and bad days, enlightened by the heavenly ray. Make others truly happy, just as you strive to make yourself happy. Speak a helpful word. Give a cheering smile. Do a kind act. Serve a little. Wipe the tears of one who is in distress. Render smooth a rough place in another's path. You will feel great joy.

Worship the poor, the downtrodden and the oppressed. These are your first gods. Love all. You will reap the benefit of more than a million sacrifices, austerities and observances. Regard your neighbour's happiness as your own happiness and regard your neighbour's pain as your own pain. We are all the fruit of one tree and the leaves of one branch. There is no stranger or alien in this world. Everyone is God in the process of evolution. Identify yourself with everything that lives. Live at peace with friend and foe. All are limbs of one body. All creation is the family of God. Love all God's creation. Love animals, birds, plants and stones. Love

everything. This is the way to knowledge of the mystery underlying everything.

True religion does not consist of ritualistic observances, baths and pilgrimages, but in loving all. Cosmic love is all-embracing and all-inclusive. In pure love, no one is shut out from its warm embrace. It is wide enough to include the humblest of us, from the tiny ant to the mighty elephant, from the condemned prisoner to the mighty emperor, from the worst scoundrel to the most revered saint on the surface of this earth. It is hatred that separates man from man, nation from nation and country from country. It is pride and egoism that divide one man from another. Hatred, pride and egoism are mental creations. They are the products of ignorance only. They cannot stand before pure love.

In love lies the salvation of all beings. Love is the hope of this dark and lonesome world. This world needs leaders filled with sympathy, cooperation, love, compassion, sacrifice and tolerance. In the cultivation of this cosmic love is individual spiritual progress, the welfare of the entire community and the peace of the whole world. Set to work therefore and spread the message of love, unity, goodwill, service and cooperation. Let the spiritual message of oneness and the divine call to unity, friendship and amicable feeling reach the hearts of all and awaken brotherhood and love in the bosom of humanity. Let the whole world be circled with a heart of love.

My dear children of love, tread the path of love, commune with God and reach the eternal abode of love. This is your highest duty. You have taken this body to achieve love, which alone is the goal of life. Live in love, breathe in love, sing in love, eat in love, drink in love, talk in love, pray in love, work in love, think in love, move in love, meditate in love and die in love. Purify your thoughts, speech and actions in the fire of love. Bathe and plunge in the sacred ocean of love. Take the honey of love and become an embodiment of love.

# Ajapa Japa

*Swami Niranananda Saraswati*



The practice of ajapa japa is one of the most ancient forms of meditation. It has been mentioned in all the ancient scriptures and literatures. Funnily enough, ajapa japa is part of pratyahara, dharana and it is part of dhyana as well. This one practice encompasses the three levels of pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. Traditionally this is the only practice of meditation given to society. Other forms of meditation were transmission between guru and disciple. The most common form of meditation is ajapa japa; it also has many stages. The first stage of ajapa japa is physical relaxation and stillness. We practised this meditation immediately after yoga nidra. The depth of the experience of breathing, the experience of mantra, the experience of visualization is totally different from what you would have in a normal situation of sitting down, closing the eyes and meditating without any prior relaxation.

After relaxation, when the mind is steady, quiet and not dissipated and distracted, you move into meditation. That is the right mood of mind for meditation as well. There are people who come back from work and say, 'I'm too stressed out; I need to meditate.' They sit down to meditate and do a few minutes of antar mouna or ajapa japa, or this or that, and say, 'Now I feel a bit better.' In that situation you have just come from a stressful situation and you are releasing the stress; you are not meditating. At that moment, meditation becomes the means to release stress and tension. Meditation becomes meditation when you practise it after having released all of the stresses and tensions, like after yoga nidra. So the first component is relaxation.

The second component of ajapa japa is developing a sharp and clear, precise and accurate visualization. When we say, 'Move the breath through your spine,' be aware of the actual breath moving through the vertebrae, not just imagining your spine like a plastic thing. Take your awareness down into the spine and go up with the breath, feeling each and every part of your back and spine. When you come down the front, it is not just visualizing a tube; you are moving inside the skin from top to bottom. You are moving up inside the skin in the spinal passage. You are moving down inside the skin in the frontal passage. This awareness has to be intensified and developed. First it is imagination, then it is visualization, and then it is an experience. Come to the point of experience, not only imagination and visualization. Come to the point of experience where you see the movement of the breath and you can feel the movement of the breath under your skin.

The passages will change. The first basic one is from navel to throat, throat to navel. Then it is from navel to eyebrow centre, and eyebrow centre to navel. Then we breathe in up our spine and breathe out down the front. Then again we breathe in up the front and breathe out down the spine. So it is a circular breath that we are visualizing. Clockwise, anti-clockwise. Forward, backward. The visualization eventually has to become perfect. Paramahamsaji used to say that when we





are trying to concentrate, focus and meditate, three components come together. First, I, the individual, who is sitting down with eyes closed in a body posture, getting ready to meditate. So it is I, the first person. The second component is the practice which we are utilizing to meditate, in this case it is ajapa japa, breath awareness. The third component is the aim of meditation which we are trying to achieve, whether it be self-realization, shanti or simple relaxation. Physical, psychological or spiritual, what is the aim?

With visualization this practice becomes easy as the prana also moves. The pranas are moved. Right now we are only moving our awareness, yet later on you will have to move your pranas. How will that happen? The way to move prana is through visualization and through experience of the movement in different regions of the body. When as a karate or a kung-fu practitioner you have to break a plank of wood with your bare hands, do you depend on brute strength only? You don't. Rather you are focusing your prana to specific areas of your hand, like the side of the hand. When pranas infuse this part you can break a plank, a brick or a brain. If pranas are not

infused, you can go on hitting and your hand will become raw. You may bleed, your bones may break, just by hitting and hitting. Ultimately, it is the pranas which have to do the trick for you. You have to help your pranas with your mind. The only way you can help your pranas is by visualizing and experiencing their movement in different pathways as defined in the ajapa japa sadhanas, like inhaling through the back, exhaling through the front, inhaling up the back, exhaling down the front; then reversing, inhaling up the front, exhaling through the back, inhaling through the front, exhaling down the back. Once the movement is clear and defined and your breath and awareness move together, then you add the mantra component, not immediately.

This is the basic understanding of meditation and the ajapa japa sadhana which we are doing as a practice of meditation, ajapa japa. Japa is the first niyama and *manahprasad*, happiness, is the first yama. In raja yoga you have five yamas and five niyamas; in hatha yoga there are yamas and niyamas, the bhūmikās. In yoga the first yama is happiness and the first niyama is japa. There is a clear and scientific explanation as to why japa has been given the first place in the niyama system. When you are engaged the whole day for twenty-four hours in the world, even in sleep you are thinking in your unconscious mind about your troubles, problems and difficulties. The stresses and tensions keep building up in your deeper layers of consciousness. You can break that pattern by thinking something totally different, which is not mundane or worldly. Japa provides the window for the mind to escape from the worldly and sensorial dimension into a dimension which people can call spiritual. In the spiritual dimension, when you are totally disconnected from everything else, you are self-contained. In that self-contained state, you remember what is positive and benevolent.

– 22 March 2023, Bihar Yoga Tradition Teaching for Teachers,  
Ganga Darshan, Munger

# Lord Shiva

*Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



Lord Shiva is the protector of all beings, the destroyer of sins and the lord of the gods. He is pure, changeless, attributeless, all-pervading transcendental consciousness. When there is neither light nor darkness, neither form nor energy, neither sound nor matter, when there is no manifestation of phenomenal existence, Shiva alone exists in himself. He is timeless, spaceless, birthless, deathless, decayless. He is beyond the pairs of opposites. He is the Absolute Brahman. He is untouched by pleasure and pain, good and evil. He cannot be seen by the eyes, but he can be realized within the heart through devotion and meditation.

When Shiva is identified with his power, he is also the supreme personal god. He is then the omnipotent, omniscient active god. He dances in supreme joy and creates, sustains and destroys with the rhythm of his dancing movements. Shiva destroys all the bondage, limitation and sorrow of his devotees. He is the giver of mukti, final emancipation. He is the universal Self. He is the true self of all creatures. All individuals and the world originate from him, exist in him, are sustained and rejected by him and are ultimately merged in him. He is the support, source and substratum of the whole world. He is the embodiment of truth, beauty, goodness and bliss.

He is the god of gods. He is the great deity – Mahadeva. He is the most awe-inspiring and terrifying deity and also the most easily pleased. He is accessible to all. He is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. He is the ideal yogi. He is the ideal head of the ideal family.

Shiva is the unchanging consciousness. Shakti is his changing power, which appears as mind and matter. Just as a husband and wife look after the wellbeing of the family, Shiva and Shakti are engaged in looking after the affairs of the world. Shiva and Shakti are inseparable, like fire and heat. They are essentially one. Shiva is the waveless ocean. Shakti is the ocean with waves. Shakti creates. Without Shiva, Shakti has no existence and without Shakti, Shiva has no expression.

The name of Lord Shiva chanted in any way is sure to give the desired result. The glory of Shiva's name cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can certainly be experienced or realized only through devotion, faith and constant repetition of his name and singing his hymns with bhava, intense feeling. The mind is purified by constant repetition of Shiva's name. It strengthens good samskaras. "As you think, so you become" is the psychological law. Lord Shiva's name has the power to burn sins, samskaras and vasanas or seed desires and to bestow eternal bliss and everlasting peace. The individual mind melts in the cosmic mind.

# Contention of Tantra

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

One important point has been clearly explained by tantra. We should never try to interfere with the natural tendencies and expression of the mind. What you call ignorance and instinct, desires and passions is a way by which the mind is trying for expansion. Guilt and fear try to obstruct the vision of reality. Guilt is an illusion and fear is unreal. It is an outcome of your interaction with your own desires.

If you gladly accept your life, if you respect yourself, if you do not hate any element of your personality, if you do not pick on yourself, there will be no guilt, no fear, and the path will be very clear because guilt and fear is an internal philosophical idea. It not only kills the psychological behaviour of man, it even creates blood pressure, diabetes and cancer. This has already been investigated. Tumours and cancer, depression and psychological misbehaviour, blood pressure and coronary illness are all born out of the deep-rooted guilt and fear that we have. Guilt and fear is due to our misbehaviour with ourselves. Therefore, in tantra, there is an idea of total expression of life.

If you have a thought, let it grow. If you have desires, let them grow. If you have experience, let it; don't block it. Give total freedom to your mind. Let it go to any extent it can. If it wants to go to hell, let it. If it wants to go to paradise, let it. If it wants flowers and flowers, let it. If it wants enjoyment of every dimension, let it. Can you imagine the efficiency of such a mind? A free mind is a powerful mind. A conditioned mind is a sick mind. A restricted mind is an ailing mind. That is the contention of tantra.

*– 28 March 1982, Barcelona, Spain*



# Relaxation

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Raja yoga begins with relaxation. Pratyahara begins with relaxation. The way to relax is sequential. The way to relax is not to let the mind be free but to guide the mind into different activities. This goes against the idea of relaxation. When we think of relaxation, we think that the mind has to be free and we can just forget ourselves. In yoga nidra, the opposite happens. We are continuously being bombarded by instructions, 'Now do this, now do this, now do this ...' The mind is kept engaged all the time. By keeping it engaged, it moves away from the sensorial track into a mental track. When the mind is following the senses and memories, then that is the sensorial track of the mind. When the mind is following its own inner mental track and is not connected with the senses, it is able to find its balance and harmony and able to relax. Before concentration, relaxation is important and therefore relaxation is the first stage of pratyahara.

Sri Swamiji says that yoga nidra is sleepless sleep. When he says it is sleepless sleep, it makes it clear that sleep is not a prerequisite for relaxation. Relaxation is one state, sleep is another. In sleep, you do not have consciousness, you are not conscious of yourself. In relaxation, you are conscious of yourself. In sleep you lose the time, space and object awareness; in relaxation you are using time, space and object to let go of your anxieties and stresses. So do not ever equate relaxation with sleep. They are different. The process of relaxation happens at different levels. First is learning how to loosen up your body.

Many people today cannot relax. Unfortunately, it is a shortcoming which we have to face. We should be able to relax. Many people say that if they use the word 'relaxation', they become more tense thinking, 'I am not relaxed.' That is also a personal shortcoming, how you think is up to you. If



you don't like to use the word 'relaxation', I am not going to change it because you don't accept it. Everything is a projection of what I think, I can do or I cannot do. These barriers have to be overcome in relaxation. You *should* be able to relax. That process of relaxation begins with releasing the tightness and tensions from bones, the muscular system and other systems, from the major body systems to the subtle systems, one by one, and become as flexible and loose physically as a rubber band.

If you are lying down in shavasana, and god's hand picks you up, you should not be straight, you should be floppy. When you pick up a rubber band, the rubber band will be

straight or will it be a floppy rubber? If god's hand picks you up while you are in shavasana, will you be stiff in shavasana or will your body be loose and flexible like a rubber? It has to be loose and flexible like a rubber. How can you make yourself come to that point of looseness? That is the first requirement of relaxation. There are different methods which are used to achieve this looseness and flexibility of the body in relaxation. That is for the physical body.

The nervous system is the second level. It responds to sensory activities like light, sound, taste, touch and smell. So you go through sound awareness. You go through the contact awareness that some parts of your body are in contact with the floor, clothes are in contact with your skin. You develop contact awareness, sound awareness and breath awareness. Then you engage the mind to focus it more. Then the sankalpa comes and then the body rotation. The body rotation is something incredible. If you have to say the name of the body part, visualize the body part and relax the body part, it indicates a total identification with the part which is being named; it is not just a cursory superficial awareness. You move into the body part and become that. Right hand thumb, you are saying right hand thumb, you are visualizing right hand thumb, you are relaxing right hand thumb and you are the right hand thumb. First finger, you become the first finger. You take your awareness and become each part of the body that is being named and you develop a close and intimate relationship with your own body.

There are people who suddenly in yoga nidra realize that they have five toes. There has never been any conscious awareness of five toes, yet in yoga nidra suddenly you realize that you have a big toe and a little toe and in between the big one and the little one, there are three more of different sizes and shapes. There are many people who even learn English names of body parts. Some Americans who came here, were asking after a yoga nidra session, 'What is an armpit?' They had not heard the word 'armpit'. The usage of the word 'armpit'



was new to them. This identification with different body parts and the visualization becomes a powerful tool for achieving total relaxation and recharging prana in the body. There is a process and a sequence of relaxation.

Once you are in a state of relaxation you move into concentration practices. The first concentration practice which has been quite eloquently described in the yogic tradition is the practice of *ajapa japa*. It uses breath and mantra in order to focus the mind. It does not ask you to witness any activity of the mind like 'observe your thinking'. It just asks you to observe the breath and mantra. You start with something physical and tangible and which can give you the mastery to control the physical and tangible.

Once you have the hang of the practice, you move into observation, *antar mouna*, and observe everything that is happening in your mental dimension. Then you change that observation into something much more subtle, *antar darshan*, observance of feelings, sensations, emotions, not only thoughts. Then you move into *dharana*. Distractions won't be there. You have acknowledged all of them. Now you focus yourself on one point. The classical focusing has been on a point of light at the eyebrow centre, *chidakasha*, the heart centre, *hridayakasha*, and mooladhara centre, *daharakasha*. These are the three main concentration points used in *dharana* practice.

When the mind fuses with the object of concentration, *dhyana* is experienced. The meditative state is experienced. Meditation is not something that you can do; meditation is something that you experience after mastery over *pratyahara* and *dharana*. It is in these states of *pratyahara* and *dharana* that the merger of thoughts takes place with its prana, the merger of memory takes place with its prana, the merger of emotions, feelings, sentiments takes place with its pranic equivalent and this is the merger that classical *raja yoga* speaks of.

– 9 March 2023, Bihar Yoga Tradition Teaching for Teachers,  
Ganga Darshan, Munger

# Uttar Pradesh



From 28th September to 3rd October 2023, a five-day yoga training shivir was conducted at the Community Centre, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad UP. Participants were new to the Bihar Yoga tradition. Their idea of yoga was limited to therapy or weight loss. The inclusion of mantra chanting was a surprise for all and initially there was slight resistance. As the shivir progressed participants were open to havan and Samiksha. The Mahamrityunjaya havan was conducted on Saturday, the second day of the shivir. Immediately after the havan, all decided to continue with Mahamrityunjaya havan every second Saturday of the month as a community spiritual practice. Overall the shivir was a very satisfactory experience for both the teachers Hansa and Muktinath.

## *Feedback*

Mantra chanting gave me mental strength, asana made my body light, pranayama was soul touching and the relaxation was very effective. *Samiksha*, the Review of the Day, gave me a clear understanding of my psychology and I learnt about my strengths.

– *Girish*

# Karma Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The mind is always split in two – one part which desires and one part which does not desire. Management of the mind has helped me along with the awareness, focus, viveka and vairagya. The mind is split in two parts, the desiring mind and the non-desiring mind. When you think, 'I want to become peaceful,' who is saying it? Your mind is saying it. When you say, 'I am under stress,' who is saying it? The mind is saying it. When you are under stress, you say, 'I want to become peaceful and relaxed.' At that point, the mind is acknowledging the stress and giving an indication that it needs to relax.

## **Karma yoga**

So there are these two minds, one which is observing and one which is experiencing the stress and the anxiety. The part that is observing says, 'I need to do something about it.' One aspect is anxiety and frustration, mental illnesses or distortions. The other aspect is the *drashta*, the witness. You have to focus on the mind which is peaceful and quiet. In one hand I can lift up a stone and hold it, and the other hand is empty. Now my right hand is heavier because I am holding a weight on it, and the left hand has nothing. One is the stress of life in the mind and the other is the *drashta* of the mind which says, 'I am free'; and it can help to make the weight less. The moment you put the left hand underneath the other hand, the stress and the weight affecting the right hand suddenly is reduced by half.

Karma yoga is when you engage all aspects to balance the negative and develop the positive. It is the heavy mind or the stressed mind, which is always negative and the *drashta* mind is always positive. The *drashta* mind is constructive and creative, and the stressed mind is negative and destructive. In karma yoga, this has to be managed. The negativity has to be

balanced with positivity. You cannot eradicate the negativity, yet you can lessen the weight, the heaviness of the stressed mind by fifty percent, if you bring the other hand underneath the heavy container. And why karma yoga? Karma yoga is an action which you do to find that balance in every activity of life. Therefore, the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* says, *Samatvam yoga uchyate* – balanced action is the highest yoga. In this balanced action you are able to observe the mind through your drashta mind which is interactive in negative stress. If you are able to manage the negativity of the mind, you attain the state of purity. *Yoginah karma kurvanti, sangam tyaktva atma shuddhaye*. Self-purification happens as you are observing, eliminating the negative and making the effort to reduce the negative. Then peace and harmony settle in the mind.

People avoid effort. Why? They avoid effort due to routine and boredom. You can follow a routine for some time, then you get bored. This bored condition of mind makes you stop every type of effort that you know should be done. You want to do it, but you say, 'I am doing this every day, every day.' This is one of the obstacles of spiritual life, according to Swami Sivanandaji. Swami Sivanandaji has given a whole list in his songs and kirtans of the obstacles of spiritual life that you have to be aware of and avoid.

People do not look at that. People only sing, 'Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity' – something which they can never do. If you look at the obstacles that have to be avoided and you make the effort to avoid those obstacles, then serenity, regularity and absence of vanity will be natural. You do not have to make the effort to acquire them. You have to make the effort to overcome the obstacles, and the rest falls into place.

People do not want to look at the obstacles; they want to look at what can be achieved. They go for achievement rather than clearing the obstacles. When you go for achievement, these obstacles will come again and block your path. You will come to me and say, 'Swamiji, I have been trying for so long, but I don't think I have progressed anywhere.' How will you



progress? You are chasing a mirage. See what the obstacles are that you need to overcome. Swami Sivanandaji has given all those points. Make the effort to eliminate the obstacles and avoid the boredom which restrict the effort.

There has to be more focus on the effort. When there is focus on the effort, there is more awareness. More awareness, more satsang. More satsang, more viveka and vairagya. More viveka and vairagya, more clarity of mind. More clarity of mind, more awareness. More awareness, more focus. It is a cycle that goes on. I am caught in that cycle. I have not been able to extract myself from this cycle and to be truthful, I love every moment of it.

– 23 October 2022, Ganga Darshan, Munger

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## Yoga Publications Trust

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Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

4: 49 pp, ISBN 978-93-94604-11-7; 5: 45 pp, ISBN 978-93-94604-10-0

In writing the second chapter of yoga a complete change in the training programs at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth has come about since 2016. The new programs are setting a standard of understanding the practices and principles of yoga from the perspective of the original intentions of yoga.


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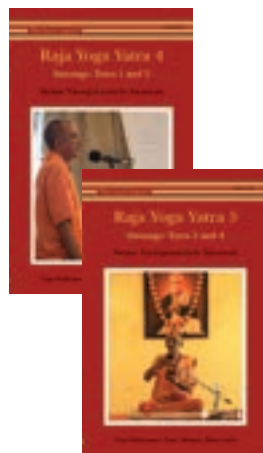
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**For an order form and comprehensive publications price list please contact:**

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## Websites and Apps

### [www.biharyoga.net](http://www.biharyoga.net)

The official website of Bihar Yoga includes information on: Bihar Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Foundation.

### Satyam Yoga Prasad

The digital library of the Bihar Yoga Tradition presenting audio, video and publications online. Available at [satyamyogaprasad.net](http://satyamyogaprasad.net) and as apps for Android and iOS devices as [prasad](http://satyamyogaprasad.net).

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This program is released aiming to improve and enhance health and total wellbeing. Available from [biharyoga.net](http://biharyoga.net) and [satyamyogaprasad.net](http://satyamyogaprasad.net).

### YOGA & YOGAVIDYA Online

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

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- *APMB*, the bestselling yoga book from YPT available as an easily browsable mobile app.
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## Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2024–2025

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Nov 3–10	Kriya Yoga/Jnana Yoga Training
Dec 1–Feb 9 2025	Sannyasa Experience (overseas aspirants only)
Jan–Dec	Ashram Life Experience
Feb 8–14	Total Health Capsule (Hindi)
Mar 3–9	Pranayama – Breathe for Healthy Lungs Training (Hindi)
Mar 22–28	Pratyahara & Dharana Training
Sep 22–30	Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training
Oct 3–11	Hatha Yoga/Karma Yoga Training
Nov 1–15	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
Nov 16–Jan 30 2026	Sannyasa Experience (national/overseas aspirants)

### **Bihar Yoga Bharati Yogavidya Training**

Mar 1–Apr 30	Yogic Studies, 2 months (Hindi)
Nov 1–Dec 31	Yogic Studies, 2 months (English)

### **Events**

Nov 17–23	Munger Yoga Symposium
Jan 28–Feb 2	Basant Panchami Celebrations/ BSY Foundation Day
Jun 25–Jul 9	Ved Parayan

### **Monthly Programs**

Every Saturday	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
Every Ekadashi	Bhagavad Gita Path
Every Poornima	Sundarkand Path
Every 4th, 5th & 6th	Guru Bhakti Yoga
Every 12th	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans