

YOGA

Year 14 Issue 6
June 2025



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.

Editor: Swami Gyansiddhi Saraswati

Assistant Editor: Swami Yogatirth-ananda Saraswati

YOGA is a monthly magazine.

Published by Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar – 811201.

Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd., Haryana – 121007

© Bihar School of Yoga 2025

Useful Resources

Websites:

www.biharyoga.net
www.sannyasapeeth.net
www.satyamyogaprasad.net

Apps:

(for Android and iOS devices)

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

Total no. of pages: 56 (including cover pages)

Front cover & plates: Bharat Yoga Yatra 2025



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Yoga

Equanimity is yoga. Serenity is yoga. Skill in actions is yoga. Control of the senses and the mind is yoga. Anything by which the best and the highest in life can be attained is also yoga. Yoga is thus all-embracing, all-inclusive and universal in its application leading to all-round development of body, mind and soul. Yoga is the Science of sciences that disentangles the individual soul from the world of sense objects and links it with the Absolute, whose inherent attributes are Infinite Bliss, Supreme Peace, Infinite Knowledge and Unbroken Joy.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Published and printed by Swami Shivadhyanam Saraswati on behalf of Bihar School of Yoga, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger – 811201, Bihar

Printed at Thomson Press India (Ltd), 18/35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Rd., Faridabad, Haryana.

Owned by Bihar School of Yoga **Editor:** Swami Gyansiddhi Saraswati

Year 14 Issue 6 • June 2025
(63rd year of publication)

Year 14 Issue 6 • June 2025
(63rd year of publication)

- 2 Yoga
- 3 Realize the Centre
- 5 For the Twenty-First Century
- 9 Yoga Is What the World
Needs Most
- 13 The Lamp of Yoga
- 15 Outcome of Bhakti
- 19 From Buddhu to Buddha
- 23 Yoga – Oriental or Occidental
- 27 Rediscovering Yoga
- 30 Hatha Yoga
- 36 The History of Yoga
- 44 Neuroplasticity
- 45 Twenty Important Spiritual
Instructions

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

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

Yoga

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Yoga is a way of life, not something that is divorced from life. Yoga is not forsaking action, but efficient performance in the right spirit. Yoga is not running away from home and human habitation, but a process of moulding an attitude to home and society with a new understanding. Yoga is not a turning away from life; yoga makes life spiritual. Yoga is something that has to be assimilated and put into practice in daily life.

Realize the Centre

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



I don't know if my ideas will be palatable to you and if you agree, but the time has come when you will have to understand yoga in a different way. Yoga came to the West

in the form of physical exercises, now it is developing as a new science and many psychologists are thinking in terms of using meditation for psycho-neurosis. It should be done, but with a few sincere aspirants, not many. They must come forward, and work hard to develop that higher awareness. Out of millions of people all over the world, only a very few people actually try to take the path of yoga and try for the higher realization or higher experience. The ultimate purpose of yoga is to experience oneself in the purest state. Now, we do not know ourselves in the purest state. What we know about ourselves is all mixed up.

We know ourselves in terms of 'I am a Christian, I am a Hindu, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a tall man, my name is this, my name is that, I am MA, or BA, I am a manufacturer, I am a businessman'. We know ourselves in terms of all these things, which is a kind of confused knowledge. We have to dissociate from all these types of knowledge and we have to gradually understand ourselves as we are. Therefore, when Socrates said 'Know Thyself', he meant to say, try to realize the centre of your personality.

When the great saint Ramana Maharshi said, 'Think who am I', he meant to say, try to realize that centre of your personality. Many great men have been trying to say this from time to time. Thus you should try to strive to realize and understand, both theoretically and practically, this higher aim of yoga. There is no other path and there is no other way by which you will be able to experience your own consciousness. There are different paths by which you can come nearer to God. There are various religions - Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism through which you can worship God in your own way, but when you want to make the consciousness free from its limitations, the only method is yoga. This method is the yoga of meditation in Sanskrit, but it should be translated as the Science of Self Awareness.

– June 1968, Prana Restaurant Berkshire, USA

For the Twenty-First Century

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The foundation of yoga is spiritual experience, not in abstract terms, but in very clear and precise terms. One day my guru, Swami Satyananda, gave me the duty of looking after the ashram garden while he was away on tour. I was seven or eight at the time and undertook the duty to the best of my ability. When he returned, he asked me what had happened, because all the trees, plants, flowers and fruits had dried up. I told him that every day I had dusted the leaves, removed the insects, smelt the flowers and polished the fruits until they shone. My guru said, "I appreciate your efforts, but just answer one question: did you water the plants?"

That was my first lesson about yoga and spiritual life and about this physical life. My teacher explained that the important part of a tree is not the external part that we see, but the roots which are underground and invisible. The roots sustain the tree and as long as they are nourished, the tree can face any situation, but if the roots are neglected and forgotten, the tree will become weak and fall down in a tempest. Our life is also like that because we identify with the body, senses, mind and emotions, which are the external manifestations of our personality. We ignore and are not aware of the greater potential that exists within us, which is recognized as spirit.

Spirit is not something abstract and vague, but part of the evolution of consciousness. Life is a process of constant evolution at different levels. Evolution is the outcome of a focused and illuminated mind. We all come with the same possibilities. God has been very generous to us. We have within us the same qualities as Christ and Buddha had. The only difference is that they were experimenting with those qualities and we have ignored that aspect of our life. They were continually refining themselves while we have stagnated at one point. This is the barrier we all face as human beings, the limitation that we cannot overcome in our lives.

Aim of yoga

When yoga appeared, it was to discover that inner potential, which is spiritual, not material. At the same time, those who developed yoga realized that growth had to take place in all dimensions of existence. The body needs to be harmonized so that it can manage illness, disease and physical stress. To manage physical imbalances, the physical postures were developed, which have become famous worldwide. Many people do them as stretching exercises or as aerobic exercises to experience lightness in the body and freedom from tension and tightness. Physical harmony will alter and influence the activity of the brain, and this cerebral and physical harmony will alter the mental behaviour. In the process of harmonizing



the personality, the mind also comes in tune with its inner strengths. This is the beginning of yoga.

The classical literature states that yoga begins with mind management. It does not say that self-realization is the aim of yoga, but clearly states that the aim is managing the mental behaviour. Desiring self-realization is like a blind man wanting to see the sun when his real need is for eyesight with which he can see not only the sun, but the entire creation in its full glory. If my need is to obtain vision, then in terms of yoga my aim becomes to prepare and transform myself, to change my nature and the restrictive components of my life. How we can realize and manage our mind, body and emotions is the main theme of yoga. The rest is only the outcome of this harmony.

In the past, this concept was not made clear by yoga teachers and therefore yoga was seen as a mystical, abstract subject.

Fifty years ago, yoga was not well known, even in India. In the 1960s it began to be propagated by those who realized that yoga was the need of people everywhere, then and in the future. Awareness of yoga became more widespread. At the same time, there were many taboos associated with yoga because nobody really knew what yoga was. To play safe, people only practised the physical aspect because the body felt light, vibrant and energetic. That is how hatha yoga first became popular. Today there are many brands of hatha yoga around the world, and most people only understand the physical aspect. Yoga was practised in this way until approximately the end of the twentieth century. Integral yoga: head, heart and hands.

At that time an important event took place in the history of yoga. A yoga university was established in India. This was the fulfilment of an idea conceived of by Swami Sivananda, who was a medical doctor and a philosopher. He believed that yoga should be established in scientific terms and that people should understand the practical and scientific aspects as well as the philosophical and abstract aspects of yoga. Swami Sivananda's vision was carried forward and developed by my guru, Swami Satyananda.

Swami Satyananda was one of the first exponents of yoga to incorporate the mental, psychological and psychic aspects for personality transformation, for the management of physical, psychological and spiritual imbalances. He also propagated how yoga could be applied in society. This is called integral yoga or Satyananda Yoga. The main theme of integral Satyananda Yoga is awakening the faculties of head, heart and hands. The head represents intelligence, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, awareness and observation. The heart represents feelings, emotions and sentiments. The hands represent the ability to act, to perform and to create. The ability to manage these three components of our life is the need of the twenty-first century, because this balance will make a person complete.

– 19 May 2005, Santillana Foundation, Bogota, Colombia

Yoga Is What the World Needs Most

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In 1943, when I joined the ashram of Swami Sivananda Saraswati, in Rishikesh, at the foot of the Himalayas, I was not taught yoga. I was taught the philosophy of Vedanta. The initiation and the teachings I received from Swamiji, the teachers and the tradition was the tradition of Vedanta. Of course, I knew a lot about yoga; I had studied books on yoga, like the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, and tantra, but for a full twelve years, I plunged into the study of Vedanta. Vedanta is a philosophy which talks of non-duality; it is a monistic philosophy that teaches that there is one reality that can be realized by hearing, contemplating and meditating, and not by pranayama, dharana or asana. That is what I learned for twelve years.

In the year 1956, according to the rules of the tradition, I left the ashram of my guru on an all-India tour in the capacity of a mendicant. A mendicant and a beggar have been the same in all the ages everywhere. They have the same status, the same form and the same social recognition or social rejection. During this period, 1956 to 1963, when I travelled through the length and breadth of India, Nepal, Burma, Afghanistan and, of course, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, I realized that people were wanting a practical path, not a theoretical one. As far as the knowledge was concerned, they knew more than enough, and during this period, I taught a few asanas which I knew and pranayama. Every now and then when I met those people I had taught earlier, I discovered that they had changed and improved and they had become better in every respect, physically, mentally, emotionally and also spiritually.

I had a fairly good knowledge of naturopathy and Buddhist sciences, because from my maternal side, a Buddhist tradition



came to my family. So I have knowledge of the Buddhist tradition, the tradition of Vedanta from my guru, and other religious traditions from my father's side. What should I now teach them, was the question in my mind. To get an answer to that question and to get inspiration, I travelled to various places. When I stayed for some time in Munger, the place where I still live, I got inspiration, a revelation and the answer – yoga. Whether I believe in Vedanta, or I am a master of naturopathy, or an

adept in the Buddhist tradition, I must teach the people what they want and I have to teach them yoga, not for myself, not for the fulfilment of my inner nature, but to fulfil their day-to-day needs.

In 1963, when I started building a small ashram in Munger, I hardly thought that things could take this shape. Today I am not able to handle the situation. Hundreds come to me, sick people, spiritual people, Muslims, Hindus of different sects, yoga-minded people, Christians, Mullahs, priests and many more. I have been telling Swami Satsangi, when we were in Manchester, 'Yoga is not the end, it is a means. But whether it is a means or the end, people want it.' My personal views do not have any relationship to their needs. This is exactly what every yoga teacher will have to realize. We are dedicated and committed to teaching yoga to people, not only because we believe in yoga, but because the people believe in it.

When I went to South American countries like Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Guatemala, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Martinique, people told me they wanted a way by which

they could discipline their body and mind. During these 40 or 50 years, many cults and traditions and sciences belonging to mysticism and occultism have spread all over the world, including to the West and to India, and people have dabbled with them at one time or the other. I have also dabbled with tantra, Zen Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana practices, though not with the Hare Krishna movement, because that is a movement I encountered much later. If it had come during my young age, I would have practised that as well. I did not dabble with the cult of the flower children because that also came too late. By the time it had arrived I was beyond flowers, but had it arrived when I was 17 or 18, I would have tried that too. I tried all methods and I liked all of them. I feel like talking to the people from every tradition, because I think that in every science there is some way to reach somewhere. However, yoga, though it is a means, is a science which is perfect in itself.

In the early days we thought yoga was a physical science for physical health and physical culture, breathing exercises and so on. Yet in the last two or three decades, fantastic research has been conducted in every part of the world on the effects of yoga, not only on the body, endocrine secretions or hormones, or nervous impulses, but also on the brain, mind and consciousness. What is more, when the great psychologist Carl Jung was thinking and commenting on yoga, he pointed out a very important fact. He said, 'Yoga is an interdisciplinary system.' He was not talking about the physical or physiological effects, he was not talking about the effects on the brain, mind and consciousness. He was hinting at the possibility of yoga being experimented on as the discipline of human life and personality. This is now the need which yoga teachers have to fulfil, and they need to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge.

Apart from yogasanas, pranayama, other hatha yoga methods, raja yoga methods, laya yoga or kriya yoga methods, we have to rearrange the system of teaching. We need to develop the background, the relationship with students, and

the method of imparting the practical lessons to them in such a way that it has a deeper effect, not only on their body, but also their personality. This will be the theme of yoga after 1983. Throughout the world now, people are clamouring for a sort of discipline. We are not talking about the political, social, national or other sorts of disciplines which we have. We are talking about a discipline for which I am responsible, not your legislation, not your inactive laws, but a discipline which I can practise and a discipline which is an expression of my personality, a discipline which I express of my own sweet will, and which gives me so much pleasure and so much happiness. If I tell you not to do this and that, then it is not yoga. Then it is law or religion.

In this particular sense, from the 1980s onwards, yoga should aim at developing that inner possibility, the total and inherent possibility in everybody. As far as I know, everybody likes to express discipline in their life, though they find it difficult. When we are able to discipline ourselves, we feel a sort of satisfaction, don't we? Yet somehow or the other, we are not able to do it. What can yoga do for this? That is what I have been thinking about this year.

In 1983, up to 19th January, I was officially associated and connected with the Bihar School of Yoga. I decided that from 20th January 1983 I would belong to no institution and no organization; I would be His Royal Mendicant. I have decided to move from place to place for another twenty years, not to work for an institution, but to work for humanity; not to work for promotion of a philosophy, but to work for the people, because I am convinced, after so many years of travelling all over the world, meeting every type of person, that yoga is the one thing which is easy for them. It does not tire their intellect.

So, please give a thought as to how to rearrange not the system of yoga but the method of imparting yoga teachings to the different sections of our society.

– 8 February 1983, London

The Lamp of Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



What is integral yoga? A few postures for the body, a few breathing techniques to increase the vitality and stamina of the body, a little bit of relaxation to remove the accumulated tensions of the day and a little bit of meditation to connect with inner positivity and strength. Each item has to be in proportion. If we add a kilo of salt to a kilo of vegetables, it will destroy the vegetables completely, but if we cook normally and naturally with a little bit of salt, with more water, with a little bit of oil, with more vegetables, it will be tasty. For food to be tasty, the items have to be in the correct proportions. The same principle applies to yoga. People are attracted by the performance of postures, but from the yogic perspective only five postures need to be practised daily for complete wellness of the body. If you want to practise anything beyond that, you are free to do so, but from the yogic perspective only five postures are required.

Swami Satyananda has always advocated that yoga be practised on a regular basis in the daily routine. This is his perspective of how yoga can be lived and experienced in

normal life. Yoga works at the physical, psychological and spiritual levels. To manage distressful conditions of the body, the practice of postures is a must. To increase the stamina and vitality of the body, we practise breathing techniques. Only two breathing techniques are important. The effect is to balance the motor and sensory nervous systems, the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. The activity of the left and right hemispheres of the brain is also regulated. Concentration and one-pointedness of mind is achieved. Nervous tension can be alleviated by practising the breathing techniques.

The third component is learning how to relax. Unfortunately, people have forgotten how to relax and how to sleep, and have to use tranquillizers and sleeping tablets. It seems that we are losing our mental balance and harmony and becoming more and more dependent on external agents to help us relax and sleep.

The fourth component is the practice of concentration and meditation to explore our personality and nature and to come into contact with our strengths and positivity. These four forms of yoga constitute the practices applicable and useful for every individual in human society.

Yoga gives us the opportunity to light our own candle to illuminate the darkness of our lives. The darkness which has remained in a subterranean cave for thousands of years can be instantly removed by lighting a lamp. Yoga gives us the opportunity to light this lamp in our life to remove the darkness, so that the dormant areas of the brain and mind begin to function more efficiently and effectively, and we connect with the humanness within us. We are humans, but in body only, not in character, not in nature, not in personality. Many people have realized this and said that we are social animals. With yoga we have an opportunity to experience the humanness within. Therefore, give yoga, evolution, peace and creativity a chance in your life.

– 30 May 2008, Sofia, Bulgaria

Outcome of Bhakti

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The outcome of bhakti is a complete transformation of the mental *vrittis*, patterns, performances, behaviours, responses, reactions, everything changes. The actual outcome of bhakti has been defined in clear terms by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The first outcome of bhakti is *adveshtha sarvabhutanam*, 'do not see any difference between me and you.' We may be physically different, I may be taller and slimmer, you may be shorter and fatter. That is physical. *Adveshtha* means, 'Do not see any difference between you and me.'

There is nothing bad about a person, there is nothing good about a person, we are all slaves of circumstances and situations. You are neither good nor bad, yet the way you respond to circumstances and situations defines the behaviour

or nature of your action as either good or bad. You yourself are balanced people, although you do not realize it yet. *Adveshta* means to have equal vision. No rich, no poor, no big, no small, all human beings at the same level. That is the first outcome of bhakti, where you forget all the differences that exist between people.

The outcome of bhakti is unity with all, *adveshta*. Sri Krishna mentions this in the chapter of bhakti yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He mentions the nature, the outcome and the qualification of a person who has purified himself internally. The first qualification is *adveshta sarvabhutanam*, one who does not differentiate between people. Such a beautiful statement of bhakti. We differentiate and say, 'I am devotee to my God, or I am devotee of my Guru.' There is differentiation, 'I am the senior one, I am the better one; you are an ignorant one, I know more than you.' That is ego, that is not bhakti, which is purity of mind or sentiments. The whole process of bhakti leads to the experience of oneness with everyone. Duality is transcended and unity is experienced.

The second outcome is *maitri*, a positive connection that develops with everyone. You call it friendship, but we call it positive connection because we do not believe in friendship. There was a time when people used to say, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' Now even in need, nobody is there to help you. There are no friends anymore, and everybody has become an independent unit. Maitri is a positive connection with everyone, known in English as friendship. This friendship is for the upliftment of people, not for personal gratification and that has to be understood.

The third outcome is compassion – *adveshta sarvabhutanam, maitraha karunaha eva cha*. Compassion indicates a soft heart, compassion indicates the ability to understand the need and the suffering of people, and working to help them fulfil their need or overcome suffering.

Nirmama, being without the feeling of 'mine-ness', and *nirahamkara*, without ego, living a humble, simple and



innocent life, without arrogance, that is bhakti. *Samadukhasukha*, one who is equipoised in pain and pleasure, when pain does not affect and pleasure does not affect, and there is equanimity in all situations and circumstances. *Kshami* is the ability to forgive and another outcome of bhakti.

If we look at bhakti yoga in this manner, it is transformation of dark into light. It allows us to move into the sattwa dimension, and that makes us aware of the spiritual nature of life. This is the real bhakti yoga. Religious people speak of bhakti as adoring and worshipping the divine, putting flowers and waving incense and light. These are religious rituals, but bhakti is an expression of pure intention and sentiment. Bhakti is an expression of purity in action. Bhakti is the behaviour which is connected not to the self, but is selfless.

Therefore, bhakti can be construed as a lifestyle. What are the practices? Mantra and kirtan. You do your mantra sadhana at night, play kirtans while you are working, cleaning the home, cooking food, changing clothes or taking a shower. The vibrations of the mantras of the kirtan will be there, resounding in your brain, in your mind, and that will create a change, a subtle change in your personality.

– 22 November 2024, Third Munger Yoga Symposium

Yoga Chakra

The Wheel of Yoga

Hatha yoga is rooted in asana and pranayama,
blossoms as restfulness and bears the fruit of perfect
health, long life and awakening of kundalini.

Raja yoga is rooted in yama and niyama,
blossoms as one-pointedness of mind
and bears the fruit of Samadhi.

Kriya yoga is rooted in truth and brahmacharya,
blossoms as the grace of the Divine Mother
and bears the fruit of union with Lord Shiva.

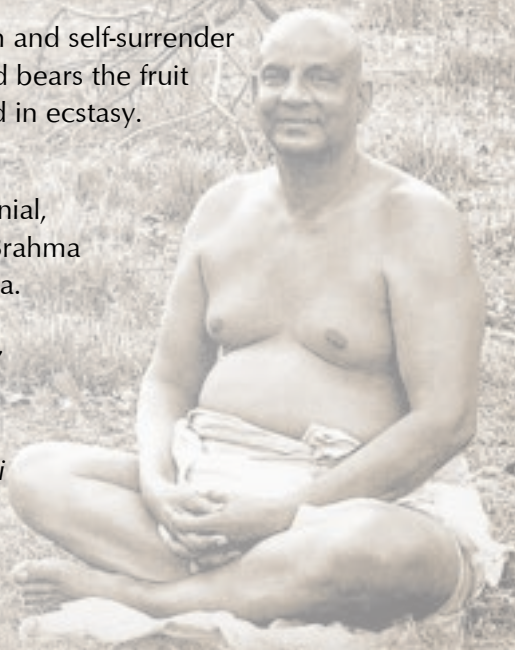
Karma yoga is rooted in self-sacrifice,
blossoms as purity and expansion of heart
and bears the fruit of knowledge of the imperishable.

Bhakti yoga is rooted in faith and self-surrender
blossoms in intense love and bears the fruit
of communion with the Lord in ecstasy.

Jnana yoga is rooted
in discrimination and self-denial,
blossoms as knowledge of Brahma
and bears the fruit of moksha.

Therefore, for quick success,
the various methods
should be combined.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



From Buddhu to Buddha

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The roots of yoga are ancient, yet the history of yoga is less than half a century old. Swami Sivananda was one of the first sannyasins to recognize the potential divinity of individuals. He trained his disciples in the systems of yoga and Vedanta, and most became luminaries who have inspired people to rediscover themselves and adopt yoga.

There have been many thousands of teachers who have picked up one component of the yogic system and propagated it as their belief, philosophy and livelihood. Some adopted the system of hatha yoga, harsh physical discipline; some the reclusiveness of raja yoga, intense meditation, tapasya and self-control; some the path of bhakti. Whatever the path, it was adopted more as a belief and as something to be experimented with rather than as something that could become part of one's life, something that had the power to transform human nature from the external, mundane and gross to something much deeper, higher and transcendental.

In the last half of the 20th century, the individual branches of yoga, such as hatha yoga, jnana yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga, mantra yoga, were developed rather than the main trunk and root of yoga. Developing the main trunk and the root means incorporating the yogic principles not only as ideology but also into one's life. Experiencing that lifestyle in which yoga becomes a part of oneself is identified either as classical yoga, the Bihar Yoga system or the Satyananda Yoga system.

At Ganga Darshan, you are taught not only the practices, but also how to live yoga. There is a difference between learning the practices and living the system, living the philosophy, living yoga as a lifestyle, because ultimately that is the main component that will make a difference to all of us and, through us, to the greater mass of society.



Worldwide, there has been an enormous growth of interest in and acceptance of yoga. Yoga is a system that incorporates a lifestyle, a practice, an idea. For example, both karma yoga and bhakti yoga are ideas that you can incorporate into your life. For a karma yogi, selfless service does not remain only an idea; rather, you become someone who expresses and experiences selflessness through action.

A bhakti yogi can experience such intense emotion that eventually the emotion burns the body completely, like Mirabai, whose physical body disintegrated into the image of Krishna. For Kabir, the power of the emotion of bhakti was such that his physical body became transformed into flowers. These people lived that component in their lives. Today there are too many things distracting us and stopping us from becoming bhakti yogis; however, there have been many hatha yogis, raja yogis, karma yogis and jnana yogis who have lived that particular yoga.

A yogi is one who is able to live and experience yoga every day. The ashram environment teaches one to live yoga every moment. To have that deep experience of yoga, certain



preparations have to be made and certain understandings need to be developed. You have to belong to the ashram, just like you have a feeling for your home, which is yours in pleasure and pain, joy and suffering. When you have this feeling of belonging, your involvement – head, heart and soul – will cultivate the potential of the environment for you, both personal and outer.

Experiencing the yamas and niyamas

At Ganga Darshan, living the yogic principles is emphasized. The activities of the ashram, gurukul, or Bihar Yoga Bharati are established so that each step is an understanding of the yamas and niyamas. For example, in karma yoga satya is to be lived. *Satya* does not mean truth; it is knowing yourself, unveiling yourself, recognizing the role of the ego, recognizing the role of aversion, the role of desperation, the role of aggression. It is recognizing your own role and how you can find your balance. You have to find your own solution, as no one can do it for you; even if somebody had that ability, you would only accept the solution you had discovered yourself.

In karma yoga, when you adhere to satya, you see yourself in your true colours, not as a victim and someone else as the manipulator, or as the manipulator and someone else as the victim. That is a power game, and it has its role, yet in the context of yogic life, you have to understand yourself, responding to the demands of the present. When you respond to the demands of the present, that reaction will carry a colour, which needs to be identified. The colour might be compassion, affection, love, hatred or dislike: it could be anything. The purpose of karma yoga for oneself is identifying that colour. Service is something else. The purity it provides you with has to be understood. Karma yoga leads to the attainment of *shaucha*, purity, one of the *niyamas*. You aspire and strive for *shaucha*, and while pursuing that road, you develop *ahimsa*, the non-violent nature.

The *yamas* and *niyamas* complement each other in the process of karma yoga, in the path of *bhakti yoga*, in the systems of *raja yoga*, in the perfection of *kriya yoga*, and the process of awakening through *kundalini yoga*. Take *mouna* as an example. If you can't stop the external chattering with words, how can you stop the internal chattering with the unconscious and the subconscious? If you are happy about failing in *sanyam*, balanced restraint, outside, how can you expect to have *sanyam* inside? Your drive and motivation is to fail in *sanyam* and to inspire others to fail as well. Attainment of failure is your right, yet you are free to leave that mind outside the walls of Ganga Darshan.

By experimenting with and experiencing the *yamas* and *niyamas* and their role in one's life, in meditation, in *pratyahara* and *dharana*, in the course of time you become like someone writing with an eraser. The impressions remain inside but the darkness goes away; the individual identity remains but the *tamas* goes away. That is the statement of the *Yoga Sutras*. From being a *buddhu*, idiot, one becomes a Buddha, the enlightened one.

– 29 July 2003, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Yoga – Oriental or Occidental

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



East may be east and west may be west; we have to accept the social and cultural differences, but when it comes to the question of problems in life, they are identical. These identical problems are born of the same situation whether it is the occident or the orient. I am thoroughly convinced that except for yoga there is no other way of resolving some of the problems that are universal today.

Western society has been trying to develop the external man for over three centuries, and has lost touch with all those traditions that really develop the inner man. The west has to be re-initiated into that tradition and this initiation has to start from the inner man. The external man has been developed in the western society but there has been a lack of inner awareness. The atom has been split, nature has been discovered, but modern society feels that it is still incomplete. It is in this particular mood of mind that the modern man has started searching for his own base.

The inner man was developed in India for centuries and centuries. This invisible existence, this inner person, this

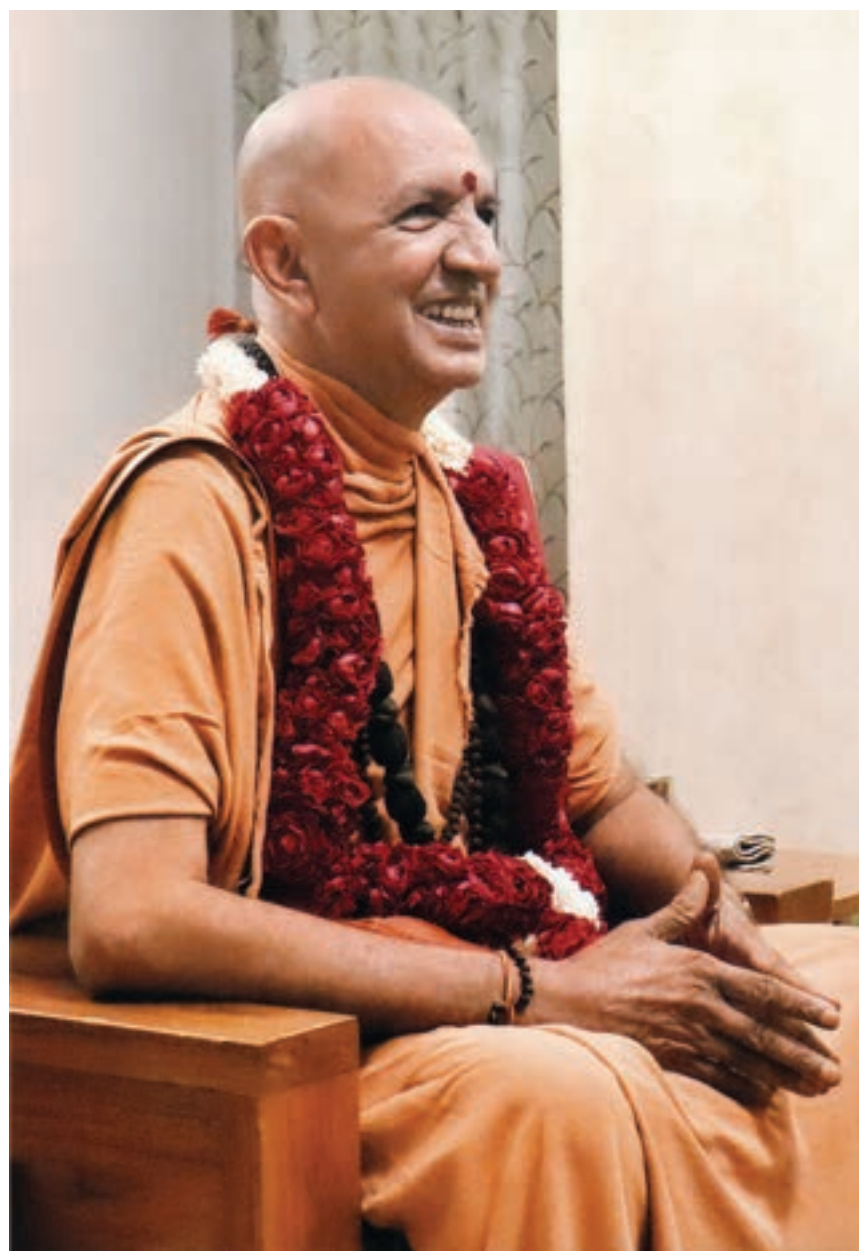
purusha or awareness, is the fundamental principle of human life. Each of us has a physical frame but it is not our personality. Materialism is the physical frame of society but that ignores the whole personality too. Yoga brings us a way to develop inner awareness which is our need.

Nobody has imposed yoga on the west, yoga has been brought to the west by westerners. As a result, whatever was destroyed in the western tradition for the past several centuries is now being reversed through yoga. People in the west are now finding justification for their religion through yoga; many find a correct and convincing interpretation of their religious symbols in this way. It is not Freud nor is it science which has given them this convincing interpretation of the inner being, nor the church: it is yoga.

Traditions such as religion are not the problem; the problem is insomnia, hypertension, an unsteady mind, an imbalance between mind, emotions and the general situation in life. It is not only the west, the whole world is facing a crisis of awareness, and the problem is not psychological, the problem is spiritual. Therefore, it is not pills that will cure even one case of insomnia, drugs will never replace yoga nidra. It is not the medicines, drugs or vitamins which can give you prana and vitality, but it is pranayama which has saved thousands of people, not only in the west but all over the world.

We have to teach yoga in modern society, keeping the different problems of society in mind. Yoga is being experimented with on the level of therapy, and it is being seen on the level of awakening awareness, too. Therefore, all the forms of yoga have to be studied systematically: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, mantra yoga, laya yoga, hatha yoga. The various themes of yoga will have to be taught according to the needs of man today. Man wants something but he does not know what it is; I think that yoga is the answer.

If it were possible for you to meditate and control your mind at one point, and experience the bliss arising, how happy you would be. I see most of you closing your eyes and





दिल्ली के नागरिकों के सहयोग से, बिहार योग विद्यालय,
विश्व योगपीठ, गंगा दर्शन, मुंगेर, बिहार द्वारा प्रारंभ
With the cooperation of the citizens of Delhi, inspired by the
School of Yoga, Vishwa Yogapeeth, Ganga Darshan, Munger, Bihar





peeping within. You are able to go in a bit but then you find the light off and there is no indication light like the one you find on a television. The inner path has to be illuminated, the consciousness has to be guided along that path, and though it is infinite, that is the path to heaven.

We have to be very clear in our attitude towards teaching and learning yoga. We should remember that though we are bringing yoga to others, we are not imposing it. That has never been our tradition. We are against expansionism; our only purpose is to develop awareness, to develop knowledge. If a disciple comes and if we find him sincere and receptive, we do not care who he is. It does not matter if he comes from any part of the east or west. A sincere aspirant, a sincere disciple, is always given the knowledge.

All the systems of yoga have to be respected. We should not lose sight of the purpose of yoga. While we are talking of transcendental yoga, the higher yoga, we cannot say that hatha yoga is out of the picture. When we talk about the higher spirit or of the self, we should not say that sadhana is out of the picture. It is according to the state of evolution of the aspirant, it is according to the limitations of the mind of the aspirant that suitable forms of yoga have to be given.

If your body is sick, you do not need kriya yoga, even though you may want it; you need hatha yoga. When your mind is like a restless monkey, you need the help of pranayama and mantra. When you are over-emotional and you are not able to check your emotions, bhakti yoga comes to you. In the same manner, when you want to discipline your life and your habits, your body and the systems in the body, the answer is raja yoga – ashtanga yoga. When you want to analyze the nature of the soul or the nature of superconsciousness, it is jnana yoga that is best able to help you.

Still there are people who want to uncover the mysteries, who want to go beyond the limitations of time, who want an answer to those things which their intellect does not know. For instance, you have seen transmigration? Is transmigration

real? If you say, 'No,' then 'Do you have proof?' If you say, 'Yes,' then 'Have you seen it?' Such philosophical problems are part of our life and there are people who want to know the answer. They must get into kundalini yoga; they must get into the higher side of yoga. They must break the mind, explode the external consciousness and get into the inner domain of awareness, to come to a land where they can see these things for themselves.

The east and west are facing identical problems; the problem of the mind. Indians do not have Indian anger; the French do not have French anger. The mental problems, agonies, repentance and guilt, are all identical. Therefore, the way for both east and west should be the same. Yoga is the answer, it is the way, and most people in the street can practise it. If only you know how to give it, if you know how to explain it and if you know how to interpret it.

There are thousands of people in western countries who are suffering from rheumatism, thousands of people in western countries who smoke and do not want to smoke, who are alcoholics and do not want to be alcoholics, who are suffering from nervous breakdowns, who are tired, exhausted and broken. Yoga can help them.

There are thousands and thousands of people in your own country who are suffering from migraine and doctors have exhausted their own ideas. But the simple practice of neti can help them. If just neti can help thousands of people out of migraine, yoga is obviously relevant to western society; we have to be open to it.

We want yoga to flourish in your country and even if you don't want it, yoga has decided to live in your country. We may go away but we will leave yoga with you. This is the heritage of mankind.

*– September 1977, Inaugural Lecture
at the First European Yoga Convention, Zinal, Switzerland*

Rediscovering Yoga

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



The people of Hyderabad as well as all the people who are here today are indeed very fortunate because you have heard two of the mantras given by Swami Satyananda. *Hari Om* is the mantra he gave in Munger; it is the yoga mantra. *Namo Narayana* is the mantra of Rikhia. Both these mantras are very important and they have now entered into your consciousness. They are mantras which recognize the divinity that is within you. And that is the subject matter of yoga: to recognize the divinity that is inside you. You have to recognize it; at present you do not recognize it.

In the *Ramayana* there is a very special moment. In the *Ramacharitamanas* it is described in 'Sundarkand' when Jamavant reminds Hanuman of his greatness. Hanuman has

gone in search of Sita who has been kidnapped by Ravana. He is sent by Rama to locate where Sita is. When he reaches the brink of the ocean, he wonders how he would cross it. At that time Jamavant reminds him of his *siddhi*, psychic ability, to fly. Hanuman knew how to fly, but he did not remember that. Jamavant reminded him at that moment that he had the ability to soar across the ocean and reach the other side. Similarly, we have come here to just remind you of something which you already know, but have forgotten. You have forgotten about that yoga which is your inheritance by virtue of being born in this land of *rishis* and *munis*, sages and saints. It is the inheritance left behind by your ancestors.

We have come here only to remind you; we have not come here to teach you. You already know everything. We are just going to remove the veil which has blurred the memory in your mind. This knowledge was handed down by the *rishi parampara*, tradition of the sages, this great knowledge which is so essential for mankind no matter in which age we live, whether Satya Yuga or Treta Yuga. Of course in the Kali Yuga it is most important, because man has gone very far from the source of his essential nature.

What is yoga? Yoga is to live a natural life, to live a life understanding yourself. At present you don't live that sort of life. If you lived a natural life, your body would tell you what you need to do; you would not have to ask anybody. This body is a product of nature, of the *pancha mahabhootas*, the five essential states of nature, and therefore whatever type of life you choose has to complement them. As the body is a product of nature, any means that you employ to improve yourself have to be natural, not chemical. We intake many things which are not natural and they cause an imbalance in the body. So when we talk of yoga, it is not just asanas and pranayamas that we have to consider. That is a very small portion of yoga. Yoga refers to a yogic lifestyle.

In Rikhia, which is the place of one of the greatest exponents of yoga, Swami Satyananda, we do not teach yoga. It was a

conscious decision not to teach yoga although most people there are trained yoga teachers. We decided that instead of teaching yoga, we should encourage people to live yoga. Just to practise asana for ten minutes in a day is not enough. It is like sinning the whole week and then going for confession on Sunday, and then getting ready to sin the next week. If you fill yourself with toxins the entire week and want to eliminate them in ten minutes, it is not possible. The yogic lifestyle has to be included in your curriculum if you want to improve your lifestyle. People come to yoga when they begin to feel an imbalance in their life, an imbalance in the body, thought or emotions. It is to correct it that they come to yoga. And for this, they have to not just practise yoga, but live a yogic lifestyle.

Yogic lifestyle means two things: balance and discipline. The best example of balance is found in nature. Nature is balanced. The night is balanced by day, heat is balanced by cold. That is how nature acts all the time. It keeps on balancing everything that takes place. That is the balance that you have to bring into your own life, starting with the amount you sleep, eat, talk, think or work. You have to regulate everything. That is called balance: the middle path, no extremes. It is when you live a life of extremes that you tax your body and mind, and then you have to pay the price for that.

The second aspect is that most dreaded word: discipline. If you want to achieve anything in life you have to discipline yourself. A musician has to follow discipline, a businessman has to follow discipline, even a housewife has to follow discipline to run her home. Yoga and discipline go hand in hand. Without discipline you cannot even think about practising yoga.

So this is the yogic lifestyle which you have to think about if you want to include yoga in your curriculum, and not just practise asanas. And that is what you have to carry away from this program.

— March 2008, Hyderabad

Hatha Yoga

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The tradition of yoga began many thousands of years ago. It was started by rishis who were following a specific lifestyle. The lifestyle that the rishis or renunciates in the past used to follow was based on vedic and vedantic principles. Yoga developed as an aid to connect with the idea of Vedanta. What is Vedanta? It literally means ‘the end of knowledge’. Where does knowledge end? When you are able to transcend the duality in life, and experience unity or oneness with the higher nature. That is the theory of Vedanta – recognize the good quality in everyone, inspire people to follow the path of dharma, inspire people to develop *viveka* or discrimination, *vairagya* or dispassion, inspire people to practise yoga and meditation and encourage people to cultivate faith and belief in the higher reality. In this way, in the ancient times rishis defined Vedanta or vedic teachings, so that one could ultimately rise above the consciousness of duality and become one with and merge with transcendental reality. If you keep this in mind,

then the purpose of yoga becomes clear. Yoga becomes an aid to attain what is stated by the vedic or the vedantic philosophy.

Lifestyle

People in society look at yoga as a practice, however yoga has two different parts or compartments. One is the practice and the other is the lifestyle. Every yoga from hatha yoga to kriya yoga, laya yoga, nada yoga, whichever yoga you name, they will always have these two components – the practice and something that you can incorporate in your lifestyle to aid the practice. What do we incorporate in our lifestyle? What is its purpose? The purpose is to develop awareness and create an attitudinal, positive change in mind, thought, behaviour, in responses and actions; to overcome the tamasic influences and expressions that are natural to us in life.

This is quite obvious. You have not gone to any school or you have not asked any teacher or guru how to cultivate anger, jealousy or hatred. However, you do ask a teacher or guru, ‘How can I become more compassionate? How can I become more kind? How can I become more loving?’ Why do you ask that? It indicates that these qualities are not your natural expression.

The natural expression in life is what you experience every day: anger, hatred, jealousy and discontentment. Whatever traits you experience in the course of the day represent the tamasic behaviour of the individual. If you shout, that is a tamasic expression; if you scream and yell, that is a tamasic expression. It is an expression which you are not able to control, despite knowing that you should not yell or scream. It is natural. To be nasty is easy, but to be kind is difficult. It is difficult to be compassionate and kind. That is an indication that the natural expression of our personality is tamasic. When we seek the positive and sattwic, we ask, ‘How do I do that?’ as it is not a natural expression, yet when we adopt positive attitudes, there is a complete change in our life.

Therefore, every yoga has two compartments. The practice: you can mechanically practise all the techniques of yoga, and

many do that. For decades they practise without awareness, without any change in attitude, without trying to improve the performance of the senses and mind, without improving the performance of emotions. Practice is happening, but there is no change in lifestyle. You are still in the same spot. You may become more flexible and loose physically, yet your mind is still that same wild-natured mind.

How does yoga deal with this aspect? The answer is simple – along with the practice of yoga, you also have to work with your own mind; you have to work with your awareness; you have to work with your attitude and your responses; you have to work to remain more connected with the positive, and less with the negative. This is the reason or the purpose why yamas and niyamas are given in every yoga.

Yamas and niyamas

When we start our education, it is not the university which is important, but the primary school. It is in the primary school that you learn how to recognize a-b-c-d, write a-b-c-d, combine them to make small words, combine those to make larger sentences. The basic skill which helps you study in higher education is acquired in the primary class. That is the system.

Hatha yoga is like that primary class; without perfecting hatha yoga even yogis do not go to the other yogas. Our whimsical mind says, 'Okay, I have done this; let me try this today, let me try that tomorrow.' Whereas yogis always say, 'Perfect one thing first, then move to the other.' This perfection in hatha yoga is the initial learning, so that one can easily go through the other classes of raja yoga and other higher yogas. Therefore, to create balance in our lifestyle, to improve our lifestyle and learn to live better, there are twenty yamas and twenty niyamas in hatha yoga. They are not defined separately like they have been defined in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali have a separate chapter on yama and niyama. The yamas and niyamas of Patanjali are not relevant

for hatha yoga, they are relevant only for raja yoga as all of them deal with mental behaviour.

When we come to hatha yoga, you will find modifications or changes in our lifestyle, and they are represented as yama and niyama. As an example, *mitahara* is one of the rules of hatha yoga. *Mitahara* means balanced eating, not stuffing yourself, but eating enough so that maximum energy can be taken from the nourishment, with minimum effort from the body. People who have practised hatha yoga are not aware of this simple niyama of *mitahara*, or having balanced food habits. This balanced food habit is connected to lifestyle, it is connected to your routine; not only to your breakfast, lunch and dinner, but also what you do during the day. It is an awareness that extends through the whole day and possibly until midnight as well. There are many people who like to eat at midnight, open the fridge, take out things, eat and then sleep.

People talk of the yamas and niyamas of raja yoga, but who speaks of the yamas and niyamas of hatha yoga? The hatha yoga yamas are similar to the raja yoga yamas. In fact, one could say that from the hatha yoga selection, Patanjali has chosen a few to incorporate in raja yoga. The hatha yoga yamas also begin with *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* – these four are common. Then hatha yoga moves on to *kshama*, forgiveness. It is an aspect of mental awareness and attitude, so that you are more in control of your reactions and responses so that they are not unconscious. They come into the conscious field of awareness and you are able to manage them in a better manner. Rather than becoming subject to those unconscious emotions and reacting, you are developing the attitude of forgiveness.

Dhriti, endurance, is a yama related to asana. For instance, if you are in the final posture, there should be the capacity to hold and endure the posture. In the 1970s, when Sri Swamiji used to teach us yoga, during the practice of asanas when we were adopting one pose, he would ask us to hold that pose until he went to each one and corrected the posture. Now imagine our group of 300 people here. All of you have to hold

one pose and I go around to each one, correcting your posture. How long will you be in that posture? Sometimes half an hour, sometimes twenty minutes. We were able to perfect the posture in one class due to our endurance.

We had to develop endurance, we had to be in that posture because the guru was watching and we could not move, we could not shift, we could not change. We were all attentive and that developed physical endurance. No matter what the asana was, even *chakrasana*, the wheel pose, which people can only perform for maybe ten seconds, we had to hold it for a long period until he came to check it. By that time, we had found a way to adjust our body so we were comfortable. The first ten minutes used to be difficult, but then the resilience of the body used to kick in and it was a perfect posture, not that we had to try for months to come to that stage. Of course, another big factor was that we were pliable and young, not stiff and advanced in age. So that helped. The aspect of endurance, sustaining a posture for a longer period, has to be there.

Then comes *sthairyam*, steadiness, and *dhairyam*, patience. One should be patient and allow the body to adjust to a posture, not push or demand from the body. One should allow the natural flow of the body and follow that with patience. Then there is *daya*, compassion; *arjavam*, straightforwardness; *mitahara*, balanced or moderate diet; *shaucha*, cleanliness; *manahprasad*, happiness; *mouna*, keeping silence; *indriya nigraha*, restraint of the senses. Then there is *dakshinyam*, politeness, which is interesting. If you are practising yoga or you are starting to practise yoga, you should also develop politeness. It is an awareness of mind, it is a change of attitude, it is a change of perspective. Not only politeness, but *maardavam*, gentleness. This is followed by *bhava shuddhi*, purity of emotion, and *vairagya*, detachment.

Out of the twenty niyamas of hatha yoga, some are *tapas*, self-discipline; *santosha*, contentment; *daanam*, charity, *ishwara poojanam*, worshipping of God; *hri*, modesty; *mati*, discerning intelligence; *pratyaksha*, acceptance; *japa*, mantra repetition;



hutam, sacrifice of ego for spiritual experience. These are some of the niyamas which have been defined in hatha yoga. They are definitely not a moral code of conduct or ethics propagated by yoga, as many western commentators write. The yamas and niyamas are connected to the development of a better quality of nature and character.

These twenty yamas and twenty niyamas of hatha yoga represent the lifestyle component. If you adopt one yama and one niyama per month, in twenty months you would have perfected hatha yoga, because each one of these yamas and niyamas helps to prepare your body and your mind, to receive the benefits of hatha yoga. I am telling you today that yoga is not only practice, but a major component of yoga is lifestyle.

– 19 November 2024, Third Munger Yoga Symposium

The History of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In order to understand and know the correct history of yoga, we will have to rewrite the history. The history we read and know today has been written from time to time with certain political or colonial motives. History, when it is written, should have a motive to record the events, not to fulfil and accomplish the designs of rulers.

The *Bhagavad Gita* was instructed to Arjuna at the end of the cycle of Dwarpa Yuga, at the beginning of Kali Yuga, and according to calculation, 5,100 years have already past. When Hindus perform their daily pooja in the temple, there is a chanting of sankalpa in which every day, one more day is added. It is called the *kuha*. That sankalpa should always be correct because one day is added every day. Much before the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Upanishads were written. In the *Bhagavad Gita* there is reference of the Upanishads. There are references in the *Bhagavad Gita* from which we understand

that the Upanishads were written before the *Bhagavad Gita*. Out of 108 Upanishads, thirty Upanishads are minor, ten are major and the rest are known as simple Upanishads. Among these Upanishads many talk about yoga such as *Yogatattwa Upanishad*, *Yoga Kundalini Upanishad*. They deal directly with yoga, the word yoga and the topic yoga.

In the *Prashnopanishad*, you clearly come across the concept of ida and pingala. They do not say ida and pingala, but *rayu* and *prana*, ray and prana. Ray represents the mind and prana represents the life. These Upanishads were compiled much after the Vedas.

The *Rig Veda* is the most ancient Veda. *Rik* means hymn, also *richa* means hymn. The other Vedas are *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Artharva Veda*. In the Hindu tradition, there is reference to three and sometimes to four Vedas. For the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is said:

Vedatrayi parananta tattvartha jnana manjari.

With the chanting of the *Bhagavad Gita* one will attain the knowledge of the three Vedas and the storehouse of knowledge of the meaning of the tattwa form.

There were certain sects who only recognized three Vedas and did not recognize the fourth, *Artharva Veda*, for the mere reason that it deals with all kinds of sciences such as magic, archery. The *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sama Veda* dealt directly with the atman, Brahman, the supreme being. The subject matter of all the Vedas is para Brahman, or *satyam*, the ultimate truth, while the subject matter of the *Artharva Veda* is life. In the *Artharva Veda* you have a reference to pranayama, yogasanas, different hatha yogic kriyas such as neti, dhauti.

Usha Sukta

The composition of the *Rig Veda* is very complicated because some of the hymns seem to have been written outside India, especially the *Usha Sukta*. There is a *sukta*, an ode, to Usha,

dawn. It is one of the most beautiful compositions in poetry written by anyone, giving a definition and description of dawn. Scholars feel that this hymn must have been composed where dawn is so poetic. It was not written in the Middle East, because in the Middle East when the sun rises it is frightful, because it is going to get very high degree of Fahrenheit. In India sunrise is very simple because it rises every day; 365 days you can see the rising of the sun. If you go to the Arctic area, the polar region where the sunrise is most wonderful because you are waiting for it for days together. Sometimes the sun does not rise for six months. You do not see the sun at all and you want that it should rise. Then one morning when the sun rises, it comes for about an hour and then it sets again. In Norway, above the Nordic region, millions of people go every day to watch the midnight sun.

This hymn to Usha must have been written in such a land. In the Puranas there is a story that relates almost to a civilization at the North Pole. The name of the rishi was Dhaumya. He came to a kingdom at the North Pole, which would not have been a snow region. It must have been a thriving civilization some thousands of years ago. The prince and the prime minister's son were playing and they were very rude to Dhomya. The rishi Dhomya wanted to be guided to some place where he could rest at night. These two kids misbehaved with him and Dhomya got furious.

The next morning the whole kingdom was buried under snow. This story indicates the coming of the snow age in the North Pole. Prior to that a civilization must have existed. Some of the hymns of the *Rig Veda* like the *Usha Sukta* composed in the arctic polar region, where a civilization was thriving, could not have been earlier than 45 to 50,000 years. If you are talking about 45 to 50,000 years, then that gives you the latest date in connection with the history of yoga.

However, we have another difficulty here. 45,000 years ago a great continent merged into the Atlantic Ocean. That civilization is known as Atlantis civilization. According to

my studies, which are by no means complete yet, the Atlantis civilization was the mother civilization of the yoga culture. This continent did not merge all of a sudden, it must have taken a few centuries. The people migrated with the knowledge they had and came to different countries where they took the message of yoga.

The submerging of the Atlantis civilization and the history of the polar region must have taken place between 45,000 to 60,000 years ago. In the *Rig Veda* there are references of planetary conjunctions, *graha yoga*. Some of the scholars like Max Muller, Griffith, Wilson have pointed out that these planetary conjunctions took place 45,000 years ago. They have fixed the date also. So these hymns of the *Rig Veda* were written over 40,000 years ago.

You can believe how many centuries must have proceeded for the perfection of such a culture, people, a nation, which can write the most beautiful poetic hymns 45,000 years ago. A primitive culture just could not emerge and start writing it. So much before the period of the *Rig Veda* there must have been a culture already existing. In the *Rig Veda* you have a clear concept of the philosophy of yoga: about dhyana, concentration and the processes through which you can awaken your consciousness or you can elevate the level of your atman.

In earlier texts you do not find references to those yoga practices which relate to the treatment of diseases, because people were very healthy. They did not have many sicknesses of the type we have today. Therefore, when they write about yoga, they always say that through the practices of yoga the realm of maya and the realm of avidya is transcended.

In the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, the first of the Upanishads and the last chapter of the *Yajur Veda*, there are six mantras. It is said that those people who are only involved in the matter of the senses and mind, their spirit enters into the area of darkness, but those who involve in the path of the spirit, that is dhyana yoga, they still enter a darker region. Further it is said that there should be a combination of the two; the world of the senses



and the world of the spirit, both must be evolved side by side. This is a clear indication to karma yoga and dhyana yoga. A combination of karma yoga and a combination of dhyana yoga is hinted at.

Latin America

In 1973, when I was in Colombia for a big conference organized by our institution, I went to the south of Colombia. There are wild forests and not many people live there. First we went by helicopter, then by jeep, then I rode on a donkey. There were many people and swamis from different places with me. That area is called San Agustin and it is considered to be a museum. There is no building, and it is spread over a very big area of forest maybe hundreds of miles.

We took many photographs and printed them on the front cover page of the *YOGA* magazine for the last two years. These stone carvings are so wonderful that they speak their story by themselves.

I saw the stone carving of neti kriya. A person taking a lota and practising neti. Of course there were stone statues of padmasana, swastikasana, siddhasana, vipareeta karani, bhujangasana, vajrasana, vrishchikasana and many other asanas, also of uddiyana bandha. Hundreds of asanas in that wild area, so now you understand how far this has gone.

I have also travelled in different areas in Mexico and went to different temples of Shiva in remote areas. They are not very much looked after by the government, but still the people of the locality look after them. After a brief study, we have come to conclude that the civilization in Colombia preceding the invasion of the Spanish, Dutch, English people, like the different races of the Incas, Aztecs, Chibchas were well conversant with the principles of yoga

The story goes that when the Spanish invaded there was a temple in every community, there used to be a temple at the top of the mountain where they consecrated their daughters. They used to live in those temples. Those temples were dedicated to Surya, for Incas were sun worshippers and did Surya pooja. They dedicated their daughters to that sun temple and used to dress in white and yellow, yellow colour means vasanti, and white colour is life. They used to live the life of sannyasins, not much is known as to what sadhana they did but it is known that they did not mix with the general public at all and they were only worshipping Surya. Whether this was the external Surya remains to be interpreted.

When the Spanish people invaded, they killed all of them. They packed all the gold and sent it to Europe. There is a written document. The letters written are now a part of the document of man's cruelty upon innocent people who were dedicated to spiritual life and a non-political culture. Spiritual people are not dedicated to the political culture; they do not

understand it. Just because we do not understand the political culture does not mean that we have to be massacred.

It is believed that the king in Colombia, on one full moon night, did some tantric ceremony and the gold powder came showering on him. Due to his tantric worships, he was completely buried under gold powder, and that is also the reason the name of the Colombian airport in Bogotá is El Dorado. This story resembles the story of Karna of the *Mahabharata* who did tantric worship in Munger which was his capital. He also received gold due to his worship to Devi and distributed the same to his subjects.

The people in Colombia are very rich in gold. In the museums you see nothing but gold. In Indian museums you find only Buddha statues of this granite and different stones. There you find everything is out of gold from the plate to the brassieres. I have seen golden brassieres finer than the brassieres our ladies wear, because they were very expert people and knew to work with gold very well. These people have a tradition of yoga much before. Then their culture was destroyed by the political system and this wild forest was left. San Agustin does not represent their culture. Colombians should have named this museum after their last king who was murdered. The Spanish invaders invited him to surrender and he said he would not surrender. They battled for days and they could not manage. Finally, these people said that they would become his friends. They were innocent. The Spanish arranged a dinner for him, he came unarmed and was killed. To such a man, this museum must have been dedicated.

Similarly, you go to south of France, to south of Ireland, you go to Scandinavian countries, then from there you go to Afghanistan, India, Tibet, South-East Asia and up to Vietnam. There seems to have been a belt where the yogic science was very much known to the people. We have been collecting a lot of evidence in Scandinavian countries. There is a brilliant swami there who has studied the yogic tradition in Scandinavian countries and has found in the old culture,



the concept of kundalini, ida, pingala and sushumna, and the awakening of the inner spirit. From all these details we come to a conclusion that the culture of yoga is very ancient.

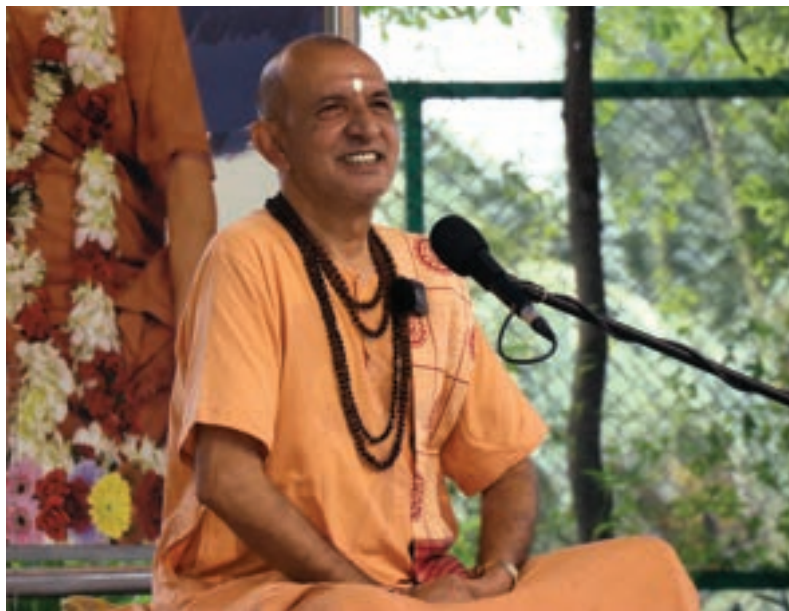
Of course it came to a sudden halt due to political systems. Political systems everywhere are responsible for the destruction of all that is beautiful that man has created. The science of politics is a science that inherits total selfishness. The political system is based on selfishness and the cult of power. Not all but most power hungry men must get power by hook or by crook. It does not matter which religion you uphold, it does not matter which religion you kill, it does not matter which frontiers you break and which ones you defeat – politicians are not interested in it. They are very selfish and conscious in order to get the lever of the power. They can prove anything, they can say and write anything, and the history you read today is written by these people.

This is how the culture of yoga was destroyed little by little in every country because the power went into the hands of the people who were not virtuous, but who became great heroes by killing people and raging wars. This is the way history was influenced by people.

– 19 October 1981, Munger

Neuroplasticity

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



All the practices of yoga, meditation and concentration lead to neuroplasticity, provided you allow new connections to be made. What is meditation? Once you are able to release the tensions and stresses of the mind, and connect with the feeling of peace and balance, then new connections will develop.

What is pratipaksha bhavana? It is to develop new connections in the brain, so that you can live the positive component of life with greater ease and facility. Therefore, it can be said that every spiritual practice of every tradition: any yoga, raja yoga or meditation leads to better connections of the brain and better expressions of the mind. So, being sincere and regular in your own sadhana will help.

– 1 September 2024, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

1. *Get up at 4 am daily.* This is *Brahmamuhurta* which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.
2. **Asana:** Sit in *padma*, *siddha* or *sukha asana* for *japa* and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do *sirshasana* and *sarvangasana* for keeping up *brahmacharya* and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty *pranayamas*.
3. **Japa:** Repeat any mantra as pure *Om* or *Om Namo Narayanaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, *Om Saravanabhavaya Namah*, *Sita Ram*, *Sri Ram*, *Hari Om* or *Gayatri*, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.
4. **Dietetic discipline:** Take *sattwic* food, *shuddha ahara*. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet, *mitahara*. Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, dhal and bread without any chutney. Do not ask for extra salt for dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.
5. **Have a separate meditation room under lock and key.**
6. **Charity:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six paise per rupee.
7. **Swadhyaya:** Study systematically the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata*, *Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama*, *Lalita-Sahasranama*, *Aditya Hridaya*, *Upanishads* or *Yoga Vasishttha*, the Bible,

Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have *shuddha vichara*, pure thoughts.

8. **Brahmacharya:** Preserve the vital force, *veerya*, very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation, *vibhuti*. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.
9. **Prayer slokas:** Get by heart some prayer-slokas, stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the asana before starting japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.
10. **Satsanga:** Have satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.
11. **Fast on Ekadasi:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.
12. **Japa mala:** Have japa mala, a rosary, around your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.
13. **Mouna:** Observe *mouna*, vow of silence, for a couple of hours daily.
14. **Speak the truth:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.
15. **Reduce your wants.** If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.
16. **Never hurt anybody:** *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*. Control anger by love, *kshama* and *daya*, forgiveness and compassion.
17. **Do not depend upon servants:** Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.
18. **Self-analysis:** Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily a diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.
19. **Fulfil duties:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct, *sadachara*.



20. **Surrender to God:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God, *saranagati*.

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas.

This will lead you to Moksha.

All these niyamas or spiritual canons
must be rigidly observed.

You must not give leniency to the mind.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DONATIONS

Donations to the ashram will be received only under the following 'Heads of Accounts':

1. **General Donation**

To Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust or Yoga Research Foundation Funds will be utilized towards developing and furthering the Yoga activities.

2. **Corpus Donation**

To Bihar School of Yoga Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Bihar Yoga Bharati Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Yoga Publications Trust Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund, Yoga Research Foundation Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund Interest income generated from **CORPUS (MOOLDHAN) FUND** shall be utilized towards all the activities of the Society/ Trust.

3. **CSR Donation**

Funds will be utilized towards CSR activities.

Therefore, devotees are requested to send donations to the above-mentioned account heads only.

Donations towards Bihar School of Yoga may be made through 'SB Collect Online Donation Facility' by scanning the **QR code**.

Donations can also be sent through cheque/ D.D./E.M.O. drawn in favour of:

**Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati,
Yoga Publications Trust or Yoga Research Foundation**
payable at Munger.

A covering letter mentioning the purpose of donation, mailing address, phone number, email ID and PAN should accompany the same.





Rishi Yoga – Yoga Upanishad

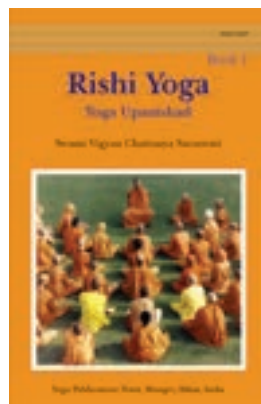
Book 1

Swami Vigyan Chaitanya Saraswati

341 pp, soft cover, ISBN 978-93-48677-15-0

Rishi Yoga – Yoga Upanishad Book 1 is a compilation of the yogic teachings from four Yoga Upanishads: *Mandala Brahman Upanishad*, *Shandilya Upanishad*, *Yoga Kundali Upanishad* and *Darshan Upanishad*.

The series *Rishi Yoga* presents the philosophy, theory, practice and intent of the yogic tradition. The books focus on the rishi's thoughts related to yogic techniques and practices, yet leave the philosophical content open for aspirants to explore for themselves.



New

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

Yoga Publications Trust, PO Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar 811 201, India

Tel: +91-09162 783904, +91-098358 92831



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



Websites and Apps

www.biharyoga.net

The official website of Bihar Yoga includes information on: 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 or by scanning the QR code, and as apps for Android and iOS devices as prasad.



Living Yoga Lifestyle Sadhana

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

YOGA & YOGAVIDYA Online

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

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

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

Other Apps (for Android and iOS devices)

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

- Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers, India
Under No. BIHENG/2002/6305

ISSN 0972-5717

Yoga Peeth Events & Yoga Vidya Training 2025

Bihar School of Yoga Yogavidya Training

<i>Jan-Dec</i>	Ashram Life Experience
<i>Sep 22-30</i>	Raja Yoga/Bhakti Yoga Training
<i>Oct 3-11</i>	Hatha Yoga/Karma Yoga Training
<i>Nov 1-15</i>	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
<i>Nov 16-Jan 30 2026</i>	Sannyasa Experience (national/overseas aspirants)

Bihar Yoga Bharati Yogavidya Training

<i>Nov 1-Dec 31</i>	Yogic Studies, 2 months (English)
---------------------	-----------------------------------

Events

<i>Jun 23-Jul 9</i>	Ved Parayan
---------------------	-------------

Monthly Programs

<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<i>Every 4th, 5th & 6th</i>	Guru Bhakti Yoga
<i>Every 12th</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamansas



For further information, as well as the online version of YOGA, visit the official website of Bihar Yoga at biharyoga.net or scan the QR code.