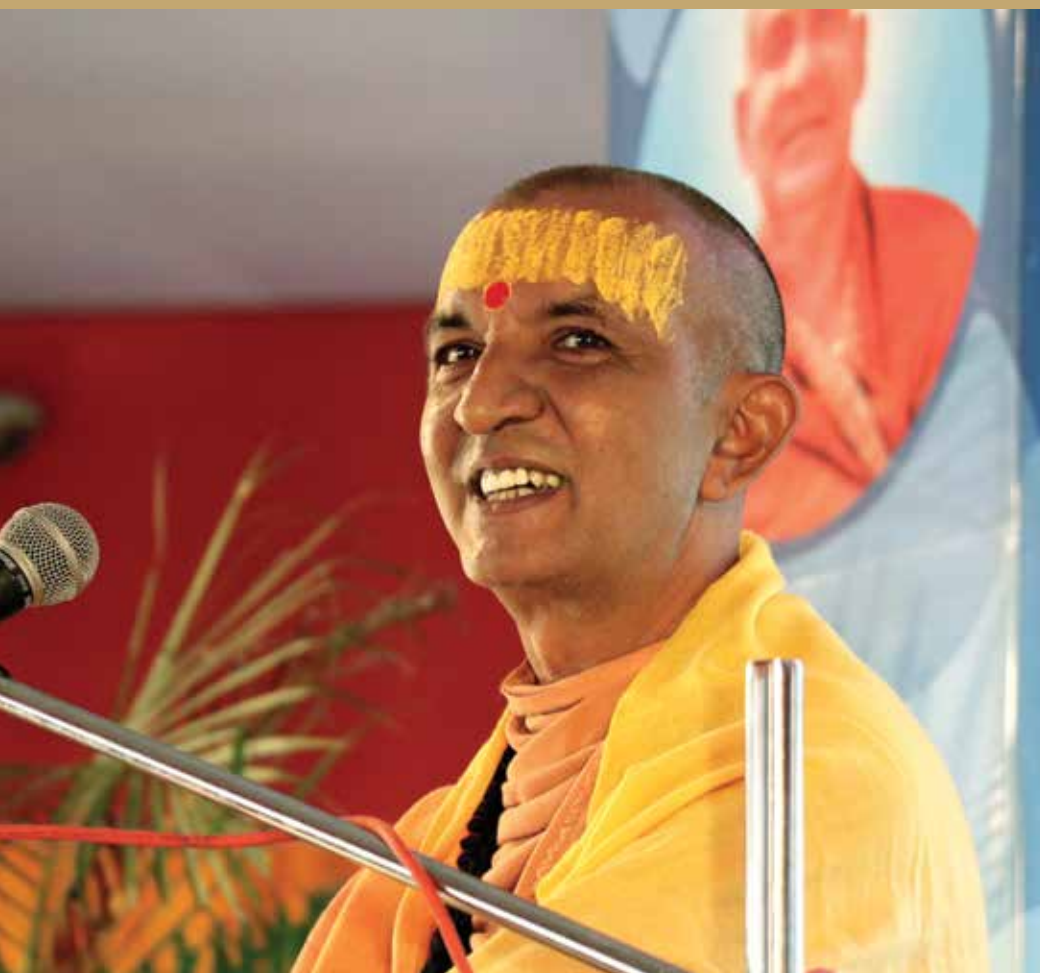




Yoga Chakrodaya

Munger Yoga Symposium 2018



Book 2/3

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Book Two



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Satsangs on the 2nd Chapter

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

25–27 October 2018, Afternoons



25 October 2018

Stepping into the 2nd Chapter



Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity,
Sincerity, simplicity, veracity,
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Adaptability, humility, tenacity,
Integrity, nobility, magnanimity,
Charity, generosity, purity.

Practise daily these eighteen ITIES,
You will soon attain immortality.
Brahman is the only real entity,
You cannot attain this in the university,
Madras University, Harvard University,
Or even Oxford University,
But you can attain this in GDVYP.

This song of Swami Sivananda describes eighteen different qualities that a human being should develop and master in order to be a true human being. This is what he called living the divine life in this material life. If you are able to imbibe the positive qualities in yourself while living in the materialistic world, and begin to express these positive qualities to uplift and correct yourself, then that is the beginning of divine life. When Swami Sivananda conceived of yoga and gave instructions to our master, Swami Satyananda, to propagate yoga, he gave three instructions: yoga for the cultivation of the qualities of head, heart and hands; intelligence, emotion and performance. Sri Swamiji developed the Yoga Chakra, the wheel of yoga, with this idea.

Jivana chakra and yoga chakra

If you look at a wheel, in the centre is the hub, from which emanate the spokes. At the opposite end of the hub, the spokes are held together by the outer rim. The inner hub is the pure, transcendental state of consciousness, the pure state of life and being. From this transcendental state emerge the six spokes.

The six spokes are defined by Sri Krishna as: *Manah shashthanindriyani prakritisthani karshati*, the five senses and the mind. The senses and the mind are connected to the outer rim, and that is our life. Every moment of our life, we are utilizing the senses and the mind. They give us the experience, the information, the understanding, the knowledge and the skills necessary to survive in life. We are the wheel, we survive in this life utilizing our five senses

and mind, and we emerge from the source of creation. That source may be called the Big Bang, Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, or God. You can decide what you want to call it. Yoga calls it Ishwara, the unchanging reality, while life is the changing spectrum.

If life is a chakra, a wheel, then our effort to transform and change is also part of the effort of the chakra. Thus, from the material perspective, the mind, the senses and the life experience make the wheel of life: *jivana chakra*. In the spiritual dimension, this jivana chakra becomes the Yoga Chakra. The Yoga Chakra is only a reflection of the jivana chakra. The wheel of life and the wheel of yoga are not separate. They are one and the same. However, when we talk about the wheel of yoga, different ideas and practices come in. When we talk about the wheel of life, then understanding of the senses, the mind and the life experiences are prominent. Ultimately, the two merge together.

The wheel of yoga represents the return journey from our life expressions back to the source by following the spokes back to the hub. That is the theory of kundalini yoga as well. The descent of kundalini from the higher states to the lower states in mooladhara has brought us into existence. The ascent of kundalini again up the same path, by the same process, will give us experience of the higher nature. Just as the kundalini has given the experience of the world and also gives the experience of the higher nature, it is the same with the chakra. When we emerge we are connecting with the world; when we centre ourselves, we return to the source. Therefore, in Yoga Chakra the different branches of yoga are a means to return to the source.

Expand before contracting

Before using yoga as the means to return to the source, which is the experiential, second chapter of yoga, you must understand how the awareness and perception need to be broadened in the outer dimension. This is an important aspect of yoga: to first expand and enlarge the awareness in

the outer dimension, the external world. Then you begin to withdraw. When you are expanding in the outer dimension, you use the same six yogas, and you control, guide and direct the same six senses of life.

Through hatha yoga you manage the senses, the sense experiences and the pranas which are physical and psychological in nature. Through karma yoga you maintain your balance between the pranic infusion into the senses and the pranic depletion from the senses. Swami Sivananda used to say to his disciples that one hour of meditation demands three hours of hard, physical work to channel the subtle pranic flows that become activated when you internalize yourself. Karma yoga becomes the medium through which the prana shakti is balanced. Through raja yoga and bhakti yoga, the intellect and emotions are balanced. Through kriya yoga and jnana yoga, psychic perception, wisdom and understanding are attained. I am not using the word knowledge, I am using the word understanding, which means that you have understood the knowledge.

While progressing through hatha yoga, raja yoga and kriya yoga, and working with karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga, your lifestyle is affected. You become more and more aware of how you are living and what you can do to balance that lifestyle so that there is more relaxation, awareness and time for cultivating a spiritual identity. When you practise these yogas, apart from developing flexibility and adaptability of body and mind, there is also a change in nature and behaviour. It is this nature and behaviour in life, the outer rim, that makes you positive or negative. Positive and negative, good and bad experiences are based on your personality: how you see, perceive, understand, accept or realize things, how you know what is correct and what is wrong. All these things happen at the life level, not at the consciousness level. Consciousness is free; it is the expression of the mind that has to become positive at the rim level.



Connect with the positive

To improve the experiences and qualities of life, it is not hatha yoga or raja yoga that you need, but yamas and niyamas. As mentioned previously, yoga does not define yamas and niyamas as moral and ethical codes of conduct. For yoga does not see morality or ethics as separate from the expression of human nature. If you are a balanced, harmonious and aware individual, then all your expressions, behaviours and thoughts will be appropriate. You don't have to think of ethics and morality if you are living a correct life. If you are not living a correct life, then you may think about ethics and morality.

Yoga says that as you purify and deepen your realization about yourself, improvement that takes place in the human nature, personality and psyche brings out the positive qualities. This expression of the positive qualities is known as yama and niyama. When you are able to curb your hate and love the person you hate, it is a condition and awareness that you have developed. That is yama and that is niyama. Change in the tamasic nature of the mind and experiencing and expressing the positive and sattvic nature of the mind is yama and niyama. Therefore, asana, pranayama and meditation are not going to improve your lifestyle, expressions and interactions. An effort to connect with the positive in life will do it.

Each yoga has its own set of yamas and niyamas, just as raja yoga, from the Samkhya perspective, has five yamas and five niyamas. Raja yoga from the classical perspective has more than twenty yamas and niyamas, as they deal with different aspects of the inner behaviour. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* defines yamas and niyamas, *Gheranda Samhita* defines bhumikas. Similarly in karma yoga, kriya yoga, jnana yoga, there are defined yamas and niyamas, which represent the perfection of a technique and attainment of a state of being.

Lifestyle yamas and niyamas of yoga are not commonly known, as no one has studied them. Even the yamas and niyamas of raja yoga would not be known if the book wasn't available. The yamas and niyamas of other yogas are also not known to people, as they only focus on the aspects related to the body. They say, "I am focusing on the body and I don't care for yamas and niyamas." Such statements indicate that you are not practising yoga. In the absence of yamas and niyamas, yoga is only physical exercise. It is when you bring in the yamas and niyamas in your life that you are connecting with the good and the positive, the constructive and the creative, and allowing the space for them to manifest and improve your life.

Light the incense of happiness

The lifestyle yamas begin with happiness. That is the first yama of yoga, and the first niyama is japa. These yamas and niyamas were introduced during the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satras. *Adhyatmic* means spiritual, *samskara* means condition. What is spiritual? Religion connects spirituality with awareness of God. Yoga connects spirituality with awareness of purity and correctness. That is the main difference between the idea of spirituality prevalent in society and the idea of spirituality in yoga. In yoga it is purity and inner awakening. From the religious point of view, spirituality is awareness of God. There is a difference in the understanding between cultures and groups, although the same word is being used. For example, Indians and westerners will have different ideas regarding spirituality.

For western society, the understanding of spirituality is based on religion. The understanding of spirituality in Asia is not based on religion but on personal experience of people who have gone through the process and have realized something different: that we are all part of the same universe, the same family. Religion says, “You have to believe,” for it is based on belief systems. Spirituality is based on “You have to discover,” for you have to see what lies within the impure mind and heart. The impure mind is the expression of greed, passion, aggression, infatuation, arrogance and jealousy. The pure mind is wisdom and understanding. If you realize the purity underneath the layers of the dirt in the mind, that is spirituality, according to yogic thinking. This is what you have to discover within yourself.

There is no use talking about peace if you are unable to experience peace yourself. There is no use talking about happiness if you cannot remain happy for the majority of the waking time. Happiness should become the natural nature of your personality, not worry and anxiety. Yet the opposite has taken place. Worry and anxiety have become the natural expressions of every human mind and happiness has taken a backseat. It should change: majority of the time happiness

and at certain times, when there are tensions and problems, worry and anxiety is okay. Twenty-four hours of worry and anxiety with a few moments of happiness thrown in between, that is not how God saw His children. God wants all children to be happy and not worried and anxious.

Make the effort to be happy, by looking at the cause of your pain and suffering. Is it you, your expectation, your ambition, or another person who creates blocks and barriers: discover that and try to manage it. If it is you, then change yourself so that you can become happier. It won't happen overnight, yet it will happen.

This is the month of October, which as a rule in this ashram, is called the happy month. Everybody has to be happy. Unhappiness is a condition that exists in everybody's mind. In that condition of unhappiness, you close yourself and brood upon what is happening to you, you feel depressed and dejected, or you feel aggressive and express yourself forcefully.

Meditation is a good way to help observe the mind. However, after you have observed the mind, can you consciously and wilfully change the expression of the mind? In your practice of antar mouna you may pick one thought and discover where it is coming from. After discovering that, you might even clear the thought, yet you have cleared only one aspect, one corner of the room. What about the lingering smell of dejection, depression and anxiety that thought has left behind? You cleared the room, but did you light incense to get rid of the lingering odour? If you light incense to remove the lingering odour of negativity, then it has to be the incense of happiness. The incense has to be that of happiness, not even of mantra, as mantra will again make you withdraw.

You have to understand the expressions of your mind and make the effort to positively change those expressions every instant, every moment. This is the most difficult sadhana. You think of yoga as classroom training, 'I am going to be doing this and this and this', 'I am going to be taught this and this



and this.’ Beyond the classroom, you live your normal life, not your yogic life. A person who involves with yoga for only a few hours during the day cannot expect to cultivate spiritual awareness. They can only put on a mask of righteousness and correctness on their faces and pretend to be yogis. To be a real yogi, you have to do the sadhana. Sadhana is not the classroom training, sadhana is continuous awareness: self-observation, self-correction; self-observation, self-correction; self-observation, self-correction.

Break your limits and make muscle memory

You have to extend yourself beyond your limits. Even in the practice of asanas, you practise one asana for maybe 10 rounds, then you get bored and move on to the next one. Then you feel that your body is slightly tired, so you lie down to relax. There is often more relaxation in an asana class than the actual practice of asanas. You don’t do an asana

class, you do a relaxation class. Every time you feel a little tiredness, you say, 'Oh, I am going to practise shavasana.' That is incorrect.

When you go to the gym to build up your body, do you fall flat after five rounds of lifting the dumb-bell? On the contrary, you try to increase your capacity by increasing the number of times you lift the dumb-bell. If it is five times today, you make it six times tomorrow, seven times the day after, until you are able to do one hundred lifts. Then you say, "I feel healthy. I have improved." Here you increase the effort every day, and in yoga you decrease the effort every day. That should not happen. In yoga too you have to increase the effort, from ten times this week to fifteen times the next week, to twenty times the second week, to twenty-five times the third week, to thirty times the fourth week, to fifty times the fifth week. If you do this, you will see what happens. Within one month you will be flying in the air, for the muscles of the body will develop a positive memory.

Right now your muscles have no memory of any posture except that of shavasana. I was talking to a senior sannyasin as to when was the last time he had done vrishchikasana. He said, "Oh, that would be in the sannyasa course in 1973." I said, "Can you do it today?" He said, "Let me try. So many years have gone by, I don't know if I can do it, but let me try." He tried, and in one go he was back in exactly the same posture. This was due to muscle memory. This is an important thing to know: that muscles have memories. When you practise an asana, you are training your body. You are not merely guiding the body to come into a posture, you are creating an unconscious memory. That memory is the real reason for improvement in health. Therefore, the practice of asanas has to be extended. Not that you do ten rounds and then shavasana. Keep on increasing the number of rounds.

In our training with Sri Swamiji, we used to do each asana for half an hour. How many rounds of pawanmuktasana can you do in half an hour? Practically one hundred rounds of each movement, and our body became completely flexible in

three days without any aches or pains. That is how Sri Swamiji trained us to do it, and therefore in the first practice of an asana we were able to master it. Due to the repetitions, the body developed its own asana memory. Even today, although I haven't done many of the advanced asanas for years, I can do them without any preparation as the memory is there and a condition has been created. Can you say the same of your own yoga practice, which consists of going into shavasana after ten rounds of anything? The memory being created is that of shavasana, not of the asana.

You have to take that extra step. You have to go beyond your limitation, but not exert yourself. It has to be done in a proper, comfortable and easy manner, yet it has to be done. This is called sustained and continuous effort. It leads to a deeper experience of yourself and you again become a learner of yoga.

Right now, you identify yourself as a teacher of yoga. I aim to ensure that by the time you leave the ashram gates you will be calling yourself a learner of yoga. You may be a teacher of yoga for others, the person who teaches them the basics of the Satyananda Yoga system. However, in your life, in your journey, you are not a teacher; you are a learner. That awareness, that understanding has to come. If this happens, then the purpose of this Symposium will be attained.

Practise awareness and relaxation every moment

You can change your mindset if you are focused on the two principles of awareness and relaxation. The idea of awareness and relaxation is not only to be incorporated in your yoga practice, but in every moment of the day as well. You are continuously engaged throughout the day. Your senses, your time, your mind are all engaged, and this engagement makes you lose sight of awareness and relaxation. That is a big flaw in your responses. If you are able to remain aware and relaxed, then fifty percent of the difficulties and challenges that you face in your mind or body can be easily overcome. When stressed people come and practise meditation, they

feel that they have relaxed and the stress has lessened. That is a result of connecting with relaxation and concentration.

Relaxation and concentration have to be developed. Today you practised kaya sthairyam, stillness of the body. It was not the practice that you have done in the past where you simply focused on stilling your body. Rather, you had to create a foundation and an awareness to experience the stillness of the body. This involved visualization of the body as a pyramid with a triangle under you. It changed the whole experience of kaya sthairyam. Your body as a pyramid connected with earth and the prithvi tattwa. As you followed the instructions and the awareness deepened, you felt that firmness settling in. You became the pyramid and came to a state where the body did not divert the awareness to any ache, pain or problem area. Perfect stillness was felt, and this was only at the physical level.

In all meditation classes, kaya sthairyam is an over-emphasized practice without any understanding of what it really means. People think that by sitting down, forcing the body to be still and closing the eyes, they can meditate. No. Stillness also has to be a gradual, progressive process. There is body stillness, then there is the stillness of the senses; one by one each sense perception has to be stilled, pacified and balanced. Therefore, there are six levels of kaya sthairyam. Each of these is a powerful practice and together they lead to sensory pratyahara. It is only when you have perfected sensory pratyahara that you can move into deeper states of meditation.

All of you think of kaya sthairyam as merely stillness of the body, since the name means that and since only that level was taught in the first chapter. “Be still,” only that much was defined. That was lesson number one. Now, in lesson number two, you are being taught how to be still, how to stop the agitation, how to disconnect yourself from the sense objects and connect with something else. Disconnection is not the end. After disconnection, you have to do something else to generate a more subtle experience. Thus, it is a complete sequential process.

Relaxation, Awareness, Concentration



There is a need to incorporate different components of awareness into your practice. The practices of the second chapter are not different from what you have been practising previously. However, the understanding and the awareness has to evolve, and the second chapter is an effort to develop that understanding and experience of yoga.

Whenever you do anything, whether it is asana, pranayama, relaxation, meditation or any other form of activity, even the normal day-to-day activities, there has to be relaxation, awareness and concentration in all actions and

efforts of life. The asanas that you are doing during the Symposium are nothing new; however, the components that have been included in the practice have altered the experience of the practice. They are not physical exercise any more. If you do them without the components of yoga, an asana only remains physical exercise. When you bring in the yogic components, exercise becomes asana.

Create positive memory at all levels

Asana means creation of a physical condition in the body, creation of a muscular memory. Just as there is memory in the brain, in chitta, there is memory in the muscles and in the cells. Everything in life has memory, from the smallest cell to the most abstract chitta. Muscles, body, mind, everything has memory.

The memory has to be built up to become positive and strengthening to the individual. It has to become positive and it has to strengthen the individual. That is the role of asana. The role of asana is not only exercise but to create a positive, healthy memory at all levels: cellular, muscular, right up to the brain and mind. This is how the concept of koshas comes into play. No matter what practice you do, even if it is physical, ultimately it should be able to stimulate something in the deeper layers of the human personality. Yogis relate this to the koshas, the different dimensions of the personality that are interconnected. It is the interconnectedness that allows an asana to lead you into a psychological and spiritual experience.

An asana is a physical activity. Yet, while you are doing it, you are also creating pranic memory. You are creating pranic activity and pranic balance at a subtler level. When pranic balance and pranic memory have been built, the mind is influenced, and balance of mind and of mental vrittis takes place. When there is balance of mind, doors to deeper layers of consciousness open up. As you enter the realm of consciousness, not the interactive mind but the substratum and foundation of life, both micro and macro, then different

experiences begin to arise. You begin to realize the truth and separate untruth from truth, impure from pure. That is the state of satya.

Now you begin to live the life of dharma. You do not have ill intention or the feeling of harm towards anyone. This is the ultimate mental quality: being absolutely harmless; no harm towards anybody, whether in thought, word or deed. Even verbal abuse can harm someone by hitting the person in a sensitive spot. Any behaviour that reflects an attempt at overpowering another person becomes an aggressive act. Therefore, any such act should be contained.

Adding wisdom to negative traits

Sometimes aggression may be necessary, but it should not become the nature of your life. Utilize it as a strength, not as a continued condition of your life. The negatives in your life can be utilized as strengths at any time, provided you have the wisdom and the knowledge of how. Sages have used anger to give people a message. Sage Durvasa is famous as the angry sage, yet anger was not what he felt inside. He was free from the anger within. What he expressed externally was to enforce a positive idea, provide a direction and eliminate the karmas of individuals. He was using the anger as a medium to attain this.

To use anger in this manner requires that quality of awareness, wisdom, and the ability to see the individual's past, present and future destination. All these faculties have to be alive. It takes exceptional people, such as the sages of the past who used negative strengths for positive outcomes. If the outcome is positive, then the quality is not seen as negative or detrimental. It is a controlled act. The yogis perceived the expression of human nature in this way. They realized that good and bad are all part of life. If you can improve or balance out the negative, it will be your crowning glory. In the absence of this ability, if you can restrain yourself and make the effort to do the right thing all the time, that will be your sadhana.



Interconnectedness and relaxation

The yogis realized that everything is connected, whatever you do will influence all other dimensions. If you work with pranamaya kosha, it will influence the body and also the subtle levels. If you work with annamaya kosha, it will influence the subtle levels too. If you work with manomaya kosha, it will influence the physical and the subtle both. Therefore, you have to learn how to relax these conditions as you experience them, the conditions that arise in the body and in the mind.

If you are able to relax yourself in the most extreme of situations, then you have succeeded in life. Even in the practice of asana, if you are able to relax yourself in the most difficult of asanas, it will benefit you. If you focus on the difficulty and the hurt and the pain, thinking, 'I can't, I will dislocate my joint', then it is a state of mind that does not know the ability of the body. You are only creating tension by all the pulling and pushing to try to get into the posture. Recognize the limitations of the body, and be relaxed. If you push and pull to come into a posture, that is anti-yoga and anti-asana. In yoga, including asana, things happen spontaneously when there is relaxation.

The interplay of awareness and concentration

Awareness is the second aspect. You have been learning to be aware, but from where? In your yoga practice, you are told to be aware of the right hand thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, fourth finger. Where do you see them from? Inside or outside? You do not see your body from the outside; you take your mind into the part. Your mind is in the finger, your mind is not in the head. The instruction is: take your mind to that part, visualize it, experience what is happening there, feel the sensations. You have been trained to go in, and when you go in your awareness is centred to a point. That focusing of awareness is known as concentration.

When you focus the awareness to come to the state of concentration, you are in reality reducing the scope of awareness. You are confining it to a single point. It is like focusing the light of a torch, bringing it closer and closer until it becomes a point. Here, the light has reduced, it has come to a point but it has reduced in luminosity. That is your state of concentration: a reduced range of awareness.

You have to change this. Normally when you hear, “Become aware of the right hand thumb,” you become aware of yourself from inside the thumb. You look around, and see this big finger all around. You might say to yourself, ‘I am in some form of a long tunnel made out of bones, marrow, blood, skin and cells.’ The next stage of awareness is to not go in; instead, to come out. I have previously given the example that even if I move my finger while talking, I am aware that my finger is moving. How is that awareness possible when my mind is not in the finger and the movement is happening naturally? It is because I am seeing myself from the outside. Just as I can see you move your finger, I see myself moving the finger, turning, talking. I am seeing it all from outside. I am not in the finger or in the speech, I am out here above my head. Therefore, I can even see the droplets of sweat on my face and the sparkle of the water. If my awareness was down in the body, I would not be able to see that. If my awareness is outside, I can see everything.

This is a sadhana. First you go in, so that you are able to focus your awareness into a point where you concentrate, and then you come out so that you can develop a bigger field of awareness and observe everything that you are doing from outside. Awareness and concentration play with each other. Awareness focused becomes concentration; concentration enlarged becomes awareness. When you enlarge concentration it becomes awareness, and when you focus awareness it becomes concentration.

These two concepts now have to be included in the Satyananda Yoga system. If you introduce them in your teaching or even in your practice, you will find a qualitative difference. The students will experience a better result, their brain will open up a bit more, and yours too.

Make living yoga a trend

Satyananda Yoga is a system that brings together all the different forms of yoga. There is hatha yoga and raja yoga: asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, relaxation, concentration; there is jnana yoga: satsang, swadhyaya, self-study; there is bhakti yoga: mantra, bhajan, kirtan, Saturday Mahamrityunjaya mantra; there is karma yoga: not only in the ashram, even at home when you clean, cook, and so on.

Whenever you do anything, develop the attitude of karma yoga. What you do at home, you don't call it karma yoga, you call it work. As a spiritual aspirant, you should be able to say "I am practising karma yoga" even when you are working in the kitchen at home or making coffee. You have to bring that idea in. If you do so, the idea will come with its own awareness and qualities. Then, even when you make tea, the mental association with what you are doing will be different.

In this manner, all the components of Satyananda Yoga have to be brought into life practice. Until now practising yoga has been a trend. Now we have to make living yoga a trend. Until now practising yoga has been the trend all around, now you have to make the effort to live yoga as a trend.

Pratyahara: Doorway to the 2nd Chapter



During the Symposium, the focus of the practices has been in developing the state of pratyahara. This is one of the first foundations of the second chapter. The foundation of the first chapter was asana, pranayama, and all the other things that you have done so far. The focus of the second chapter, or rather one of its foundational steps, is pratyahara.

Pratyahara is the least understood and the most important of practices after asana. Now, in the second chapter, to develop the awareness and experience of yoga vidya, to create a positive transformation and qualitative change in life, the need is to perfect pratyahara, for pratyahara deals with the mind.

Before meditation

Meditation is a state or condition of mind, not a practice. When you are peaceful, happy, content, without worries and problems, when there is nothing that concerns you and your mind is absolutely free from everything, how do you feel at that time? That is the state of meditation. Once you achieve the state, there is nothing else to search for anywhere. It is a condition and attainment of mind and not an effort of mind. When the same condition of mind continues for an extended period of time, it is known as samadhi, the deepest meditation.

All these are conditions, just as there is the condition of light sleep and deep sleep. In light sleep, if someone comes and shakes you, you will be up instantly. In deep sleep, somebody can be shaking you yet it will be difficult for you to come out. That is meditation and samadhi. The light sleep is meditation and the deep sleep is samadhi. They are experiences of the mind, just as satisfaction from hunger is an experience, not a process. The process involves using your mouth and hands, chewing, swallowing, drinking, settling it. When you have stopped eating and drinking and everything is settled, then you say, "Now I am content." That is an experience. It is not a process; the effort you make to become content is the process.

Meditation is the experience of *shanti*, peace, a condition of harmony and equilibrium. Therefore you don't practise meditation, it happens spontaneously, just as you don't try to go into deep sleep. The movement from light sleep to deep sleep is natural. You don't even know that you are making that transition. The journey from meditation to samadhi

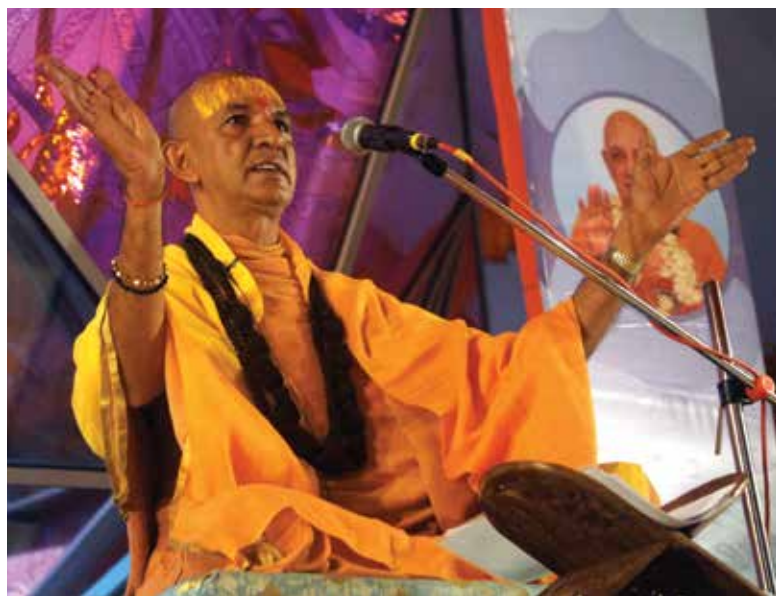
is the same. You don't know the difference between the meditative state and the samadhi state, for the difference does not exist.

That which brings you to this condition of mind is not dharana, the pre-meditative component, but pratyahara, the first step after pranayama. Thus, just as asana is important for the body, pratyahara is important for the senses, pranas and mind.

Reverse feeding

There are two definitions of the word pratyahara. When the word is seen as prati + ahara, it means reverse feeding: what comes at you, you give it back. All your senses are firing information to your brain right now, are you aware of that information going to your brain? All the senses, from skin to taste to smell to sight to hearing are sending information to your brain, yet you are not aware of them. You are aware of only the sound of my voice, as it is the most prominent. That does not negate the functioning of the other senses, they are also functioning one hundred percent. Where is that information being digested and stored and how is it being eliminated? You may say, "The brain does all those functions for me, I don't have to worry about them." Who are you then? You are only the awareness of an experience, nothing more. If that awareness becomes absent, you won't even know who you are. Therefore, don't say that you are the holy spirit when you are not even total awareness, when you are only partial awareness.

You are not aware of the influx of the senses and how your body, brain and mind is consuming all that information and creating different levels of anxiety, stress, feelings, sensations, affections, likes, dislikes, attractions and repulsions. So many things are happening, yet you are not aware of a single one of them. This is only at the level of the senses. What about all the information being compiled by manas and buddhi? While listening to me, you are not aware of the thoughts going through your mind, as the whole attention is in your



ear. Manas is ignored, buddhi is ignored, chitta is ignored, ahamkara is ignored.

The inputs at all these different levels is managed with pratyahara: the sensory, pranic, subtle, mental, psychological, emotional, psychic inflow. Only when these realms of the personality are balanced and there is no spike coming to disturb your awareness or concentration, can dharana take place. As long as there are spikes that disturb your concentration and awareness, you have to fall back into pratyahara to manage them. Thus pratyahara at one level means reverse feeding: return everything that is offered to you.

Clearing pratyayas

When the word pratyahara is seen as pratyaya + hara, the meaning becomes removing the impressions that you consciously or subconsciously create, which define your thought and behaviour patterns and performances. These are the *pratyaya*, and they have to be removed.

An example of pratyaya: on the first day of the Symposium we heard the song sung by the children: 'Jal hi jeevan, jeevan jal hai'. The tune of the song was going on in my head till late at night. It was like loud music in my ears. I started to think, 'Why can't I stop this music?' I searched the surface memory, 'Why am I connected to this song, what is the reason?' I could see no connection at all in the present memory. I thought, 'There must be some connection, some relationship between this song and some memory in my life.' I said, 'Let me go back to my childhood.'

While I was looking at the folders of my childhood, I heard a piece of music: 'Ba ba black sheep, have you any wool?' It was the same tune. 'Jal hi jeevan, jeevan jal hai.' Then I realized, 'The tune is the same, the words are different. I can forget the words but the tune is continuing as I have heard it in my childhood.' That had become a pratyaya.

The song stimulated that memory, that pratyaya, yet I had to search for it, not that it came up spontaneously. I had to turn the folders of my childhood, and then I realized, yes, it is the same tune. I had discovered something about myself and I entered into a happy and relaxed state of mind. If I had not discovered the pratyaya, the song would still be going on in my head.

It was possible to do this due to the understanding of pratyayas. I could go back and see where that memory was which was responding to this particular sound, and why at the conscious level I was not able to clear it. If you say something, I can clear it instantly. I could not do this with that tune. This meant that it had become a pratyaya at some time in my life. Now it got cleared.

Expand, relax and understand

The above example should indicate the deep, inner psychological stresses that we don't know exist within us. It is clearing of these that happens through pratyahara. Therefore you have to make the effort to develop your awareness by

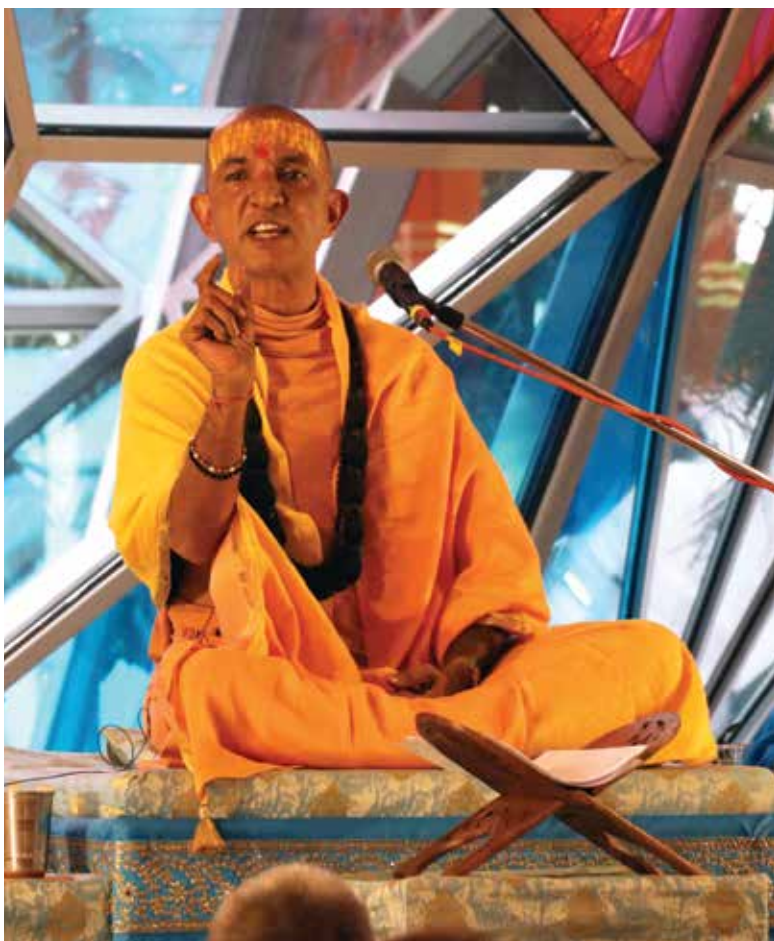
expanding outwards first. Then focus and come back in. By expanding outwards, enlarge the scope of awareness. After the awareness has been extended fully, then you can focus and concentrate in that state of enlarged awareness. The example of being able to see the whole body. I am seeing your whole body, yet I can focus on your little finger. Despite seeing the whole body, my focus and concentration is on that little finger. Thus I am seeing the bigger picture and also the smaller picture. Awareness is the bigger picture and concentration is the smaller, focused picture.

At the same time, an effort has to be made to consciously relax, for you are always consuming through the senses, the mind, the buddhi, the chitta, the ahamkara, and therefore there is a continuous reaction and no understanding. There is only reaction and no understanding of the different pressures and problems that another person can face; you think that your interpretation is the final and the last.

Pratyahara is the doorway to the second chapter. Only when you are able to perfect pratyahara that you can move into deeper states of meditation. That is the focus of the training you have received, to give you a glimpse of what is to come. None of the practices that have been done are complete; they were only intended to convey certain points, to give you a hint of what the second chapter entails.

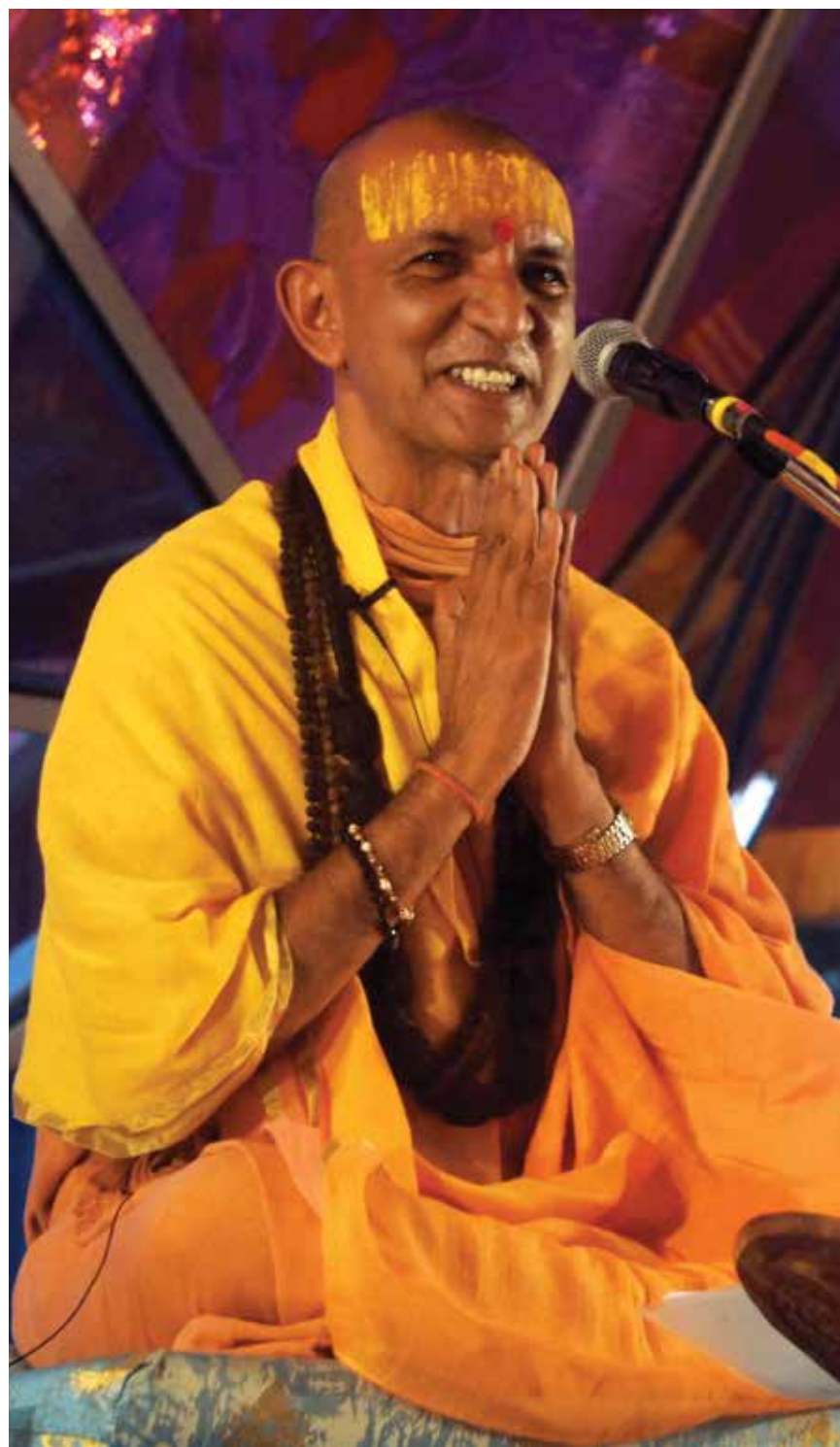
In Satyam Yoga Prasad, you might have seen the series of books 'Yoga for Everyone', *Raja Yoga for Everyone*, *Hatha Yoga for Everyone*, *Karma Yoga for Everyone*, *Bhakti Yoga for Everyone*. In those you will find that small capsules of practices have been defined to attain a state of mind or a change of perception. Those are the things that you need to now incorporate to deepen your understanding.

Pick up a program from 'Yoga for Everyone', a capsule, according to your need and requirement which are mentioned there, and follow that one program for at least a month. Keep a check on yourself, an objective check. Do not try to justify your shortcomings or faults, do not worry about them, just focus on practice. You will discover that gradually



you begin to shine, little by little. Just as metal begins to shine when you keep rubbing it, in the same manner, you will begin to shine if you keep working on yourself. Therefore, don't be afraid of working on yourself, and to do that, follow the capsules. You will find that they will work like soap and remove the dirt. Try and experiment with this, for it will allow you to take a look at yourself from the yogic perspective.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Imparting Yoga Vidya

The Classes

25–28 October 2018



The APMB Classes



The APMB classes for the Blue Group were taken by Swamiji himself, and for the Red Group by Swami Sivadhyanam. While the practices were no different from what every Satyananda Yoga practitioner is familiar with, there was a precise structure and sequence, each session was woven around a theme, and one was led to deepen the awareness within each practice by following different levels of awareness. Through all this, and due to the power of the guru's presence, new doors of experience opened up for all participants: within the body, the prana, the mind. A glimpse of what the yogis intended when they created the system of hatha yoga was received. In the following section, a few aspects of the classes are presented.

SHANTI PATH

Often the Shanti Path becomes a mechanical repetition for teachers. Swamiji's classes were an example of the importance of beginning the class on the right note. Even the flame at the eyebrow centre was not the same old boring flame – it came alive. This is how:



. . . Now bring your awareness to the eyebrow centre and visualize the image of a burning candle flame. At first it is a process of imagination, but as your awareness and concentration develop, you will begin to gradually see the outline of the flame, then the colours of the flame, and then the flame in three-dimension, and when you are able to experience the flame in three-dimension in your mind, then that is the culmination or the fulfilment of concentration. Hold the awareness of the image and breathe in deeply to chant the mantra *Om* three times with me all together.

MANTRA CHANTING

Every class commenced with chanting of the three mantras: Mahamrityunjaya mantra, Gayatri mantra and the 32 names of Durga. Again, no compromise on this aspect of the class, and following the complete sequence: not shortening it and never skipping it. The sankalpa for each mantra was given by Swamiji in the following words:



Mahamrityunjaya mantra: Make a resolve to attain health, vitality, strength, stamina and physical wellbeing. Repeat the resolve three times in your mind and then we shall chant the Mahamrityunjaya mantra 11 times.

Gayatri mantra: Now make the second resolution to attain wisdom, clarity of mind, understanding and inner creativity and to open the dormant centres of intelligence. Repeat the resolve three times to yourself mentally and we shall chant the Gayatri mantra 11 times.

32 names of Durga: Now make the third sankalpa, third resolve, to overcome difficulties, distress, disturbances, distractions, and to attain peace, harmony, joy and equilibrium in life. Repeat the sankalpa three times to yourself mentally and we shall chant the 32 names of Durga three times.

After the chanting of the mantras, the participants did not immediately jump into asana practices; instead, Swamiji allowed them the space for experience and also externalization:

Remain seated quietly and silently for some time, experiencing the state of your body and mind. Experience the relaxation and stillness in the body, experience awareness and silence in the mind.

Mentally prepare yourself for the practice of asanas, externalize the awareness, become aware of the outer surroundings. Gently bring the hands together and rub the palms, and when heat is created in the palms, place them over the closed the eyes and then slowly open your eyes.

Swamiji explained the effects of the mantra chanting:

These three mantras that we do in the morning are the most important aspect of yoga to begin our day. People think to start the day with asanas. In reality, one should always start the day with mantras.

Mahamrityunjaya mantra is a mantra for optimum health, Gayatri mantra is for positive intelligence, and Durga mantra is to overcome the disturbing distresses in life. In the morning, upon waking up, before you even get out of the bed, when you are half-sleepy, not fully awake, just sit on the bed quietly and do the three mantras. That is the state of the subconscious mind, half-sleepy and half-awake, not fully connected to or grounded in the world.

At that time make the first sankalpa for attainment of wellbeing, health, stamina, strength, vitality. Focus on the sankalpa that you are desiring: health, vitality, stamina. Visualize a healthy condition in yourself and chant the

mantra. This will plant the seed of health and wellbeing in your subconscious mind. Similarly, focus on the sankalpa for acquisition of wisdom, understanding, creativity, clarity of mind, and then chant the Gayatri mantra. The same for overcoming difficulties and distress with the 32 names of Durga.

When you chant these mantras in the half-sleepy state, they access and alter the behaviour of the subconscious mind, and the subconscious mind then guides the subtle processes of the body to rise to that level of wellbeing, creativity and overcoming distress in life.

Mantras have always been given a lot of importance in yoga; however, one has to practise them. Once Swami Anandananda received a letter from a student in Italy saying, “I received a mantra from Swami Niranjan about twelve years ago. Yet I haven’t received any benefit from it.” Swami Ananda asked him, “Have you been practising the mantra?” He replied, “When I was receiving the mantra, my companion told me, ‘You are receiving a mantra, it is a mantra of power, it will change your life.’ So I kept the mantra in my room, I never practised it but I kept it.” This is an example of how you have the tool yet you don’t apply it.

Mantra is a tool that should be applied. The best application of mantra is to use it to correct and rectify the defects of human personality and nature rather than for meditation. If you can correct the defects of human personality and nature then meditation will flow automatically, as the biggest barrier in meditation is your own distractions and disconnection from the process in which you are involved. Mantras help overcome the dissipations of prana and mind, and centre them to create a positive outcome in life. Therefore, mantra is the first practice to be done by every yoga aspirant. Health, creativity and overcoming distresses are the birth-rights of everyone. So use the practical techniques that can help you overcome your own limitations, difficulties and distractions.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ASANA

Swamiji chose a specific principle of asana as the theme for each day, and the practices focused on that theme as a practical experience.



25th October: From annamaya to anandamaya with relaxation and awareness

First, the purpose of asana is not to do physical exercise, but to create a condition, a *sthiti*, a state in the body which you can sustain for an extended period of time. So, whatever asana you do, even if it is a dynamic asana, you have to focus on two ideas: *sthiram*, stability, and *sukham*, comfort. No matter what asana you do, you have to make the effort to experience stillness and comfort in it.

Second, asanas are not just physical exercises; they are the means to access other dimensions of human nature and personality. The other dimensions include, apart from the body, prana, mind, consciousness and spirit. They are known as the *koshas*: annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijnanamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha. Sri Swamiji taught us that asanas are not merely to experience the body, but to go progressively through the experiences of annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and come to anandamaya, and he defined a process, a sequence for this advancement.

At first, focus on the physical body in the asana: the movement, the posture, the muscles and the joints which are being used, extended, flexed, etc. Focus the entire awareness in the physical experience, how you are moving, where is the tension or the tightness, how far can you bend, where is the stiffness, the pain, the ache, discover all those aspects of annamaya kosha.

Once you have cultivated the annamaya kosha awareness of the asana, move into the pranamaya kosha, by linking the breath with the posture. Now eliminate the body awareness, let it dissolve, let it drop, and just become the breath which is moving. As the breath moves, the body comes into the posture. The breath is guiding the body, not your effort and not your awareness. The focus is not on the body while you are doing the asana but on the breathing, and letting the breathing bring you into the state of asana.

The third stage is visualization. You have to visualize the perfect posture in your mind. If you are bending forward and can only bend five inches, it doesn't matter. If you are three feet away from the floor, it doesn't matter, but visualize the correct posture in your mind. The stronger your visualization of the correct posture, the more the body will adjust and adapt to move into that correct posture.

First, it is body awareness: annamaya kosha; second, it is breath awareness: pranamaya kosha; third, visualization: manomaya kosha. After you have gone through the process

of visualization, then you focus on a chakra, a psychic centre, and feel the activation of the chakra while you are doing the posture practice. Deepening the awareness of chakras will lead you into vijñanamaya kosha. The fifth component is mantra awareness in the posture. Becoming aware of a mantra while you are practising the asana and allowing the mantra to predominate, will lead you into anandamaya kosha. In this way, one practice can take you from annamaya to anandamaya by following this sequence and balancing all the different dimensions of the personality.

The main components in the practices today are going to be awareness of the posture and relaxation in the posture. Whatever you do today, there has to be awareness of the posture and awareness of relaxation in the posture. While practising an asana, if you locate any areas of tightness and tension, take your mind there and try to relax that part as much as you can before saying, 'Oh I can't do this practice.' Just take your mind there. In the Blue group, the sentence 'I can't do the practice' does not exist. If I see anybody not doing it, please shift to the Red group, because that will be more appropriate for you, regardless of whether you are acharya or long-term associate. Be truthful and sincere to your aspirations in yoga and not to your arrogance that 'How can I go to the Red group, I have been teaching yoga for so many years!' That is your arrogance. You are free to change from Blue to Red. Red to Blue won't happen, but Blue to Red can happen.

Two ideas should be clear. One, the sequence that Sri Swamiji taught us. Asanas are not physical exercises, they are postures which, when performed correctly, will give you the experience of annamaya kosha to anandamaya kosha. Each asana will do it, no matter how insignificant you consider them. Two, the practice is not mechanical, it is always done with awareness and relaxation in the posture.



26th October: Focusing on prana shakti in an asana

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

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

are engaged in something. Even if you tie yourself up like a pretzel, be aware of the whole body and remain relaxed. That was the focus of our practices yesterday.

Today we are going to focus on prana. How do we experience prana at the time of performing an asana? Some people will say the movement of energy in the body, some others will say heat, tingling, and so on. I differ from all those views. Take the example of eka pada pranamasana, single foot standing salutation pose. It is a practice of balance. Where is the awareness of prana in this posture? Everywhere? Wrong. Ajna? No. Here the entire focus is on the foot, for it is the foot that is supporting the body, it is the foot that has to be firm and strong. If the foot is firm and strong, the body remains unmoving. If there is fluctuation of prana in the foot, you will be swaying. So the focus comes at that point of the body from where stability is being created and experienced. Here the entire force and power of prana is on the foot on which you are standing, not in the whole body. The prana is focused and centred in the foot. If the pranas were not focused and centred in the foot, you'd be unable to stand on your single leg. You do not focus on the swaying of the body and try to reduce it, that only increases the swaying. You have to focus on the foot and the ankle, and be firm and immobile.

The stability, the firmness, the stillness, that is the control of prana, not feeling little sensations travelling from head to toe and getting electrical shocks. You have to become aware of prana in an asana by becoming aware of the strength that you are using to make a movement or hold a posture. Where the pressure and the force is, that is the area you need to stabilize. Wherever you are using your strength or force, it is in that region that you have to focus.

Another example: if somebody has to do mayurasana, the peacock pose, then the focus of prana shakti will be in the wrists and hands, as they are using that prana shakti to keep the body in that posture. Once the awareness of prana shakti comes there, the wrist and hands will become firm. Therefore, you have to direct the prana shakti, like they do

in martial arts, punching with the breath – there is a power, strength and firmness in the action. In the same manner, in yoga too, wherever you are feeling the pressure or the force, that is where you have to concentrate for experiencing the prana shakti.

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



27th October: Simplicity

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

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

Despite the simplicity, the class represented the knack of a master to take one into an experience by just that slight twist in a practice. For example, in surya namaskara, the practice was done by becoming aware of the physical movement in the first round and then Swamiji developed the next two rounds in the following way:

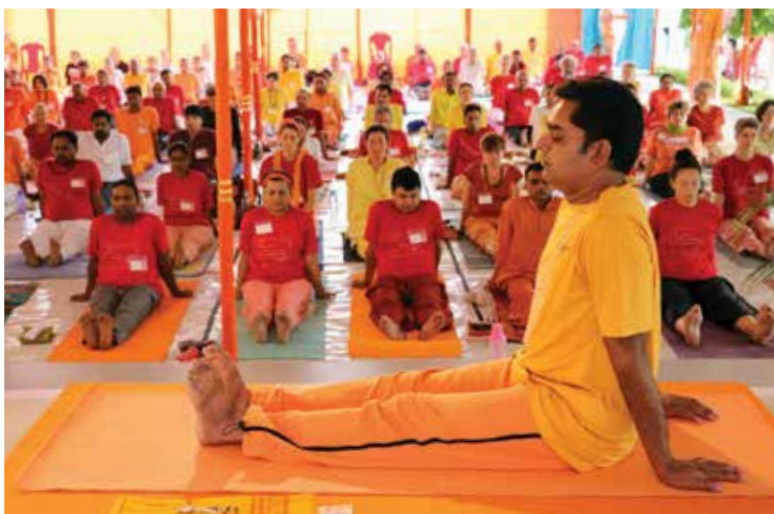
Follow the speed of breath

In the second round we shall follow the speed of breath, and following the speed of breath we come into each position. This means there is not going to be any gap in your breathing, it has to be long and deep breathing, and you do the movement, whether bending or coming up, with a full breath. It is the breath which is guiding the posture of your body, not the muscles. The breath tells you, “Now do this, now go into the posture.”

Visualization

In the third round we shall visualize the practice. Don't focus on the physical movement, don't focus on the breath. When I say '1', visualize the posture and then move into it. When I say '2', visualize the posture and then move into it. Your visualization has to be of the correct and perfect posture, and let the body follow. If the body cannot do the perfect posture, it doesn't matter. You still follow the visualization, not your memory. See how you are practising in your mind and then try to do the same. Don't use your memory, use your visualization: see it and then do it. This means there will be a gap between my count and your practice. When

I say the number, you prepare to visualize, then I will say 'visualize' and you see the full posture, then I will say 'move into posture' and then you move and come into the posture. So there is a delay of three seconds from the count to your actual coming into the posture.

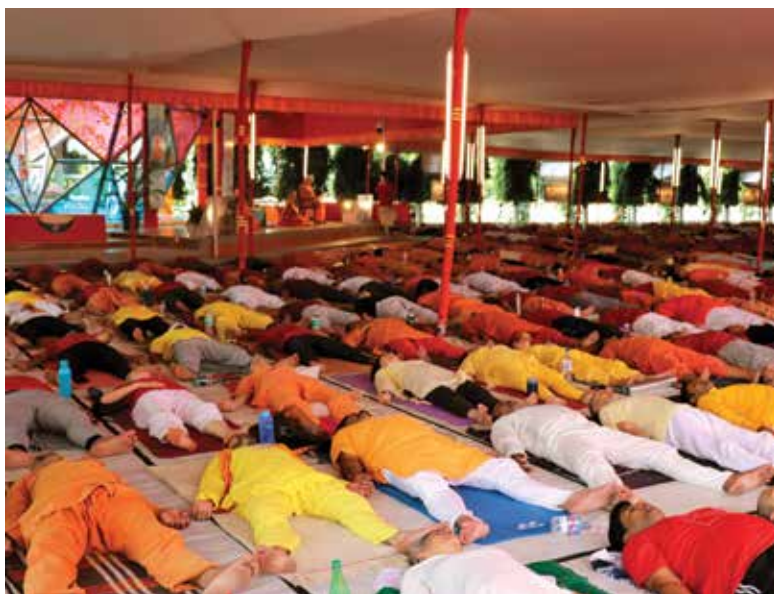


28th October: The backbone of Satyananda Yoga

Today is the last day of our session and today we are going to do the practices which are the backbone of the Satyananda Yoga tradition. Can you guess? The backbone of the Satyananda Yoga tradition is pawanmuktasana. I kept pawanmuktasana for the last day so that we never forget that they are very simple practices, yet they make the backbone or the foundation of all yoga practices.

Everybody is used to doing pawanmuktasana as physical movements. We are going to use pawanmuktasana to access all the different dimensions of the personality, by developing the awareness of the five koshas in each asana. Therefore our practice is not going to be only 5 or 10 movements but 25 movements: 5 with body awareness, 5 with breath awareness, 5 with visualization, 5 with chakra, and 5 with mantra.

The Yoga Nidra Classes



The yoga nidras that were given during the MYS were the same yoga nidras that Sri Swami Satyananda had given in the sixties and seventies. Even though the voices were of Swami Prembhava for the Blue Group and Rishi Arundhati for the Red Group, the scripts followed the transcripts of Sri Swamiji's classes. This allowed for the possibility of connecting with the source. Before the first session, Rishi Vasishtha introduced the subject of yoga nidra:

ORIGIN AND PRINCIPLES OF YOGA NIDRA

Rishi Vasishtha, Canada



I have twenty minutes and I'm going to give the talk in two parts. One part concerns the origin of yoga nidra as I learned about it from the earliest printed records of Swami Satyananda's statements on yoga nidra. The second part concerns some of the principles of yoga nidra which are not written in any of the books you have, and hopefully in the planned new publication on yoga nidra the points I will make will be included somehow.

First, I want to mention some basic general principles of yoga and tantra, and to say something in regard to the talk we've just heard from Swami Niranjanananda. One of the most important principles of tantra, which Swami Satyananda always emphasized is:

“When relaxation is complete, meditation arises spontaneously.”

In raja yoga one has to use the will to fix the mind on a particular object or topic and one has to keep the mind focused without sleeping or becoming distracted until samadhi is attained with regard to that object or topic. This is a positive, forceful effort involving willpower. As Paramahamsaji always pointed out, this is not the way of tantra or yoga nidra. Vedanta is based on self-enquiry and enquiry into the distinction between what is real and what is unreal. Swamiji was talking about this, but it is also not relaxation-based sadhana. So that's one principle of the tantric approach to attaining the meditative state. That is

why yoga nidra is so important because it leads to complete relaxation and hence to spontaneous meditation.

Secondly, I want to emphasize that one of the principles of yoga is that one should be aware of the fundamental role of the relationship of sadhana and siddhi. You are all sadhakas now, in stage two of yoga vidya you are becoming sadhakas. What is the relationship between sadhana and siddhi? Well, siddhi tells you when to stop doing a particular sadhana because you have achieved its intended goal. Paramahamsaji always used to say, “You should neither practise nor teach any yoga practice or sadhana unless you know when you have reached its intended result or accomplishment which is called its siddhi.” You don’t know what you’re doing unless you know when to stop your practice. You don’t want to do it forever. You may know some people who do many yoga practices for twenty years, but when you ask them what they have actually accomplished, they say they got nowhere. They usually haven’t even got a clue as to where their practice is leading, particularly where spiritual ends are sought by them. So you have to know the siddhi before you know how to proceed and when you’re finished. Let me take an example from *Yoga Sutras* fourth book, “In the presence of him who has perfected harmlessness all enmity ceases.” Gandhi was assassinated, Jesus was crucified, none of them reached ahimsa in the perfect state where all enmity ceases in their presence. So that is one sadhana you can do forever, since even those elevated people didn’t completely achieve that siddhi. That you should know when to stop sadhana is what Paramahamsaji used to drill into us. And ninety-nine percent of all teachers of yoga have no idea about that, they just teach anything that suits their fancy or attracts more students.

So these are some of the principles one needs to remember to have success in yoga and effectiveness in teaching yoga.

The next point I want to make is that if you want to change practices, according to the teachings of Paramahamsaji, you have to know the reason for changing it, a reason which



indicates that it improves the practice but maintains the original spirit of the practice. Rishi Arundhati would always ask Paramahamsaji or Swamiji, “Can I change this and here is the reason?” And he would say, “Okay.” So as yoga teachers, let me advise you, you’re making all these changes for reasons of political correctness or appealing to more students, and to make more money and whatever else that has nothing to do with improving its efficacy and usually destroys the original intent of the practice. So if you change practices, check with Swamiji, give reasons why you want to change it. And if it is sensible, because you are adapting to modern-day circumstances, or special conditions, you will get permission to change it. So that is why Rishi Arundhati always was allowed to change things, as for example in the case of the warrior sequence. So that is what I wanted to add for all of you yoga teachers in the audience.

And now another thing about Paramahamsaji was his absolute non-dogmatic nature. If you asked him a question then the first thing he would say was: “Okay, this is what the shastras and the tradition say about this.” Then he would say, “This is what I think about it.” And the third thing he would say was, “Now you make up your own mind.” So he was never dogmatic, he would never force you to accept his

reasons but to use your own reasoning to confirm what is the truth. I haven't got much time, but I want to tell you about a time in Toronto, Canada. There were many gurus, Sikh, Buddhist, whatever, on stage and I was the only European. The first question from the audience of about five or six hundred Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, etc. was, "What about sex before marriage?" So all these gurus, they turned around, looked at me, probably thinking, "Let's see what this white guy is going to say about this." So applying Paramahamsaji's principle, I said, "This is what the shastras say, it is not a good idea." Then I said, "I think it doesn't make you a bad person if you've done it. So don't condemn them for having done it." And thirdly I said, "Now make up your own mind." This is just a brief story, and this principle of Guruji's got me out of so much trouble.

Now let us get to my impressions about the origins of yoga nidra as developed by Swami Satyananda Saraswati. In 1966 I had my first contact with yoga as taught by Paramahamsaji from Ma Yogashakti, then the Acharya of BSY Munger. The Indian embassy called me, I was then president of the Theosophical Society in Vienna, Austria, and they asked, "Can this yogi who just arrived come and do yoga teaching on your premises?" I agreed and she came to teach and I asked her some questions and she could not answer them to my satisfaction. So I said, "Who taught you this?" And she said, "Swami Satyananda." I said, "Next year we get him." It took two years, until 1968 before we got him to come. So it is fifty years that I've been associated with Paramahamsaji. That's how long I've known about yoga nidra.

Now in 1968, in a statement taken from a booklet entitled *Yoga Nidra Explained*, which is in the archives, he said, "There are many methods of yoga nidra suitable for many types of aspirants and patients." So there is not one yoga nidra. When Swamiji and I searched for the earliest references to yoga nidra in our published literature, we found the earliest in the letters to Satyabrat, Swamiji's father; it occurs in the last letter before Satyabrat had the accident. There he says

to Satyabrat: “There is a state between sleep and waking on a border, and I will teach you that so you can overcome the problems” which Satyabrat had asked Swamiji about. And then came the accident and no more letters. The next reference we found was in *Taming the Kundalini* which contains letters to Ma Yogashakti. In the later letters she is instructed to do four hours of yoga nidra. And Paramahamsaji said you couldn’t do yoga nidra without initiation, you had to be initiated to be practising yoga nidra. Can you imagine four hours of yoga nidra? It wasn’t all rotation through the body. There were very advanced methods included in it. Then he taught it to Swami Atmananda. Atmananda was the next Acharya of BSY and also the next guinea pig. The third guinea pig was Swamiji. And there’s a paper in *Yoga* magazine by Paramahamsaji called *Taming the Wild Monkey* where he talks about this young boy that couldn’t be controlled in the ashram, causing all kinds of troubles, and how he tamed the wild monkey using yoga nidra.

So yoga nidra was a higher, much higher practice, nothing to do with what you’re now learning, that was used with initiates to reach complete relaxation and therefore make meditation spontaneous. Then if you look at the first two papers on yoga nidra in *Yoga* magazine volume 2, numbers 3 and 4, one written by Paramahamsaji and one written by Swami Atmananda, you will see that he extracted from that complex practice that he was teaching to his chief disciples, only the physical practice, essentially what they are now in America calling yoga nidra. So it was mainly, and the purpose is described in those papers, to learn how to go to sleep the right way at night. They advised not just to go to sleep, but to do yoga nidra and then go to sleep that way. And the other purpose was to overcome insomnia; if you can’t sleep, do it and go to sleep. But that was it, no more.

In 1968, in *Yoga Nidra Explained*, before he came to the West, Paramahamsaji characterized the stages as follows: first stage is rotation of consciousness, there is no other stuff in front of it. He doesn’t mention sankalpa. Why? Because

sankalpa was the very heart of what he was teaching his disciples; it was the mission. Sankalpa was on their mind not just for yoga nidra but all the time. Sankalpa then was to spread the mission. Take yoga to the world, shore to shore, that was the sankalpa. He didn't have to tell them about sankalpa because they were doing it all day long. Always recall your sankalpa. So the first practice is rotation of consciousness. The other things are preparations for any meditation; we always say, "Relax your body, natural breath." That's not a yoga nidra part, it's part of every meditation.

So the first stage is rotation of consciousness and he says to do it through the seventy-six parts of the body. What are those seventy-six parts? The marmas, they are those points of power called marmas in Ayurveda, and so on. He says the seventy-six points, he's not talking about right hand thumb and all that, it's the seventy-six important points. Stage two is awakening of feelings, heaviness, lightness, hot, cold, and so on. Stage three is mental awareness through conceptual awareness of psychic centres, psychic symbols or psychic stages one reaches in dharana in yoga nidra. And this I'm bringing in because Swamiji is talking about dharana and dhyana in yoga nidra. So what is the dharana part of yoga nidra? Well, in 1968 he said locating, visualizing or experiencing those psychic symbols, the chakras, that's the part that has to do with dharana in yoga nidra, and that's part 'a' of stage three. Part 'b' of stage three is twenty to thirty articles or scenes and landscapes, experienced without effort and not serially developed. They shouldn't follow one from the other, they should be completely separate things, seen quickly, without effort of the mind. If you have to use the mind to start thinking about the blue lotus on the lake, forget it, you're not doing yoga nidra. It has to come spontaneously. And then he would say, "If it comes spontaneously, fine; if it doesn't, don't worry about it, but it means you'll have to practise some more, you're not fully relaxed. But it has to be quick and you must not do an intellectual analysis or try to construct it, it has to be spontaneous."

And when the mind is sensitive enough, you go to stage four at which time you do *atmachinta*, awareness of atma. So that means you're now going into dhyana and you focus on the supreme self, atma. And he says, "After study of Vedanta, reflect on Brahman and truth." So that was the final stage.

Now when Paramahamsaji came to Vienna in 1968, we discussed yoga nidra and many other sadhanas all day long with him, in view of discovering scientific explanations of why these practices work. So now I want to move on to the topic of the efficacy of yoga nidra and the clarification of some of the specific roles of aspects of yoga nidra. And these I want to share with you in the second half of my talk.

So let's begin with rotation of consciousness and the nature of Paramahamsaji as being someone who does not impose his opinion upon you, but gives you the right to make your rational choice. That's actually embodied in yoga nidra. Why? Here comes my question to all in the audience: "How many of you in this room can tell me the difference between hypnotism and yoga nidra? What makes a yoga teacher different from a hypnotist?" Well, the difference is in the phrase 'repeat after me'. If you are being hypnotized you play a passive role, you are asked to become aware of the part of the body. No other activity is required of you, you passively accept and obey everything the hypnotist is telling you. But if the yoga teacher tells you: 'repeat after me', now you are being asked to actively keep your awareness along with you throughout your descent into relaxation. There is a scientific explanation of this fundamental difference between hypnotism and teaching of yoga nidra. We have two sets of nerves, afferent and efferent, and they only run in one direction, from the brain to the part of the body where you want to direct attention or move, or coming from there to the brain so you can feel the thumb without moving it, just you becoming aware of it, feeling it. Now you're using the nerves running from there to the brain. If you say 'repeat after me mentally, right hand thumb', you're sending a signal the other way on the nerves. So you're using both sets of



nerves completely as you traverse through the whole body. In hypnotism you would not be asked to preserve self-awareness nor to actively engage in mental and verbal self-dialogue

Now the thing he used to say is, “I can’t massage your brain, because there’s a skull around it. And I can’t have you take a walk through the brain either, because it’s inside that skull. How am I going to walk you through your brain? Well, through the nerves. By the time I’ve covered the whole thing, I’ve covered every part of the brain systematically.” One of the important things to realize about the rotation of consciousness is that during it you can yourself discover whether you have fallen prey to the two enemies of meditation. What are the two enemies of meditation? Sleep and distraction: some other thought. So if you are at the right hand thumb and you’re suddenly at the left elbow, you know yourself that you slept or you were distracted. Eventually you will discover, you will be your own diagnostician. And he would emphasize this aspect a lot, because he would ask you afterwards, “So how did it go? Did you sleep? Where did you sleep? How did you sleep?” He’d ask you how much of that you recall. The next time in yoga nidra where you yourself can gauge your own success in the practice is when you do the fast visualization, the one that is not supposed to be sequential and you’re

supposed to spontaneously let the picture come, 'large bird flying, snow-capped mountains', etc. It gauges your degree of relaxation. If you have to work at it, you're not relaxed; if it comes spontaneously, you're relaxed. You yourself can determine whether you're relaxed or not. Very few people teach you these things or develop their instructions in such a way that you yourself get a handle on it.

So we have rotation of consciousness. Then the main pranayama technique he was using after you do the rotation of consciousness was alternate breathing, left and right, because he's again balancing ida and pingala, like Swamiji was saying. I forgot to mention that when you're doing the rotation of consciousness you reach the point where you have to have the whole body awareness, "homogeneous awareness of the whole body." His words were: "Homogeneous awareness of the whole body," and then he would say, "Now visualize yourself standing over yourself and see yourself practising yoga nidra, and all the people in the room practising yoga nidra, and see all the clothes they are wearing," and so on. So there was a pratyahara away from the body, raising the level as Paramahamsaji would say, and that is actually preparation for psychic projection, if you'd proceed further in the practice that way, you can psychically travel or perceive at a distance.

We used to be trained by Swami Atmananda to be able to practise thought transference or perceive at a distance. And the way she would do it is she would say, "Okay, concentrate on Munger and tell us what's happening now in Munger. What are they doing?" And then she would transmit that to Munger and ask them, "Was that happening at the time? Was it true?"

That shows you some of the uses of yoga nidra. You can use it to go to sleep, to overcome sleeplessness, you can use it to develop psychic faculties which were discouraged by Paramahamsaji as distractions from the spiritual aspects of yoga. When Paramahamsaji found out we were doing it, he said, "No, no! None of this." But anyway, when you do the

balancing of the breath, you're again relaxing the breath, natural breath, but with full awareness and hence transforming it into psychic breath. This brings me to another important point about yoga nidra. He used to call yoga nidra 'psychic sleep'. What makes sleep psychic? He would also talk about psychic breath. What's psychic breath? Does anybody want to tell me? What was his definition of psychic breath? Psychic breath means breathing with awareness. Normally when you breathe, you're not aware; it becomes psychic if you become aware of it. The same with sleep; it becomes psychic sleep if you're not unconscious in deep sleep, but you are aware. Now it is psychic sleep. And where does it take place? It takes place in the psychic nature, in the astral body. People use different names for the same thing.

I've already said how these two techniques of the body rotation and the quick visualization allow you to monitor or check how you're progressing in your practice of relaxation. Beyond what I have described here as the common part of yoga nidra practices, about which various texts on yoga nidra may differ, does not define different yoga nidras, but only indicates different applications of yoga nidra. Rishi Arundhati may have a chance to talk to you about an application we have used a lot to improve children's performance in examinations at school. Parents would come to us and say, "My kid is failing. They've got an exam at school next week and he's failing. What can I do to help him?" And we'd say, "Okay." We'd record the first part of yoga nidra leading to full relaxation. Then we'd tell the child to read the chapter of the book he is going to have the exam on onto the tape after the part leading to relaxation, and at the end of their taping of the chapter finish off with a sankalpa that they will do well in the exam and that they will improve their learning throughout the school year. They practised with that recorded yoga nidra and usually got A's in their exam after practising with it only for one week or less.

So that's the technique that Paramahamsaji really was the most eager to develop, because as you may know, before

he developed yoga nidra, he had to look after young kids at night in Rishikesh and after that he would be sleeping. And when he was sleeping they were doing their mantra chanting. The next day he sat in front of Swami Sivananda while the children were chanting and told Swami Sivananda, "I know these things. How do I know them?" So Swami Sivananda said it was because he heard them unconsciously or subconsciously when he was sleeping in the school he was taking care of. So one of his main concerns was how to use yoga nidra to learn. Not neglecting the advanced sadhana that I was talking about with the initiates that were doing long hours of yoga nidra, which he did not publicize. And he also said yoga nidra is a complete practice that can take you all the way to samadhi, all the way to self-realization. I believe the guru of Paramahansa Yogananda did all his meditations lying down. But Paramahamsaji would explain that you normally should not do that, because you have trained your body for years to go to sleep when you lie down. So it's going to be hard for you not to go to sleep when you put the body in the lying down position.

Which brings me to the last important point, the sankalpa. For years you put bad habits into your conscious, subconscious and unconscious psyche. And then you say, "Oh! I resolved to change all that." Right? Well you're not going to successfully change these deep-seated habits and attitudes unless you do it at the same deep level into which you have embedded these age-old habits of yours. And the way to do it is through yoga nidra, where you move into those same deeper levels of your psyche where you can offset those deep-seated habits, and there you now make your resolve at the end of the practice. And that's going to give an equal power to the resolve over your bad habits of thinking and attitudes, and so on. And this is the reason why sankalpa at the end of yoga nidra is so important, it gives you the means by which you can really change yourself. And Paramahamsaji used to say, and that is the last thing I'm going to say also, "Anything in life can fail, except your resolve in yoga nidra."

The Swadhyaya Sessions



An important aspect that Swamiji has been emphasizing for all yoga aspirants who wish to be part of the second chapter is swadhyaya.

The term ‘swadhyaya’ means self-study. However, it is not academic or intellectual study; it is experiential study. It is the effort to look at ourselves, understand ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, and to also understand the tools that can help us break out of our shells. Through this effort, we are gradually able to experience positivity within us and around us.

Swamiji has told us in no uncertain terms that if we wish to follow him on the path that is unfolding in the second chapter, we cannot be content with thinking about being good or expecting others to be good; we have to make the leap into true and deep

inner transformation. He has given tangible methods to do this by commencing a unique course that is held twice a year since 2015: Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satra. During these courses, Swamiji has defined the lifestyle yamas and niyamas, the positive qualities that can be lived during our daily moments of strife and stress. He has not spoken of these as mere concepts but like a master gardener, sown the seeds, the samskara. It is up to us to nurture and nourish his gift, which will allow us to become part of a beautiful garden.

The satsangs that Swamiji gave during the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana Satras were published in the Yoga Chakra series of books. During the swadhyaya sessions at MYS, excerpts from these books were read out so all participants could share in Swamiji's gift. Along with this, short contemplation practices were given on different yamas and niyamas, so they may become real experiences and not remain mere ideas.

The sessions were led by Swami Yogatirtha and Swami Yogamaya for the Blue Group, and by Sannyasi Sivadhara and Swami Vedantananda for the Red Group.

The two yamas that were in particular emphasized were manahprasad and bhava shuddhi.

MANAHPRASAD

Change begins from lifestyle, not with the practice of asana and meditation, not with the attempt to wake up at five o'clock every morning. These are little beneficial regulations that you may practise, but the actual transformation takes place when you look at your own lifestyle and begin to fine-tune that. The moment you do that and express a better aspect of yourself, you are attaining new samskaras, impressions, visions, perceptions, new ways to express yourself. That has been the subject of the Adhyatma Samskara Sadhana.

During this course, the first yamas and niyamas of yoga were also introduced. The first yamas and niyamas of yoga are not what you read about in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. There are many more yamas and niyamas of yoga. Patanjali's yamas and niyamas reflect management

of the mind, not management of life, not management of crisis situations externally, not management of emotional changes, not the behavioural aspect. There are many aspects of life that are considered in yoga. Patanjali is only one of the yoga exponents; yamas and niyamas have existed in yogic literature prior to Patanjali and will continue to exist even when humanity has changed. They are the eternal principles that define the positive traits in life, representing a culmination of the human effort to experience the beauty, peace, bliss, truth and expansiveness in life.

The yamas and niyamas that were introduced relate with the management of the first two friends who are tenants in your mind: kama and krodha. Kama means desire, passion, need, ambition, that which motivates you to interact with the outer world for a gain. The way to manage kama is through the first yama, which is *manahprasad*, or happiness.

This yama also reflects the Niranjana challenge. You have to pass the Niranjana challenge to qualify to establish yourself in spiritual life. Be happy for twelve hours of your waking time. If you can, you qualify for spiritual life. If your happiness fluctuates, then you don't qualify for spiritual life; you qualify for training, disciplining and educating yourself and your mind. Just smiling does not mean you are spiritual; it is a state of mind that you have to maintain for twelve hours of the waking state. That is the Niranjana challenge.

BHAVA SHUDDHI

Bhava shuddhi denotes a process to purify the bhava that is influencing the total personality. When that process is complete, you attain a *shuddha bhava*. Thus, bhava shuddhi is the process and the outcome is shuddha bhava.

To understand and practise bhava shuddhi, you have to recognize the bhavas at all levels of your personality. Most of the time, the bhavas that are expressed are tamoguni, negative. What disturbs you and causes suffering and pain is not the positive qualities but the negative qualities. If you



do good, it will not agitate you; if you do something wrong, it will. If you are happy, you will not feel disturbed; if you are sad, you will feel disturbed.

Whenever you are disturbed, it is not due to a positive quality; it is due to a weakness, a shortcoming, a negativity. The negativity does not signify rajoguna or sattwa guna, it signifies tamoguna. It is an expression and influence of tamoguna. Therefore, in bhava shuddhi, you have to first observe your negative acts and negative thoughts, not your good acts and good thoughts. Look at your negativities, faults, weaknesses; they are the tamasic behaviour of your mind which express in the form of jealousy, hatred, desire, anger, greed, etc. When you begin to change and purify them, that process is bhava shuddhi. In Hindi it is said, *Paap ka aayina dekhana padhata hai* – You have to look at the mirror of your faults and then clean it. You have to look at the mirror of your tamoguna and then clean it. That takes energy, strength and capability.

When a rocket is sent into space, the most critical point is breaking free of the gravity of earth. Once that happens, then it can travel freely in space. It is not difficult to rise above earth, but it has to work the hardest to be free of the gravity of earth. In the same way, a human being has to work

the hardest to break free of the gravity of tamoguna. That is where people fail, for they are not able to face their own negativity. If they somehow happen to see it, they will not think of themselves as the source but blame it on someone else. Everyone believes they are pure and pristine. They say, “I am reacting due to someone else’s behaviour. It is not my own nature.” It is due to this mindset that people are unable to cross the line of tamoguna or understand rajoguna, and sattwa guna remains a mere fantasy.

In the process of bhava shuddhi, it is the negativities in life that you have to identify without any guilt. Tulsidas said, *Mo sama kauna kutila khala kami* – “Who is as crooked, devious and lustful as me?” You may think, ‘How can a saint experience all this?’ Such thoughts are not relevant here; you have to understand why he said this. His words are an indication that no matter what you do and how evolved you think you are, the limitations of human existence and the negativities of life can still be there. However, that should not deter you. Every time a negative situation comes, face it and go on marching ahead.

Sri Swamiji also used to say that if you fall a thousand times, pick yourself up a thousand times and keep walking with a smile on your face. If you fall down and insist on crying, “I have fallen into a ditch. How can I go on in the journey? Please find me a solution, tell me the way out”, then you cannot be helped. A person who falls but believes that he can rise again, will make the effort to rise up. This is the meaning of looking at your negativities.

People find it hard to do this, therefore they say, “We will only do asana and pranayama.” As mentioned earlier, you cannot attain peace by practising asana and pranayama since their purpose is not attainment of peace, their purpose is attainment of health. If your aim is to establish yourself in sattwa guna, then asana-pranayama will not help you. For that you require self-observation. This self-observation is not jnana yoga. This is specifically bhava shuddhi, as here you have to be aware of every level of expression.

The Meditation Classes



In the meditation classes, the practices that have been developed in the last four years by Swamiji focusing on pratyahara were introduced. These practices are derived from the original scriptures of raja yoga and tantra, and suffice to say that the master's touch transported all participants to another realm altogether. It was a direct experience of how one's pranas can be catapulted so that deep and wide inner transformation can come about.

For the Blue Group, the practices were given by Swamiji himself and by Swami Yogamaya, and for the Red Group by Swami Vedantananda. Both groups started with the practice of yantra kaya sthairyam, where the familiar practice of body stillness assumed a new form. Then the Red Group went on to pratyahara of the individual senses, which also involved clearing of pratyayas. The Blue Group practised prana pratyahara, then antar mouna with withdrawal of prana from manas.

On the final day, Swamiji gave a special class to both groups together: the original nyasa yoga nidra from the tantras. As one of the residents remarked, "I wasn't able to go to any other session of the Symposium due to my duties, but I went for the final nyasa yoga nidra that Swamiji gave. When I emerged, I felt that I had done my Symposium. I did not need anything else. This was it."

PRANA PRATYAHARA

Before the practice of prana pratyahara, Swamiji explained the following:

Today my focus is the pranamaya kosha and the practice which we are going to do is prana pratyahara. It is a combination of yoga nidra and meditation.

Prana is present in every dimension of human personality. It is the vital force that sustains and nourishes the physical body, and the subtle aspect of prana nourishes the mental dimension. There are more levels of prana beyond the physical and the mental. The ancient yogic literatures speak of centres of prana in the physical body as marma sthanas and centres of prana in the psychic body as chakras. So there are two places of prana shakti: the internal, the chakra system; and the external, the marma system. This is not a theory of Ayurveda, it is a theory of classical raja yoga.

They say that there are sixteen points of the body from where prana has to be withdrawn in the practice of prana pratyahara. That is the physical dimension of prana. In the mental dimension, although people call the prana here 'chitta shakti', that is a general description of the prana

controlling the entire mental faculty. In reality, there are four different kinds of prana active here: manas prana, buddhi prana, chitta prana, and ahamkara prana. They are all guided and controlled by different expressions and manifestations of prana shakti.

Prana pratyahara is a sadhana in which first the pranas from the marma locations are withdrawn and utilized to deepen the awareness of prana shakti. Then the manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara pranas are withdrawn. The awareness has to be subtle enough to identify each of these pranas.

At the conclusion of the practice, Swamiji said:

This was the pre-primary, kindergarten lesson on prana pratyahara. I am using the word 'kindergarten', since it is the first exposure. The practice develops into an important practice of clearing the content in the head which you have been unable to clear for a long time.

Every memory, every incident, is not only an imprint in the mind, it also shapes the pranic energy. Many memories become strong and powerful due to this pranic connection. You don't know how many memories you have; it is only when a memory comes to the surface that you realize it is relevant to you, it relates to something that you have seen or you did, and your life force or prana is part of that memory. If you remove the prana, the memory dies. If you remove the prana from hate, hate dies. If you remove the prana from love, love dies. The prana is the vibrancy of these states that you experience in your responses, reactions, behaviours and interactions. A true yogi is one who is able to strip off the prana from an action or a thought, and remain free and pure without that thought influencing or altering the personality, the thinking, the behaviour or the response.

NYASA YOGA NIDRA



On the concluding day, as a thousand participants from the Blue and Red groups, the sahayogis and the residents spread out their mats in the Chhaya Samadhi pandal for the final practice of nyasa yoga nidra to be given by Swamiji, it was a sight to behold. Adi Shankaracharya's Brahma Jnanavali from the ashram's new audio release played, and Swamiji introduced the subject:

This song *Brahma Jnanavali* set the mood for what is to come. It is a beautiful song written by the founder of our sannyasa tradition, Adiguru Shankaracharya.

*Asango'ham asango'ham asango'ham punah punah
Sachchidanandorupo'ham ahamevaham avyayah.*

He talks here about the real existence that Vedantins and tantrics have always believed in. The materialistic outlook believes the world of the senses and sense objects to be real, as it is cognizable. However, the spiritual masters of all religions and traditions have maintained that this world is unreal and the realness is discovered elsewhere. The reason

they give is that the nature of Prakriti is transitory; nothing ever remains the same here, it changes every moment. What changes every moment is not the Truth. What changes every moment is not the Satyam, for Satyam is the essence that does not ever change.

H₂O is the formula of water: two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. With that water you can make tea, coffee or sherbet, you can change its taste and use it in any manner that you choose. Despite all the different uses, the essence is always the same: H₂O. In the same manner, we all come in different colours and hues, shapes and sizes, backgrounds and traditions, locations and religions. We all represent different cups of coffees, teas, sherbet, Coca Cola, Sprite, champagne, yet we have the same essence, and that is conveyed in the song.

The essence that is always there is the reality of existence, and what changes continuously cannot be the reality. It is only a transitory moment in existence, a moment in the journey. The wheel keeps on rotating, Prakriti keeps on moving and time does not wait for anyone. What is constantly mobile cannot have a permanent identity, therefore the sages and masters of all ages have said that we have to discover that permanent identity, our real identity.

How do we discover it? By seeing what is outside, for the real identity will be the opposite of what is outside. Outside everything is transitory and inside everything is permanent. The state of permanency is known as Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. The understanding and the knowing of the essence that permeates everything is the Truth, Satyam. Shivam is the correctness and the positive outcome of the correctness. It is the positive outcome of a proper, correct understanding, behaviour and performance in the form auspiciousness, joy, happiness and contentment. Shivam is that which uplifts the human nature, and with the upliftment of human nature you discover that everything is beautiful. That is Sundaram, the awareness of the underlying beauty. This is the reality, according to Vedanta.

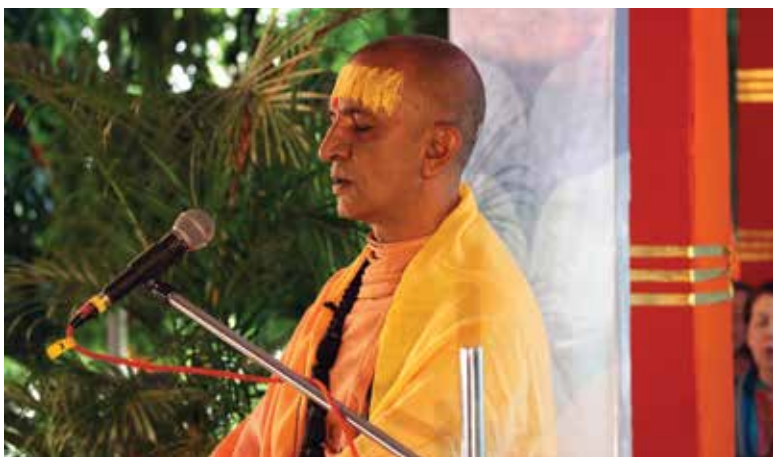
In the song, Adiguru Shankaracharya, the founder of our sannyasa tradition, is telling us about the different aspects of the transcendental nature which do not change. *Nirakaraham Nirvadyoham Asangoham Shiroham*, ‘What I am in reality is not this, I am the opposite of everything that I experience in this life.’

If we are the opposite of everything that we experience in the material life, if our spiritual life is the reverse, then somehow we have to find the means to rise from the material into the spiritual. A blend has to take place between body and prana, mind and consciousness, materialism and spiritualism. The process of developing the spiritual awareness is that blend. Yoga is that blend.

Yoga is the blend that allows the spiritual dimension to percolate down to the material dimension and enhance the life experience of the material dimension. The sadhanas of tantra vidya and of the vedantic vidyas, which comprise the yoga vidya contain in them the knowledge, the sequence and the understanding that can lead us from A to B, from B to C, from C to D, to keep on growing, progressing, evolving. The wheel keeps on turning and we keep moving with the wheel.



The Concluding Message



After the conclusion of the nyasa yoga nidra, Swamiji led a thousand voices to chant Om. As the vibrations of the sacred Pranava filled the air, Swamiji's own voice rang out loud and clear, yet so soft and tender, invoking Swasti Vandana, the prayer of wellbeing for all. It was a moment that will remain etched in the memories of all who were present. And then Swamiji said the following, to remind us of the reality and the purpose, and perhaps to bring everyone back to earth:

The slogan that was given to Sri Swamiji was to carry the message of yoga from door to door. As the doors increased, the shores also increased. The mandate, however, was to carry

the message of yoga from door to door, and that was for the first chapter of yoga. The message for the second chapter of yoga is *yoga from moment to moment*. It is not yoga from door to door, that chapter of yoga propagation is over. Now we are starting a new chapter to live yoga.

During the Symposium, a lot was said, theories were discussed, and we also went through the practices that are the defining techniques of the second chapter of yoga. The conclusion is that if we have to make yoga a part of our lifestyle and culture, if we have to live the depth of yoga as an experience, then there cannot be any bhoga. For example, when people go to sleep in yoga nidra, they are practising bhoga nidra, the sleep of enjoyment and pleasure, and not yoga nidra, the sleep of pratyahara.

What we have practised today is going back to the basics, the nyasa system, from which the subject of yoga nidra evolved. I hope that this will be to restart your journey in yoga nidra and leave bhoga nidra. Fifty years ago Sri Swamiji planted the seed of yoga and yoga nidra, and then it spread everywhere. Now again another seed of yoga nidra is being planted, which will remain intact for some time before you change it to some other crazy nidra. Nevertheless, while we are aware of its original form, let us focus on cultivating the moment to moment awareness. Let us look at exploration of yoga vidya as an experiential process and not for teaching to others. For general teaching, Satyananda Yoga stands tall. You practised it for fifty years, and others will continue to practise it.

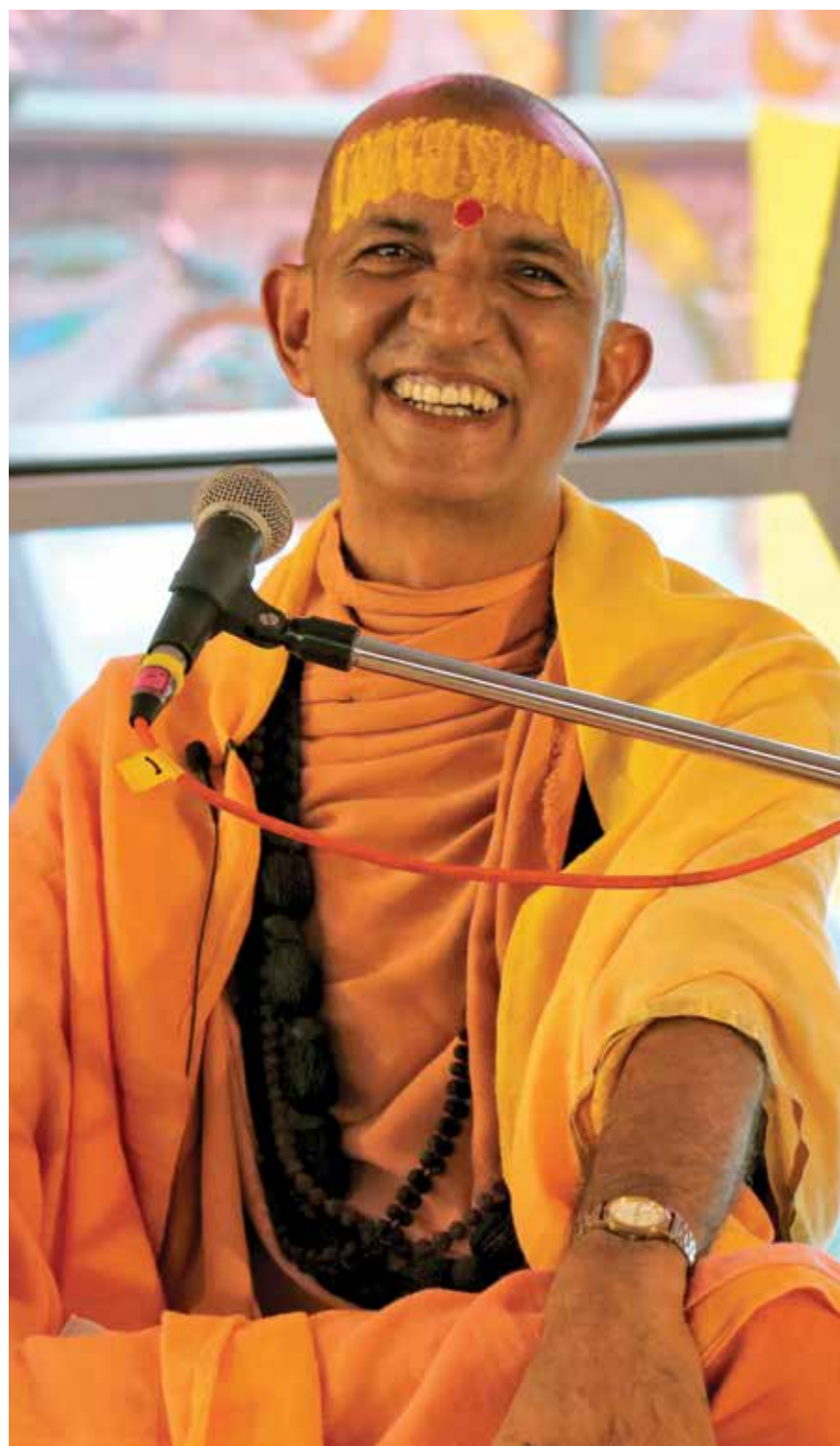
The purpose of this Yoga Symposium is to understand yoga and let it express in behaviour, thought and action. Or is the intention to be a hypocrite yoga teacher all your life, where you tell others the righteous way of living and live in the most ridiculous manner yourself, not applying the principles, the understanding or the wisdom of yoga in daily life, and confining it to classroom environment only? That is the ridiculousness that all of you have expressed, projected and lived. If you observe yourself, this is what you will find:



yoga in the classroom, bhoga outside the classroom under the guise of yoga. If you are sincere, change it. If you are not, you can continue living the way you have been. You will be the loser and you will be the winner. If you want to be the loser, follow the whims of your ego and mind. If you want to be the winner, follow the aspirations of yoga.

One example: we had the beautiful presentation by children; immediately afterward a person said, “Can we franchise it?” This question indicates that you have not come here for yoga, you have come here to see what can be franchised by you. If you were truly connected to yoga, you would not have asked such a question. God has given you so much. If you see Sri Swamiji’s writings in Satyam Vatika, you will find his statement that God has given us so much and we have to all share it freely and openly. Therefore the call of the time is now to live *yoga from moment to moment*. Let that be our vision, let that be our goal, and let that be our aspiration.

Hari Om Tat Sat



The Experience and the Learning

Impressions by Participants



BASKING IN THE PRESENCE

Swami Sivamurti, Greece

There are so many impressions of the Symposium and it will take time to digest them. The first thing that comes to my mind is that this whole ashram under the guidance of Sri Swamiji and Swami Niranjan is just washed in Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. We felt that in every activity. There were no slip-ups or difficulties, from our perspective. I must credit the venue team because whenever we walked into the pandal, everyone was so attentive in taking care of where



one sat and where one lay down, to the extent that you were asked to move if your head was on the grass, as the grass was cold. Everyone had a smiling face, not only in the venue, but in all the areas of the ashram. The attitude of seva, sweetness and caring came across so strongly.

The organization was perfect in every field, including the kitchen. The wonderful team that came from Mumbai gave us a feast every meal. The Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal performances were out of this world; one cannot express how beautiful they were and what meaning they gave to all of us to take back home. Satyam Prasad – overwhelming generosity. I think we must be at least a hundred and eighty kilos overweight, but somehow we are going to manage that. The yajnas and the kirtan going on in the background . . . everything ran so smoothly, these were such a beautiful few days.

I am also glad that I came early and could participate in the Pre-Symposium sessions. Swamiji reiterated with such clarity and precision the development of Yoga Chakra and Satyananda Yoga, and the second stage focusing on

lifestyle and sadhana. Only someone who knows the subject thoroughly and has experienced it can put it in such simple terms for all of us to understand, even for those of us who haven't been here since the 2013 Convention. That was an overwhelming experience.

At some point I started to think, 'How can I describe Swamiji's satsangs?' The words 'wonderful', 'out of this world', 'fabulous', 'thrilling' came to mind, but they all seemed banal. Then I remembered the saying of Disraeli, the English Prime Minister. In one of his talks in the parliament, he said something to this effect: "I am inebriated by the exuberance of my own verbosity." That's when I thought, 'When I hear Swamiji speaking I am inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity, the way he can put such complex themes in such simple words.'

Another saying that came to mind is by Emerson, which roughly translates as, "I cannot hear what you say, because what you are thunders so loud." I think this is especially important. We all come to listen to Swamiji's lectures and satsangs, and we are thrilled by them, yet it is Swamiji himself who makes the difference, it is what he is that makes the difference. I am not diminishing the brilliance of the lectures, I just want to make it clear that it is what he is that is so very, very special. Even if he just sat here in silence, we would gain so much just by being in his presence.

That brought to mind a story about a rabbi who was giving a lecture somewhere in the Balkans, and people came from near and far to hear him. There was one man who came at the last moment just as the lecture was closing. His friends came up to him and said, "Goodness! You missed such inspiring words. We have learnt so much!" At that moment, the rabbi was bending down to tie his shoelaces, and the person who had arrived late on the scene said, "It doesn't matter that I missed the lecture. Just seeing how he ties his shoelaces is a lecture in itself." That is what we have when we live with the guru. It is how he lives his life and handles situations that teach us so much. Just being with him and



seeing how serene and calm he is in every situation, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is a learning.

Moving to the practices, they have shown us what we can take back home, what we can teach and cannot teach. Especially comes to mind the practice of pratipaksha bhavana. Such an important practice that enables us to observe the negative that is going on in the mind and superimpose some positive thought and positive emotion on it so we can always express ourselves positively. That's a very important practice for all of us to work with. The other lifestyle practices of the yamas and niyamas: *manahprasad*, being happy without a cause, and the way to do that, the corresponding niyama being japa. Then another pair of *maitri*, friendship, and *adweshta*, which enables us to eventually let go of the tamasic ahamkara and find atmabhava to see the divinity in each and every one, which was so much a part of Swami Sivananda's teachings. These are two practices that came to my mind that I want to take back to Greece and put into full practice.

In closing, I would just like to say thank you Swamiji, thank you Sri Swamiji, who was obviously here, blessing the whole occasion that ran so smoothly. Thank you Swami Niranjana for giving us all the opportunity to be here, meet one another, share our views and experiences, and have this wonderful experience. I hope that there are many more Munger Yoga Symposiums.

YOGA YAJNA

Swami Anandananda, Italy



This has been a historical event. We have been making history, and I am very happy, proud and honoured to be here, to be present at and to have witnessed this historical event.

A few days ago, as I was coming up after lunch, a very clear feeling came that I was in a yajna. It is even clearer now: this has been a yajna, an amazing yajna! We have participated in many yajnas before, but this was the time when I really experienced what is yajna. This is my impression. Every aspect of a yajna was there: satsang, daan, homa. But here satsang and daan were mixed together because the daan was what Swamiji was giving us: yoga. The fire was going on there in the Akhara, but that was not the only fire, because there were a thousand little flames in each one, and Swamiji was providing the fuel to them. Satsang, daan and fire were happening continuously and there was a connection. Everything was interconnected, within every aspect. Fire, daan and satsang were interconnected and we were all connected as individuals.

I was also thinking about time. Swamiji brought something from way back in the past and projected it into the future. So past, present and future were interconnected. Space also was connected. There was the external space where we were all seated together. There was the space of our awareness and consciousness, which was connected when Swamiji was giving satsangs or in any other moment. So time and space were also connected with daan, fire and satsang. There was an amazing interconnection.

There have been occasions with Sri Swamiji during the yajnas in Rikhia when the tears would just start flowing. The same thing happened here at the end of the children's program. It was so touching. I told the children, "Look, you people are very powerful." They said, "Why?" I said, "Because you made me cry. That's why." These children of Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal have grown up here. Many of the qualities they have, such as the grace in the dancing, the self-confidence, are all due to the contact, experience and training which they have received here. There was no clumsiness, no effort was visible. They have the samskaras. The Symposium is also making samskara for all of us. I don't know when it will trigger, but it has been planted.

We have a duty and a responsibility if we want to honour Swamiji and the tradition: apply what we have learned. I have been involved with yoga for over forty years, yet this is like the first day. A new chapter. Sri Swamiji once said, "There is always the sun rising at the horizon." There is always something to look forward to; the sun is rising at the horizon. We have to move towards it with openness, optimism, inspiration and effort.



IN THE SPLENDOUR OF GERU

Swami Yogabhakti, France

To me, coming to Munger and coming to a seminar like this is being in the splendour of geru, something which I don't always wear because I live and work in the city. I have been working for decades, but I never give a yoga lesson or a talk without wearing geru. To me it means being in the lineage of the yoga that is so wonderfully concentrated here through Swami Niranjan, Swami Satyananda, Swami Sivananda. And behind them is this huge world of great sages.



I am sure that when children see a sage, they remember the fairy tales of magicians and fairies, but they also perceive the glory of the wisdom of all ages coming back to them. That is something I saw here in the beautiful presentations which the children of Munger exemplified before our eyes. They had a message: to protect the planet. It was not just dancing and singing, they had something to say to us. That is why I believe in the hidden doors of Intelligence, with a capital 'I', and the children have the secret of it.

Like children, we also should open our imagination and think of what we have received here. It is the original, traditional yoga set up by those elegant figures dressed in geru who simply greet us and make everything so easy that you wonder how it was possible. They exemplify high thinking which is in them, maintained and increased every day through their sadhana. At the same time, they represent the principles of precision and organization. In them we realize the relation of extremes when they are adjusted, as yoga advises us. Even the blue and red of the logo tells us

that ida and pingala are in us, but they have to be adjusted so that the third force rises which is not the addition of ida and pingala, but something else. To realize this you have to come to Munger; you have to come to Rikhiya, you have to imbibe the atmosphere and see the real master coming in front of you. He can be playing and joking, yet during the practices when he adjusts the postures of the crowd, there are no mistakes except when, for a joke, he passes from three to twenty-five.

I am amazed every time at the possibility that we have to make opposites come together. That is the force exemplified in this pandal. The way it grew out from the lawn, I don't know how, because the last time I was here, I didn't see it! Then, after the force of creation, there comes the beauty, decorating the place with the flowers and trees, so that even though the air might be polluted outside, here we breathe fresh air; we receive prana. Prana for physical health, but also prana for the mind, the emotions, the deeper dimensions of our beings. We are recharged by this force and the beauty that we find here. Since we have been here for this unveiling of the second chapter, we will be able to say in the future to our friends and children, "I was there!"



PRIVILEGED TO BE A GUINEA PIG

Sannyasi Agnidev (Ignacio Copete), Colombia



In any given situation, I generally try to think of what is happening, what is the story, what is the whole blueprint of what is happening. That is what I have been trying to do throughout the days of the Symposium. The thoughts are still raw, but I think that is part of the process here.

Everything goes back to what Sri Swami Satyananda said when he came out to the West in 1968. He said, “We are re-introducing yoga because the dawn of the psychic race is here and they need yoga.” I think this is the process that is going on. Sri Swamiji and Swami Niranjan don’t have the need to go out, give lectures and become famous. They probably would have been much happier retreating into a hut. Sri Swamiji used to say, “My ideal life would be in a hut doing my mantra.” So why do they do that? Why do they come out? Because they have a mission to fulfil. The mission is to bring a tool, which is yoga, to the human race for its development.

There is a process involved in this. When you begin to teach math to children, you don’t start with calculus; you start with the concept of numbers, one and two and three and four and five. That is what Sri Swamiji was doing at the beginning, trying to tell us what yoga is, to the extent that we could understand. He created a revolution in fifty years, and that was the first chapter. Now we are at the beginning of the second chapter. My feeling is, it is going to be huge. It will be a second revolution.

Sri Swamiji would often say, “I am paving the way for someone else who will come after me,” without saying who it

was. The process was clear in his mind, and it is the same with Swami Niranjana. They are introducing the instrument for the evolution of the human race, and they have to go step by step.

Swamiji Niranjana told us that Sri Swamiji had to water down the teachings because we were not prepared for them. Now, in the second chapter, we are learning that yoga is more than what we have known so far. It is not only asana. In this context, several things that Swamiji mentioned have become imprinted in my mind.

Number one: the idea of yoga from moment to moment. The experience with Sri Swamiji was that. He was living yoga all throughout the day and he expected us to do the same. And the only way to practise yoga from moment to moment is through awareness. When Swamiji mentioned about the microphone and the guitar overpowering everything, I saw Sri Swamiji sitting there. He was teaching us that you do yoga day to day, moment to moment, in the little things of life, not just in the transcendental things. This was exactly what Sri Swamiji used to train us to do. You had to be aware of all the little things, how a person comes, where you seat that person, how you treat the person. You have to be aware of everything. In the second chapter, awareness is the main theme.

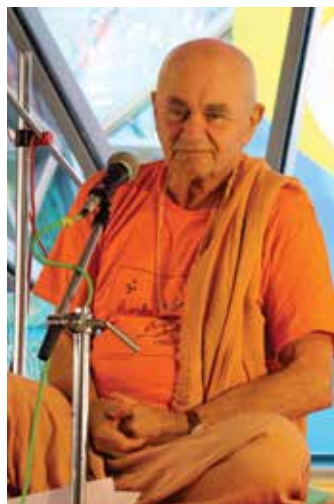
The other thing that struck me in what Swamiji was saying is the importance of pratyahara. In the Yogic Studies course in Colombia I teach Patanjali, so his words were a big blow to me. I saw chitta vritti from a new perspective altogether: that the vrittis are of chitta and not of the mind. That is the key and that is why pratyahara is so important.

I also find that the more I come here and the more I try to learn, the more I find that I know nothing. Take the practice of nyasa, how difficult and how complex it is, and obviously Swamiji was giving a watered-down nyasa. What our gurus are giving us is a version that we can handle. Nyasa is probably not applicable for the common people today, for they don't have the training. Yet to receive a glimpse of how vast the knowledge is and how little we know is humbling. Therefore, all we have to do is follow our gurus.

I think Swamiji tells us that these teachings are only for us and not for teaching others, because this is just the beginning. It is like sowing the seed. The few people who are here, we have to start the process of germination. In a way, we are like guinea pigs, trying to practise and become proficient. Swamiji may have to see what we do with the knowledge and how proficient we become, and then make adjustments, so that the rest of the human race can make that leap. The human race has to make the leap, for we are in the process of a revolution. I feel very lucky to be part of this process. It is a huge opportunity. Our gurus are giving us a boon and we have to be up to the challenge, for the sake of the whole of humanity.

A SPIRITUAL MODEL

Rishi Nityabodhananda, Australia



My first impression when I walked in the gate was that everything is so neat, tidy, to the last degree, every leaf, every branch, the order, the system, the environment. You can't see any faults; you are not bothered by a weed growing there or an ungainly-looking branch somewhere else. Therefore it is the best place to settle down and start your spiritual pursuit.

I had never heard of the Yoga Chakra before. Such a beautiful idea! With Sri Swamiji in the centre of the chakra and the six spokes coming out to make the complete picture of yoga. Guru in the centre and the six yogas all around. And as we complete each spoke, the wheel moves forward. It is perfect. Then to put each of those yogas



in place, so that we can practise them and systematically learn about them to have the complete picture. We always tend to think, 'Oh, now I am going to do the philosophy of yoga', 'Oh, now I am going to do asana', 'Oh, now I am only going to do this.' But we have the whole wheel now.

Most of you might have already been introduced to the second chapter. I had never heard of the second chapter when I came in. It was a completely new idea to me, and I must say, very timely. I live in a place called Byron Bay where yoga is a business. If you want to go to kirtan, fifteen dollars. Asana class, fifteen or twenty. If they offer you a cup of 'chai', three dollars. If you want a mantra, thousands! And so on. That yoga business is very well established. However, this second chapter has introduced a revolution which takes yoga into a spiritual dimension. It gives depth to the dimension of yoga. It is so appealing to me that such a step has been taken. You saw Swamiji teaching pawanmuktasana, how can you give a spiritual dimension to pawanmuktasana? That was great! All those levels of awareness. This second chapter of yoga, I think, is the beginning of a very timely change in the course of yoga with Swamiji at its spearhead. It is not

a business model, I hope you have noticed, it is a spiritual model. Of course we have to pay the rent and the expenses and somehow manage, but not forget, as Swamiji says, that these practices are for us.

The depth of yoga brings us into this idea that it is not just a practice, it is an experience. We get the experience through the different techniques that Swamiji has taken us through. For me, the greatest gift of the teachings were his comments on raja yoga. The fact that there is Samkhyan raja yoga and Vedantic raja yoga was astounding. We have always been learning yama and niyama from the *Yoga Sutras* and focusing on the idea of *yogaschitta vritti nirodhah*, stop the impressions from coming. However, in Vedanta chitta vrittis can be dissolved. They are just an appearance; they appear to be real but they are not. That's a beautiful approach. It brings raja yoga into a practical dimension, not just theoretical.

Then Swamiji's introduction of the importance of environment, not just in the ashram, but everywhere. The plastic that is clogging up the Ganga and also the world. The message came through very clearly how unaware we are of our environment. We are not aware of the trees, the nature, of what is going on around us. We do not want to be inconvenienced by thinking about all that. We want to have an easy life, a convenient life without considering the world around us which is the basis for our existence in this waking state. How can we hope to meditate properly if we are always bothered by the problems around us when we open the eyes? That came through very strongly with the drama in English and Hindi.

The overall impression was: samskara. This event has sown a beautiful and deep samskara and has left me with a love for yoga. I have always had a love for yoga, now it is deeper and with new information and new curiosity to be able to rediscover things. I am sure that this samskara will not only live through this life, but also the next life. So now I have a guiding light to be able to carry through this life and beyond.

AN INITIATION

Swami Dharmakeerti, Bangalore, India

The Symposium was more an initiation rather than an academic session that many of us expected. Such tremendous activity went into its organization and running it so seamlessly, it was as if a higher energy was moving the people on the ground. The residents of the ashram did a marvellous job quietly and unassumingly without looking around to be feted or appreciated. It was an example of authentic karma yoga which could have been inspired only by



a leader who himself opened out his heart to these energies. Swami Niranjan was like a rock behind everyone who was part of this endeavour. The Guru was there and they knew it. The entire reverberation of the Symposium was seen in watching the body language and conversations that people constantly exchanged. Many people talked to each other about the heightened energy that they felt, the power of Gurusthan and the intensity of personal practice that they experienced.

People from various countries mingled with such comfort, joy and ease that boundaries were dissolved. Swamiji's spiritual energy unified everyone in a one-pointed trust in the authenticity of his being and most people left feeling privileged to have been in his presence and inspired to walk this path with faith.

I don't know if I am saying all I want to. It is not easy to put into words what was uplifting of one's spirit. Listening to Swami Niranjan speak – the depth of his knowing, the clarity of his mind and the ease with which words flowed through his lips reminded me of Sri Swamiji and a realization flooded

me as I remembered Sri Swamiji saying, “As people, Niranjan and I are different, but he is my completion.”

I stood in awe in the presence of Sri Swamiji and I stand humbled again seeing his majesty unfold in Swami Niranjan. There is a Sanskrit sloka:

Kim Vachaneeyam Guru Mahima
Kim Avachaneeyam Guru Mahima.

Neither words nor silence can capture the glory of Gurutwam.

There were techniques at the Symposium. There were samskaras to be attained and strengthened. There was a chance for chitta shuddhi in the opportunity for karma yoga. There was a chance to bathe in the purifying Veda mantras at the yajnas. But these were not the larger vision I felt. The larger reassurance was that despairing humanity would not be abandoned. There was a pure and great power here that could not be quenched. Everyone who came here took a bit of that power back with them to love and to serve all beings. Truly it is said, *Moksha Moolam Gurukripa.*



THE DIAMONDS

Swami Yogagnana, Bulgaria



After the Symposium concluded, I returned to my country. Two weeks passed and slowly I came down to earth. The body and mind adjusted to normal life. Yet there was a fullness. We had gone back home with full hearts, heads and hands.

The Symposium was like a lifting up in all dimensions: physical, energetic, mental, psychic, spiritual. The setting of Chhaya Samadhi, the diamond, with sunrays going through the coloured glass making a fairy-tale image of lights . . . In front of this incredible beauty was Guru, another diamond, sparkling and shining. He spoke and we listened to the diamonds of truth, we laughed. And sometimes I could see other diamonds: tears of joy in many eyes. I thought: ‘Let this moment last forever, I don’t want it to end.’

I thank all sannyasins, sahayogis and guests, who were the instruments of Guru and made all the preparations so the Symposium could happen according to his plan and will. It was also very nice to see the Satyananda Yoga family gathered together, to hear the older sannyasins and see the enthusiasm and energy of the new generation from so many countries. Along with all this, the yajna performed in Akhara felt like a powerful medium to invoke the higher powers to be with us.

I feel uplifted by Swamiji's grace. I thank him for giving us his support, his blessings, his knowledge, his wisdom, his inspiration, his energy and his smile.

What can we do to make our guru as happy as he made us? Thankfulness is not enough. There is only one way: to practise and live all that he spoke about.

ON THE BILLBOARD OF MY CHIDAKASHA

Swami Mudraroop, Serbia



Last night when I lay down to go to sleep, there was a billboard in my chidakasha. The upper line in a happy-looking red font said, 'Yoga from door to door', and then the bottom line lit up in a blueish colour and said, 'Yoga from moment to moment'. I went to sleep with that image. The mantra of the second chapter that Swamiji has given to us, 'Yoga from moment to moment', is my strongest impression of the Symposium.

When I looked into the welcome prasad bag, inside were the souvenirs of the 2013 Convention. The thought came, 'There is a reason we have been given this.' I browsed through the books and memories of the Convention returned. All of us who were part of that event know how magnanimous it was, its magnitude and the impact it had on us. The Symposium is a more contained event, a much more personal experience where we, the lucky ones, were able to sit at guru's feet and receive the teachings. That was a very strong impression, that we received knowledge directly from him. It was transmission, not merely the words, but just being with him. I felt so lucky, grateful and humbled to be a part of that.

The practices were not given just as practices of a class but practices of life: doing them with eyes closed and living them with eyes open. You know, soldiers go through their drill on the training ground and then they apply what they learn when they go to battle. In the same way, we can win our own little battles of life with the blessings we have received. Each one of us received a small piece of shaktipat and it is up to us how we use it. We've got the knowledge and the inspiration, something for the head and something for the heart, and we have our hands to apply it.

I felt Sri Swamiji's presence throughout the Symposium, happy, laughing and clapping with us, saying, "You know!" or "Theek hai!" asking us to light the bottom line on the billboard now: 'Yoga from moment to moment'.

I have one very nice pratyaya: the hooting of the train in Munger. Sometimes out there in the world I hear a train hooting and the pratyaya is triggered. Sometimes it hurts a bit because I am there, not here, but it is a sweet pratyaya. A thought came yesterday, that the Bihar School of Yoga is a hooting train, moving forward with three engines, and all I wish is to remain on this train and help it move in whichever way I can.



THE COLOUR OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Swami Bhajanananda, Greece

If I was to give a colour to the key impressions from the ten days of the Symposium and the Pre-Symposium, I would say it was the colour of ‘care’. Care for our needs, caring in the organizational details, care in the neatness and the beauty of the presentation and the surroundings.

I was stunned by the care that I saw coming from Swamiji. When he was talking to us or when he was not talking, I realized how much he wants us to get out of the quagmire of tamas, to disconnect from the negative, to raise our level of awareness, to improve the quality of our lives.

He advises, he cajoles, he convinces us with arguments, he prods, he admonishes, he can be strict, he uses any way to get us to make a move, to take a step out of tamas, and he gave us concrete guidelines. So when we get back, we need to create a yogic environment in our home, we need to live a yogic lifestyle, connect with nature, disconnect from negative destructive people, practise the morning mantras, cook our own food, see our daily activities even at home as karma yoga, uplift those around us by sharing our positive experience and knowledge, practise the practices we learnt at the Symposium to gain our own experience and thus begin our journey into yoga vidya and living yoga ‘from moment to moment’. Thank you Swamiji.



A MULTIDIMENSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Swami Shaktidhara, Italy



I am very happy and content for having taken the decision to come for the MYS three weeks in advance with the idea to take part, even for a short time, as a small drop, in the preparation of the event. Many, many things, activities and departments taking place and going on simultaneously. I had the opportunity to join many different sevas and I always found all the swamis and residents of the ashram very kind, smiling, careful to details, trying to do their duty with total awareness. In Bhet it was very impressive, the coordination of filling the bags with prasad: in two to three minutes, thirty to forty bags were ready, full of items inside. It was like being in a beehive, everybody with their duties moving together in a very coordinated way.

The result of the common effort of the swamis to apply Swamiji's teachings is a tangible experience. Compared with the previous years, I could feel that something has changed. For sure there are difficulties, yet the feeling during my stay in the ashram was being inside an enormous flow of energy in which everybody is collaborating with personal effort and belief to fulfil an inner inspiration.

To have the opportunity to be with Swamiji for so much of time during the Symposium was a very nourishing exper-



ience. I felt as if we are an open book for him. He can read exactly what is going on within us, no matter how we want to appear. I also felt from Swamiji a pure flow of real love. The vibration of his voice, his smile, his attitude, his simplicity, his teachings, everything was full of love. Pure love is the all-per-vading energy within Swamiji. I really felt welcome and a sense of belonging to this spiritual family. My heart on one side is crying because I am now leaving, but on the other side it is happy because the doors to come back will be always open.

Unforgettable are the mantras of the final pooja from the pandits. They were like a sparkling and crackling fire reverberating in all our five koshas.

I want to thank from the depth of my heart Swamji and all the swamis and people it made possible to be a part of this memorable and multidimensional event. I want to conclude with a sentence from Swamiji that I read in the *Yoga Chakra* book. I found it a very poetic and touching sentence and for me it represents the ultimate expression of the quality of head, hearts and hands. If we could apply this principle, we would be really living a happy life.

“Humility brings the understanding that we move together, many people as one . . . this is Ishwara Pranidhana, when the eyes look at the beauty, when the ears listen to the harmony, when the hands reach out to help and not to get, when the feet do not falter and instead walk towards excellence and perfection, and when the heart is open to love.”

PERFECT ALIGNMENT

Swami Maitreyi, Colombia

The Munger Yoga Symposium 2018 has been a historical, memorable and magic event. We are all very fortunate to have participated and witnessed such a unique event. It has left a deep impression and has had an impact which we are unable to comprehend or understand, but which I am certain will show in our lives in the years to come.

Swamiji gave us his thoughts on yoga with crystal clarity and simplicity, with unique humour and a way with words that only he has. He is the alchemist turning mercury into gold, the magician pulling treasure after treasure out of his hat, the mathematician giving the proof of the highest truth in the most simple, pure and beautiful equation.



A word that came to mind is alignment. When all the planets are aligned, very special events occur. Through the practices we experienced the inner alignment of body, prana, mind and emotions, which gave the sense of deep relaxation, balance, harmony, peace, contentment and ananda. Externally everything was aligned, the work behind the scenes, the seva, the different events, the programs, the music, the performances were all flowing flawlessly in perfect harmony.

All the planets were also aligned. *Surya*, Sun, shining on all of us with his glory and brilliance; *Chandra*, Moon, guiding us and giving us the connection to the tradition, to vidya and wisdom; *Buddha*, Mercury, connecting us to *mahat*, the higher intelligence and understanding, seen in the brilliant management; *Shukra*, Venus, filling us with love, music, art and beauty, giving us the beautiful performances of BYMM and YYMM; *Mangal*, Mars, the strength of sankalpa, giving us the strength of willpower, dedication and direction; and *Shani*, Saturn, the force of duty, seva and responsibility.

Swamiji, you are the brilliance of the sun shining on all of us; the droplets of the rain, showering us with blessings; the river of tradition on which we are gently floating down; the ocean of vidya and wisdom in which we are slowly learning to swim; the cup of love from which we are quenching our thirst, filling our hearts, the flowering of human potential in the thousand-petalled lotus, from which we are drinking the nectar of bliss. You are the perfect yogi, sharing the fruits of your highest sadhana with us, out of love and compassion for humanity. You are one without a second.

Throughout was the vision of Sri Swami Sivananda and the mission of Sri Swamiji flowering in Swamiji.

Thank you for everything that you are giving us and for being in our lives.

Dhyana moolam Gururmurti
Puja moolam Gurorpadam
Mantra moolam Gururvakyam
Moksha moolam Gururkripa.

LIGHT AND JOY

Swami Yogajyoti, Ireland

What words can express how it was? I was lucky to be here to see the preparations happening: step by step the MYS location grew up around us. Each day a little more beauty unfolded until the whole ashram was glowing and bringing joy to us just seeing it around us – meticulous care to every detail. So already we were coming into the MYS frame of mind.

Then the Pre-Symposium: a clear, uplifting exposition of the Yoga Chakra given from the heart by Swamiji. It lifted us along with it, inspiring to keep up the effort, now more truly, sincerely and deeply than before. The sections of the program built on each other and lit up the whole feeling and experience of the place and the participants, just everything.

The Symposium itself: the joy of learning together through Swamiji's clarity, firmness and his seeing the light in us and encouraging us to release it, his inspiration carrying us out. The strong hope, determination, belief that we will experience yoga, live the yoga vidya to make him proud. Each location was well organized, friendly and expressing the October month of happiness. I feel so much gratitude for the time and care received from Swamiji.



THE EXPERIENCE OF SATTWA

Swami Savikalpananda, Greece

“If there is no sattwa, there is no yoga,” these are the first of Swamiji’s words I remember when I think of the Munger Yoga Symposium 2018. All aspects of sattwa were visible, almost tangible on all levels. From the smooth flow of the programs, to the practices we were taught, from smiling faces everywhere to the programs of the Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal children, from the environment, from the colours, the smells and the food, to the yajnas and poojas.

Swamiji has given to all of us so much in abundance. It will take some time to digest it all but there are some points that will stay with me:

- Relax and breathe.
- Be simple in practice and in your life.
- Have faith in yourself.
- Make every moment of your life yoga.
- Teaching is just one part of your life, not who you are.
- Application of wisdom and philosophy of yoga sadhana and abhyasa will bring you closer to who you truly are.

The feeling that I had all these days was that Swamiji was encouraging us to strive to become a learner of yoga and reach for the vast knowledge of yoga vidya, to look within and have our own experience of yoga, to become better human beings and not to settle for anything less than that. To leave the shallow waters of ignorance, to learn to swim and then dive deep into the beautiful ocean of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

Thank you Swamiji. Thank you to all those who have enabled all of us to have beautiful experiences in this Symposium.



AMIDST A FELLOWSHIP

Sannyasi Anandaratna, Switzerland

For me, the most moving aspect of the Symposium was the feeling of fellowship, of friendship and family. I think this will become a strong aspect of our way of life in the second chapter. Not just being at home and doing our practice, but being able to express it within our community and connect through the teachings in a positive and inspirational way, and help other people rise above the mundane level.



What we have seen is a perfect example of the sannyasins and residents of Ganga Darshan committed to the teachings and the mission of the Bihar School of Yoga, sacrificing themselves to make this event what it came to be. And then, of course, our masters sacrificing their whole lives. We have heard that most probably they would be very happy in a small hut doing their sadhana, but no, they are here with all of us, giving non-stop. If we are able to connect to that idea of giving, then we can make this event a goal and a guiding light for our future. Then we can make the second chapter come alive and move in the direction of living yoga from moment to moment.



WHAT A PRIVILEGE

Bhaktitara, Switzerland



The word 'wonderful' does not do any justice and is not enough to describe it. As it goes, I am still processing the Symposium days. In my mind, I still hear Swamiji's words of wisdom and knowledge that went straight to my heart. What a privilege to be in his presence. I feel blessed over and over and I am deeply grateful for all of it. Thank you for this Symposium which was from out of this world.

Thank you Swamiji for having me at the symposium.

Thank you Swamiji for planting the seed of love in my heart. I am taking care of it and hope it will sprout and grow.

Thank you Swamiji for destroying my ego.

Thank you Swamiji for helping me being aware.

Thank you Swamiji for the honour of greeting you every morning at the entrance of the symposium with 'Hari Om' and 'Wishing you a happy day'. Since then it has become my morning routine – wishing you a happy day every day.

Thank you Swamiji for all you have given me during the symposium and during this year.

Thank you Swamiji for being my guru.

THE OPENING OF A DOOR

Sannyasi Dharmaprem, New Delhi, India

The immaculately conducted Munger Yoga Symposium was a milestone in the history of yoga. It was akin to opening a door to show us the yogic path of life, which would be spiritually enriching, full of abundance, peace and joy.

The clear message of Swamiji brought home emphatically that the time has come to truly understand, imbibe and explore the wisdom of yoga in our lives. True knowledge is that which can be put in action in life. Hence, in the spirit of the Satyananda tradition, the message of following the yogic lifestyle was combined with practical sessions. Swamiji himself handheld us and guided us on how to deepen the experience by widening the horizons.

It was a divine blessing to be part of this Symposium which was full of vibrant, pure energy of love. In the benign presence of Swamiji, we were witness to his turning the wheels of yoga. Two decades later this Symposium will reverberate all round the world.



SO MUCH LOVE

Sannyasi Yogavilas, Greece

Every time I leave this place I feel immense gratitude for the love and the knowledge I have received. But this time I feel that everything was magnified. So much love, so much knowledge given from the heart, from the wisdom of the heart. Apart from all the above, the perfect organization and the gentleness and kindness of the people involved in it, gave me the impression that everything was flowing in such harmony. I really feel blessed for the opportunity to participate in this 'super' event and I thank you all so very much.

I hope the dream of Swami Niranjan for the second chapter will come true: that it will be realized by the effort of many teachers and sannyasins and become the culture of tomorrow for the whole world.

READY TO WORK

Swami Bhaktiratnananda, Greece

I came to the Munger Yoga Symposium without any expectations. My suitcases were full of my emotions, my limitations, and my will to learn more about my evolution, and how can I serve humanity in the future.

On the first day, a warm feeling spread in my heart seeing presentations of all the countries and their seva on propagation of yoga all over the world. The Symposium was a journey to a higher pranic level. The yajna of Ganesha, the yajna of removing all the obstacles, was the fuel of all this and uplifted us to a higher level.

Swamiji was with us during all the days and there was an endless giving. I felt Sri Swamiji through his words and his smiles. All together we were practising yoga and meditation. All together we were eating. All together we were at the yajna environment. He sowed the seeds of inspiration in our heart.



Now we are moving from yoga practice to yoga lifestyle. He gave us a new trademark: yoga from moment to moment.

What is the meaning of 'moment'? A moment includes the whole universe. A new pure river of information. The words are small in front of what I feel. Now I am ready to return home full of love and inspiration.

THE TREASURE HUNT

Sannyasi Ahimsa, Switzerland

I feel very blessed having been part of the Munger Yoga Symposium. A big treasure has been given with the second chapter. The map to this treasure is in our hands and it is the responsibility of each person who attended the Symposium to follow the road which has opened before us. With an open heart, determination, willpower and conviction.

Everything we received in the satsangs and classes with Swamiji and all the other speakers and teachers, is now in our hands and will unfold if we are able to incorporate it into our daily life. I would like to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to Swami Niranjan and to all the people who were involved in the organization of the Symposium. Everything went so smoothly. Thank you!

PLUGGED INTO A NEW SOCKET

Sannyasi Atmadeep, USA

It has been a while since I returned from Munger and I am still overwhelmed by the experience.

I knew it was a special occasion. A glimpse into the path that we have to now travel on. A direction and an attitude made clear by Swamiji. Swamiji had talked about this before and I arrived with a sense of anticipation and excitement.

The events of the Symposium swept me off my feet. I felt Swamiji's affection in everything, from the food, the endless prasada and all the various programs. He indulged us like a mother indulges her child on a special occasion so the child can be cheerful and receptive to the gems of the occasion.

I realized that we were being initiated. Initiated into something amazing – the second chapter! A new way of thinking, feeling and behaving – a whole new life itself! To be followed from moment to moment.

I returned drenched in that love, joy and laughter. I returned full in every way. A silent celebration continuing within me. My commitment and effort is to connect with this silent celebration from moment to moment.



I feel as if I had been struggling all my life, plugged into a socket that linked me to all sorts of useless patterns of thinking and feeling. And now I have been pulled out of that socket and plugged into a new one that floods me with joy and love and laughter. Old patterns come up often, but I am now able to ignore them and draw from my new socket of uplifting and beneficial thoughts and behaviours. This is my yoga from moment to moment.

CLARITY ON THE PATH

Jignasu Atmavishwas, Patna, India

Each day of the Symposium and Pre-Symposium was a revelation with the aim to observe yoga in daily life so that yoga does not remain merely as a practice in abstraction but becomes a lifestyle. It is a lifestyle in which all the materialistic and psychological barriers are overcome to see life in a totally new dimension, or life in its totality.

I found a very clear and concrete picture of the second chapter of yoga given beautifully by Swamiji in his expositions. Obviously, he can envision the next 50 years' plan. He gave a new insight of raja yoga and bhakti yoga with emphasis on their practical implementation in sadhana (raja yoga) and daily life (bhakti yoga). But the expositions of Swamiji on kriya and jnana yogas were totally new concepts for me with their profundity. They broke many of my earlier understandings without creating the least confusion or dilemma, and helped to get rid of the previous chapter mentally, for the context has changed.

The previous chapter was about social yoga (Satyananda Yoga) dealing with common problems of human beings and the next chapter is the original yoga called the Bihar Yoga tradition. It was waiting for the right time to come out, as mentioned by Swamiji in his satsangs. He beautifully explained the difference between concentration and awareness and how it is awareness that leads to concentration.

Expanding the focus is awareness; concentration without awareness is not possible, and both are inseparable.

The myth that jnana yoga is for intellectuals has been completely shattered by his eloquent explanation that intellectuals are up to the reach of buddhi and manas at the maximum whereas the method of enquiring ‘Who am I?’ is fit only for the higher intellect or para buddhi. Therefore one has to follow a sequential path of practice in jnana yoga. In this way, he gave a glimpse of how even jnana yoga can be followed by average people. I am astonished at how Swamiji maintains a progression in his satsangs in these vast complicated topics. When I look at my earlier drafts on Swamiji’s talks, I find that the picture is becoming clearer in his continuity of expositions.

I also feel that I am on the verge of getting a holistic picture of my sadhana. The path is becoming clearer and more concrete from being an abstract idea. Being present at his satsangs makes a great difference in spite of the fact that everything has been mentioned in the books. Each and every word of Swamiji requires super awareness when listening to his satsangs. Whatever he says is like universal truth.

Swamiji beautifully explained yama and niyama in a totally new context. I felt that yama and niyama are essential to maintain the purity and continuity of sadhana and help to have extended experiences. Asana and pranayama don’t improve the quality of life. Yama and niyama improve the quality of life by embedding positivity in our thoughts.

Just as ancient yogic seers imparted the sacred vidya orally to their disciples, we have a yogi in our times. We are fortunate to have the presence of Swamiji in this materialistic age. He is with us in the form of divine inspiration. Swamiji’s satsangs at the beginning of the second chapter like the revelation of a vidya that was kept secret for fifty years, waiting for the apt time to come out for sincere spiritual seekers. I bow to this amazing super human.

INSPIRED TO BE A BETTER DISCIPLE

Sannyasi Bhaktananda, Hungary

This Munger Yoga Symposium was definitely a beautiful culmination of all the efforts Swamiji made in the last five years, since the World Yoga Convention, to bring forth again the wonderful concept and practices of the Yoga Chakra, which is the foundation of the Bihar Yoga tradition led by Swamiji. The Yoga Chakra was presented by Swamiji in a way that all of us were able to relate to and understand.

I was fortunate to spend the weeks before the program at Ganga Darshan and participate in the last-minute preparations, which was in itself uplifting, being in the presence of Swamiji who created a benevolent sattwic atmosphere for all activities.

The program was full of unforgettable experiences and from those I would like to highlight one.

Many times before the sessions with Swamiji the chants of Adi Shankaracharya were played. One day, listening to a stotra, a thought came to my mind. Shankaracharya during his life achieved amazing things with the help of his disciples amongst whom many were gurus in their own right. Swamiji too needs and deserves good disciples, so he can also accomplish what he needs to. At that moment I felt the desire and inspiration to become better so I can help him and achieve the aspirations of the second chapter of BSY, to live a divine life by living yoga from moment to moment. This is the inspiration which I take from here.



SAT-CHIT-ANANDA UNLOCKED

Sannyasi Bhaktitmudra, Italy

The continuous flow of joy, bliss, happiness, light and love that I have experienced during this Symposium is something beyond any possible expectations and there are no words to describe it. Swamiji, you have unlocked the doors of sat-chit-ananda and I have had a true glimpse of it.

Thank you Swamiji from the bottom of my heart, I am so grateful to God for belonging to such a great tradition. I want to honour it from moment to moment and forever.

LEARNING POSITIVITY

Sannyasi Bhavanichetana, Greece

It was an honour to be a participant of the Symposium. Everything was fully organized with love and respect. I had the feeling that Sri Swamiji was present every moment.

Swami Niranjanananda reminds us that the most important thing is to be a student, and that knowledge depends on our behaviour, not on books. We must live yoga, not think that we are doing yoga with asana, pranayama, and so on. He reminds us that if we think positive, positivity will be around us.



THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YOGA TEACHER

Sannyasi Brahmadhyanam, Bangalore, India



The Yoga Symposium has helped us understand the introduction to the next chapter of yoga. Most importantly, the responsibility of a yoga teacher to deepen the sadhana.

Though the Symposium was scheduled to be for four days, Swamiji blessed everyone with four more days of Pre-Symposium satsangs, and we were fortunate enough to attend the same. Swamiji introduced the second chapter, the history and the purpose of yoga, the Yoga Chakra, laid emphasis on awareness, on developing our understanding and practices, and there were presentations from different countries.

During the Symposium, we learnt the five-fold awareness of asanas on the first day, with chakra awareness and mantra repetition. This was a completely new learning and every practice was dynamic. In the satsangs with Swami Niranjanji, the most important thing I learnt was how to live the yogic life moment to moment, leaving the six enemies behind and moving ahead with yogic wisdom, with the yama of manahprasad and niyama of japa.

COMING HOME

Sannyasi Gauriroopananda, Greece

I have experienced that I have come home, to the source, the chakra of love, true happiness and endless giving – prasad. Now I also have the right and the ability to be part of this giving with no limit. I have lived in a society these days of great transcendental changes – chanting, evolved children in a true sense, happy and compassionate adults. Love-filled glimpses of Swami Niranjan and all-pervasive energy of Sri Swamiji. A sample of our society in future.

TOTAL IMPACT

Sannyasi Gyandeva, Kolkata, India

One could feel a divine and intense surge of energy and power to help us embark on a new, holistic journey. The impact was total, with the new mission statement ‘yoga from moment to moment’ engulfing, encompassing and embracing us all. The feeling of fellowship was intense and intimate despite the many people, the varied backgrounds. This was like a trip to a whole new universe. I am blessed, overwhelmed and happy, and very fortunate, to be at the Symposium, with my Guruji leading us to the new light of wisdom and goodness.

The way the Symposium was planned, it seemed like a wonderland! The manner in which it was executed was so perfect, with every detail taken care of by the BSY team.



LIFE-CHANGING EVENT

Sannyasis Jyotimitra & Govindas, Dhanbad, India

When the Golden Jubilee of BSY culminated with the World Yoga Convention in 2013, we understood that a new chapter of yoga had begun, but even though we wanted we could not align ourselves with the change.

Within a small time frame of four days of Munger Yoga Symposium 2018, the second chapter of yoga was beautifully hammered into us and the seeds of living yoga 'from moment to moment', the actual meaning of pratyahara, concepts of awareness and concentration were sown deep into our consciousness. The highlights of the event were:

1. For the first time the difference between classroom yoga and yogic lifestyle was understood.
2. The hatha yoga practices, which we actually took as physical movements for maintenance of physical body have now become a tool for going deep into the pancha koshas and have become more of a mental practice.
3. The yoga nidra practice which we earlier understood as a tool of relaxation has become a tool for increasing awareness.
4. The pratyahara practices now seem to be achievable, the practice, related to each sense, has been understood.
5. Why we are not able to uplift ourselves and constantly fall into the trap of misery due to the six enemies has now become clear and the role of yama and niyama to get us out of this trap has been understood.

The design of the program was such that the concepts were getting hammered in. Asanas taking us into new dimensions, advanced version of pranayama, yoga nidra, kaya sthairyam and pratyahara practices, followed by swadhyaya, Swamiji's satsang and evening performance program, made the event very intense.

The beauty of the event was that it was well-complemented by relaxation and knowledge at the same time. In Satyam Darshan 34-minute films containing satsangs of Sri



Swamiji and developments were shown. Satyam Yoga Prasad was unique with a free selection of books and DVDs and CDs of the ashram with no restriction on numbers. Apart from it, akhand kirtan was rejuvenating and positively charging the atmosphere. Not only this, the event started with Ganesha Yajna and concluded with Sudarshan Mahayajna so that we may receive the grace of the Almighty in visualizing the new chapter and achieve success in it. The quality of food served was a class of its own and also needs a special mention.

To conclude, it was a life-changing event. Condensed in an unbelievable short span of time. A lot of planning, hard work and care has been taken to ensure 100 percent success. The second chapter of yoga definitely is much more difficult, requiring a lot of effort and awareness in every moment. But with the guru's grace flowing in abundance, a new ray of hope is burning high and I assure Gururji that we will give our 100 percent effort to move ahead in the direction shown, for this is perhaps the only way by which we can thank you and show our gratitude for such a commendable event.

EVENT OF EXTRAORDINARY PROPORTIONS

Sannyasi Mahavidyananda, Greece

The Munger Yoga Symposium was an event of extraordinary proportions at all levels. Swami Niranjan shone as the spectacularly gracious and magnanimously generous host, seamlessly supported by many devoted sannyasins and sevaks. Remarkable was the sense of a continuous flow of the eternal teachings of the parampara in a way that brought them within everyone's reach. Swamiji's effulgent presence and his imparting of the foundations and ground rules for the second chapter of yoga fine-tuned us, pointing us in the direction of the yoga vidya which is always there for us to connect with through sincere, serious, committed effort. A heartfelt thanks with immense gratitude to all the sannyasins who contributed to the materialization of the Yoga Symposium and especially to Swamiji who is a never-ending source of inspiration for all of us.

RESOLVE TO HONOUR

Sannyasi Mangaldharma, Romania

I haven't really processed the Symposium, so I cannot say what I have absorbed and what is my deeper understanding, still I can say a few words. I consider that the past phase was more like water and oil in a bottle, that was my relationship with yoga. Now I would like to make an attempt to turn it into water and some sugar, and make yoga more soluble in my life. It is not going to be easy. I still have a huge number of books I looted in the World Yoga Convention that I haven't



touched. Nevertheless, I continued the legacy and picked more this time. I should read the book dealing with lobha!

The other thing that I felt was that the legacy of Karna Chaura has been maintained – not only through the efforts of Satyananda Yoga, but also through Swami Sivananda's teaching of 'adjust, adapt and accommodate'. Everything that YPT has produced so far has now gone into the virtual world. This is not just a sign of giving, but adapting with the needs of the times. That was something very touching to witness, Swamiji so generously giving everything. It is up to us whether our cup is turned up or turned down.

In fact, I am leaving this place with a little bit of fear, if I may say this. A lot has been given without asking. A lot came on our plate without trying or pushing ourselves to get that. And I have observed in my life that when things came too easy, I did not value them. So I make a sankalpa to try this time to not let go of all the goodness, all the blessings, all the knowledge that not only Swamiji but the whole band of acharyas shared with us in these last few days.

The last thing I would like to say is that every management school should send their graduates to Bihar School of Yoga during such events. There is no place better to learn how to run and manage events with the smoothness that everybody does it here. So thanks to all those people who were in the foreground and in the background. We just came in for fifteen days and had a happy honeymoon phase and are now walking back. It was a cakewalk for us delegates. But it were they who did the hard work. So thank you to each and every one who made it happen. And of course, this does not need to be said, but without the presence of Sri Swamiji and Swamiji in our life, we would find our life to be less than what it is, we would find it meaningless. So thanks to them for having us in their lives and adding some purpose and meaning to our life.

THE JIGSAW PUZZLE IN PLACE

Sannyasi Manoroopa, Bangalore, India



I would like to express my gratitude for having had the opportunity to be a part of the Munger Yoga Symposium.

The experience of the Symposium was like diving into a deeper realm to understand the real knowledge of yoga. I had been exposed to the concept of Yoga Chakra earlier, but during the Symposium when Swamiji took us through the theory and the practices, all the bits of understanding fell into place like a big jigsaw puzzle – and one could see the larger picture. How the different forms of yoga make the spokes of the wheel of the Yoga Chakra made absolute sense. This was not just an insight of how they are linked; it went further to give concrete ways to apply them in life.

A most important aspect for me was the sets of yamas and niyamas that Swamiji developed for practice. Manahprasad seemed to be so small, but the practice made me realize how the experiences of life colour the way I experience life. Just making the resolve to be happy changes the tone of the day; it makes me look forward to the day with positivity. The yama of danti made me realize the hold of the senses over the moods of the mind. The sessions on how to practise the yamas and niyamas made them even more experiential and applicable.



Sitting through the different sessions and the yajna, I had the feeling that we were being given a chance to experience the yoga as the rishis and sages intended it to be experienced, and the way they taught it centuries ago.

FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT

Nirbhasa, Greece

With all my respect to our Guru and our Tradition:

from moment to moment

With magic way I experienced all these days the sweet yoga fellowship movement.

from moment to moment

Everything I was doing, watching, eating, observing, hearing, chanting, doing seva, it was an observation of myself as part of the body . . .

from moment to moment

It was a special experience of faith that I am in the right place at the right moment.

from moment to moment

I was feeling the inner connection with the source.

from moment to moment

I realized that I want to be the winner and to become a part of this amazing yoga fellowship.

A PROMISE OF HAPPINESS

Sannyasi Sadhanashakti, Italy

During a class with Swamiji, while we were chanting the mantra *Om* all together at the same rhythm, he started chanting the Shanti Path. I heard his voice coming inside of my heart, it was so touching, so sweet, like a spiritual lullaby!

His voice was like the voice of a mother that cradles her new-born baby. I was that baby, held in his arms, protected. I felt all his love and his hope for our growth, a promise of happiness. Thank you Swamiji for giving me a new life in this second chapter.

SRI SWAMIJI IN SWAMIJI

*Jignasu Sagar Chaitanya and Meenu Dhungra,
New Delhi, India*

We thank from the core of our hearts Swami Niranjananandaji, the sannyasins, the coordinators and the entire team for organizing such a beautiful program. It was indeed a great pleasure and honour for us to be part of this program. Words cannot describe our experience. These cherished moments will be stored in our memory and will become the guidance of our lives from now onwards.



Two things, above many, we would like to say. As per Swamiji's directions, we have to begin to lead a life based on yogic principles. And the seeds of love will blossom and spread the message of love to all.

It seemed at the Symposium that Swami Satyananda was showering his blessings on all of us. It also felt that Swami Niranjanananda had become Swami Satyananda – as if his head, heart hands were not his, but Satyanandaji's.

RENEWED CONVICTION

Sanjiv Chaturvedi, Thailand

In the second chapter, this is my first participation in an event like this. Even though I am from Jamalpur, after receiving my master's degree from BSY in 2004 and working here for three years, in 2007 I immigrated to Bangkok. Since then I have not been able to join any of the courses.



The teachings that are at the forefront of my mind from the Symposium are the happiness challenge that Swamiji gave us, developing pratipaksha bhava, applying yama and niyama in daily life. But there is something else I would like to say. During the convocation ceremony of our master's degree, Swamiji said, "I have given you all the teachings and wisdom of yoga, and now my physical connection with you is finished. Now you go into society and swim by yourself. Whatever I have taught, if it is good, you will accept it. Don't only love me, love my teachings." I always keep this in mind. I have received

only mantra diksha, I don't have the orange cloth or the confidence like all of you, but I have Swamiji's teachings and I have faith.

Since 2007, with the teachings, with faith, belief and trust in my guru, I have been able to do something. Even when I have come here sometimes, in front of Swamiji I forget everything that I wanted to ask. So I have no other option but to connect at the energy level or the mental level.

Yet by guru's grace and the power of the Satyananda Yoga tradition, I have had the chance to teach yoga to more than 300,000 people. It is true that yoga has become a business model now, yet I find that in the centre where I teach and where there are teachers from other traditions also, most students like to join the Satyananda Yoga class and the retention factor is nine out of ten. Therefore I feel that if we follow the teachings, we can do anything. We can help society, help people.

I have also found that when I have to develop new classes, I just use whatever I learnt here and create different modules. Then I come across one of Swamiji's latest satsangs and find that he is talking about the same thing. I don't get the opportunity to be present in his classes or satsangs, yet it happens. I feel that whenever I develop a class or take a class, I can connect with him. I don't know how, but it is all Swamiji's blessings. I always feel the presence of Swamiji whenever I give lectures in the university or places like the UNESCO. I never feel that I am alone. Even though I don't have guru, I feel that Swamiji and the tradition are always with me, and this empowers me. After participating in the Symposium, I have received new confidence that I was right. If you have trust in your guru, everything is possible for you.



THE GRANDEUR OF LOVE

Sannyasi Shabdavani, Greece

I am speechless at the grandeur of Swami Niranjan's love. Such a great amount of joy and beauty on all levels. Even in his strictness he transmitted love to us. I feel as if one more opening of mind and heart has happened for me.

I am leaving Munger keeping in my mind three things of what Swamiji said:

1. Yoga from moment to moment.
2. Facing constantly the six smugglers.
3. That I am the one who is going to decide if I am the winner or the loser!

FULL OF JOY AND ENERGY

Jignasu Shaktimurti, Greece

I feel very proud to have participated in this historical event of Satyananda Yoga. I was given everything I needed and much more. The difficulties at the physical level have been forgotten and now I feel so full of joy and energy and so inspired to begin working and putting into practice the yoga 'from moment to moment'.

The main thing that made me cry sometimes was to see all the positive qualities expressed by Swami Niranjan and especially his love for all of us. He took care of everything in such a detailed manner. The perfect environment, the plants and flowers, the music, the kirtan, the delicious food, the evening programs, the havan, so much prasad! Everything was perfect.

I will try with all my heart to be serious, sincere and committed to all the responsibility he gave us. Thank you!

MANY LEARNINGS

Swathi, Bangalore, India



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

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

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

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

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

I thoroughly enjoyed singing and repeating kirtans and it made me realize that singing releases endorphins, which makes one feel elated. This reminds me of the Manganiars whose soulful music against the full-moon backdrop is etched in my memory. The children's play and the message it contained will always be remembered, 'Jal hi jeevan, Jeevan hi jal'. Along with this goes the 'Ba ba black sheep' example that Swamiji gave and the impact of vasanas and samskaras in our life. There were many such things that made me go, 'Wow!'

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



TREASURED MOMENTS

Sannyasis Vedamurti and Durgashakti, Greece

There are no words to describe the feelings and experiences we have had at the Munger Yoga Symposium 2018. Any attempt to express the beautiful and treasured moments seems to be limited and incomplete.

Swamiji presented the principles of applying yoga vidya in our lives which will bring out our inherent positive qualities and transform ourselves. He gave us more than we asked or planned for, and we felt the love and care in every activity, during satsangs, in yoga classes at Chhaya Samadhi or participating in seva, akhand kirtan, following the rituals in Akhara during the yajna ceremonies.

The Symposium was organized to every detail and even the idea of separating the participants in Blue and Red brought to mind the main forces of ida and pingala working harmoniously.

We saw people's smiling faces as they were coming out from the DVD theatre, the Kundalini Awakening Centre, the Satyam Yoga Prasad area and at the same time we were hearing the akhand kirtan from the amphitheatre. Such generosity of giving in every form we have never seen anywhere else.

The light of Satyananda Yoga in the second chapter is entering the electronic age as Swamiji uploaded the SY books and DVDs on the web and launched in cyberspace the SY encyclopaedia 'Bihar Yoga Wiki'.

Participating in the presentation and beginning of the second chapter of Satyananda Yoga, we feel very honoured and blessed by our gurus and heartily wish that the new chapter will transform and uplift humanity.

THE SOUND OF GURU'S VOICE

Vijaya, Greece



What has made the biggest impression on me is the voice of our guru, Swami Niranjana. His voice was full of love even when he was firm. Like talking to his children. With this sentiment I will leave Munger, BSY. With the sentiment of love, being part of a big family, and never forgetting the sound of his voice.

CELEBRATION OF VIDYA

Jignasu Visnumitra, Greece

Everything happened in such an amazing way! The satsangs of Swami Niranjana have been a true revelation of yoga vidya and of the magnitude of the guru of the Satyananda Yoga tradition. I felt very lucky and privileged to be part of the 'celebration of vidya'.

In my Satyananda Yoga life, I've been stunned by the 'original prehistoric' experiences:

1. Yajna in Rikhia. I will never forget the yajna in 2014 and in 2016 with the huge fires.

2. January 2017 Swamiji's panchagni in Munger.
3. The tantric nyasa yoga nidra we had from Swamiji during the Symposium.

This last experience travelled me through ages and I feel cleaner. It has been beautiful that we all witnessed how Sri Swamiji started yoga nidra and how he decoded it.

Many congratulations to the sannyasins and sahayogis who worked so hard and always smiled! The whole atmosphere with all these people coming from so many different parts of the world and performing kirtan together, sharing their stories and experiences of yoga has been beautiful and touching.

Everything worked out perfectly without gaps or uneasy moments. About the afternoon classes, although the time of the classes was difficult (after lunch with the heat), there were very interesting elements such as the pratyahara technique with the eyes open.

BSY is running fast. I was very happy with the availability of yoga vidya through technology on the internet. A new era is starting and it shows that to be traditional does not mean to be closed and aloof.

I will take with me the kindness and generosity of Swamiji and honour the fact that he shared his vidya with all of us, and his vision and inspiration.

GOING WITH DETERMINATION

Sannyasi Vivekamani, New Delhi, India

The Munger Yoga Symposium has been a path-breaking event in the lives of all of us who witnessed and participated in it. The immaculate execution of the program indicated that the vision of a sage cannot be anything but Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram. It felt like Swamiji envisioned everything in one glimpse in his meditation and conceptualized the whole of yoga vidya in a language that would make it available to people of the present age. The mystical wisdom

of yoga was taught to us in a manner that made those deep, ancient concepts crystal clear.

We are so fortunate to receive this great vidya directly from the masters, and there is a commitment to inculcate it in our lives. All of us go with determination to follow the mandate of our Swami Niranjan to turn our lifestyle into a yogic lifestyle by integrating the six yogas of the Yoga Chakra into our daily life. The practices have been given and are further made accessible through Satyam Yoga Prasad. We go bathed in blessings, love and inspiring energy created during the Symposium to do our best in living the life of a true practitioner of yoga vidya.





SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

Yoga Chakrodaya, the Dawn of Yoga Chakra, is a tribute to the Munger Yoga Symposium conducted at Ganga Darshan in October 2018 to unveil the second chapter of yoga. In a nine-day celebration Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati launched the Yoga Chakra, the wheel of yoga, in the presence of yoga teachers and aspirants from all over India and from around the globe.

In *Book 2*, Swamiji explains the essential components of the second chapter of yoga, and in the classes of hatha yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga delegates were given the experience of the new direction. As a personal tribute charyas and yoga teachers share their connection with yoga and Sri Swami Satyanada.

