

Yoga Ecology series: Volume 4

BIHAR YOGA®

# Janani

## Holistic Yogic Lifestyle

**Swami Prembhava Saraswati**



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

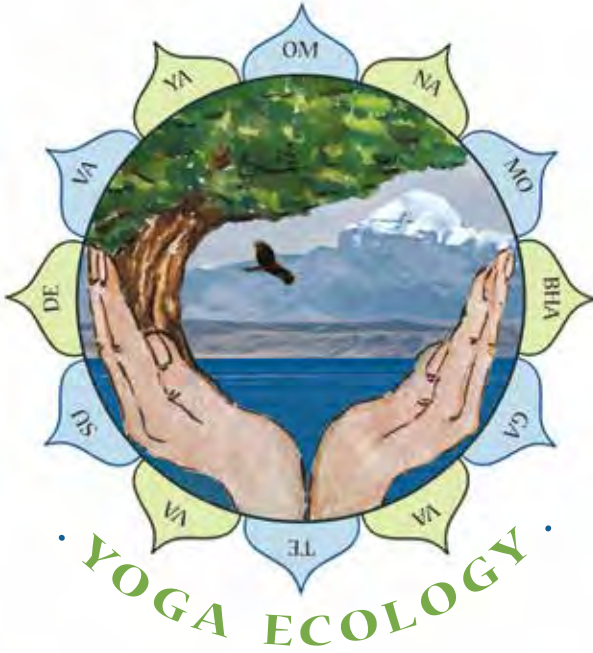


# Janani

## Holistic Yogic Lifestyle

*With kind regards, ॐ and prem*

Sriani Nivaran



• Promoted by Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth •



Yoga Ecology is the yogic science of ecological living and is part of the 2nd Chapter initiative by the Bihar School of Yoga.

In our Yoga Ecology image, Mount Kailash represents the manifest form of the supreme tattwa of creation, the state of 'I am'. Lake Mansarovar symbolizes inner purity without which spiritual awareness is not possible. The tree epitomizes selfless giving and living according to the laws of nature.

All these aspects of Prakriti are seen nestled in the hands of Lord Narayana, the nurturer and sustainer of creation. The sixteen petals of anahata chakra surround them with the qualities of loving, giving, sharing and connecting. The mantra of Narayana rests on these petals:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय।

*Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.*

# Janani

Holistic Yogic Lifestyle

Swami Prembhava Saraswati

*Under the Guidance of*  
Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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The purpose of this book is to provide relevant information regarding yoga practice; it is not a practice book and it is not to be used for teaching oneself or others. All yoga training is to be learned and practised under the competent guidance of a person well versed in the practice. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to choose the teacher and the manner in which the classes are being conducted. Bihar School of Yoga is not responsible in any way for the individual's choice.

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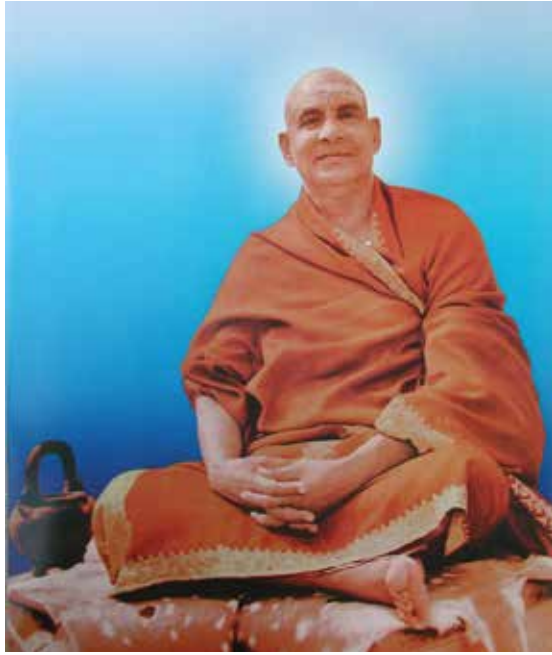
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## Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to  
Swami Sivananda Saraswati,  
who recognized the unity of all life as the divinity of Nature.*



## Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to  
Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who inspired  
aspirants to honour Nature with respect and care,  
living life in the spirit of yoga ecology.*

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# Janani

The cosmic universal energy, power or *shakti* is known as *Janani*, the Mother. Another name for this universal shakti is *Yoga Maya*. As Yogamaya, two prominent functions of this cosmic shakti are defined: Yoga, her ability to lead us to harmony, peace and union, and Maya, her ability to lead us astray to distraction, illusion and ignorance. From Yogamaya emerge the three faculties of *jnana shakti*, *iccha shakti* and *kriya shakti*, the powers of knowledge, will and action. They converge for creation to occur, and their convergence is known as Prakriti. The power or energy required to express and manifest is *Prakriti*. With the three faculties Janani defines the nature of Prakriti which is to create evolve and expand. Prakriti is present in atoms, particles, gaseous, liquid and solid matter in stars and galaxies; she is everything manifest for she is the shakti of manifestation.

*Prithvi*, the earth, is the final outcome of Prakriti. Prithvi is the manifestation of Janani, and Prakriti is the power that moves everything on this earth. Prithvi is the perfect manifestation. Here on earth she appears in all her beauty and splendour and bestows on us her immeasurable treasures. To date we do not know of any other planet in all the multiverses where such an abundance of life and life forms exist. Since the creation of Prithvi, countless ecosystems have existed side by side expressing the joyful play of creation: the oceans' unfathomable depth, the lofty

heights of mountain ranges, jungles and deserts, from small unicellular beings to the biggest mammals and us, the human beings of this planet. Everything on earth is a celebration of Janani and her creative aspect Prakriti.

Philosophically Prakriti is the creative energy and realistically Prithvi is our home planet from whose womb all life forms have taken birth and continue to enjoy the bounty given by her for the development, sustenance growth and evolution of us, her children.

Yoga ecology honours Janani and Prakriti, both the beatific and cosmic expression of cosmic shakti, and attempts to bring harmony through a series of simple practices such as aradhana, yama and niyama, havan and mantra chanting. At the same time, an effort is made to harmonize the individual nature and connect to the natural forces, the natural environment and the people we share life with through genuine sattwic qualities, respect and love for all.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



# Yoga Ecology – The Vidya for Today

Central to the teachings of Satyananda Yoga is the concept of the yogic lifestyle. Yoga is not just a practice to be performed. Yoga is a way of life, a manner in which life can be lived, with awareness, understanding, positive intention and appropriate and creative action. When yoga becomes a part of life, then it becomes universal and dynamic. This is the aspect of the yoga vidya which has been emphasized in the Satyananda Yoga tradition. It is a holistic vision of yoga, leading to the development of a balanced personality and harmony between body, mind and spirit, which expresses as wisdom and restraint in management of the sensorial and sensual world.

Contrary to popular belief yoga is not limited to a set of practices, neither is it static and inert. Underlying the practices and techniques, is the *yoga vidya*, an inherent *jnana* or wisdom arising from direct understanding and experience of the transcendental reality. It is this yoga vidya which emerges through the yogic traditions or *parampara*, the true spiritual knowledge and wisdom that shines forth as a progressive and inspiring force which evolves according to the circumstances and the need of the time.

It is the duty and purpose of a spiritual parampara or tradition to preserve the vidya. The spiritual luminaries, the seers of traditions maintain the spiritual knowledge in its pure radiant and pristine form, untainted and unsullied by

the ignorant and free from permutations and combinations. Only when the time is right, when there is a genuine need and thirst for knowledge and the conditions are conducive, is the vidya revealed for the benefit of humanity.

It was at a critical juncture in the history of humanity in the 1940s, that Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh began the work of the Divine Life Society. The early 1900s saw a world devastated by the horrors of wars, epidemics and depression. The Divine Life Society shone forth as a beacon of light in the darkness of materialism, misery, fear, selfishness and greed. To one and all regardless of caste or creed, Swami Sivananda taught an integral system of yoga which could be practised in any situation and station of life. The call to live the Divine Life was a clarion call inspiring people to cultivate virtues, purify the heart through selfless service and develop universal love.

Swami Sivananda's disciples expounded the science and discipline of yoga as a practical method to improve the quality of life. Taking yoga across the world they taught an integral yoga, a synthesis of karma yoga, hatha yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga and kriya yoga to harmonize the attributes and expression of head, heart and hands. Yet the global development of yoga today pays more tribute to the popularity of asana and the physical culture, than it does to the qualities of mind and heart necessary for harmonious personal development and spiritual transformation.

In 1963, Sri Swami Satyananda established Bihar School of Yoga to take yoga from 'shore to shore and door to door'. His vision of yoga as a science, a lifestyle, a culture of humanity, necessitated a profundity of understanding, experience and an ability to look at life differently. Accordingly, his method of teaching was different. Yoga was taught in the ashram, a yogic environment, where practices and techniques were embedded within a lifestyle that supported the underlying yogic principles and focused on developing serenity, simplicity, restraint, contentment and happiness in daily life.

The importance of lifestyle cannot be underestimated. As Swami Satyananda demonstrated through his own life, when adhered to correctly without deviation, the yogic lifestyle culminates in *atmabhava*, the understanding and experience of the connection between all beings and the underlying spiritual reality.

Following its Golden Jubilee in 2013, which celebrated the conclusion of 50 years of yoga propagation, Bihar School of Yoga embarked upon the 'second chapter of yoga'. There is no doubt that through increased physical health the practice of yoga has enhanced the lives of millions. Yet, faced with irrefutable evidence of environmental devastation, society across the globe finds itself at another crisis point and unable to find a solution.

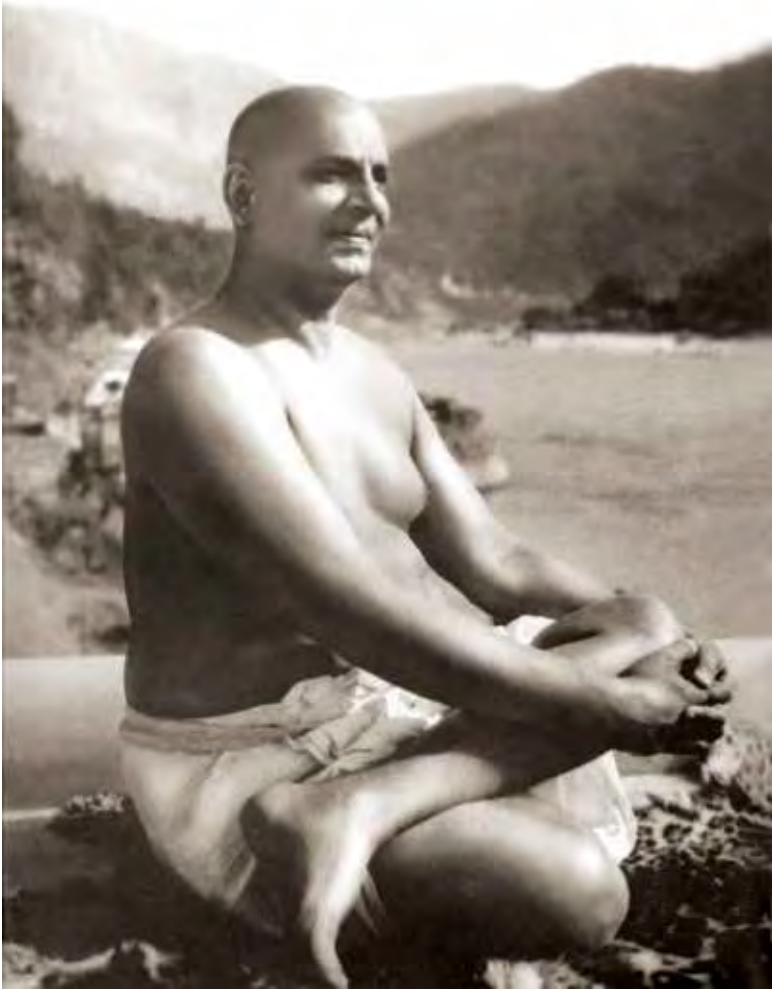
Essentially, there is only one real cause, which contains within it every cause, and that is imbalance. To provide a means by which the individual person can make an effort to redress the imbalance of modern material life, the vidya of yoga ecology is being revealed by Bihar School of Yoga, under the inspiration of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati.

The essential spiritual truth of the interrelationship and interconnectedness of all things, between the microcosm and the macrocosm, is an intrinsic aspect of the yogic lifestyle. When the individual awareness expands, the individual is able to transcend the all-consuming experience of the limited, selfish, egocentric self, and begins to feel the interconnectivity and interrelationship that exists and underlies all life.

Explained here in simple, practical terms is the connection between the purity of the internal environment of every individual and the external world around us. The sadhanas given in this book are ancient and powerful techniques of purification, transformation and spiritual awaking. Yet alongside any regular practice there must also be a sincere commitment and effort to refine the lifestyle, restrain the outgoing senses and desires and develop simplicity, humility and love, thus realizing the inner spiritual nature.

This is the yoga vidya of the Satyananda Yoga parampara. This is the teaching of Sri Swami Sivananda which still echoes in the Himalayas. This is the wisdom of Swami Satyananda eternally aloft on the rivers of the Ganga. This is the boon which is being placed before humanity by the inspiration of Swami Niranjanananda.

—*Swami Ratnashakti Saraswati*



# Introduction

*Janani: Holistic Yogic Lifestyle* describes the importance lifestyle plays in the life of the individual, in society and the natural environment of the earth. One's lifestyle may be a personal choice or depend on socio-economic condition, one's beliefs or one's natural habitat. The search for a lifestyle which fulfils one's desires and needs is ingrained in human nature. From the early gatherers and hunters to today's nomads and jet-setters lifestyle, always served the purpose of procuring satisfaction. The pursuit of this purpose has led to the current state of Mother Earth where deforestation, abuse of natural resources and pollution has led cause destruction and death of many ecosystems of the planet. And the destruction of a healthy social fibre for humankind.

The holistic yogic lifestyle is based on *sanyam*, the ability to remain balanced in the many varied circumstances life may present. It is not a philosophical concept but the teaching of sages and saints of all times. More than ever, the need to cultivate and live *sanyam* is the need of the time. *Sanyam* begins with the four instincts, of sexuality or *maithuna*, craving or *ahara*, fear or *bhaya*, and sleep, disconnection or *nidra*.

The mismanagement of the four instincts manifests in physical and mental illness, in social upheaval and degradation, chaos and in a human race living without direction. The permissiveness of sexuality today has gone

far astray from its original intent of pleasure, progeny and spiritual experience. It is pleasure only that is sought and at all costs. The craving instinct of individuals and entire societies expresses itself in unbound consumerism and a shameful distribution of resources without care and consideration for the majority of the world's population.

The natural instinct of fear, a necessity at times, has become distorted to be the fear of safeguarding one's self-image. Social media are the predators of today. The equally natural instinct of sleep, which balances the day's activity with necessary rest and regeneration, has grown into a need to disconnect. We disconnect from our everyday reality and enter the sphere of intoxicants, addictions and the cyber world. The healthy requirement of sleep has moved from an uncontrolled need for disconnection to isolation and estrangement. However, there is a fifth instinct, the caring nature, which expresses itself through a selfless approach to life, through compassion for our fellow men and the world we live in.

The holistic yogic lifestyle offers solutions to redress our management of the four instincts. Simple and practical tools and disciplines are suggested which enhance the quality of our being, life and the environment we live in. To start the day with the positive input of mantras, watch the sunrise every morning, to practise *yogasana*, trace our efforts in a spiritual diary, connect to nature and end the day at peace with ourselves and our life, are only a few ingredients to a yogic lifestyle.

*Janani: Holistic Yogic Lifestyle* explains why we have to do something to change and how to do it. As always the choice is ours: to continue the path of ignorance, darkness and destruction or to walk forward towards the light of understanding and good will for one and all, including our home planet Earth.

# Part 1

## Sanyam for Basic Instincts



# 1

## The World Today

*The collapse of civilization and the natural world is on the horizon. Right now we are facing a man-made disaster of global scale, our greatest threat in thousands of years – climate change.*

—Sir David Attenborough, 2018

Our planet is heating up; its temperature is increasing faster than ever before. Climate scientists show that the average global temperature is increasing as the level of greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, water vapour, Methane and Nitrous oxide) increase in the atmosphere due to the excessive use of fossil fuels by modern human society. Fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) provide energy to nearly all areas of society: transportation, electricity, agriculture, food production and technology. Deforestation, livestock grazing and bushfires are also releasing carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere. Our modern society is literally smothering the earth with a layer of pollution and waste. We must change the way we live now.

Australia is an example of the effects of climate change:

- In the summer of 2018, heatwaves scoured the Australian countryside and temperatures soared to 45 to 50 degrees Celsius, within 24 hours the temperatures would plummet down to 23 degrees.

- Studies have shown that Australia has experienced the 20 warmest years on record and these have been in the most recent 22 years, and the hottest four in the past four years.
- Bush fires raged nearly every day and droughts affect large regions of the continent.
- Deforestation is killing koalas and 100-year-old fish were dying in the rivers.
- In some areas there was so much rain, the rivers were bursting their banks and flooding vast areas; people were forced to evacuate their homes.
- The Great Barrier Reef is dying from increased sunlight, and alkaline waters due to carbon dioxide and pollution.
- The sea level is rising and sand is washing away from the beaches. Without the natural reserve of sand dunes to replace the sand, the beach will eventually be washed out to sea and the beach- side houses will follow.
- The sun's UV rays have become so strong due to the hole in the ozone layer, that children are covered from head to toe as they frolic on the beach. Parents panic when their children leave the house without hat and sunscreen, even to go to school. Skin cancer checks are as common as going to the dentist.



*We have about 100 years left on earth, due to climate change, overdue asteroid strikes, excessive population growth and the threat of epidemics.*

—Stephen Hawking, 2017



In the summer of 2019, Europe was burning with record-breaking heatwaves and hundreds of fires spread across the Arctic circle. The Arctic circle, including Greenland, Siberia, Alaska and parts of Canada are warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet. After the hottest June ever recorded, the region is literally on fire, with the worst fires on record. In July 2019, alone over 100 fires emitted 50 megatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is equivalent to Sweden's total annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Many of these fires were burning through peat. Peat is a long-term carbon store of decayed and buried plant material often used as fuel. Peat fires can smoulder for months at a time and release enormous amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, adding to the climate crisis. Due to the 2019 heatwave in

Europe, over half of the surface of the Greenland ice sheet has softened to slush. In June 2019, the ice sheet released a record amount of 197 billion tons of ice and water into the ocean. Ice melts as large as this have extremely detrimental effects on the climate of the planet and will increase sea level rise.

Areas of Europe such as Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands and the United Kingdom have experienced record breaking temperatures reaching up to 42 degrees Celsius. In the UK the transport systems shut down due to technical breakdowns and faults caused by hot weather.

In all countries around the world people tell a story of the unusual and changing weather in their country: extremely cold, extremely windy, droughts, floods, storms and extreme heat. Global warming and climate change is occurring now and the existence of our civilization is in peril, but to most it seems, 'business as usual' There should be daily warnings and updates on front pages of newspapers, television, the internet and social media. Leaders of countries and governments should be issuing warnings of the threat to our existence as a species and to the planet. However, there isn't; even when children are fighting for their future and striking from school for the climate crisis, there is very little sense of emergency anywhere.

People are aware of and have experienced climate change in their own lives, but very few are willing to make the necessary changes required to reduce carbon emissions from their lives. For example, in the average Australian family, each member of the family drives a car, has their own television, computers, mobile phone, tablet and bathroom. Increasingly more and more people have air conditioning and heating in their houses. As individuals how many people are doing something to reduce their carbon footprint? Reduce the number of burning forests, and smoke filled skies? Reduce the polluted and drying rivers? Reduce the vast areas of drought?



A small percentage maybe, but most people choose to live in ignorance to protect themselves from the reality of the changing world around them.

We have tipped the scale over on the level of environmental pollution and destruction that the ecosystems of the planet can absorb and rectify and scientists are not sure we will be able to bring the balance back to the healthy ecosystems and life on earth as we have known it.

The cause of this environmental and climate crisis is our modern materialistic and technology-based society and lifestyles. We strive for economic growth and financial security, for business, house, car, holidays. We live to buy more stuff to make ourselves happy. We live without connecting to the positive or to the spirit in nature and life itself. Spiritual awareness has been overshadowed by our love of material possessions. Mobile phones and social media have become our reality. 'Home is where the heart is' has been replaced by 'Wi-Fi is where the heart is'. This has led to a lonely society that lacks the ability to share and communicate with one another, with animals and the natural world around them.

We know the damage we are doing to our environments and ecosystems, and that we are polluting the very soil, water and air essential to our survival and our children's survival. Still we continue this destructive path for material gain and convenience. Our culture is governed by economic growth not environmental health, balance and understanding of our place on this earth.



We must stop the destruction for our children and grandchildren and find alternative ways to live simply with less. This must now be our focus and goal in life. If we can begin to live with awareness and see how all our actions impact the world around us, we can try to improve ourselves, little by little, day by day, and eventually, moment to moment.

Like our environment, people's bodies and minds are weak and sick – cancer, heart disease, obesity, asthma, depression and anxiety are on the rise in all countries around the world. Our modern lifestyles have led to imbalances in people's routines, food habits, sleep, exercise, attitudes, ambitions, level of awareness, sense of self and goal in life. We have forgotten how to live simple and natural lives where we connect to the positive within ourselves and bring discipline and balance in all aspects of life.

### **Living yoga**

A yogic life is a holistic lifestyle that connects us to our higher self through our daily activities and awareness. In a yogic lifestyle we continually aspire for positivity, purity, perfection, inspiration, simplicity and happiness knowing the presence of divinity or a higher reality in everything we do.

*If we don't protect nature, we can't protect ourselves.*

—Harrison Ford, Actor

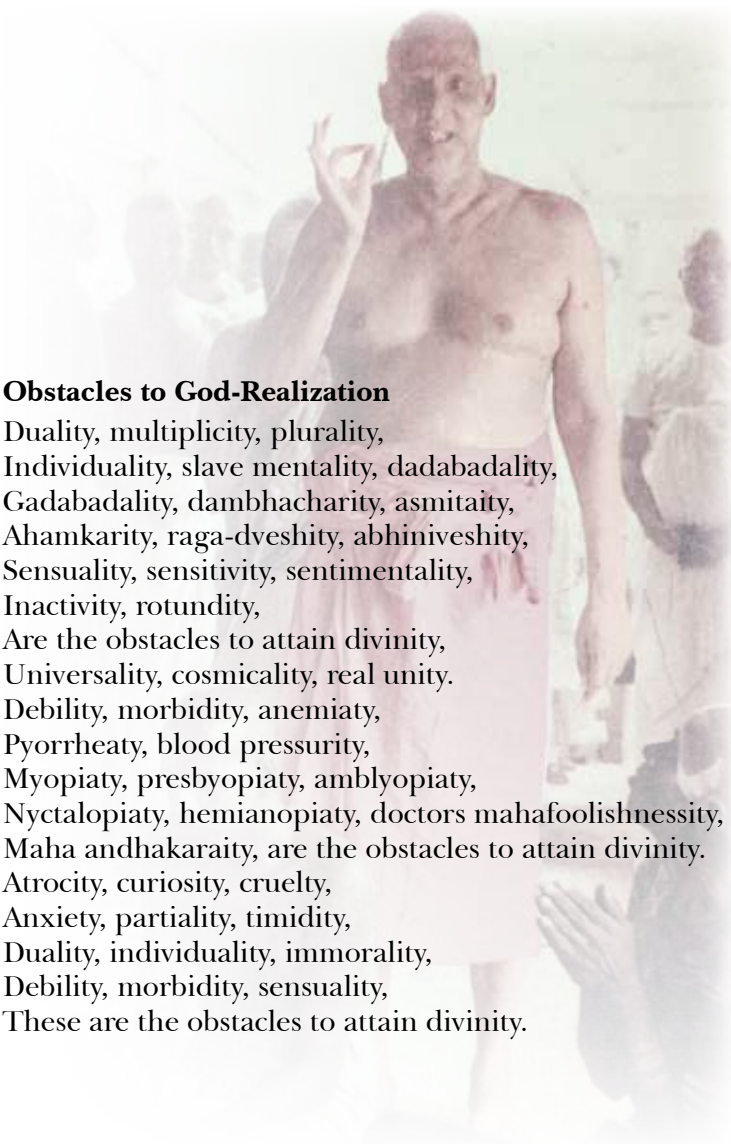
It is up to us as individuals to choose the life we want to live and the impact we have on our environment. It is our chosen lifestyle that determines the health of our body, mind, emotions and spirit on a daily basis. Our lifestyle can become a harmonious expression of mind, emotions and attitude, and this improves the level of our health and happiness, influencing the environment and people around us.

Living yoga moment to moment means living with yogic awareness and disciplines. The holistic yogic lifestyle harmonizes and balances every aspect of our being – the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual through a regulated and disciplined life that enables us to live our life to the fullest without injury to the environment and the earth which nurtures and sustains us.

Self-awareness enhances our understanding of the situations around us and helps us improve our mind and our positive, creative actions. Self-awareness may eventually give us solutions on the local level and to global problems.



Swami Sivananda used to teach through songs. He composed a song on the *Obstacles to God-Realization* listing the negative traits of personality which hinder spiritual growth.



### **Obstacles to God-Realization**

Duality, multiplicity, plurality,  
Individuality, slave mentality, dadabadality,  
Gadabadality, dambhacharity, asmitaity,  
Ahamkarity, raga-dveshity, abhiniveshity,  
Sensuality, sensitivity, sentimentality,  
Inactivity, rotundity,  
Are the obstacles to attain divinity,  
Universality, cosmicality, real unity.  
Debility, morbidity, anemiatty,  
Pyorrheaty, blood pressurity,  
Myopiatty, presbyopiatty, amblyopiatty,  
Nyctalopiatty, hemianopiatty, doctors mahafoolishnessity,  
Maha andhakaraity, are the obstacles to attain divinity.  
Atrocity, curiosity, cruelty,  
Anxiety, partiality, timidity,  
Duality, individuality, immorality,  
Debility, morbidity, sensuality,  
These are the obstacles to attain divinity.

## 2

# Lifestyles

*To live well: eat well, sleep well, walk daily, laugh and love without measure.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

A lifestyle is the way one chooses to live. Our lifestyle is our activities, jobs, attitudes, interests, food, health, exercise, routine, involvement in society, finances and money, religion, values, emotions, mind and spirit. Our chosen lifestyle is our daily 24-hour routine including how we sleep.

It is important to observe, evaluate and understand our own lifestyle. It is only when we can work to improve areas of our lives with the sankalpa to become more healthy and balanced – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually that we can live in harmony with ourselves and the people and environment around us. It is through our small daily actions and attitudes that we can improve ourselves and become more ecologically and yogically aware. The need of today is that we become people who preserve, protect and nurture nature and live with awareness, positivity, cleanliness and respect to all life. It is through living yoga that this change can be achieved. Yoga is an ecological lifestyle.

The following table is a guide and an outline of the possible aspects of lifestyle that we can observe and reflect upon. It is a summary and a reference, there may be many other aspects of your life that are not listed in this table.

**Table 1: Aspects of Lifestyle**

| Aspect of lifestyle                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Culture                                            | What music, art, drama, night life, entertainment do you enjoy? Do you live in a culturally diverse and rich area?                                                                              |
| Religion                                           | What religion, if any, do you follow? How does the religion influence your daily life?                                                                                                          |
| Language                                           | What language do you normally speak? Do you speak many other languages?                                                                                                                         |
| Gender influence, sexuality, marriage status       | How does sexuality influence your daily life? What is your sexual identity? Are you happy with it?                                                                                              |
| Climate and weather                                | How does the weather where you live influence your daily lifestyle? Warm weather? Cold, snowy weather leading to a life inside your home? Hot weather inviting daytime siestas and late nights? |
| Environment: city, urban, rural, mountain, seaside | Do you live in a large cosmopolitan city, an urban or rural environment or by a beach, or a mountain area?                                                                                      |
| Profession and work                                | Are you employed? Self-employed? Where do you work and what hours do you work? Is your work inspiring and fulfilling to you?                                                                    |
| Transport                                          | Do you own a car and drive to work daily? Do you catch public transport or commute many hours a day? Do you walk or ride a bike? How much of your day is involved in transport?                 |
| Wealth and financial security                      | How do you earn money? How do you spend money? Are you a consumer or a minimalist? How important is money to you?                                                                               |

|                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Relationship with nature and the environment                      | Do you spend time to connect with nature? Do you live within nature? Do you spend your holiday going to national parks and reserves? Do you walk in a park or on the beach?                                                                                                 |
| Food habits                                                       | What do you choose to eat? Healthy nutritious food or fast foods? Are you vegetarian, vegan or a meat eater? How much do you eat? How often do you eat?                                                                                                                     |
| Exercise and health                                               | How much exercise do you do daily? How is your health? Do you have any disease - physical, mental and emotional?                                                                                                                                                            |
| Travel and adventure                                              | Is travel and adventure important to you? Do you like to know different cultures and environments?                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Escape into computer, phones, videos and social media             | How much time do you spend daily on a device such as a phone, or on social media and internet? When do you read a book?                                                                                                                                                     |
| Hobbies, activities and fashion                                   | What are your daily hobbies and activities? Do they bring health and happiness? How influenced are you by current trends?                                                                                                                                                   |
| Spiritual activities, personal reflection and meditation, sadhana | How much time do you spend in personal reflection and meditation? How much time in seva, in mantra chanting or reading scriptures? Do you practise yoga asana, pranayama and yoga nidra? How much time do you spend a day connecting to the positive within and around you? |

All of the factors within this table contribute to your lifestyle and determine who you are and what you do. It is your lifestyle that determines the health and happiness of your body, mind, emotions and spirit as well as all other beings and ecosystems on this planet.

## **Ecological and carbon footprint**

There are two measures – the ecological footprint and the carbon footprint – that have been created by scientists for governments, industries, the commercial sector, agriculture and for individuals to measure how they impact the environment as well as the cost of that impact. These measures offer solutions to how and where changes can be made to minimize the impact.

The ecological footprint measures the impact of human activities on nature, i.e. the biologically productive land and water required to produce the goods consumed and to assimilate the wastes generated. It measures how fast we consume resources and generate waste, and how fast nature can absorb our waste and generate new resources.

Each country has a bio-capacity which is a measure of the country's natural resources and represents the productivity of a country's ecological assets, including cropland, grazing land, fishing grounds, forests, rivers and coastlines.

If a population's ecological footprint exceeds the regions bio-capacity, that region runs an ecological deficit. Currently the ecological footprint of the entire humanity runs in a deficit, with annual demands on resources exceeding what the earth can regenerate each year. Today humanity uses the equivalent of 1.7 Earths every year to provide the resources we use and to absorb our waste.



Table 2: Ecological Footprint

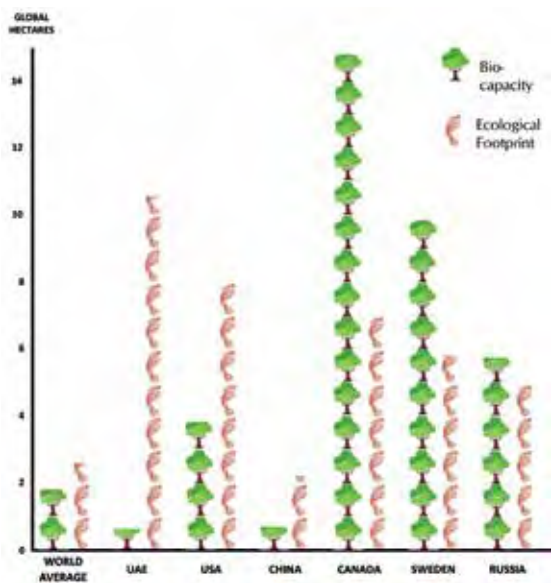


Table 2 shows the number of global hectares of bio-capacity versus ecological footprint. The countries with a higher ecological footprint are living with an ecological deficit and beyond the means of their natural resources; this is the world average. Canada, however, is a country rich in natural resources such as forests, and its bio-capacity is well above the ecological footprint.

The carbon footprint is a large portion of the ecological footprint and has become an important measure in itself due to its role in global warming and climate change. A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact of human activities on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced. It is a measure of the greenhouse gases CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, water vapour and nitrous oxide released during the production, use and disposal of products and services. This includes all processes between the time the fossil carbons are extracted from the earth until they reach consumers as finished products in stores. The other

greenhouse gases such as methane are included in the carbon measurement by being converted into the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that would cause the same effect on global warming.

Each country and each individual has a different carbon footprint that measures how much carbon emissions are released due to their daily activities and lifestyle such as transportation (plane, car, bus, bicycle), food, purchases and consumerism, tourism, and electricity use in the home. Adjusting how we live can reduce our individual carbon footprint and be our contribution to reduce the current problem of excess carbon in the atmosphere. It is up to all of us to make these changes.

A report released by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) in 2018 said that in order to keep global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees Celsius, global carbon emissions would need to fall 50% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

**Table 3: Carbon Footprint**

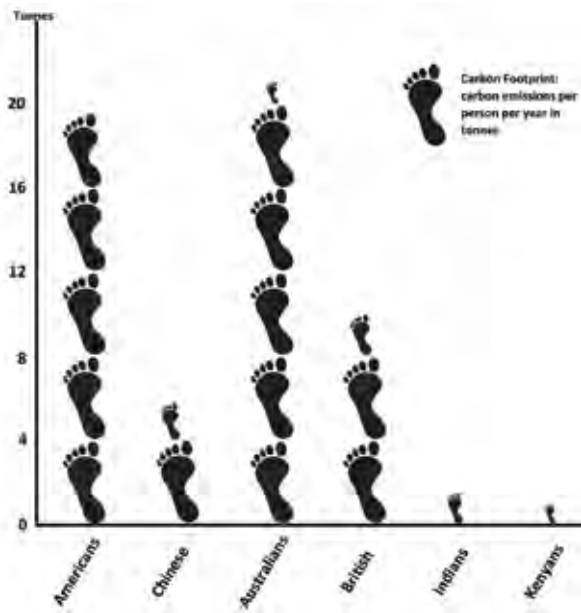
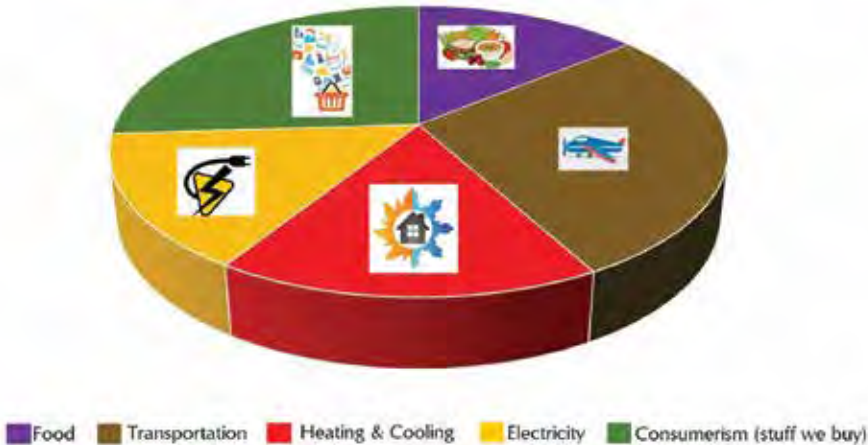


Table 3 is an example of an individual's carbon footprint from different countries around the world. It has been suggested that people should target a 10 tonne CO<sub>2</sub> per year budget and eventually reduce it to nothing by 2050. This would mean big changes to people's lives and the use of alternative fuel sources to sustain our current technological and computer age. Here are some examples of carbon footprint:

- A return flight from London to Hong Kong uses 3.4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- A typical passenger car emits about 4.6 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.
- In the US, each household produces 48 tons of greenhouse gases per year.
- Food consumed in a US household produces about 8 tonnes of emissions per household, per year.
- Livestock farming produces from 20% to 50% of all man-made greenhouse gases.
- A vegan diet has the lowest carbon footprint at just 1.5 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year, a meat lover diet uses 3.3 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year.

**Graph 1: Main Sources of Carbon Footprint**



## **Lifestyles around the world**

There are many different lifestyles around the world, depending on the country, the environment, customs, belief, and financial status. Each specific lifestyle has a different sized carbon footprint and contribution to the global environmental problems. In 2018, China was the leading country contributing to carbon waste in the atmosphere, followed by the USA and India.

Some ancient cultures like the Australian aborigines, whose ancestors have walked the earth for fifty thousand years, continue to maintain their same traditional lifestyles. Considering the absence of cars, electricity and modern facilities, it can be assumed that ancient lifestyles have a much smaller carbon footprint and environmental impact than a modern city and urban lifestyle.

Here are a few examples of the vast variety of lifestyles that exist within the human civilization in 2019.

### **TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES**

#### **Rural lifestyle**

This lifestyle is living a farming or country life. Rural areas are located outside of towns and cities. They have low population density and small settlements. The large scale agriculture, forestry and livestock industries have caused serious ecological problems including deforestation of forests and rainforests causing soil erosion and degradation. They generated around one fifth of the world's greenhouse gas emissions: carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

In developed nations it has been found that the carbon footprint per person in rural areas is higher than that of a city dweller. The rural dwellings and houses are bigger and require more heating and lighting per person than the small flats and apartments within the city. City dwellers can walk or catch buses for shopping and entertainment, whereas in rural areas people would drive their own car long distances to local shops and entertainment.



Africa, India and Asia have dominantly rural lifestyles and constitute nearly 90% of the world's rural population. Seventy percent of India's population lives in rural and village areas, and contributes a large portion of India's GDP through agriculture, self-employment services, construction etc. The impact on the earth's environment of a small Indian or African farmer or villager is small.

Globally there are approximately 3.4 billion out of 6.9 billion people living in the country and village rural areas. It is expected that the populations in rural areas will decrease over the next 30 years.

### **Tribal lifestyle**

Tribal people, also called indigenous, live in isolated remote areas around the world and have preserved their culture and traditions for centuries. A tribe is a group of people that have common ancestry, a common culture and live in their own enclosed society. Tribes share a unity with each other, their past and the land they live on. Many tribal communities are completely self-sufficient; they live off the land and do not depend on the state or government for money or politics. Approximately 50 million tribal people live within the world's rainforests, such as the Amazonian tribes.

There are still some tribes around the world that have not been discovered. They remain hidden and protected in Mother Nature's untouched wilderness from the destructive modern society and people. Hundreds of tribal cultures have been destroyed in the last 200 years as explorers and travellers discovered their lands and cultures and chose to destroy what they didn't understand or know.

These tribal people have minimum carbon footprint and minimum destructive influence on the planet. They live within the natural world with full respect and understanding of their place within nature's law and their dependency on Her.

### **Nomadic lifestyle**



The word nomad, originally, means one who wanders for pasture. A nomadic lifestyle is a wandering lifestyle. Historically nomads were hunters and gatherers who hunted and used local plants and animals to sustain their lifestyle. The nomadic life is very much dependent on the seasons and climate and accordingly nomads travel in cycles, moving from place to place as a way of finding water, obtaining food, finding pasture for livestock, or working. The nomad's life is very simple, they own few possessions as they have to carry them from place to place. It is a minimalistic lifestyle.

The Bedouin of Middle Eastern deserts are nomadic. They are animal herders who migrate into the desert during the rainy winter season and move back towards the cultivated

land in the summer months. Camel nomads occupy huge territories and are organized into large tribes in the Sahara, the Syrian and Arabian deserts. Other nomadic tribes are the Kalahari bushmen and the Australian aboriginals.

Many people around the world choose to live the nomadic or gypsy life, living in caravans and tents away from cities and urban areas they are continuously on the move for employment, supplies and food. It is a growing fashion in many countries as a life choice to be free and moving.

Grey Nomads are groups of retired people (over 60 years, with grey hair) who decide to leave their houses and commitments, buy a caravan and take to the road spending months or years, travelling around countries such as Australia, USA, England and New Zealand.

### **Gypsy lifestyle**

A gypsy lifestyle, is a traveller's lifestyle. They are not established in any specific place and do not own property. Gypsies move around looking for trade and food; they stay for some time in one place and then move on to next destination. There are many gypsies in Europe who came from India hundreds of years ago. They speak their own language and have their own customs and beliefs.

### **Sea and ocean-based lifestyles**

There are millions of people who live on islands around the world and are dependent on the ocean for their livelihood and survival. These people who live close to the ocean such as Pacific Islanders and Polynesians are already seriously affected by global warming and climate change. Sea level rises threaten to destroy their very existence and many islanders have been



evacuated and relocated to higher ground due to sea level rise and storms.

To many of us climate change is something we have to prepare ourselves for, but for islanders their lives are already threatened by global warming, which expands the oceans of the world and melts the glaciers leading to sea level rise.

Many major cities around the world like New York, Sydney, London, Osaka, Mumbai are situated on coastal areas and will eventually have to face the rise sea level; it is just a matter of time.



### **Snow and ice-based lifestyles**

The Inuit people, also known as Eskimos, are the ancient inhabitants of the Arctic. For thousands of years they survived the world's harshest conditions. They are expert hunters and live off their prey of whales, seals, birds and fish. The Inuit people follow a moral code based on ancient myths and legends.

These people are already under the direct effect of global warming. As the glaciers melt their lives are changing dramatically. The weather has become unpredictable, and land and ice are changing. Familiar territory has become unstable and makes navigating and travel dangerous.

The areas for hunting are decreasing as is the number of animals. Many families have been relocated and are beginning to farm the land that was previously covered by ice and snow.



## **BELIEF-BASED LIFESTYLES**

### **Amish lifestyle**

An Amish lifestyle is a Christian-based life, free of modern technologies. Amish are deeply devoted to their religion and beliefs: to work hard, to involve in manual labour, to live a simple, rural and disciplined life, with humility and plain dress. They do not own cars, television, radios, computers and mobile phones, they believe these things will bring about inequality. To see an Amish community is like stepping back in time 400 years: horse and cart, simple dress, simple farming and agricultural practices, and families and communities working together as a group on the land. Due to the simplicity and absence of automobiles and technology the Amish lifestyle has a low carbon footprint.

### **Religious lifestyles**

A religious life is a form of consecrated life in the Christian faith. It is a lifestyle completely dedicated to God and worship of Jesus Christ and Mother Mary. In a religious



community men and women make three specific vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The vows are made in either a congregation or a community of the church. These communities consist of sisters and nuns, brothers and monks or religious orders of priests. Once their vows are made, they will change from civilian dress to the habit of their chosen order and follow the disciplines and conduct of that order, which include:

1. *The active orders:* Members serve in ways that involve direct engagement with the world, dealing with students, parishioners, prisoners, the sick and needy of society, such as Mother Theresa.
2. *The contemplative orders:* Members retreat from the world in a closed community which allows them to spend time in prayer and contemplation of God.
3. *The monastic orders:* In such an order some live in monasteries and engage together in work and prayer, and others live in solitude like hermits in caves and forests.
4. *The mendicant order:* Members have a radical vision of poverty and dependence on God. They own nothing except the clothes on their backs and the grace of God. They beg for alms and live a wandering life.

These religious lifestyles are simple lives focused on spiritual and not material attainment. For this reason, the carbon footprint of these lifestyles is minimum in particular the mendicant order who live with nothing.

## Ashram lifestyle



Ashrams are part of ancient Indian culture. ‘A’ means to come and *shram* means labour or to work hard. An ashram is a place where you come to work hard on all levels of being from physical to spiritual. An ashram lifestyle is a spiritual lifestyle based on the vedic culture of peace, contemplation and seva. It is a place where people can find a routine, balance themselves and live each day to reach their full potential. Ashrams teach lessons for life, no matter what the age, culture or country. An ashram is a changing community. People come, live a spiritual routine and lifestyle for a few days, weeks or years and then go.

An ashram is a different way of life and it is a haven from the modern world. In an ashram people put away their mobile phones, computers and television, and personal choices of food, routine and work. In an ashram people of all walks of life, regardless of religion, cast or creed, live and learn to perceive and understand themselves as part of a unique community working together in seva and yoga with inspiration and positivity.

This kind of community living, minimizes the carbon footprint of each individual. The light vegetarian food is prepared and cooked daily in one communal kitchen, from food locally grown and produced according to season. All facilities are shared including bathrooms, fans and lights, and there is minimal use of electricity. People do not drive cars and if required travel short distances in groups by the ashram community car. Through karma yoga people learn to garden and care for their environment, through daily aradhana and kirtan they connect to the beauty of nature around them. In the ashram people imbibe a spiritual and yogic lifestyle that they can adapt into their daily lives when they return home.



## MODERN AND ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES

### **Urban life**

An urban lifestyle is lived by people in a city or urban environment. This environment has a high population density and infrastructure, such as high rise buildings, streets, underground sewage systems, water and electricity supplies to most buildings, houses and flats, cars, buses,



trains, shops, restaurants, entertainment, retail shopping malls, businesses, and a high level of telecommunications.

The mega cities, like Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, Mexico City and San Paulo, have more than 10 million inhabitants. Currently approximately 55% of all people in the world live in urban areas, and as urbanization increases and more people choose to live within urban areas due to more employment and conveniences, it is expected that by 2050 nearly 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas.

The urban revolution and ever-rising standard of modern living has had a detrimental impact on the environment and natural resources. The uncontrolled waste of our modern cities is choking our planet's rivers, oceans, soil and atmosphere, as is pollution from excess burning of fossil fuels for transport and industry. In some cities around the world the air is so polluted that it is equal to smoking two packets of cigarettes a day.

Modern urban lifestyles are the least natural of all lifestyles and have a large impact and demand on the planet's precious and diminishing natural resources. The atmosphere, oceans, rivers, forests, soil, biodiversity and future generations, all are paying the price for the material greed and consumerism of our modern lifestyles.

However, the carbon footprint per individual within the high density city is actually less than that of the suburbs and rural areas. In the city more people occupy less space in small flats of high-rise apartment blocks, and they use less electricity per person in lighting, heating and cooling. Less fuel is used in cars as everything is available close by and it is possible to travel by foot, bus and train.

### **Sustainable lifestyle and community**



Sustainable living is an ecological lifestyle that attempts to reduce, as individuals and communities, the use of the earth's natural resources. People who choose a sustainable lifestyle, consciously choose to reduce their carbon footprint by altering their methods of transportation, housing, energy consumption, clothes and diet.

Sustainable homes are built using sustainable methods, materials and practices such as solar power, composting, water conservation and storage. They attempt to have as little negative impact on the surrounding ecosystem as possible. Sustainable housing involves environmentally friendly management of waste with recycling and composting, use of non-toxic and renewable, recycled and reclaimed materials. Sustainable living uses locally available food supplies, and other materials as much as possible

so as to reduce the need for transportation of goods and packaging and to support the local community.

A vegetarian diet is part of sustainable living as it requires the least amount of resources to produce, and causes the least amount of environmental damage and degradation.

A sustainable lifestyle means living as lightly on the earth as possible. This lifestyle uses minimal resources and aims to leave the same pristine and pure environments and biodiversity for future generations.

### **Off the Grid**

*'Off the Grid'* describes a totally self-sufficient dwelling that is not connected to any council services such as electricity, water, sewage, or phone lines. Such a lifestyle aims to be self-sufficiently independent from society, and maintains a very low carbon footprint. It is estimated that 1.7 billion people live off the grid, but this is due to the millions of people in countries like India and Africa who have never had the luxury of being on the grid; they live in poverty without fresh water, food and energy to light the nights and warm the house. These people have the lowest carbon footprint, however, not necessarily by choice.

### **Vegan lifestyle**

This is a life philosophy in the spirit of *ahimsa*, non-violence. Vegans do not eat any animal products or wear any animal products, such as leather or fur. Vegans eat pure food, drink pure water and live as simply as possible, with care and protection for all life. Reducing meat and dairy from the diet can reduce a person's carbon footprint by 25%.

### **One common lifestyle**

Our earth has a greater amount of biodiversity than any other planet we know of. Our human civilization is one of the most diverse and successful species on earth; the varieties of people, customs, beliefs, traditions are beyond the discussion of this book. However, we do know that no

matter what our language, colour, religion or belief we are all living on this one small planet and we all share the same elements for survival: soil, food, water, air and biodiversity.

Our challenge now as a civilization is to protect, purify and keep the earth's natural resources safe for our future, our children's future and our grandchildren's future. This can only be done when we begin to change ourselves and our immediate environment through awareness and recognition of our own individual responsibility to care for our home. This means people making choices to live more simply with less in thoughts, words and actions. There has to be a constant effort to improve oneself through one's daily activities and awareness.

It is through our own lifestyle that we can change and influence the world around us. If we all choose to live a life that is positive, constructive, creative and protective of nature and her precious tattwas, or elements, we may be able to slow the destructive path that we are now on. Holistic yogic lives are healthier for us as individuals, they have a small carbon footprint so they are healthier for the planet and sustainable for all future generations to come.



### 3

## Sanyam – the Spirit of Change

*Sow a thought, reap an action, sow an action, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character and reap a destiny.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Nowadays, if you ask people what yoga is, they will probably tell you that it is a series of postures that bend and stretch the body and a few breathing techniques for health and peace. This is partly true, but shows a very limited understanding of yoga. Yoga is a complete way of life; it is the most simple, practical and healthy way in which to live for the individual and the planet.

### **Vedic culture**

Yogic lifestyle is based on the vedic culture which is both an attitudinal and spiritual culture. The lifestyle is based on the cultivation and development of the human personality by encouraging positive qualities and samskaras. Our *samskaras* or impressions are the experiences which mould character, attitudes and beliefs. When we live positive experiences we create positive samskaras, and positivity will manifest in our character and in life. This moulding of character takes place through our daily activities and lifestyle. According to the vedic culture there are sixteen main samskaras which represent the beginning of new conditions or situations

in life. This process begins before birth and continues throughout life and until death. Each major transition in life, such as pregnancy, name giving, first solid food, education, marriage, is welcomed, acknowledged and blessed with success and auspiciousness. It acts as a doorway to divinity and the beauty present in the cycle of birth, life and death.

The vedic society lived in harmony with nature and the daily lifestyle followed the natural biorhythms of the earth and sun. Nature was not seen as something to use and abuse for one's own selfish needs but it was to be respected and revered as divine. Through mantra people connected and communicated with nature and the elements.

The vedic rishis lived and taught a balanced lifestyle for head, heart and hands. They taught that through proper diet, sleep and exercise people could apply themselves properly to other areas of life such as marriage, profession, sport, self-study and reflection, time management, relaxation, aradhana and havan. They gave tools, methods and techniques to manage the instincts of fear, sleep, craving and sexuality.

### **Sanyam**

*Real yoga is 'sanyam yoga' as it beautifies all strata of the human personality.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The vedic rishis gave guidelines for living each day permeated with the attitude of *sanyam* which means restraint. Swami Niranjanananda explains that the word *sanyam* is composed of two Sanskrit roots *sam* and *yam*. *Sam* means total, the total personality, all the dimensions of human nature. *Yam* is *yama*, a state of mind which you maintain, cultivate and develop. Therefore, *sanyam* means all dimensions of the human personality and lifestyle are taken through a process of transformation and beautification and that state is maintained and developed. The main attitude that must be cultivated in a holistic yogic lifestyle is *sanyam*.

## **Our life is a garden**

When we keep a garden, we first need to prepare the soil, remove the weeds and rocks, add some compost and water to the soil, turn the soil and make it soft and nutritious for the new seeds or seedlings. As they grow we must continue to care for them; water them, protect them from pests, remove the weeds. This nurturing and care continues throughout the plants' life – trimming, pruning, removing dead leaves and branches, giving compost and medicine or tying and supporting them. Sometimes a fast, growing tree seedling needs support and discipline to train its stem and branches so it becomes strong enough to grow in a proper fashion on its own.

Keeping a garden requires constant care, effort and time and this beautification process is sanyam. Similarly, our personalities and lifestyles require effort and care to nurture the positive in head, heart and hands and improve our actions and interactions, for this will transform our lives into a garden of positivity, happiness and beauty. This is the most valuable training for life and for the health of the planet.





### **Changing one's lifestyle**

For the majority of us, there are certain aspects of our lifestyles that we cannot easily change, such as culture, climate and environment, governments and language. However, we can begin to change and regulate the small habits of our daily lives, and this will naturally lead to bigger changes and the evolution of our personality.

Changing to a holistic yogic lifestyle means replacing the destructive habits that do not bring positivity and health into our lives with nourishing habits that encourage health, positivity and contentment in head, heart and hands. This can be done through regulating one's lifestyle and the cultivation of yogic attitudes and awareness.

We cannot expect improvement and change in life without facing the negative and destructive habits of our physical, mental and emotional behaviours. Dissecting one's personality and examining the traits that underlie one's animalistic behaviour requires courage and honesty. With yogic techniques such as a spiritual diary, review of the day and *pratipaksha bhavana*, developing the opposite positive quality, we can learn to see, understand and accept that these habits exist. Only then can we recognize them and

begin to replace them with positive and creative attitudes and behaviour. We need to see how to make our interactions with other people and our environment more positive and uplifting. This process of change is not an intellectual exercise and it can take years, some say even lifetimes, of dedicated endeavour to re-condition and transform one's personality. Otherwise we are just enforcing external disciplines. Swami Niranjana says that it is like placing a straight pipe over the curly tail of the dog. Once you remove the straight pipe the tail returns to its original curly nature.



*When yoga becomes a way of life, identification with and expression of the balanced, positive and optimistic nature takes place and then one attains physical health, mental health and spiritual wealth.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Life is too short to live without happiness and health in our daily lives. It is our birth right to live with happiness, but it is our responsibility to live with health and happiness through the choices and efforts we make in our daily lives.

### **Change requires discipline**

For true learning, change and growth to take place in our lives there must be discipline and practice, for example if one wishes to play the guitar, then to achieve this goal one must practise daily with discipline and commitment to produce melodious music – this is sanyam. Sanyam means focusing and encouraging the growth and transformation of all that is good, creative and beautiful.

Sanyam is the process of transformation that applies to each and every expression in life, including behaviour, attitude, speech and thought. Through sanyam we are continuously developing better and more positive qualities in life, and replacing the old, detrimental and destructive ones. Through sanyam we can transform the limiting and the negative into positive and uplifting.

*Sanyam will cultivate the right samskaras, and samskaras will cultivate the right character, personality, trait, behaviour and action.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

### **Shift from material life to spiritual life**

Materialism has become the theme and basis of our modern lives, the ambition and race for profession, social recognition, financial and economic success has left our spiritual lives dry and barren. This has led to a modern society with a diminished strength of spirit. Just as the physical body becomes weak without food, and the mind becomes weak without joy, Swami Niranjan says the spirit becomes weak when there is lack of sanyam in life. It is this lack of sanyam which causes many problems and imbalances in life. There must be a balance between the material and the

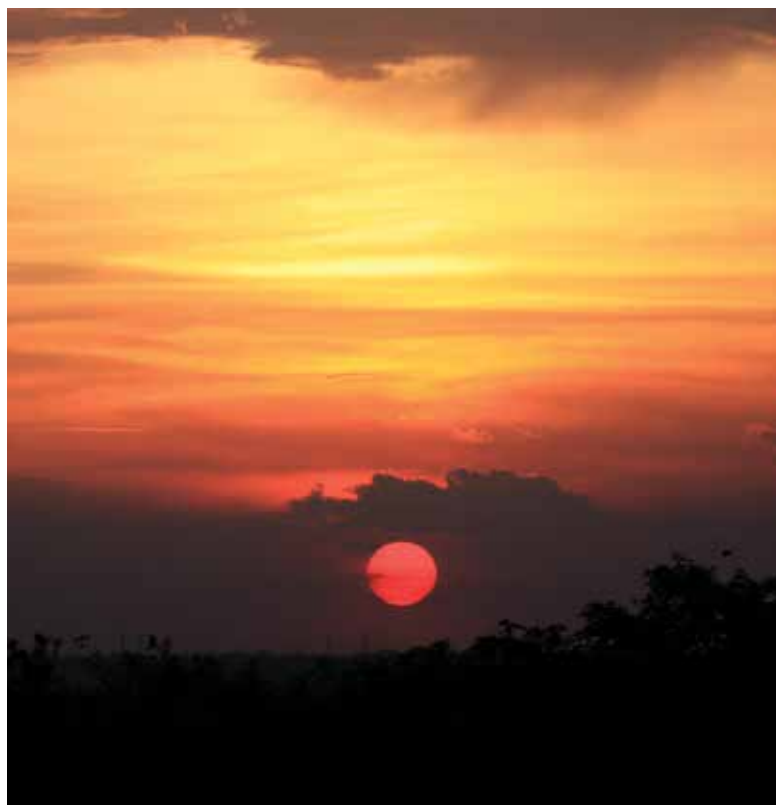


spiritual in life and the attainment of this balance is sanyam. Spiritual awakening begins with sanyam; it is the shift from material awareness to spiritual awareness.

Yoga recognizes that each aspect of the personality is linked with the whole being and the environment around us. If the physical body is sick or injured, then the mind, emotions, the spirit and the environment are also influenced and vice versa. Whatever we do to nature we do to ourselves. Yogic lifestyle connects us to our spiritual nature. This is the nature that continually aspires for connection, positivity, seva, inspiration and happiness through our daily activities and awareness.

*Be good, do good.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



The holistic yogic lifestyle extends this connection to the environment around us and understands that we are an integrated part of nature, and every action we do affects the world around us. We must change our lifestyles to live more simply, naturally and harmoniously. We must do this for ourselves, our families, our future generations, our society and the earth.

*To be completely healthy is to live fully – body, mind and spirit performing their tasks efficiently and working together as a harmonious whole. When you are healthy you enjoy your food, sleep soundly, work hard and tackle your difficulties with courage.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

To help develop sanyam, Swami Sivananda used to sing the *Song of 18 ITIES*, saying ‘these are the qualities that an aspirant must possess on the spiritual path’.

**Swami Sivananda’s *Song of 18 ITIES***

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,  
Listen! Go and sow some good now and generosity,  
You will abide in eternity and infinity;  
You will behold unity in diversity;  
You cannot attain this in the university.  
Madras University, Harvard University,  
Or even Oxford University,  
But you can attain this in the Vedic University,

(You can find this song on the CD *Siva’s Spirit Volume 1* on the Satyam Yoga Prasad App.)

## 4

# Understanding the Instincts – The Key to Yogic Lifestyle

*Most illnesses and problems in the body and mind can be helped and cured by proper management of food, sleep and exercise. When these three areas of our lifestyle are cared for with yogic awareness then we will have a strong foundation with which to live happy and healthy lives.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

### **Yogic attitude and awareness**

Most people live completely unaware of the factors influencing and controlling their mind, emotions and health. When we start to practise yoga, a new awareness begins to dawn in our minds and consciousness. Yogic awareness means we awaken the witness or the *drashta awareness* and start to observe ourselves. We start to observe the physical body and the breath, followed by observation of thoughts and our behaviour and responses.

Through the techniques of yoga such as asana, pranayama, yoga nidra, meditation and aradhana we can learn to access the deepest realms of our nature and begin to see ourselves more clearly. We can then begin to make a change and improve ourselves once the *drashta awareness* has been cultivated and we are able to recognize the qualities and idiosyncrasies of the personality and accept our short comings, faulty attitudes and behaviour. The yogic attitude

of positivity and sanyam are the vital elements to this process of change and the basic attitudes of the yogic lifestyle.

### **The four instincts**

According to yoga, there are four instincts that govern the lives of all animals; 1. *maithuna*, sexuality, 2. *ahara*, craving, 3. *bhaya*, fear, and 4. *nidra*, sleep. Instincts are natural or inherent tendencies that people and animals have and which make them behave or react in a particular way. Behaviour is considered instinctual if it is performed without being based upon any prior experience; it is therefore an expression of innate biological factors. All animals live completely under the control of these instincts. However, human beings have the ability to observe and manage themselves and even transcend the instincts to achieve the highest states of consciousness and spiritual awakening. Yoga provides the tools and methods to manage our instinctual behaviours through our daily awareness, attitudes and behaviour leading to the creation of positive and healthy habits. These habits improve our lifestyle, our relationship with the people and environment around us and influence our whole personality.

An awareness of the instincts and their management provides the key to understanding our individual role and society's responsibility in relation to the environmental problems we face today. They provide insight into the complexities of our modern society and other alternatives and possibilities available to us. This awareness leads to balance in the material and spiritual aspects of our lives. Without this balance there can never be peace, contentment and a healthy biosphere for life.

*Without health you cannot achieve anything in the material or spiritual life. Good health is the most coveted possession of all. Therefore, preserve good health by natural ways of living.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

## Modern society and the instincts



Modern material society is embedded in and thrives on these four instincts. If we examine any large city around the world, we will see that they are epicentres of our instinctive expressions. As the population of cities increases, the role of these instincts is magnified. For example, if one walks down any capital city in the world, one will find thousands of food shops and restaurants

selling food of every possible cuisine at any time of the day. Drugs, alcohol and entertainment are available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Sexuality is openly expressed and sex is available to all at any time. Our instinct of fear has turned from survival against the threat of a wild tiger to our own self-image and our projected social media image. The current norms of our society demand fulfilment of our instincts and this has become the underlying factor contributing to most of our modern health and psychological problems and the global environmental crisis.

### **Animal instincts – human instincts**

The difference between humans and other animals is our ability to observe ourselves and to know that we know. Through our long evolutionary process, we have evolved to be the most powerful animal on this planet and we have become a geological force that has changed the face of the earth. We now live in the Anthropocene era, a term given by geologists to describe the era of the earth when human beings dominate. We have the strength, intelligence and technological capacity to be the caretakers of this planet, to nurture, protect and care for all life on earth.



Instead we have become a force of destruction as we use our intelligence and strength to express our animal nature through our uncontrolled instincts of ahara, bhaya, maithuna and nidra. The yogic path and lifestyle provides tools and practical techniques to manage the instincts and evolve the personality from its tamasic to a sattwic nature and expression.

*Let the body follow its nature yet be aware of the nature of the body. Allow the mind to follow its nature, let the thoughts and emotions follow their nature, but remain aware and allow viveka, discrimination, to guide you in the right direction.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

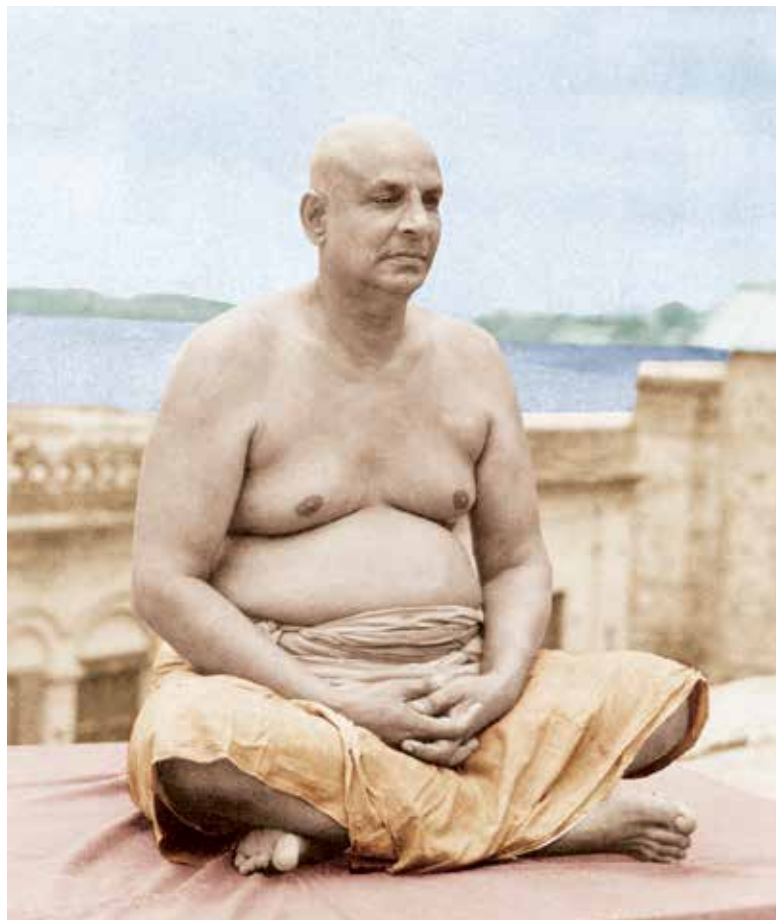
### **The instincts and the gunas**

According to the yogic system, there are three kinds of qualities prevalent in creation: tamas, rajas and sattwa.

- *Tamas* is the conditioned and fixed quality; it is stability and support in life. Tamas is the stability and foundation required to launch yourself to higher awareness.
- The *rajasic* nature is the dynamic, self-oriented, egoistic awareness; it is also the action, ability, movement and the force of change.

- The *sattwic* nature is purity, simplicity and spirituality.

The aim of yoga through all its various processes is to transcend *tamas* through *rajas* and attain the *sattwic* nature.



*If sattwa prevails you will enjoy wonderful health and peace. If rajas predominates the mind will be restless, perturbed, agitated and distracted. If inertia or tamas predominates, the mind will be heedless, indolent and lazy.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

The gunas influence our actions and behaviour in the material world, they influence our body, pranas and emotions. They also influence our experience of mind and consciousness. Our effort must be to identify the gunas manifesting in our lives and through yogic sadhana and lifestyle transform the tamasic nature with the power of rajas, our determination and effort, and establish ourselves in the spiritual sattwic nature. This is the path of yoga and spiritual evolution. It is the path humanity must follow to cope with the climatic crisis and environmental disasters we face.

An understanding of the gunas helps us to see the influence of the instincts on our personality and lifestyle. For example, if we look at the instinct *ahara*, craving, we can describe each of the gunas in relation to the instinct and its expression in our lives:

- A tamasic ahara will be the constant craving but without the ability to attain the object of one's desire, so one remains with the craving, accumulation and stagnation of whatever one does receive.
- A rajasic ahara expresses itself as ambition, a drive to attain and accumulate more and more. Everything in life is sacrificed for the attainment of one's desires and greed.
- A sattwic ahara will be expressed as contentment and fulfilment of our basic physical, mental or emotional needs through spiritual practices and simplicity in lifestyle.



## The instincts and the chakras



According to yogic science, the four major instincts are connected to the four lower chakras that are active in everyone:

- Maithuna or sexuality, is connected to mooladhara chakra; it is the centre of our security and sexuality.
- Bhaya or fear is connected to swadhisthana; it is the centre of desires, fears and insecurities.
- Ahara or craving is connected to manipura chakra; it is the centre of ambition, ego, digestion, processing both physical and mental food.
- Nidra or sensory disconnection is connected to anahata chakra; it is the centre where higher emotions such as compassion, creativity and understanding are expressed.

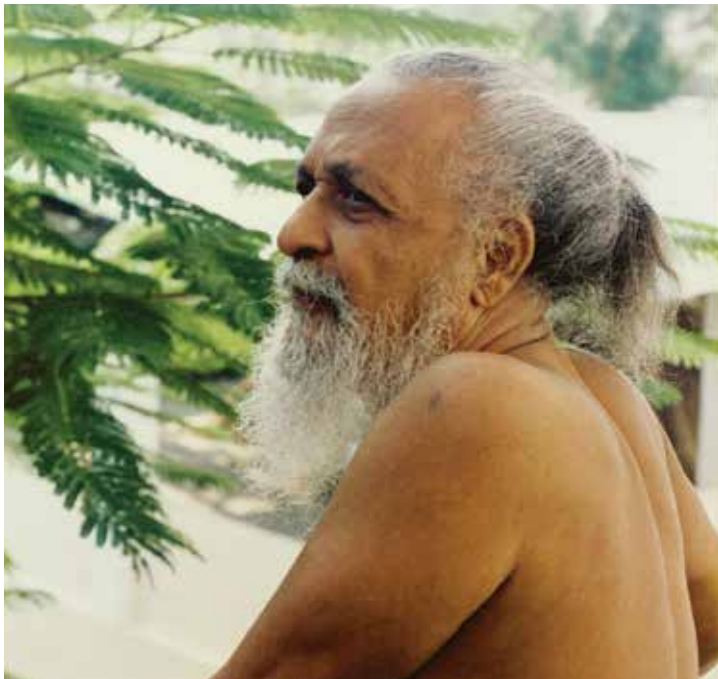
It is through awareness and purification of the chakras and the awakening of kundalini shakti that we can purify the body, mind and psyche and transform ourselves from the tamasic state to the sattwic state. This awakening of kundalini and purification of the chakras takes place through sadhana, lifestyle and attitudes. When kundalini awakens the kundalini shakti breaks down the barriers of the instincts and the individual can transcend the animal nature.



*There is no way you can avoid or jump over the basic instincts which make up the basic nature of life. You have to go through them, you have to awaken them, to experience them, channel and harmonize them. You have to do all the things that are necessary to purify yourself.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

In most human beings these four chakras, mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura and anahata are active in a tamasic state and express themselves through the senses and the mind. Through yogic sadhana and lifestyle the chakras are purified and become spiritually and psychically active in the sattwic state.



*The higher qualities of love, compassion, charity, mercy are the expressions of a mind which is influenced by awakened chakras. When the chakras are awakened, the mind automatically changes. Your values in life also change, the quality of your love and relationships improves immensely, enabling you to balance out the disappointments and frustrations in life. You are then able to live a little higher than you do now, and your attitude towards yourself and towards this life is better.*

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

## **Ambition and need**

To begin to manage the instincts we must first be aware of them in our lives and then assess if they are being governed by our ambition or our need. This is the path of sanyam. For example, if ahara is governed by ambition the craving will never stop. We will always want more money, more power. There will be no end to our cravings. However, if our craving nature is governed by the positive sattwic awareness of what we need then this is the yogic management of the ahara instinct. This constant awareness and analysis of what is really necessary in life is sanyam. In this way, our craving takes a different perspective and sanyam becomes a transformative process. It starts with the physical and material possessions until it leads to managing emotions, thoughts and attitudes.

## **Path to peace**

Our instincts express our evolutionary history and connect us to our animal ancestry and behaviour. We require them for our survival and protection, however, since the industrial revolution about 200 years ago, our civilization has changed so quickly, that our slow rolling evolution of millions of years cannot keep up.

Our human brain has evolved the consciousness and capacity to observe ourselves, the drashta, if we choose to. We have limited ourselves to the instinctive behaviour and we waste enormous human creativity and spiritual potential that lies dormant within each individual. Living our lives directed by the instincts has led to the environmental degradation, climate crisis and extinction we face now. We must make the choice to live the sattwic expression of the instincts, to live positive, creative lives with care and respect for all of creation. This is the path to individual and global peace and the path of yoga ecology. The following chapters outline the instincts, their characteristic and the yogic management of each in our daily lives.

## 5

# Maithuna – Sexuality

Maithuna is derived from the Sanskrit word *mithuna* which means ‘twins’. When two poles (positive and negative) of energy join together this is called maithuna. According to yoga, male and female, man and woman, represent the two opposite poles of energy. Although these two forces stand at opposite poles, during sexual interaction they move out of their position of polarity and come together. An explosion occurs and this energy can then be used either for creation or for spiritual awakening.

Maithuna is the first instinct and the strongest force of creation. It is the primal urge to become many. It is the desire and need for sexual and sensual experience.

### **Levels of maithuna**

Swami Satyananda said that sexuality can be experienced for progeny, pleasure and sublimation.

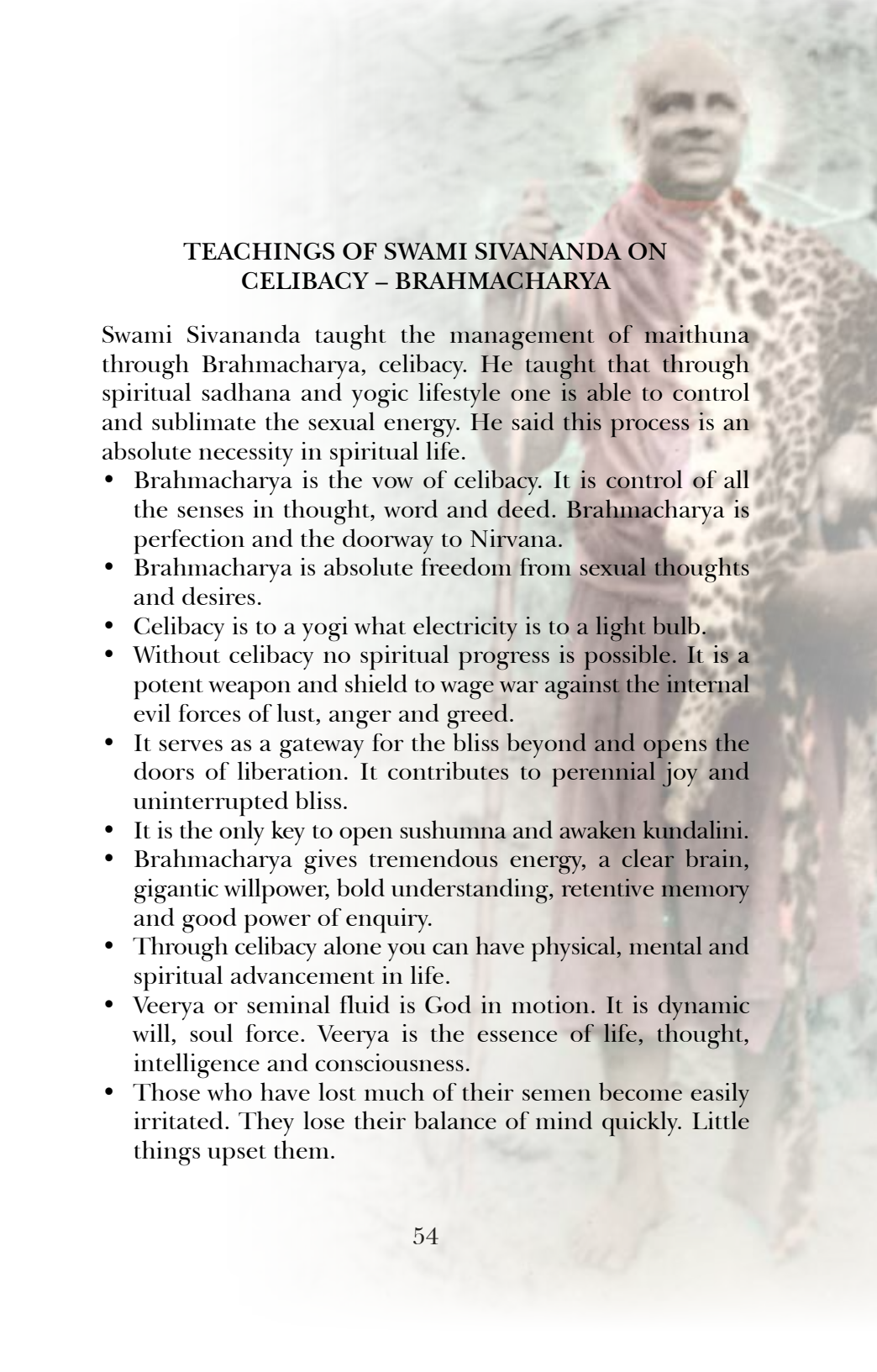
**Procreation:** Human beings like all animals are sexual beings. For most animals, sexuality is for progeny, reproduction and continuation of the species.

**Enjoyment:** Sexuality for enjoyment has become a very important yet complicated part of our human society and relationships. However, without any deeper purpose to sexuality, most people find that the enjoyment and excitement dies after some time and people become bored

and dissatisfied. Sexuality only for enjoyment can lead to obsessive behaviours and imbalances in lifestyle.

**Sublimation:** Through a yogic lifestyle sexuality can be managed and seen not only for progeny and enjoyment but also for sublimation of the sexual energy. Normally during sexual intercourse, the sexual energy is released and wasted. This sexual energy is the same creative and spiritual energy that is the kundalini energy of mooladhara chakra. Two people in a committed relationship can explore sexuality as a sadhana and learn to awaken and channel this energy into the higher chakras. This leads to purification of the personality, cultivation of the sattvic nature and the experience of bliss, *ananda*.

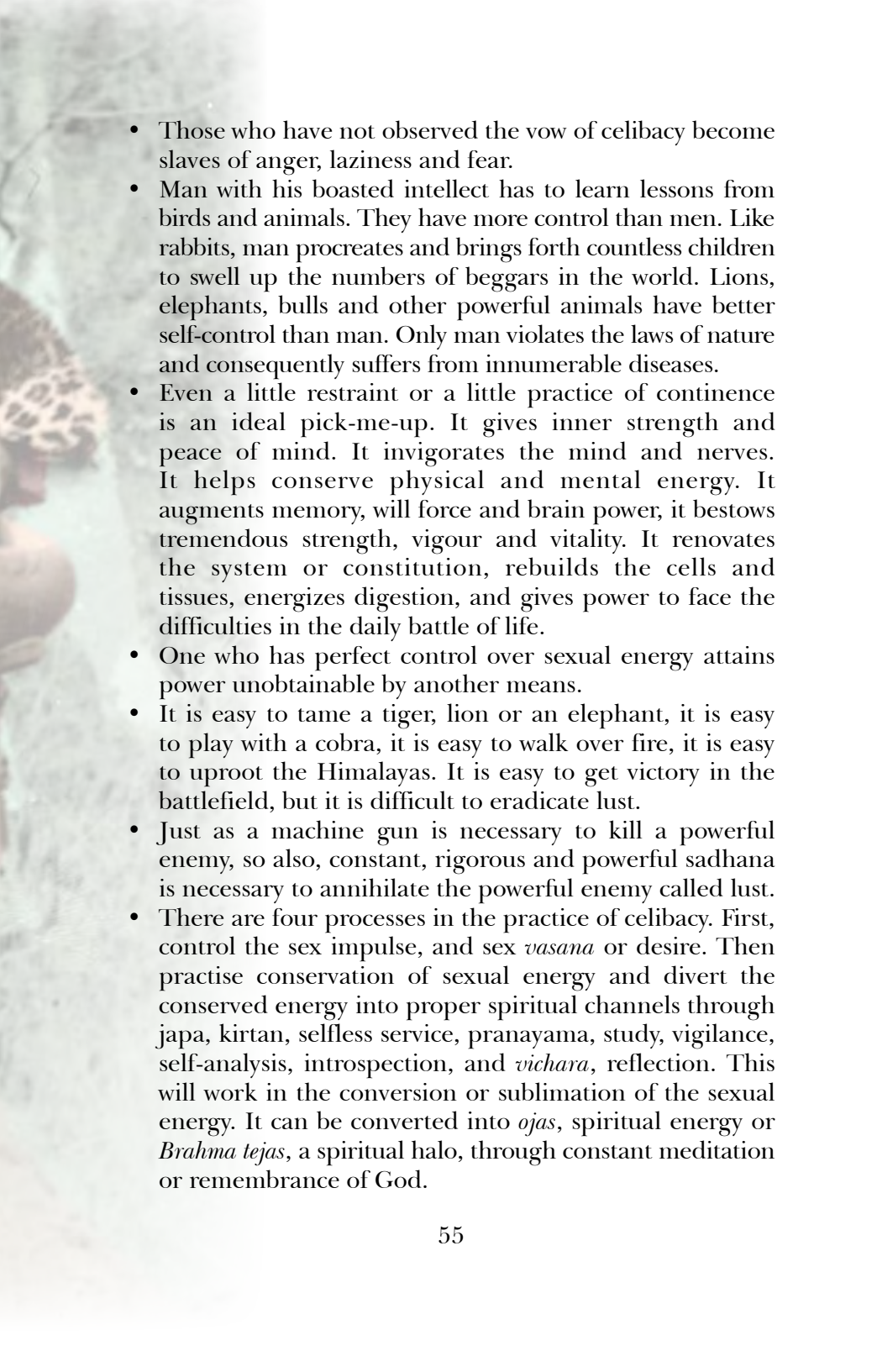




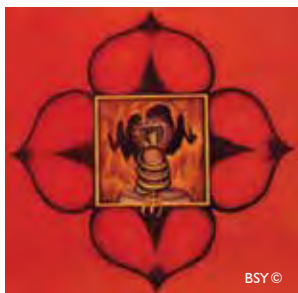
## TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON CELIBACY – BRAHMACHARYA

Swami Sivananda taught the management of maithuna through Brahmacharya, celibacy. He taught that through spiritual sadhana and yogic lifestyle one is able to control and sublimate the sexual energy. He said this process is an absolute necessity in spiritual life.

- Brahmacharya is the vow of celibacy. It is control of all the senses in thought, word and deed. Brahmacharya is perfection and the doorway to Nirvana.
- Brahmacharya is absolute freedom from sexual thoughts and desires.
- Celibacy is to a yogi what electricity is to a light bulb.
- Without celibacy no spiritual progress is possible. It is a potent weapon and shield to wage war against the internal evil forces of lust, anger and greed.
- It serves as a gateway for the bliss beyond and opens the doors of liberation. It contributes to perennial joy and uninterrupted bliss.
- It is the only key to open sushumna and awaken kundalini.
- Brahmacharya gives tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic willpower, bold understanding, retentive memory and good power of enquiry.
- Through celibacy alone you can have physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.
- Veerya or seminal fluid is God in motion. It is dynamic will, soul force. Veerya is the essence of life, thought, intelligence and consciousness.
- Those who have lost much of their semen become easily irritated. They lose their balance of mind quickly. Little things upset them.

- 
- Those who have not observed the vow of celibacy become slaves of anger, laziness and fear.
  - Man with his boasted intellect has to learn lessons from birds and animals. They have more control than men. Like rabbits, man procreates and brings forth countless children to swell up the numbers of beggars in the world. Lions, elephants, bulls and other powerful animals have better self-control than man. Only man violates the laws of nature and consequently suffers from innumerable diseases.
  - Even a little restraint or a little practice of continence is an ideal pick-me-up. It gives inner strength and peace of mind. It invigorates the mind and nerves. It helps conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will force and brain power, it bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. It renovates the system or constitution, rebuilds the cells and tissues, energizes digestion, and gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life.
  - One who has perfect control over sexual energy attains power unobtainable by another means.
  - It is easy to tame a tiger, lion or an elephant, it is easy to play with a cobra, it is easy to walk over fire, it is easy to uproot the Himalayas. It is easy to get victory in the battlefield, but it is difficult to eradicate lust.
  - Just as a machine gun is necessary to kill a powerful enemy, so also, constant, rigorous and powerful sadhana is necessary to annihilate the powerful enemy called lust.
  - There are four processes in the practice of celibacy. First, control the sex impulse, and sex *vasana* or desire. Then practise conservation of sexual energy and divert the conserved energy into proper spiritual channels through *japa*, *kirtan*, selfless service, *pranayama*, study, vigilance, self-analysis, introspection, and *vichara*, reflection. This will work in the conversion or sublimation of the sexual energy. It can be converted into *ojas*, spiritual energy or *Brahma tejas*, a spiritual halo, through constant meditation or remembrance of God.

## Maithuna and mooladhara chakra



Maithuna is connected to mooladhara chakra. Mooladhara chakra is the root chakra and is situated at the perineum of the male body and the cervix of the female body. It is active in us all, at every moment of every day. When mooladhara is active, it influences our passion, desire, attraction and our sense of

security. The concept of beauty and fashion is connected to mooladhara as we try to be sexually appealing and beautiful to attract a mate.

Mooladhara chakra is the resting place of kundalini shakti and through the process of awakening and purifying this chakra with the help of yogic practices and sadhana, the instinct of maithuna can be managed and eventually transcended. There are many yoga sadhanas for awakening and purifying mooladhara chakra, which is the doorway to realizing our instinctive nature. As we purify mooladhara chakra there will be experiences and manifestations associated with the quality of the chakra in our personality, such as insecurity, sensuality and sexuality, laziness, inertia, self-centredness, creativity, awakening of hidden abilities, vitality and vigour. With yogic awareness we can begin to identify these characteristics and with constant effort understand, purify and manage the instincts. This management can be achieved through purification of the chakras.

*The mind of the worldly man with base desires and passions moves in mooladhara and swadhisthana chakras. If one's mind becomes purified, it rises to manipura chakra and experiences some power and joy. If the mind becomes again purified, it rises to anahata chakra and experiences bliss and visualizes the effulgent form of the ishta devata.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



### **Maithuna, lifestyle and the gunas**

Depending on the evolutionary level of consciousness of an individual, the instinct will be expressed in the form of one of the gunas.

- Tamasic maithuna is expressed as sexuality for procreation and security. Children represent security and support for the family, and due to lack of contraceptive measures people may have as many as ten or more children primarily to provide financial security. Nature has designed the human being to have a high reproductive success rate, however, this ability has allowed our human population to explode and we have become the most dominant species on the planet.
- Rajasic maithuna expresses through reputation, attraction and attachment. Career, entertainment and social life become sense- and sex-orientated. It is a materialistic life based on possessions, fashion, social status and security. Constantly, energy and money is spent on trying to uphold our reputation and status. A beautiful wife or husband represents one's reputation and status, and after a few years, divorce follows when the partners become bored with one another. Through rajasic maithuna everything in life is used to satisfy the sexual urge and to release tension.

- In the state of sattwic maithuna, sexuality is utilized to awaken spiritual energy. Very few people can have the experience or attain the sattwic state of maithuna. To attain this state yogic sadhana and lifestyle is essential. Through yogic sadhana and lifestyle people can understand the power of the sexual energy and utilize it for spiritual awakening. Whether through the path of celibacy or with a sexual partner, sublimation of sexual energy requires a high level of wisdom, understanding, commitment and control.

The instinct of maithuna can be purified from the tamasic to the sattwic state through yogic and tantric sadhana and sanyam in life.



## **Maithuna and yoga ecology in modern lifestyle**

Maithuna, sexuality and sensuality, in the modern city is frequently expressed openly anywhere, at any time. Enormous billboards and advertisements display half-naked beautiful men and women meant to sell items such as sport cars, watches and perfume. People are taught to believe that by owning these possessions they will be more sexually alluring for the object of their desire. This appeals to the rajasic nature.

Sexuality through pornography is readily available on the internet for anyone of any age to see. Insufficient measures are taken to protect the younger generations, who lack discrimination, from gaining access to such material.

Uncontrolled human sexuality has led to exponential population growth. The human population of nearly 7 billion is increasing beyond the carrying capacity of the earth, especially at our current level of growth and consumerism. Overpopulation is going to be one of the greatest problems we as a civilization will face in the not too distant future. Mother Nature will always find a way to control populations within any ecosystem and she will definitely manage our human population if we don't, but then her ways will not always be kind, with measures such as disease, viruses or climatic calamities like floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and droughts. Through such events, Mother Nature will keep the human population within a healthy range of balance and carrying capacity for the earth. It seems due to climate change this process may have already begun.

Countries such as China have tried to control population growth by limiting the number of children per family. This has spread an awareness of population control but is difficult to control. Many couples in developed countries around the world have made the decision not to have children for fear of the future and of the suffering the child may face due to environmental destruction and climate change. Limiting population growth is one aspect of managing the maithuna instinct.



Overpopulation and consumerism are two of the main causes of the global environmental crisis we face today. Being aware of the unnecessary stuff we buy for fashion, status and security and reducing it to live only with what we need as the basic requirement for life and happiness is also managing the maithuna instinct.

*Sanyam becomes the medium, the realization and the desire to hold on to that which is positive and to cultivate that. This then becomes the process by which we can dis-identify with tamas and connect with sattva.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

### **Yogic sanyam for maithuna**

Feeling the urge to have sex is a normal part of human nature. However, these feelings and desires can sometimes become detrimental and interfere with daily life and relationships. Finding ways to manage the unchannelled sexual energy may help one to improve the quality of life, relationships and performance.

- Yoga practices help to balance the sexual hormones and this reduces the craving and obsessive sexual nature.
- Exercise daily. Physical exercise is one of the healthiest ways to control and manage the sexual energy.
- Minimize stress in life. Practise yoga nidra and japa daily to reduce stress. Sometimes when one is feeling



overwhelmed or stressed, obsessive thoughts will take hold of you.

- Keep busy. Channel sexual energy into creative projects, such as, gardening, painting and music. Find new hobbies that can uplift and inspire.
- Sublimation means taking a negative or unwanted emotion and turning it into something more positive and useful. *Seva* or service to society, volunteer work and helping a good cause is a way to channel the sexual energy into a positive and creative activity that helps others.
- Avoid pornography.
- Abstain from drugs and alcohol. Being under the influence of drugs and alcohol makes it more likely that one will engage in sexual activity.
- Learn to practise *antar mouna* and start to observe thoughts and tell yourself, “These are only thoughts of the mind, they are not helping me in life.”
- With mind management one can learn to postpone compulsive behaviour until later; this will make one think about one’s behaviour before committing to it. It helps in learning to take control of thoughts, feelings and desires and not fall prey to them.
- Avoid environments that will trigger and stimulate sexual energy.

## 6

# Bhaya – Fear

The instinct of fear or *bhaya* is a biological response created by a perceived danger or threat. When we feel fear, the hormone adrenaline is released into the blood, and instantly the body and mind respond with extra energy, strength and the capacity to either fight or run. Fear is an ancient primordial instinct and exists in all species as the survival instinct. This survival instinct is one of Mother Nature's ways of ensuring the continuance of every species and of life itself.

Fear is one of the four main animal instincts controlling the lives of human beings and society. As our species has grown, evolved and established civilizations, each civilization and generation has had different threats to fear. The object of our fears has changed as our circumstances changed, but the power and influence of the instinct remains the same.

For example, when people lived as nomadic tribal communities or hunters and gatherers and were under constant threat from attack of wild animals, weather and other tribes, the need to be ready to fight or run was primary. The fear instinct kept them alert and aware. When needed adrenaline would rush through the body and give strength to run faster and protect themselves from any potential threat or danger.

In the agricultural civilization people began to settle, store and manage personal possessions and properties. The threat then changed to protecting land, crops and livelihood from animals, pests, diseases, extreme weather and other tribes.

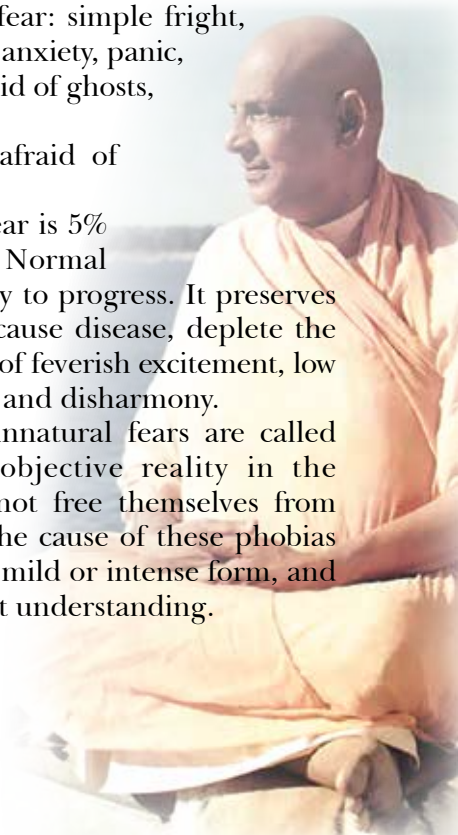
In the industrial civilization, industries created labour and work. People were no longer self-sufficient on the land, they went to work to make an income and provide for the family. With this shift, the standards of living began to improve. Fears started to shift towards one's relation with money, possessions, job security and position for the individual and the family.

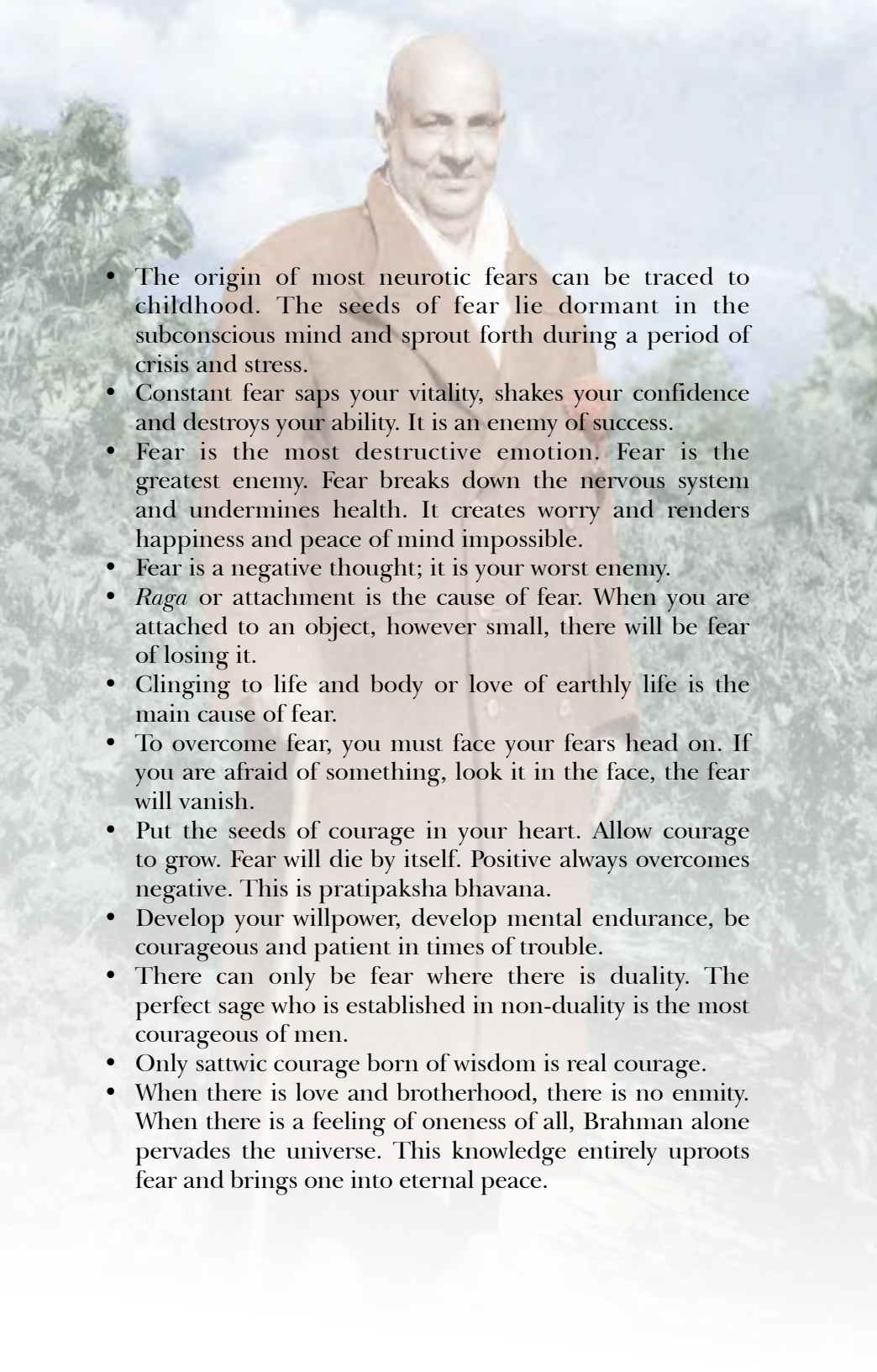
### **Human fear**

Unlike other animals, the human brain and consciousness has evolved so that humans are able to plan and imagine the future. However, this awareness of the future when attached to fear, creates irrational fears, fear of unreal situations. These feelings lead to phobias, anxiety and many mental and physical diseases.

## **TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON FEAR – BHAYA**

- There are various degrees of fear: simple fright, timidity, shyness, alarm, terror, anxiety, panic, and terrible fear. Some are afraid of ghosts, some are afraid of disease.
- The majority of people are afraid of public concern.
- Fear is of two kinds: normal fear is 5% and imaginary fear is 95%. Normal fear is healthy; it paves the way to progress. It preserves life, whereas imaginary fears cause disease, deplete the energies, and produce all sorts of feverish excitement, low vitality, uneasiness, discomfort and disharmony.
- Peculiar, private, irrational, unnatural fears are called phobias. Phobias have no objective reality in the environment, yet people cannot free themselves from fears and negative feelings. The cause of these phobias are nervousness, stupidity in a mild or intense form, and lack of right thinking and right understanding.



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- The origin of most neurotic fears can be traced to childhood. The seeds of fear lie dormant in the subconscious mind and sprout forth during a period of crisis and stress.
  - Constant fear saps your vitality, shakes your confidence and destroys your ability. It is an enemy of success.
  - Fear is the most destructive emotion. Fear is the greatest enemy. Fear breaks down the nervous system and undermines health. It creates worry and renders happiness and peace of mind impossible.
  - Fear is a negative thought; it is your worst enemy.
  - *Raga* or attachment is the cause of fear. When you are attached to an object, however small, there will be fear of losing it.
  - Clinging to life and body or love of earthly life is the main cause of fear.
  - To overcome fear, you must face your fears head on. If you are afraid of something, look it in the face, the fear will vanish.
  - Put the seeds of courage in your heart. Allow courage to grow. Fear will die by itself. Positive always overcomes negative. This is pratipaksha bhavana.
  - Develop your willpower, develop mental endurance, be courageous and patient in times of trouble.
  - There can only be fear where there is duality. The perfect sage who is established in non-duality is the most courageous of men.
  - Only sattvic courage born of wisdom is real courage.
  - When there is love and brotherhood, there is no enmity. When there is a feeling of oneness of all, Brahman alone pervades the universe. This knowledge entirely uproots fear and brings one into eternal peace.

## Bhaya and swadhisthana chakra



Swadhisthana chakra is connected to bhaya. Swadhisthana chakra is situated at the coccyx, the tailbone. Once kundalini awakens in mooladhara it moves upwards through swadhisthana chakra, where we experience the storehouse of all our samskaras, memories and our deep unconscious fears

and insecurities. Whenever there is change in life our fears and insecurities will be triggered. This is the reaction of swadhisthana chakra. Swadhisthana chakra is associated with the adrenal glands.

Through the process of awakening and purifying this chakra through yogic practices and sadhana, the instinct of bhaya can be managed and eventually transcended. There are many yoga sadhanas for awakening and purifying swadhisthana chakra. As this takes place there will be experiences and manifestations associated with the quality of the chakra in our personality, such as fears, insecurity, obsessive sexual fantasies and urges, emotions, subconscious desires, lack of inspiration, frigidity. With yogic awareness we can begin to identify these characteristics and with constant effort understand, purify and manage the instincts through the chakra.

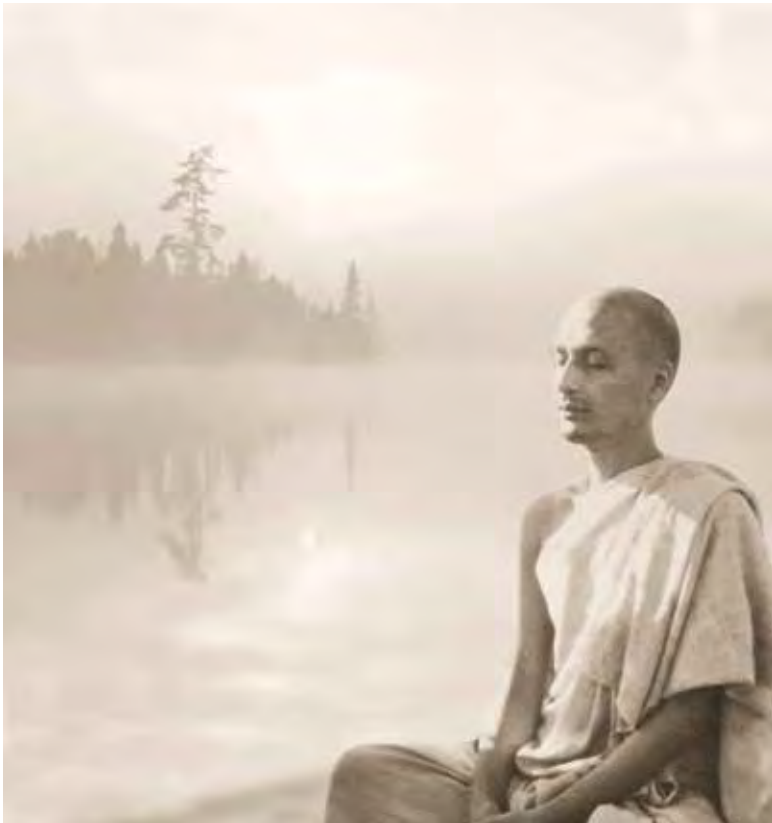
*The management of fear, the natural instinct of bhaya, represents the management of swadhisthana awakening through viveka, by shining that light on the object or the moment of experience.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

## Bhaya, lifestyle and the gunas

Bhaya manifests in different ways depending on the dominant guna. Through yogic sadhana and lifestyle one is able to transform the quality of the gunas from the tamasic state through rajas to the sattwic state.

- When the tamasic guna of bhaya is dominant, insecurity and phobias will dominate. A person will not be able to function properly in society due to fear. People become inert, incapable of leading normal, happy lives.
- When rajas bhaya dominates people will be defensive, reactive and angry, as they constantly try to protect themselves from their own perceived threats. A rajasic fear will express as control and manipulation of situations and people to protect oneself from the perceived threat they represent. This stems from deep unconscious fears and insecurities that the rajasic fear attaches to status, reputation, position and social life.



## **Bhaya and yoga ecology in our modern society**

In our modern cities one no longer fears the wild tiger and threats to crops and land, now one fears status and recognition in society. Social media and digital images to friends and family hold one fearful. People fear speaking out for fear of what may be immortalized in the digital world. One sentence is enough to destroy a person's 'social media image' and thus their life.

People are obsessed with being constantly in contact and tuned into friends and family, if one loses a phone, phone connectivity, or battery then the fear of missing out takes over. This is an acknowledged syndrome called 'the fear of missing out' (FOMO) which has become prevalent since the creation of the mobile smart phones and social media.

The fear of being alone makes one insecure as people crave friendship and companionship. People have lost the strength of individual character and experience, as every experience has to be shared with a photo and liked with everyone known (and unknown).

Most of the fear faced today in modern life is irrational and imaginary fear caused by negative thinking and worry about the future, finances and relationships. This irrational fear leads to anxiety and phobias: fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of being left out, fear of the future and fear of the unknown are all imaginary as there is no actual threat taking place. The threats are created within the mind and have no real basis in actual life. Long-term fear and anxiety can lead to many physical and mental problems, due to the unnecessary and excessive release of stress hormones. These hormones flood through the blood stream leading to many imbalances in the body, mind and emotions, because one does not respond physically to any threat.

Humans beings have always lived in fear and awe of the forces of nature. In the past, humans saw nature as Divinity in all its various forms, and understood their total dependence on it. In recent years, technology has enabled one to control and manipulate the forces of nature. This has

given comfort, luxuries and a high standard of living for a few but at a high price. The price is paid with arrogance and the inherent belief of separation from and superiority to nature. Now, humankind faces the wrath of nature in all her forms as she battles to bring back balance to earth's ecosystems and atmosphere. One of these processes is the climatic crisis of today.

Our instinct of fear has been our protector since the beginning of existence. Now fear has become our enemy and creates wrong thinking, irrational behaviour, anxieties and phobias. Our current fears need to change from our social and Facebook reputation to the very real fear and reality of climate change and environmental destruction. Scientists are telling us that we may not even have one hundred years left on earth if we continue on our current course of destruction. We must fear for our very future and use that fear to create change in our lives and the world around us. We have to educate ourselves to the real threats that face us now, not the created threats of our mind. All our efforts must be put into action, joining forces to protect our earth home and fellow species, without which humans are finished.





### **Yogic sanyam for fear**

- Stop and relax. It is impossible to think clearly when your blood is filled with fear and anxiety. Go for a walk, have a hot bath or shower and lie in shavasana.
- Follow the breath. If you face panic and fear lie down in shavasana, place the hand on the belly and follow slow deep abdominal breathing. If you purposefully breathe out longer than you breathe in your body and mind will calm down. Breathe in for the count of 5 and out for the count of 8.
- Face your fears. If you start to face your fear it will start to fade. If you fall off a horse, jump back on, don't let the experience create a vritti of fear within the mind. Repeated exposure to the fearful event that created the trauma can help the anxiety to subside.
- Reward yourself when you face fears.
- Imagine the worst. Try to imagine the worst that can happen, and you will see it is not possible; the fear will run away the more you chase it.
- Don't forget the big picture, we are just a small planet in a universe of millions of universes. Our individual lives mean nothing in the order of the universe. So don't take yourself and your situation too seriously. Life is too short and precious to live it in fear.

*If you live your life in fear, you half live your life. Be brave and face your fears. God is with you.*

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

- Imagine yourself in the fearful situation but see yourself calm and relaxed.
- Yoga nidra and sankalpa are powerful ways to overcome your deepest fears.
- Cultivate simple everyday routines: good sleep, wholesome food and a brisk walk. They are the best cure for anxiety.
- You are never alone in nature. When you explore nature and wild places you cultivate your love of nature, and realize you are never alone. The stars become your lights, the animals and birds your friends, the trees your protectors and providers, flowing rivers speak to you, insects and birds sing to you the finest symphonies.
- Anytime you are feeling alone or lost spend time in nature, connect to everything around you and discover the support, friendship and protection of natural places.



## **Pratipaksha bhavana**

Fear causes us to notice and remember negative events, which reinforce our sense that the world is a negative place. We can change the negative outlook by deliberately noticing the positive and put all our focus and energy into that. Positivity of mind broadens our perspective and the more we practise positivity the more that quality manifests within us. This creates strength and resilience of personality that helps us manage even the most difficult situations in life. This is pratipaksha bhavana.

*Pratipaksha bhavana is a process of converting the negative expressions in all aspects of life into the positive. In the process of pratipaksha bhavana you slowly develop a better understanding, expression, thinking, perspective, and a better interaction with yourself and the world around you. This transformation is the state of sanyam.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Pratipaksha bhavana is a very powerful tool for dealing with one's mind and negative responses to situations. Through pratipaksha bhavana we identify the cause of our fear, we switch the mind to the opposite and positive thought and see the positive in the situation. This requires constant awareness of one's thoughts and reactions as the witness, the *drashta*. It takes practice but frees one from the claws of negativity which hold us down in fear, anxiety and worry.

## **Fear for the modern 'digital' children**

The children of the 21st century have a fear that no other generation of children have ever faced – the very real fear of global warming, climate change, extinction and terrorism. Children the world over live in fear for their health and their future. They fear they will not have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. Already many children pay the price of our modern lifestyles and suffer pollution-related diseases such as asthma and other respiratory diseases.



big scheme of things. Parents must allow their children the time, space and place to run free in nature. It is the children of the world who are currently joining forces to fight against climate change. They have used their fear of the future to create change.



## 7

# Ahara – Craving

*Ahara* is craving for satisfaction, including food and nourishment. This craving is physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Our physical body craves food, sex and sleep. Our minds crave mental stimulation, entertainment and sensuality. We crave knowledge, information and gossip from other people and places, we crave recognition, position and respect. Our emotions crave love, affection, care, support, friendship, family and a sense of belonging. Our spirit craves joy, sanyam, contentment, peace, happiness and freedom.

It is this craving nature which sustains and nourishes us throughout our lives and drives the other three instincts – sexuality, fear and sleep. The craving instinct provides us with all the necessities we require for a healthy life: food, protection, company, happiness and connection to the divine.

When man lived as nomadic hunters and gatherers he required the craving instinct to help in the search for food, water, a mate, sleep and rest, protection, safety and security. However, as civilizations and the standard of living grew cravings continued and people began to crave beyond their needs to fulfil the never-ending greed. Due to ignorance and the tamasic mind the craving nature can become strong and lead people to continually crave food beyond the actual need of the body which leads to obesity and obesity-related diseases. People become dependent on the emotional

support and recognition of others and crave attention to such an extent that they are never alone and they never know themselves.

We need to be aware of our craving and desiring nature in all aspects of life. Once that awareness begins, we can manage ourselves so as to live with what we need and not succumb to greed.

### TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON CRAVING – AHARA

- Craving is the nature of the instincts, an involuntary prompting into action.
- The wheel of worldly existence is kept up by these cravings.
- According to Vedanta craving is born of ignorance.
- There are neither cravings, desire or longing in Brahman. It is ever pure and transcendent. It is untouched by even a trace of desire.
- Search all the roots of cravings by digging deep in the mind and burn them beyond resurrection.



## Ahara and manipura chakra



Manipura chakra connects us to ahara, our endless cravings and desires. Manipura chakra is situated at the navel in the spine. It is through manipura chakra we express our dynamism, energy, willpower and achievements. It provides the energy that nourishes and sustains us physically, mentally and emotionally – the body is nurtured with food, the mind is nurtured by pleasures, and the spirit is nurtured through spiritual life. Manipura sustains the energy of the whole personality just as ahara provides the craving for all the senses.

Purification of manipura chakra through yogic sadhana and lifestyle helps to balance the energy of manipura chakra which is the key to balancing our craving nature.

## Ahara, lifestyle and the gunas

According to yogic philosophy each person is governed by one particular instinct and it expresses throughout their lifestyle. The quality of that instinct is expressed as the gunas influence our lives.

The expression of tamasic ahara is the inability to achieve or attain anything in life by one's own will and effort. There is laziness, and even though there is craving there is no will to attain the object of the craving. People will accept their pitiful state and obsess over the object of their craving. With tamasic ahara they expect others to provide for them. If they do get the will to act, they are willing to steal or even murder for the object of craving.

It has always been human nature to steal and kill for the object of one's desire. Whole kingdoms and civilizations have been destroyed and new ones forged through death and destruction; this is the tamasic ahara. As our societies have evolved the brutalities may have reduced a little but the

tamasic ahara still continues today disguised in arms, law, finance and advertising.

Rajasic ahara is expressed as greed. All energy and effort is consumed in the never-ending attainment of all desires and more. The greedy rajasic ahara stores extra food, possessions and money whether needed or not. The wealth grows beyond the need of the individual and is not shared. There is little understanding of the effect of the greed on people or the environment. This rajasic ahara is creating global destruction and degradation of the ecosystems of the planet. People knowingly allow their greed to rule their lives at the expense of other humans, other species and the planet as we know it.

A sattwic ahara will express as balance, contentment and satisfaction. Sattwic ahara only takes what is required for a simple, peaceful life and shares the excess with others. Everything is seen as provided for by the divine and there is trust that whatever is needed will be received. There is gratefulness for all of Mother Nature's bounty and gifts.

### **Ahara and yoga ecology in our modern society**

The ahara instinct sustained and protected the human species for thousands of years. Now in the modern world we have developed a complex society that provides for all our needs. We no longer need to hunt, chase and catch our food – it is delivered to our door in under thirty minutes! In industrialized countries all the basic requirements of life such as food, water, housing, electricity, family, protection, entertainment, communication are provided. Yet still the craving is for more and we always feel that what we have is not enough. In the modern material world, we believe that more possessions will bring us happiness.

Human nature continuously craves for more and we consume like there is no tomorrow. The Christmas Eve shopping frenzy in supermarkets and departments stores around the world is an example of how so-called educated people of developed nations behave when they know that

shops will be closed for Christmas (one) day!! They rush, push and purchase enough food to last a year, just to survive one day without shopping. This mentality makes us hoard and store away our food, possessions and relationships. We consume far beyond our needs to fulfil our greed.

Modern society's obsession with food along with its increased variety and availability has led to global health problems and associated diseases and illnesses. Our habits of eating, food production and waste have created environmental degradation and atmospheric pollution.

Our craving nature has filled our lives with unnecessary stuff and encouraged a throwaway society that pollutes the earth's ecosystems and our bodies with plastic and toxins. Marriages and relationships change every few years as we crave someone else to make us happy.

We can ask ourselves the following questions before we purchase or acquire something: Do I need this? How will it help to improve my life? Is it my ambition? Is it my desire?

### **Expression of ahara for food**

(For a full description on our relationship with food, please see Yoga Ecology series Volume 2: *Janani Annadwai Pranah – Food is Prana*)

*If you eat right, you live a long, healthy and peaceful life. Therefore, along with yoga practices, seasonal routines of diet and appropriate times of eating make a powerful combination so that one can live a healthy life.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Our relationship with food comes under the instinct of craving or *ahara*. Our nomadic ancestors had to search for food and water; they would often not know where their next meal would come from. In modern cities we have access to food 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but we still eat like we may not have anything tomorrow. This means the *ahara* instinct is governed by our greed not our need, and this

creates many problems in the health of the individual and society. We can learn to manage the craving instinct through our food habits and prevent it from governing our lives.

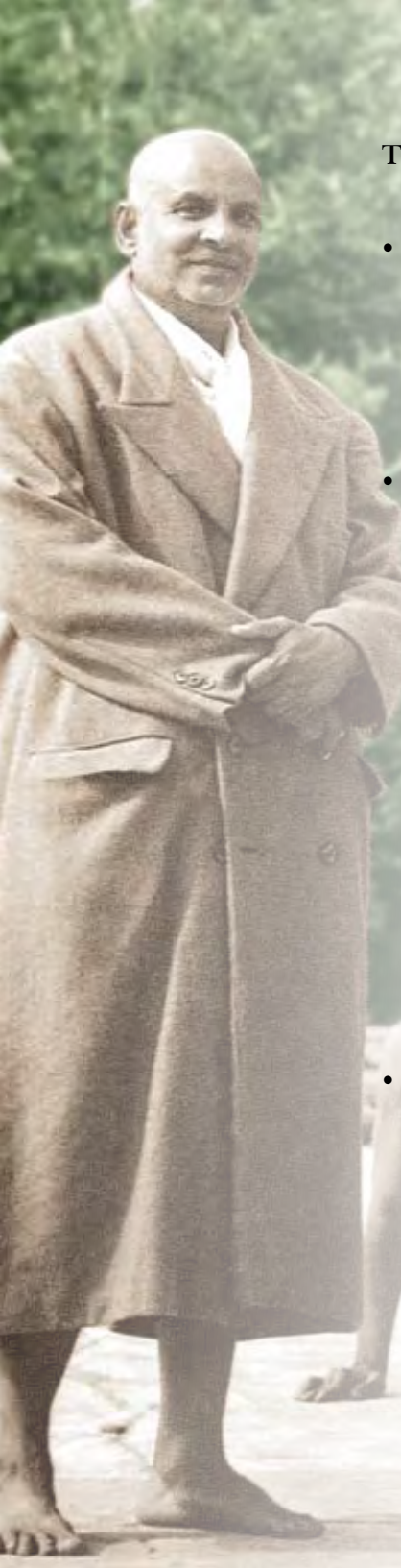


*Eat to live, do not live to eat.*

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

The food we eat builds the cells of our body and mind – we are what we eat. For a healthy body and mind we must eat healthy natural food. When the body is fed properly in a balanced and healthy way, the mind will be constructive, creative and active and the emotions balanced and content. Consuming food in the wrong way, like eating too much of the wrong food, or not enough food, leads to many problems in body, mind and emotions. Overconsumption of food has led to many individual health problems as well as global ecological problems.

What we eat effects the environment, and there is no doubt that by changing to a vegetarian diet we can help to reduce and minimize the environmental consequences of feeding and grazing cattle, including water scarcity, soil degradation, deforestation, degraded ecosystems and pollution of waterways and oceans.



## TEACHING OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON FOOD

- A yogic diet is that which helps the aspirant to keep the mind calm and to curb the restless senses. A yogic diet helps him to squeeze out the rajas from his mind and fill the mind with sattwa, and to practise unceasing meditation.
- Diet should be carefully chosen and arranged. Condiments, tea, coffee, alcohol, foods that are rich in starch, sugars, and fats, and all stimulating drinks should be avoided. Fresh fruits, salads and raw vegetables, cheese, nuts, cereals, wholemeal bread, soya beans, dried fruits, cream, milk, barley, honey, dates and almonds are highly beneficial. Raw foods are more vitalizing, make better blood and build better bodies. They should therefore make up at least eighty per cent of the diet. Occasionally live on juicy fruits for a week. This will help greatly towards elimination of impurities from the system.
- We require a variety of foods with a variety of contents and properties. Variety in food is necessary; but too many different kinds at one time is not good. The fewer the kinds the better. Mother Nature provides judiciously and amply for all our needs and varies the contents of foods in accordance with our needs.



### **Yogic sanyam for taking our food**

A change in diet is a positive action everyone can make as an offering to Mother Earth and her inhabitants and ecosystems. If we do not change our ways of eating we may not be able to feed our steadily increasing populations. We can bring sanyam into our eating habits through the following yamas or attitudes: *prasad* or divine gift, *abhar* or gratitude and *vitaraṇa* or sharing.

### **Prasad**

In the holistic yogic lifestyle food is considered as *prasad*, a gift from nature, from the divine Mother Annapurna.

*Whatever food is obtained think that it has come as a gift, so that life may be maintained. Accept it as a Prasad, a gift which has been given by God and is permeated with prana, life force. Thinking of it as prasad will purify the mind. If one develops this belief, sickness will not occur. Positive thoughts only have a good effect on the body.*

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



## **Sharing**

In vedic times the concept of sharing or vitarana, was a natural expression of human kindness in daily life, especially in relation to food. In vedic times and in many cultures around the world an extra plate of food was always laid out when a family sat to eat their meal, in case of the arrival of any unexpected guest. People would place a morsel of food on the ground before they ate, an offering to the insects, birds and animals who represent Narayana, the life force in our lives.

It seems that in just one generation, people of modern society have forgotten how to share and the value of sharing. We have become self-centred and self-obsessed and the more we have, the less we share. All around the world there are people who do not know where their next meal will come from. We can choose to share what we have with people who have little or nothing.

## **Gratitude**

Gratitude is a feeling of appreciation for life and the source of one's life. Through the attitude of gratitude one connects to Prakriti, Mother Nature, and to the Divine, the source of one's food and realizes the value and importance that food plays in life for one's wellbeing and happiness.

Offering prayers of thanks to nature and the Divine for the incredible design, effort and time that goes into producing the food on our plate is a way to improve one's

relationship with food, which in turn leads to better digestion and overall health of body and mind. Sanyam is expressed through our gratitude shown in the amount of food that is purchased, cooked, eaten and thrown away which will be naturally reduced.

### **Mouna**

*Mouna* or silence is a very powerful tool to observe the food we eat and our method of eating. Often we eat too much as we are distracted in gossip or watching television. Food eaten in silence allows us to be totally aware of each mouthful, each morsel, of what and how we are eating, preventing us from overeating and cultivating the awareness of the importance of eating slowly and less.

### **Fasting**

*Fasting is nature's curative agent. It can restore health where everything else has failed. It gives nature a chance to clear the system.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Fasting is a way in which we can rest the senses for some time and allow the body and mind to be involved in other activities, such as healing, spiritual sadhana, creativity or being alone in nature. Food fasts are effective and safe ways to help the body detoxify itself and use the energy otherwise spent in digestion for rejuvenation and healing. By fasting regularly, we give all our organs a rest, reduce toxins in the body, increase immune power, and purify the blood. Fasting helps to live a longer and healthier life.

### **Practical yogic sanyam for eating**

- As much as possible three meals should be taken at the same time every day during sunlight hours. The digestive fire of the body is connected to the fire of the sun and is at its peak at midday. So the main meal should be taken during the day and a light meal for dinner.

- “For breakfast, eat like an emperor, for lunch, eat like a king and for dinner, eat like a poor man.” It is said that breakfast should be the main meal of the day, to break the fast and to give body and mind strength and stamina for the day ahead. Dinner should always be a light and simple meal, to assist in digestion and to provide good sleep.
- If you train the body to eat at regular timings it will utilize its prana, energy more efficiently. It enables the body to anticipate intake of calories at these specific times throughout the day. The body functions best when its natural cycles of eating and sleeping are regular and fixed.
- Try to minimize eating processed and fast foods as they are detrimental to health and provide little nutritional value.
- Eat fresh, locally grown and locally produced food products. This supports the local community and reduces the impact on the earth from transportation, packaging and cold storage.
- Sit quietly and relax before eating and chant the following mantras of the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:24):

*Brahmaarpanam brahma havirbrahmaagnau brahmanaa  
hutam;*

*Brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarmasamaadhinaa.*

The act of offering is Brahma, the oblation is Brahma, by Brahma it is offered into the fire of Brahma, Brahma is that which is to be attained by him who performs action pertaining to Brahma.



- Invoke the feeling of gratitude for the tasty nutritious food provided for you from Mother Nature and the Divine. Feel that each meal is prasada, a gift from nature and a gift from the Divine.
- If possible eat in silence, or if with family, leave all digital devices and TV switched off during the meal.
- Never think or talk negatively while preparing or eating food, as the negative vibration is absorbed by the food which in turn affects the health of the body and mind of all who consume that food.
- When eating, fill the stomach 50% with solid, 25% with water and 25% with air.
- Chew your meals properly before swallowing.
- “After breakfast work with a smile; after lunch rest a while; after dinner walk a mile.” This helps the body naturally to digest the food. After lunch it is advised to rest or sit in vajrasana to assist the body in the heat or peak of the day to digest the food.
- Find a way to help feed the needy in your area by supporting groups, non-profit organizations, community services or ashrams who take food to the streets and feed the homeless and hungry. Always share a little of what you have with those who have nothing. Sharing takes us out of our selfish mind and ego and opens the heart
- Grow a vegetable garden. Even small terraces can be used to create a small vegetable garden, supplying each family with basic food supplies.
- Fast once a week either one day or miss one meal. This will give the digestive system a break and allow you to observe the body and mind



## **Happiness – ahara for the mind**

The body requires food for growth, health and sustenance. The mind also requires food, but the food of the mind is happiness. Happiness is the way to nurture and manage the mind. When we are happy we can achieve anything and work with anyone in any situation. Happiness is the strength and the shield that protects us from the negativity of *tamas* in our daily lives. Happiness is our birth right and our true nature, when we can let go of the constant craving to attain and achieve. Happiness shifts that craving to experience God and goodness within our own true nature, and this is spiritual life.

*If you can learn to consciously move into that natural experience of happiness which is not dependant on any cause, then you will be able to change your mood, the behaviour of your mind, your character traits and the whole personality. Your anxiety, tension, depression and frustration will disappear. Happiness is the armour against which all the arrows of pain and suffering fail.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



## 8

# Nidra – Sleep

*Early to bed, early to rise keeps a man healthy, wealthy and wise.*

—Benjamin Franklin

*Nidra* literally means sleep and disconnection from the senses. It is one's ability to shut off from reality mentally and emotionally, and retreat from the activity of the senses. This takes place during sleep and is a natural process. It allows the mind and psyche to release the accumulated tensions that build up due to an overload of sensory and external inputs.

Life on earth has evolved through its dependence on the light of the sun for energy and warmth. Other than nocturnal creatures, most animals, birds and plants go to sleep at night. For all of human history we have lived in accordance with the sun, during the sunlight hours we become active and during the dark hours of the night we become still and sleep. This connection and relationship to the rise and setting of the sun is called our circadian rhythm, and it influences every system of the body and mind. Sleep is what we should do every night when the sun goes down.

Sleep is a very important requirement for the health of the whole being. However, in our modern society millions of people around the world do not sleep at night and suffer



the problems associated with sleep deprivation. Studies show that sleeping five hours or less a night consistently over time leads to sleep deprivation increasing the risk of adverse health problems, including cardiovascular disease and early mortality, high blood pressure, weakened immune system, weight gain, lack of libido, hormonal imbalances, mood swings, paranoia, depression and higher risk of diabetes, stroke, dementia and cancer. The brain cannot function properly without good sleep.

Depending on age, sex, diet and daily activities, most people require a minimum of six to nine uninterrupted hours of sleep a night. A proper sleep requires the body to pass through the four cycles of sleep:

Stage 1: light Non-REM (rapid eye movement) sleep

Stage 2: Non-REM sleep

Stage 3: Deep Non-REM sleep and

Stage 4: REM (dreaming stage, 90 to 120 minutes per night) sleep.

These stages progress cyclically and each stage plays a very important role in maintaining the health of the body and mind. The entire undisturbed cycle of the four stages of sleep is required to restore, rejuvenate, detoxify the blood and tissue, grow muscles, build bones, repair tissue, synthesize and balance hormones, and strengthen the immune system. It regulates mood, appetite and libido. The brain processes and stores all our memories during sleep. Sleep encourages learning and improves memory.

## **Wake early each morning to see the sunrise**

*Going to bed early and waking up before sunrise is the foundation of yogic lifestyle.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati





In a yogic lifestyle, daily routine and discipline is very important. The early morning between 4 am and 6 am is called *Brahmamuhurta*, the time of the gods. It is the time of the day most conducive for spiritual practices.

Waking at this time attunes the body to the natural biorhythms of the sun, earth, nature, birds and animals. It attunes one to nature's laws and helps to build a strong and healthy mind and body.

In the early morning, the environment is charged with prana and vitality as nature awakens to the new day. Humans (other than nocturnal plants and animals) are the only species that stay awake at night and sleep during the day. This goes against our natural biological design and can cause many physical, mental and emotional imbalances, leading to disease.

The quiet and peace of the early morning is a special time for yogic sadhana and reflection. It enables one to prepare mentally for the day ahead, it stretches and awakens the body and pranas.

Rising early gives more time and energy to the day. If one wakes at 4 am each morning, then by 7 am, one has had a shower, done sadhana, eaten breakfast and is ready to face the day ahead with clarity and inspiration.

Waking early helps to balance and harmonize all systems of the body, in particular the endocrine system, which leads to hormonal balance and thus can harmonize the instincts.

Rising early to see the rising sun is the basis of the holistic yogic lifestyle. Once you are established in the habit to wake early, it will become a natural response of the body and mind, and an alarm clock will no longer be required. This is discipline and sanyam, and the support and base of a healthy yogic life.



### TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON SLEEP – NIDRA

- Nature takes him to her bosom at night to soothe his tired nerves and brain, to refresh him and to supply him with fresh energy and vigour so that he may continue his activities the next day. She makes him go to sleep. Sleep is a physiological phenomenon by which the mind, the brain and all the organs get rest for some hours. During sleep the mind goes back to its source. There is temporary absorption of the mind into its cause.
- Sleep is nature's tonic for a healthy life. The more sound sleep one has, the healthier one will be. The amount of sleep required varies with age, temperament and amount of work done. Too much sleep makes a man dull and

lethargic. What is required is quality of sleep. Too much sleep causes premature decay and weakens brain power.

- Avoid going to bed late. Sleep with windows and doors open. The more oxygen you inhale during sleep the more refreshed you will feel throughout the next day.
- Do not take drugs to make you sleep. If you cannot sleep naturally then take a brisk walk in the open air for fifteen minutes and then go to bed.
- Sleep on your side, especially on the left side. This helps to empty the stomach.
- Keep the same time daily for sleep.
- Wear loose clothing. Do not cover yourself with heavy blankets or clothing.
- Sleeping in the day should be avoided especially after a meal. However, a short nap in the summer afternoon is refreshing and invigorating.
- Keep a spiritual diary and review your actions before going to bed. Forfeit any ill feeling to anyone. Good spiritual ideas will sink down deep into the subconscious mind.
- Keeping wide awake throughout the night is called a vigil. You will derive incalculable benefits if you practise vigil on holy days.
- Half your lifetime is wasted in sleep. Those spiritual aspirants who want to do rigorous sadhana should reduce their period of sleep gradually.

### TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON THE SCIENCE OF RELAXATION

- We have forgotten the value of proper relaxation. We have acquired many artificial habits and have allowed nature's original habits to lapse.
- If you practise relaxation energy will not be wasted. You will be very active and energetic. Fatigue is due to the overworking of some part of the body or the brain.
- Both exercise and relaxation is equally necessary for health. Do not mistake laziness for relaxation. The lazy



man is inactive and has no inclination for work. When you feel sleepy it indicates that your system is in need of a rest. A few minutes of rest and relaxation serve as a great restorer and refreshener.

- The quality of relaxation depends on the mental poise of the person. A person who worries cannot relax well. Relaxation comes through discipline. Those who practise relaxation can conserve their physical and mental energy and utilize it to their best advantage. They will never experience fatigue. Energy flows in their nerves when they relax.
- Relaxation of the muscles brings repose to the mind, while relaxation of the mind brings rest to the body as well. The mind gathers experiences through the body and it works in conjunction with the prana, senses and body. The mind has influence over the body. If you are cheerful the body will be healthy and strong, and when you are feeling depressed the body cannot work. The mind acts on the body and the body acts on the mind. Removal of tension in the muscles brings repose and calmness to the mind.
- By relaxation you give rest to the mind, tired nerves and overworked muscles. You will get immense peace of mind, strength and vigour. The practice of relaxation of mind will remove internal mental strain, fill the mind with new mental energy and will make you cheerful and happy.
- If you want to enjoy good health you must take enough rest. There is always a cycle in nature. A period of activity is always followed by a period of inactivity.

## Nidra and anahata chakra



Anahata chakra connects us to nidra. Anahata chakra is situated in the spinal passage behind the heart. It is the centre of emotion, unconditional love and understanding. Through anahata we are able to experience *atmabhava*, seeing oneself in others.

Once kundalini reaches this point it will not return to mooladhara. It is said that if anahata awakens everything you think and wish comes true. Once kundalini reaches this point one must be very careful who one associates with and how one lives life.

The experience is of sensitivity and awareness. Governed by the mind and emotions anahata connects to nidra and our ability to disconnect from the physical manifest experience and establish ourselves in peace and contentment. The most pure experience of anahata is disconnection and connection to all.

## Nidra, lifestyle and the gunas

The state of nidra is under the control of the gunas and this influences our behaviour and lifestyle.

- When tamasic nidra dominates we sleep too much or at times without control. Sleep is used as a means to escape and disconnect from life. Another form of tamasic nidra is the disconnection that comes through the use of drugs and alcohol. They are used to escape from our external reality into our self-created world protected by intoxication.
- When rajasic nidra dominates one cannot disconnect from the senses taking mental tensions and problems to sleep at night, tossing and turning, waking up tired and groggy. Rajasic nidra produces erratic sleep patterns – some nights ten hours sleep, some nights four hours sleep. When rajas is active, nidra will generally be experienced

as disconnection from life through entertainment, television, surfing the internet and computer games.

- A sattvic nidra is the state of yoga nidra when one is aware yet disconnected from the senses and external environment. This leads to deep relaxation and the state of pratyahara. The sattvic state of nidra is personified by Lord Vishnu who rests in the state of yoga nidra, completely peaceful, at ease, content and balanced. This state can only be achieved when we can disconnect from the senses and experience the bliss of peace and happiness within.

People dominated by the instinct of nidra will be creative and sensitive by nature. They crave sleep like an alcoholic craves his drink, and sleep can take them anywhere at any time. They can be easily drawn into drugs and drug addiction as a means to escape. Their lifestyle and routine will reflect their sensitive nature and their addictions.

This expression of tamasic nidra can be managed through the daily sleep routine, exercise and making use of the rajasic nature to move away from tamas. Techniques of reflection such as the spiritual dairy, and the practice of yoga nidra can help to manage the sleep instinct.





Swami Niranjan is an example of a person once governed by nidra. He explains that nidra was his strongest and dominant instinct, and he could sleep anywhere at any time for hours. Not even a noisy train or being carried around in his bed would wake him. He managed to transcend the instinct of nidra by controlling his daily sleep and training himself to sleep a little less each day. He is no longer controlled by nidra and naturally wakes early every morning as a regular and effortless routine.

### **Nidra and yoga ecology in our modern society**

In modern society, people are less and less able to deal with the daily stresses and problems of life through natural sleep. Many turn to alcohol and drugs to take the stress and pain away. Doctors now readily prescribe tranquillizers, anti-anxiety and anti-depressive medication to people of all ages, even children, to deal with their mental and emotional problems. People have lost connection to their own inner strength, positivity and wisdom.

Studies have shown that in America over 60 million people do not sleep well at night and that many take melatonin, a natural sleep hormone, produced by the body to help them sleep.

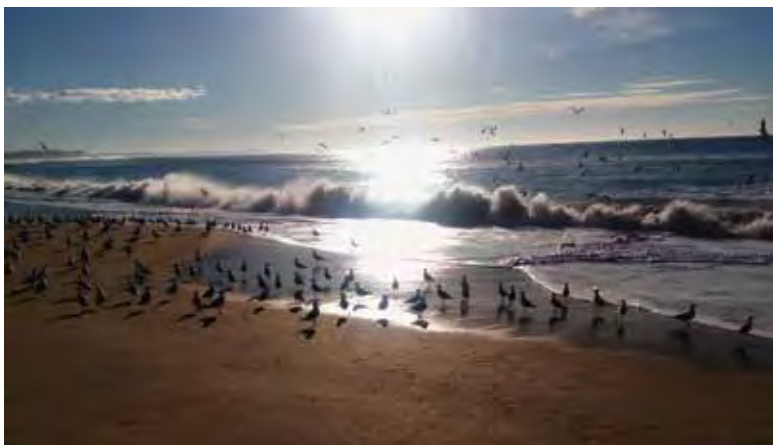
Escaping into movies, computer games and television is also nidra. It has now become common for people to while

away hours daily with these distractions mostly via their mobile phones which they carry with them wherever they go. If you catch a bus or a train in a major city around the world, you will see hundreds of people on mobile phones. In offices people are unable to focus on the work at hand as they are constantly checking their phones for messages, mails, Facebook and Instagram notifications, and so on.

### **Spend time in nature**

Spending time in nature – walking in a park, a forest, on a beach, climbing a mountain, being with a starry night, the full moon, a river, the ocean – helps one to connect to our source of inspiration and to disconnect from the stresses of daily life. Connecting with nature is essential for both our happiness as well as providing a sense of belonging. City and modern life and all its distractions create tension, stress, illness and disease. Spending time in nature helps the body, mind and spirit to relax and recharge. Nature creates a different kind of nidra. Nature is a nidra of beauty, freshness, connection, inspiration and wonder.

When we are relaxed and the mind is calm, we are more able to connect with the world around us, communicate with nature and connect with that force and prana that sustains us.





### **Nidra and yoga nidra**

Yoga nidra is an effective way to manage our nidra instinct with awareness. Through yoga nidra one moves from the external reality into the realm of the subconscious. This is a meditative process where deep tensions and stresses are progressively released from the body, mind and emotions.

Thirty minutes of yoga nidra can help one release tension and connect to the sankalpa, positive resolve, and inspiration in life. Yoga nidra brings one back on track when the stresses of daily life take us away from our centre and happiness. Through yoga nidra the obedient subconscious mind is reminded who one is, where one is going and what has to be done to achieve that. Through yoga nidra one can connect to the higher self and no longer feel the need to escape into bad habits and tamasic nidra.

Yoga nidra is one of the greatest tools for bringing about change in one's life and habits. Through a sankalpa the subconscious is guided to live with positivity and faith.

## **Yogic sanyam for sleep**

There are yogic attitudes and disciplines for sleep which can be easily incorporated into the daily routine. The following habits can be cultivated to encourage a spiritual environment of peace and calm that encourages restful and rejuvenating sleep.

### **Before sleep**

- Meal and sleep times. Eat a light meal at least three to four hours before you go to bed. The food will be digested before you sleep allowing the proper enzymes and hormones to be released during sleep, repairing and rejuvenating the body.
- If you have had a very stressful and busy day, take a warm shower before bed to remove grime and negativity, relax muscles and purify the body, mind and emotions.
- Do not watch television, the computer screen or smart phones for two hours before sleep. More than any other wavelength of light, the blue light of television, smart phones and laptops, affects the release of the sleep hormone, melatonin. Watching TV or using electronic devices two hours before sleep will delay the time you fall asleep as the brain is stimulated by the blue light. It reduces the amount of REM sleep or dream state sleep, which means the body and mind do not rejuvenate themselves, and you always wake up feeling tired.
- Perform Jyoti Aradhana (see Yoga Ecology series Volume 1 *Janani: Understanding Prakriti*); light a small deepak or candle in the bedroom. It creates a vibration of peace and divinity in any room.
- Drink a glass of water before sleep to keep the body hydrated throughout the night.
- Do japa and prayer before sleep.
- Practice the Review of the Day meditation. Reflect and rewind back over the day, see the different experiences, interactions and moods and analyze them to see how you can do things better tomorrow. This process helps to let

go of tension associated with daily experiences so you can sleep and dream well.

- Yogis say that in the northern hemisphere do not sleep with the head to the north. The magnetic pull of the earth pulls the blood to the brain, so you are unable to sleep peacefully. Likewise, in the southern hemisphere, you should not put your head to the south when sleeping.
- Perform yoga nidra before sleep to connect to the sankalpa and help to bring about deeper and tension-free sleep.

## Waking up

- Don't use a loud disturbing alarm clock; soft gentle music and mantras are good. If you are going to bed early it will become natural for the body to wake the same time each day without an alarm. This consistency should be practised for some time until the alarm is no longer required and you can wake naturally.
- In the morning on waking sit up in bed and chant the three morning mantras: *Mahamrtyujaya* mantras, 11 times; *Gayatri* mantra, 11 times; the *32 Names of Durga*, 3 times
- After the mantras, practise palming which stimulates, awakens and energizes the nerves in the eyes and face through the palms.
- For a moment smile to yourself and feel happy that you are alive. Be grateful for another day ahead.
- Nidra is also escaping from reality by TV, mobile phones and entertainment. Be aware of how much time you waste in the digital world and see if it is helping you to live a balanced happy life.



## 9

# A Ray of Hope – The Caring Nature

*Plant seeds of happiness, kindness and friendship; it will all come back to you in abundance. This is the law of Nature.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Swami Niranjan says that within all of us there is a very special quality – *samrakshan*, the caring nature. *Sam* means ‘complete’, and *rakshan* means ‘to protect and preserve’. It is this innate nature that takes us out of our self-centered ego and puts the comfort and happiness of others first. This soft quality is also known as the maternal instinct or motherly nature. It is a quality most often found in mothers of nearly every species on earth. It is this quality that allows an untrained female to know exactly how to give birth, hold, protect, feed and nurture her young. It is this instinct that gives strength and courage to protect the young and loved ones against all possible threats. A mother will starve herself to ensure her child has food.

Professionals such as nurses, paramedics, gardeners, school teachers, national park rangers, environmentalists, old age carers and many more have developed their caring nature and express it daily through their work. It exists within us all and can be encouraged and expressed by one and all.

According to science, the maternal instinct is a response to the release of oxytocin which creates a feeling of love,



care, bonding and connection to one's family and friends. Oxytocin is released in the mother's body during pregnancy; it assists with child birth, breast feeding and encourages the connection and care between mother and child.

This release of oxytocin takes place when we are connecting or interacting with other people, sharing, feeling cared for, during sexual intercourse and orgasm, as well as through positive experiences of the senses, such as taste, touch, sound, sight and smell. Oxytocin is a feel-good hormone and is released when our external situations are positive, loving and caring. The more we love and care the more oxytocin is released. It is therefore possible to increase the quantity of oxytocin in our bodies by being more caring which, in turn, increases the strength of our caring nature. Swami Sivananda always said that the more we care and give to others the more we receive.

*For it is in giving that we receive.*

—St Francis of Assisi

The essence of Mother Nature is the maternal or caring nature. She has provided everything needed for life and the health of all species. Nature cares and gives selflessly to one and all, like a tree which provides fruit, shelter, shade and oxygen to any creature which comes her way.

Biophilia, a term coined by biologist E.O. Wilson, is the innate affinity of humans towards nature and other forms of life. Biophilia is our love of life and nature. It is a part of our genetic design. We need to live with and care for nature and other lifeforms to be happy and healthy. Many households around the world have pet dogs, cats, birds and fish. These creatures are loved and cared for like other family members, and it has always been that way for the human race. We need this connection to other life forms for happiness. The love and care that animals have shown in helping people lift themselves out of loneliness and depression. It has been found that dogs in retirement homes and hospitals bring joy and calmness to patients. People find just to pet and touch a friendly dog can lift the mood and bring happiness.

We are made of this caring nature and it sustains us. It exists within us all in different degrees and can be encouraged and extended to all areas of life. The more we give and care for others, the more we receive, the happier, stronger and more content we become. This has been the teachings of spiritual teachers, saints and sages of all times.



It is this nature that is the need of today and could provide solutions to many of the problems we face as a species, society and civilization. It provides hope for the future of our civilization. The caring nature has the power to pull the human race out of the self-centred greed-based civilization that is causing so much destruction, and make it a civilization that can care, protect and nurture our environment for future generations.

### **Sanyam of caring**

The caring instinct can be enhanced in simple ways in daily life through a caring awareness of ourselves, our surroundings and people. We must first care for ourselves through a healthy diet, routine and lifestyle, then we can extend our care outwards to the environment and people around us. This will improve our own life and increase happiness and joy through simple acts of kindness. For example:

- Learn to care for your own body and mind through the yogic practices of asana, pranayama, yoga nidra, mantra japa and a natural yogic diet.
- Care for your family, share time together, come together at dinner time and share life's adventures and stories.
- Having a dog or cat around will help to express the caring nature and you will receive so much love and affection in return.
- A garden helps you connect with nature and with other species, such as plants, trees, insects and birds. Caring for a garden awakens our love and respect for nature. Even a small pot plant in the kitchen can awaken this caring nature.
- If you see some rubbish when walking down the street, pick it up and throw it in the dustbin just as you would in your own house or garden.
- Assist strangers, the elderly and people in need just as you would a family member.
- Whenever you feel depressed or lonely, take yourself out of the self-centred awareness by helping and caring for others.



- Karma and seva yoga encourages our caring nature. When we do action with the awareness of service we offer our help and abilities to the yogic mission.
- Practise Ashwattha Aradhana daily. Fully connect and care for the tree, nourish it with compost and nutrients, trim and clean the old leaves and branches, water it daily. Learn about the species of tree. What country does it originally come from? What is its natural habitat and environment? What other species live with this tree? How much sunshine does it need? How much water does it need? What soil does it like? Observe everything about the tree and learn to communicate with the tree.

The caring instinct can be used as the tool to shift us into a new beginning, a new identification and a new civilization based on love, connection and care. It is up to each one of us to establish ourselves within this caring awareness and within nature. We must begin now.



*Learn to give, give in plenty, give with love, give without any expectation, one does not lose anything by giving, on the other hand you get back a thousand fold.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati



# Part 2

## Sadhana and Lifestyle Changes



## 10

# Importance of Physical Exercise

*Take a 20-minute brisk walk in the fresh air every day, to keep the body strong.*

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Up until the last one hundred years, human beings have lived active lives in natural outdoor environments. Nomadic ancestors spent their days moving and hunting in search of food and shelter. They would often travel large distances on foot – a day’s walking being an estimated walk of 12 to 16 kilometres. From hunters and gatherers, man moved to agricultural lifestyle and farmers who worked hard physically on the land with an estimated walk of 12 to 13 kilometres a day.

Our bodies have evolved to be regularly active. However, in many modern lifestyles people spend their days sitting in front of computers and television with the estimated walk of maximum 2 to 3 km. This sedentary lifestyle has led to epidemics of diseases and weakness in people’s bodies and minds. There is a saying, ‘Use it or lose it’. If we do not use our muscles, joints, bones and organs such as the brain, heart and lungs they will become weak and diseased. Incorporating a mix of exercise into daily life including walking, running, bike riding, yoga, swimming, dance, sports, gardening and house cleaning can improve the overall health of body and mind.



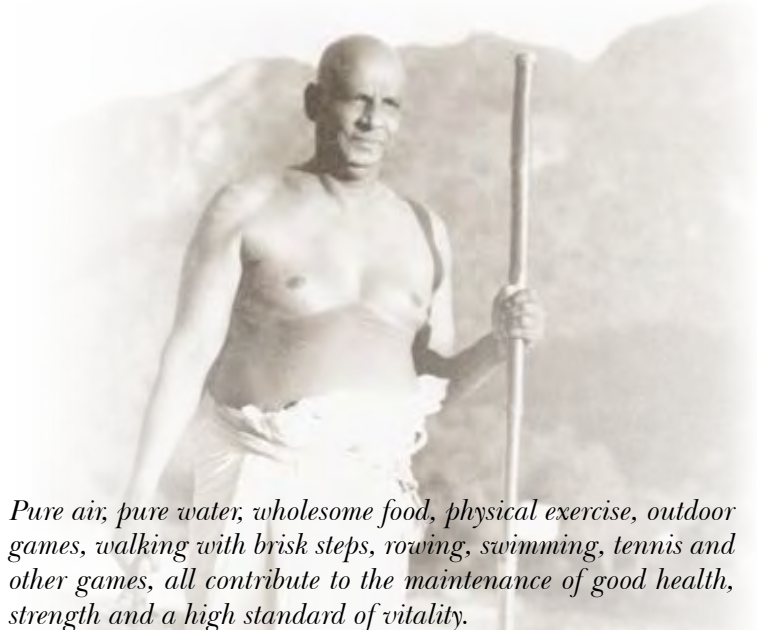
### **Benefits of exercise**

- Exercise improves strength and efficiency of the cardiovascular system. The heart becomes strong, every organ and cell of the body receives fresh nutrient-rich oxygenated blood. Toxins and wastes which build up in the body are flushed out. By strengthening the heart muscles and blood circulation, blood pressure and cholesterol are reduced.
- Exercise increases blood flow and oxygen levels in the brain. It also encourages memory and learning. This in turn boosts concentration levels and cognitive ability.
- Exercise keeps muscles strong, tendons and ligaments flexible reducing the risk of joint and lower back pain, as well as keeping joints aligned. Exercise also improves coordination and balance.
- Exercise helps to maintain a healthy body weight; the more you exercise, the more calories you burn, and hence reduce weight.
- Exercise helps to build a healthy, balanced appetite and a healthy digestive system.
- Exercise stimulates and strengthens the endocrine system of the body leading to balanced hormonal production.
- Daily exercise can help to manage the sexual energy by balancing hormones.
- Exercise enhances the immune system.
- Exercise helps to regulate blood glucose levels and prevents diabetes.

- Exercise stimulates the release of endorphins which makes you feel happy and relaxed.
- Exercise helps you to sleep better.
- Exercise can prevent and treat mental illnesses like depression and anxiety.
- Keeping fit can reduce some of the natural effects of ageing.



## TEACHINGS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA ON EXERCISE



*Pure air, pure water, wholesome food, physical exercise, outdoor games, walking with brisk steps, rowing, swimming, tennis and other games, all contribute to the maintenance of good health, strength and a high standard of vitality.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

- Without exercise there will be no health. Exercise is essential for the different organs of the body to function easily and effectively.
- Exercise should be systematic, regulated and adjusted according to the age, physical development or capacity of the individual.
- Every part of the body should take part in the exercise.
- Infrequent, severe exercise is not very beneficial. It may do more harm than good.
- Exercise should be taken in the open air.
- It should be repeated daily at about the same time.
- Exercise should never be taken just before or after meals.
- Chills should be avoided after exercise.
- After exercise the body should be washed or sponged.
- There should be perfect exhilaration of spirit after exercise.

### **Yogic asana as exercise**

Yogasana and pranayama were designed by the ancient yogis who understood the importance of using, moving and strengthening the body. Yogis spent hours a day sitting in static meditation postures and therefore required techniques to stretch and move the body to keep it healthy, flexible and strong. They observed the forces of nature and the instinctive movements and behaviours of animals. They designed each asana to have a different stretch and effect on the body's systems. In this way yogasana and pranayama provide the body with all-round strength, flexibility, fitness and health.

Yogasana, however, are not just physical exercises like stretching or going to the gym. They also require awareness and relaxation. Practitioners are encouraged to be aware of the effects of the practices on every level of the personality – physical, emotional, mental, pranic and spiritual. With yogic awareness and breath, asana can release deeply stored emotional and mental tension from all these five interconnected layers or *koshas*. Exercise, asana and pranayama are an essential part of the holistic yogic lifestyle.





### **Yogic sanyam for exercise and asana**

- Practise asana and pranayama every morning for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Do not be lazy, or allow the tamasic attitude to stop you moving the body. Remember that your body has evolved to be physically strong, trim and active. Keep the body active whenever possible throughout the day with activities such as cleaning, housework, gardening, walking.
- Invest in a pair of good walking shoes, and walk whenever it is possible, rather than drive, or use a bus.
- A short slow walk after dinner is a good habit to cultivate. It helps in digestion and prepares one for sleep.
- Bicycles are beneficial, both for the health of an individual as well as for the planet; they are a cheap and clean form of transport.
- If you have a family with children, spend time playing games and sports with them outdoors as much as possible. Take the family walking or hiking in nature on the weekends.
- Children need to play outside to receive all the nutrients, fresh air and sunlight required to grow properly and strengthen their immunity. Climbing trees and exploring nature is an important part of the growing physical, emotional and mental requirements of a child. Playing in nature keeps children physically healthy and strong, and they may experience and imbibe the joy, inspiration and wisdom from nature.

# 11

## Practical Ways to Live a Spartan Life

Sometimes it feels that there is very little we can do to help the environmental and climatic crisis we face, but the truth is we can help by making an effort to change our lives and live with less. This is the holistic yogic lifestyle and it is the need of today. We must live with respect and care for Mother Nature and know that every action we do, both positive and negative, influences her. Therefore, our actions must be positive, constructive and caring. This chapter outlines practical ways to change our lifestyle in relation to transport, electricity, food and consumerism. By managing these four areas of our lives we lower our carbon footprint and help solve the biggest problem we as a civilization have ever faced.

### **Transport**

Due to the burning of fuel and release of carbon dioxide, transportation is a major contributor to global warming.

- Be a minimalist with the use of your car. If you can manage without a car, then that is the best action you can take to reduce your carbon footprint.
- Ride a bicycle instead of using a car. Bike riding is better for your health and the health of the planet. Riding a bicycle increases overall health of the body by strengthening the muscles, joints and bones particularly in the legs and hips. It reduces excess fat and encourages balance and coordination, increases circulation, streng-

thens heart and lungs. Riding a bicycle leads to cleaner air and streets, reduces traffic congestion and traffic jams, and lowers noise levels. Many major cities around the world have well designed bicycle paths.

- Walking is the most natural form of exercise for the body. It helps to maintain healthy weight, strong bones and muscles, and improves balance and coordination. It helps one to sleep better, it lifts the mood and prevents diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.
- Use public transport when possible. Buses, trains, trams and ferries take up less space than cars, reduce congestion, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and within the busy city traffic they are often faster than cars and don't require parking.
- Reduce the number of flights you take. Flying uses enormous amounts of fuel and massive waste is produced per meal per passenger. A passenger's carbon footprint of a one-way flight from London to New York is just under half a tonne of greenhouse gases. A few flights a year will push your carbon footprint well above the ideal measure.

## **Electricity**

- Save electricity around the house and office. Always switch off lights, fans and heaters when not in use.
- Many household appliances draw electricity when they are simply plugged in. Even a mobile phone charger will use electricity when plugged in and not charging. Unplug them when not in use.
- Reduce the number of electrical goods in the house. You don't need an electric toothbrush and heating towel rack. These are luxuries you can live without.
- Use energy-efficient lighting such as LED light bulbs which can use up to 85% less electricity than normal bulbs.
- Switch to alternative energy sources such as solar power.
- Properly insulate your house to stay cool in summer and warm in winter without extra heating or cooling.

- Wear more jumpers in winter and light cotton natural cloth in summer.

### **Consumerism**

- Buy less stuff! Ask yourself before you buy anything, “Do I really need this?” Live with what you need not your greed. If we allow our greed to rule our lives we will never have enough. Live simply.
- It is better to spend extra money on a good quality product that will last twenty years rather than a cheap product lasting two months and which will shortly end up as rubbish in the ocean.
- Support local farmers, companies and businesses by buying locally produced goods and services. Avoid imported goods
- Reduce, reuse and recycle as many things as you can. In the US approximately 40% of the total greenhouse gas emissions are released from the energy used to produce, process, transport and dispose of the food we eat and the goods we use. Recycling does not use as much energy as the extraction and processing of new goods.
- Reduce the amount of plastic you buy and throw away. Choose products with minimal plastic packaging, if any. Plastic is made from fossil fuels and is polluting every ecosystem on the planet. Even the depths of the ocean, the skies and rainforests are filled with plastic waste and broken-down micro plastic.
- Clear out clutter from your life, donate to charity or share with others: One man’s junk is another’s delight. Less clutter in your life will also reduce the clutter in your mind and bring about a more relaxed state of awareness. As Swami Niranjan says, “Show me the state of your room or almirah and I will know the state of your mind.”
- Many people upgrade their devices such as mobile phones and tablets, yearly to keep up with the latest technological advances and fashion. The old models are thrown away and this leads to an enormous amount of

electronic waste in landfills. Most cities around the world now have facilities to collect, or even buy, electronic waste and recycle the spare parts.

- Advertising and consumer marketing have convinced people that, if they have more and the latest stuff, they will feel more fulfilled and happy in life. People try to compensate for the emptiness they feel inside by purchasing more and more unnecessary products. However, studies have shown that more stuff doesn't bring lasting happiness. Spending time with family, friends or alone in nature will bring greater happiness and fulfilment.
- You can ask yourself the question, "Does owning more make me happier? What things do I need in life for happiness and contentment?" You will probably find it is the simple things in life that make you happy.

## **Diet**

- What we eat is one of the biggest contributors to most of the world's major environmental issues, including climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Food production is responsible for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to global warming. Changing one's diet to a plant-based vegetarian or vegan diet helps to reduce one's carbon and ecological footprint. It saves water and forests, it reduces pollution and carbon emissions.
- Avoid dairy products: milk, cheese and butter. Reducing them in your diet also reduces your carbon footprint.
- Be aware of where the food you are buying has been grown and produced and try to buy food produced locally and grown within the season.
- Grow a vegetable garden, plant fruit trees. Even a small garden, terrace and balcony garden can produce vegetables for daily meals.
- Don't waste food, be aware of what you need and buy, estimate and cook correct amounts of food and be creative with your food scraps and waste. Globally we



waste one third of all food produced or approximately 1.3 million metric tonnes per year. The USA loses close to \$200 billion a year in food waste. In a world where millions of children die yearly from malnutrition and starvation, the amount of food wasted is an absolute disgrace and shows the hypocrisy of our modern society. Food waste ends up in landfill and releases methane gas, one of the strongest greenhouse gases, which is 20 times stronger than CO<sub>2</sub>.

- A garden compost bin is a good and simple way to recycle food waste. The compost can be used for your vegetable garden.

*Loose life is not perfect freedom. Eating anywhere, sleeping anywhere, saying anything you like is not freedom. You have become a slave of the body, senses, mind, food and fashion. Liberty of thought is not freedom. To move aimlessly is not freedom. To do as one likes is not freedom. To be a monarch, to have independence, to have plenty, to have a comfortable living, to possess immense wealth, to conquer nations, to shirk responsibility, to renounce the world – these are not freedom. Material independence cannot give one perfect happiness and perfection. Bread and jam cannot give real happiness. The little things of the world cannot give you eternal joy.*

*Real freedom is freedom from egoism and desires, from thoughts, likes and dislikes, freedom from lust, anger, greed and pride. Still the mind. Herein lies freedom and bliss eternal.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

To live yoga is to live with awareness and respect for nature. When we can carry that awareness into all areas of life, including transport, consumerism, food and electricity, we will then make decisions and take actions that support and not destroy nature. This is how we can contribute our little bit for the climate and ecological crisis. When millions of people do their small bit, we will begin to see positive and constructive change towards a clean and healthy planet. This is yoga ecology.



## 12

# Yogic Lifestyle Sadhana for the Four Instincts

The following suggested sadhanas for the four instincts are not for all aspirants. Aspirants require prior training in *yoga vidya*, the complete knowledge of yoga. It is not possible to acquire and imbibe that understanding through books alone. Having undergone the sequence of yoga from practice to sadhana to lifestyle is an essential prerequisite for following the suggested sadhanas for the four instincts. Therefore, none of the practices given in the following pages are described in detail. This refers to asana, pranayama and shatkarmas, as well as to the meditation practices and jnana yoga techniques. The guidance of an experienced yoga teacher is essential.

The practice of yoga nidra and the recordings of the various chants can be found on the website [www.satyamogaprasad.net](http://www.satyamogaprasad.net) or on the Satyam Yoga Prasad App available for *Android and iOS devices*.

A description of the bhakti yoga practices such as aradhana and havan are described in the book *Janani – Understanding Prakriti*. They are indicated with an \*.

## **Find your dominant instinct**

According to yoga, we all have an instinct which is dominant in our personality. To be able to change our lifestyles and learn to manage the instincts we need to identify the dominant instinct within ourselves. For some it may be sexuality, and everything in their lives revolves around that instinctual drive. For others fear and anxiety governs their lives. This chapter contains the sadhanas for each instinct. You can identify your dominant instinct and then choose the corresponding sadhana. At different times in our lives, depending on age, situation and samskaras, different instincts will dominate, and we can use these sadhanas to balance ourselves at those times.

The sadhana of managing the instincts is a lifelong endeavour, and we can only begin from where we are now. So start with the most obvious dominant instinct and as the awareness grows you will be able to see the other instincts manifesting in your personality. Then you can work to improve those areas and extend that awareness in all areas of life. You may decide to perform one of the sadhanas of one instinct for one year and then incorporate that awareness into your daily life and move to another.

We can all learn to manage the instincts on a daily basis through our awareness and adjusting our daily activities and habits accordingly. It requires self-awareness, acceptance, perseverance and most of all sanyam.

Along with the following sadhanas please read the sanyam section for each of the instincts in the previous chapters, as they provide guidelines for daily management of the instincts in practical, simple ways.

Each sadhana is divided into times of the day and, combined with lifestyle changes, can create the basis of a yogic life.

## HOLISTIC YOGIC LIFESTYLE SADHANA

The following suggestions will help you lead a life with awareness, sanyam and happiness.

### **Daily**

- Mantra path of choice
- Mantras or prayers before meals

### **Daily morning – on waking**

- 3 mantra sadhana
- Drink a glass of water
- Have a shower to wash away tamas and negativity of disturbing dreams.
- Try to see the sunrise every morning.
- Asana and pranayama
- Reduce and measure the time spent daily in social media.
- Reduce your needs by asking yourself ‘Do I need this?’

### **Daily afternoon**

- Minimum 30 minutes exercise daily such as jogging, brisk walk, swimming, surfing, gym, and competitive sports
- Ashwattha Aradhana \*
- Yoga nidra

### **Evening**

- Evening walk after dinner
- Jyoti Aradhana \*
- Spiritual Diary
- Review of the Day
- Japa

### **Weekly**

- Kunjal and neti
- Spend time with friends and animals.
- Go for a walk in nature, in a park, a forest or along the beach at least once a week.

- Mahamrityunjaya havan on Saturday, for full training in the correct way of conducting havan, contact Bihar School of Yoga.
- Kirtan

## Monthly

- Laghoo shankaprakshalana

## Seva

- Join a community project dedicated to the environment by planting trees, spreading environmental awareness among the young, in homes and communities, or cleaning up beaches, mountains, rivers and oceans.
- Make a vegetable garden; with urban gardening you can grow your own fruit and vegetables even on your balcony or terrace.
- Build a relationship with your garden and plants.



## SADHANA FOR MAITHUNA – SEXUALITY

### **Daily morning – on waking**

- Say to yourself: I am fully satisfied.

### **Daily before breakfast**

#### *Asana*

- Pawanmuktasana parts 1 and 2 (Use a selection of these practices to prepare for the following asanas.)
- Surya namaskara
- Vajrasana
- Dynamic and static shashankasana
- Shashank bhujangasana
- Dhanurasana
- Paschimottanasana
- Sarvangasana
- Gomukhasana
- Brahmacharyasana (It is the best asana for males to conserve sexual energy for spiritual purposes; it is an advanced asana and should be practised only after due preparation and under the guidance of a competent teacher.)

#### *Pranayama, mudra and bandha*

- Vajroli and sahajoli mudra
- Moola bandha, jalandhara and uddiyana bandhas
- Bhastrika pranayama
- Nadi shodhana to a comfortable count
- Prana mudra

#### *Weekly*

- One day fast on water or juices
- Practise sexual sanyam

## Daily afternoon/evening

### *Yoga nidra*

- with long breath awareness and opposites
- with sankalpa

I am satisfied with myself and my life.

I seek fulfilment through a healthy yogic lifestyle.

I connect and surrender to the divine will.

*Ajapa japa and japa of personal mantra or mantra Om.*

### *Spiritual Diary*

The purpose is to identify the role sexuality plays in one's life.

### *Chanting*

- *Bhajo Govindam* daily

### *Diet*

Diet plays an important part in managing maithuna. Avoid garlic, onions, meat, fish, eggs, oily foods, salt, chilli or spicy foods, caffeine, processed foods, fast foods, alcohol. Eat pure sattwic food such as fruits, dried fruits and nuts, milk and fresh vegetables and salads and yeast free organic breads. Fasting helps to control the passions and calms emotions.



| Day | Do you feel satisfied with your sexual life? | How did you express yourself sexually during the day? | Were your interactions and behaviour influenced by sexuality? | How much mental thought and energy went into sexual and sexual-related thoughts? | How did you express restraint and management of maithuna today? |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 7   |                                              |                                                       |                                                               |                                                                                  |                                                                 |

## SADHANA FOR AHARA – CRAVING

### Daily on waking

- Say to yourself: Do I need this?

### Daily before breakfast

#### *Asana*

- Pawanmuktasana part 2
- Surya namaskara
- Naukasana
- Veerasana
- Makarasana
- Matsya kridasana
- Vipreeta karani asana
- Eka pada pranamasana
- Eka padasana

#### *Pranayama*

- Full yogic breath
- Nadi shodhana: (1:1) x 5 to a comfortable count
- Bhramari

### Weekly

- Kunjal and neti
- Fast one day a week; have khichari twice a week.

### Monthly

- Laghoo shankaprakshalana

### Daily afternoon/evening

#### *Yoga nidra*

- with long breath awareness and opposites
- with sankalpa:  
I am grateful for what I have.  
I have all I need and I am content.  
Simplicity fills me with wholeness and peace.

| Day | Which sense propelled you towards a craving? | How did you respond to the craving? Did you indulge, practise sanyam, or ignore? | How many times did you think 'Do I need this?' | How many times did you respond to greed? | When, in which situation, did you feel mentally and emotionally satisfied and content? |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 7   |                                              |                                                                                  |                                                |                                          |                                                                                        |

## *Antar mouna*

### *Spiritual Diary*

The purpose is to identify cravings, desires, ambitions, aspirations experienced during the day.

### *SWAN – specifically related to ambitions and needs*

What are your real needs? How much of what you crave is related to greed and ambition?

### *Karma yoga*

- Seva in a kitchen or garden

### *Bhakti yoga*

- Developing the qualities of simplicity, humility, gratitude and *santosha*, contentment,
- Practice of *daan* – give, give, give
- Chanting of *Bhajo Govindam* daily

### *Diet*

- Eat a simple yogic diet.
- Have khichari twice a week.
- Chant mantras or say a prayer of gratitude before each meal.
- Take food as prasad.
- Always share what you have.



## SADHANA FOR BHAYA – FEAR

### Daily on waking

- Say to yourself: I am grateful for the new day ahead.
- Wait a few hours to look at your social media or phone after waking.
- Acknowledge your fears insecurities, and know that Shakti is with you.

### Daily before breakfast

#### *Asana*

- Surya namaskara
- Simhagarjanasana
- Kastha takshanasana
- Dhanurasana
- Paschimottanasana
- Akarna dhanurasana
- Eka pada pranamasana
- Nauli

#### *Pranayama*

- Full yogic breath with golden light of fearlessness
- Full yogic breath with 3-word affirmations or sankalpa, at each level of breath: Bravery, Confidence, Fearlessness
- Bhastrika x 5
- Nadi shodhana: (1:1:1) x 5

### Daily afternoon/evening

#### *Laugh at least once a day*

#### *Yoga nidra*

- with opposites
- with sankalpa:  
I am strong and fearless.  
I trust life and my own strength.  
I am loved. I am safe.

| Day | How strong were your fears on a scale of 0 to 10? | Identify and name any fears faced today? | Which strength did you use to overcome fear? | How did you feel after you had faced the fear? | How often did you feel brave and courageous? |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
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### *Spiritual Diary*

The purpose is to identify fears lived during the day and the response to them.

*SWAN – especially with using your strengths to overcome fears*

### *Karma yoga*

Bhaya related to self-image: seva at an orphanage, old people's home, animal shelter to allow time to connect with real people, create real relationships and reduce the importance of social media image.

### *Chanting*

- Daily chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* – for strength to face fear and to surrender
- Listening to mantras, such as the *Mahamrityunjaya* mantra and Sundarkand

### *Diet*

- Healthy diet will reduce fear and anxiety.
- Eat healthy, natural foods three times a day.
- Reduce caffeine and processed foods, meat and dairy products.
- Be grateful for your food and enjoy eating.



## SADHANA FOR NIDRA – DISCONNECTION AND SLEEP

### **Sleeping habits**

- Avoid using devices such as phone, tablet, computer two hours before sleep, and definitely not in bed.
- Sleep with fresh air flowing through a window.
- Develop the habit to sleep at the same time each day.
- Wear loose clothing, and wash your feet and hands before going to bed.
- Eat at least three hours before sleep.

### **Daily morning – on waking**

- Use a gentle alarm sound or mantra chanting to wake up.
- Say to yourself: I look forward to the experiences of the day.

### **Daily before breakfast**

#### *Asana*

- Surya namaskara
- Pawanmuktasana part 3
- Majari asana
- Vipareeta karani asana
- Shavasana
- Shashankasana - dynamic
- Shashank bhujangasana
- Ardha matysendrasana

#### *Pranayama*

- Nadi shodhana (1:1) x 5 to a comfortable count
- Bhastrika
- Bhramari
- Ujjayi

## **Weekly**

- Kunjal and neti

## **Monthly**

- Laghoo shankaprakshalana

## **Daily afternoon/evening**

### *Yoga Nidra*

- with the emphasis on staying awake and going deep into relaxation not sleep
- with sankalpa:  
I will stay awake during the practice of yoga nidra.  
I am free of the need to disconnect.  
I embrace life fully.

*Practise sanyam of the time spent with TV, computers, devices.*

*Create a hobby such as painting, music, dance.*

*Remain creative and aware.*

### *Spiritual Diary*

The purpose is to identify the use of time.

### *Japa with personal mantra*

### *Diet*

- Have a light sattwic diet.
- Avoid caffeine, sweets, chocolate and refined sugar in the evenings.
- Drink herbal teas.
- Avoid coffee altogether.
- Avoid late evening meals, spicy foods, garlic and onions.

| Day | How many hours did you sleep at night?<br>How many hours did you sleep during the day? | How did you feel when you woke up? How many times did you press the snooze button? | How much time did you spend with television, computers, social media? | Do you use any kind of intoxicant to deal with the problems or stress in life? Which ones? | How did you relax and release tension without intoxication?<br>Walking, running, yoga? |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 2   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 3   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 4   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 5   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 6   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
| 7   |                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                            |                                                                                        |

## Postscript

Since the start of writing this book in March 2019, the global climate crisis has reached a state of emergency across the planet. The threat of total climate catastrophe, extreme weather, biodiversity loss and ecosystem destruction is upon us and is increasing at a rate faster than scientists could have ever imagined or predicted. The reason it is taking place faster than we could have imagined is because we have not listened to the warnings and we have not changed our ways.

We treat nature as a commodity, and we have grown greedier and more arrogant in our race for material wealth – money has become our addiction. The Amazon rainforest is burning, not due to global warming or natural fires; it is being burnt by people choosing to burn the forest for economic gain. They see no value in the rainforests and the vital role they play in the balance and sustenance of biodiversity and life on earth. As the forests burn the skies fill with even more carbon dioxide and thus the greenhouse effect and the impact of global warming increases.

Our home is on fire. The earth is burning. Global warming is taking place and we are experiencing more extreme weather than ever before: heatwaves, floods, freezing winters, hurricanes, extreme storms and fires. The Arctic Circle is burning, Indonesian forests are burning, Central Africa is burning, California is burning and the Great Amazon rainforest is being burnt. As the forests are

destroyed and temperatures increase, an enormous amount of water is evaporated into the skies as water vapour, adding to the greenhouse gases. The excess water in the skies falls as torrential rain, causing sudden flash floods and debilitating cities such as Mumbai, and destroying crops and lives, like in Bihar. The forests play a vital role in the water cycle of the planet. Now, we see drought and flood taking place side by side.

Our disrespect and destruction of nature is leading to the suicide of our species and the extinction of millions of fellow species on earth. If we don't stop the destruction of nature, we are doomed. We need nature, we are an integrated part of nature, *we are nature!*

We must change our attitudes, our actions, and our lifestyles. If we do not change, there is no hope for our civilization. Mother Nature will continue without us, she will always survive, evolve and grow, that is her dharma. If we do not change our ways, she will eventually rid herself of the cancer that has spread through her ecosystems, eating up her biodiversity and life, polluting her skies and oceans with waste and leaving the soil dry and lifeless. She will rid herself of the selfish human species, a species who allowed greed to destroy everything it was given.

Change the way you live your life now. Live simply with less, protect nature like you do your family, and work to bring balance into your life and the environment around you, before it is too late.

## BHAJA GOVINDAM – MOHAMUDGARA

*Adi Shankaracharya*

The *Mohamudgara* is translated in full here; it is irresistible simply because it is so fresh, laughingly pointing out the snares which can entrap a sannyasin, and it is so evocative of the spirit of sannyasa which the Shankara of legend exemplifies. It is a simple but moving poem exhorting dispassion from the attachments of the world and seems to have been intended to be a marching song for Shankara's group of wandering sannyasins although it is addressed to an old grammarian he met in Varanasi. *Moha* means delusion, *mudgara* means hammer, *dukrinkarane*, referring to 'grammatical rules' here symbolizes all secular knowledge. The chorus is:

*Bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam  
moodhamate  
Samp्राप्ते Sannihite marane nahi nahi rakshati dukrinkarane.  
Bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam.*

Seek Govinda, seek Govinda, seek Govinda, oh careless minded fool! When the appointed time (death) comes, grammatical rules will surely not save you. Seek Govinda, seek Govinda

*Moodha jaheehi dhanaagamatrishnaam kuru sadbuddhim  
manasi vitrishnaam  
Yallabhase nijakarmopaattam vittam tena vinodaya chittam. (1)*

Oh fool! Give up the thirst to possess wealth. Create in your mind thoughts of reality devoid of passions. Entertain your mind (be satisfied with) whatever you get as a reward for the past. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Naareestanabharanaabhiniवेशम drishtvaa-maayaa-  
mohaavesham  
Etanmaamsa-vasaadi-vikaaram manasi vichintaya  
baarambaaram. (2)*

Seeing the full bosom of a young maiden, and her navel, do not fall prey to maddening delusion. “This is just a modification of flesh and fat,” think well thus in your mind again and again. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Nalineedalagatasalilam taralam tadvajjeevitamatishaya  
chapalam  
Viddhi vyaadhyabhimaanagrastam lokam shokahatam cha  
samastam. (3)*

The water drop playing on a lotus petal has an extremely uncertain existence, so also is life ever unstable. Understand that this world is completely riddled by disease, pride and pangs of suffering. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Yaavat-vitta-upaarjana-saktah taavat nijaparivaro raktah  
Pashchaat dhaavati jarjara dehe vaartaam prichchhati ko’pi  
na gehe. (4)*

As long as you have the ability to earn and save, all your dependants are attached to you. Later on, when you have an old infirm body, no one cares to share a single word with you, even at your own house. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda.

*Yaavat-pavano nivasati dehe taavat-prichchhati kushalam gehe  
Gatavati vaayau dehaapaaye bhaaryaa bibhyati tasmin-  
kaaye. (5)*

As long as the life breath dwells in the body, they enquire of your welfare at home. Once the breath leaves and the body decays, even your wife fears that very same body. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Baalastaavat kreedaasaktah tarunastaavat taruneesaktah  
Vriddhastavaat chintaamagnah paare brahmani ko'pi na  
lagnah. (6)*

So long as one is in one's boyhood, one is attached to play. So long as one is a youth, one is attached to one's own young woman. So long as one is in old age, one is attached to anxiety. Yet no one, alas, is ever seen attached to the Supreme Brahman. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Kaa te kaantaa kaste putrah samsaaro'yam ateeva vichitrah  
Kasya tvam kah kuta aayaatah tattvam chintayah yadidam  
bhraatah. (7)*

Who is your wife? Who is your son? Supremely wonderful indeed is this samsara! Of whom are you? From where have you come? O brother, think of that truth alone here. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Satsangatve nihsangatvam nihsangatve nirmohatvam  
Nirmohatve nishchalatattvam nishchalatattve jeevanmuktih. (8)*

Through the company of the good non-attachment arises, through non-attachment arises freedom from delusion, through freedom from delusion, the experience of immutable reality, from experiencing the immutable reality, the state of *jivanmukti* (liberated while alive). *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Vayasi gate kah kaamavikaarah shushke neere kah kaasaarah  
Ksheene vritte kah parivaaro jnaate tattve kah samsaarah. (9)*

When that age has passed, where is lust and its play? When water has evaporated, where is the lake? When wealth is reduced, where is the retinue? When Truth is realized, where is samsara? *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Maa kuru dhana-jana-yauvana-garvam harati nimeshaat-  
kaalah sarvam  
Maayaamayam-idam-akhilam hitvaa Brahmapadam tvam  
pravisha veditvaa. (10)*

Take no pride in your possessions, in the people at your command, in your youthfulness - time loots away all these in a moment. Leaving aside all these, knowing their illusory nature, realize the state of Brahman and enter into it! *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Dinamapi rajanee saayam praatahs shishira-vasantau  
punaraayaatah  
Kaalah kreedati gachchhatyaayuh tadapi na munchati  
aashaavaayuh. (11)*

Day and night, dusk and dawn, winter and spring, they come and depart again and again. Time sports, life ebbs away, and still one doesn't leave the gusts of desire. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Kaa te kaantaa dhanagata-chintaa vaatula kim tava naasti  
niyantaa  
Trijagati sajjana sangatirekaa bhavati bhavaarnava-tarane  
naukaa. (12)*

Oh distracted one! Why worry about wife, wealth etc? Isn't the Ordainer there for you? In all the three worlds, it is the association with good people alone that can serve as a boat to cross the sea of change (birth and death). *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Jatilo munde lunchita keshah kaashaayaambara-bahukrita-  
veshah  
Pashaynnapi cha na pashyati moodhah udara nimittam  
bahukrita veshah. (13)*

One ascetic with matted locks, another with shaven head, another with hairs pulled out one by one, another parading in his geru robes – these are fools who though seeing do not see. Indeed, these different disguises (apparels) are only for their bellies. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Angam galitam palitam mundam dashana viheenam jaatam tundam  
Vriddho yaati griheetvaa dandam tadapi na munchati aashaa pindam. (14)*

The body has become worn out, the hair has turned grey, the mouth has become toothless, the old man moves about leaning on his staff. Even then he doesn't leave the bundle of his desires. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Agre vahni prishthe bhaanoo raatrau chibuka-samapita-jaanuh  
Karatala-bhikshaa tarutala-vaasah tadapi na munchati aashaapaashah. (15)*

In front of the fire, the sun at his back, late at night he sits resting his chin on his knees. He receives alms in his own scooped palms and lives under the shelter of some tree yet the noose of desire spares him not. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Kurute gangaa-saagara-gamanam vrata paripaalanam-athavaa daanam  
Jnaanaviheenah sarvamatena muktih na bhavati janmashatena. (16)*

One may go on a pilgrimage to where the Ganga meets the ocean, observe vows or give gifts away in charity; if one is devoid of first hand experience of Truth, then according to all schools of thought one gains no release, even in a hundred years. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Sura-mandira-taru-moola-nivaasah shayyaa bhootalam-  
ajinam vaasah  
Sarva-parigraha-bhoga-tyaagah kasya sukham na karoti  
viraagah. (17)*

Sheltering in temples, under some tree, sleeping on the bare ground, wearing a deer skin, renouncing all idea of possession and the thirst to enjoy – to whom will *vairagya* (dispassion) not bring happiness? *Bhaja Govindam . . .* seek Govinda

*Yogarato vaa bhogarato vaa sangarato vaa sangaviheenah  
Yasya brahmane ramate chittam nandati nandati nandati  
eva. (18)*

Let one revel in yoga or revel in bhoga, let one seek enjoyment in company or revel in solitude away from the crowd – he whose mind revels in Brahman, he enjoys, he enjoys, truly, he alone enjoys. *Bhaja Govindam . . .* seek Govinda

*Bhagavad Geetaa kinchit-adheetaa gangaa-jala lava-  
kanikaa-peetaa  
Sakridapi yena muraari samarchaa tasya yamah kim kurute  
charchaam. (19)*

To one who has studied the *Bhagavad Gita* even a little, who has sipped at least a drop of Ganga water, who has worshipped Lord Murari (destroyer of Mura) at least once – in him there is no discussion (quarrel) with Yama (the Lord of death). *Bhaja Govindam . . .* seek Govinda

*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi jananee-  
jathare shayanam  
Iha samsaare bahu-dustaare kripayaa-apaare paahi  
muraare. (20)*

Again birth, again death and again lying in the mother's womb – this process of samsara is very hard to cross over – save me Murari through your infinite kindness. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Rashyaacharpata virachita kanthah punya-apunya vivarjita-panthah*

*Yogee yoga niyojita chittah ramate baalonmattavadeva. (21)*

The yogi who wears only a shawl rejected by others, and walks the path beyond merit and demerit, whose mind is joined in perfect yoga with its aim, he revels (in God-consciousness) and lives thereafter as a child or as a madman. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Kastvam ko'ham kuta aayaatah kaa me jananee ko me taatah  
Iti-paribhaavaya sarvamasaaaram vishvam tyaktvaa svapna-  
vichaaram. (22)*

Who are you? Who am I? From where did I come? Who is my mother? Who is my father? Thus enquire, leaving aside *vishvam* (the world of sense experiences), as essenceless and a mere dreamland, born of imagination. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Tvayi mayi chaanyatra-eko vishnuh vyartham kupyasi  
sarvasahishnuh*

*Sarvasminnapi pashyaatmaanam sarvatrotsrija  
bhedaajnaanam. (23)*

In you, in me, and in all other places too, there is but one all-pervading Reality (Vishnu). Being impatient, you are unnecessarily getting angry with me. Seeking the Self everywhere, lift the sense-of-difference (plurality), born out of ignorance. *Bhaja Govindam . . . seek Govinda*

*Shatrau mitre putre bandhau maa kuru yatnam vighraha-  
sandhau  
Bhava samachittah sarvatra tvam vaanchhasi achiraad yadi  
vishnutvam. (24)*

Strive not. Waste not your energy to fight against or make friends with your enemy, friend, son or relative. If you want to attain the Vishnu-status soon, be equal-minded under all circumstances. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Kaamam krodham lobham moham tyaktvaatmaanam  
bhaavaya ko'ham  
Aatmajnaana-viheena moodhaah te pachyante  
narakanigoodhaah. (25)*

Leaving desire, anger, greed and delusion, the seeker sees in the Self “I am He”. They are fools who don’t have self knowledge, and consequently they are tortured as captives in hell. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Geyam geetaa-naama-sahasram dhyeyam shreepati-roopam-  
ajasram  
Neyam sajjana-sange chittam deyam deenajanaaya cha  
vittam. (26)*

The *Bhagavad Gita* and *Sahasranam* are to be chanted, the form of the Lord of Lakshmi is to be meditated upon, the mind is to be led towards the company of the good, wealth is to be distributed to the needy. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Sukhatah kriyate raamaabhogah pashchaaddhanta shareere  
rogah  
Yadyapi loke maranam sharanam tadapi na munchati  
paapaacharanam. (27)*

Very readily one indulges in carnal pleasure, later on, alas, come diseases of the body. Even though in the world the ultimate end is death, even so man doesn't leave his sinful behavior. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Arthamanartham bhaavaya nityam naasti tatah sukhaleshah  
satyam*

*Putraadapi dhanabhaajaam bheetih sarvatraishaa vihitaa  
reetih. (28)*

“Wealth is calamitous”, reflect thus constantly; the truth is that there is no happiness at all to be got from it. For the rich, there is fear even of one's own son – this is the way of wealth everywhere. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Praanaayaamam pratyahaaram nitya-anitya-viveka-  
vichaaram*

*Jaapya-sameta-samaadhi-vidhaanam kuru avadhaanam  
mahat-avadhaanam. (29)*

*Pranayama* (control of life energy) *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal) *nitya-anitya-viveka* (discrimination between the permanent and non-permanent) along with *japa* (mantra repetition) and *samadhi* – perform these with care, with great care. *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Punarapi rajanee punarapi divasah punarapi pakshah  
punarapi maasah*

*Punarapi ayanam punarapi varsham tadapi na munchati  
aashaamarsham. (30)*

The night, the day, the *paksha* (lunar fortnight) the *maasah* (month) the *ayan* (six-monthly sun cycle) and the *varsha* (year) pass again and again. But still, even then, why do you not leave the attachment to desire? *Bhaja Govindam* . . . seek Govinda

*Guru charana-ambuja-nirbhara-bhakta samsaaraat-  
achitaraat-bhava muktah  
Sendriya-maanasa-niyamat-evam drakshyasi nija-  
hridayastham devam. (31)*

Oh only by becoming an ardent and fearless devotee at the feet of the Guru may you become liberated from this dense samsara. It is only through disciplining the senses and the mind that you come to experience the Being of light who lives in your own heart.

*Bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam  
moodhamate  
Sampraapte sannihite marane nahin nahin rakshati  
dukrinkarane  
Bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam. (32)*

Seek Govinda, seek Govinda, seek Govinda oh fool! When the appointed time (death) comes, grammatical rules will surely not save you. Seek Govinda, seek Govinda!



# Glossary

**Abhar** – gratitude

**Ahara** – craving

**Anahata chakra** – psychic/pranic centre situated in the spine behind the sternum; associated physically with the cardiac plexus, heart and lungs, mentally with emotion, especially love, and spiritually with *atma*, the spirit

**Ananda** – bliss

**Aradhana** – to be fully immersed in worship of the deity with intense reverence

**Ashwattha** – non-dying; name of the holy fig or peepal tree, a huge tree whose roots and branches spread extensively

**Ashwattha Aradhana** – tree pooja

**Atmabhava** – seeing oneself in others

**Bhaya** – fear

**Brahmacharya** – celibacy

**Brahma tejas** – a spiritual halo

**Chakra** – circle, wheel or vortex; pranic/psychic centre; confluence point of energy flows (nadis) in the body; seven major chakras for descent of divine energy or for human evolution

**Daan** – gift, donation; unconditional giving

**Deepak** – small oil lamp

**Drashta** – witness, uninvolved observer, onlooker, seer; the consciousness which knows what is going on; the inner self.

**Guna** – quality; the three gunas, aspects of prakriti (nature) are sattwa, rajas and tamas

**Havan** – a small yajna for groups; special samagri is offered with specific mantras into a fire; a powerful practice of individual and environmental purification

**Janani** – cosmic universal energy, power or shakti, the mother

**Japa** – a meditation practice involving repetition of a mantra

**Kirtan** – singing of God's name; practice in which a group of people sing a collection of mantras

**Kundalini** – spiritual energy lying dormant in mooladhara chakra

**Maithuna** – sexuality

**Manipura chakra** – literally, 'city of jewels'; psychic/pranic centre situated in the spine behind the navel; associated with the solar plexus and digestive organs and mentally with willpower; source of vitality and energy

**Mantra** – words of power; sound vibrations which liberate the mind when repeated

**Mouna** – silence; measured speech

**Mooladhara chakra** – the lowest psychic/pranic centre in the human body; situated in the perineal floor in men and the cervix in women; associated physically with the coccygeal plexus, excretory and reproductive organs, and mentally with the instinctive nature; spiritually it is the seat of kundalini

**Narayana** – *Nar* means water and *ayana* means abode or path, Narayana is the abode of water

**Nidra** – sleep, disconnection

**Ojas** – spiritual energy

**Prana** – vital energy force, essence of life permeating both the macrocosmos and microcosmos; the sum total of all energy residing within the universe; breath; respiration; principle of life

**Prasad** — favour, grace; blessed gift or object, something full of grace, happiness

**Pratipaksha bhavana** – developing the opposite positive quality

**Rajas** – guna or quality of dynamism, activity, restlessness

**Sadhana** – spiritual practice or discipline performed regularly

**Samrakshan** – the caring nature

**Samskara** – mental impressions, archetype

**Sankalpa** – positive resolve; purpose, aim, intention; willpower

**Sanyam** – mastery, control, self-discipline

**Sattwa** – guna or quality of luminosity, harmony, balance, purity, goodness

**Seva** – literally, ‘being That’; service; selfless service; to become one with the divine transcendental nature, and to express that nature in thought, word and deed

**Shakti** – primal energy; manifest consciousness; power, ability, capacity, strength, energy; counterpart of Shiva; the moving power of nature and consciousness; in Hindu mythology Shakti is often symbolized as a divine woman

**Swadhisthana chakra** – literally, ‘one’s own abode’; second psychic/pranic centre; located in the coccyx, associated with the sacral plexus and governing the urogenital system; the storehouse of subconscious impressions

**Tamas** – guna or quality of inertia, stability, stillness, ignorance, mental dullness, unwillingness to change

**Vasana** – desire

**Vedic** – pertaining to the Vedas

**Veerya** – seminal fluid, the essence of life

**Vichara** – reflection

**Vitarana** – sharing

**Yama** – self-restraints or rules of conduct which render the mind tranquil and connect us to positivity within and help us live accordingly

**Yoga** – union; the root is yuj, meaning ‘to join’, ‘to yoke’; a system of practice leading to a state of union between the individual and universal awareness; practices, philosophy and lifestyle to achieve peace, power and spiritual wisdom as well as perfect health, a sound mind and a balanced personality; one of the six main systems of Indian philosophy

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## Notes

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**Swami Prembhava Saraswati**

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She has been studying and teaching yoga ecology at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth and Bihar Yoga Bharati since 1996. She was initiated into poorna sannyasa in 1999 by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati. Based in Munger, she continues to undergo yogic and sannyasa training.

Her special interests are chanting, kirtan, havans, aradhana and living the yogic lifestyle as a way to connect to the beauty of life.



SATYANANDA YOGA  
BIHAR YOGA

Yoga ecology is the yogic and vedic way of ecological living. Only when all the forms of Janani, the Mother, are respected and loved will there be peace in the life of the individual and on Earth.

Inspired by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, Janani is a series dedicated to the ancient vidya or science of yoga ecology which encourages aspirants to renew their bond with Mother Nature on a daily basis.

*Janani: Holistic Yogic Lifestyle* is the fourth volume of the series on yoga ecology. A yogic lifestyle brings harmony into one's life by balancing the four basic instincts of human nature: sexuality, craving, fear, and sleep or disconnection. The key is sanyam, the ability to remain unaffected by one's likes and dislikes, to be steady and at ease in all circumstances. Practical sadhanas address the needs of the individual at different times of the day and in the course of a month.

*We have to get back to nature and natural living. We have to adopt the simple life and high thinking of our forefathers. Lead a simple, natural life. Be self-reliant. Reduce your wants. Be honest in your dealings. Develop noble qualities.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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**Front cover** represents our planet Earth and Janani in the form of Bhuvaneshwari