

Parivartan

Time to Change

Swami Prembhava Saraswati



2019 – The hottest year yet . . .

Across the world, Nature is out of balance – cold waves and heat waves, floods and droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and fires. 2019 was the hottest year on record globally and the planet is literally burning, from the vast expanse of the Amazonian, Australian, Indonesian and Siberian forests to the towns and cities of the USA. The planet is on fire.

Australia was hit with such unprecedented catastrophic fires it took the country and the world by shock and jaw-dropping disbelief. Millions of hectares of forest burned with a ferocity never seen before. Years of severe drought, intense heat waves and the build-up of dried fallen branches and leaves of the flammable eucalyptus trees formed fires with flames so big they created their own disastrous weather systems and patterns. It will take years and billions of dollars for the Australian community to clean up the destruction of land, homes, lives and businesses, however, we can never recover the animals, birds, insects, reptiles and entire ecosystems that are being pushed to extinction by these fires.

Everything on our planet is intricately connected in complex systems and ecosystems. These catastrophic fires in Australia are not only caused by local issues of drought and heat wave, and do not only influence Australia – they are a response to the changing climate of the whole planet. As a result the enormous amount of smoke released into the atmosphere and the loss of ecosystems and forest cover due to these fires is

influencing the climate and balance of the whole planet. We are all connected.

As the earth's oceans and land warm, the climate and weather is becoming more extreme and unpredictable everywhere. Every town has a tale to tell of strange or extreme weather in their area: Australian burns, UK floods, and Canada freezes over! The scientists are telling us that the changing climate is due to increased levels of greenhouse gases.

The planet is undergoing change; there is no doubt about that. When we look around us we can see the detrimental impact our materialistic society has on the earth: atmospheric pollution, plastic and chemical waste in oceans and water ways, food waste, general waste, deforestation, desertification, loss of biodiversity, overpopulation and more.

People the world over feel helpless and unable to do anything to prevent these environmental problems and climatic disasters. However, to every problem there is a solution and there is always a possibility for people and society to change if they are encouraged and guided in the right manner.

What is required is immediate action and leaders who can guide people to live balanced and simple lives in regard to nature, and the precious natural world around them. We must start to live and think differently. The old material ways and ambitions are no longer helpful to individuals, society and the planet.

Our dharma – A yogic way of life

Your effort has to be – ‘how do I live my life in yoga and how can I express that in the little things that I do?’ For that you have to change your idea that yoga is only a classroom practice; it is a practice for living moment to moment.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Yoga ecology unites our head, heart and hands with Nature. It reconnects us to our source, our Mother Janani, and gives our life the dignity it deserves. We may blame others, escape into a doomsday mood, use the excuse of despair and confusion or simply ignore the world around us. Or we can all do something. Yoga ecology gives guidance, methods, tools, a new perspective, understanding and way of life.

As we continue to use yoga to redress our own imbalances, we need to apply the teaching of yoga ecology to correct the natural imbalances on our planet. It is our individual and collective human dharma to change, so that Nature has the time and possibility to flourish again in all her splendour and abundance.

Yoga has the simple theory that if we live in accordance with the laws of nature, then there is no place for ill health. The purpose of yoga is just one – to show humanity how to worship life.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The way of yoga ecology

We all must change. So what can we do? Yoga offers the tools and lifestyle adjustments to make those changes. All we have to do is live it, in thought, word and action. Swami Satyananda said:

Yoga will emerge as a mighty culture and change the course of world events.



RESPECT FOR NATURE

There is no difference between spiritual and worldly life. That is where we make the mistake. If we believe that our spiritual life is our daily life, and our daily life is our spiritual life, there will be no conflict.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

1. Live simply with less.

Let this become the basis of your existence. Be aware of how you use natural resources. Be strong and avoid the consumer society that surrounds you and engulfs you. Reduce the use of your car, electricity, oil and gas. Turn off lights, turn off appliances when not in use.

2. Eat with care.

Avoid eating meat. Livestock grazing has changed the face of the planet, through deforestation, desertification and water use and pollution. We can live without meat; it is just a matter of choice.

Grow your own vegetables, create a garden, even in cities growing vegetables is possible.

Eat natural food, locally grown and seasonal.

3. Save water.

Respect this precious liquid that sustains life itself. Without it we are finished. Be mindful of every drop you use and throw waste water on your garden.

4. Plant trees.

Wherever and whenever possible, plant hundreds of trees and plants, indoors and outside.

Give trees and plants as gifts for birthdays, at Christmas and other occasions. Trees and plants are a gift of life. Trees purify the air, water and soil; they provide the food and oxygen we require for life, and they absorb the enormous amounts of

CO2 that fills our atmosphere. It is trees that will bring the balance back to the earth.

5. Reconnect to nature.

She is our very life, our very existence. We are nature. Worship all aspects of life and nature..



*Smile with the flowers and the green grass.
Play with the birds and the deer.
Shake hands with the ferns and twigs.
Talk to the rainbow, wind, stars and the sun.
Converse with the running brooks and the waves of the sea.
Develop friendship with all your neighbours, dogs, cats,
cows, trees and flowers.
Then you will have a wide, perfect and full life.*

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

LIVE YOGA

Here are some moments of yoga which you can incorporate into your daily life. Keep in mind that regularity over a long time is the key to change within and around you.

1. Wake early and try to see the rising sun.
Make it a habit to connect to the natural rhythm of the sunrise and let it become part of your daily routine.
2. In the morning, chant the *Sama Veda Shanti Mantra*, visualizing peace within and around you.
You may do it alone or with other members of the family.

ॐ द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः पृथ्वी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः वनस्पतयः
शान्तिर्विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वं शान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सामा शान्तिरेधि ॥
शान्तिः शान्तिः सुशान्तिर्भवतु सकलारिष्टसुशान्तिर्भवतु सर्वे ग्रहाः सुशान्तिर्भवतु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*Om dyauh shaantirantarikshagvam shaantih prithvee
shaantiraapah shaantiroshadhyah shaantih vanaspatayah
shaantirvishvedevaah shaantirbrahma shaantih sarvagvam
shaantih shaantireva shaantih saa maa shaantiredhi.
Shaantih shaantih sushaantirbhavatu
sakalaarishtasushaantirbhavatu sarve grahaah
sushaantirbhavatu.
Om shaantih shaantih shaantih.*

May there be peace in the heavens (celestial plane), peace in the sky (astral plane), peace on earth (physical plane), peace on water, peace among herbs, plants and trees, peace among the ten cardinal points of the planet, peace upon Brahma, peace everywhere, peace upon me, peace and peace alone. May there be peace and auspiciousness, may all the misfortunes and tribulations be pacified, may all the planets be pacified.

3. Practise asana for 15 minutes to keep your body and mind healthy, so you can offer your life in service of others, the planet and our future.

You may simply do a few rounds of surya namaskara; or practise a yoga capsule of tadasana, tiryak tadasana and kati chakrasana, surya namaskara, vipareeta karani asana and eka pada pranamasana; or you may practise every day pawan-muktasana part 1 or 2. It is not the amount of practices that will benefit you, but your regularity and awareness.

4. Become aware of your natural breath as often as possible during the day, and take five deep breaths or more.

Use the connection to your breath to improve the quality of your respiration and to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of the world around you.

5. 'Do I really need this?' 'Do I really want this?' – keep this awareness constantly alive throughout the day for all areas of your life: material, social, mental and emotional.

(Do I really need 30 pairs of shoes? Do I really need to check my Facebook and Twitter account every five minutes? Do I really need these negative thoughts? Do I really need this jealousy, sadness, or anger?)

Repeat questions with want.

Life is what you live through the mind. Lifestyle is the expression of the quality of your mind.

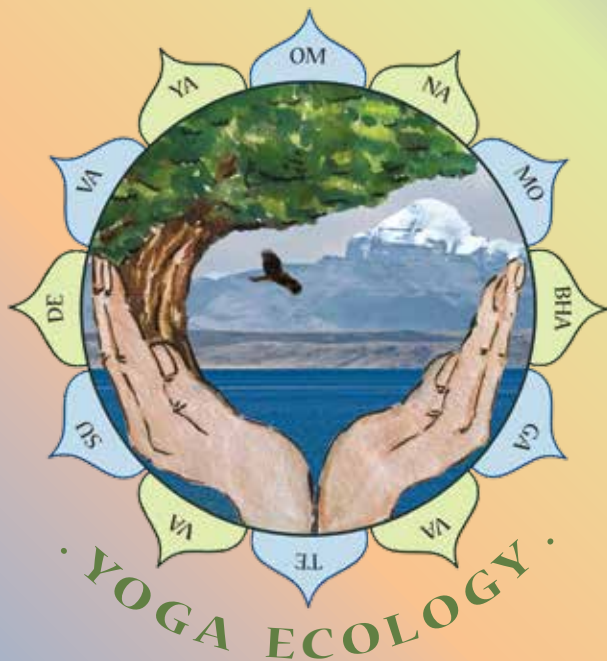
—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

There may not be time left; it may be too late for us to save our natural resources, but we can do our little bit. Be brave enough to live differently, and walk alone if you have to. Encourage others to live a life lived in the spirit of yoga ecology with respect for all of creation. Do it now! Live yoga with pride and never ever give up.



When you start incorporating yogic principles in your life, then yoga becomes part of your lifestyle. It is reflected in your behaviour and interactions. This disciplined, positive and awakened individual helps himself as well as others: family, society, nation and world.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



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