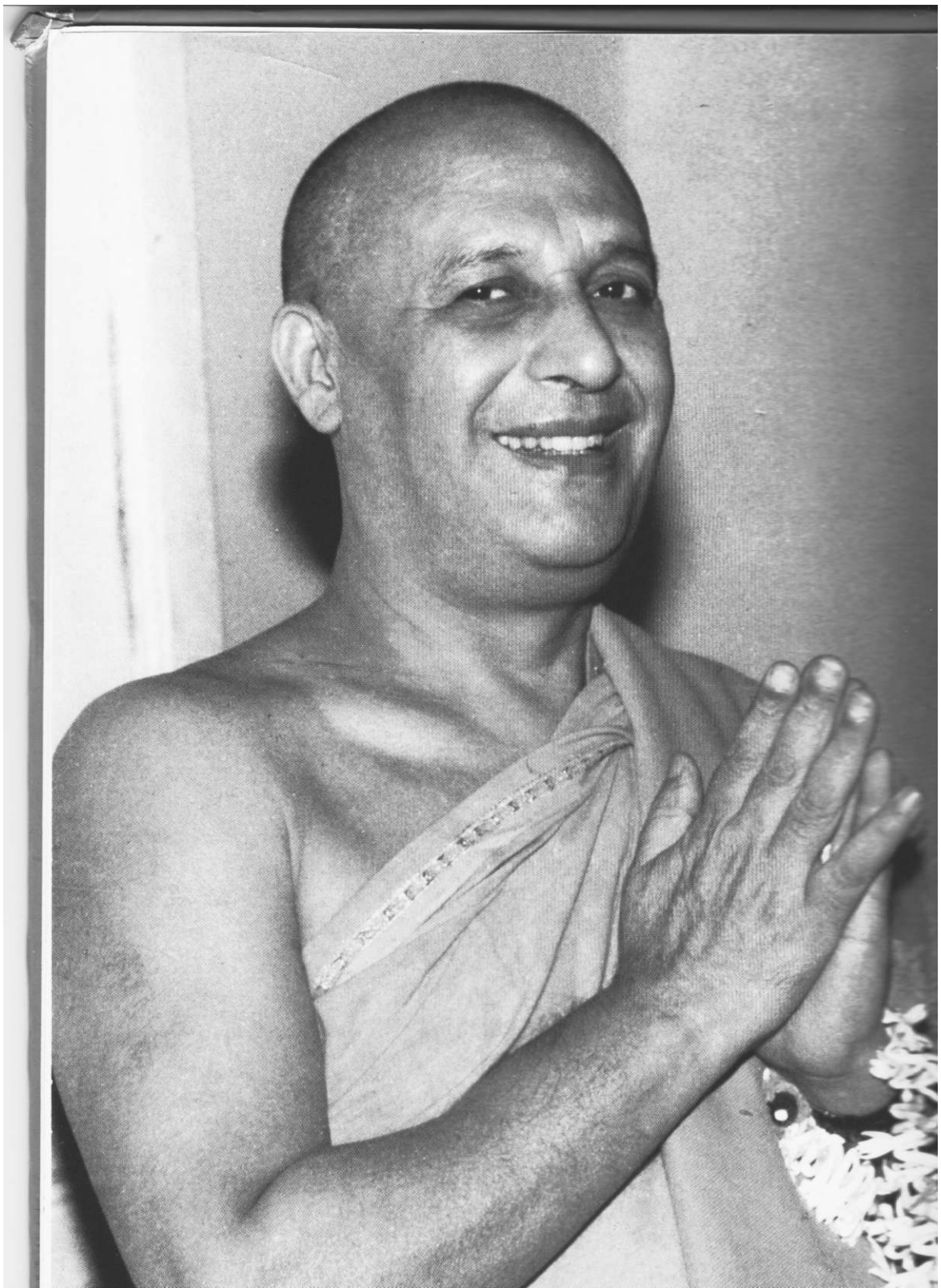


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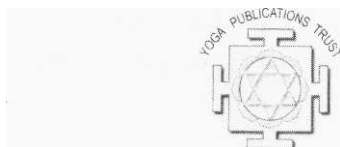
With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan



A Systematic Course in the
Ancient Tantric Techniques of
Yoga and Kriya

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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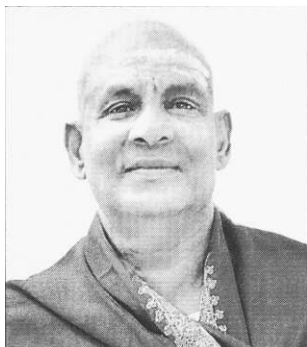
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Dedication

In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who
initiated Swami Satyananda Saraswati
into the secrets of yoga.

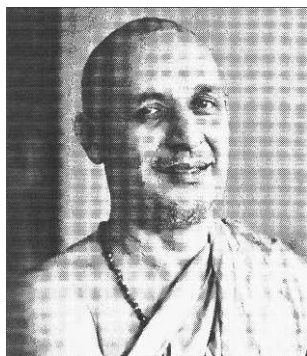
SWAMI SIVANANDA SARASWATI



Swami Sivananda was born at Pattamadai, Tamil Nadu, in 1887. After serving as a medical doctor in Malaya, he renounced his practice, went to Rishikesh and was initiated into Dashnami sannyasa in 1924 by Swami Vishwananda Saraswati. He toured extensively throughout India, inspiring people to practise yoga and lead a divine life. He founded the Divine Life Society at Rishikesh in 1936, the

Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy in 1945, the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy in 1948 and the Sivananda Eye Hospital in 1957. During his lifetime Swami Sivananda guided thousands of disciples and aspirants all over the world and authored over 200 books.

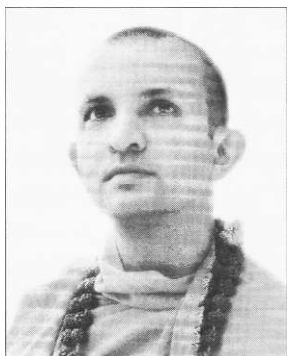
SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI



Swami Satyananda was born at Almora, Uttar Pradesh, in 1923. In 1943 he met Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh and adopted the Dashnami sannyasa way of life. In 1955 he left his guru's ashram to live as a wandering mendicant and later founded the International Yoga Fellowship in 1956 and the Bihar School of Yoga in 1964. Over the next 20 years Swami Satyananda toured internationally and authored over 80 books. In

1987 he founded Sivananda Math, a charitable institution for aiding rural development, and the Yoga Research Foundation. In 1988 he renounced his mission, adopting kshetra sannyasa, and now lives as a paramahansa sannyasin.

SWAMI NIRANJANANANDA SARASWATI



Swami Niranjanananda was born at Rajnandgaon, Madhya Pradesh, in 1960. At the age of four he joined the Bihar School of Yoga and was initiated into Dashnami sannyasa at the age of ten. From 1971 he travelled overseas and toured many countries for the next 11 years. In 1983 he was recalled to India and appointed President of Bihar School of Yoga. During the following 11 years he guided the development of Ganga

Darshan, Sivananda Math and the Yoga Research Foundation. In 1990 he was initiated as a paramahansa and in 1993 anointed preceptor in succession to Swami Satyananda. Bihar Yoga Bharati was founded under his direction in 1994. He has authored over 20 books and guides national and international yoga programs.

SWAMI SATYASANGANANDA SARASWATI



Swami Satyasangananda (Satsangi) was born on 24th March 1953, in Chandorenagore, West Bengal. From the age of 22 she experienced a series of inner awakenings which led her to her guru, Swami Satyananda. From 1981 she travelled ceaselessly with her guru in India and overseas and developed into a scholar with deep insight into the yogic and tantric traditions as well as modern sciences and philosophies. She is an effi-

cient channel for the transmission of her guru's teachings. The establishment of Sivananda Math in Rikhia is her creation and mission, and she guides all its activities there, working tirelessly to uplift the weaker and underprivileged areas. She embodies compassion with clear reason and is the foundation of her guru's vision.

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Introduction

This book and the depth of knowledge it contains provides the link between you, the practitioner of yoga, and an experienced guide and teacher. This link is your *sadhana* (spiritual practice), the beginning of your inner transformation, spiritual awakening and realization of higher ideals in life.

The techniques covered in this book have their basis in the ancient Vedic (tantric and yogic) shastras and were handed down over the centuries from guru to disciple until they reached the late great Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, who further passed them on to his disciple, Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Now in an age when travel and communication have become almost instantaneous affairs and there are more efficient methods of disseminating wisdom than the human voice and ear, we wish to offer these transcendental instruments of grace to all who have eyes to read and ears to hear.

The original text was compiled from teachings given by Swami Satyananda to his closest disciples for the ultimate benefit of mankind. According to tradition many of the practices of yoga, especially the advanced practices of kriya yoga, were kept secret and passed on by word of mouth only between guru and disciple. However, modern man in his intense search for an underlying meaning in life has now come to a point of evolution where he is ready to integrate the practices of yoga both physically and spiritually. There is more guidance available also to help him understand and practise the more advanced techniques.

This book is our effort to keep this valuable tradition alive and to spread the message of yoga further into your homes and into your inner being. It is a complete work on yoga - a complete course in the practices of integral yoga. It presents a synthesis of the various paths of yoga in a scientific and systematic manner to ensure the harmonious development and unfoldment of every aspect of the

individual. The different branches - hatha yoga, raja yoga, mantra yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and kriya yoga - are progressively introduced with special emphasis on practice and application in day to day life. Through the practice of integral yoga this book aims to develop in the aspirant a state of perfect body health, peace of mind and mental stability, perfect intellectual clarity and higher spiritual knowledge and awareness, a state where one is both useful to himself and to mankind. It contains the essence of Swami Satyananda's teachings and in this respect is an ideal single source of information for both teachers and students alike.

We have tried to present the book in such a way as to lead one gradually and progressively through the practices as if learning directly from a devoted teacher. If your approach is sincere and you follow your program regularly, the benefits will unfold themselves into all the different aspects of your life.

There are three main parts, divided into thirty-six lessons, containing various topics on both the theoretical and practical aspects of yoga, and eventually a full exposition of the ancient system of kriya yoga. The first book of practices for beginners is intended to systematically prepare the mind and body for the more advanced practices in Book II and eventually to the higher practices of kriya yoga in Book III. The ultimate aim is to progressively lead you step by step through the different techniques so that by the end of this sadhana course you will have an integrated approach and a full theoretical understanding of kriya yoga, as well as many other facets of yoga.

We are not interested in formulating a perfect philosophical system which bears no practical significance or relationship with daily life. In the form of discussions we have presented the theoretical side of the different paths of yoga to act as a guideline and inspiration to help

you to change and improve your life at all levels. These discussions are intended to open your eyes to certain aspects that perhaps you were blind to before in this most incredible world around us, above us and beyond us. Words at best only serve as a guide; they can never give the experience by themselves. The means are the practical techniques of yoga, using words as a method of communication.

The integration of both the theory and practice of yoga is the means of developing a new and simpler outlook on life and its seemingly complex patterns, i.e. a new consciousness. Each person is a unit consisting of body, mind and consciousness. Most evolutionary systems tackle one of these aspects and ignore or deny the other aspects. It is with this in mind that this book, an integral approach to yoga and life in general, is presented to you - a sadhana from beginning to end, to enable you to travel the inner transcendental road towards union and harmony.

Reasons for practising yoga

Your reason for wanting to practise yoga or your reason for currently practising yoga is not important. The important thing is that you have overcome previous prejudices and postponements to try yoga for yourself. You have overcome the biggest obstacle.

Perhaps you are doing yoga to develop a healthy body or a beautiful body. There is nothing wrong with this motive and the practices of yoga will help you to attain this. All we say to you is: "Be aware of your mind. Do you feel more peaceful? Have you developed greater concentration?" If so, then through personal experience you will know that yoga practices have a beneficial influence on the mind as well as the body.

Perhaps you have some illness or body ailment which you want to eliminate and have come to yoga as a last resort. Whether it is physical or mental, it does not matter, for yoga can help you. If it is mental peace you want or improved concentration or willpower, then definitely yoga can help, as the very essence of yoga is tied up with these faculties.

Many people have unsatisfactory relationships with wife or husband, friends or colleagues. The practice of yoga will help to put your relationship on a sure, positive basis. Remember, a relationship improves in depth

of understanding according to the level of self-awareness. Yoga aims at enabling you to know yourself and to see your foibles and nature in others. In this way, understanding arises and through this your personal relationships will improve.

Perhaps you have heard that yoga can improve or rectify sexual relationships. Yes, this is true and is a perfectly good reason for starting yoga, especially since inadequate sexual relations are often the cause of much unhappiness and frustration. A body that is perfectly healthy and efficient and a mind that is tuned to a high point of sensitivity and calmness, as they are through yoga practices, increase one's ability to enjoy sexual union or remove the obstacles that at present make it impossible.

Maybe you have religious beliefs, but without any spiritual experience. Or maybe you have no religious beliefs and you seek spiritual experience. Or perhaps you have no belief in the existence of spiritual experience, but have come to yoga merely to see what it is all about. It does not matter - you have come. That is the main thing.

What we are trying to say is that whatever your situation in life, whatever you believe or do not believe, whatever you want from life, yoga will help you because it changes your whole being and hence your relationship with and attitude to life itself.

The ultimate point of yoga and this book, however, is to expand your consciousness, to open your eyes to the vast number of things around you, of which at present you are unaware. It was Shakespeare who said: "There are more things in heaven and earth . . . than are dreamt of in your philosophy." We must keep our minds open to new possibilities. It is yoga that shows us a way.

The importance of practice

One can read or speak a million words and still find no change in one's consciousness. This is the mistake that verbose philosophers have been making throughout the ages. Although it is possible to devour great amounts of knowledge, this is not connected in any way with expanded awareness. It is merely mental accumulation of factual data. Our aim is to encourage you to become a suitable vessel to receive the influx of higher consciousness. Sri

Aurobindo put this idea very tersely with the following comment: "The cup has to be left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it."

The emphasis will be on your personal practice and effort. Without this, you will never develop sensitivity and awareness to your external and internal surroundings. We will start with the assumption that you know little or nothing about yoga practices. Gradually lesson by lesson the practices will be introduced and developed in step, we hope, with your personal practice and experience. It is absolutely essential to start from the basic practices and slowly but surely proceed to more advanced techniques. Failure to do this can lead to disappointment and disillusionment. For example, many people hear of meditation and try some practices for themselves without sufficient preparation. They sit comfortably, close their eyes and wait for something to happen. Because their eyes are closed they think they are introverted, but actually they are still thinking of the outside world or mulling over their problems. Their minds and consciousness are still in the same rut as they are every day. They achieve a little relaxation (though frustration is more likely) and then fall asleep. Nothing is gained and they begin to think that meditation is nothing more than a hoax. The preparation was not there so they failed to gain anything. Yoga is like any other science or art: preparation and training are essential.

Our objective is your regular and intense practice of the techniques as we introduce and explain them, in lessons progressing from the simple to the more difficult, so that you will eventually be able to do practices that at present seem completely impossible. Each lesson contains a number of topics systematically arranged according to the order of practices in your daily program. These topics include *general discussions* intended to develop your understanding of integral yoga side by side with your physical and mental transformation. Various *cleansing techniques* are included which aim at progressively purifying your body to help it meet the demands of the more subtle practices of kriya yoga. Topics on *asanas* will help strengthen your body, make it more flexible and give you more control over bodily functions, resulting in vibrant good health.

Different *pranayama* techniques are included to develop your breathing capacity, which leads not only to better health, but to an increased clarity and calmness of mind. *Meditation* practices aim at developing your ability to explore the mind and root out any subconscious problems. Then finally we will lead you to the techniques of *kriya yoga*. Our aim is to give you personal experience of what people have tried to talk about in the abundance of literature that exists today - experience of higher vibratory planes of existence.

There are many books available dealing with specific aspects of yoga such as raja yoga, kundalini yoga or pranayama. The techniques presented here can be learnt from varied sources and in different forms. In this work we have tried to arrange the practices in a certain ordered sequence so that they reinforce each other and lead the practitioner to both physical and spiritual development. Practice programs have been included at the end of each lesson with the purpose of bringing together all the different techniques into a form which can easily be fitted into your daily routine. There are integrated shorter and longer programs which can be adapted to the needs of both householders and sadhakas: for the mother, the working father, students, retired people and yoga teachers. However, to enhance the benefits obtainable from the practices and discussions in this book, we strongly recommend that you make contact with a swami, an ashram or an experienced yoga teacher for personal guidance. This applies especially to beginners.

Whatever you regard as meaningful in your life is your own business. We do not presume to want to change your beliefs through any type of dogmatic preaching. We are only interested in helping you to gain maximum happiness and fulfilment in life. To attain this there are various systems. The aim of this book is to guide you along your own path utilizing yoga. We are not concerned with the path you tread, only that you tread it as effectively as you can.

Outline of the course

The following skeleton list gives an idea of the practices which will be covered. Obviously it cannot include everything contained in the book, as this would take up too much space.

Body cleansing: various systems for purifying the body; these will include practices such as neti, basti, kunjal, dhauti and shankhaprakshalana, plus such techniques as amaroli, diet and other natural healing methods.

Asanas- large numbers of asanas are included from pawanmuktasana, pre-meditational, meditational, forward bending, backward bending, spinal twist, relaxation, balancing, inverted, dynamic and advanced groups. Full information will be given on the limitations, benefits, counterposes and background of each practice.

Pranayama: all the important forms will be fully described, including nadi shodhana, bhas-trika, kapalbhati, ujjayi, etc., as well as other aspects of prana control.

Mudras and bandhas: there are a hundred mudras. We will concern ourselves only with those most useful and which relate to kriya yoga. Among others shambhavi, khechari, vajroli, yoga, maha, naumukhi and hand mudras will be covered as well as the different aspects of all the bandhas.

Meditational practices: we intend to work through the most practical meditational practices and systematically introduce them so that you can simultaneously practise them for yourself. The practices will include ajapa japa, nada yoga, antar mouna, simple and complex mantrajapa, trataka, yoga nidra, kriya yoga and more.