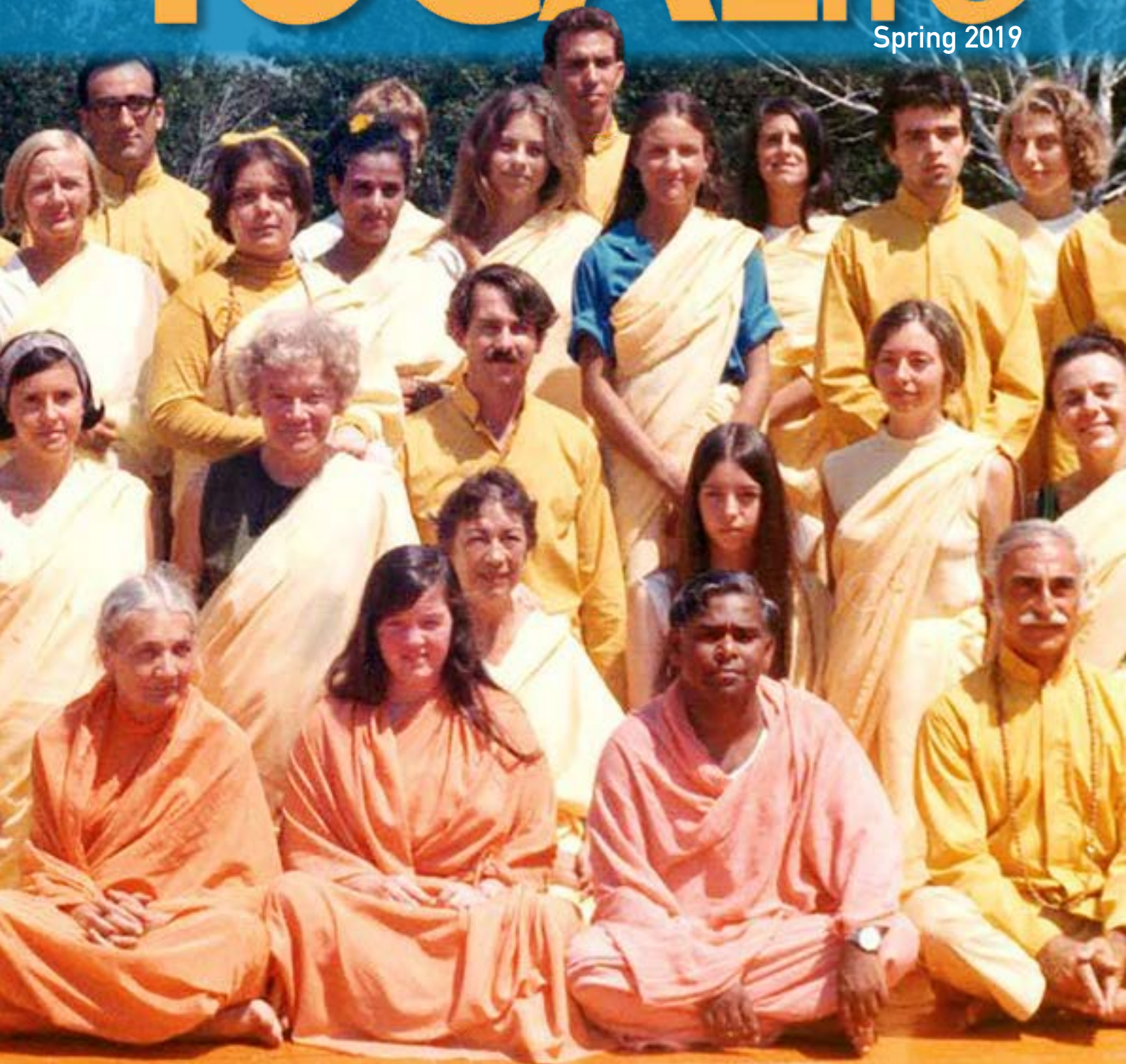


# SIVANANDA YOGALife

Spring 2019

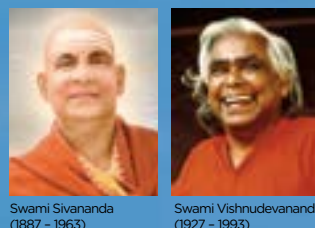


50 years of the TTC  
Avatara of Lord Vishnu  
The Spice of Life

Janma Samadhi Yatra  
The Great Vision  
5 Meditation Poses

SERVE LOVE GIVE PURIFY MEDITATE REALISE





Swami Sivananda  
(1887 – 1963)

Swami Vishnudevananda  
(1927 – 1993)



## Expand your horizons...

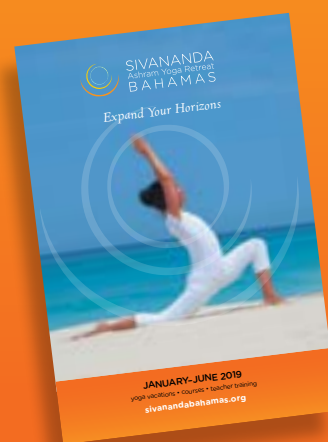
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### 2019 28-day Teacher Training Courses

January 4, February 3, March 5, April 4, May 4,  
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### 2019 Advanced Teacher Training Courses

January 4, April 4, November 4



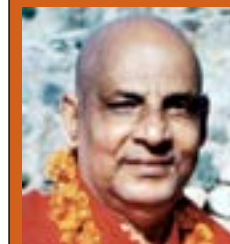
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## International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres

### Swami Sivananda (1887 – 1963)



The spiritual strength behind the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, Swami Sivananda's teachings are a synthesis of all the formal doctrines of yoga. Author of more than 300 books on yoga, Swami Sivananda was a medical doctor before renouncing worldly life for the spiritual path. He founded the Divine Life Society and the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh, Himalayas. His main message was:

*Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise.* In 1957 he sent one of his foremost disciples, Swami Vishnudevananda to the West to spread the ideals of yoga. Swami Sivananda entered Mahasamadhi on July 14th 1963.

### Swami Vishnudevananda (1927 – 1993)



Born in South India in 1927, Swami Vishnudevananda entered the ashram of Swami Sivananda at the age of 18. A world famous authority on Hatha and Raja Yoga, Swami Vishnudevananda founded the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres in 1957 and was author of *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga, Meditation and Mantras, Karma and Disease*

and a commentary on the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. Swami Vishnudevananda entered Mahasamadhi on November 9th, 1993.

### The Executive Board

The Executive Board of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres is comprised of senior disciples of Swami Vishnudevananda, personally chosen and trained by him to direct the organisation after his departure. Each of them has had many years' experience in teaching all aspects of yoga. They are renowned for their devotion to Swami Vishnudevananda and Swami Sivananda and for their profound knowledge and inspirational teaching and guidance, wisdom imparted to many thousands of students throughout the world. We welcome Kanti Devi, Acharya for the South American Centres and Prahlada, Acharya for the Indian and Canadian Centres, as new members on the executive board.

Swami Durgananda  
Swami Swaroopananda  
Srinivasan  
Swami Sivadasananda

Swami Kailasananda  
Swami Sitaramananda  
Kanti Devi  
Prahlada



Swami Durgananda



Swami Swaroopananda



Srinivasan



Prahlada



Swami Sivadasananda



Swami Kailasananda



Swami Sitaramananda



Kanti Devi

## Welcome

The years 2018 and 2019 have been and continue to be special years for the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres organisation. In the latter part of 2018 we celebrated the silver jubilee of Swami Vishnudevananda's mahasamadhi with a six-week pilgrimage through India, visiting temples and holy places, giving talks, seminars, conferences, yoga demonstrations and satsangs in cities, towns and villages along the way, continuing Swamiji's mission of bringing yoga to as wide a public as possible (page 30).

This year, 2019, we are celebrating the 60th year of the opening of the organisation's first city centre in Montreal in 1959 (page 60) and the 50th year of the first Sivananda Yoga Teachers' Training Course—held in 1969—and the first to be held in the West. Swami Vishnudevananda was an innovator and pioneer. He was instrumental in bringing yoga to a world-wide audience which continues to flourish and expand each year. Nearly 50,000 students have graduated from the internationally-renowned course, teachers who have returned to their

homes enriched with this gift from Swamiji and taken the ancient wisdom of yoga and vedanta to all corners of the globe (page 44). As part of the celebration we are publishing a new book, *The Great Vision*, which tells the inspirational story of Swami Vishnudevananda's mission, a preview of which is on page 9. This year will also see the publication of Swamiji's *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga* in China in Chinese, another indication of how the teachings are spreading.

We hope this edition of YogaLife, full of articles on all aspects of yoga and allied topics, will continue to inspire you in your practice. May the blessings of the Gurus and God be upon us all.

Om Shanti

The International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres

*Front cover: The first Sivananda Yoga Teachers' Training Course, 1969*



Est 1957

### HEADQUARTERS

SIVANANDA ASHRAM YOGA CAMP  
Eighth Avenue, Val Morin, Quebec, Canada J0T 2R0  
Tel: +1 819 322 3226  
email: [hq@sivananda.org](mailto:hq@sivananda.org)

With ashrams and centres located around the world see page 84 for addresses

The International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, founded by Swami Vishnudevananda is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is practising and teaching the ancient yogic knowledge for health, peace, Unity in Diversity and Self-realisation.





Swami Sivananda  
(1887 – 1963)

# Sivananda Yoga Retreat House

Reith near Kitzbühel, Tyrol, Austria



Swami Vishnudevananda  
(1927 – 1993)

## YOGA – A LIFESTYLE

### INTERNATIONAL SIVANANDA YOGA TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSES Reith/Kitzbühel, Austria

May 25 – June 23, 2019, German  
June 28 – July 26, 2019, English, German  
July 28 – Aug 25, 2019, English, German  
Sept 1 – Sept 29, 2019, English, German  
Dec 14, 2019 – Jan 12, 2020, English, German  
January 1 – February 2, 2020, German

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# SIVANANDA YOGALife

Spring 2019



Simple Living *by Swami Sivananda*

The Great Vision—A new publication

Follow the Thread *by Swami Sivananda*

The Third Dimension *by Swami Durgananda*

Distractions and Friends *by Srinivas Pulluri*

The Eternity of Time *from the Yoga Vasistha*

Reaching Home, Finding Peace  
*by Swami Swaroopananda*

The Ten Avatara of Lord Vishnu

Take the Pulses of India

Janma Samadhi Yatra, 2018

Karma, Unity & Freedom *by Srinivasan*

A Year of Celebration, Swami Gayatriananda

Yoga Sadhana *by Swami Sivananda*

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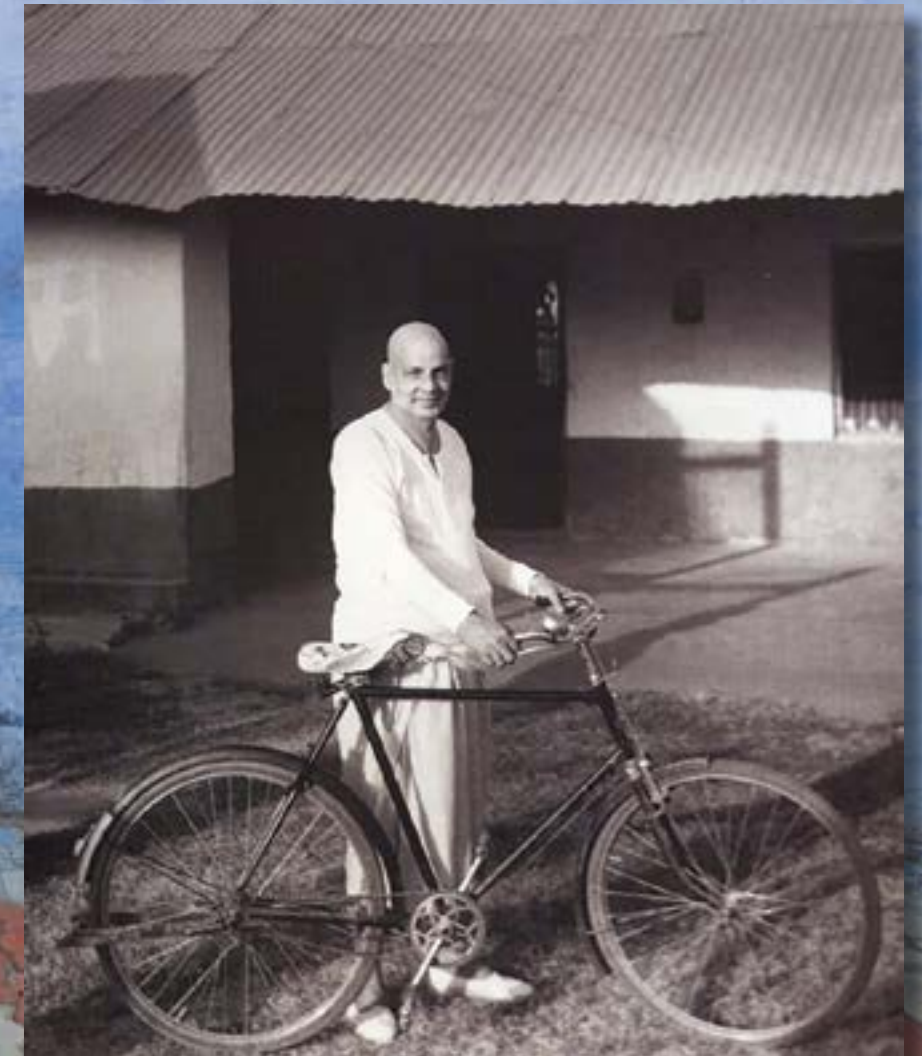
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# SIMPLE LIVING

In dress, in food, in character, in manners, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity.... Swami Sivananda

Photograph of a bicycle taken outside a house next to Swami Sivananda's home in Pattamadai, Tamil Nadu in 2017 and a photograph of Swami Sivananda in the late 1950s.





# RUDRAPRAYAG HIMALAYAS • INDIA



Swami Sivananda  
(1887–1963)



Swami Vishnudevananda  
(1927–1993)

## International Sivananda Teachers' Training Courses

23 February – 24 March 2019  
19 October – 17 November 2019  
21 February – 22 March 2020

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28 October – 12 November 2020

Advanced hatha yoga practice following  
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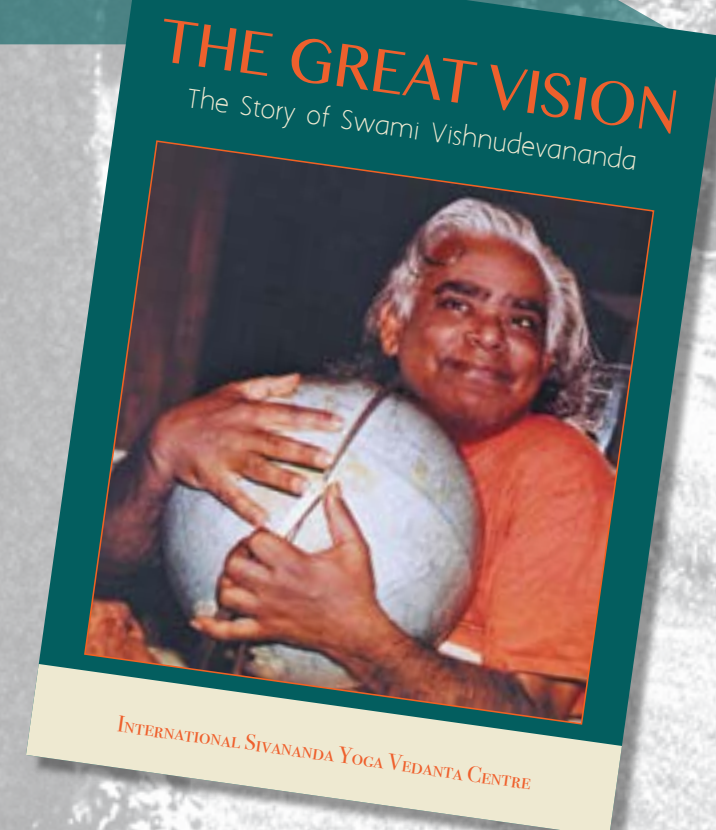
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simultaneous translation into  
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# NEW PUBLICATION



The story of **Swami Vishnudevananda**, peace activist and yoga pioneer, master of hatha and raja yoga and founder of the world-renowned Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre organisation. It is the story of a simple man, of iron will and tenacious humility and integrity, who dedicated his life to the propagation of the ancient teachings of yoga without any personal gain. The example that Swami Vishnudevananda expressed of the yoga teachings in pure form and selfless manner are of untold value to today's student of yoga.

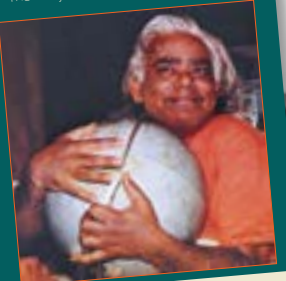


Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda. Est 1957

[www.sivananda.eu](http://www.sivananda.eu) • Contact: [rudraprayag-himalayas@sivananda.net](mailto:rudraprayag-himalayas@sivananda.net)



THE GREAT VISION  
The Story of Swami Vishnudevananda



INTERNATIONAL SVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTRE

chapter 3  
**LESSONS FROM THE GURU**

I became Master's personal assistant. This gave me the opportunity to observe his actions firsthand. I learned that the way Master acted in public was exactly the way he acted in private. There was no pretense or showmanship about him, just an honest, straightforward and loving nature.

Swami Vishnudevananda



Swami Vishnudevananda and disciples

chapter 12  
**FULL CIRCLE**

Because of you yoga is all over the United States now. I have taken classes of yoga at the YWCA, at colleges, at Christian churches, in high schools, in gyms, everywhere. I remember in Detroit, when I first saw you (in about 1937 or 1938), you explained you were sent to the West to spread the teaching of yoga and its philosophy and now as I look back over the past thirty-five years I see that you did it. Thank you so much for your life endeavours. I love you and hold you in the highest esteem.

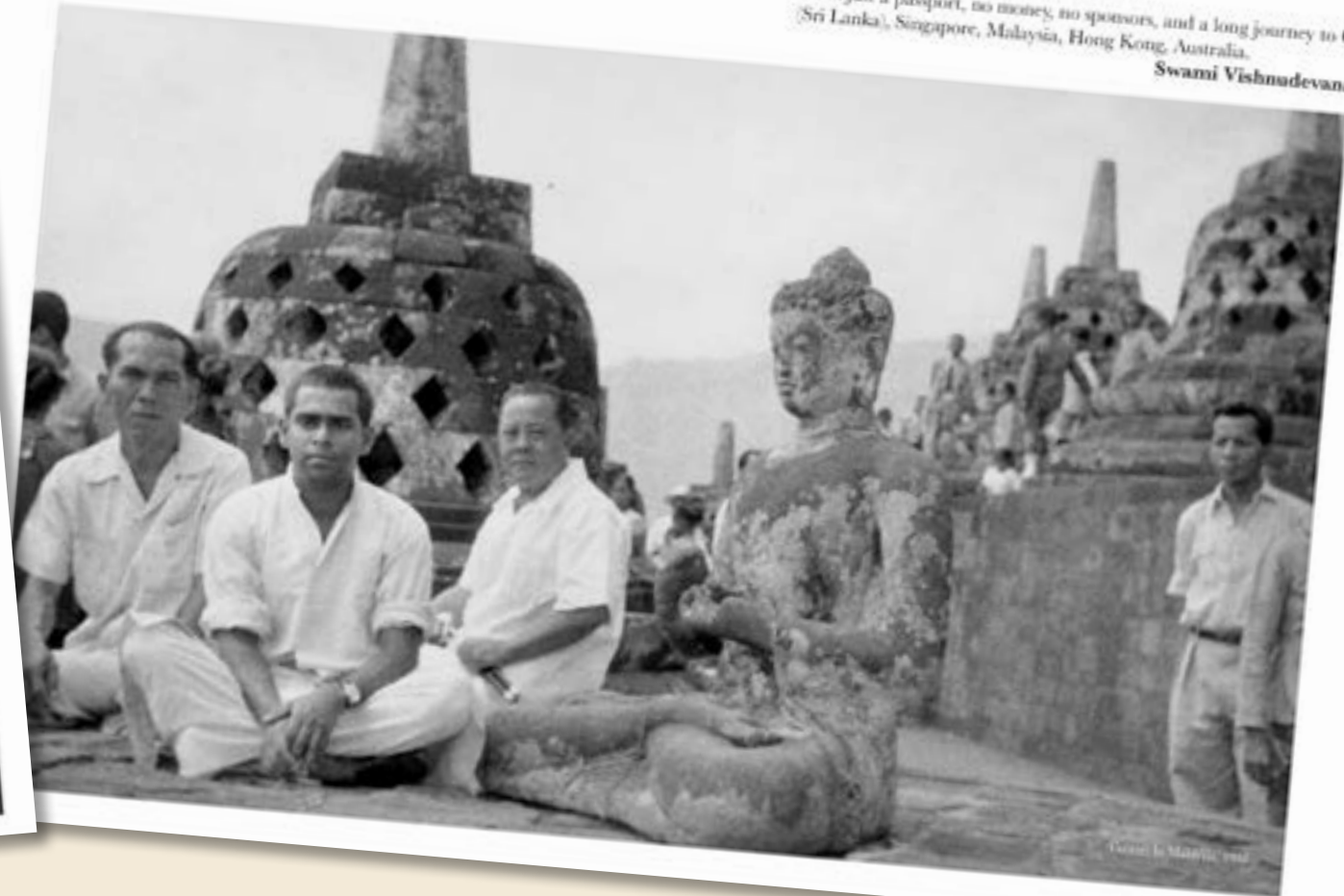
Student S



chapter 6  
**THE WEST BECKONS**

I had just a passport, no money, no sponsors, and a long journey to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia.

Swami Vishnudevananda



Swami Vishnudevananda

chapter 10  
**FLOWERS NOT BOMBS**

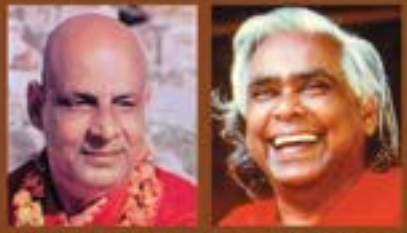
And so my boundary breaking mission came. It came to demonstrate that our world is small. Symbolically we wanted to show that we cannot cross borders with guns, only with flowers.

Swami Vishnudevananda



On a private mission





**SIVANANDA ASHRAM  
TAPASWINI - GUDUR**

Swami Sivananda (1887 - 1963)  
Swami Vishnudevananda (1927 - 1993)

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**Kids' & Teens' Camp**

02 - 15 Jun'19

**Sadhana Intensive**

26 Jan - 08 Feb'20



Sivananda Ashram Tapaswini  
Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda, Est. 1957

Gothavaripalem Village, Kadivedu P.O 524410 Gudur, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh, India

www.sivananda.org/gudur, gudur@sivananda.org

Mobile : + 91.8985045125 +91.8985045251

Course registration E-mail : gudurregistrations@sivananda.org

# FOLLOW THE THREAD

by Swami Sivananda

Sūtra means "string, thread"; it is derived from the Sanskrit root √siv "that which sews or holds together" and √sū tr "to tie, to thread"

## SUTRA

अल्पाक्षरमसन्दिग्धम् सारवत्त्वित्तो मुखम् ।  
अस्तोभमनवद्यं च सूत्रं सूत्रविदो विदुः ॥ पद्म पु.

Alpākṣaram-asandigdham sāravat viśvatomukham ।  
Astobham-anavadyam ca sūtram sūtravido viduḥ ॥

alpā kṣa ram - concise  
asandigdham - without any doubt i.e. unambiguous  
sā ravat - meaningful  
viśvatomukham - lit. 'having many faces'; embracing many meanings  
astobham - devoid of 'stobha' (fillers in Vedic chanting) like 'hA' or 'hU'  
anavadyam - faultless, blemishless  
sūtram — sūtra (accusative case, object)  
sūtravido is in fact (there is sandhi) sūtravidoḥ — the knower of sūtra  
viduḥ — know, say

*Those who are knowledgeable about sutras say that a sutra should consist of a minimum number of letters, be unambiguous, give the essence of the subject-matter, be all-encompassing (containing all the matters intended to be conveyed), be free from repetition and faultless.*

**A SUTRA** or an aphorism is a short formula with the least possible number of letters, without any ambiguity or doubtful assertion, containing the very essence, embracing all meanings, without any stop or obstruction and absolutely faultless in nature. The sutrakara or the composer of the aphorisms is said to be as happy as one would be while getting the first male child, if he is but able to reduce one letter in his abstruse sutra of words and ideas. The best example of the greatest, the tersest and the most perfect of sutra literature is the series of aphorisms called the Ashtadhyayi composed by Panini. Panini is the father of all sutrakaras from whom all others seem to have borrowed the method of composition. The sutras are meant to explain a big volume of knowledge in short assertions suitable to be kept in memory at all times. The six Vedangas and the six systems of Hindu philosophy form the twelve sets of sutra literature of the world. In addition to these, there are later compositions for example the Narada-Bhakti Sutras or the Sandilya-Bhakti Sutras, which assume an equal form with the famous sutras mentioned above.

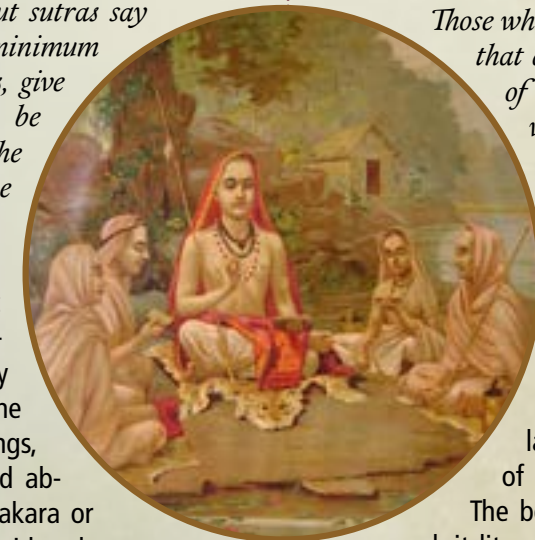
## BHASHYA

सूत्रार्थो वर्ण्यते यत्र वाक्यैः सूत्रानुसारिभिः ।  
स्वपदानि च वर्ण्यन्ते भाष्यम् भाष्यविदो विदुः ॥

Sūtrārtho varṇyate yatra vākyaiḥ sūtrānusāribhiḥ ।  
Svapadāni ca varṇyante bhāṣyam bhāṣyavido viduḥ ॥

sūtrārthaḥ — the meaning of the sutra varṇyate — is expounded  
yatra — wherever, where  
vākyaiḥ — through sentences  
sūtrānusāribhiḥ — in accordance with the sutra  
svapadāni — their (sutras) own words (the words contained therein)  
ca — and  
varṇyante — is expounded  
bhāṣyam — bhaṣyam  
bhāṣyavidoḥ — the knowers of the bhaṣya  
viduḥ — know, say

*Those who are knowledgeable about bhashya say that a bhashya is one in which the meaning of a sutra is expounded through sentences which are in accordance with the sutra and also the meanings of the words contained therein.*



**A BHASHYA** is an elaborate exposition, a commentary, on the sutras, with word-by-word meaning of the aphoristic precepts, their running translation, together with the individual views of the commentator or the bhashyakara.

The best and the exemplary bhashya in Sanskrit literature is written by Patanjali—considered to be the father of bhashyakaras—on the Vyakarana Sutras of Panini. This bhashya is so very famous and important that it is known as the Mahabhashya. The second in importance is on the Mimamsa Sutras written by Sabara-Swamin who learned the art from Patanjali. The third important bhashya was written by Sankara on the Brahma Sutras. The bhashyas on the six sets of aphorisms dealing with Indian philosophy were written by Vatsyayana, Prasastapada, Vijnanabhikshu, Vyasa, Sabara and Sankara. On the Vedanta or Brahma Sutras, there are about sixteen bhashyas, such as those by Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Nimbarka.



# THE THIRD DIMENSION

An Address to the Sivananda Yoga Teachers' Training Course, Ustka, Poland, October 2018

by Swami Durgananda



**Swami Sivananda says that yoga practitioners are mostly aware of two dimensions.**

Swami Sivananda says that yoga practitioners are mostly aware of two dimensions. The first dimension is the outer life. As soon as we are born our parents take care of our outer life. They help us also to connect to the outer life. This includes education: which school I am going to, which teacher can I trust, can I make it to university or not. This is called secular, outer or worldly life. In this outer life we interact with people, some of them are friends, others are enemies. Secular life surrounds us from all sides.

This outer life values the ego and deals mostly with profit and loss: how rich do I become, how successful, how much do people recognise me, what titles do I have, how do I dress, in which part of town do I live. People and events push us towards this outer dimension, forcing us to act in the way this outer dimension expects us to act. It is very tiring and occupies most of our energy.

**You may wonder whether there is more to life than this outer dimension.**

You may wonder whether there is more to life than this outer dimension. This is when you enter the second dimension, the spiritual life. Spiritual life is not an easy dimension because nowadays you have a lot of choice. In earlier times there was no choice. You were born into a religious or into a non-religious family. Traditionally in India the family would have a guru and the children would go to the same guru. Today with the help of the media we do not necessarily believe in what our ancestors believed. This has brought about a big change in the society.

Yoga is one amongst many religious or spiritual belief systems. It believes in the existence of the atman, the Soul, the Eternal. If we engage in spiritual life through yoga we are very busy. In a way we apply the same intention as in secular life, we try to achieve something. The focus is on asanas, pranayama, awakening of the kundalini. We try to do everything right on the spiritual

path, just as we try to do everything right in the secular life. In this way the spiritual dimension is just as intense as the secular dimension. Swami Sivananda points out that merely focussing on the secular and spiritual dimensions will not really lead us anywhere.

**There is a third dimension which Swami Sivananda really wants us to look at. This is the inner life.**

There is a third dimension which Swami Sivananda really wants us to look at. This is the inner life. It is the life of thoughts, of feelings, of attitudes, of reactions and of countless memories. This dimension lies between the secular life and the spiritual life. It is from this dimension that you decide how your outer life should be, and you also decide what spiritual life you live, or whether you become an atheist, which in itself is a spiritual choice as well. It is your conclusion about how you want to relate to God.

In order to understand Yoga, we need to focus on how it relates to this third dimension. It starts with the yamas and niyamas. The yamas are abstinence from injury and killing, truthfulness, abstinence from theft, continence, and abstinence from greed. The niyamas consist of cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of the self and self-surrender to God.

The yamas and niyamas purify the third dimension, the inner psychological life of our attitudes. They bring clarity into what is positive or negative, justified or unjustified, wise or unwise. This clearing up of the third dimension consists mostly of the purification of preconceived ideas. It is a psychological level of life which is extremely subtle and invisible.

**As you think, so you become.**

As you think, so you become—there is much truth in this sentence. If we continue to keep thinking the same way as we have in our secular life, picking up our ideas from our surroundings and the media, if we do not change our thoughts, our spiritual life will not develop either, and the third dimension will remain completely untouched.

**Faith is an important aspect of the third dimension.**

Faith is an important aspect of the third dimension. But blind faith is not what is meant here. When Swami Vishnudevananda would speak about faith, he would say: faith grows if you practise. When you feel the result of your practice, then faith grows. But if people do not practise at all, they have no way of developing faith. A lazy or tamasic person has no faith. A passionate or rajasic person may have faith in his or her own ego or in "give and take". In a pure or sattvic person the faith in the third dimension develops, and the result will show: As you think, so you become. There is nobody who can do this for you, you are the driver of your own system. Thus, the mind alone is the cause of all bondage and of course it can also be the cause of liberation. And that is the decision which is made in the third dimension. It is also called interim or in-between, as it stands between the secular and spiritual life.

It is easier to do asanas and pranayama. You may say that this is also difficult because it requires discipline. But once the discipline is in place, asanas and pranayama are easy to do. Whereas this inner life, these inner attitudes are constantly subject to greed, lack of faith, competitive attitudes, worry about tomorrow and fear of ageing. All these are influences from the outer world. They have actually nothing to do with us. Our inner Self is free from this.

You can experience this when you meditate. When you have a moment of peace inside, where are all these outer influences? Nowhere! As soon as we shut the door behind us in our home, we are with our minds. And if the third dimension is not tackled properly we become restless. Just practising asanas and pranayama cannot solve this situation. Positive thinking and meditation are required.

Helping people to bring awareness into their third dimension—this is an important task for yoga places and organisations. Swami Vishnudevananda would tell the graduates of the Yoga Teachers' Training Course:

**"Be like light in the darkness."**

"Be like light in the darkness. You can help many people." Personally I have seen how many of these graduates continued to evolve and grow and learnt how to live well on this planet. This is the intention of the Yoga

Teachers' Training Course. The goal of a yoga teacher is not to make money. You have to collect some money to pay for your hall, your food and personal expenses. But your main intention should be to serve. This is how the third dimension is purified. You are not doing this for profit, not for the ego. This is the intention for this course. In this course you are not becoming tired from the activities themselves. You are getting tired because you are facing that third dimension, that which is deeper inside of you and which is being expanded during this course. Yoga is not what you see. You cannot see the inner dimension. In many approaches to yoga today the inner dimension is not considered. It is just secular life and spiritual life – you go for it and you expect things. And if that doesn't work, you go to the next teacher, you do the next thing. This in itself is a great obstacle. Therefore, the great sages and seers taught methods of how to pay attention to what your thoughts are. It is to be practised not only when you meditate, but throughout the day also. When you sit in the evening and look back at how you reacted during the day, you can see again and again how you put the attitudes of your secular life into your spiritual life.

There is really nothing new in yoga. It could become very boring as long as you deal with yoga only in the first two dimensions. But if you enter purposefully into the third dimension, with awareness, then discrimination, viveka, will slowly awaken within you, and a whole new inner world opens up.

**Be ready.**

Be ready. Then you really need asanas and pranayama, because you will have surprises. You may feel ashamed that you actually think in certain ways and never knew it. Now you decide what is favourable for you and what is unfavourable for you. Something is not simply good because somebody was living like this for centuries. You have to look at it. You have to look at how you move, what you eat, how you sleep, how you interact with everybody. You really look at life. You do this with your inner dimension, as well as with the help of the scriptures. It can be the Bible or any other spiritual book which speaks about the third dimension. The mind needs this mental food every day because it has a tendency to forget, because it floats back into the old habits. Have you noticed? Even after so many years I recognise this in myself.

*continued on page 17*



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(1887–1963)



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Founder Swami Vishnudevananda,  
1957

**AUGUST 3 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2019**

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One aspect of laziness or *tamas*, consists in not entering into the third dimension. You continue to do what you always did. Even though you may be quite active, it is still *tamasic*. Because you don't change. This is the problem for many people. They all go in the round about. During younger years they experiment with this hair cut or that clothing fashion. But when they are forty, they become like their parents. There is no connection to the third dimension. The most important thing in yoga is a positive attitude, a positive vision, a positive approach and a positive orientation. These are the words of Swami Sivananda: attitude, vision, approach and orientation. Then things change. The secular life starts changing, the spiritual life starts changing, you enter a different platform. Swami Sivananda says as long as you are in your body, the old habits will try to pull you. Therefore every day has to be a new awakening. This is also true for meditation. You may have a good meditation today, but this does not continue forever. The next day you may be unsuccessful in meditation, you may fall asleep, there may be indigestion, you may hear everything around you, your body may itch or you cannot sit still. All this doesn't matter, you sit anyway. Don't expect anything. Do not have a pessimistic, negative attitude—what does it do for me, me, me ... Remember faith. Remember to accept things as they are. And continue to work from there.

### Make use of your inner faculties.

Make use of your inner faculties. Do not simply do things for which you were trained, for which you have a degree or what mother, father or friends taught you. There are many more faculties within you which you can develop. When you try to do things which you don't know how to do, you may make a fool of yourself. Because you are never the best when you do things you have not done before. But you can learn. This also applies to yoga. Some people say: I am not really ready for yoga, I will start when I am retired. But when you are sixty, you will have many new problems which prevent you from practising. Start now, change now. Those who do volunteer service in this organisation continuously have to do things which they never did before. That is why sometimes things in the Centres and Ashrams are not perfect.

### You have more talents than you think.

Use your inner faculties. You have more talents than you think. You cannot even imagine which talents are hiding within you. Slowly nourish your third dimension. Otherwise it remains asleep. You will continue to do what you always did, and you also do your asanas in the same way. Where is then the third dimension?

Everything in this world has positive and negative aspects, every coin has two sides. This should be accepted; it is like that. You know that things are changing, you should accept the changes. Nothing is permanent, everything changes.

In today's fast world there are major changes every three to four years. When you are young, you can live with this, but people who are above fifty years old, they have a hard time to keep up. Your parents know how to use a mobile phone, but maybe not everybody knows how to use a computer. Keep your mind open, keep that third dimension open, then you will be able to keep up with changes, even when you are fifty or sixty years old. When you try to be open to changes, life is not boring. And when you had a terrible day, you can start afresh the next morning.

Depending on your own psychological tendency, your connection with the third dimension corresponds to a different yoga path. In *bhakti* yoga we say, God put me in this situation for me to learn, it has a purpose. In *jnana* yoga you analyse: What is this? Why is this? Can I change it? etc., and then you come to a conclusion. In *raja* yoga you understand the function of the thought waves or *vrittis*. You look at the *vrittis* and you change them.

The common point in all these different paths is to change your ego and bring light into this stagnant ego attitude. We stagnate because we think we are right, the ego thinks it is right. But what is right? It is so relative and depends on different circumstances. Intelligent thinking, which is guided by the scriptures, helps you to truly discriminate, so you can decide your next move, step by step.

Swami Sivananda says that until we reach Self-realisation, every human being remains an individual, a psychological being. In other words, we remain different until we have merged into that Self, until we allow ourselves to say: Yes, I Am. Not I am so and so, I am that, I am this—this is the psychological state.

### "I Am That I Am."

Saying "I Am That I Am" means entering into complete peace, because we now no longer differentiate.

If we are considering this, then we are really in training, and both our secular life and our spiritual life will be illumined by this third dimension. We gain emancipation.

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# DISTRACTIONS & FRIENDS—ANTARAYAH & SAHABHUVAH

by Srinivas Pulluri



The great Patanjali Maharshi is considered to be the grandfather of yoga psychology, through his contribution to Yoga Sastra and to mankind, in the form of his Sutras. The goal of Yoga Sastra is to make the practitioner *abide in his own real nature*, **svarupe'vasthānam** 1.3, *to stop the erroneous identification with the thought-waves of the mind (vritti)*, **vṛttisārūpyamitaratra** 1.4. Patanjali Maharshi states his position in the first four sutras themselves and elaborates on them in the sutras that follow. To abide in one's own real nature, one

has to *restrain the thought-waves of the mind*, **yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ** 1.2. Patanjali advocates two techniques to do this. *Their (the thought-waves) restraint is attained through repeated practice and dispassion*, **abhyāsavairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ** 1.12 and/or *through devotion to Ishwara*, **īśvarapraṇidhānādvā** 1.23.

The word which expresses Ishwara is *pranava*, **tasya (īśvarasya) vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ** 1.27. *This pranava must be repeated with meditation upon its meaning*, **tat (praṇavaḥ) japastadarthabhāvanam** 1.28. *Hence comes the realisation of the inner Self and the removal of obstacles (takes place)*, **tataḥ pratyakacetanādhigamo'pyantarāyābhāvaśca** 1.29.

Maharshi Patanjali outlines the distractions of the mind—*antarāyā*—which present as obstacles in *yoga sadhana*. The word *antarāyā* is derived from the root *aya*, to go, with the prefix *antar*, between; thus *antarāyā* means to get in-between, i.e. obstacle. Simply put *antarāyā* means that which comes in between the process of joining the individual self with the Supreme Self.

There are nine distractions of the mind explained in sutra 1.30:

**vyādhi - styāna - saṁśaya - pramāda - ālasya - avirati - bhrāntidarśana - alabdhabhūmikatva - anavasthitatvāni**

1 **vyādhi** = physical disease

Ayurveda, the science of health and longevity, categorises *vyādhi* (disease) into four groups: *Agantuka* (from an external source or accident); *Sātrā* (from disturbance of the balance of the three humours viz., kapha, vāta and pitta); *Mānasa* (from the mind, due to jealousy, anger, lust and so on); and *Svābhāvika* (from natural causes, due to hunger, thirst, old age, etc.). These diseases may be caused by poor lifestyle and/or by the karma from previous lifetimes.

2 **styāna** = mental laziness, langour, apathy

This is an aspect of mental paralysis according to Sankara, a disinclination toward work which has to be overcome by great will power and self-effort. Swami Sivananda advocates overcoming this obstacle with asana, pranayama and active habits.

3 **saṁśaya** = doubt, indecision

*Saṁśaya* or doubt is created when two kinds of knowledge opposed to each other arise in the mind. It is to be overcome by faith in the scriptures and the teacher. The Bhagavad Gīta (4.40) declares that a doubting person loses this world and the next, ultimately leading to self-destruction.

4 **pramāda** = carelessness, lack of enthusiasm, misplaced priorities  
*Pramāda* is heedlessness or carelessness and the blunder that arises out of it. Once the mind is allowed to slip from the path of yoga due to *pramāda*, it can result in a total fall (vide Vivekacūdāmani 324). The famous sage Sanatsujāta compares *pramāda* to *mṛtyu* or death since it leads to *samsāra* or transmigratory existence (vide Sanatsujatiya 1.4).

5 **ālasya** = laziness, sloth

*Aalasya* or laziness is an aspirant's greatest foe. As a result of laziness, we cannot hope to attain material well-being, let alone progress on the spiritual path. It is caused by an excess of *tamas* (the dark element amongst the *gunas*), and is overcome by *rajas* (activity) and *sattva* (dynamic goodness). Susruta, the great teacher of Ayurveda, considers *ālasya* as a condition which inclines a person more towards pleasure and less towards work, even though capable (vide Susruta Samhita Sarirasthana, 4.51).

6 **avirati** = worldly-mindedness, stubborn attachment to sense objects

*Avirati* is the absence of the spirit of renunciation. Yoga is defined by Patanjali as *citta-vṛtti-nirodha*, control of the modifications of the mind. These modifications continue to rise as long as their causes—in the form of *kāma* or desire for the pleasures of the senses—exist. *Kāma* has to be controlled by *virati* or dispassion, an intense spirit of renunciation.

7 **bhrāntidarśana** = false perception, mistaken notion, delusion/ illusion

At the intellectual level, false perception can manifest itself as a misunderstanding of the teachings of the guru and the scriptures. This can be due to dullness, perversion of the intellect or self-conceit. At the psychic level, through wrong methods of practice, false perception can lead to hallucinations. True experience gives joy and peace whereas one that is false may have little or no impact or may cause unhappiness, fear, restlessness and tension. Elimination of this distraction requires great effort and tactful handling. Discussions with the guru in all humility can help eradicate these tendencies.

8 **alabdhabhūmikatva** = non-attainment of firm ground, non-achievement of a state

Despite correct practice of the yoga disciplines, the aspirant fails to attain any of the *yogabhūmis* or planes of psychic and spiritual experience mentioned in the scriptures. This is due to the negative *samskāras* or impressions from past lives, which drain away the energy generated by yogic practices just as rat-holes in a field drain away the irrigation water. With the help of the guru and by deep introspection the aspirant can discover and eliminate these weaknesses.

9 **anavasthitatva** = instability, non-maintenance of firm ground

*Anavasthitatva* is the last and most formidable obstacle. Through assiduous practice, the yogi succeeds in raising the mind to higher states but through weakness of mind is unable to sustain the achievement. Lust, love of money, mercurial irritability or crass selfishness are often responsible for this fall. By dispassionate and deep introspection, consultation with the guru and prayer to *Ishwara*, the root cause can be eliminated.

The distractions outlined in the sutra above (1.30) are psychological problems. The subsequent sutra (1.31) mentions the external manifestations of these problems called *sahabhuvah*, companions of the distractions.

**duḥkha** = grief, sorrow;

**daurmanasya** = despair;

**aṅgamejayatva** = trembling of the body;

**śvāsa & praśvāsa** = irregular breathing

When sorrow, disappointment and despair are not sublimated by discrimination and will-power, they cause tremendous restlessness in the mind, affecting the nervous system, and manifesting as physical restlessness. The aspirant is thus unable to sit steadily for meditation and frequently changes position. Persisting in the practice of yoga, repetition of *pranava* (OM) and an attitude of surrender to *Ishwara* will gradually lessen this disturbance. Irregular breathing patterns can be overcome by the practice of pranayama.

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# THE ETERNITY OF TIME

EXTRACT FROM YOGA VASISTHA

translated by Swami Venkatesananda



All the hopes of man in this world are consistently destroyed by Time. Time alone, O Sage, wears everything out in this world; there is nothing in creation which is beyond its reach. Time alone creates innumerable universes, and in a very short time Time destroys everything.

Time allows a glimpse of itself through its partial manifestation as the year, the age, and the epoch, but its essential nature is hidden. This Time overpowers everything. Time is merciless, inexorable, cruel, greedy and insatiable. Time is the greatest magician, full of deceptive tricks. This Time cannot be analysed; for however much it is divided it still survives, indestructible. It has an insatiable appetite for everything—it consumes the smallest insects, the biggest mountains and even the king of heaven!

Even as a young boy plays with a ball for his pastime, Time uses the two balls known as the sun and the moon for its pastime. It is indeed Time alone that appears as the destroyer of the universe (Rudra), the creator of the world (Brahma), the king of heaven (Indra), the lord of wealth (Kubera), and the nothingness of comic dissolution. It is indeed this Time that successively creates and dissolves

the universe again and again. Just as even the great and mighty mountain is rooted on earth, this mighty Time is also established in the absolute Being (Brahman).

Even though Time creates endless universes, it is not wearied, nor does it rejoice; it does not come, nor does it go; it does not rise, nor does it set.

Time, the gourmet sees that the objects of this world have been ripened by the fire of the sun, and when he finds them fully ripe he consumes them! Each epoch of time is decked, as it were, by the lovely jewels of colourful beings for the pleasure of Time that wipes them all out playfully.

To the lotus of youthfulness, Time is the nightfall; to the elephant of life-span, Time is the lion. In this world there is nothing, high or low, that Time does not destroy. Even when all these are destroyed, Time is not destroyed. Just as a man after a day's activity rests in sleep, as if in ignorance, even so Time after the comic dissolution sleeps or rests with the creation-potential hidden in it. No one really knows what this Time is.



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# REACHING HOME, FINDING PEACE

## The Role of the Guru in Our Spiritual Life

by Swami Swaroopananda



### INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A GURU?

Swami Sivananda, Swami Vishnudevananda and all the yogic scriptures talk about the importance of the Guru or spiritual preceptor. The word “Guru” literally means the one who dispels the darkness of ignorance by bringing in the light of knowledge. There are two types of

knowledge found in the Vedas, or sacred Hindu scriptures. The first type of knowledge teaches us how to take care of the world, and the second teaches us how to transcend the world. Without learning how to take care of the world, we do not have the foundation for transcending the world. Thus the study of both topics is essential for our spiritual life, and the study of both these topics requires a Guru.

### WHO IS A TRUE GURU?

According to the Upanishads, there are two qualifications that a person must have in order to be considered as a Sat Guru (perfect Guru). The Guru needs to be a master of the scriptures (Brahma-srotriya) and to have a direct realization of the Self or Brahman (Brahma-nishtha). Such a person knows the yogic path from beginning to end and therefore has the capacity to teach it to others.

Another quality that a Guru must have is love, compassion, and caring for other people. Compassion is the only motivation for the Guru to teach and transmit spiritual knowledge to others. For a true Guru there is no other motivation, because a true Guru does not have any personal desires. Swami Sivananda describes the Guru as the richest person in creation, richer than any emperor or king, because in his or her possession is the entire wealth of the Lord. The Guru is a person who has fulfilled all possible human desires. Having fulfilled all desires, what possible motive might they have to teach us other than love and compassion? They teach because of Grace. By definition, a true Guru must be completely selfless. He or she does not expect anything in return; there is no personal interest there, only love.

The Guru can save us from the greatest disease, which is perpetual suffering caused by our spiritual ignorance, and so the Guru is our greatest savior. That is why we worship the Guru. Yet, the Guru has no desire to be worshipped; the need to worship is ours. A Guru will never point us toward himself; rather, he or she always points us towards our own Self. Their only purpose is to direct us towards the knowledge of our true nature; this is the reason they manifest in our life..

### GURU IS GOD HIMSELF

According to the yogic scriptures, the Guru, the Self, and God are one and the same. The Guru that you see outside is identical with your own Self, which is within, and is also identical with God whom we worship. By saying that the Guru is God, we do not mean that the physical body of the Guru is God, but that God reveals Himself to the aspirant through the form of the Guru. God comes to each one of us in a personal way, in the form of our personal Guru. Whoever is the Guru for one person may not be the Guru for another person.

Why does God manifest in our life in the form of the Guru? According to our tradition, the Jiva, the individual soul, is going through a long path, a Divine path of purification that takes many lifetimes. When the heart is pure enough, the soul begins to yearn to know the truth, or God. It prays, “O God, please show yourself to me, please come to me.” God listens to our prayers and appears in our life in the form of the Guru to show us the path to Himself, which is the path to our own true Self. It is said that when the disciple is ready, the Guru shows up at the disciple’s doorstep. ‘Ready’ here means pure. When there is enough purification in the heart and the mind the Guru appears. Once the Guru takes responsibility for a disciple, the Guru will never leave the disciple; our Guru will stay with us until we realize the Self, even if it takes many lifetimes.

### NECESSITY OF A GURU

People often ask: how important it is to have a Guru? Do we really need a Guru to progress on the spiritual path and attain the goal? If so, must the Guru be in a physical human form? The answer is that having a Guru is essential and extremely important for those who are living a spiritual life. In fact, it is the most important thing. The Upanishads declare that one who has a Guru knows while one who does not have a Guru does not know. In our tradition, knowledge comes only through a Guru, not through books or any other means. Thus, we need a living spiritual master in a physical form. There are few exceptions to this rule. There are great yogis and saints like Dattatreya and Ramana Maharshi who did not have a Guru in a physical form. Yet, these were rare exceptions. Most of us need a human Guru in a physical form to guide us to our goal.

### HOW TO FIND A GURU

Clearly, a Guru is necessary, but how can we find one? First and foremost, we need to desire a Guru. If we truly have a powerful desire to find our teacher, eventually we will find him or her. It is said that when the heart and the mind are

pure, the Guru shows up at our doorstep. But this does not mean that we should sit idle. Rather, we should actively search for our Guru. If we wish to learn yoga, we need to find a teacher who can teach us yoga. If we wish to realize the Self, we need to find a teacher who has realized the Self and who can teach us how to attain this goal. In this process of searching for a teacher, we meet different teachers. They enlighten us and open many gates for us. Eventually, we reach our Guru. At that moment, we enter the path that leads to freedom, to spiritual liberation. Then we can be certain that we have reached the last leg of our spiritual journey.

Desiring and searching for a teacher should be combined with prayer. If you wish to find your teacher, pray to God to send you your teacher. Pray hard, with a sincere heart: ‘Oh, Lord, help me find my Guru.’ Prayer is a very effective method. Another method, which is the most important and powerful one, is meditation. In deep meditation, if you sow the seed of finding your teacher, that seed will sprout, and you will find your teacher. If you combine all these methods - desiring a teacher, praying, meditating, and actively searching - you will soon, if it is within your destiny, find your teacher. When this happens, it seems that we have finally found our teacher, but truly, it was the teacher who has found us.

### HOW TO RECOGNIZE YOUR GURU

Still people may wonder: ‘How do I recognize a teacher as a true teacher, and how do I know that this is my own personal teacher?’ You know that you have found your Guru because in his or her presence you find peace. You feel as if you have reached home. You were restless, you were searching, and finally you found what you were looking for. In the presence of your Guru you feel content, you do not have any other desires or needs. When we were in the presence of Swami Vishnudevananda, we felt like we did not need anything else. To be with him was enough. Yet, he did not allow us to simply sit in his presence for too long. He always sent us to do some karma yoga.

In the presence of your Guru you begin to flourish, and you are ready to follow the Guru’s instructions. Then you start to grow from within. This growth is a long process. It may take your entire life, but you are content because you found your Guru and you have no doubt. Thus, when people ask how one knows that they have found their Guru, the answer is, ‘When you find your Guru, you know’.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE TEACHER

A true teacher is someone who can guide us in such a way that we are able to experience the teachings ourselves. Additionally, there are other characteristics, like purity, honesty, ethical qualities, wisdom, and skill in guiding others. Most importantly, we should seek a spiritual preceptor who is following the spiritual path from beginning to end, is skillful in guiding others to do the same and has a direct experience of the teachings.

We may meet a teacher but may not be sure if he or she is a true Guru. How can we tell? The best way to test is through our own spiritual perception, by observing the impact of their spiritual teachings on ourselves. We need to take enough time to test the teachings. It may take years, but eventually, we will be able to recognize the actual value and authenticity of a spiritual teacher. What we wish from the teacher is not to learn theory, but to learn how to practice and experience the teachings. After a few years you can look within and ask, ‘Am I experiencing the teachings? Did the preceptor fulfill his or her promises to me? Did they act in a way which is consistent with the teachings?’ If the answer is ‘yes’, then you know that this is a true, authentic, genuine teacher.

But we must keep in mind that the Guru has a human side as well as a Divine side. The guidance for the disciple is to focus only on the Divine side of the teacher, never on the human side. For example, your Guru may help you to realize the Self, but your Guru may not know mathematics or engineering. There may be many things that are worldly in nature that the Guru does not know. But the Guru can guide you wonderfully on the spiritual path. Thus, we need to remember these two sides of the Guru. If we are disappointed by the fact that the Guru also has a human side, we may not benefit from his teachings, from his presence, and from his Grace.

### WHAT DOES THE GURU TEACH?

The Guru teaches us how to transcend samsara or the cycle of suffering. The source of all our suffering is ignorance regarding our true nature. The Guru imparts to us a special kind of knowledge by which this ignorance is removed. When this ignorance is removed, the cause for all possible suffering is also removed. Thus, the Guru gives us a method to rid ourselves of ignorance and pain. This method has many names. In our tradition we call it ‘yoga’. The word yoga has two primary meanings. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says that “Yoga is the separation from the union with pain.” (Ch. 6, v. 23). The second definition of Yoga is the realization of the oneness of the individual consciousness and the Supreme Consciousness. Ultimately, we do not accept a real separation; we do not believe that the individual consciousness is truly separated from the universal consciousness. We believe that there is only one consciousness, and that separation is only an appearance. Yoga is that knowledge which removes the apparent separation between the human being and God and the false idea that the Self is different from Brahman or God.

The Guru teaches us how to realize our true nature, which essentially is one with God. This knowledge is not theoretical, but practical. Swami Sivananda teaches that an ounce of practice is worth tons of theory. The most important part in the teaching of the Guru is the practice, because the practice is the method of attaining the goal of life.



## THE GURU AS “DOCTOR”

The scriptures often use the analogy of medicine. The Guru is seen as a doctor, the disciple as the patient. The disease that needs to be removed is our spiritual ignorance or misapprehension of reality: not knowing who we are, and having the wrong notion about ourselves, the world and God. The symptom of this disease is our suffering. The medicine that the doctor gives us in order to cure us from this disease is the teachings. Just as the doctor evaluates the condition of the patient and prescribes a remedy that specifically fits the person and his condition, so does the Guru apply a specific remedy for each of us according to our specific needs, condition and level of spiritual progress.

Swami Vishnudevananda gave general teachings to all, but he also offered specific teachings to different individuals according to their needs. The individual teachings were not formal; they came in different ways, many times through instructions in karma yoga. Thus, the Guru always gives individual attention to his disciples.

The Guru heals us from our spiritual disease by offering us a series of practices. The purpose of these practices is to remove the cataract of ignorance and to allow us to see our own Self, the world and reality as they truly are. Then the causes of suffering and suffering itself disappear, and consequently our capacity to help others increases tremendously. In other words, when we heal, we ourselves become healers. But there is one important thing to remember: the Guru can only prescribe the medicine, it is still up to us to take it, to apply the remedy by practicing the teachings. Even the best doctor cannot heal us if we do not agree to be healed, if we have no desire to become healthy, if we do not take the medicine.

Faith is extremely important in this process. Even in medicine, we hear about the placebo effect. Placebo means that when you have faith in something, that faith itself can heal you. It is not the medicine that heals but the faith in the medicine that heals. Similarly, in our spiritual life, if we have faith, shraddha, in our Guru and in the teachings, and if we apply the teachings with faith, we are much more likely to succeed. Faith is important because if we lose faith, we will not apply the teachings. And even if we do try to apply them, without faith they will not be as effective.

Just like a good doctor, the teacher is giving us the medicine and also instructing us how to take it. And along the way, the Guru will change the medicine according to our progress. Slowly, our spiritual preceptor will take us to the healthy state, the state in which we realize our oneness with God, the state in which we realize our true nature and attain spiritual liberation.

## HOW TO BE A DISCIPLE

Once you recognize your Guru and accept him or her as your Guru, then you are also ready to accept the Guru's spiritual instructions and put them into practice. You spend time with your Guru so that the Guru can guide you and correct you. Through a gradual process, the teacher brings

you to the point where you start to experience the teachings directly. Along the way, there are things that the disciple must learn. This is a very long process that takes many years. Eventually, a true Guru can take the disciple all the way on the spiritual path, from beginning to end.

The relationship of the disciple to the Guru is a relationship of love and devotion. For some, it is love at first sight. For others, it is a longer, slower process. For some it is a quiet and peaceful relationship of love and devotion, called Shanta Bhava. They feel the presence of the Guru as profound peace. For others it is more dynamic. Sometimes the disciples feel an ache of longing when they are physically far away from the Guru. Other times, even if the Guru is physically far away, they can still feel the Guru's presence within their heart. The disciple's love for the Guru constantly grows and evolves. This is not a normal relationship with a logical progression in which one comes to the Guru in order to learn and after a certain number of years the learning is complete. The relationship is spiritual, and it is of the nature of bhakti, of love and devotion which manifests in our life and which constantly grows.

The process is gradual and can also develop through pain. The disciple may have a lot of emotions toward the Guru and these emotions may come with great intensity. But eventually these emotions will purify, will clear up and will become love or devotion. The connection between the Guru and the disciple is extremely powerful. It is a deep and long connection that crosses lifetimes, many lifetimes.

## HOW TO GET CLOSE TO THE GURU

The best way to get close to the teacher is to follow his or her spiritual instructions. The teachers do not desire for us to be attached to them. Their goal is to introduce us to our true, Divine nature. They wish to show us the way to freedom, to introduce us to that reality which is absolutely free, which is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Nothing can make them happier than seeing us attain this goal. But they also know that there is a long and often painful process of purification that they must take us through before we can reach the goal. Through their association and through their guidance we purify and eventually attain our goal which is Self-Realization or God-Realization. Self-realization is not ego realization. On the spiritual path we are moving from selfishness to selflessness. Therefore, the first instruction that any spiritual teacher will give us would be the injunction “serve” then “love”, then “give.” These were the first three instructions that Swami Sivananda gave to his disciples. For example, he instructed Swami Vishnudevananda to go to the West as people were waiting there to receive the teachings. And Swami Vishnudevananda followed the instruction, even though it was painful for him to leave his teacher, to leave his country, to leave the Himalayas and the Ganges which he loved. But he was a good disciple and he followed the instructions of his beloved teacher. And until the end of his life, everything that he did was under the guidance of his Guru Swami Sivananda.

This made him feel very close to Swami Sivananda. Therefore, if you want to get close to your Guru, try to follow his or her instructions as much as you can, even though this is not easy, it may even be extremely difficult.

## THE LEGACY OF SWAMI VISHNUDEVANANDA

Swami Vishnudevananda was our Guru, and we had the direct experience of being with him. He was very human from many points of view, but he also had a Divine side, and those of us that lived with him could clearly see both sides. His purpose was to help us transcend our own human side, our own little ego, to transcend the realm of suffering and to move into the realm which is beyond samsara—the realm of our true Self. This is what he taught us, and he did it in a very marvellous way. He first taught us how to take care of the world, and then, how to transcend the world. Before leaving his body, he told us to take care of this organization. Just before leaving to India for his last journey, he gathered his senior disciples and he spoke to each one of us. He went from one person to the other and said: “Be a good acharya, be a good acharya”. We asked him what a good acharya meant and he said: “A good acharya is one who takes care of this organization.” And we asked, “Why?” He said, “Because this organization is my body.”

What happens when we do not take care of our body? We are unable to do the practices that we need to in order to realize the Self, nor are we able to serve others. Similarly, Swami Vishnudevananda

taught us that if we do not take care of this organization, we will neither be able to take care of others, nor we will be able to do what is necessary in order to attain our goal in life, which is Self-realization. These were his last words to us before leaving for India for the last time and before leaving his body.

He left us with this heritage to carry on the mission of Swami Sivananda, which he carried faithfully for so many years. Since he left his body, each one of his disciples has been doing their level best to carry on this mission. We all know that our duty is first to realize ourselves what he taught us, and then to share with others whatever we received from him. These are the two things. There is nothing else to be done. Swami Vishnudevananda is a very good example of a real Guru because of his profound humility and because of his

great devotion to his teacher. He refused to be called a Guru and even scolded us when we did. When we came to ask for his blessings, he would say “My blessings are cheap, go to the Master, go to Swami Sivananda.” He did not call this organization by his own name; he gave it the name of his Guru, Swami Sivananda. For him, Swami Sivananda was everything, and he himself was nothing. He never considered himself to be a yoga master, although so many people all over the world considered him to be a great master. As a person, he was very humble; his devotion to Swami Sivananda was second to none, and he was a supreme practitioner and a great yogi. Still, until the last moment of his life, everything he did, he did for his Guru, his master, Swami Sivananda.

Swamiji was a wonderful example for all of us of the relationship between Guru and disciple. He was an exemplification of a perfect disciple, and whoever is a perfect disciple can also be a perfect Guru, a Sat Guru. I personally believe that before Swamiji left his body, he realized the goal of his life, and he blessed all of us. When he was asked by one of his disciples, “What should I do in order to realize the Self?” he said: “Practice karma yoga for thirty years, and

don't look back, and you will realize the Self.”

This was his message: “Don't think about yourself. Whatever you do—even your own practice, dedicate it to the entire humanity.” Do absolutely nothing for your own sake. Do everything for others. Even sadhana. Even your own realization. This was his teaching, and this is a wonderful

teaching. When we saw him, we saw his Guru, Swami Sivananda. I never met Swami Sivananda, but seeing Swamiji, I believe I saw Swami Sivananda.

When you see a good disciple, you see the disciple's Guru, and this is how it was in the case of Swamiji. And we pray that all of us will be able, even to a small degree, to emulate the example of our own Guru, Swami Vishnudevananda, both as a disciple, and as a teacher, as a practitioner, and, most importantly from his point of view, as a servant of humanity.

*Swami Swaroopananda is the acharya of Sivananda Yoga Centres and Ashrams in the Middle East and in the Bahamas and is one of the foremost disciples of Swami Vishnudevananda.*

Photo: Swami Vishnudevananda at the shrine of Swami Sivananda, Yoga Camp





### Matsya Avatara Fish

The incarnation that saved humanity from the Great Deluge.



### Kurma Avatara Tortoise

The incarnation that supported the churning-rod (Mount Mandara) when the devotees and asuras churned the cosmic ocean of milk for amrita.

### Parasurama Avatara Rama with Axe

The incarnation that delivered the country from the oppression of the kshatriya rulers.



### Rama Avatara

The incarnation that destroyed the wicked ten-headed demon Ravana and brought righteousness to the world.

### Varaha Avatara Boar

The incarnation that rescued the earth with its tusks when it had been dragged down to lower realms by the demon Hiranyaksha.



### Narasimha Avatara Man-lion

The incarnation that freed the world from the oppression of the demon Hiranyakasipu, father of Prahlada.

### Sri Krishna Avatara

The incarnation that destroyed the demon Kamsa, delivered the message of the Bhagavad Gita, and became the force behind the bhakti schools of India.



### Buddha Avatara

The incarnation that affirmed the principles of non-violence and love.

### Vamana Avatara Dwarf

The incarnation that restored the power of the devatas which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of demon King Bali.



### Kalki Avatara

The incarnation that will appear at the end of the Kali Yuga, to destroy the wicked and re-establish virtue.



*Whenever there is decay of righteousness, then I Myself come forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age.*  
Bhagavad Gita Ch IV v.8

# THE TEN AVATARA OF LORD VISHNU

Taken from images painted on the walls of the Narayana Hall, Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram.



# TAKE THE PULSES OF INDIA

Indian cuisine is one of the finest in the world. Recipes using the pulses of India are full of colour, vibrancy and health-giving nutrients. They are easy to master. Pulses are used to make a wide variety of food in Indian cuisine. They can be ground into flour, soaked and ground into a paste, and commonly used in desserts. They are usually available in three types: whole, split with skin on, or split with skin removed. Fully versatile and immensely nutritious, make sure they are a staple in your kitchen cupboard.

Dive in and relish the taste of India.

**CHICKPEA** (channa)—white skinned variety is known as kabuli channa. Channa flour is the main ingredient for many dishes.

## Chana Masala

Preparation time: 20 minutes (plus overnight soaking and cooking of chickpeas) Serves 4

### Ingredients

1½ cups cooked chickpeas (channa/garbanzo) (soak overnight and cook till tender)

1 large tomato  
½ tsp fennel seed  
1 tsp garam masala  
½ tsp minced fresh ginger  
1 small bunch chopped coriander leaves  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 tbsp oil

1 tsp salt (adjust to taste)

Directions: Heat oil and add the ginger. Fry for 30 seconds and add fennel seeds. Add tomatoes and cook until soft. Cool and blend to a fine paste. Return to the same pan and add cooked chickpeas, chilli powder, salt and water. Bring to boil and simmer for a few minutes. Add the garam masala and sprinkle liberally with chopped coriander leaves. Serve with rice or flat bread.



**URAD** (black gram)—small black seed, white inside. Used widely to make dosas, idlis, poppadum.

## Adai (South Indian pancakes)

Preparation time: 30 minutes (plus overnight soaking of pulses) Serves 4

### Ingredients

½ cup rice  
¼ cup toor dal  
¼ cup split chick peas (chana dal)  
¼ cup urad dal (split black lentils)  
5 to 6 red chillies, broken into pieces  
2 tbsp freshly grated coconut (optional)  
¼ cup grated carrot  
¼ cup finely chopped cabbage  
¼ cup finely finely chopped fresh coriander  
1 tbsp finely chopped curry leaves salt to taste  
4 tsp oil for cooking

Directions: Clean, wash and soak rice, dals and chillies in enough water to adequately cover, for 2 hours. Drain and blend in a mixer to a coarse batter using approx. 1¼ cups of water. Transfer mixture into a deep bowl, add all the remaining ingredients and mix well. Heat a shallow frying pan (griddle), sprinkle a little water on the surface and wipe it off gently using a cloth. Pour a ladleful of the batter and spread it in a circular motion to make a 175 mm. (7") diameter thin circle. Spread ¼tsp of oil over the batter and along the edges and cook on a medium flame till the Adai turns golden brown in colour and crisp. Turnover and cook on other side. Fold over to make a semi-circle. Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve immediately.



**RED LENTIL** (masoor)—brown skinned lentil, orange inside. Commonly used to make dal, soups and stews.

## Red Lentil (masoor) Dal

Preparation time: 30 minutes Serves 2-3

### Ingredients

¾ cup masoor dal/red lentils  
½ or 1 tsp lemon juice, as required  
1 medium sized tomato, chopped  
¼ inch fresh ginger, finely chopped  
1 green chilli, chopped  
1 to 2 whole dry red chillies  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
¼ or ½ tsp red chilli powder  
¼ or ½ tsp garam masala powder  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp crushed dry fenugreek leaves (optional)  
2 cups water, as required  
2 tbsp oil or ghee

1 tbsp chopped fresh coriander leaves salt as required  
Directions: Clean and rinse dal. Boil lentils in a pan with 2 cups water, till soft and mushy. Adjust quantity of water as required. When dal is cooked, lightly beat with a wooden spoon and keep aside. In another pan, heat oil or ghee. Fry the cumin seeds till browned. Add chopped ginger and stir fry for 10-15 seconds. Add green and red chillies. stir. Add all the dry spice powders one by one and stir. Add the tomatoes and fry till oil separates and tomatoes soften. Add the cooked dal. Add 1½ to 2 cups water. Add salt and stir. Simmer dal for 6-7 minutes more on a low or medium flame till you get the desired medium consistency. Add crushed fenugreek and simmer for 1 minute. Add lemon juice and 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves and stir. Serve with steamed basmati rice or flat bread.



**TOOR** (pigeon pea)—beige lentil, yellow inside. A staple in everyday Indian households.

## Toor Dal Sambar

Preparation time: 60 minutes (plus overnight soaking and cooking of toor dal) Serves 2-3

### Ingredients

#### For lentils

1 cup toor dal (pigeon peas)  
2 ½ cups water  
1 tbsp oil

#### For sambar

1½ cups of tamarind water (1 tsp tamarind paste dissolved in water)  
4 tbsp oil  
½ cup carrot, julienned  
½ cup red pepper, julienned  
3 green chillies, split in half (adjust to taste)  
20 curry leaves  
½ cup cubed tomatoes  
½ tsp cumin seeds  
½ tsp mustard seeds  
½ tsp turmeric  
2 tsp chopped fresh coriander  
salt to taste

Directions: Soak lentils overnight. Cook in salted water till soft. In a heavy sauce pan on medium heat add oil and mustard seeds. When they splutter add cumin seeds. Add the carrot and red peppers and cook for 3 minutes. Add turmeric, tamarind, tomatoes, salt, curry leaves, and cooked lentils. Add water to medium consistency and simmer for a few minutes. Serve with rice or flat bread.



**MUNG BEAN** (green gram)—green outer shell and yellow inside. Used for both sweet and savoury dishes.

## Kitchari (rice and lentils)

Preparation time: 35 minutes

Serves 4

### Ingredients

1 cup white or brown basmati rice  
1 cup split mung dal (yellow lentils)  
4 cups water  
2 tbsp ghee or butter  
2 tbsp minced fresh ginger or 1 tbsp dry ginger  
1½ tbsp cumin powder  
1 tsp turmeric  
salt and pepper to taste

Garnish: chopped fresh coriander, ghee, yogurt



Directions: Bring water to boil in a large heavy bottomed saucepan. Put rice and dal in fine mesh colander and rinse mixture under cool water until it runs clear.

Add rice and dal mixture to boiling water. Cover and simmer for about 30 minutes or until water is absorbed. Add more water for a soupier consistency. Fry spices in ghee or butter in pan till fragrant. When rice and dal are cooked take off heat and pour spices into rice/dal and mix thoroughly. Garnish as required. Serve with flat bread.

Sweet Variation: Add ½ cup coconut milk, maple syrup to taste, cinnamon and nutmeg to the ghee/butter. Omit the cumin and turmeric. Add dried fruit and toasted nuts. Serve with shredded coconut as garnish.





# JANMA SAMADHI YATRA 2018

## SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE MAHASAMADHI OF SWAMI VISHNUDEVANANDA

The Janma Samadhi Yatra started from Swami Vishnudevananda's birth place in Nemmara in Kerala, south India on 24 September 2018 and travelled through eleven states and two union territories visiting temples and holy places, giving talks, seminars, conferences, yoga demonstrations and satsangs in cities, towns and villages along the way.

We shared Swami Vishnudevananda's teachings of Yoga and Vedanta in institutes of higher education, colleges, schools, local communities and our Sivananda Centres and Ashrams, bringing yoga to a wider public throughout India, finally reaching the place of Swamiji's Jalsamadhi in Netala in the Himalayas on 9 November. It was a challenging and inspirational journey of six weeks and hundreds of miles. Over one hundred yatis from around the world took part in the momentous journey which was divided into three segments. Each segment connected many thousands of people to each other and spread Swami Vishnudevananda's perennial message of Unity in Diversity.

The Yatra was well-received wherever it went, and opened the hearts and minds of the yatis as well as those who came into contact with the teachings. Celebrating Swamiji's Mahasamadhi Silver Jubilee with Acharya Prahladji and other disciples and devotees marked the end of the journey and was one of the highlights of the Yatra. The mission of this simple and heartfelt endeavour of propagating peace and unity through Yoga and Vedanta as taught by our Masters was accomplished.

We hope and pray that Swami Vishnudevananda's mission will grow from strength to strength and we know that all those who have contributed in this Janma-Samadhi Yatra have experienced his blessings and guidance and will continue their efforts in taking Swamiji's teachings to the world at large.





# KARMA, UNITY AND FREEDOM

## YOGA AND THE QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

by Srinivasan



*Man wants happiness. He shuns pain. He moves heaven and earth to get the happiness he wants from sensual objects, and lo, gets himself entangled in the extricable meshes of Maya. Poor man! - Swami Sivananda*

Everyone is seeking happiness. Everyone has their own personal strategies for attaining happiness.

Everyone relates to the world based on what they believe consciously or unconsciously to bring happiness or unhappiness. The drama of life is thus comprised of karma, actions to attain happiness and avoid pain, as well as reactions to the expected and unexpected consequences of actions. When people act selfishly, or unskillfully, suffering is the undesired result. Promising a release from the world of suffering, yoga practice cultivates skillful strategies and attitudes to realize absolute and universal happiness. These strategies begin with healthy living and healthy relationships, with the goal of Self-knowledge—the realization of Absolute Unity within the world of apparent diversity—and Absolute Freedom from countless superimposed conditions on happiness. Yoga focuses on the removal of the self-imposed obstacles to a natural state of happiness rather than selfishly trying to attain possessions, prestige, power or pleasure in opposition to others and conditioned in time, space and causation.

Karma, the law of action and reaction, is the feedback mechanism which yoga practitioners rely on to sharpen their discriminative skills to choose happiness over suffering in life. Karma motivates spiritual transformation through the pain and suffering experienced when ignorant or dysfunctional strategies ultimately fail either resulting in frustrated desires or the loss of pleasure. The ignorant assumption that happiness can be attained by fulfilling the material conditions supportive of our vanity, desires, prejudices and fears, is the disease behind our suffering rather than the remedy. Individual karma is experienced as the daily drama of reacting to the superimposed obstacles to happiness. Happiness is experienced as an illusive, impermanent prize to be conquered, captured and protected. Yoga rejects this material, conditional approach to happiness, as ignorance. The very suffering that motivates selfish action is actually the result of selfish action. Thus ignorance perpetuates suffering creating the wheel of karma. With the yogic practices of viveka (discrimination) and vairagya (dispassion), the karmic disease of perpetual suffering is treated by nam-

ing and eliminating the cause of suffering as the kleshas: ignorance, vanity, desires, prejudice and fear. Once recognized, the kleshas can be systematically let go of as unhealthy habits and stress.

### THE THREE TYPES OF MIND

It is helpful in the process of recognizing the healthy and dysfunctional approaches to happiness to understand the energetic nature of the mind. Sattva, rajas and tamas are the three qualities or gunas that motivate all action and inaction. With a pure, sattvic mind we seek happiness in Unity, as love for love's sake; as an uncompromised commitment to Truth. The rajasic mind, motivated by selfish desires, pits each selfish individual against a world of perceived competitors, disrupting healthy relationships and Unity. The attachments created by selfish desires condition happiness, compromising integrity, truth and freedom. The resulting suffering generates more karma. Happiness has been alienated into external objects and conditions. The tamasic mind is a state of negativity and depression resulting from the failure of selfish rajasic strategies for happiness.

When material attachments are ultimately frustrated in a changing world, one's attitude can either shift to negativity and a feeling that the world is evil or unfair (the tamasic mind), or turn to yoga, (the sattvic mind). Initially yoga allies the rajasic mind's desire to escape suffering with the sattvic discriminative mind to work hard to develop the necessary skills to awaken Self-knowledge. Through yoga sadhana, the aspirant cultivates healthy actions and attitudes and transforms bad habits into good ones. For the yoga practitioner, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras serves as a manual for understanding the defects of the mind and transforming those defects into freedom enhancing virtues. Yoga cultivates the sattvic mind by removing the attachments and expectations that place conditions on happiness, and by celebrating unconditional happiness as the very essence of Life. The sattvic mind finds peace and silence. Yoga proposes that happiness and freedom are only accessible to a quiet mind. With a quiet mind one can know the Self.

### BOOK I 2 *yogas chitta vritti nirodhah*

Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (chitta) from taking various thought forms (vrttis).

### BOOK II 3 *avidya asmita raga dvesha abhinivesha klesha*

The pain-bearing obstructions (kleshas) are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. Ignorance is the root cause of all the kleshas.

### BOOK II 12 *klesha moolah karmashaya drishta adrishta janma vedaniya*

The individual collection of works (sanchita karma) has its root in these pain-bearing obstructions (kleshas), and their experience (prarabdha karma) in this or in future lives.

### BOOK II 16 *heyam duhkham anagatam*

The misery which has not yet manifested is to be avoided (agami karma).

### BOOK IV 7 *karma shukla krishnam yoginah trividham itaresham*

Works are neither black nor white for the Yogis; for others they are threefold, black, white, and mixed.\*

### BOOK IV 28 *prasankhyane pyakusidasy sarvathavivekakhyater dharma megha samadhih*

Even when arriving at the right discriminating knowledge, he who gives up the fruits, unto him comes as the result of perfect discrimination, the Samadhi called the cloud of virtue.

### BOOK IV 29 *tatah kleshakarmanivrittih*

From that comes cessation of pains (klesha) and works (karma).

\*When the Yogi has purified the mind of the kleshas, the actions, and the karma produced by those actions will not bind him, because he did not desire them. He just works on: he works to do good, and he does good, but does not care for the result. But for ordinary people, who have not attained to that highest state, works are of three kinds, black (evil actions), white (good actions) and mixed.

### SAMSKARAS AND VASANAS

#### The Unconscious Roots of Karma

An individual's ego is made up of an endless collection of unconscious prejudices and habitual reactions to the material world. On the basis of these attachments, the ego objectifies the world and generates the drama we experience as karma. These unconscious impressions frame how each person experiences and reacts to the conditions of their life. These experiences can be best understood according to the three types of karma. Sanchita karma is the collection of all of the accumulated unconscious impressions and the habitual reactions to perceived objects and phenomena. Prarabdha karma is experienced as specific conditions and situations encountered throughout a lifetime, along with the pleasure and pain associated with those experiences. Prarabdha also includes the resources available during a lifetime with which to react to pleasant and unpleasant situations. Agami karma refers to the specific actions performed in real time in response to the

prarabdha situations encountered. The kleshas define the dysfunctional strategies for dealing with the suffering associated with the vasanas (seed desires). Samskaras are the impressions created by emotional reactions to the objects of the world; and the habitual actions - physical, verbal and mental, triggered by those emotional reactions. Samskaras live in each person's mental world triggering karma. One's perceptions of the world and the reactions to those perceptions constantly leave new samskaras on the mind. The more passionately and consistently those perceptions and reactions are repeated, the deeper the samskara. Our dream world is created from those impressions, and we consistently 'dream' our waking world based on the kleshas that generate our dreams. Samskaras are unconscious memories colored by likes and dislikes. The more they are repeated, the more they take on a life of their own as vasanas, binding a person to the objects that they have come to habitually believe to be sources of happiness. Vasanas are the unconscious



buttons of temptations and infatuations with objects, as well as prejudicial dislike for objects. These objectifications fragment life into countless pieces of likes and dislikes, which in turn become the conditions we place on happiness. Vasanas empowered by desire, generate thoughts, (vrittis). Thoughts can only be quieted temporarily until the source vasanas are rooted out. Every vritti is a 'whirlpool of energy' that creates noise in the mind. The reactions to specific conditions experienced is the real karma, and not the actual situations or objects themselves. Thus different people react in radically different ways to objectively comparable situations. One person's trauma is another person's heroic opportunity. One person's obsession or addiction, appears repulsive to another. The practice of yoga quiets the mind of the noise produced from vrittis and their root klesha vasanas. By burning the vasanas through Self-knowledge, devotion and meditation, remembering the sacred, all-pervading nature of God or Self, one discovers freedom from the wheel of karma.

### KARMA AND VASANAS - Discrimination and Imagination

As vasanas are the very essence of desire, they are based in imagination. Karma operates in the waking world of prarabdha by natural laws of cause and effect shared by all sentient beings. Whether dreaming or waking, vasana is the emotional response of like or dislike to the perceived objects and conditions of the world. Through discrimination, one learns from the reactions to actions and attitudes what promotes health, prosperity and wisdom, becoming more skillful in one's strategies for happiness. This yoga of karma is 'skill in action'. When one turns the motivation from seeking pleasure based in imagination to acting for the universal good, happiness is derived through living dharma. Peace of mind, compassion, and realizing the unity in diversity become the sattvic results of dharmic action, as opposed to the suffering ultimately resulting from the rajasic and tamasic strategies of objectifying the world into the pleasant and unpleasant.

### THE THREE GUNAS AND KARMA

The mind is sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic according to the predominant nature of the vasanas and samskaras. The nature of the samskara is based on the quality of the vasana that generated the specific reaction to an object or experience. If we have fear or hatred towards a certain object the habitual reaction is already programmed. Thus samskaras and vasanas are inseparable. Every 'new' experience is informed from past experiences, and most often the 'new experience' only reinforces past impressions and the seed emotional reactions. Through repetition vasanas increase in strength. A dark hatred or ad-

diction is maintained by tamasic samskaras and vasanas. A passionate desire or prejudice corresponds to rajasic samskaras and vasanas. Passionate vasanas can rotate from love to hatred and back ("I love you honey", and "go to hell honey"). A sattvic samskara reflects a clear knowledge of unity, compassion and love, and a deep understanding and commitment to dharma. Through discrimination we learn from karma. The knowledge gained creates new skillful sattvic samskaras and vasanas. Sadhana is conscious practice to eliminate the tamasic, and transform the rajasic into sattvic samskara/vasanas of devotion to God and dharma, and knowledge of the unchanging reality. Sattvic samskaras ultimately serve as a clear mirror to reflect the unconditioned, immortal Self. The end of karma is Self-knowledge, freedom from all vasanas. Ultimately, through the practice of meditation and discrimination, samskaras of restraint bring the mind to experience greater and greater depths of silence and meditation.

### SADHANA TO TRANSFORM AND BURN KARMA

Yoga sadhana systematically transforms the darkness and agitation of the tamasic and rajasic vasanas into sattva—eventually burning even the sattvic vasanas in the realization of the Self. Each path of yoga offers its own sadhana for liberation:

**KARMA YOGA** - through the power of selfless actions motivated by caring and compassion, vanity and selfish attachment are transformed into a life of loving integrity, and a realization of unity and grace.

**BHAKTI YOGA** - transforms vasanas generated by despair, fear, vanity, craving, anger, jealousy and attachment into devotion. Resting in supreme love of God, bhakti develops faith through concentration on the sacred, and willingly surrenders ego as a celebration of infinite grace. Through love of God, one becomes God-like culminating in knowledge of the universal Self in all.

**RAJA YOGA** - uses pratipaksha bhavana, (replacing selfish rajasic and negative tamasic habits with pure sattvic ones) and meditation as paths to freedom from karma. The light of intuition burns the ignorance of the vasanas and the sacred unity of life is no longer fragmented into objects of desire, attachment and repulsion. Renunciation of vasanas is developed first by pratipaksha bhavana and then through the intuitive knowledge gained. A mind habituated to peace, knowledge and joy through the practice of meditation can choose peace when aggravated rajasic and tamasic vrittis actively arise. Awareness of the unchanging Self or purusha is awakened replacing all previous samskaras.

**JNANA YOGA** - Knowledge is the means for Self-realization and the cure for the disease of ignorance. Knowledge of God or the Absolute leads to devotion, selfless service, and meditation on the Absolute as the Consciousness animating all life.

### HOW DOES KARMA WORK?

The most important factor in the generation of karma is intention. When two people do a similar action with different intention, the effect of the action (karma phala) will be different. If someone tries to help another but ends up hurting them, the intention to help creates good karma generating unity and freedom. However, any element of carelessness or disrespect in the action, generates negative karma reinforcing ignorance.

It is important to note that what we consider 'good' or 'bad' karma depends on the guna that motivates and informs both the action, the intention, and the consequences of the action. When the mind is predominately sattvic, an unpleasant situation can be seen as a positive learning experience, or as a requirement for strengthening of character and integrity; whereas a pleasant situation could be seen as a temptation, a compromise or distraction from one's spiritual discipline and principles. For a rajasic practitioner, a psychic power might be seen as a deserved reward for hard work invested in sadha-

na, to be exploited to the maximum extent. To a sattvic aspirant, that same power will be seen as a tempting by-product of tapas, to be renounced as an obstacle to the goal of liberation and Self-realization. To a tamasic person, there is no point to practice, being oblivious to the many gifts at their disposal.

The law of karma motivates the burning desire for liberation necessary for spiritual transformation. From the perspective of the law of karma, all actions have consequences and all experiences are the consequence of past actions. Taking responsibility for karma, one looks to become more skillful and success suddenly becomes possible. True unity is reflected in a compassionate outlook towards the challenges of others. "There, but for the grace of God go I"; to love thy neighbor as thyself, are not just moral injunctions, but attitudes supported by the law of karma, precepts for daily practice. To perceive others as spiritual inferiors is a sign of a rajasic ego obstructing the realization of unity and honoring life as sacred. The lives of the saints of all traditions have set examples for a life of compassion and unity.

*Yoga shows the way.*

*Srinivasan, Yoga Acharya for US East Coast and Chicago and senior disciple of Swami Vishnudevananda, teaches throughout the Sivananda organisation in North America and Teachers' Training Courses worldwide.*

International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres

# Yoga Teachers' Training Courses 2019

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**Sadhana Intensive:** September 5 – September 19



**Serve. Love. Give. Purify. Meditate. Realize.**

sivanandayogaranch.org | (845) 436-6492 | yogaranch@sivananda.org



## A YEAR OF CELEBRATION SWAMI GAYATRIANANDA

The year 2018 was a year of celebration for our oldest member of staff, **Swami Gayatriananda**. We were delighted to honour Swamiji's 90th birthday and her 25th anniversary of initiation into the holy order of sannyas. Swamiji has been an inspiration to all of us who have served with her, in her unflinching and dedicated work in the Ashrams in Canada and India as well as her work in the Sivananda Yoga Centre in London. Always cheerful, always 'up and doing' and always ready to lend a compassionate ear to younger members of staff, she has been a beacon of light within the organisation. We wish her many more years of active service and pray that the blessings of Swami Vishnudevananda and Swami Sivananda continue to give her good health and liberation in this very lifetime.





# YOGA SADHANA

—THE PATHS OF YOGA *by Swami Sivananda*

**Sadhana** means any spiritual practice that helps the sadhaka to realise God. Abhyasa and sadhana are synonymous terms. Sadhana is the means to attain the goal of human life. Without sadhana no one can achieve the purpose of life. Sadhana differs in different individuals according to capacity, temperament and taste. Everyone must take to some kind of sadhana to attain the state of final beatitude. Sadhya is that which is attained through sadhana. It is God or Atman or Purusha. If you want to evolve quickly you must have the right kind of sadhana.

The spiritual path is thorny, precipitous and keen like the edge of a razor, but nevertheless has been trodden by those of strong determination, undaunted spirit and indomitable energy. When once you make up your mind to tread the path, everything becomes smooth and easy. There is descent of grace from the Lord. The whole spiritual world will back you up. The path will directly take you to the realms of infinite bliss.

Just as one coat will not suit Mr John, Mr Tom, Mr. Banerjee or Mr. Iyer, so also one path will not suit all people. There are four paths to suit four kinds of temperament. They all lead to the same goal, the attainment of Ultimate Reality. Roads are different but the destination is the same. The four paths that are inculcated for the achievement of this ultimate Truth from the different standpoints of one of action or the busy working person, the emotional or devotional person, the mystic, or the philosopher or the one of reason and will are respectively called karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga.

These four paths are not antagonistic to one another, but on the other hand are complementary. One-sided development is not commendable. Karma yoga purifies and develops the hand. Bhakti yoga destroys vikshepa (distraction of the mind) and develops the heart. Raja yoga steadies the mind and makes it one-pointed. Jnana yoga removes the veil of ignorance and develops will and reason. Therefore one should practise the four yogas.

## Bhakti Yoga Sadhana

Those who follow the path of devotion should do japa, read the holy scriptures such as the Bhagavata or the Ramayana. By the practice of navavidha bhakti, (the nine modes of devotion) the bhakta should develop bhakti to a very high degree. Sravana—hearing stories of the Lord, smarana—remembering the Lord at all times, kirtana—singing the Lord’s glories, vandana—prostration to the Lord, archana—worship of the Lord through ritual, padasevana—service at the Lord’s feet, sakhya—worship as a friend of the Lord, dasya—worship as a servant of the Lord, atma nivedana—complete surrender to the Lord, are the nine methods to develop bhakti. Bhaktas should observe vrata (vows), anushtana (austerity) and do prayers and manasic puja (mental worship). They should serve others, realising that the Lord resides in the hearts of all. This is the sadhana for those who tread the path of bhakti yoga.

## Karma Yoga Sadhana

Those who follow the path of karma yoga should do disinterested selfless service to the suffering humanity and society in various ways. They should surrender the fruits of action to the Lord as isvararpana (offering to God). They should give up agency by realising that they are the instruments in the hands of God. They should get rid of their selfishness and control their indriyas (senses). They should completely consecrate their lives in the service of humanity. They should consider that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord. If they serve people with such bhava (feeling, attitude) their hearts get purified in the long run. This is the sadhana for karma yogins. This is very important for all beginners in the spiritual path. This is the first step in the spiritual path. This is not the goal itself. Many erroneously think so and neglect the higher course of sadhana. They should advance still further and through dharana, dhyana and samadhi reach the highest goal.

## Raja Yoga Sadhana

A raja yogi slowly ascends the yogic ladder through the eight steps. He gets ethical training in the beginning to purify himself by the practice of yama (restraints) and he practises niyama (observances). Then he steadies his posture (asana). Then he practises pranayama to steady his mind and purify the nadis. Then by the practice of pratyahara (control of the senses), dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation) he gets samadhi (super-conscious state). Through samyama (dharana, dhyana and samadhi taken collectively), he attains different siddhis (powers). He restrains all the mental modifications that arise from the mind.

## Hatha Yoga Sadhana

The students of hatha yoga should try to awaken the kundalini shakti that lies dormant in the muladhara chakra by mudras, bandhas, asanas and pranayama. They should try to unite the prana and apana and send the united prana-apanas through the sushumna nadi. Heat is increased by retention of breath and vayu (prana) ascends up along the kundalini to the sahasrara chakra through the different chakras. When kundalini is united with Lord Siva at the sahasrara chakra the yogi attains supreme peace, bliss and immortality.

## Jnana Yoga Sadhana

Those who take up the path of vedanta or jnana yoga should acquire first the four means of salvation (sadhana chatushtaya): viveka, vairagya, shat sampat and mumukshutva. Viveka is discrimination between the real and the unreal. Vairagya is indifference to sensual enjoyments. Shat sampat or the sixfold virtues consists of: sama—serenity of mind, dama—control of the indriyas, uparati—satiety, titiksha—power of endurance, sraddha—intense faith and samadhana—mental balance. Mumukshutva is intense desire for liberation. Then they approach a Brahmanishtha guru, one who has realised the Supreme Self, and hear the srutis (revealed truth) from him. Then they reflect and meditate on the Self and eventually attain Atma sakshatkara (Self-realisation). Then the jnani claims with joy: ‘the Atman alone is, one without a second. Atman alone is the one Reality. I am Brahman, Aham Brahma Asmi. Sivoham. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma.’ The liberated sage (jivanmukta) sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.



# I STOOD IN MY SHOES AND WONDERED!!

A personal reminiscence by Suren Rao, assistant at the Teachers' Training Course Sivananda Kutir, Netala August 2017

Boys & girls, men & women,  
From countries across oceans,  
Youngest a couple of years out of her teens,  
Oldest crossed sixty and running sixteen.  
Assembled at Sivananda Kutir, for TTC,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

In the lap of Himalayan mountains,  
Deva Bhoomi, Gangotri & Yamunotri,  
Rishis, munis and saints sat in deep meditation here,  
Amidst divine peace, tranquillity & serenity.

Chanting Om Gajananam, Tryambakam,  
Om Namah Shivaya,  
Om Namo Narayanaya,  
Om Namo Sivanandaya,  
Om Namo Vishnudevanandaya,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Heavy dose of Bhagavad Gita,  
Upanishad and Vedanta,  
Spirituality, Pujas, Dharma & Karmas,  
Mantras, Mudras and Chakras,  
Taught in Gurukula Parampara,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Daily Pranayama, meditation and asanas,  
Bandhas, kriyas, yamas & niyamas  
Anatomy, karma yoga & silent walks,  
For rejuvenating body & quietening mind's flak,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Prakriti, ego and maya,  
Astral body, soul, and kaya,  
Ida, pingala and sushumna,  
Understanding illusory self & Brahman,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

I am not this body, this body is not mine,  
Aham Brahma Asmi, this intellect is not mine,  
Bear insults, bear injuries,  
Satsang, kirtan & song of Eighteenity,  
For uplifting one's spirituality,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Americans, Israeli, Italian,  
Spanish, French and Indians,  
German, Romanian and Japanese,  
Irish, South African, Kenyan and Chinese,  
An IAS, officers from the Navy, wives from Air Force & Army,  
Chanting with clarity Ganga Aarati,  
Perfect example of unity in diversity,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Learning to serve, love, give, meditate & realise,  
Be good, do good, be compassionate and rise,  
Adapt, adjust and accommodate,  
Messages worthy of world peace accolade  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
I stood in my shoes and wondered!!

Four weeks rolled by super fast,  
Leaving all amazed, agog and aghast,  
Retro-fitted with 108 surya namaskar & lubricated,  
In retrospect, we all hugely benefited,  
Learned loads & practised a ton,  
And also had a fair share of fun,

God willing, we would be back again,  
For Sadhana Intensive, ATTC and spiritual attain.

Farewell my friends, farewell to you all,  
Bye-Bye  
Au Revoir (French)  
La revedere (Romanian)  
L'hitraot (Hebrew)  
Aufwiedersehen (German)  
Hasta Luego (Spanish)  
Arrivederci (Italian)  
Zaijian (Chinese)  
Dos Vidaniya (Russian)  
Sayonara (Japanese)  
Farewell to you all,  
And may God bless you all,  
And I stood in my shoes and wondered,  
Who Am I, Who am I, Who Am I ? ..... I wondered!!!

radmssrao@gmail.com

Image: Bridge over the Ganges at Sivananda Kutir

# Prison Project Update



Since 1996 Karma Yogis at the Yoga Ranch have been corresponding with prisoners and sending a free copy of *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga* by Swami Vishnudevananda to inmates all across the United States. This year 195 copies were sent and in addition 29 copies of *Meditation & Mantras* by Swami Vishnudevananda as well as 25 other Sivananda books. Most of the funds are provided by selling cookies at the Sivananda Yoga Ranch and at the Sivananda New York Center. Yoga helps the prisoners to cope with their lives on many different levels, improving their physical and emotional health. Some of the letters require special instruction on different subjects and these requests are answered individually.

If you would like to contribute, please sell cookies for the Prison Project. For donations, checks can be mailed to "Sivananda Yoga Ranch" P.O.Box 195, Woodbourne, New York 12788, or call us on 845-436-6492 to make a tax deductible donation by credit card.

## The Prison Program in Bermuda



ShantiDevi (Shanell Vaughn), Advanced Teachers' Training graduate at the Sivananda Yoga Ranch, recently launched a Prison Yoga Program for the Bermuda Government, teaching in both men's and women's facilities. The idea arose from a desire to make yoga accessible to those who cannot go to a yoga studio. In her words, "Yoga is a practice in the art of peace. It is a way to calm and purify the mind so that we bring balance to each level of our existence. It is a systematic science that gives us the skills to go beyond the base emotions rooted in the ego— fear, anger, greed etc.—so that we can access our highest states of love and equanimity. For the men and women behind bars who voluntarily participate in each class, yoga is an invaluable tool for them to learn greater awareness, better self-regulation, and healthier ways to manage their emotions and patterns of behavior. It is my hope that when they re-enter the community they will have had a transformative encounter with yoga, and their established practice and knowledge will help them to be healthier, more peaceful and have a greater sense of their true nature."





INTERNATIONAL SIVANANDA YOGA

# The Sivananda Path

Be the change you wish to see in the world. Start your spiritual journey now.

Over 40 years of exceptional yoga teacher training: our courses are recognized worldwide and have produced thousands of graduates. The courses are based on the 5 Points of Yoga: Exercise, Breathing, Relaxation, Diet and Meditation & Positive Thinking. To suit all types of students, all four traditional paths of yoga are practiced: Bhakti (devotion), Karma (action), Raja (science), and Jnana (philosophy). This unique Gurukula system of teaching will immerse you in ashram life at the Sivananda yoga camp, the headquarters of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers.

Our goal is to plant the seed of peace in our trainees. We believe that by disciplining the mind and body, an inner spiritual awakening can be achieved, helping people become more peaceful; loving, tolerant, patient and understanding toward the whole of creation. Countless students come to learn how to live a simple, happy & healthy life, while sharing the sacred teachings of Yoga with people throughout the world. By following the Sivananda Path, you will gradually grow and develop your spiritual practice to become not only a better person, but an ambassador of peace to all those around you.

## Course Dates 2019

**TEACHER TRAINING**  
JUN 30 - JUL 28  
NOV 17 - DEC 15

**ADVANCED  
TEACHER TRAINING**  
AUG 4 - SEP 1

**SADHANA  
INTENSIVE**  
JUN 9 - 23

**ADAPTED  
SIVANANDA COURSE**  
JUL 29 - AUG 10

**TTC  
REFRESHER**  
TBD...

For more info, email us at: [registrations@sivananda.org](mailto:registrations@sivananda.org)

# IN MEMORY OF A DEAR FRIEND



**Durairaj Narayanasamy**, our dear friend and staff member in Toronto, left his body peacefully in his sleep on 11 November 2018, the same day that we mark Swami Vishnudevananda's Jalasamadhi. Durairaj was born in 1957, on 21 June, a day that we now celebrate as the International Day of Yoga. His life was centred on yoga. He was a karma yogi for many years in India, and later joined the Toronto Centre in 2012. Durairaj was calm and loving, and will be remembered for his infectious smile, compassion, generosity, sincere service, and for skilfully bringing people together through yoga, food, and excellent chai! He was caring and giving throughout his life. As a young boy, he would ask his mother to give him extra food for lunch, just so he could

give more away. He lived simply. As a staff member, he knew the name of every student, and he took karma yoga seriously. Just one day before he passed, friends and teachers gathered to wish him well, before he left for his annual winter migration back to India. Little did we know that it would truly be a farewell. Many at the Toronto Centre have struggled to accept the news of his passing and the loss that we feel. Durairaj's legacy however is the pure love he showed to absolutely everyone, taking his inspiration from Swami Vishnudevananda. We continue to repeat Om Tryambhakam for the departed soul and pray that Master and Swamiji continue to watch over him always.



Durairaj sent this poem out to many of his friends the week before he passed.

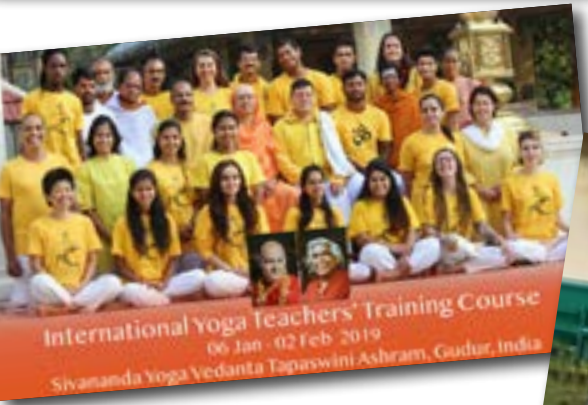
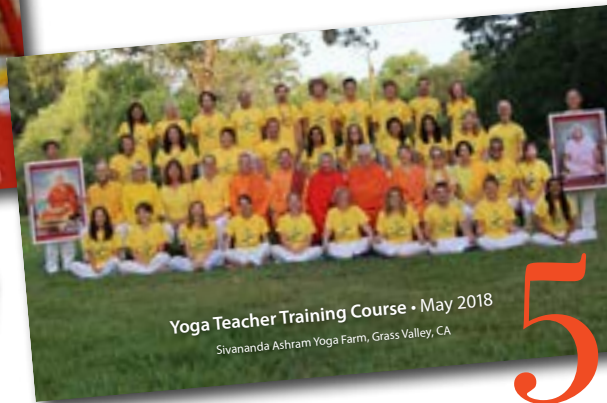
## MY SOUL HAS A HAT

*I counted my years  
& realized that I have  
Less time to live by,  
Than I have lived so far.  
I feel like a child who won a pack of candies: at first he ate  
them with pleasure  
But when he realized that there was little left, he began to  
taste them intensely.  
I have no time for endless meetings  
Where the statutes, rules, procedures & internal regula-  
tions are discussed,  
knowing that nothing will be done.  
I no longer have the patience  
to stand absurd people who,  
despite their chronological age,  
have not grown up.  
My time is too short:  
I want the essence,  
my spirit is in a hurry.  
I do not have much candy  
In the package anymore.  
I want to live next to humans,*

*very realistic people who know  
How to laugh at their mistakes,  
Who are not inflated by their own triumphs  
& who take responsibility for their actions.  
In this way, human dignity is defended  
and we live in truth and honesty.  
It is the essentials that make life useful.  
I want to surround myself with people  
who know how to touch the hearts of those whom hard  
strokes of life  
have learned to grow with sweet touches of the soul.  
Yes, I'm in a hurry.  
I'm in a hurry to live with the intensity that only maturity  
can give.  
I do not intend to waste any of the remaining desserts.  
I am sure they will be exquisite,  
much more than those eaten so far.  
My goal is to reach the end satisfied  
and at peace with my loved ones and my conscience.  
We have two lives  
& the second begins when you realize you only have one.*  
-Mário de Andrade, 1893-1945



# 50 YEARS OF THE SIVANANDA YOGA TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSE





The unsettling vision of a world engulfed in flames that Swami Vishnudevananda had experienced whilst meditating at the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat in the Bahamas became the catalyst for the conception of the TWO, (True World Order) a mission to bring peace to the world. The first programme of TWO was the Sivananda Yoga Teachers' Training Course, whose stated purpose was to train future leaders and responsible citizens of the world in techniques to finding peace. He knew that men and women with minds and emotions controlled were needed to create a peaceful society and that this could be achieved through yoga and meditation. He knew how difficult it was to check the emotions and be selfless in thought and action without training. He saw that even if a glimpse of the peace and happiness which true yogis enjoy could be brought to people in all walks of life, that attitudes and values within society would change for the better.

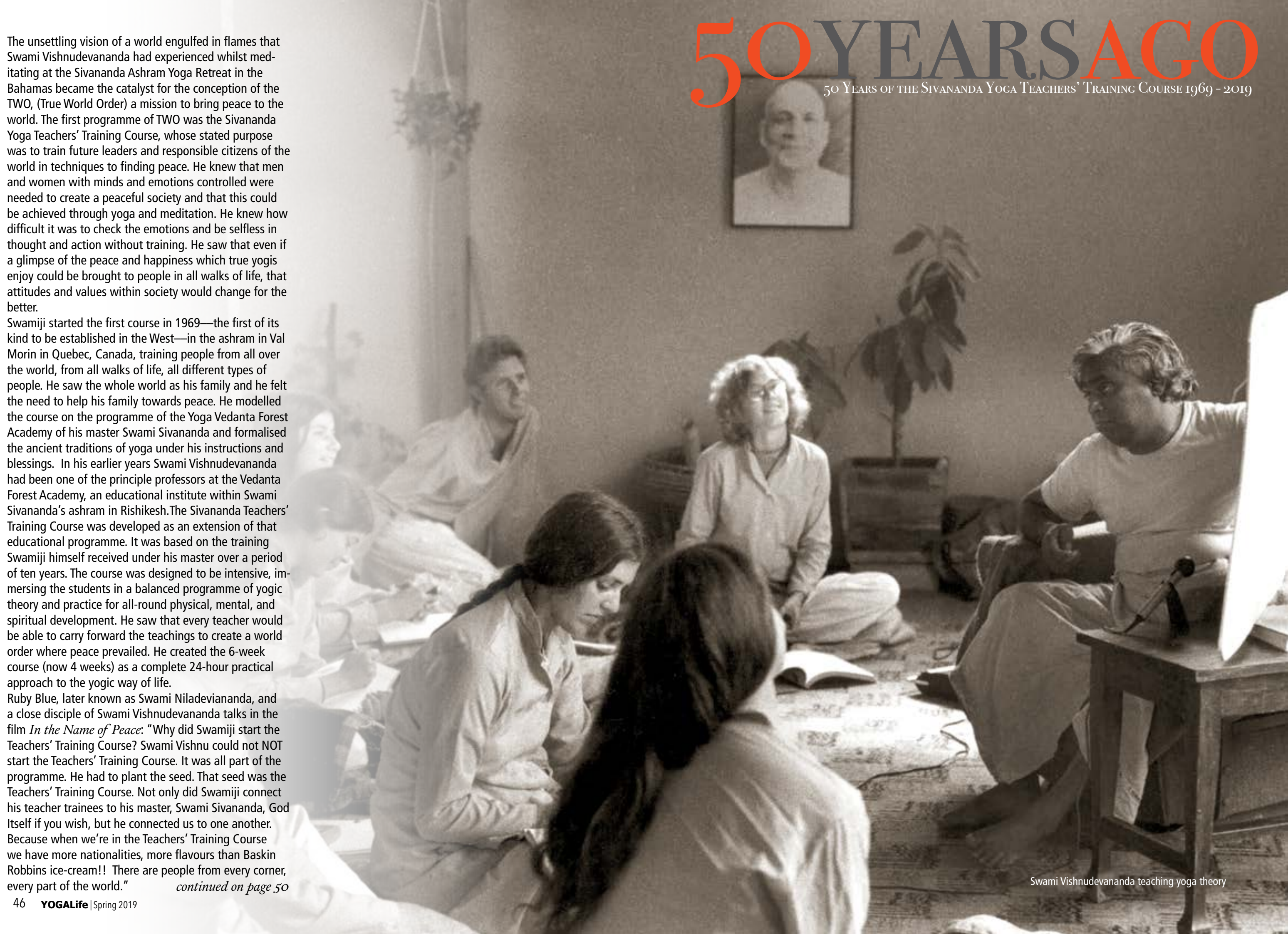
Swamiji started the first course in 1969—the first of its kind to be established in the West—in the ashram in Val Morin in Quebec, Canada, training people from all over the world, from all walks of life, all different types of people. He saw the whole world as his family and he felt the need to help his family towards peace. He modelled the course on the programme of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy of his master Swami Sivananda and formalised the ancient traditions of yoga under his instructions and blessings. In his earlier years Swami Vishnudevananda had been one of the principle professors at the Vedanta Forest Academy, an educational institute within Swami Sivananda's ashram in Rishikesh. The Sivananda Teachers' Training Course was developed as an extension of that educational programme. It was based on the training Swamiji himself received under his master over a period of ten years. The course was designed to be intensive, immersing the students in a balanced programme of yogic theory and practice for all-round physical, mental, and spiritual development. He saw that every teacher would be able to carry forward the teachings to create a world order where peace prevailed. He created the 6-week course (now 4 weeks) as a complete 24-hour practical approach to the yogic way of life.

Ruby Blue, later known as Swami Niladeviananda, and a close disciple of Swami Vishnudevananda talks in the film *In the Name of Peace*: "Why did Swamiji start the Teachers' Training Course? Swami Vishnu could not NOT start the Teachers' Training Course. It was all part of the programme. He had to plant the seed. That seed was the Teachers' Training Course. Not only did Swamiji connect his teacher trainees to his master, Swami Sivananda, God Itself if you wish, but he connected us to one another. Because when we're in the Teachers' Training Course we have more nationalities, more flavours than Baskin Robbins ice-cream!! There are people from every corner, every part of the world."

*continued on page 50*

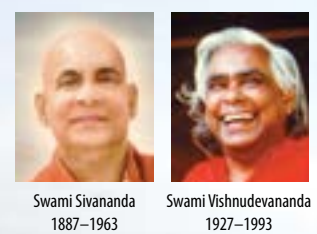
# 50 YEARS AGO

50 YEARS OF THE SIVANANDA YOGA TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSE 1969 - 2019



Swami Vishnudevananda teaching yoga theory





# Sivananda Yoga in Vietnam

## YOGA VACATIONS • OPEN YEAR ROUND

### COURSES in Dalat, Vietnam 2019

#### Teacher Training Course (TTC)

Taught in English with Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese translation. Open to all.

February 16–March 17  
July 13–August 11  
November 2–December 1

#### Yoga Health Detoxification Rejuvenation Retreats

March 17–31  
April 10–24  
May 2–16  
October 4–18

### SYHET 2020

#### Sivananda Yoga Health Educator Training

Application of classical yoga (5 points, 4 paths), Ayurveda and adapted asana for health and healing. Two-year, 800-hour professional course.

Email: [vietnamyogahealtheducator@sivananda.org](mailto:vietnamyogahealtheducator@sivananda.org)

Early bird discount ends June 1, 2019

Module 1: Jan. 3–18, 2020  
Module 2: Oct. 9–24, 2020  
Module 3: Jan. 8–23, 2021  
Distance learning  
Mentored practicum

#### Sadhana Intensive

March 17–31

#### Children's Yoga Camp

June 10–20  
June 24–30 (teens)  
Children's Yoga  
Teacher Training  
June 3–7

#### Vedanta and Silence

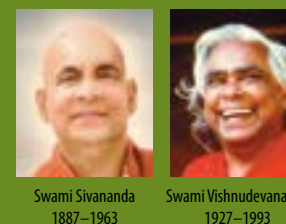
December 14–23

#### MONTHLY COURSES:

Yoga Beginners  
Stress Management  
Meditation

Open to all TTC graduates.

VN SYHET is a branch of SYHET in CA, USA which is accredited as a school by International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT)



# Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm

14651 Ballantree Lane, Grass Valley, California 95949  
[yogafarm.org](http://yogafarm.org) • 530-272-9322



#### Sivananda Yoga Health Educator Training (SYHET)

Oct. 18–Nov. 2, 2019

(first module)  
800-hour, two-year professional training.

Accredited by the International Association of Yoga Therapists.

#### TTC & ATTC

May 4–June 1

International Yoga TTC

Oct. 12–Nov. 9

International Yoga TTC

June 3–July 1

Advanced Yoga Teachers Training Course



### SPECIAL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

April 19–21 Easter Yoga Retreat: Wisdom Medicine East and West

May 24–27 Memorial Weekend: Expression of the Soul with Swami Sitaramananda, Anuradha, Dr. Fred Luskin

Aug. 30–Sept. 2 Labor Day Weekend Retreat: Yoga Music Festival

Nov. 22–25 Thanksgiving Yoga Retreat

Dec. 21–Jan. 1, 2020 Holiday Retreat

### YOGA VACATIONS & SPECIAL COURSES

April 21–26 Hatha Yoga Sadhana with Swami Adiparashaktiananda

April 26–28 Yoga Health Education Weekend: Pain Management with Swami Sivasankariananda

May 10–12 Compassionate Communication with Swami Narayanananda

June 9–16 Yoga of Recovery with Durga Leela and Mary Thompson

July 4–7 20th Annual Vedic Astrology Conference

Sept. 22–29 7-day Meditation Course with Swami Jnaneswariananda

Nov. 16–25 Vedanta and Silence Course with Swami Sitaramananda

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.sivanandayogavietnam.org](http://www.sivanandayogavietnam.org)  
[www.sivanandayogachina.org](http://www.sivanandayogachina.org)  
[www.yogafarm.org/taiwan](http://www.yogafarm.org/taiwan)  
[www.sivananda.jp](http://www.sivananda.jp) (Japan)  
[www.sivanandayogafarm.org](http://www.sivanandayogafarm.org)



Founded by Swami Vishnudevananda. Est. 1957

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[yogafarmregistration@sivananda.org](mailto:yogafarmregistration@sivananda.org)

[www.sivanandayogavietnam.org](http://www.sivanandayogavietnam.org)  
Add Vietnam email

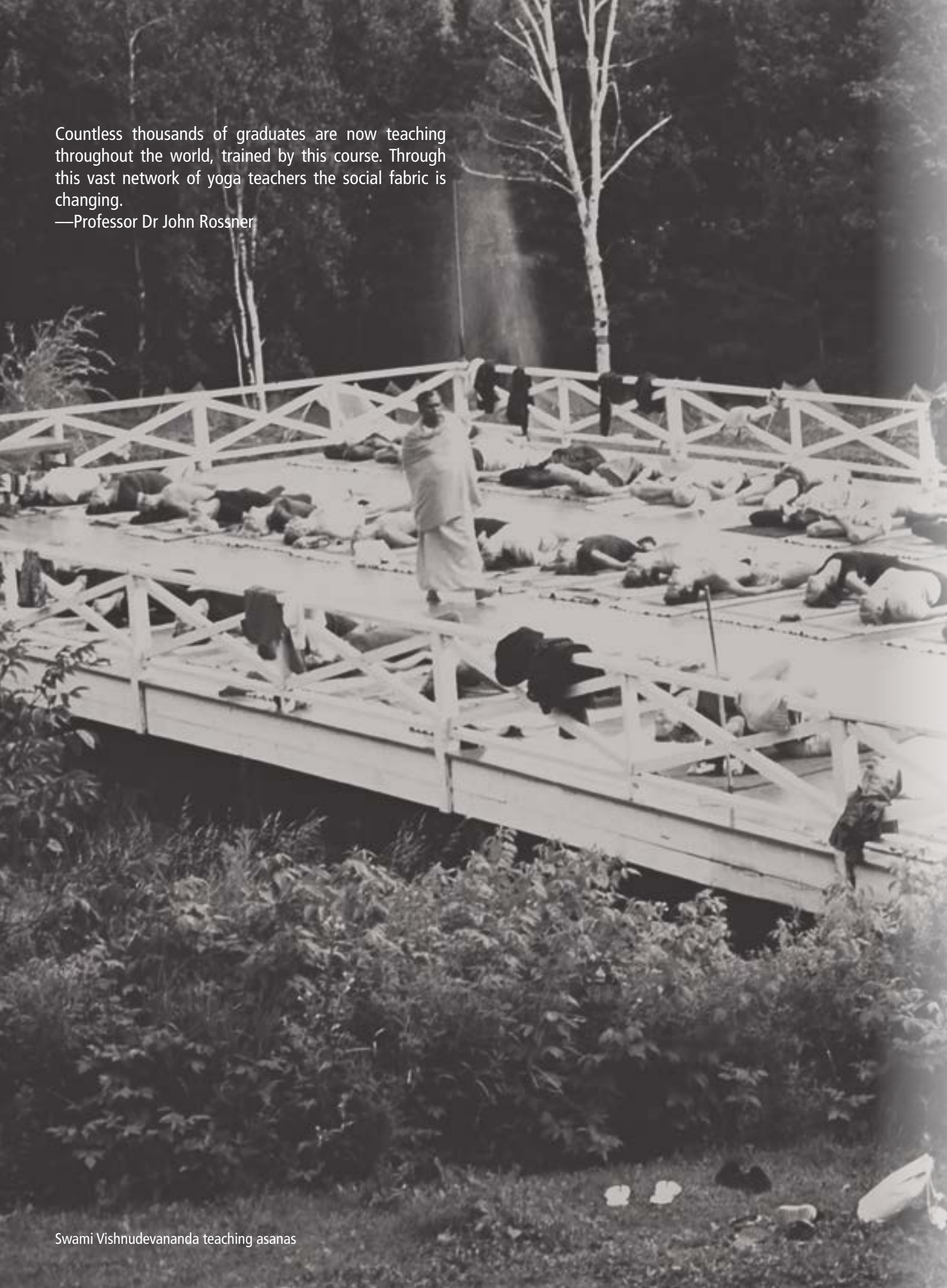


Founded by Swami Vishnudevananda. Est. 1957



Countless thousands of graduates are now teaching yoga throughout the world, trained by this course. Through this vast network of yoga teachers the social fabric is changing.

—Professor Dr John Rossner



Swami Vishnudevananda teaching asanas

Swami Vishnudevananda devised a structure for teaching yoga that was easy to understand and simple to practise at home. He took yoga out of the arcane and brought it into the mainstream. His motto was 'Health is Wealth. Peace of Mind is Happiness. Yoga Shows the Way'. In describing the teachings of yoga Swami Vishnudevananda said: *There is a particular need for yoga today. The stress and tension of life is often beyond the ordinary human being's control. So many millions of people are living on tranquillisers, sleeping pills, alcohol, junk food, pills and more pills. They are unable to cope with the stress. Yoga helps to bring stress under control, not only on a physical level but on a mental and spiritual level as well. Even when a person has a job and a certain amount of physical and financial security still there is a vacuum, a feeling of emptiness within. This vacuum is caused by a lack of inner peace, due to a lack of discipline, too much stimulation, excitement. Television, bars, advertising...all these excite, excite.*

*'Yoga' means union, and shows us how to unite all our life forces, our mental forces, our rational and abstract thought by directing them INWARD. The goal is happiness and happiness lies within. You can go anywhere in the world, to night clubs and restaurants, to London or Paris and still not find happiness. If happiness were to be found in Paris then all Parisians would be happy. If happiness is at home with the family then you must all be happy—but are you? It doesn't matter what your living conditions are. Happiness does not exist outwardly, even in an ashram. Happiness lies within. The world crisis is but a reflection of the chaotic state of the collective consciousness. The most positive action we can perform to contribute to the momentous task of bringing our planet back into balance is to start changing ourselves. Positive, focused thoughts are much more powerful than negative, confused thoughts. No external technology can control surging emotions and imaginations. No type of alcohol, drugs or anything else can offer a long-term solution to endemic mental weakness. These chemicals destroy not only the bodies and minds of the users, but also those of their offspring, creating genetic disturbances and unbalancing the mental vibration. Real peace comes only to those who can control the body and mind with proper self-discipline.*

*Yoga is a complete science of self-discipline. Yoga balances, harmonises, purifies and strengthens the body, mind and soul of the practitioner. It shows the way to perfect health, perfect mind control and perfect peace with one's Self, the world, nature and God.*

*I have studied the mind since I was 17. Watching how it reacts to life in a cave, to wandering as a penniless*

*monk, to people throwing stones and spitting at me, to days of constant meditation, asana, pranayama. And, in contrast, how it reacts to sitting in a Maharajah's palace. I have achieved a certain state of peace and I know that it can be achieved by everyone, even if the advanced stages of yoga are beyond them.*

*By closely observing the life-style and needs of modern men and women I have synthesised the ancient wisdom of yoga into five basic principles which can be easily incorporated into everyone's own pattern of life. Yoga is a life of self-discipline built upon the tenets of simple living and high thinking. If you follow the five points of yoga which compose a holistic approach to our whole system of body, mind and soul, you will gain strength and balance to face this life. When body, mind and soul are healthy and harmonious the higher mind can easily triumph over the vicious instinctive lower mind. Obstacles become stepping stones to success and we begin to understand that life is a school for the development of character, compassion and realisation of the divine all-pervading Self. You will gain a new angle of vision of health and positivity. If you can heal your own body and mind you will be capable of healing and taking care of the planet. I have been religiously true to the ancient teachings of all forms of yoga. I have invented nothing new, only presented this perfect science of self-development in a form comprehensible for an analytically-minded era.*

At the end of every Teachers' Training Course, once the final exam had been completed, Swami Vishnudevananda would present graduation certificates at the evening satsang. He would tell the students the importance of practising what they had learned and to become yoga teachers in the true sense of the word and not merely "yoga preachers." He would inspire them to take this knowledge with them and to help humanity in any way they could.

He would say about the course,

*In our training courses we may not yet feel the presence of God, we may not yet experience Him, but we begin to understand the process of doing so. We begin to see how much we can do, but also how much has to be done. We recognise that we are on the right path, that we have a better knowledge about ourselves, that we can manage better our own physical, mental and spiritual energy. We are better equipped for life. Eventually, if we continue for long enough and with enough determination and faith we become saintly.*

The Sivananda Teachers' Training Course laid the cornerstone for the systematic spread of yoga in the West.



# CHARITABLE WORKS OF THE SIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTRE IN INDIA

by Kalyani



In the chapter on Charity in *Bliss Divine*, Swami Sivananda says that the best form of charity is vidya-dana, imparting wisdom. Our Centres and Ashrams are specifically set up by Swami Vishnudevananda for this purpose; to give people the tools for peace of mind. Swami Sivananda continues to say that the second best form of charity is giving medicine to the sick; and the third best is anna-dana or giving food to the hungry. Our Centres and Ashrams in India regularly provide for these needs.

Despite the Indian economy flourishing, with a population of about 1.34 billion people, where close to 70% live in rural villages, provision of jobs, health care, education and transport facilities is a daunting task. According to the India Philanthropy Report 2017, despite progressive government schemes in India such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save a Girl Child. Educate a Girl Child), Jan Dhan Yojana (a financial inclusion programme) and Swachh Bharat (Clean India Mission), India is far from achieving critical social goals. On the positive side, the report notes that the Indian philanthropy market has matured with funds contributed by individuals growing faster than funds from foreign sources and funds contributed through corporate social responsibility. At the same time however, it is pointed out that philanthropic efforts from any direction are needed to overcome the many obstacles found here in India in trying to meet the basic needs of the poor.

## MEDICAL CAMPS

The 101st free ayurveda medical camp took place at the *Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram at Neyyar Dam* on 21 December 2018 after holding camps for 500 – 1000 people once a month for eight and a half years. The local people are greatly appreciative of the service provided by ten or so doctors prescribing free consultations and medicines. The average number of patients is 800 to 900 per camp. The possibility of replacing the monthly camp with a free daily clinic to better serve the public is currently under consideration.

The Sivananda Rural Clinic set up in 2013 and the Free Rural Mobile Clinic started in 2016 by the *Sivananda Meenakshi Ashram in Madurai, Tamil Nadu* with a kind donation from Mr Vishnu, Toronto, for purchasing the ambulance, continue apace. With recent outbreaks of viral fever in the area, the number of patients to the general clinic each day has increased markedly. The regular Sunday Camp, where doctors of different disciplines offer free consultations continues to expand. As well as specialist attention in such areas as diabetes, obstetrics and gynaecology, women's health generally, cancer, eye care, dental, general medical and surgery, these camps provide an important opportunity for the health education of the most poor. Many false notions and fears about surgery and modern medicine are challenged, allowing modern science to be used alongside the traditional village approaches. In addition it is much easier for those in the outlying villages to attend these clinics, using the small ambulance as transportation, than to make the longer and more expensive journey to the busy hospitals in the city of Madurai.

The weekly free ayurveda medical clinic at the *Sivananda Kutir Ashram in Netala in the Himalayas* has been running now for over twenty years, opening its welcoming doors in 1998. The number of patients seen each Sunday afternoon ranges from 10 as a minimum in the summer months to around 30 in the winter months when the weather is more of a challenge. As well as receiving the loving care of Dr Chandok, free medicine is also prescribed.

## Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram at Neyyar Dam



## Sivananda Meenakshi Ashram at Madurai





## Sivananda Dwarka Centre, Delhi

The Sivananda Dwarka Centre provides support to My Angels Academy, a charity working in Delhi for under-privileged children and the young. These include children of migrants living in the city slums, young inmates in jail and tribal children in Orissa. The Academy has succeeded in taking many children off the streets away from rag-picking, begging, pick-pocketing and involvement with drugs and such like. They have been entered into the educational system and provided with after-school activities, including English language development, sport, dance, theatre and yoga.

Over one hundred of the students came to the Centre for a feast for Swami Vishnudevananda's birthday on 31st December 2018.



## Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram at Neyyar Dam



The Ashram makes many regular contributions to individuals in the local area for health, education, housing and social needs as well as to local temple festivals and temple development.

It regularly contributes to the SG Special School which has been providing opportunities of stimulation and education for mentally- and physically-challenged children of impoverished families from the local tribal areas since 1980. A number of volunteers serve 75 children from a rented space—with great love and devotion. An appeal is currently in progress for funds to purchase land and construct a purpose-built building.

The Sivananda Ashram provides support on a regular basis to an orphanage for abandoned children, elderly persons and cows. Registered as a charity, the Aum Pranava Ashram in nearby Tamil Nadu, has been accommodating a children's home since 1996, an old age home since 2003 and now has a growing goshala of 60 cows. As well as long-term shelter, the charity provides nutritious food, medical care, a spiritual environment with daily satsang, and supports the educational needs of the children into adulthood.

## Sivananda Centre, Chennai

### A Contribution to the Swachh Bharat Project (Clean India Mission)

In December the staff at the Sivananda Centre in Chennai gathered together students, teachers and well-wishers (and even our Trustees!), to join them in the thorough cleaning of a local government school. Others sponsored the cleaning tools and materials and food for the day.



### Nutrition for Children

Six branches of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre in India contribute financially to the Jeevadhaar Foundation Charitable Trust. This charity organises a nutrition supplementary programme in villages in rural Andhra Pradesh in which school children aged from 3 to 15 receive a nutritious grain snack at the end of each school day, to alleviate hunger at home where there is often no food for them in the evenings. This project was introduced to us by our trustee Ravi Kumar in Chennai.

*True charity is the desire to be useful to others without thought of recompense or reward. Charity is love in action. Charity is universal love. Give cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation. Do charity daily—Swami Sivananda*  
We look forward to hearing of more activities involving Sivananda staff and students working within their community. They are great yogic activities.

*Kalyani is co-director of the Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram, Neyyar Dam, Kerala, south India*





# HOW TO LEARN FROM THE SPIRITUAL MASTERS AND BECOME WISE

by Swami Sitaramananda

## THE DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE

First you need to know that you do not know and you need to know that someone does know. This attitude will help you to be receptive to meeting with those who have the ultimate knowledge of reality and will help you to be humble enough to receive such knowledge.

The sincere inner desire to know the truth leads your way in this search. With this attitude, you seek out a teacher and are able to recognise the teacher. It is said that the teacher appears in front of you when you are ready. In other words, divine grace will allow you to recognise and appreciate the teacher when your sincere desire to know the truth has ripened. In the same manner, you cannot desire to have a husband if you are not ready to be a wife and vice versa. Why? Because husband/wife is a relationship and similarly student/teacher is a relationship. To find a spiritual teacher, you need to have the spiritual readiness to learn and to self-transform, ultimately to surrender to the truth conveyed and embodied by the teacher. It is not sufficient for you to be exposed to knowledge; you need to drink deep from it. The teacher and the knowledge might impress you but are you ready to dive into it?

## MISUNDERSTANDING

In general you are so much involved in the external vision of yourself as a physical body in the material world, that initially it takes sometime to turn the mind around and begin to differentiate the "I" as distinct from the physical; to recognise that there is a more subtle reality, that of mind and spirit. In this undeveloped state of mind, often you misinterpret the teachings of the teacher, not understanding why everything seems so complicated and why there seems to be a need to apply hair-splitting logic to know oneself. You mistake your mental habits, your var-

ious identifications and attachments to be your Self, and you are unaware of the links between your lifestyle and your happiness and how these innocent private preferences contribute to your confusion and unhappiness. The teacher will talk of the nature of your suffering and the nature of your mistakes in perception, and you will misinterpret, thinking that the teacher talks about someone else and not you. The teacher will talk of the nature of true bliss, and you compare this to your temporary experience of conditioned happiness. The teacher will talk of the nature of your real Self and you will equate it to the specifics of your ego-self. In fact you have no clue what the teacher is talking about! What he or she says may fly over your head or may make you feel uncomfortable. You might argue internally. For example the teacher says that you are eternal bliss, that bliss is your true nature. You might argue with it. You might think inside that it is not true; you are quite content with glimpses of peace, but do not understand the concept of bliss absolute. Your personal experience is of the constant ups and downs of life and you think the teacher is over-optimistic or unrealistic or even absurd to say that life is only bliss and existence, no death, no pain. It makes no sense. You do not understand that, without the background of eternity, you will not have the correct perspective to appreciate the truth of present life.

To learn from the teacher, you need to meet him/her at his level with faith; the teacher will then meet you at your level with love. Swami Vishnudevananda used to teach the highest philosophy mixing it with simple words such as pizza, banana, ice cream. He used to point out with humour our delusion and laugh so heartily that we also started laughing at our own mistakes and learned without taking ourselves so seriously.

## THE PROCESS OF LEARNING: HEARING AND HEARING AGAIN

You need to hear the teachings again and again from the teacher, not only through reading but most importantly through listening, hearing the teachings. Hearing with an open attitude. You need to meet with the teacher in person because you need to bring the learning to a personal, physical, experimental, real level. Hearing and seeing together produces tremendous learning. The process of learning then comes not just through the intellect or imagination—both of which can be dismissed easily—but through tangible, real life, real involvement of the heart, head and action. This process of absorption of the Truth through tuning to a living wise person is not an instantaneous process. It is to be carried on over time. You will have to hear and hear again, until the knowledge is absorbed into your very own heart. You will have to have satsang again and again until you vibrate on the same wavelength as the teacher.

## CONTEMPLATION: THINKING AND THINKING AGAIN ON THE WORDS OF THE TEACHER AND SCRIPTURES

In Vedanta and Yoga philosophy, it is said that you will have to contemplate on an idea even if you might not agree or it is not your experience now. You have to contemplate on the idea that has been transmitted to you by those enlightened souls or the masters who have experienced it. The great masters have experienced bliss absolute. They say so; you have not had the experience but you have to think about it. The process is you think, contemplate on it and you realise by this process of thinking just how your thinking is wrong on certain points. It is not that what they say is incorrect, it is that your thinking process somehow prevents you from understanding or perceiving what they say.

There is a technique in Vedanta called self-inquiry. The practice of self-inquiry is to question the way you think about yourself. You question the way you think about yourself because you heard it from the master. You have faith that what they say is correct. You do some thinking based on what they say, having faith that what they say is correct. Then you realise what they really say is in your own heart. That is the purpose of self-enquiry and contemplation. It requires some thinking from you, that thinking you have to do yourself. It is not for the teacher to think for you. The master did the thinking and the scripture conveyed the knowledge. The teacher can explain it, but you will have to do the thinking for yourself until you understand it and make it yours. You have to realise it yourself in this self-inquiry, because it is about you. The question starts with "Who am I?"

Most of the time people do not like to think about "Who am I", because it requires a lot of thinking. Most people do not like to think. They will say, "Tell me what I need to believe in and I will be fine. I trust you." The process of learning is not a process of blind believing. You will have to think and realise it yourself as nobody can save you except yourself. Swami Vishnudevananda would say all the time: "If you are hungry, you have to eat for yourself. No-one can eat for you." You yourself have to do the thinking and the straightening out of your own mind. The teacher might study your mind and might know your mind and might point out your obstacles. Yet, you will have to think about it and realise it for yourself.

## REALISATION IS IN A MOMENT

A student is like a child in a hurry to grow up. "How old are you?" you ask the child. "I am 6 years and a half". For a spiritual student, it is similar. Every effort costs the student much, and he/she is in a hurry to get 'there' even though not knowing where 'there' is, nor how it looks. Students are mystified when hearing that realisation takes no effort, it just takes a moment! Eureka, I know! Yes, it takes no effort and it takes no time—realisation is instantaneous, but the problem is that it takes lifetimes to be ready for that moment.

Yoga says: your right is to work, but not with its fruits. Your duty is to think and contemplate but not with expectation of results. Keep tuning to the teacher's thought wavelength, practise the system of learning they have set up for you to learn. Practise, practise, practise, contemplate, contemplate, contemplate the teaching and let go of all expectation.

*This talk was given on the holy day of Guru Purnima, celebrations in honour of the Guru.*

*Swami Sitaramananda is a direct disciple of Swami Vishnudevananda and an acharya of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres. She is the director of Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm, California and the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Resort and Training Center in Dalat, Vietnam.*





# THE SPICE OF LIFE

## Cumin



- Boosts body metabolism, aids weight loss
- Maintains blood pressure and heart rate
- Aids insomnia
- Strengthens bones, improves muscle flexibility and strength
- Regulates blood sugar level
- High iron content reduces anaemic conditions
- Reduces respiratory problems, breathing difficulties
- Anti-fungal, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory

## Turmeric



- Anti-oxidant, boosts immunity and through its active agent curcumin destroys free radicals
- Anti-fungal, anti-septic and anti-bacterial
- Enhances skin condition. Reduces wrinkles and blemishes. Soothes burns, treats cracked heels
- Powerful anti-inflammatory
- Encourages healthy hair and reduces hair loss, dandruff
- Restores normal pH level of stomach. Prevents ulcers and acidity
- Maintains liver health through detoxification

## Coriander



- Strengthens the eyes. Remedy for conjunctivitis
- Prevents menstrual irregularities
- Anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal—effective in healing skin disorders, mouth ulcers
- High vitamin C content helps with colds and flu, reduces phlegm
- Remedy for nausea, diarrhoea and halitosis (bad breath)
- Reduces hypertension, reduces LDL cholesterol
- High iron content reduces anaemic conditions
- Strong anti-histamine properties, reducing hay fever and seasonal allergies and allergic reactions to food, plants and insects

## Cardamom



- Anti-oxidant, retards cellular ageing
- Anti-spasmodic, helps hiccoughs, intestinal cramping
- Blood-purifier, removes excess toxins from the kidneys
- Remedy for colds and flu, mouth infections and halitosis
- Anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral
- Relieves hypertension
- Remedy for skin allergies, improves skin complexion
- Masking agent. Strong warming fragrance wards off unpleasant smells
- Encourages healthy hair growth and enhances shine and lustre in hair

## Fennel



- Regulates blood pressure
- Diuretic
- Expectorant properties, reduces the symptoms of asthma
- Improves eyesight. Used in ancient India for the treatment of glaucoma
- Has cooling effect on the body
- Calms nerves and promotes mental clarity
- Anti-inflammatory
- Contains high content of dietary fibre

## Black Pepper



- Anti-depressant
- Has mild laxative effect
- Boosts metabolic rate, aiding weight loss
- Stimulates the digestive processes
- Relieves colds and coughs
- Carminative, aiding flatulence and bloating
- Promotes sweating, ridding the body of toxins
- Enhances the immune system

Spices are not just to enhance flavour—they have a broad range of powerful healing properties. Add these magical gifts of nature to your favourite recipes.

## KASHAYA

A wonderful aromatic health-giving drink. Add spice to the early morning or drink it at night to soothe away the day.

- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- ½ tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 3 cardamoms
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 inch fresh ginger, grated
- 3 tbsp milk (adjust to taste)
- sweetener (adjust to taste)

1- Grind coriander, cumin, fennel, pepper, and cardamom in a blender to a medium fine powder (not too fine).

2- Add 1 cup of water to a saucepan and add 1 heaped tsp of the kashaya powder, then the turmeric powder and grated ginger.

3- Add sweetener to taste.

4- Allow to simmer gently for five minutes. Strain through a fine sieve.

5- Add 2-3 tbsp of milk and drink while hot.

## To Store Kashaya Powder

Dry roast separately coriander, cumin, fennel, pepper and cardamom in pan over heat for two minutes. Be careful not to burn the seeds. Add to bowl and mix. Grind to coarse powder and store in airtight tin. Additional ingredients to taste can include cloves, nutmeg and dried ginger.



# 60 YEARS AGO

60 YEARS OF THE SIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTRE , MONTREAL 1959 - 2019

by Satyabhama

2019 is a big year. We are celebrating sixty years of the Sivananda Centre in Montreal, the first Centre founded by Swami Vishnudevananda in 1959.

Sixty years is significant on its own, but the fact that we have held to Master and Swamiji's teachings as they shared it, without changing and accommodating the various trends and fashions, makes it even more significant and valuable.

In our attempt to understand its importance and create a year filled with special programmes, we have spent much time thinking about Swamiji - his journey, his struggles, his triumphs, his love and devotion towards everyone, but most importantly, his love and faith towards Master Swami Sivananda.

We wondered how difficult it must have been for the young swami to travel across the world to the West, a world that he had never before visited and one with which he was not familiar, and how he managed to create, found and establish the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres and Ashrams. A young swami, who, purely based on his faith and trust in Master Sivananda, left with only ten rupees and somehow made it all the way to Canada. How did he manage to do all of it, while being so far away from his dearest and most beloved Guru ji? Where did he draw his infinite amount of strength and love from?

It made us realise how much discipline, persistence, purpose, courage and love it took for Swamiji to build every-

thing that we have the good fortune of being a part of. In our own lives, when we have short and long moments of difficulty and struggle, Swamiji's journey is one from which we can all draw much inspiration, a journey that began over sixty years ago, and still continues to inspire and change so many of us. If one soul striving to bring peace to humanity, internally and externally, can have such a lasting impact, imagine what we could all do together, without any prejudice or divide, if we were united in our beliefs and purpose.

We are extremely grateful to all the Acharyas, senior teachers and disciples of Swami Vishnudevananda (present and past), who have kept the teachings and discipline intact. They have worked tirelessly in maintaining and expanding the teachings throughout the world and have kept Swami Vishnudevananda alive through their memories. By sharing them with us, they have helped us to have a stronger and personal understanding of Swamiji, creating a strong connection to him.

This is what we will be sharing throughout the year at the Montreal Centre, the timeless and eternal teachings passed down to us, and celebrating every moment that we are able, to live, practise, share and spread these teachings to all those who wish to hear.

*Satyabhama is director of the Sivananda Montreal Centre.*



Swami Vishnudevananda outside the Montreal Centre, 1959





## SIVANANDA ASHRAM MINAKSHI - MADURAI

Swami Sivananda (1887 - 1963)  
Swami Vishnudevananda (1927 - 1993)

*Experience the Bliss of Yoga in the Temple City.*



### Teachers' Training Courses

26 May - 22 Jun'19 • 13 Oct - 09 Nov'19  
17 Nov - 14 Dec'19 • 05 Jan - 01 Feb'20

### Kids' Camp

28 Apr - 18 May'19

### Fasting Detoxification Programme

17 Nov - 01 Dec'19



Sivananda Ashram Meenakshi  
Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda, Est. 1957

Madurai Dt., Tamil Nadu, India,  
+91.98.6565.5336 +91.98.6515.5335 [www.sivananda.org/madurai](http://www.sivananda.org/madurai)



## SIVANANDA ASHRAM KUTIR - UTTARKASHI - HIMALAYAS

Swami Sivananda (1887 - 1963)  
Swami Vishnudevananda (1927 - 1993)

*Experience the Bliss of Yoga in the Himalayas.*



### Teachers' Training Courses

07 Apr - 04 May'19 • 12 May - 08 Jun'19 • 16 Jun - 13 Jul'19  
21 Jul - 17 Aug'19 • 08 Sep - 05 Oct'19

### Sadhana Intensive

13 Oct - 27 Oct'19



Sivananda Ashram Kutir  
Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda, Est. 1957

Sivananda Kutir (near Siror Bridge) Uttarakhand, Himalayas, 249 193, India  
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# OXYGEN – NERVE IMPULSE – PRANA – THOUGHT

by Swami Sivadasananda

*What do yogis mean by the word prana? Yogis speak about ha and tha, or sun and moon energy, two subtle currents which work within the body. When these energies unite at the level of the solar plexus and ascend along the spine, the mind experiences exhilaration and becomes absorbed in deep meditation. The theory of this subtle process seems to have little to do with the established modern-day understanding of the human body. But before concluding that this theory belongs to the realm of mere belief, here is a closer look at the physiological benefits of hatha yoga breathing exercises.*

## FOCUSING ON INHALATION

If you are asked to produce a few deep breaths, will you start with inhaling or with exhaling? Most of you will first inhale with the idea that you are “taking a deep breath”. During deep inhalation the action of the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles expands the volume of the lungs, allowing plenty of air to be drawn into the microscopic air bags known as alveoli which make up the spongy tissue of the lungs. These alveoli are surrounded by plenty of capillaries allowing oxygen to move from the lungs into the blood stream and carbon dioxide from the blood into the lungs. This exchange of gases between the air and the blood occurs according to a concentration gradient. If the concentration of oxygen in the lungs is high, more oxygen can move into the blood stream. However, by putting the emphasis on inhalation instead of exhalation, the lungs are not emptied properly, leaving a substantial volume of old oxygen-poor air in the lungs. Even though a deep inhalation brings in a good amount of oxygen-rich air, it mixes with the remaining oxygen-poor air which is already present. This lowers the oxygen concentration in the lungs. Thus focusing only on inhalation is not an efficient way to bring more oxygen into the blood.

## KAPALABHATI – FOCUSING ON EXHALATION

In the kapalabhati breathing exercise the abdominal muscles are used in a series of short active exhalations, each one followed by a passive inhalation, during which the abdominal muscles are relaxed. This pumping or active emptying and passive filling of a partial volume of the lungs avoids the mixing of fresh and old air. The result is a superior concentration of oxygen in the lungs allowing more oxygen to move into the blood stream. It takes about ninety seconds for the total volume of blood to make a full round through the body: from the heart to the body tissues, back to the heart, from the heart to the lungs and then back to the heart. When an experienced practitioner does ninety pumpings of kapalabhati at moderate speed, it will take about ninety seconds. During this time the total of the body's five litres of blood passes through the lungs and receives a superior amount of oxygen. This is especially invigorating for the brain, which, compared to its size, requires more oxygen than

any other part of the body. Kapalabhati is an excellent preparation for meditation and a good stimulant during prolonged mental work. The second phase of kapalabhati consists of two deep breaths using all the respiratory muscles. This prepares the nervous system for the final part of the exercise—the retention of the breath.

## OXYGEN LEVELS DURING RETENTION OF BREATH

After the intense exchange of gases during the kapalabhati pumping, the retention begins with a high level of oxygen and a low level of carbon dioxide in the blood. During retention the cells continue to absorb oxygen and expel carbon dioxide, which gradually changes the chemical make-up of the blood. When holding the breath for one minute or even longer, the level of oxygen becomes very low and carbon dioxide very high. This automatically triggers the exhalation.

During the development of the cosmonaut space travel programme in the former Soviet Union, medical researcher Dr Arkadi Prokop studied the impact of high and low levels of oxygen on the metabolism of the cells. Subjects were asked to breathe through a mask connected to a machine producing air of different levels of oxygen concentration. By alternating periods of high and low oxygen, a similar alternation occurred in the blood. The cells themselves also received sometimes more, sometimes less, oxygen.

## BREATH RETENTION REJUVENATES THE CELLS

Microscope observation of the cells showed a surprising change in the mitochondria or ‘power plants’ of the cells. The alternation of oxygen levels resulted in the destruction of old mitochondria and promoted an accelerated reproduction of healthy, younger mitochondria in the cells. This discovery of Dr Prokop was further developed by various university departments of experimental medicine under the name of ‘interval hypoxic training’. A study at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) reported encouraging improvement in respiratory diseases, high blood pressure and metabolic disorders (greater ease in climbing stairs, less susceptibility to infection, decrease in increased blood pressure, economisation of the heart work, reduction of blood sugar and blood lipids) and on the level of subjective well-being (bad mood, irritability, sadness and lack of motivation), along

with improved sleep quality. Here Swami Sivananda describes one who practises pranayama: He or she will “have a light body free from disease, very fair complexion, a sweet melodious voice, pleasant smell from the body, good appetite, cheerfulness, a handsome figure, good strength, courage, enthusiasm, a high standard of health, vigour, and vitality, and concentration of mind”.

*One could therefore conclude that the word prana used by the yogis actually refers to certain chemical aspects of the body such as oxygen, carbon dioxide and mitochondrial activity in the cell. But further observations of how pranayama works point to a subtler mechanism.*

## PRANAYAMA AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Yogic breathing emphasises the use of the diaphragm as the main respiratory muscle. It is controlled by the phrenic nerve which originates in the neck and passes down between the lung and heart to reach the diaphragm. Both inhalation and retention can only happen with the motor impulses of the phrenic nerve causing the contraction of the diaphragm, while exhalation is the result of lowering these impulses and relaxing the diaphragm.

An interesting anatomical fact is that the solar plexus (or celiac plexus) receives filaments from the phrenic nerve. Thus the three aspects of diaphragmatic breathing in pranayama which are inhalation, retention and exhalation, have a specific effect on the solar plexus. The solar plexus is considered an important part of the autonomic nervous system. It relays both sympathetic and parasympathetic impulses, i.e. it has an influence on how well a person reacts to stress and how well he or she can relax. The solar plexus also communicates sensory information from the abdominal area back to the central nervous system. This is one reason why abdominal breathing is particularly useful to expand body awareness in asanas, pranayama, relaxation and meditation.

*The connection of the respiratory mechanism with the solar plexus suggests a physiological basis for the affirmation of many yogis: pranayama can produce a conscious or voluntary control of the autonomic or involuntary nervous system. It opens an understanding for the yogic theory that the mind and the functions of the body are connected by prana or life force.*

## PRANA – VITAL ENERGY

Yoga sees vital energy as the central reality of both body and mind. When a person dies the vital energies depart.

This is commonly described as the astral body permanently separating from the physical body. All mechanical and chemical therapies can be understood as a variety of ways to improve the balance of vital energy. Until a person dies, various treatments are given to prolong life. Once a person is dead none would think to inject medicines, apply mechanical therapies or conduct surgery. This supports the yogic view that all life is a manifestation of prana or vital energy. Swami Vishnudevananda used to point out that if the nature of life was merely chemical, then we could supply a person with intravenous feeding and a respiratory mask with unlimited supply of oxygen—and the person would become immortal!



Swami Sivananda in meditation

## PRANA AND THOUGHT

The limited idea that the mind is confined to the brain has led to the conclusion that thinking is something individual and therefore limited. But prana not only relates to the physical life of human beings, animals and plants. Thought itself is a manifestation of prana. In the theory of the five elements, the element of space is considered to be the medium of prana. And prana is understood as the medium of thought. Wherever there is space, there is prana and thought. Just as prana affects

thought, so also thinking has a powerful influence on prana, and through the prana on the body.

## VISUALISATION IN YOGA

Yogis see prana and thought as two sides of the same coin. While practising asanas, pranayama, relaxation and meditation, the power of visualisation can be used to improve the balance of prana in the body for improved health. The efficiency of any visualisation will depend on three factors:

- The power of understanding (*jnana shakti*): It is prana that you are breathing rather than the atmospheric air. Visualise the inner life energy which underlies the breath and which permeates every atom.

- The power of desire (*iccha shakti*): Focus on your innermost desire to live, expand, connect and become one with life itself.

- The power of will or action (*kriya shakti*): Actual experience comes only through practice. Otherwise it will remain wishful thinking. One ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Develop concentration and will power through yogic discipline. Become a Yogin and radiate joy, light and power all around you. Swami Sivananda

*Swami Sivadasananda, Yoga Acharya and senior student of Swami Vishnudevananda, teaches workshops throughout the Sivananda Centres in Europe and Teachers' Training Courses worldwide. email: sws@sivananda.net*



# HOW SWEET IS HONEY

by Swami Sivananda



**Honey** is a first-class food and tonic. It is very easily digested and assimilated and a most nutritious natural food. It will strengthen a weak heart, a weak brain and a weak stomach. Honey is the product of the nectar of flowers. It is a mistake to say that honey is gathered by bees from flowers. Bees are nature's sweet makers. They manufacture sweets better, finer and healthier than any sweetmeat maker—with all his skill, dexterity, ingenuity and many ingredients—can ever make.

Green plants manufacture sugar for their own use. This is carried with the cell sap to the different parts of the plant either for direct assimilation or future use. All the flowering plants concentrate a quick supply of food at the base or the bottom part of their flowers to help the proper growth of the ovaries. The excess solution is thrown out at the base of the flowers. This solution of the cell sap with sugar is known as 'nectar'. This nectar is changed into honey in their mouths by the honey bee. Every hive imparts a new flavour because in every hive the nectar is drawn from different flowers and plants.

**Honey** contains all the mineral elements found in the human body. It contains 80 per cent nutriment in a most assimilable form. It contains the sugars levulose and dextrose, formic acid, iron and various accessory components. Because it contains enzymes which disintegrate or break up complex foods into substances that can be

easily digested and absorbed, honey does not require digestion at all. It is ready for absorption into the blood without any change and goes into the blood stream directly. It should form part of your diet. A teaspoonful of honey per day will keep the stomach in order.

**Honey** is a heart stimulant. It is useful in cases of malnutrition, and should be give for general physical repair. Honey kills bacteria and thus enables the body to overcome diseases. Disease germs cannot grow in honey. Honey is useful in bronchial catarrh, sore throat, coughs and colds. It also acts as a laxative. As soon as a child is born (in India) its tongue is smeared with honey. This is the first food that a child takes.

**Honey** can be taken with milk, cream or butter. It is a restorative after serious illness. It invigorates, energises and vitalises the system and improves health. It is more stimulating than alcohol. Honey is a diffusible stimulant. If you take a tablespoonful of honey in hot water when you are tired or exhausted by over-exertion it will brace you up immediately. You will become strong and active again. (if the honey is bitter do not take it). Soak ten almonds in water at night. Remove the skin in the morning. Take them with one or two tablespoonfuls of honey. This is a potent brain tonic.

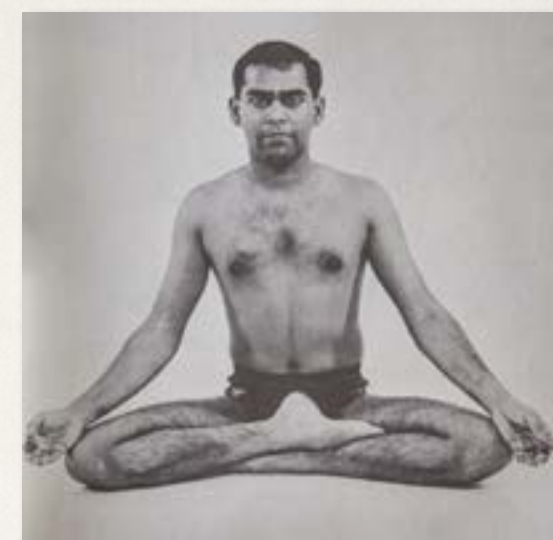
# 5 MEDITATION POSES

from *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga* by Swami Vishnudevananda



Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

Sit on mat or blanket and stretch both legs forward. Take hold of the right foot with two hands, bending the leg and placing the foot on the left thigh. Then bend the left leg and place the left foot on the right thigh. Both knees should be flat on the ground.



Siddhasana (Adept's Pose)

Sit on mat or blanket and stretch both legs forward. Bend the left leg at the knee and place the heel at the soft portion of the perineum. Then fold the right leg and place the heel against the pubic bone or just above the genitals. There should be pressure on the genitals.



Swastikasana (Ankle Lock Pose)

Sit on mat or blanket and stretch both legs forward. Bend the right knee at the groin and keep the heel against the groin of the left thigh so that the sole will be lying in close contact with the thigh. Then bend the left leg and set it against the right groin. Insert the toes of the left foot between the right calf and thigh muscles.



Vajrasana (Kneeling Pose)

Kneel. Sit on the heels with spine erect. Ankles and big toes are touching or let heels fall to the side. Rest hands on knees or thighs.



Sukhasana (Easy Pose)

Sit in an ordinary cross-legged position, with each foot supporting the opposite lower leg. Keep spine erect. Hands on knees.



*Swami Vishnudevananda  
with  
Swami Chaitanyananda*



# The Three Gurubhais

*Sivananda Guha, Himalayas*



*Swami Vishnudevananda  
with  
Swami Chidanananda*

# DEAR TO ME

Amritastakam

Bhagavad Gita Ch. 12 v.13-20



v.13 He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving,

v.14 Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with the mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he My devotee, is dear to Me.

v.15 He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me.

v.16 He who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, and free from pain, renouncing all undertaking or commencements—he who is (thus) devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

v.17 He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, and who is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

v.18 He who is the same to foe and friend, and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment,

v.19 To whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, of a steady mind and full of devotion—that man is dear to Me.

v.20 They verily who follow this immortal Dharma as described above, endowed with faith, regarding Me as their supreme goal, they, the devotee, are exceedingly dear to Me.



# THE FIRE OF LIFE

by Dr. P.R. Vishnu, BAMS, MD



The manifestation of the fire element in the body is known as Agni (digestive fire) in Ayurveda. Agni is the faculty which is responsible for the process of transformation and assimilation of food consumed. Agni converts food into energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. Therefore, Ayurveda considers that Agni is the cause of life. Ayurveda stresses that Agni is to be nurtured. Once the functions of Agni are vitiated, the body produces Ama (a metabolic toxicity) which leads to disease. Acharya Charaka, considered to be the father of Ayurveda, tells us that the presence of Agni in normalcy is life and its destruction within the body is death.

According to Ayurveda the functions of Agni include the digestion of food; nourishment of the doshas (humors); nourishment of the dhatus (tissues); creation of immunity; clarity of mind; and maintenance of the life force. There are thirteen types of Agni in the body. Of these the principle ones are:

**JATHARAGNI** (Abdominal Fire, 1), the primary Agni located in the abdomen (the digestive tract) which nourishes the other Agnis. It is responsible for the entire process of digestion of food materials in the gastro-intestinal tract leading to the production and absorption of nutrients as well as the formation and elimination of waste products such as urine, faeces etc.

**BHUTAGNI** (Elemental Fire, 5) is located in the liver and is responsible for breaking down the nutrients into the five elements which are required for maintenance and growth in the body and for the transformation of the five elements into the seven tissues (dhatus). Bhutagni transforms the heterogeneous nutrients into one homogenous substance which can be accepted into the structure of body and starts its work immediately after the absorption of nutrients. The food molecules are circulated by Bhutagni throughout the body for nourishing the seven dhatus.

**DHATUAGNI** (Tissue Fire, 7) is responsible for the absorption of tissue-specific nutrients and goes to work after Jathragni and Bhutagni. Each Dhatuagni is located in its specific tissue to permit its nutrients from the circulating substances derived after Bhutagni to form its own tissues.

**THESE THIRTEEN TYPES OF AGNI CAN BE CATEGORISED INTO FOUR STATES DEPENDING ON DOSHA DOMINANCE.**

**MANDAGNI** (hypo-functioning)—Hypo-secretion of digestive enzymes—a state in which Agni is considerably inhibited due to the dominance of kapha. Agni is unable to digest and metabolise even a small quantity of easily-digested food leading to indigestion, low appetite and food intolerance.

**TIKSHNAGNI** (hyper-functioning)—Hyper-secretion of digestive enzymes—a state in which pitta is in dominance. The Agni in this condition is said to be excessively excited and will digest even a very heavy meal easily and in a very short span of time. It can cause voracious hunger and discomfort of heat in the throat, palate and lips, as well as heartburn.

**VISHAMAGNI** (irregular functioning)—Irregular secretion of digestive enzymes—a state in which vata is in dominance. The Agni in this condition is erratic and fitful, sometimes helping in the process of complete digestion and at other times producing distention of the abdomen, colic, constipation, dysentery, IBS and loose motions.

**SAMAGNI**—(normal functioning)—Normal secretion of digestive enzymes—a well-equilibrated state of the functioning of the tridoshas. The Agni in this condition digests the food at the scheduled time without giving rise to disharmony in the body, conserves body energy and is conducive to good health.

## PROPER AGNI FUNCTION

When Agni is functioning as it should the following are observed

- Adequate diet
- Timely evacuation of bowel and bladder
- Good strength
- Good resistance to infection (immunity)
- Good skin lustre
- Proper functioning of all sensory organs

## POOR AGNI FUNCTION

The symptoms of mild to moderate malfunctioning of Agni are as follows

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Recurrent infection
- Constipation/diarrhoea
- Incomplete evacuation of bladder or difficulty in micturition
- Improper functioning of sense organs
- Depression

The symptoms of severe malfunctioning of Agni are as follows

- Collection of fluid in the body (ascites, oedema, pleural effusion, pericardial effusion etc.)
- Marked loss of energy and general debility
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Improper sleep

## YOGA AND AGNI

**ASANA** practice purifies and balances the digestive fire (Jatharagni).

**PRANAYAMA** purifies, balances and energizes the pranic or breath fire (Pranagni).

**PRATYAHARA** or internalisation purifies and internalises the fire of the sense and motor organs (Indriya-agni), particularly that of the eye and speech, the main forms of Agni in the sense and motor organs.

**DHARANA** or concentration focuses and heightens the fire of the mind (Manasa-agni).

**DHYANA** or meditation increases the fire of wisdom (Buddhi-agni).

**SAMADHI** or absorption merges us into the Divine fire to transform our consciousness at a soul level (Jiva-agni).

**KEEP THE FIRE OF LIFE BURNING THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF YOGA!!**

Lord Agni, God of Fire

Dr P.R. Vishnu, BAMS, MD is director of the Sivananda Institute of Health at the Sivananda Dhanwantari Ashram, Kerala, south India, e-mail: dr.vishnu101@gmail.com





# THE KING AND QUEEN OF ASANA

by P.C. Kapoor

Inverted postures are exceptional innovations of yogic practice. During inversions the pull of gravity is counteracted, which leads to enhanced deep breathing, which in turn stimulates an oxygenated blood supply to the brain. Inversions assist the venous flow of blood towards the heart; blood and lymph accumulated in the lower extremities are drained back to the heart and then circulated to the lungs, purified and re-circulated to all parts of the body. The normal upright position of the body has an inclination to induce weariness on the organs over time; the inversions combat this effect of tiredness and is the reason why their practice is refreshing, energising and invigorating. Inverted postures improve the quality of concentration and meditation, refining consciousness and enabling it to enter unexplored levels of the mind. Some of the benefits of inversions include an increase in self-confidence, reduction of fear, stress and anxiety and an increase in mental power. In yogic parlance, inversions are used to sublimate and transform sexual energy

into spiritual energy. The aim in this context, is to stimulate the chakras, open the sushumna nadi and raise the kundalini to bring about psychic awakening. The practices influence sluggish apana vayu i.e. they facilitate the downward and outward flow of energy from the body, empowering jatharagni (the digestive fire) at the same time.

Sirsasana (headstand) and Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) are both classified as inversions. However each has a different effect on the endocrine, nervous and musculoskeletal systems of the body. In the Sivananda tradition Sirsasana and Sarvangasana are complementary postures.

*Please Note:* Inverted postures such as Sirsasana and Sarvangasana must be practised under the supervision of a trained teacher only.

## SIRSASANA



The name Sirsasana comes from the Sanskrit word 'sirsa' meaning 'head' and 'asana' meaning 'posture'. Sirsasana is considered as the King of Asanas as it impacts the sahasrara chakra. Swami Vishnudevananda says "Sirsasana is one of most powerful asanas for body and mind, a virtual panacea for all human ills."

**Physical Benefits** The main physical effect of Sirsasana is on the brain. The practice promotes clarity and sharpness of intellect by building the awareness, coordination and restraint required to stay and balance in the posture and revitalising the pituitary, pineal and hypothalamus glands in the brain that regulate growth and health in the body. In the inverted state the lymphatic and cardiovascular systems are affected—the lymphatic system drains more efficiently and blood from the veins in the leg moves back toward the heart with less resistance, resting the heart. In addition the pose positively affects the nervous and digestive systems of the body. Posture is improved due to adjustment of spine alignment: legs, pelvis and torso are strengthened: and its practice aids recovery in diseases of the eye, nose, head, throat, stomach, liver, spleen, and lungs. It relieves renal colic, deafness, diabetes, piles, asthma, constipation, alleviates problems of the uterus and ovaries, promotes fertility and slows down the ageing process.

**Mental Benefits** The improvement of cognitive abilities such as concentration, memory and processing can be attributed to a regular headstand practice.

**Spiritual Benefits** The posture illuminates psychic faculties by impacting on the sahasrara chakra. The sahasrara is the most sacred of all chakras as it is considered to be the culmination point of Yoga. It is here where the kundalini merges with its Source and attains supreme bliss. It is the centre at which Self-realisation happens.

### Contraindications of Sirsasana

Practitioners suffering from heart conditions, high blood pressure or severe back conditions should not practise Sirsasana. Those with arteriosclerosis, glaucoma, detached retina, ear or eye infection or any disease of the brain, or those with cervical spine problems should refrain from inverted postures.

In Sanskrit, 'sarva' means 'all' or 'entire' and 'anga' means 'organ' or 'body part'. Thus Sarvangasana means 'full body pose' because of its benefits for the whole body. It is also known as the Queen of Asanas. The inversion of the asana increases oxygenated blood supply to the chest area, assisting in the healing of ailments in this region such as bronchitis and asthma. The chin lock of the posture, which is known as the Jalandhara bandha, stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands, involved in the regulation of the nervous and muscular systems and metabolism of the body. The posture also reduces premenstrual tension and other hormone-related disorders, helps to cleanse the intestines, improves digestion and eliminates toxins from the body. It soothes the nervous system and promotes patience and emotional stability.

**Physical Benefits** Sarvangasana stimulates the thyroid gland, balancing the circulatory, digestive, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. The thymus gland is stimulated boosting the immune system. The posture invigorates the parathyroid gland, ensuring normal development and regeneration of the bones, preventing premature calcification. Abdominal breathing is induced improving the exchange of air in the body thus releasing stress. It also aids in the preservation of youthfulness by keeping the spine elastic.

**Mental Benefits** The shoulderstand brings tranquillity to the mind, relieves mental and emotional stress, fear, stress-related headaches and alleviates psychological disturbance. Its practice is beneficial in relieving insomnia and depression.

**Spiritual Benefits** The posture impacts on the Vishuddha chakra, the centre of pure consciousness and creativity. When the consciousness dwells in this chakra, right understanding and discrimination develop. With consistent shoulderstand practice, a new sense of vigour and strength results accompanied by a feeling of happiness, peacefulness and confidence.

### Contraindications of Sarvangasana

Practitioners with high blood pressure, detached retina, glaucoma, hernia, cardiovascular disease, cervical spondylitis, and/or slipped disc should not practise the shoulderstand.

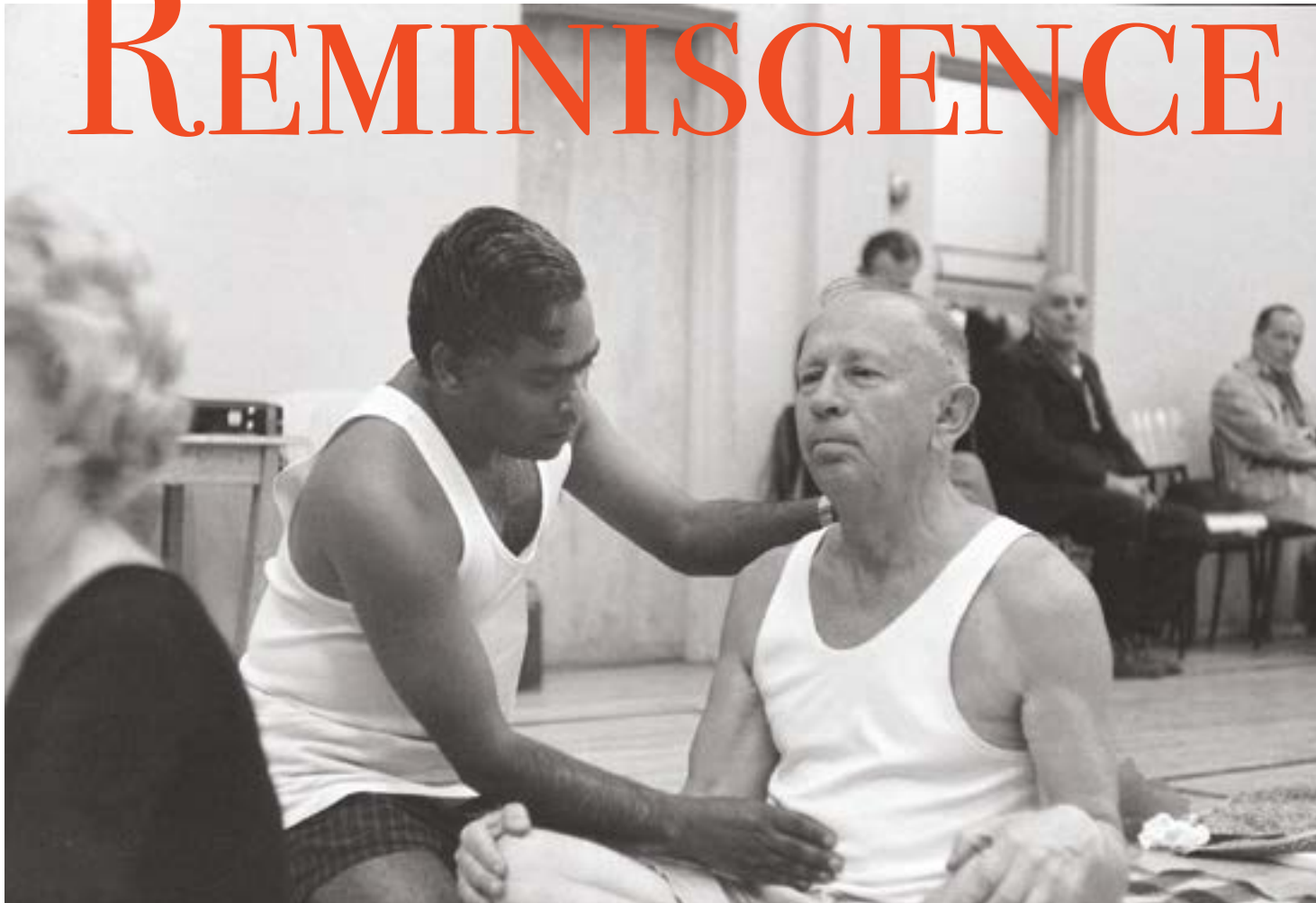
P.C. Kapoor is Director of the Sivananda Nataraja Centre in Delhi. [pckapoor@sivananda.org](mailto:pckapoor@sivananda.org)

## SARVANGASANA





# REMINISCENCE



I FIRST MET Swami Vishnudevananda in the fall of 1960. A class was being given in a hotel room. This hotel, on 23rd Street, near Seventh Avenue, was the beginning headquarters of the New York-based Sivananda Center. Our Swami Vishnu did no talking, but was a demonstrator of various yoga postures. The entire affair was so interesting that I left my name and address at the door. Upon receiving some literature, I joined the Centre, and soon attended every Wednesday evening—the only time and day that classes were offered. There were actually two classes, one at around 5 p.m., the other around seven. Swamiji gave most of the classes, but was breaking in a few others, to help with the teaching of the classes. Swami Vishnu taught his disciples to be real taskmasters. I was always under the impression that no mercy was to be shown to the students, beginners, or otherwise. Swamiji was always, however, when it really mattered, patient and tolerant, especially when a beginner was having some difficulties. Above all, he had an enormous sense of humor, and had shown himself to be a joker par-excellence. A year or so later, as more members joined the Center,

it was moved to an apartment on 20th Street, near Fifth Avenue and Broadway. By now Swamiji was only teaching a few of the classes, as the other instructors had become capable teachers on their own. Classes were now being given several days a week and the entire Center and its operations were expanding. Swami Vishnu, now able to leave the Center in dependable hands, was travelling to other Sivananda Centers, primarily in Canada.

Another year later, and the house, as we know it, was purchased, on 24th Street, off Eighth Avenue. Tremendous growth followed, and eventually, classes were given every day, usually morning and afternoons. My closest contacts with Swamiji were in the Ashram, Val Morin, Canada. I went to the Camp year after year during the 1960s and 1970s, first with my father, then alone, then with my wife, and then with my wife and daughters. Swamiji, much to my delight, had my family working hard, and it was particular fun watching him teach my two very little daughters the headstand.

Swami Vishnu could not remember any of our names. However he knew where everyone was from. He would

refer to "Hey Chicago, how are you doing today?" or "Hey Minneapolis", or "Philadelphia, how is it going?" On one occasion he looked at me and asked, "Hey Brooklyn, I know you were having some problems, how do you feel today?" I answered, "Well Swami, my back is much better, my knees seem to be improved, my heart is beating normally, and my shoulder feels better, but Swami, what about ME?" On another occasion, after the 4 p.m. class was over, Swamiji asked how I was enjoying the asanas. I told him it was like the old Listerine advertisement for the mouthwash—which tasted horrible "I hate it, twice a day." As I was saying goodbye, preparing to return to New York, he asked how I enjoyed my stay at the Camp. I told him that for the entire two weeks, all I could think about was going home. As he looked disappointedly toward the ground,

I then mentioned that now, for the next fifty weeks, at home, all I would think of, was next year's return to the Ashram. You should have seen the smile on his face. Well, we will all certainly miss our own Swamiji. His enthusiastic interest in people, their problems, and in helping them, is unparalleled. Who can forget his "Flying Swami" peace mission of the early 1970s or his incredible trip over the Berlin Wall in 1984. Most of all however, we shall always remember and revere his seemingly infinite energy. He travelled to where he was most needed, to help continue the world peace movements. Let us pray that his many loyal disciples will successfully continue his efforts.

A Faithful Student,  
Brooklyn



## Sivananda Yoga Kids & Teen Camp

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### KIDS' CAMP

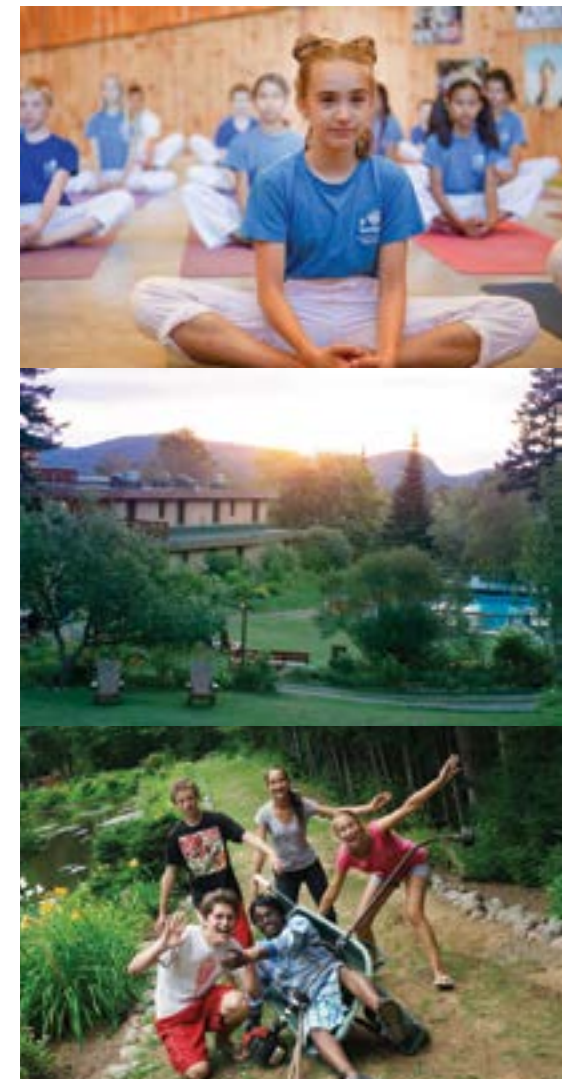
JUL 7 – 28, 2019

[www.syvc.ca/kids](http://www.syvc.ca/kids)

### TEEN CAMP

AUG 4 – 18, 2019

[www.syvc.ca/teen](http://www.syvc.ca/teen)





# THE HEALING POWER OF TEMPLE

by Dr. M. Rajaram IAS



A temple is a scientific construction designed to store the energy of Shakti. A visit to the temple primarily uplifts the soul, while providing delight to all aspects of our being. Our physical body gets the necessary exercise it needs when we walk around the huge temple complexes with many prakaras or circumambulatory paths. Each of the five organs of sense that the physical body houses is engaged in a divine way during our visit to temples. The beautiful sculptures and the ultimate darshan of the deity in the sanctum sanctorum in the dim light of burning camphor cools the sense organ of sight. This organ is tired from seeing the world of objects such as computers, television, mobile phones... The difference between seeing and engaging with objects of the world and seeing and engaging with the deity in a temple is that the man-made world sucks out our source of prana while the temple architecture and the refined activities in the temple reflect it back to us manifold. It is for this reason that we feel energised when we walk out of a temple.

Our sense of smell is addressed with the fragrance of fresh flowers, camphor, incense sticks and other divine aromatic compounds that are waved around the deity as well as taken around the temple.

The auditory sense is catered to with divine sounds of chants pleasing to the ear. The sounds of the bells and chants correct our neural network in the brain and our thoughts flow in the channel of success.

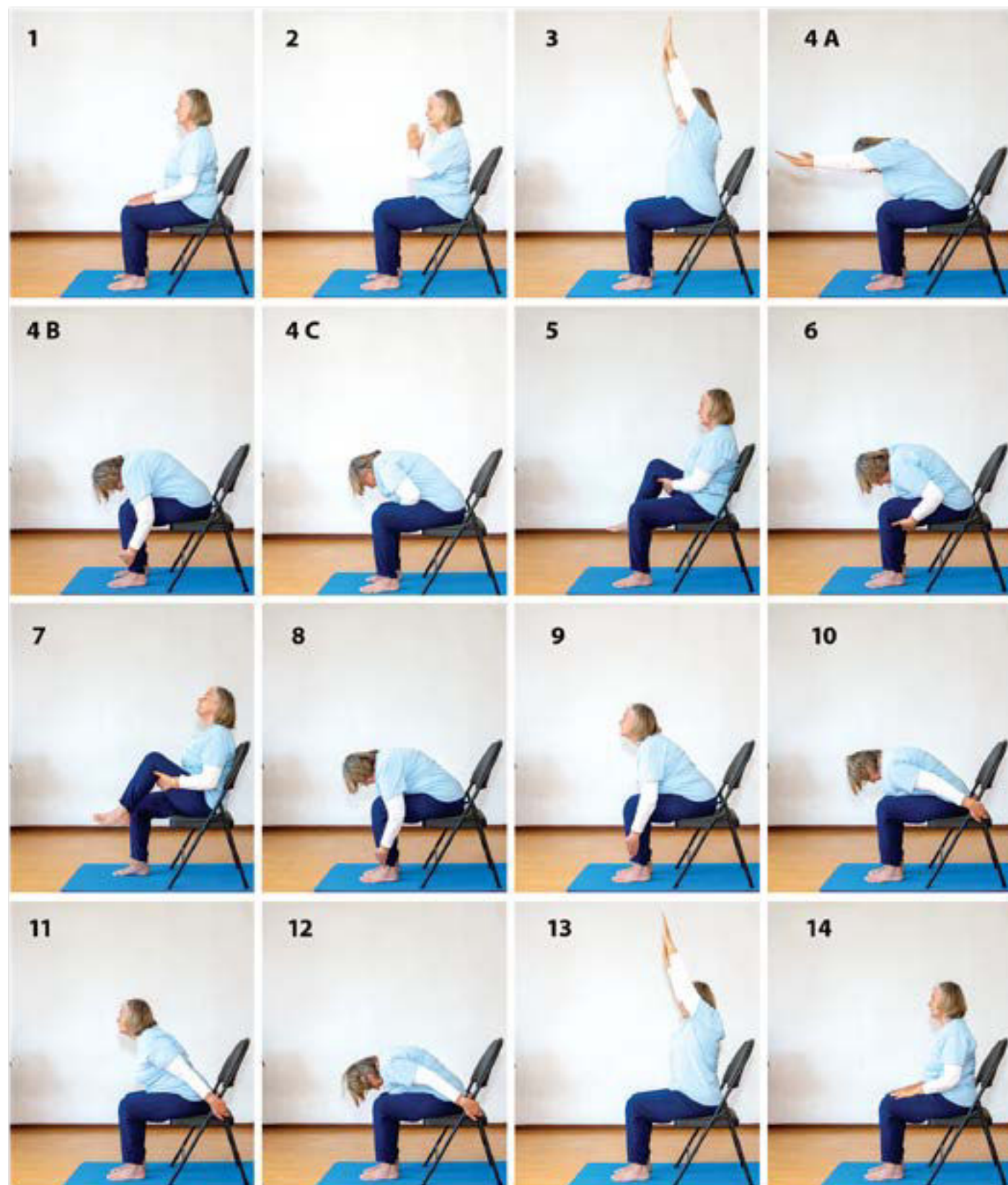
And then there is the sense organ of taste. Delicious prasadam in small quantity is relished with reverence and devotion. This not only appeases our hunger, but also prepares the mind to accept challenges, trials and tribulations that life throws at us, as prasadam is the gift of the Supreme. The mind becomes quiet. Such a mind is a meditative mind naturally. Such a mind is successful in the world of action.

Whoever wishes to quieten their mind should visit neighbourhood temples and make pilgrimages to remote famous temples. Temple visits indeed heal the mind and body.

*Dr. M. Rajaram is a trustee of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre organisation in India.*



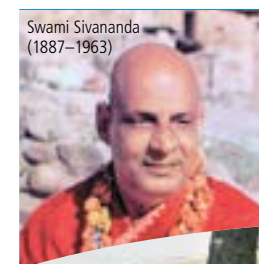
# CHAIR YOGA—THE SUN SALUTE



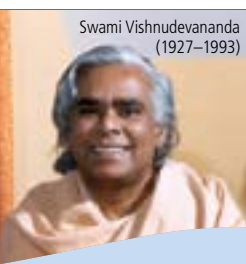
- 1—Sitting in Mountain Pose, inhale deeply
- 2—Exhale, palms together
- 3—Inhale, stretch up with the spine and arms
- 4—Exhale, stretch forward (no need to emphasise down)
- 5—Place hands under right knee and inhale right knee up, open chest
- 6—Exhale down and switch legs
- 7—Inhale, left leg up
- 8—Exhale down and place hands on shins

- 9—Inhale, lift chest up
- 10—Exhale down and reach back to hold the back of the chair or anywhere you can reach
- 11—Inhale, lift the chest
- 12—Exhale down
- 13—Inhale, reach forward and up
- 14—Exhale, relax the arms

*Extract from the manual for the course Chair Yoga Teacher Training.  
Our thanks to Anjaneya, michaelhutkins@gmail.com*



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Founder Swami Vishnudevananda, 1957

31 AUGUST – 29 SEPTEMBER, 2019



# NEWS

## NASSAU, BAHAMAS

### Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat



In 2018 the Ashram celebrated its 50th Anniversary with three special events in January, April, and a third inspiring celebration in the month of June during Swami Swaroopananda's Birthday Symposium. In the spirit of Unity in Diversity, we hosted presenters from different religions and spiritual traditions as well as musicians, dancers, artists and scientists.

In June, Pranava, who manages the ashram kitchen and Sivakami from the Tel Aviv center were initiated by Swami Swaroopananda into Brahmacharya. They received the new names Pranava Chaitanya and Sivakami Chaitanya.

During the summer, we renovated the Ocean View Deluxe and Beach Front Deluxe rooms. The bathroom floors were redone, the wooden floors were refinished, interior walls and balconies were painted, and the furniture was touched up. We also renovated our Well Being Center and added a new treatment room, a renovated laundry room, and an air-conditioned supply room.

[www.sivananda.org/bahamas](http://www.sivananda.org/bahamas)

## VAL MORIN, CANADA

### Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp



Here at the Sivananda Yoga Camp in Val Morin, our panchakarma and ayurvedic courses have been growing and the need for more space and amenities was made evident. Over the summer many of our staff helped

in the construction of a new Ayurveda Building that will now accommodate all panchakarma participants. The new building includes four newly decorated and furnished rooms each with a private bathroom, a dining and kitchen area where meals will be served, a consultation office and laundry room. The beautiful new building had its grand opening in August.

[www.sivananda.org/camp](http://www.sivananda.org/camp)

## GRASS VALLEY, USA

### Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm



The Sivananda Yoga Health Educator Training (SYHET), a two-year, 800-hour professional training course launched at the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm in September 2017 has received accreditation by the International Association of Yoga Therapists

(IAYT). The Standards Committee is diligent and the vetting process rigorous. The first group of SYHET trainees has completed three intensive modules at the Ashram. They continue with distance learning and applying what they've learned—doing health assessment intakes and formulating specialized protocols under the supervision of certified mentors to fulfill their 250 practicum hours. They run 5-day Health Camps and weekend Intensives at the Ashram offering the five points of Yoga life (lifestyle medicine) applied to specific health conditions, like Stress Management, Chronic Pain, Diabetes and Weight Management, Cancer Wellness, Depression, Trauma and more. The second cohort begins in October. There are also retreats specifically geared toward doctors, nurses and health practitioners.



[www.sivananda.org/farm](http://www.sivananda.org/farm)

[www.sivananda.healtheducator.org](http://www.sivananda.healtheducator.org)

## MADURAI, INDIA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Meenakshi Ashram



We are significantly expanding our vegetable gardens, as well as our rice paddies at the ashram. This fall we had our first cultivation of rice, enough to feed the ashram with idli and dosa for one year! Late in December we had our second planting of rice paddies. Staff and guests joined the local staff for the planting.

We have recently installed new signage throughout the ashram with signage in place directing guests and students to the new 'Saraswati Walking Path' which circles the ashram and the 'Shanti Vana Meditation Area' where students can find a quiet space to meditate, to study or to reflect.

In February we inaugurated the Narayana Yogalaya Yoga and Naturopathy Centre. The Centre, associated with Vikram Hospitals and our Trustee Dr. V. Naranayaswamy, is located near to the ashram and we hope to offer programmes in conjunction with the ashram in future.

[www.sivananda.org/madurai](http://www.sivananda.org/madurai)

## GUDUR, INDIA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Tapaswini Ashram



2019 we held the first-ever Teachers' Training Course at the ashram, attended by fifteen enthusiastic and eager students. We also completed significant renovations to the existing ashram buildings so that we now have accommodation for one hundred guests in dormitories and twin-share rooms.

[www.sivananda.org/gudur](http://www.sivananda.org/gudur)

## NETALA, HIMALAYAS, INDIA



### Sivananda Kutir

At the Sivananda Kutir in Netala the dining hall floor and walls have been laid with marble tiles; the kitchen has just been given a permanent roof on top of which an extra room is in process of construction;

the Kailash building is being revamped with store room and three double rooms downstairs and another three double rooms upstairs all with attached bathrooms. A new men's dormitory is in the process of construction above the medical clinic rooms looking over the road to the bridge.

[www.sivananda.org/netala](http://www.sivananda.org/netala)

## NEYYAR DAM, KERALA, INDIA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram



There has been extensive construction and renovation works at the ashram over the past year. The Sita Kaveri dormitory building has been reinforced and the roof terrace turned into a new temporary dormitory; a new path leading to Sita Kaveri dormitory has been laid; a new ceiling has been installed on the Dwarka roof terrace; and a roof and floor sealing on the Vishnu (Dining Hall) roof has created a wonderful large and airy new space for yoga classes. We now have new smart ashram maps and signboards; and the main project—the creation of Ganesh and Hanuman Kutirs mainly as comfortable modern accommodation for teaching staff and special guests was completed. We have also extended the roof of the kitchen area and improved storage for coconuts. A new website for all the India branches was launched. The Ashram contributed to flood relief and a team of guests, paid and voluntary staff went for a day of cleaning in one of the badly-affected areas. The Janma-Samadhi Yatra of seven weeks was successfully conducted with participation from many staff.

[www.sivananda.org/neyyardam](http://www.sivananda.org/neyyardam)

## ORLEANS, FRANCE

### Sivananda Ashram de Yoga



The construction of the new Hanuman Kutir building that started in September 2017 was completed in November 2018, just in time for the beginning of our November Teachers' Training Course. It stands next to our meditation building and contains two large teaching rooms, twelve single ensuite rooms, two generous dormitory spaces and a big storage space in the basement. The walls of the teaching rooms consist almost completely of glass sliding doors, which let in plenty of light and create an airy and spacious ambience. They also open the halls up to the ample wooden terrace that not only connects the building to the meditation hall but also allows us to extend the classes into the open air during the summer season. Two elaborate special Pujas were performed by our temple priests, the first one just before the building was opened for service and the second one in an official inauguration ceremony during the Christmas festivities.

[www.sivananda.org/orleans](http://www.sivananda.org/orleans)

## WOODBOURNE, NEW YORK, USA

### Sivananda Ashram Yoga Ranch



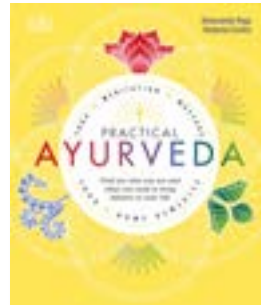
The Yoga Ranch and the New York Center helped celebrate the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations in New York City. Swami Paramananda taught the main hatha yoga session on the North Lawn of the United Nations building. Four karma yogi Sivananda teachers demonstrated on the stage and forty Sivananda yoga teachers and TTC students assisted a class of almost one thousand participants. The following day Srinivasan participated in the United Nations panel discussion delivering a presentation on Yoga and Peace. In the evening, Swami Paramananda taught the final yoga class of over 1500 students in Times Square with the help of over fifty Sivananda yoga teachers and TTC students. The hugely successful event covered four blocks in the Times Square area and was projected on to giant screens, spreading Swami Vishnudevananda's message of yoga to thousands in person, bolstered by a massive online campaign.

[www.sivananda.org/ranch](http://www.sivananda.org/ranch)



## REITH, TYROL, AUSTRIA

### Sivananda Yoga Retreat House



The new Sivananda book *Practical Ayurveda* which was published last year by the Sivananda Retreat House is now available in English, German, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Dr David Frawley commented on this new publication: "This book provides an excellent and informed guide to this ancient art and science of optimal well-being and higher consciousness."

[www.sivananda.org/tyrol](http://www.sivananda.org/tyrol)

## DALAT, VIETNAM

### Sivananda Yoga Resort and Training Center



On 1 January 2019 the Sivananda Yoga Resort and Training Center in Dalat, Vietnam celebrated the second anniversary of its opening full time as an ashram and retreat. Teaching at the Yoga Resort is in English with Vietnamese translation. International guests are always welcome. We also launched our new website on the same date.

[www.sivananda.org/vietnam](http://www.sivananda.org/vietnam)

## DELHI, INDIA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Nataraj Centre



By Masters' Grace we had many vibrant special programmes in 2018. Accomplished yoga teachers graced the Centre including Prahladaji, Swami Sivabhaktananda, Swami Janardhanananda, Janaki and Kalyani who all conducted inspiring courses, workshops and satsangs. Our summer Kid's Camp was well attended by aspiring and enthusiastic young yogis. The Centre staff took part in the International Yoga Fest 2018 in March in which a Sivananda yoga class was demonstrated. The Janma Samadhi Yatra visited the Delhi Centre on its way to Uttarkashi. Yatris were welcomed with bhajan chanting and a very devotional Guru Paduka puja. Our Christmas Eve celebration saw kids' yoga students showing off their skills at asanas and singing carols. 2018 was closed by celebrating Swami Vishnudevananda's birthday and the New Year on 31 December with a lively and exciting cultural programme.

[www.sivananda.org/delhi](http://www.sivananda.org/delhi)

## Sivananda Guha, Gangotri



At the Gangotri Guha a new thick steel reinforced protection wall was completed and also a high platform with steps to reach the cave door.

## Geneva

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre



An extensive general renovation of the large municipal building took place in the Geneva Center. Ceilings, walls, bathrooms and electricity were renewed. The asana rooms and the meditation hall are now equipped with a beautiful wooden floor. Teachers and students are enjoying the fresh and sattvic look.

[www.sivananda.org/geneva](http://www.sivananda.org/geneva)

## MADRID, SPAIN

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre



The Conde Duque Cultural Centre, one of the most relevant of the city of Madrid, has signed an agreement with the Embassy of India in Spain to offer free yoga classes to all citizens. The Sivananda Yoga Centre in Madrid is part of this exciting project. It is nice to see every Sunday morning yoga practitioners queuing just to benefit from a good asana and pranayama class. We feel this as an opportunity to present the essence of the yoga we learned from our Masters to people from all ages and conditions. The current space fits about 70 students and is full every week. Quite an honour for Vishnu and Gopala to share these classes with the people of Madrid in this beautiful Cultural Centre.

[www.sivananda.org/madrid](http://www.sivananda.org/madrid)

## Munich

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre



Small is beautiful: after an intense period of clearing rooms, storing furniture, maintenance and moving the main altar into the new meditation room, the Centre has moved to a new space next door with a shiny reception area, a spacious office and five teaching rooms. Students like the new place as everything is in one building and easy to access.

[www.sivananda.org/munich](http://www.sivananda.org/munich)

## SAN FRANCISCO, USA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center



Several successful health education weekend programs have been run by Sivananda Yoga Health Educator (SYHET) trainees at the Center. Topics include Stress Relief, Diabetes, Chronic Pain and Cancer. Mood and motivation improve as students learn asana techniques tailored to their health condition, eat a healthy meal together, attend a health education workshop and close with deep relaxation and meditation.

We have launched a monthly Wellness Day—starting with an interactive talk by a noted health professional, followed by a two-hour practice session including gentle movement and breathing, meditation, small group check-in and goal setting, ending with sharing a healthy meal together. Swami Vishnudevananda's five points in action!

Suprabha Jain, MD will be seeing patients at the Center one Saturday per month. The visits are billable to health insurance, as are any prescriptions she makes for yoga. SYHET trainees will implement the requisite protocols in the intervening weeks.

[www.sivananda.org/sf](http://www.sivananda.org/sf)

## CHENG-DU, CHINA

### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center

Finally the most awaited translation in Chinese for *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga* by Swami Vishnudevananda is on the way, to be published by a respected Chinese publisher. We expect the book to come out in 2019. For information enquire at SYVC-Chengdu, [china@sivananda.org](mailto:china@sivananda.org) or [Sivani@qq.com](mailto:Sivani@qq.com)

## SIVANANDA YOGA IN SOUTH AMERICA

In April 1969, Kanti Devi started practicing yoga in Montevideo, Uruguay. From then until now—a period of fifty years—Sivananda Yoga has spread all over South America and can be found wherever teachers and students are eager for a healthy and spiritual life.

The Sivananda Centres in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay and the affiliated centres in Bolivia, Brazil and Chile provide, in addition to the activities of the centres, different support services to the community, including many yoga classes offered in public places with the aim of bringing yoga to a wider public.

Other community work includes:

- Montevideo: yoga classes in a women's correctional centre
- Buenos Aires: adapted yoga classes in a Health Centre for young people with both physical, mental and social needs
- Brazil: yoga classes in a community setting for seniors

Last year there were several tours within South America, visiting not only Sivananda Centres but also places where Sivananda Teacher Training graduates are teaching, often in very remote areas.

Kanti Devi toured Brazil, leading activities and retreats in Porto Alegre, Sao Paulo, Franca, Rio de Janeiro, Petropolis, Itaipaba and Sao Luis de Maranhao. There was excellent attendance at all conferences, classes and meditations.



Swami Premananda, who is director of the Sivananda Centre in Buenos Aires, toured the north of Chile and Bolivia visiting the cities of Copiapó, Iquique, Arica, Santa Cruz de la Sierra and for the first

time, Tarija where a surprising number of students offered a very dynamic programme.

Swami Dayananda, director of the Sivananda Center in Buenos Aires, was in Chile teaching in the Viña del Mar Affiliated Center, then she led a Yoga and Meditation Retreat in Rapel Lake, and later visited Chiloé, a small Chilean Island, where a group of teachers, trained in Argentina (Bariloche TTC), are doing a beautiful service of spreading the teachings of yoga.

It is amazing to see, through the devotion of teachers and students, how Gurudev Sivananda's and Swamiji's teachings continue to reach more and more people and so far afield.

In October of 2020 we will add a new Teachers' Training Course in South America, in Brazil, in a place close to Itaipaba, Rio de Janeiro, a stunning location in the mountains surrounded by a forest national park.

Translation into Spanish of the pictorial book Swamiji on Swami Vishnudevananda's life and work is finished and will be available soon. We thank Carlos Dominguez from Colombia for his dedicated service and Swami Dayanandaji for correcting it.

[www.sivananda.org/montevideo](http://www.sivananda.org/montevideo)







Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp, Val Morin, Quebec, Canada



Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat, Nassau Bahamas



Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram, Kerala, India



Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm, Grass Valley, California



Sivananda Retreat House, Reith near Kitzbühel, Tyrol, Austria

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Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: +961 1 566770  
info@beirutyoga.com  
www.vintob.com/beirutyoga

#### LITHUANIA

##### Jogos Centras Prana

Sivananda Jogos Vedantos Centro (filialas)  
Žiemgalio g. 8, LT-48230, Kaunas, Lithuania  
Tel: +370 (8) 698 40929  
info@pranajoga.lt  
www.prana.lt

#### NEW ZEALAND

##### Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre

145A Tupaka Street, Westown,  
New Plymouth 4310, New Zealand  
Tel: +64 06 753 8234  
info@sivanandayoga.co.nz  
www.sivanandayoga.co.nz

#### POLAND

##### Szkota Jogi „Odrobina Dobrej Woli”

ul. Zarudawie 11  
30-142 Krak



# Ashram de Yoga Sivananda

## Loire Valley, France

### Yoga Vacations and Teachers' Training in France 2019



Swami Sivananda  
(1887 - 1963)



Swami Vishnudevananda  
(1927 - 1993)

#### Teachers' Training Course:

5 April - 4 May, 2019 (in French)  
6 May - 4 June, 2019 (in French)  
28 June - 26 July, 2019 (in English & French)  
28 July - 25 August, 2019 (in French)  
November 18 - December 17, 2019 (in French)  
4 January - 2 February, 2020 (in French)

#### Advanced Teachers' Training Course:

28 June - 26 July 2019  
(in English with translation into French and Spanish)

#### Sadhana Intensive:

25 May - 9 June 2019  
(in English with translation into French)  
13 August - 28 August, 2019  
(in English with translation into French, German and Spanish)

#### YOGA SUMMER FESTIVAL

5 - 12 August, 2019

#### Certificate Courses 2019

- The Light of Hatha Yoga - Connecting to the source of power within with Swami Kailasananda
- Yoga and meditation for anxiety and trauma with Molly Madhavi Birkholm
- Principles of Asana Alignment with Steven Weiss
- How Yoga Works - Anatomy & Biomechanics of the Asanas
- Yoga psychology - The ancient path of Raja Yoga to inner peace
- Asanas - the foundations
- The meditation experience
- Yoga of relationships

#### Further Training Courses for Yoga Teachers

TTC Refresher Course:  
15 - 21 June, 2019

- Accessible Yoga with Lakshmi Sutter
- How to teach Meditation and Mantra Chanting with Swami Kailasananda
- How to teach Yoga to children
- How to teach Yoga to seniors
- Yoga and pregnancy

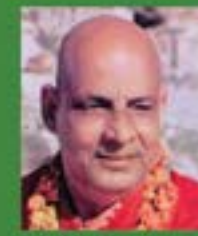


Ashram de Yoga Sivananda

Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda. Est 1957

Tel: +33 (0)2 38 91 88 82

[www.sivanandaorleans.org](http://www.sivanandaorleans.org)



Swami Sivananda  
(1887 - 1963)



Swami Vishnudevananda  
(1927 - 1993)

## SIVANANDA ASHRAM DHANWANTARI - NEYYAR DAM

*Experience the bliss of yoga in God's own country.*



#### Teachers' Training Courses

17 Mar - 13 Apr'19 • 10 Nov - 07 Dec'19 • 05 Jan - 01 Feb'20

#### Kids' & Teens' Camp

21 Apr - 11 May'19

#### Panchakarma Detoxification

01 May - 15 May'19 • 17 May - 31 May'19 • 02 Jun - 16 Jun'19  
17 Jun - 01 Jul'19 • 02 Jul - 16 Jul'19

#### Sadhana Mandalam

01 Aug - 10 Sep'19

#### Ayurveda Wellness Course

10 Nov - 24 Nov'19

#### Fasting Detoxification

04 Dec - 18 Dec'19

#### Advanced Teachers' Training Course

09 Feb - 07 March'20

Sivananda Ashram Dhanwantari

Founder: Swami Vishnudevananda, Est. 1957

Neyyar Dam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

+91 9495630951, +91 9446089992 [www.sivananda.org/ndam](http://www.sivananda.org/ndam)



# The International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Teachers' Training Course



Swami Sivananda  
1887-1963



Swami Vishnudevananda  
1927-1993



## Dates and Locations 2019-2020

**An intensive four week  
immersion in the yogic  
way of life**

**Open to students of all  
levels**

**Certificate on successful  
completion of course.**

**Recognised by Yoga  
Alliance.**

**Asanas, Pranayama,  
Meditation,  
Mantras, Vedanta,  
Bhagavad Gita, Kriyas,  
Diet,  
Anatomy & Physiology**

### ALUENDA, SPAIN

August 3 – September 1, 2019

### BARILOCHE, ARGENTINA

March 3 – 30, 2019

### BRACCIANO, ITALY

August 3 – September 1, 2019

### CHENGDU, CHINA

September 7 - October 5, 2019

### DALAT, VIETNAM

July 13 - August 10, 2019

November 2 - 30, 2019

February 1 - 29, 2020

### GAROPABA SC, BRAZIL

January, 2020 TBA

### GRASS VALLEY, CA, USA

May 4 - June 1, 2019

October 12 - November 9, 2019

### GUDUR, SOUTH INDIA

January 2020, TBA

### LONDON, UK

August 31 – September 28, 2019

### MADURAI, SOUTH INDIA

May 26 - June 22, 2019

October 13 - November 11, 2019

November 17 - December 14, 2019

### NASSAU, BAHAMAS

March 5 — April 1, 2019

April 4 — May 1, 2019

May 4 — 31, 2019

June 3 — 30, 2019

July 3 — 30, 2019

November 4 — December 1, 2019

December 4 — 31, 2019

January 4 — 31, 2020

### NETALA, HIMALAYAS, INDIA

April 7 - May 4, 2019

May 12 - June 8, 2019

July 21 - August 17, 2019

September 8 - October 5, 2019

### NEYYAR DAM, SOUTH INDIA

March 17 - April 13, 2019

November 10, 2019 - December 7, 2019

### ORLEANS, FRANCE

April 5 – May 4, 2019

May 6 – June 4, 2019

June 28 – July 26, 2019

July 28 – August 25, 2019

November 18 - December 17, 2019

### QUEBEC, CANADA

June 30 – July 28, 2019

November 17 – December 15, 2019

### REITH, TYROL, AUSTRIA

May 25 - June 23 2019

June 28 – July 26, 2019

July 28 – August 25, 2019

September 1 – 29, 2019

December 14, 2019 – January 12, 2020

### RUDRAPRAYAG, HIMALAYAS, INDIA

February 23 – March 24, 2019

October 19 – November 17, 2019

### THAILAND

September 28 - October 26, 2019

### USTKA, POLAND

May 20 – June 18, 2017

July 29 – August 27, 2017

September 2 – October 1, 2017

December 16 – January 14, 2018

### USTKA, POLAND

August 31 – September 29, 2019

### NEAR VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

July 1 – July 30, 2017

### WOODBOURNE, NY, USA

March 17 - April 14, 2019

June 2 - June 30, 2019

July 31 - August 28, 2019



[www.sivananda.org](http://www.sivananda.org)  
[www.sivananda.eu](http://www.sivananda.eu)

