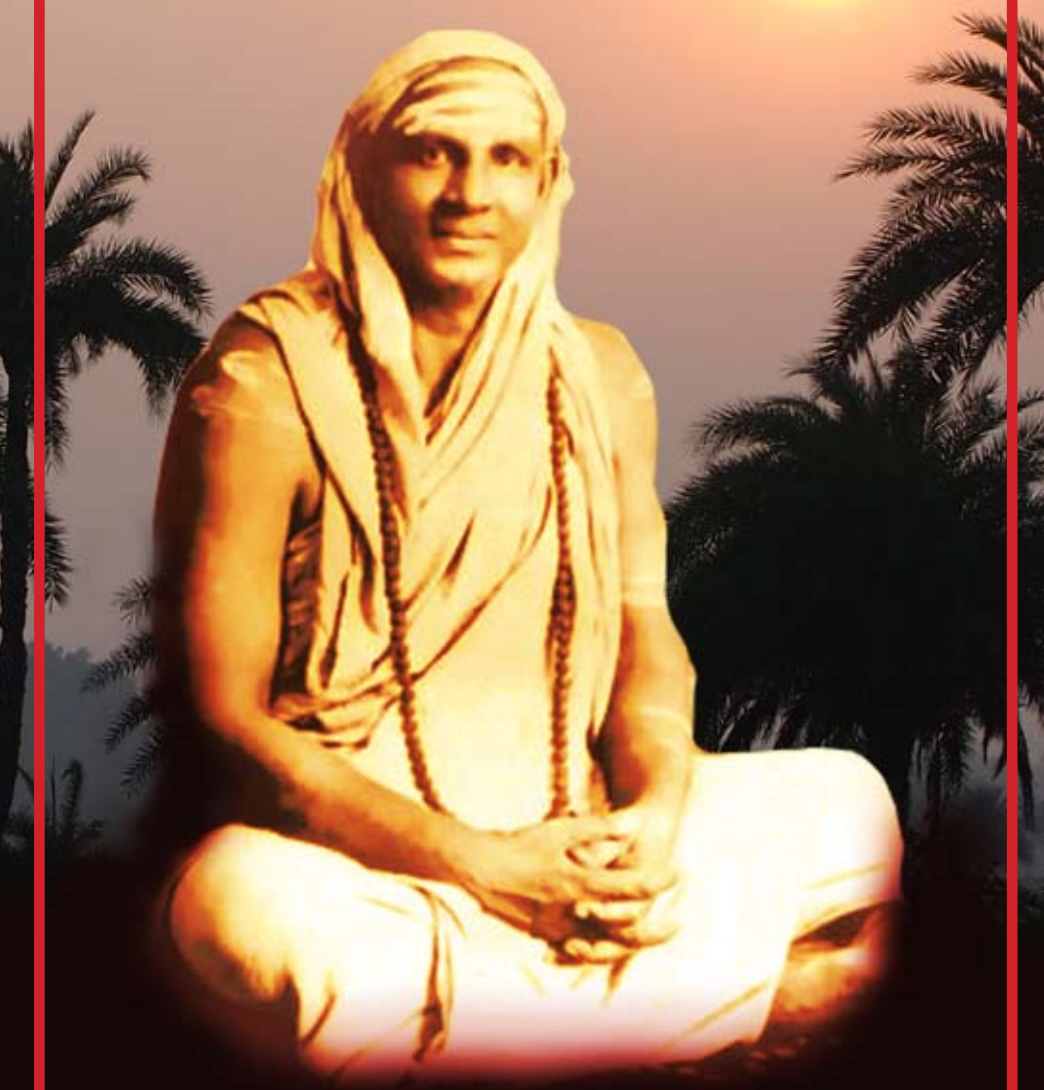


ARADHANA

Yoga of the heart ❤️

Complimentary

Year 1 Issue 3
May/June 2012



Rikhiapeeth, Rikhia, Deoghar, Jharkhand, India



Namo Narayan

Aradhana – Yoga of the heart ♥ is an offering to Paramguru Swami Sivananda and our beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda. It is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples, devotees and well-wishers of Paramahansa Satyananda.

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1. *Yajñashala Complex*
2. *Patanjali Ashram*
3. *Yoga Shakti Kutir*
4. *Sukraat Bhavan*



Rikhiapeeth, the tapobhumi of Swami Satyananda has developed into a vibrant spiritual epicentre abundant in peace, plenty and prosperity. Aspirants, seekers, devotees, householders and sannyasins, come from all parts of the world to live and work together for the benefit of others by following the high ideals of seva, selfless service, sadhana, spiritual practice, swadhaya, self study, and satsang, association with truth, as taught by Swami Sivananda and established by Swami Satyananda. It is a place of inspiration and joy for the thousands of natives who live in the hundreds of villages that surround Rikhiapeeth, as well as for millions of spiritual aspirants and devotees who come to imbibe the spiritual vibrations that abound in this sacred place.

Aradhana – Yoga of the heart ♥ is intended to share the profound teachings and lifestyle that are being practiced and lived in this sacred place for the benefit of all.

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Aradhana Invocation

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः । परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ Bhagavad Gita 3:11

Yajnas nourish, strengthen and empower the Devas, they in turn empower us. Strengthening and nourishing each other in this way, both attain shreya (prosperity).

—Sure Steps to Spiritual Life—

Give

Give in plenty, in humility and with joy. In the very process of giving you will enrich yourself too. Peace of mind comes to one who gives joy and happiness to others. Give yourself for the wellbeing of the world. Only through selfless activities, unattached work and loving service can one acquire the precious gems of purity, patience and humility, which lead to equanimity. Giving and not identifying with actions purifies the mind and heart and prepares one to receive divine grace and spiritual peace.



For a beginner, selfless service is easier than self-enquiry, jnana yoga. It purifies the heart and prepares the mind for the attainment of atma jnana, knowledge of the Self. By gradual practice and purification of the mind, you can become an expert in karma yoga. True nishkama yogis are able to remain unshaken by grief and loss, anger and malice, lust and greed, hatred and jealousy. They are always calm and serene though engaged in ceaseless action. Thus they always maintain a balanced mind. In this manner all their actions are done perfectly and selflessly.

Once you have tasted the bliss of selfless service, you can never leave it. You will begin to feel that this whole world is a manifestation of God. The spirit of self-sacrifice will grow. Immense faith, inner strength and purity of heart will be gained. The heart will be filled with sympathy, mercy, and pure love.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Let Rama be Your Ideal

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



Lord Rama

The noblest lesson embodied in the Ramayana is the supreme importance of righteousness in the life of every human being. Righteousness is the spiritual spark of life. Cultivation of righteousness is the process of the unfoldment of the latent divinity in man. The glorious incarnation of the Supreme Being, as Lord Rama, has exemplified through his own life, how to follow the path of righteousness. Let mankind follow in his footsteps and

practise the ideals cherished by him, for it is only thus that there can be everlasting peace, prosperity and welfare in this world.

No one but the righteous can be truly happy. No one but he who has the correct sense of duty and the will for its implementation can be said to live worthily. One must be imbued with a definite conviction about the supremacy of moral principles, ethical values and spiritual ideals, which should guide one's day-to-day actions and serve as powerful means for the culture of the human personality. That is the purpose of life. That is the way to Self-realisation. That is the message and the mission of Lord Rama's life on earth.

To a devotee, Sri Rama is not simply a good and great person, but God Himself. Rama is not merely the son of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya, but is also the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent God, Self, Atman or Brahman. The destruction of the ten-headed Ravana is the annihilation of the mind or the ten senses. Worship of Lord Rama is the worship of the Virat Purusha, all-pervading Godhead, Himself.



Swami Sivananda worshipping the divine

Devotion to God is not a simple emotion. It is the result of intense vairagya, dispassion, and sattvic bhavana, purity of heart and inner attitude. You should possess the good qualities that are extolled in the Ramayana and exemplified in the life of Lord Rama. Otherwise, emotion may rise up in you temporarily to a kind of ecstasy, but you cannot experience divine consciousness thereby. Devotion is a fruit which ripens gradually through the process of self-restraint and virtue. There can be no sadhana for God-realisation without intense vairagya. Only after detachment from the world of things, is it possible to have the attainment of God. Remember this.

Devotion has absolutely nothing to do with age, caste, creed, position, rank or sex. Generally, the worldly-minded people say: "We will practise dhyana, devotion, etc., when we retire from service." This is a serious mistake. How can you do spiritual sadhana after squeezing all your energy into service? How can you practise the strict means of yogic discipline in old age? Is there any certainty of life? The spiritual seeds of devotion must be sown in your heart when you are young, when your heart is tender and untainted. Then only it will strike a deep root, blossom and bear fruit when you become old, when you retire from service. Then only you will not be afraid of Yama, the God of death. You will meet him with a smile.

I shall tell you the means of attaining the final release from the great cycle of births and deaths. Devotion to Lord Rama is a great purifier of the heart. From devotion arises knowledge.

From knowledge comes the realisation of the pure Self. Knowing this perfectly, one goes to the supreme abode and merges in the Supreme Self.

The name of Lord Rama is the greatest purifier of the heart. It will wipe away all the sins from your heart. Not only this, it will wipe out all your sinful tendencies, too. The name of Rama is sweeter than the sweetest object. It is the haven of peace. It is the very life of pure souls. It is the purifier of all purifying agencies. It quenches the consuming fire of worldly desires. It awakens the knowledge of God. It bathes the aspirant in the ocean of divine bliss. Glory to Sri Rama and his name.

Therefore, recite his name, sing his glory and serve his lotus-feet. Enthroned in your heart Lord Rama of dark hue, whose image is reflected in the heart of Lord Shiva. Blessed is the pious soul who drinks uninterruptedly the nectar of Sri Rama's name which has been churned out of the ocean of the Vedas, which removes the impurities of Kali Yuga or the Iron Age, which lives constantly on the lips of Lord Shiva, which is a sovereign remedy or unfailing cure for the disease of worldly existence and is the life of Mother Janaki.

Rama Nama burns ignorance, passions and sin. With knowledge or without knowledge, correctly or incorrectly, when the word



Swami Satyananda performing Panchagni sadhana at Rikhiapeeth, 1990

“Rama” is pronounced, it showers a rain of good on the devotee. Sri Rama is Brahman who takes one across samsara. Rama is one in whom the yogis sport, the Self within. Rama Nama is the essence of Sahasranama. Rama Nama is equal to the Lord’s thousand names, or repetition of the mantra a thousand times. I call this the anti-gossip tonic. When you find you have wasted your time in gossip, repeat His name several times. You can make up for the time lost, and the mind will slowly be weaned from the gossip-habit.

Time is fleeting. Know the value of time. Time is most precious. Utilise every second profitably. Abandon all idle gossiping. Forget the past. Live every moment of your life for the realisation of the ideal and goal. Unfold all latent faculties. Grow, evolve and become a superhuman or a dynamic yogi. Struggle hard and reach the goal of life. May the blessings of Lord Rama be upon you all!



Welcoming Lord Rama

If the dust is in the company of the wind, it soars high in the sky. If it is in the company of water, it becomes dirty mire. If the air is in the company of jasmine, it wafts a sweet fragrance. If it is in the company of offal, it disseminates a foul odour. Likewise choose the company of wise men and become divine.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Rama is Omnipresent



In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Rama,
In the heart, mind, prana and senses is Rama,
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Rama,
In sentiment, thought, word and action is Rama.
Within is Rama, without is Rama, in front is Rama,
Above is Rama, below is Rama, behind is Rama,
To the right is Rama, to the left is Rama,
Everywhere is Rama.
Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama.
Refuge, solace, path, Lord, witness is Rama.
Father, mother, friend, relative, Guru is Rama.
Support, source, centre, ideal, God is Rama.
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer is Rama.
Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama.
The ultimate goal of one and all is Rama.
Attainable through shraddha,
Prema and worship is Rama.
Accessible to devotion and surrender is Rama.
Approachable by prayer, japa and kirtan is Rama.
Hosanna to Rama, glory to Rama, victory to Rama.
Adorations to Rama, salutations to Rama,
Prostrations to Rama.
Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama.
Om Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Aradhana during Vaishakh – April/May

Adi Guru Shankaracharya Jayanti

Shankara was a great unifier of humanity. His philosophy was not restricted to the highly intellectual, but within reach of the layman. Shankara's teachings are not words but life and light, and he exhorts that man must be true to his nature, absolutely dispassionate, saintly and wise, so that through proper meditation he may transcend himself and attain communion with the Absolute Spirit. May you obtain the blessings of Shankara and all the Brahmaidya Gurus!

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Shankara Jayanti Aradhana

On this day, you can study his works or teachings, and pray and meditate on his life. You can chant the entire Saundarya Lahari which is a Siddha Stotra that emanated from him. This sacred hymn praises the divine form of Devi and is a path of highest sadhana which leads to self-realisation.

You can also chant the following Stotras by Adi Shankaracharya:

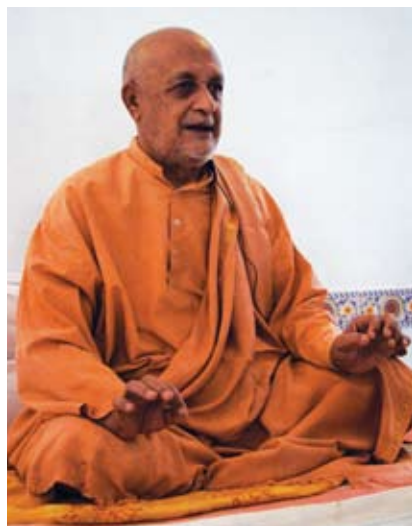
- Nirvanastakam (Atmanubhuti)
- Mohamudgar (Bhaja Govindam)

“Shankara formulated the sannyasa tradition by founding the Dashnami Order, to which all sannyasins today belong. Prior to this order, sannyasins had no platform through which they could be recognised, acknowledged or unified with a common aim. The Saraswati tradition, with its peetha at Sringeri, was founded by Shankara twelve hundred years ago. Tripura Sundari, the Devi invoked by Shankara in Saundarya Lahari, is the adishthatri Devi or established deity, of Sringeri Peetha and forever enshrined there.”

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

Bhakti is the Path of the 21st Century

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Swami Satyananda

The keynote of the twenty-first century will be bhakti. The bhakti movement will take us by storm. Yoga was responsible for weaning people from the material to the transcendental world. The yoga movement ushered in the spiritual awakening at large. Had yoga not been revived, humanity would never have turned to spirituality. Yoga has completed its mission successfully. Hatha yoga, asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and other yogic practices proved extremely

useful in bringing humanity to the path of bhakti. Yoga has become the pretext, the most practical excuse.

But the twenty-first century belongs to kirtan and bhakti. It will be full of sankirtan. The sound of sankirtan soirees will ring in the atmosphere. Renowned singers and musicians will step into kirtan singing, because the joy and ecstasy derived from devotional music cannot be found elsewhere. Two objectives will automatically be served in this way. First, the standard of music will improve. Second, those who find the spiritual path very difficult will find it easy through bhakti. Therefore, those of you who can sing and who have a family must sing kirtan. Dance, music and sankirtan will dominate this century. There will be metropolitan sankirtan, cruise sankirtan, forest sankirtan, mountain sankirtan and, of course, temple sankirtan.



Thousands of devotees receiving Sri Swamiji's blessings at Rikhiapeeth

Sing God's name, hear His name, write His name, draw His picture, talk about Him, live with people who talk about God. This will not only make you free from tension, high blood pressure and so on, it will make you immensely happy, a kind of happiness that you cannot imagine, which cannot come from anything else in this world. The point of singing God's name is divine intoxication, divine ecstasy.

Empty your heart

Bhakti is a science. It brings about a transformation in awareness, like a chemical change. Bhakti causes a metamorphosis in a person's thoughts, actions and mind, as well as in their reactions, responses and lifestyle. These changes can be seen and experienced. All those who have reached the ultimate stage of bhakti, like Mirabai, Kabir and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, have told us one common truth - that bhakti is divine energy, transcendental love. It is not the ordinary emotion of love, it is supreme love. When your mind is fully and unconditionally merged in something, it becomes one with that object of love. When you turn your love towards God, the mind begins to lose itself. It slowly becomes one with God and the chasm between the devotee and God begins to narrow down.

Bhakti is the only sadhana path that is free of obstacles, bhakti is inspired and sustained by God Himself. It is attained only by the grace of God. Therefore, when bhakti is God's gift, His wish, how can there be an obstacle? This is my own personal experience and the teachings of all the sages, great souls, scriptures and holy books. Bhakti is the only sadhana that is simple, easy, without hazards, side effects, risks or any chance of going astray.

Bhakti is a ninefold path, but what I mean by bhakti is just attaching your mind to God. When your mind is attached to a man or woman, it is passion. When it is attached to money, it is greed. But when you attach your mind to God, it is bhakti. I suggest you turn all your feelings and attachments that are now flowing in different directions towards one focus - God. Gather your emotions together from all other relationships and direct them to God. Leave everything behind and empty your heart.

Remember that if you want to know what is beyond name and form, beyond the senses and intellect, the simplest and easiest path is to think about others. If you help your fellow beings, even a little, God will most certainly shower His grace upon you, because to worship others is to worship God.



Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda invoking Devi during Chaitra Navaratri with 1000 names of Lalita Havan

Ramacharitamanas

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Ramacharitamanas tells the story of Rama and Sita as narrated by Shiva to Parvati. It is a commentary on faith and the most powerful tonic for generating bhakti. After thoroughly studying the Vedas, Upanishads, Bible, Koran and many other spiritual books, I stopped my reading with Ramacharitamanas. This one book paved the way in my life. The greatest obstacle was that I knew too much about God, but He only remained within the precincts of my mind; I



Swami Satyananda, 2003

I couldn't go beyond. This book took me out of the gravitational force of mind and intellect, and now it is the only book I read.

The Bhagavad Gita contains knowledge, but Ramacharitamanas has the sweetness of nectar. The biggest contribution it has made to my life has been to establish a concept of God with form. Sakara is the one who has a shape, a form, and nirakara is the formless one. God is everywhere, but I want a God who has a name and a form, so I enshrined Lord Raghunath in my room and He is mine. From Ramacharitamanas I learned that God is everywhere, but you have to hold Him in one place. I also learned that this light which you see comes from the sun, but it is not the sun. It has the warmth and brilliance of the sun but it is not the sun. In the same way I may have a spark of divinity, but I am not the Divine. I may be a part of Him, but I cannot be Him.

In Ramacharitamanas the story is the skeleton structure over which the teachings are delicately woven. The real instruction is about



Ram Naam Aradhana at Rikhiapeeth

life. There are lessons on the philosophy of life, on relationships, be it love between brother and sister, between two brothers or between father and son, how relationships should be lived and how they become distorted. That is the speciality of Ramacharitamanas.

Ramacharitamanas deals with the conflicts, frustrations and disappointments of life from birth to death. You cannot call it a religious book. Ramacharitamanas will give you a complete idea of the timetable of life. Life is a journey and you should have a timetable. The whole book, including Sita and Rama's wedding, Rama's exile, the abduction of Sita, Sindhu Tarang, the burning of Lanka, the killing of Ravana, reflect the spiritual journey of the jivatma, the individual soul, from bondage to liberation. The Ramayana happens every day. Do not say that Rama never was, he is spiritual philosophy personified.

Most people first understand the esoteric meaning and then accept Sita and Rama. The second mentality is to first understand the personages of Sita and Rama and then turn to the underlying philosophy. The Indian village mind functions like this. A villager first understands Sita to be the daughter of King Janaka from Mithila, who was taken away by Ravana, the king of Lanka, who was killed by

Rama. The uneducated villagers understand this in story form first and then go into the spiritual dimensions, thus experiencing both the exoteric and esoteric Ramayana. But their urban intellectual counterparts go about it by interpreting the symbolism before the human side of the story. The story becomes important for them only as a representation of a philosophy.

Chant Ramacharitamanas, read it devoutly, profoundly and with understanding. The formless God becomes manifest in a recognisable form. It is futile to concentrate on deciphering the inner meaning and explaining the symbolism behind all the characters. Instead, read the Ramacharitamanas as it is, feel and understand it as it is. If you apply your brain, God becomes still more elusive.

Rama should not be taken as allegorical or symbolic. Rama and Sita should be worshipped as a God and Goddess. Go to God through your heart, not the intellect, and see him as Tulsidas has described him. A sadhaka should take Rama as a sakara purusha, a manifestation of God. Sita's beautiful character should move our hearts and bring tears to our eyes. Our hearts should become softer and softer, more and more tender, and slowly we should merge in the formless.



Swami Satyananda and Swami Satyasangananda in front of Raghunath Kutir at Rikhiapeth, 1995

Devotion and Bhakti

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Swami Niranjanananda performing aradhana of kanyas during Sat Chandi Devi Puja

Devotion is an expression of qualities such as faith and belief coming together. Faith and belief are not abstract qualities but represent some basic realisation that you may have had about yourself and about God. We can say belief is personal reflection and faith is universal reflection. You have faith in God, something and somebody whom you have never seen and may not see in this lifetime, but faith continues. There is faith in some transcendental form of existence and there is belief in yourself.

Every aspect of creation is guided by its inherent nature. The nature of a fruit tree is to bear fruit eventually. The nature of a human being is to experience peace, truth and bliss. If the seed of a fruit tree is left above ground in the middle of a desert, it will not germinate, much less become a tree and fulfil its nature by bringing forth fruit. You have to plant the seed, care for it and create the right environment for it to fulfil its destiny. It is the same with human beings. The nature of a human being is to experience satyam – truth,

shivam – positivity, auspiciousness, and sundaram – beauty. But to have this experience you have to create the right environment. You can't just say, "I am going to fulfil my destiny."

The right environment begins with belief in one's own potential and ability; and faith in God, Ishwara pranidhana, knowing one is being guided and directed, and that the essence in oneself is the same as the essence of God. This is the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. Whether water is contained in an ocean, a river, a lake or a cloud, the essence is the same – H₂O. Similarly, the essence of God and the reflection of that essence in us is the same. We call the essence of water H₂O and the essence of divinity God. Recognising and realising that essence is the development of faith and belief.

So one component of bhakti is to drop the masks and experience the reality at a personal level, social level and global level. If the aim of bhakti is to experience the truth, then the first sadhana of bhakti is to realise the truth of who you are and what you are.

Once faith and belief are alive and active, the emotions are channelled – and this is bhakti. Emotion is e-motion – energy in motion. When it is directed outwards into the world, we experience pleasure, pain, change, likes, dislikes, fulfilment, satisfaction, as well as a vacuum and emptiness. But when the same energies are directed inwards with the help of faith and belief, it becomes bhakti. Bhakti is channelling the emotions towards transcendental realisation.

Immersion into Satyananda Yoga, Chennai

From 16th to 18th March 2012, Swamis Tyagraj and Shaktimurti conducted a very successful seminar in Chennai. Three classes per day were simultaneously conducted in two Chennai yoga studios. All the classes were enthusiastically attended, with the seminar culminating on Sunday evening with kirtan and a DVD on Rikhiapeeth ashram life.



Love is Light

Jyoti darshan on Holi at Samadhi Sthal



On the occasion of Holi, 8th April 2012, during the early morning havan conducted by Swami Satyasangananda and the sannyasins of Rikhiapeeth, we were all blessed by a special darshan at Sri Swamiji's Samadhi Sthal when two divine flames manifested in the akhanda jyoti on the Samadhi Sthal. The flame appeared during the Lalita Sahasranam Havan, 1000 Names of Devi, and was visible until the Purnahuti when it mysteriously vanished. This darshan appeared on the auspicious occasion of Holi, which was the day Sri Swamiji gave his first darshan after Mahasamadhi in the form of light during Holi of 2010, and now in the form of a flame we felt his presence again. It was clear that he was giving us the message that love is light, love is truth, love is God.

When Should a Child Start Yoga?

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



Daily yoga class for kanyas of Rikhiapeeth

Yoga is the science of life. It is not merely the science of postures nor is it merely the science of breathing or the science of the mind. It is the science of life, the complete life in its totality and therefore, the right moment to introduce yoga is when the life begins so that the individual is born complete, whole and total.

After all, if you ask the makers of a Mercedes car at which point should they start to seek perfection in the car they will tell you that perfection has to be sought right from the very moment they decide to make a car. The moment they decide to make a Mercedes, it is from that moment that they have to seek perfection in the design, in the planning, in the execution and manufacture and even after the car is ready and has been sold, there has to be perfection in maintenance and usage of the car. Perfection has to be foremost if the car has to function properly without accidents or damage.

This applies to human beings as well, for humans are the Mercedes of creation. Amongst all of God's creation, it is the human being that is the most superior in terms of intelligence, in terms of intellect, in terms of intuition and in terms of his capacity to know about himself. Humans alone have the ability to know, for the seed of knowledge has awakened in them.

Animals do not know of their existence like we do. They just exist and function according to the dictates of nature. The dog barks but he does not know he is barking, he is merely guided by his instinct. I am talking and I know that I am talking. You are listening and you know that you are listening. This is the seed of knowledge that makes man the most perfect of all God's creation.

Therefore, when we want to introduce yoga, we should think about it from the moment two individuals decide to conceive a child. What type of child do I want to bring into this world. Should he be a poet? Should he be a warrior? Should he have saintly qualities? Should he be an intellectual? At the planning stage you have to decide this, just as the maker of the Mercedes has to decide at the planning stage the type of car he wants to make. That should be your motivation and desire when generating a new life.

After that, when the child is conceived, the mother, who is the manufacturing machine, has to be very selective about the type of things she exposes herself to because whatever the mother is experiencing, whatever the mother is feeling, whatever the mother



Yoga class for kanyas of Rikhiapeeth

is thinking, she is conveying that to the life she is carrying within her. Most certainly! There are ways of learning which are beyond the mind and anything that transpires with the mother at that time when the life is forming inside her is passed on to the subtle awareness of the child.



Kanyas of Rikhiapeeth receiving Devi prasad at Tapowan Vedi

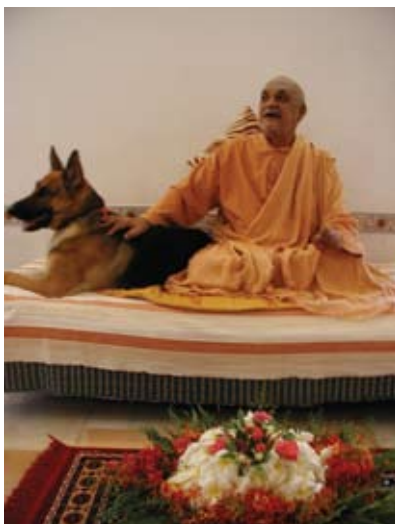
So if you want a perfect product then you have to start yoga at that point, when the child doesn't even know, or rather that life, I would not say child, that life does not even know that it is practicing yoga. That is the point. In India there is a tradition of giving samskaras to the child at an age when he cannot even comprehend or analyse what he is receiving because many samskaras are given to the child during conception or before the age of seven when his intellect is not formed. But his grasp is total because the process of learning is not always through the mind. Through the mind we learn several things but there are areas of our being which can grasp knowledge without the process of rationalisation or of understanding.

It is a subliminal process through which knowledge flows freely to the child and he just absorbs it. He does not understand anything intellectually but his grasp is deep. Therefore from the time of planning, through the conception period and after birth, the first seven years of the child, when he is with his manufacturer, the mother, that is the most important and formative period for the child. Whatever he learns after that influences his intelligence and intellect, but his exposure in the formative years influences his intuition. This is the belief of yoga.

It is the first seven years of a child's life that are the most formative, and these are spent with the mother. This is why the mother is considered the first Guru. It is the period where the child is developing emotionally, not intellectually. His emotional strength is being built at that time. And it is those strengths that form the foundation of his life which will see him through his later years when he enters into the arena of life.

Intellectually you may be a giant, but if you are weak emotionally, you will break in any crisis. You may be very intelligent, you may be very capable, but if your emotions lead you astray you can have a nervous breakdown. I have seen many children who are very intelligent and they do extremely well in their studies but the first emotional crisis that they face, they have a breakdown and after that they don't recover. Many of them don't recover. So what was the use of that lop-sided development of intelligence alone? Both emotions and intelligence have to develop side by side. After the age of seven, the intellect gains the limelight, but before that in the first seven years of a child's life, that is the period when the child learns the principles of the heart. The heart, which is the foundation of your life.

We take our decisions through the head. We don't listen to the heart. But if we cared to listen to the heart, our decisions would be more correct because the heart cannot deceive you. The head can deceive you. The head can lead you astray. The heart can never deceive you because the heart is pure. You see how little children are, when they speak, they speak the truth. They don't know how to deceive. It is only as we grow older that we learn the art of deception, from adults. We learn the art of concealing what we actually feel, what we actually think.



Swami Satyananda and Purna

So these first seven years are most important because the heart is a very important aspect of your life. You may have ignored it, that's a different matter, because the life that you live requires you to deal through the head. It requires that you deal through the head. But as I said the head space on its own with poor or retarded development of the heart, can create difficulties in life.

Therefore, the first seven years of the child are very important, when he learns what we call bhakti, because the heart is the seat of bhakti or higher intelligence and awareness. Of course you understand bhakti only in a religious sense but bhakti is not necessarily religious. Bhakti is that feeling which gives you the ability to see something beyond the mind. The mind is not final. It is your mind that decides everything that you do, but the mind is not final. After all, what you thought at the age of five, you don't think that today. Your mind has changed as you have grown. Your mind has changed, your perceptions have changed, your conceptions have changed, your understanding has changed, your beliefs have changed.

And what your mind tells you about a particular person, object, event or circumstance need not be the ultimate judgement, because another person who may be closest to you may not have



Birds-eye view of kanya bhoj at Annapurna Kanya Kitchen



Kanyas of Rikhiapeeth performing Sri Vidya Puja during Navaratri 2012

the same response or reaction to the same person, object or event. Everybody understands, perceives, cognises and acts according to the quality of his own mind. So whatever the mind alone tells you cannot be the final deciding factor because mind is whimsical, it changes all the time.

But the heart doesn't change. If you go back to what you liked in your childhood, to what you believed in your childhood, when your heart held sway as the mind was still in seed stage and had not formed, you will find those areas are still in you, as strong as ever. If you care to go back to those moments when you functioned through the heart because you were innocent, you will at once discover that those were the cherished moments of your life.

They call it re-birthing and many people use that as a technique of therapy. When people have mental conflicts they use that as a technique. It's called re-birthing, to go back to that moment in time when you were receiving everything from the heart. So the point of yoga begins for a child at the moment when the life begins. If you plan to have a child then you can think in this way where from the moment that you decide to have a child, you set out the chart, the blueprint, the desire of what kind of progeny you want to bring into the world, so that the model you bring out is the perfect being.

But in the case of those who have already been born, who have missed that crucial moment of engineering because their parents were not that aware, they should begin yoga at the age of seven. We all belong to that category, as we have all missed the bus. So for such children who are born without any yogic planning there is a tradition where the child at the age of seven is given a mantra. It is called upanayan, and this is as important a samskara in the life of the child as the samskara during conception. It is a tradition in India that the child, whether boy or girl, at the age of seven, is taken to the Guru and at that time he is told three practices – surya namaskar, pranayama, and gayatri mantra, because it is believed that at the age of seven, when the child is taken away from the mother to begin his education, that is a very significant moment in the life of the child.

At the age of seven, a very important gland, known as the pineal gland, which corresponds to the ajna chakra in yogic physiology, starts to slowly but steadily decay. This process of decay which commences at the age of seven in a very small way continues until the time of death which is responsible for the ageing process as well. If the child is introduced to the practice of asana, pranayama and mantra at the right time the decay can be delayed and its effects can be balanced, prolonging his life and maintaining optimum health.



So if you have missed the bus you can still help the child by introducing him or her to three simple practices of yoga at the age of seven. It is known as upanayan and although many people may mistake it for an orthodox religious ceremony the real reason is purely yogic and scientific. These three practices alone introduced at the correct time can give the child the solid foundation required to have a good and healthy life.

Easter at Rikhiapeeth

Easter weekend was observed at Christ Kutir, Rikhiapeeth. Ashram residents, guests, kanyas and batuks attended a special program dedicated to the inspirational life and qualities of Jesus. Mantras were chanted with much devotion, including uplifting kirtans led by residents and guests. The program was continued with a lively and abundant Easter picnic feast.



Chaitra Navaratri at Rikhiapeeth

The 9 day Navaratri anusthan with daily chanting of the entire Ramacharitmanas and Sri Vidya Puja with Devi mantras by the kanyas of Rikhia presided over by Swami Satyasangananda was full of bliss, joy, devotion and blessings for all devotees present. This grand anusthan concluded with the chanting of Akhanda Ramayan by the Ramayan Mandali of Munger and Ram Sahasranam havan and kanya bhoj of 650 kanyas in the auspicious presence of Swami Niranjanananda who came on the last few days to bless all who had participated in the anusthan. Diksha was given to 54 aspirants and daily bhoj was offered to 650 kanyas and 550 batuks as a part of this anusthan.



Aradhana during Vaishakh – May

Buddha Jayanti

6th May 2012

The gospel of Buddha is simple and yet wonderfully profound. The universal experience of sorrow or dukha is the starting point of Buddha's thought. He emphatically asserts that there is a way out of sorrow, and a haven of eternal bliss within the reach of every man.

The extinction of suffering can be achieved by the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of the practice of:

- Right belief
- Right understanding or right views
- Right aspiration
- Right speech, right conduct or right action
- Right living or right means of livelihood
- Right exertion
- Right mindfulness or attentiveness
- Right concentration or meditation

The Noble Eightfold Path destroys lust, anger, greed, malice and other evils, and purifies the heart.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Buddha Jayanti Aradhana

On this day take time to reflect on the Noble Eightfold Path and make a solemn vow to meet hatred with love, and malice with goodwill. This is the best way to pay homage to the great sage Lord Buddha, the apostle of love and ahimsa. Do something for the needy to develop goodness of heart and perform havan with the mantra 'Buddham Sharanam Gachaami'.

Establishing the Gurukul System at Rikhiapeeth

Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati



Kanyas and batuks receiving blessings of Guru during Tulsi Puja 2007

When I arrived with Swami Satyananda at Rikhia, an obscure village in Jharkhand, I felt as if I was slipping back into the 16th century. You could not get more backward than that; there was simply no trace of the 21st century, no roads, no electricity, no phones, no newspapers, no cars, no busy streets, no hospitals, a few dilapidated schools looking desolate with only a few ragged unkempt children, wearing torn and tattered clothing.

That was the Rikhia we entered on 21st September 1989. Swami Satyananda had chosen this place for his life of seclusion according to a mandate he had received while performing austerities at the jyotirlinga of Shiva at Trayambakeshwar near Mumbai. Soon after he arrived, Sri Swamiji plunged into sadhana and undertook the sankalpa of performing many arduous practices such as Panchagni and mantra anusthan.

It was during this time that our neighbours began knocking on our door for help. They were hungry, they needed medicines, shelter and clothing. The very basics that we take so much for granted were unavailable to them. We started helping them in whatever way we could and help started pouring in. Our work began in full swing when, in 1995, Swami Satyananda, accepting that as the will of God, gave us the green signal to start this work in earnest in an organised and systematic manner, with the attitude of an aradhana, or worship of God in living form.

Today, when you see the same place and the people, especially the children, you may not believe the condition they were in hardly ten years ago. They would qualify perfectly for a before and after advertisement if you know what I mean!

How did it all happen? The very same children, who at that time did not have the confidence to look you in the eye and answer a simple question like what is your name, today are at the helm of the Rikhia ashram, speaking wonderful English, designing the ashram calendars, conducting all its multifarious programs, singing soul stirring kirtans, conducting yajnas with perfect intonation of Sanskrit mantras which would make even a pandit sit up and listen.

When I look back to the time where a young village girl knocked on our door and shyly asked to learn English and we hesitantly



Swami Satyananda with kanyas during Sita Kalyanam

started to teach her 'abc', I am amazed to see how the small seed sown on that day has flourished into this giant tree of over 1,500 children that are ever on the increase.

Mind you, these children come from impoverished homes. They are the unfortunate, neglected of society who have been condemned to a life worse than the animals that affluent members of society rear as pets in their homes. They do not have even the basic amenities that a child needs like a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, comb and towel or even a toilet where they can bathe in privacy. This, to my mind, is the main achievement of Rikhia because these children have literally risen out of the doldrums.

Rikhia was an experiment, based on the philosophy of Swami Satyananda, that education is a process of unfoldment from within, not something you borrow from outside, which becomes possible when the child is exposed to a positive environment and receives trust, encouragement, recognition, responsibility and love, as in a gurukul system of education. Sri Swamiji always says that when you contribute to the growth of an otherwise useless person and make him capable, that is a big achievement and accomplishment. Anyone can get things done by trained professionals, but then what is your contribution in that? Instead, if you make a person who is otherwise a total reject into someone useful, that is a big service you have done for him.

With these words in mind we took up the challenge at Rikhia. We started with the girls because they were the most neglected in the community. The parents did not even consider it necessary to send them to school or educate them. These little girls were doomed to a life of doing odd jobs at homes which perhaps no one else cared to do. In other words, they were considered good for nothing or a burden on the family.



With his wonderful ways, Swami Satyananda changed all that. He gave them the name 'kanya', which immediately exalted their position in the minds of everyone as kanya worship is an integral part of Indian society, so much so that every Indian rich or poor, educated or illiterate, has utmost faith in the ritual of kanya puja. To my mind that worked wonders for them, for some deep-rooted change began to occur just by this recognition given to them.

The method we used was first of all to allow them their own free space without making any demands on them to come regularly. In other words, they should want to come out of their own sweet will. Then arose the question of what we should teach them.

Yoga was the natural option as we were all trained yoga teachers and we all knew how beneficial yoga would be for their expansion of mind. But then we decided to ask them what they wanted to learn instead of imposing our choices on them. Imagine our surprise when they said English! Those ragged, snotty-nosed kids, who could not even speak their own mother tongue properly, wanted to learn the most sophisticated language of our age.

So the English lessons started. Sometimes they came, sometimes they didn't. But we did not react to that. One fine morning when the kids had not turned up, some of us sannnyasins were chanting the morning prayers in Sanskrit, followed by kirtan, when a few of them turned up and asked to join in. They liked it so much that they began to come regularly and soon learnt all the chants and kirtans effortlessly.



Kanyas art project

Gradually, we noticed a marked change in their confidence levels. They responded better, they looked brighter, they moved with ease, grace and poise. They became more and more enthusiastic about all their activities and thus learnt quicker. The



Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda with Kanyas of Rikhiapeeth

chanting of mantras had worked wonders for expanding the frontiers of their mind, making them more receptive to the unfoldment of knowledge.

After all, expansion of mind is that phenomenon which opens all the unseen locks of the mind that prevent the removal of ignorance. This was taking place in these children through the constant chanting of Sanskrit mantras. Sanskrit is a phonetic language based purely on sound frequency. In that respect, it differs from other languages which have developed for the purpose of communication.

Through the medium of sound, Sanskrit activates energy centres located in the mouth, throat, nasal tract, epiglottis and tongue, which are directly linked to higher centres in the brain. To achieve this, the only requirement is that the pronunciation should be perfect and the chanting should be regular. They fulfilled both these conditions and we can see the results.

The chanting of mantras and kirtan are an integral part of nada yoga which utilises dhvani, or sound, to awaken the inner potential. Along with nada yoga, we introduced them to the ritual of yajna, which is a fire ceremony performed with the chanting of mantras. These simple methods have worked wonders for them.

Today the attendance of girls in the nearby school is one hundred percent and they carry away all the prizes for distinction in all subjects. With this marked improvement in the kanyas, we then decided to include the little boys as well or else the girls of Rikhia would soon begin to overshadow them. Swami Satyananda named them 'batuks', as the batuk too plays an important role in the kanya worship and this has created a wonderful competitive spirit between them.

Today their minds have opened up to a whole new world out there. They can hope, aspire, dream and even become what they dream to be. Previously, they were like the proverbial frog in the well that could not even imagine a world beyond the walls of the well where he was born, lived and died. All this was possible only because a very special person, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, happened to step into their lives one fine afternoon in 1989 and started the establishment of a gurukul system of education.



Kanyas of Rikhiapeeth

Education is the root. Culture is the flower. Wisdom is the fruit.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Guru Purnima

Rikhiapeeth 1st to 3rd July 2012



इस वर्ष पूज्य गुरुदेव स्वामी सत्यानन्द के सम्मान में गुरु पूर्णिमा उनके तपोभूमि रिखियापीठ में मनाई जाएगी। सर्वोत्तम सद्गुरु के साथ साथ वे सर्वोत्तम शिष्य भी थे और उनका जीवन गुरु भक्ति, गुरु स्मरण और गुरु समर्पण का एक अनोखा उदाहरण है। इस परम पवित्र अवसर पर सद्गुरु स्वामी शिवानन्द, स्वामी सत्यानन्द तथा विश्व के सब गुरु-जनों को समर्पित पूजा और आराधना से स्वामी सत्यानन्द की तपोभूमि निखर उठेगी।

गुरु पूर्णिमा १ से ३ जुलाई २०१२ के दौरान मनाई जाएगी। ३ जुलाई को प्रातः ७ से ११ गुरु पूजन का कार्यक्रम होगा जिस दौरान दीक्षा दी जाएगी। इस भव्य कार्यक्रम का आयोजन स्वामी निरंजनानन्द सरस्वती तथा स्वामी सत्यसंगानन्द सरस्वती की पावन उपस्थिति में किया जाएगा। जो भक्तगण गुरु के प्रति अपने प्रेम और समर्पण तथा अपने जीवन में गुरु शक्ति के कृपा तथा आशीर्वाद प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं वे पत्र, फोन या ई-मेल द्वारा जल्द से जल्द अपना स्थान आरक्षित करें।

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This year Guru Purnima will be commemorated at Rikhiapeeth in honour of the disciple of disciples, Swami Satyananda who lived and breathed only for his Guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati. During this most sacred event, the Tapobhumi of Paramahansa Satyananda will come alive with prayers and worship of Sadguru Swami Sivananda, Swami Satyananda as well as all Gurus of the universe who inspire our lives.

The Guru Purnima anusthan from 1st to 3rd July 2012 will culminate with the sacred Guru Puja from 7–11 am on the 3rd July, and diksha will be given on 3rd July. The grand scale event will be presided over by Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda. Devotees who wish to offer their love and devotion to Guru and invoke the grace and blessings of Guru Shakti into their lives may register by phone, email or letter at the earliest.

Aradhana

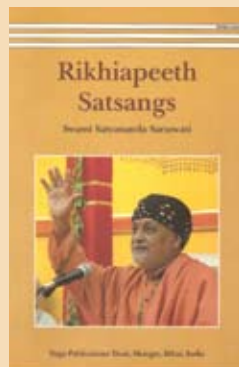
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May/Jun 2012

Rikhiapeeth Satsangs

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Rikhiapeeth Satsangs is a selection of talks given by Swami Satyananda between 2000 and 2007 to visitors from all over the world. The satsangs exemplify Swami Satyananda's liberal, compassionate and practical views on a broad range of subjects including: ashram life, Guru-disciple relationship, the Cosmic Mother, children, awakening of consciousness, yoga, poverty, and destiny. Rikhiapeeth Satsangs provides fresh impetus and inspiration for all individuals.



Rikhiapeeth blog: www.rikhiapeeth.net

The Rikhiapeeth blog is a sanctuary for all spiritual seekers. Inspiring satsangs of Paramahansa Satyananda are posted daily which address universal questions relating to the entire gamut of birth, life, death, reincarnation and karma. These satsangs uplift spiritual seekers from around the globe, known and unknown, in their pursuit to live a divine life. In fact if

Blogger's comment: "This blog is truly appreciated. It can be an excellent way to begin a day, becoming a daily dose of wisdom and clarity."



Courses at Rikhiapeeth May/June

Yoga Sadhana and Ashram Life Course: 15th - 28th June

This course offers sincere aspirants an opportunity to practice yogic sadhana and experience the benefits of ashram life through seva. This course offers a balanced daily routine of hatha yoga, raja yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and gyana yoga.

"The greatest lesson we have to learn is the lesson of life. And this becomes available to us when we decide to step out of our routine existence and adopt some different ways to live by, even if it is for a short time. One of these ways is ashram life, where you can stay for a few days as a sannyasin and live a life that is diametrically opposite to yours and learn how to deal with different situations, different people, different problems and, at the same time, also learn to deal with yourself."

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Rikhiapeeth Events 2012

July 1st–3rd	Guru Purnima
July 29th–Aug 2nd	Sri Radha Krishna Jhoolan
Aug 9th	Krishna Janmashtami
Sept 1st–8th	Srimad Bhagavat Katha & Sivananda Janmotsav
Sept 12th	Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Day
Oct 16th–23rd	Ashwin Navaratri Sadhana
Nov 13th	Diwali
Dec 14th–17th	Sat Chandi Mahayajna / Sita Kalyanam
Dec 24th–28th	Yoga Purnima
Dec 31st–Jan 1st	New Year
5th & 6th each month	Guru Bhakti Yoga

Rikhiapeeth Courses 2012

June 15th–28th	Yoga Sadhana and Ashram Life Course
July 6th–8th	Antar Mouna Course
Aug 15th–Sept 4th	Yoga Teacher Training Course (Hindi)
Sept 14th–16th	Ajapa Japa and Yoga Nidra Course
Oct 26th–Nov 4th	Chakra Sadhana Course
Nov 7th–13th	Prana Vidya Course
Jan 2nd–8th 2013	Kriya Yoga & Tattwa Shuddhi Course (English)
Jan to Oct	Introduction to Ashram Life

Those planning to attend any of the specified events and courses should contact Rikhiapeeth by phone, email or post in advance (for reply within India, please enclose a stamped self addressed envelope).

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