

## **YOGA: STEP – BY – STEP**

THIS IS A SERIES OF FIFTY – TWO LESSONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF YOGA WHICH INCLUDES INSTRUCTIONS IN ASANAS, KRIYAS, MUDRAS, HATHA YOGA, JNANA YOGA RELAXATION AND THE SCIENCE OF PRANAYAMA. THE FIRST STAGES OF THE ANTARANGA YOGA OF PATANJALI ARE DEALT WITH BY THE AUTHOR AND PARTICULARLY THE EARLY KRIYAS OF PRATYAHARA, SENSE WITHDRAWAL AND THE HIGHER KRIYAS AND PRAKRIYAS OF JNANA YOGA AND RAJA YOGA INCLUDING THE HIGHLY RESPECTED TECHNIQUE OF THE HANG SAH KRIYA AND THE ORIGINAL RISHI CULTURE CONCEPT AND TEACHINGS OF CHETTINA NIDRA, NOW POPULARLY CALLED YOGA NIDRA, YOGA PSYCHIC SLEEP. THESE LESSONS ARE IN SEQUENCE AND WERE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AS A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN YOGA, BUT THEN GREATLY EXPANDED INTO FOUR VOLUMES ENTITLED:

VOL. I How to Begin a Practice of Yoga

VOL.II Yoga – Intermediate Practices

VOL.III Advanced Yoga Practices

VOL.IV Senior Yoga Practices.

These lessons are intended to be studied lesson by lesson, absorbed and learned before going on to the next lesson. In no sense is this a book to be read for the sake of reading, or to pick out some postures which one wishes to do for the sake of doing some Asanas alone. This author would be happier if you reached for some lesser-known work on Yoga if all you want to do is learn a couple of Yoga exercises—twists and jerks. This course of Yoga tuition offers a step-by-step guidance to anyone who is ready for real Rishiculture Yoga and can be followed up with numerous courses that are also available but only after these courses are studied, step – by-step.

BY YOGARISHI DR. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI, ACHARYA, YOGA JIVANA SATSANGHA (INTERNATIONAL), PRESIDENT, VISHWA YOGA SAMAJ (WORLD YOGA CONGRESS), FOUNDING MEMBER AND PATRON OF INDIAN ACADEMY OF YOGA (BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY UP,)

### **Dedication and Acknowledgement**

This author has had serious reservations about publishing any of the material entrusted to him by his Guru as all of this material was passed to him by a mouth – to – ear system, and oral system that is still the only system by which Yoga can be properly learned today. Yoga is not a visual science, and cannot be taught by visual means, no matter how good the teacher or the intentions of the well-meaning instructor. There is no substitute for a Guru and if there were, it would never be a “Kitab Guru ..... Book Guru”. I have written this work after seeing so many books virtually insulted the base of real study of Yoga. In some cases, these books virtually insulted the base of Yoga as the SCIENCE OF SCIENCE, the only science of spirituality that can lead a human aspirant to enlightenment and the “At-One-Ment” with the Universal Self. With all humility and with the deepest of respect to my teachers I wish to dedicate this material which has been entrusted to me by that long line of Parampara or Spiritual Masters without a break, who have made this life such a pleasant Yoga Life... and I hope that these “step-by-step teachings” will add a new dimension to the life of those who take up this Yoga Life step-by-step. Where I have erred may I be Karmically forgiven and where I have added some modern scientific terms it has only been to be able to help the scientifically-minded and those educated along this line. For those needing a philosophical and scientific explanation for the Kriyas and Prakriyas, this single volume will greatly help. For those needing a spiritual insight into the teachings of the way of life in which they have been raised, may this elevate your thinking into Christ Consciousness, the Buddhist splendour.... the Yogic Cosmic Consciousness.

I would be remiss if I failed to offer my life once again to the service of that great Guru in the tradition of the Rishi Brighu, Dr.Swami Kanananda Bhrigu, to Sri Akanda Paripurna Satchidananda Satguru Srila Sri Kambli Gnana Desiga Swmigal, and Sri La Sri Peedathiapathy Shakaragiri Swamigal, the Gurus to whom I own everything I know, am have, or am able to offer to you, and the long line of Gurus, from which we are descended and to you the reader whose life will surely be blessed by this study and application of Yoga.

## **YOGA: STEP – BY – STEP**

How to Begin a Practice of Yoga – PART 1

A Course in Yoga Tuition with Step – by – Step Guidance in the Preliminary Practices of Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras and Beginning Pranayamas that Form a Basis of Classical Rishi Culture Yoga.

BY YOGARISHI DR. SWAMI GITANANDA

It has often been said that Yoga should not be practised except under the direct guidance of a Guru. This is certainly true of more intricate, higher phases of Yoga, but there are certain aspects of Yoga which can be learned through the printed word and by photos and diagrams. Yoga philosophy and psychology, hygiene and diet, instructions in Pranayama and basic Asanas plus encouragement to embark upon the Yogic Path are all areas of learning that can be passed along by the written word. The written word is never a substitute for direct contact with a Yoga Guru and study in his presence, but there are few today who can afford the time and the cost of travel to have the rich blessing of the Guru's presence or to live in his Ashram. The "Book Guru" has become the means of teaching for millions around the world, and some students are able to gain a good deal of benefit.

Even the student privileged to study at "the feet of the Master" often needs to take copious notes to be reminded of the suggestions made. This note – taking can be a great deterrent to real learning and often the notebook is "realized" but the student misses out. Written material, parallel to the teachings of a Guru, therefore can augment the study and practice of Yoga and be source of rich "remembering" of the material earlier presented. It may also clear up any doubts as to techniques which are found difficult to remember at the time. It was with this thought in mind that I embarked upon a simple presentation of some of the material which I teach in my regular Yoga Teachers Training Course presented each year from October 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

I once had serious misgivings about putting Yoga down in print, but I have found that many have benefited, particularly those who have been in personal contact with me and find the teachings accurately represent the oral tradition, Paramparam, out of which I teach. Many students who have heard me lecture or speak on Yoga write to tell me that they can actually hear me speaking as they read the words of instruction on the various aspects of the course. This intimacy alone justifies the production of such a Yoga model of instruction. I myself learned in a totally different manner. My Guru had the attitude that one must listen and absorb. We were never allowed to ask a question about techniques that we had been taught, although we were encouraged to ask questions in general. If I missed a point and queried that point, he would ask me to sit down and think, "remember", and see if the material would re-present itself to my mind in memory form. In this way I developed a photographic – cum – photogenic memory that has been the greatest single boon to my life along with the good health that I have.

I encourage my own students to “listen”. Modern students “hear” but they don’t listen”, possibly because of the high incidence of sound in the modern world and the modern hang-ups that in clued” not listening to the voice of authority”. I have had students who have wept at my feet because they have lost the ability to “listen” even to the voice of the Guru, and now rue the day they took to an” a – Yogic “ path.

If “ Yoga is skill in action”, as quoted by Sri Krishna in BHAGAVAD GITA, it means we must also become skillful with our senses, our talents and our other mental and physical faculties. If the printed word does help in gaining this skill, then the method is doubly justified. Still, the onus is on the student and every effort must be made to learn as much as possible and gain personal benefits. The book may be the source material, and a place to check and re-check methods and techniques, but it must never replace actual learning and absorbing. This is particularly true if the student wishes later to convey this material through teachings to another. The written word does help make sure that the teaching is conveyed correctly and without error.

I originally began the lessons as a weekly series to cover a year of Yoga learning practice. Presently, fifty –two lessons are available, but it could easily be extended by another fifty –two weeks, and I hope to do this some time in the not – too – distant – future. Many people desired a permanent record of their lessons, so we bound up each series of thirteen lessons into a handsome volume with a dust jacket. Vol. 1, we entitled HOW TO BEGIN A PRACTICE OF YOGA; Volume II was entitled YOGA – INTERMEDIATE PRACTICES; Volume III, ADVANCED YOGA PRACTICES; and Volume IV was entitled SENIOR YOGA PRACTICES.

Volume I, HOW TO BEGIN A PRACTICE OF YOGA, Lesson 1 to 13, was laid out in a simple step – by – step method of learning the simple beginning postures or Asanas of Hatha Yoga and the rudiments of Pranayama. The student was encouraged to go along slowly, perfecting the postures and the breathing techniques before going on to the next lesson. I encouraged the students to avoid a common, popular, modern delusion that they needed to learn a great number of postures and “Yoga things”: In short, to collect a lot of names and material “without the doing”. Yoga is knowledge, but it is more in the doing, in the action. I encouraged the student to let Yoga become a way of life, through a new attitude using Yoga philosophy and psychology and a change in personal hygienic and diet patterns. In this way knowledge could set them free from the bad habits and the conditioning of their earlier lives. I also pointed out that the Intermediate and Advanced Practices to follow required a good foundation that could only be had by perfecting the present material.

When I completed all four volumes (1976) of the YOGA PRACTICE SERIES, I had them bound up into one giant book entitled YOGA: STEP BY STEP. This material I had reserved only for those taking my six – month –long Yoga International Teachers Training Course and the course in Indian Indigenous Medicine on Yoga Chikitsa, or Yoga Therapy. Successful candidates of the Yoga course can be registered as Yoga teachers on an international basis, while those completing the Yoga Chikitsa Course can join the All- India Yoga Physicians Association. Recommendations for all candidates must come from the parent Yoga Jivana Satsangha, and myself as President. This actually makes the fifth edition and the present edition is vastly expanded over the previous for editions. I plan to write more as Volumes V to XIV. These volumes will be ready in the near future. (Vol. V, VI and VII are now finished).

In the YOGA – INTERMEDIATE PRACTICES, of Volume II, Lessons 14 to 26 were presented. Again I warned my reader to go slowly, lesson by lesson. Perfect your practices before you move on. I stressed that Yoga is an integrated practice, so that earlier material learned should still be included, and at this stage, as material was still being collected. Yoga content was still important. The “Yoga View of Life” was stressed. The idea of Karma, “action – reaction”, was introduced and ways of overcoming common health disturbances, and facing life and what it had to offer. The postures and Pranayamas in this section were much more difficult and required a good deal of practice to perfect.

The step – by –step approach was continued in Volume III, ADVANCED YOGA PRACTICES, I encouraged review of the earlier 26 lessons. I pointed out that the material in Lessons 27 through 39 was a stepping stone to the Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga Kriyas that were yet to come. Much emphasis was placed onto the relaxation techniques of the Jnana Yoga, and a good deal was said about body pain and tension and the difficult art of being happy. The beautiful Surya Namaskar was introduced in the latter part of this sequence of lessons. It culminated with what I felt to be the need for relaxation in movement, as it expressed a free flow of energy under the command of the mind to the body. Possibly this section of the course is the most important one for students living in a tension –riddled world. In this section I put much more emphasis upon the need for relaxation away from the 3- F Stresses of modern society. These three stresses are ; fear, or fright; flight or fugue; and fight. Anxiety and fear are said to be the source of modern tension, killing millions yearly through various stress disorders. Over half of the population of the modern world is in some sort of fugue, a flight from responsibility and reality, and aggression knows no bounds at the personal, inter-personal, national and international level. The need of the hour is to step back, relax, and see the modern world for what it is, a by – product of anxiety.

In the SENIOR YOGA PRACTICES of Vol. IV, Lessons 40 through Lessons 52, I again stressed the drawback of isolating this material from the previous instructions. I feared that a student of Yoga may not follow each lesson as well as if they had been presented one lesson at a time. I put the extra onus for this attention onto the student, and warned against complacency and slipping behind in conscious Yoga practices. I set out this dictum: “ Each lesson must be thoroughly learned before moving onto the next lesson”. Each section must be perfected, before learning more. Do not leave out any part, thinking it is not important. Otherwise, the continuity is lost. Do not rush ahead too quickly into material which you are not yet ready to absorb. “Learn fully”. If such instructions become a daily thought corresponding to action in reality, then Yoga or Union is a foregone conclusion. This volume, a part of the larger Yoga Course, is intended to give the widest possible appreciation of the study and practice of Yoga, and to meet the requirements of a Yoga teacher or a Yoga physician.

All of the material contained in the first four volumes of my YOGA LIFE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE is contained in this single volume YOGA: STEP – BY- STEP. Each lesson contains a Question Refresher, which should be used as a review by the casual reader or serious student who is studying from this volume alone. I am not in a position to answer these questions for the student who should send these answers to me for that purpose. I confine that service only to the students who are doing a Yoga Correspondence Course with diploma or certificate to be awarded on completion.

## How to Begin a Practice of Yoga

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### **Tributes and Testimonials**

Generally when one releases a book that has been out in previous editions, they have some eminent scholar write a masterful introduction to the new edition. I could have done the same for YOGA : STEP-BY-STEP but have chosen instead to let a few of my students of the YOGA LIFE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE that in this edition is entitled YOGA : STEP-BY-STEP speak for the quality of this material. I have thousands of letters from grateful students, unsolicited, and sometimes written much after they have completed the course. Those who have signed their testimonials may be contacted if my reader wishes. Many other comments are to be appreciated from my students. They range from “amazing – wonderful – magnificent – superb – masterful – unbelievable – informative – detailed – exact – deep insight – real wisdom.” Many others have echoed – “Just what I have been searching for.” – “Priceless”. – “Your work is filled with love,” – “I feel that abounding grace of the Guru” “Thank you”! “Bless you”.

“Obtaining my Yoga Teacher’s Certificate has been a dream of mine for a long as I can remember. My family responsibilities, plus lack of finances would not permit me to travel to India to accomplish this dream, but it was feasible for me to study via the mail service, by correspondence, which I did. Although I began studying Yoga about fifteen years ago, and have been teaching for almost fourteen, I did not feel in any way adequately prepared for such a responsibility. I did however, receive the confidence and factual information, plus knowledge I needed to continue

in my study and teaching of Yoga by completing the Teachers Course. (Needless to say my studying has not ceased) I cannot nor would I want to imagine my life without Yoga. My daily Yoga routine has become an integral part of my life. When I began studying Yoga I was very overweight, and totally toxic, plus lacked any sense of direction in my life. I have worked hard to change these conditions, and with much success. At that time I was leaning heavily on medication and drugs to solve these problems, but to no avail. An old automobile injury left me with a whip lash and reverse curves in my spine, that could only be solved with surgery (So I was told). Fortunately with diligence, patience and some discomfort, years later these problems are nonexistent for me. I cannot say my life has been devoid of pain, but I can say with all sincerity Yoga has offered me many tools with which to survive; for this I shall be eternally grateful. I have learned also to which to survive; for this I shall be eternally grateful. I have learned also to accept the lessons and challenges of life and not try to hide or run from them. This certainly does add to one's serenity and peace of mind, not to mention the fact that my energies are more wisely spent". Mary Frances Beckman W. 3626 West Drive, Spokane WA, 99204, U.S.A.

### **CORRESPONDENCE COURSE TRIBUTES**

A Few Selected Comments from the Hundreds Received From Students around the World

"I have received the four volumes of the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE and am thrilled! I am anxious to take all of the courses. Your mailing department has been faithful in getting the material to me each month. As the lessons are so well done, and I savour each one, my thoughts go in your direction often and I thank you for the opportunity to do just that." – Majorie Fishes, 617 Greendale Road, Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081, U.S.A.

"One Kriya in particular I am pleased to have made acquaintance with the Hang Sah Kriya. The relaxation I experience after each segment of this Kriya is a treasure to me. No doubt, I was in need of this cleansing Kriya, as I feel so comfortable with its practice. To me, living a Yogic life is like climbing a golden stairway with very shiny, slippery treads. If one does not watch each step, it is easy to slip back, but provided one continually looks up there will always be a hand to help one back up that difficult stairway. The "Self" has a remarkable way of supplying the hand." – Mrs Eunice Warrne, Yoga Teacher, M.S. 795, Bowenville 4404 Queensland, Australia.

"I am very happy with the YOGA LIFE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE. I plan to continue with Section Five when I have completed the first four section. I really feel the benefits from practicing this Yoga and also find many answers to questions I and previously had but which no one before could give me a satisfying answer I always look forward to receiving the weekly lessons because I feel a real link with you – the Guru!" – Helen Haas. Scheibe 554, Neustift, A-6167, Tirol, Austria, Europe.

"I am greatly enjoying the fifty-two lesson series in Yoga which you present so logically and scientifically. I am interested in continuing the additional lessons and studying through your other publications. Your Yoga disciple" – Dr. S.P. Singh Saini, Medical Physician and Yoga Teacher, 42 Main Road, Longeaton, Nottingham, NG 10 1 QW, England, Great Britain.

"I have studied with every major teacher in America, but I find your teachings and especially your writings the best material anywhere for Yoga study." – Yours in Yoga, - Sue Miller, Yoga Teacher, Box 18 RD 4 Aber Road, Finleyville, Pa 15332 U.S.A.

"My wife and myself do Asanas and Pranayama every day at home. Through your teachings our enthusiasm has continued. Your Pranayama Techniques have cured me of my sinus trouble for which I am most grateful. I am desirous of obtaining your ongoing courses and books. Om Shanti!" – R.G. Abeyesinghe, 26, Edward Lane, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka.

"We are grateful for the teaching coming through you and other beautiful teachers around the globe. We are continuing to present your Asanas and Pranayamas along with a life generating diet. We often of returning to the Ashram, and enjoying again the great training that you conduct there." Janaka and Sita Ananda, Yoga Teacher, (James Cox) Po Box 203 North Bonneville. WA 98639 0203.

"I feel your course has helped me tremendously in many aspects of my life. I begin teaching an evening Yoga class at our local Community College this next week. I look forward to teaching and employing all that you have taught me through the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE" – Beverly Pung, Yoga Teacher, 1940 Carl Rd. No. 107, Irving, Texas 75061, U.S.A.

"I am regularly receiving the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE lessons and also YOGA LIFE magazine. Both are really most interesting and I study them with great pleasure. I wish to thank you heartily for spreading to the world your wisdom of this ancient and invaluable science." – Stefania Redini, Via A. Casotti 6, 16137 Genova, Nervi, Italy, Europe.

"During this year of studying Yoga through these most perfect teachings, I have made an incredible change in my emotions and my mind, but the first important change happened in my body through the new idea of respecting my body. I know this is only a beginning. I feel that Yoga I have discovered the "Real Life". – Giorgio Cagiari, Yoga Teacher, Mantova, Viale Alfieri 16, Italy.

Although I have not had the pleasure of meeting with you and knowing you personally, I feel in my heart as though I have known you for a life time. It is said that when one is ready to begin to practice Yoga and live a Yoga Life, Yoga will come to you. In my case this is so true. Almost eight years ago, I began to practice Yoga with a teacher named Pat Rickits, of whom you will know Swamiji as she recently completed your correspondence course, and these begins my life. For the first few years, I attended Yoga classes without thought of anything but the sense of physical well being which ensued. I was fortunate indeed to be instructed in the practice of Yoga by a teacher, concerned with not only the physical well being of her students, but who also attended to the needs of their minds. As you are well aware Swamiji not all who claim to be teachers of Yoga are deserving or worthy of the title Yoga teacher, I eventually became aware that there was more to this thing called Yoga, than first meets the eye. After some "gentle persuasion" I was induced to apply to study your correspondence course. And what an informative course! Thus far I have completed up to Lesson Nine, and am looking forward with eager anticipation to the following lessons. It never ceases to amaze me that so much information can be set down in print, yet still retain the feeling of person to person teaching. This personal touch shines through to such an extent, that I can almost hear your voice Swamiji directing me along the right path of Yoga learning. Encouraging me to further research, and leading me to continue along this well trodden path of knowledge and learning. Picking me up, dusting me off and standing me on my feet again, with well deserved criticism if I stumble along the way. Your correspondence course which takes in all facets of Yoga would be nigh impossible to emulate. Through the study of your correspondence course, I am at last able to begin to sow the seeds of Yoga learning into new fields. As the seeds sprout they will be nurtured in the light of your knowledge Swamiji, which you have seen fit to graciously bestow upon me and they will be lovingly tended there after.

There is a particular aspect which is so apparent in the lesson on "Love". The "Love" you yourself have for your students and the "Love" they in return have for you. The copies of YOGA LIFE magazine are an added bonus to your Correspondence Course and are eagerly scanned by me, page by page for news and information from your Divine Self, Meenakshi Devi, Ananda Balayogi, and other guest writers. Verlie Gabrio, Box 234, PO Ingleburn N.S.W. 2562 Australia.

Your Correspondence Course has been an interesting and important adjunct to my life and I see and appreciate its many benefits. As you suggest, I will now reread and go through the whole course again in order to refresh my memory and to discover things missed or not fully understood the first time around.

- Peggy Champin, Cape Town, South Africa.