

Parmarth Niketan / Newsletter 2017



Yoga for Health & Wellness:

*Yoga brings together the United
Creations at the United Nations!*



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www.washalliance.org (Global Interfaith WASH Alliance)
www.parmarth.org (Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh)
www.gangaaction.org (Ganga Action Parivar)
www.divineshaktifoundation.org (Divine Shakti Foundation)
www.projecthope-india.org (Project Hope)





International Day of Yoga at the United Nations

Official celebrations at the UN Honors & Celebrates India's Ancient Tradition of Yoga- with Interactive Yoga Demos, Sacred Interfaith Chanting, Meditation, Inspiring Talks, Divine Music, & More!



More than 1,000 people participated in the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations in New York City on June 20th-21st, celebrating the ancient tradition of yoga brought to the West from India. This historic gathering was led by one of India's most revered and beloved spiritual leaders, His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), along with Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiiji Director of the International Yoga Festival at Parmarth Niketan and Secretary General of GIWA. Both luminaries, known for their altruism and global interfaith endeavors, have curated some of today's leading yoga talent to join them in illuminating the myriad gifts yoga brings to the world.

A beautiful commemorative Yoga Day stamp was released on the occasion with President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly HE Peter Thomson and Ambassador of India to the UN Syed Akbaruddin, Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, along with yoga teachers and experts. A beautiful plant was given to the hon'ble diplomats as a symbol of allowing the roots and essence of yoga to keep our lives grounded and centered, allowing our lives to bring health and well being to all. This unprecedented spiritual gathering featured today's most renowned yoga experts including: Jivamukti's Sharon Gannon; Off the Mat founder Seane Corn; Kirtan Master Jai Uttal; spoken word artist and social media phenom Prince Ea.

This event was organized by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and was open to all. Everyone in attendance was united in the mission to create a more peaceful world through the "true" practice of yoga, which extends beyond the mere physical practice of asanas to every moment and every minute of our lives. A very special pledge and water blessing ceremony also took place, bringing together all of the Yoga Masters, teachers and experts to encourage and inspire yoga practitioners and enthusiasts from every corner of the world to lead greener, healthier and more harmonious lives.

**some of these pictures are courtesy of Mr. Jay Mandal*



"During International Day of Yoga, the sun reaches the highest point in the sky, and people from New York to New Zealand will similarly be reaching to the sky with yogic techniques developed by India's ancient sages to ease the pains, strains and stresses of daily life. How symbolic then, that the United Nations will be holding this unifying event on its very lawn, for all to participate and appreciate. With so much turmoil, conflict and challenges in our world today, yoga is the key to a healthier, happier and more harmonious future."

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (Pujya Swamiji),

[Click here to watch Pujya Swamiji's speech!](#)

[Click here to watch Sadhviji's speech!](#)

[Click here to see more!](#)



President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Peter Thomson, shared that the age old practice of yoga guides people towards being in harmony with fellow humans and with nature. Pointing out the fast-paced ways of the 21st century, Thomson said it is important for us to ensure that we look after ourselves through healthy lifestyles and choices and that which helps us sustain physically and mentally, adding that yoga connects our bodies with nature and leads us to be in better balance with the world around us.



Ambassador of India to the UN Syed Akbaruddin said that more than 170 countries have supported the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in recognizing the important role of yoga in bringing peace and prosperity to the world. He said that yoga is not only restricted to India but the whole world is doing yoga, which shows the importance of our country in the world.



Said Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, *"The practice of "yoga" leads automatically to a life in which our choices are ones made in an awareness of unity and oneness. This is what our world needs. As individuals, to overcome our depression, loneliness and numbness, we need to feel connected. As a society, in order to function well, we need to be connected and in harmony. As an international global world family, we need to realize that we are inextricably connected. Yoga, a true realisation of union, could save not only our health, but also our planet."*



Said Sharon Gannon, *"The Earth does NOT belong to us—we belong to the Earth."* "A yogi is someone who is striving to live in harmony with the Earth and ALL beings, including humans, animals, forests, rivers, oceans. Be a Yogi who deeply cares for all beings- human and living, EVERY being without exception."



Said Seane Corn, *"The time is now for all of us to wake up and to participate in social change by engaging with compassion and love, we can not wait for our leaders, we must be those leaders. We must change the systems by engaging the systems. We can not meet hate with hate, we must meet hate with love and fear with compassion and when we do? if we can? Peace is not only possible, its inevitable."*



Said Prince EA, *"The most important question human beings can ask themselves is, 'Who am I?' But you can't know it, you can be it. Because who you truly are is beyond the mind. My favorite way to understand this is by the yogic practice of neti-neti, not this- not this. By knowing what you are not, you can deduct who you truly are. Let us practice this today."*

Media Coverage



Stamps Release, Meditation Mark Yoga Celebrations At UN



International Yoga Day: UN staff and yoga enthusiasts attended 'Yoga Session with Yoga Masters' United Nations: The UN began the International Day of Yoga (IDY) celebrations with the release of stamp, a water pila and meditations for peace in the world's most diverse gathering of nationalities, religions and races. More than 1,000 people, including permanent representatives of several nations, diplomats, UN staff and yoga enthusiasts attended the outdoor 'Yoga Session with Yoga Masters' session on Tuesday at the UN headquarters on the eve of the Third IDY. A unique element in this year's event projecting India's soft power was the water pila ceremony led by Swami Chidanand Saraswati and Sachin Bhagwat Saraswati of the Paramahansa Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh. As water was symbolically poured over a globe, participants raised their hands heavenwards praying for clean water for all and for reclaiming the sanctity of water, the sustainer of life and the link of humanity.

That meshed in with the UN push for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to better the life of people. Speakers stressed yoga's place in helping reach them.

[Click here to see more!](#)

Conversation on Yoga for Health

Shares and illustrates that yoga is truly for one and all.



On the occasion of the 3rd International Day of Yoga, a special event, 'Conversation on Yoga for Health' was organized at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, in the prestigious ECOSOC Chamber on 21 June 2017.

The event was organised by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in association with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati ji, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, President, Divine Shakti Foundation, Mr. Keith Mitchell, Former NFL (USA football) athlete turned yogi, Mr. Stanton Kawer, CEO, Blue Chip

Marketing Worldwide, USA, Swami Sivadasananda, Sivananda Yoga Retreat, Austria and Mr. Anupam Kher, Actor and Social Activist, India, were on the distinguished panel.

The ancient science of yoga continues to be practiced by millions across the globe as it "works". The regular practice of yoga has a direct and visible impact on improving physical and mental health and contributes to social harmony and wellbeing. By helping us tune our inner selves with our surroundings, comprising all nature, including fellow human beings, yoga contributes to wider societal wellbeing. Yoga promotes the practice of sustainable lifestyles leading to a better harmony between people and the planet.

The United Nations endorsed the vision of Prime Minister Modi by

adopting the UNGA resolution A/Res/69/131 that proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. The resolution notes "the importance of individuals and populations making healthier choices and following lifestyle patterns that foster good health".

At the end, HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji lead a beautiful pledge of oneness, inspiring everyone, including Anupam Kherji, Dr Nata Menabde and the Ambassador of India to the UN, Mr Syed Akbaruddin, to take yoga from global to local, starting in their own lives and with their own self. All of the participants deeply moved, stood up, joining hands, chanting in unison the sound of Om, as it powerfully reverberated throughout the hall, ending the historic International Day of Yoga conversation on Yoga for Health and leaving everyone with a insight and inspiration.





Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (Pujya Swamiji) said, " *When I was in the jungle I saw that the saints there had no shopping mall, no Pizza Hut, no Starbucks, no Amazon.com to get whatever they want, whenever they want, but they were so happy. Nothing was set in their lives, no menu for tomorrow, but personally they were set. Their hearts were set. Their minds were set. From that, their entire health was set! In our lives everything is set but we are upset! What is the key to being set and healthy in body and mind? The answer and the secret is yoga.*"



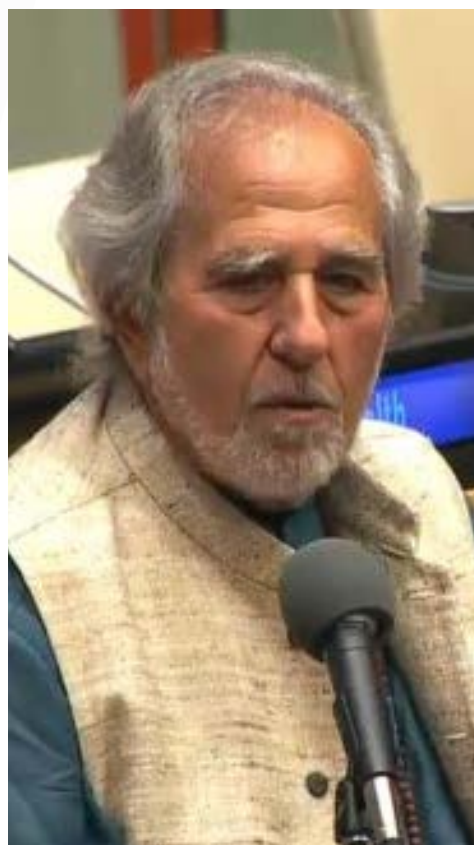
Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji said, " *We have eradicated most of the diseases that plagued our planet last century, we now have so many vaccinations, antibiotics and other medicines. But we are not any healthier. Today the diseases we suffer from are mostly diseases from a system out of balance, a system gone awry. Yoga is what brings us back into balance and cures not only diseases of the body but also the pervasive "dis-ease" lack of ease, lack of balance, that afflicts our minds and hearts. Yoga, a true realisation and practice of union, could save not only our health, but also our families, our communities, our nation and our planet.*"



In the opening remarks by Dr. Nata Menabde, Executive Director, WHO, New York, she shared, "Healthy lives and wellbeing have been recognized as an essential aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. While it is important to provide affordable health care services, including hospitals, quality vaccines and medicines, it is important to spread awareness about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in promoting good health. Hence, yoga is not a religion but truly a lifestyle."



Acclaimed and respected Bollywood actor, Anupam Kherji shared, "We leave our happiness in someone else's hand. Yoga teaches you to be happy with who you are. We are constantly trying to be somebody else but yoga teaches us how to be ourselves. That will be yoga's contribution to your own life. Your own contribution to your own life. You can only contribute to your life if you are happy with your life."

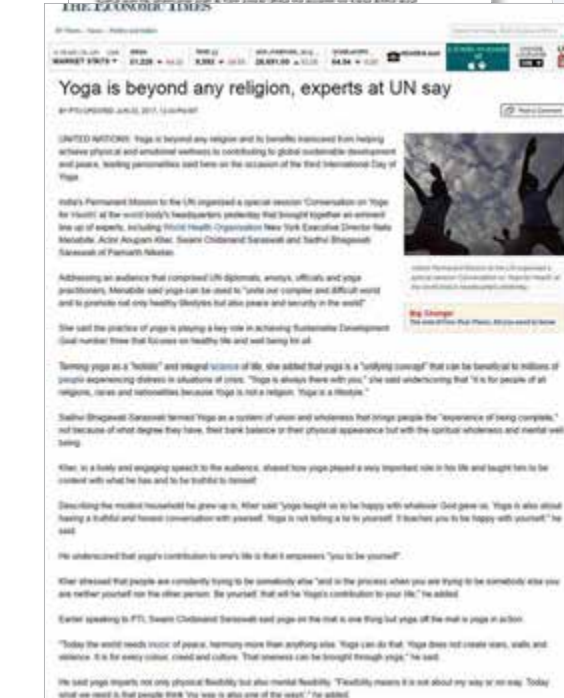


Dr Bruce Lipton shared, "We are not victims of our genetics but we are masters of our genetics. But this involves organizing our consciousness and our spirit to work in harmony with our body. And this is why yoga becomes so important in our world scene today. Because yoga is bringing that harmony into our system and it is with that harmony you are a powerful master of your life, not just internally but externally."



"When I participate in my own healing then I no longer am the victim, I am the victor. I am victorious and time is the urgency because every day is an opportunity. Yoga found me. Not only did it save me but it saved my sanity. It made me reach for deeper relationships, deeper connection and one of the greatest thing I learned from the process was patience and compassion. If you reach up for the moon, if you come up short you grab the stars." Keith Mitchell NFL footballer player turned yogi

Media Coverage



Click here to see more!



Special Community Reception for Hon'ble PM Modiji in DC

Puja Swamiji shares, "Time has come for both nations to shift from two-ness to togetherness."

Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji were invited to a high-level, special community reception, hosted by the Hon'ble Ambassador of India in Washington, DC, Dr Navtej Sarnaji in honour of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi's visit to the United States.

During the reception, in addition to meeting Shri Narendra Modi, Puja

Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati also met with the Hon'ble Ambassador of India, Shri Navtej Sarnaji and other diplomats and cordially invited them home to Rishikesh, the yoga capital of the world, on the banks of Mother Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayas.

On the occasion, Puja Swamiji shared in an interview with the media, "This is a historic moment for India and America, two great nations, two great leaders and two great democra-

cies coming together. This meeting is not just a meeting of two leaders but really a meeting of two hearts. I think two nations need a shift, from two-ness to togetherness. Both leaders are fearless, both are ready to accept a challenge and both have the capability of bringing change in the society."

Sadhvi Bhagawati shared in her interview, "I hope that Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Modi ji will be able to share with President Trump our beautiful



vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. I also hope and have faith that the relationship between the U.S. and India that he has already made so strong and so wonderful with President Obama will continue with President Trump."

A special invitation to inaugurate the 30th Annual International Yoga Festi-

val at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), was also given to Hon'ble Shri Modiji; he had addressed this year's Festival through live video conferencing.

Puja Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati also passed onto the Hon'ble Prime Minister a copy of the National Ganga Rights Act, drafted by the Global

Interfaith WASH Alliance and Ganga Action Parivar, under Puja Swamiji's vision and leadership, which would be the first Act of Law to fully ensure the rights of the Ganga and all of its tributaries across all states in which they flow. In addition, they also passed on other key suggestions and ideas for the Clean Ganga Mission.



Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji met with the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Smt Sushma Swarajji prior to their trip abroad to discuss preparations for their upcoming International Day of Yoga celebrations at the United Nations as well as to discuss other important topics related to Swachh Bharat and overseas Indians giving back to their motherland in meaningful ways.



Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji share their deep appreciation with the Hon'ble Ambassador of India to the UN, Syed Akbaruddinji for his great leadership, commitment and dedication to spreading and sharing yoga with all.



[Click here to see more!](#)



Meet & Greet with International Day of Yoga Committee at the U.N.

Discussions on how to take yoga off the mat and into the world, by serving our world family and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A special meet and greet was held to warmly welcome Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji to the United Nations and New York ahead of the International Day of Yoga celebrations by the International Day of Yoga Committee at the U.N, coordinated by Ms. Denise Scotto, United Nations Advisor, International Policy Speaker.

Fruitful discussions were held on how to take yoga off the mat and into the world, by serving our world family and working to achieve the

SDGs. The inspiring and multi-faceted work being done by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) to improve WASH for everyone everywhere was also shared, including the exciting courses and empowerment programmes of the World Toilet College.

Amongst the committee was Mr Juan Elias Chebly, Lead Adviser, United Nations Environment Programme, who was especially glad to hear from Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji about the grand and ground level work being done by GIWA.

Mr German A Bravo Casas, President of the Yoga Club at the United Nations, who leads weekly yoga classes and shares tools for personal transformation with UN staff and high level officials, also was deeply touched to meet them and agreed to come home to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) for the 30th Annual International Yoga Festival 2018.

Everyone within the committee was deeply inspired and uplifted by the meeting and sincerely looked forward to welcoming Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji back again soon.

The World Celebrates Yoga

Congratulations and deep appreciation to our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi for his great vision to share and celebrate yoga with the world.



Yoga Day, Every Day

Special Post Yoga Day Celebrations Bring Together Puja Swamiji with Yoga Guru Puja Swami Ramdevji in the USA



Puja Swamiji graced Puja Swami Ramdevji's special live yoga class, to which He was cordially and warmly invited to bless the participants on the true meaning and purpose of yoga.

He shared about the power of yoga to harmonise our mind, body and spirit as well as to bring together the world for a more peaceful and sustainable future. Puja Swamiji shared, "Today in the age of technology and Internet we may seem to be more connected

but in many ways we are also disconnected. A family of four may be in one car, connecting and texting with the world but not even speaking once to their own family within the car. In today's world we have everything set, TV set, sofa set, coffee set, but at the end of the day we are still upset, having to take pills to go to sleep. This is where yoga comes in connecting us to each other and to our own self. This is why I remind everyone to do yoga, be yoga, learn yoga, love yoga and live yoga."

Puja Swamiji warmly acknowledged and lauded Puja Swami Ramdevji's incredible contributions to yoga in bringing it with greater enthusiasm and excitement to the world.

He also shared that due to Swami Ramdevji, yoga has truly become a household phenomenon in India, whose benefits have touched millions. He shared that Puja Swami Ramdevji was truly a living example of the power of yoga.



[Click here to see more!](#)

Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) Convention

From Medication to Meditation: Yoga for Doctors and Healthcare Practitioners

Baba Ramdevji, Brahmakumari Shivaniji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiiji were invited to grace and bless the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA, held 21st-24th June 2017. Pandit Jasraji inaugurated the convention. Kailash Kher and comedian Shailesh Lodha both performed. Baba Ramdevji led a morning yoga session and shared "We are all children of the rishis, of the saints and being doctors of Indian origin you must be deeply rooted in your spiritual-cultural heritage of Yoga, Ayurveda, Naturopath, Ved Darshan and the Upanishads. I would like to share with you that one of the most

fundamental and important things Yoga does is that it helps us rise from our lower consciousness to our higher consciousness. Yoga brings about divine transformation. I am a living example of that transformation and each one of you can also be a living example of the transformation of yoga." Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji emphasized the important connection between mind and body and the role that what we think, feel and believe plays on our physical health, as well as the health of our communities and our nations. She said, "As the Bhagavad Gita reminds us: the mind is the cause of all problems and the mind is, therefore, the solution. So many top research institutes are showing to-

day what our sages and rishis told us thousands of years ago --- jaise beetar vaise bahar (as is the inner condition, so do we create the outer condition.)" She further emphasized that maintaining a connection to Indian culture and heritage is the greatest and most important gift they can give their children and grandchildren.

Brahmakumaris Shivaniji led an introspective talk, in which she shared, "Anger of the doctor and fear of the people working with the doctor dissipates the healing environment that we need in our hospitals. Let us take a collective pledge today that no matter what happens we will not create anger in our lives and in our workplaces."



The world-famous International Yoga Festival is a truly historic celebration of yoga -- Total Wellness and Oneness. Join us next year from March 1-7, 2018, for another incredible celebration with the world's leading yogis on the banks of the sacred River Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayas.



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*From 101
countries*



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*More than
60 diverse class
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**MORE THAN 70
PRESENTERS**

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*From more than
20 countries*

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Inspirational Videos



**Highlights from “Yoga Session with Yoga Masters”
(20th June)**



**Full video of “Yoga Session with Yoga Masters”
(20th June)**



Pujya Swamiji's Interview on ANI for IYD 2017



**Highlights from “Conversation on Yoga for Health”
(21st June)**



**Full video of “Conversation on Yoga for Health”
(21st June)**



Sadhviji's Interview on ANI for IYD 2017

Yoga Off the Mat

*"Yoga is not just what you DO but it's who you ARE.
Hence, your yoga must continue 24 hrs, especially when
you get off the mat and into the world."*

– HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji –



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is the world's first initiative to bring together the faiths as allies in ensuring everyone, everywhere has access to safe, life-giving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

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