



28th Annual, World Renowned

INTERNATIONAL

YOGA FESTIVAL

Jointly organized by the Uttarakhand Tourism
Development Board, Parmarth Niketan & GMVN.



2016



India

- Afghanistan Argentina Armenia Australia Austria Azerbaijan
Bangladesh Belgium Belize Bermuda Bhutan Bulgaria Bolivia
Brazil Canada Croatia Czech Republic
Costa Rica France Finland
Estonia Germany Greece Hungary Iran Ireland Italy Jamaica
Latvia Lithuania Malaysia Mauritius Mongolia Morocco
New Zealand Norway Oman Poland Qatar Romania Russia
Slovenia Sri Lanka South Africa Sudan Switzerland Taiwan Tajikistan Trinidad & Tobago Thailand
Turkey Uganda Ukraine United Arab Emirates United Kingdom
United States Uruguay Uzbekistan Venezuela Vietnam



ONE DESTINATION

THE **YOGA CAPITAL** OF THE **WORLD**
ON THE HOLY BANKS OF MOTHER GANGA
AT **PARMARTH NIKETAN (RISHIKESH)**
IN THE LAP OF THE **HIMALAYAS** TO RECEIVE THE **DIVINE**
TEACHING, TOUCH AND TRANSFORMATION OF YOGA

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Click on the icons in the Table of Content pink boxes below to navigate directly to that section of this newsletter

Messages & Blessings 16	Revered Saints, Yogacharyas & Teachers 18	Inauguration of the International Yoga Festival 21	Day One 26
Day Two 30	Day Three 35	Day Four 40	Day Five 46
Day Six 50	Day Seven 56	International Maha Shivratri 63	Yog Maha Kumbha 68
Quotations from participants 82	Your Contributions to Yoga Off the Mat 83	Stay Connected 84	



प्रधान मंत्री

Prime Minister

MESSAGE

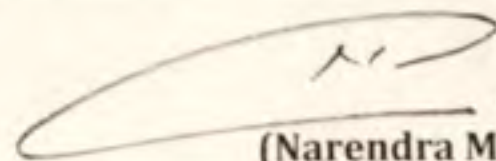


I am happy to learn that the 28th Annual, International Yoga Festival is being organized at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, by the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam.

Yoga has enabled people and societies to develop a spirit of oneness with the self, with each other and with nature. It provides a holistic approach to well-being for people struggling with the pressures and stress of everyday life. The enthusiasm that exists around the world for Yoga today, was evident on 21st June 2015, when millions of people across the world celebrated the first-ever International Day of Yoga.

Yoga is much more than just a set of exercises. It is a philosophy of discipline and meditation that brings about a qualitative transformation in an individual's personality.

Parmarth Niketan's service to humanity is an inspiration for many, across India and the world. I am sure, the mighty Himalayas, the holy River Ganga, and the sacred land of Uttarakhand will provide a perfect setting for this Yoga Festival at Rishikesh.



(Narendra Modi)

07 March, 2016
New Delhi

विदेश मंत्री
भारत



Minister of External Affairs
India

सुषमा स्वराज
Sushma Swaraj



MESSAGE

As winter gives way to spring, and the timeless Himalayas glimmer in the distance, I am delighted to learn that the annual International Yoga Festival is taking place again from March 1-7 at Parmarth Niketan Ashram.

When Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had called for the global community to declare June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, he wanted to unify the world around this ancient Indian practice which seeks to yoke mind and body, thought and action in a holistic approach to health and well being while also fostering harmony with nature.

Though Yoga is valuable as a physical exercise, it is so much more than that. It enables us to access a new dimension of the self. This new dimension is critical for the age that we live in – overloaded by information, stretched by the pressures of daily life, and confronted by constant challenges – yoga helps us to restore our balance and furnishes us with a much needed sense of clarity. Through Yoga, we seek completeness, and above all – a oneness with the world.

And what could be a better place to seek that unity than in the eternal city of Rishikesh, in the calming surroundings of Parmarth Niketan Ashram. A journey than began at the UN in September 2014 with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's proposal for an International Day of Yoga has now become a global movement. The presence of more than a 1000 people from 70 countries is a living testament to the significance of that movement, and the spiritual leadership of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, a beacon of light upon our civilizational heritage.

I had wished that I could be there in person with you to celebrate this joyous occasion, but though my work keeps me away physically, my thoughts and wishes are with all of you as you embark on this journey and seek the transformation of the self, and with it, the world.



Sushma Swaraj

राजनाथ सिंह
RAJNATH SINGH



गृह मंत्री
भारत
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HOME MINISTER
INDIA
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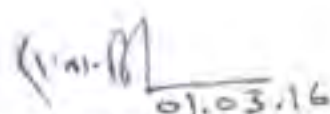
MESSAGE

I am happy to note that the weeklong Annual International Yoga Festival at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) is being organized jointly by Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board Government of Uttarakhand, GMVN and Parmarth Niketan, from March 1-7, 2016. I also feel delighted to know that people from all walks of life, from more than 70 nations, in the spirit of Vashudhaiva Kutumbakam, are celebrating Yoga in the sacred land of the Himalayas.

Yoga literally means to join, to unite and such a huge congregation bears testimony to this fact. Yoga, is a sacred tradition of our Indian spiritual heritage and brings us closer to ourselves, to our communities and to our planet, which is key to a safer and more peaceful world.

I have had the great joy of knowing HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji for many years. His Message and teachings are truly universal, beyond borders of caste, colour or creed. I am also indeed happy to know that this message of oneness and togetherness is being spread all around the world.

I convey my best wishes to all those who are associated in organising this mammoth event and wish the weeklong sadhana a great success.


01.03.16
(Rajnath Singh)

डा. महेश शर्मा
Dr. Mahesh Sharma



राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
पर्यटन मंत्रालय
संस्कृति मंत्रालय
राज्य मंत्री नागर विमानन
भारत सरकार
Minister of State (Independent Charge)
Ministry of Tourism
Ministry of Culture
Minister of State for Civil Aviation
Government of India
Date: March 01, 2016

MESSAGE

It is wonderful to know that the **International Yoga Festival** is taking place again this year at **Parmarth Niketan Ashram**. I was fortunate enough to be there last year, for the Inaugural Ceremony and to spend a glorious few hours with the participants from all across the world. I was so deeply impressed to see the zeal and commitment that the participants have.

I wish that I could be with you again this year. However, our Parliament is in session and therefore it will not be possible for me to get away. Even though I am not able to welcome and greet you personally, I am glad to welcome you all, on behalf of the Government of India, to this glorious nation, the birthplace of yoga. We are so glad that you have all found health and healing in this ancient yet timeless practice.

I am especially glad to see the way the festival is expanding every year, and to know that this year there are approximately 1000 participants from more than 70 nations having the opportunity to take part in approximately 150 different classes.

My best wishes are with the Government of Uttarakhand and **Parmarth Niketan Ashram** as well as with each of you. I hope that your time in India is full of exciting and transformative experiences and opportunities. I hope that, either before or after the **International Yoga Festival**, you will also have time to explore our Incredible India and be enriched by this majestic, colourful, vibrant and beautiful land.


(Dr. Mahesh Sharma)

Swami Chidanand Saraswati
President
Parmarth Niketan
Rishikesh

डा. के. के. पाल
राज्यपाल, उत्तराखण्ड



संदेश

राजभवन
देहरादून - 248 003

29 जनवरी, 2016


मुझे यह जानकर अत्यन्त हर्ष हो रहा है कि परमार्थ निकेतन स्वर्गाश्रम, ऋषिकेश द्वारा इस वर्ष भी 01 से 07 मार्च, 2016 तक 'अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव' का आयोजन किया जा रहा है।

योग जीवन जीने की सहज, सरल और सर्वाधिक प्रभावशाली शैली है। यह हम सबके लिए खुशी और गर्व की बात है कि अनादिकाल से ही भारतीय जीवन पद्धति का आधार रह चुके 'योग' के महत्व को आज पूरी दुनिया समझने लगी है।

स्वस्थ शरीर, स्वस्थ सोच के साथ स्वस्थ समाज के निर्माण के लिए 'योग' के विश्वव्यापी विस्तार की जरूरत सदैव बनी रहेगी। इस दृष्टि से परमार्थ निकेतन की भूमिका सराहनीय है।

मुझे आशा है कि इस अवसर पर प्रकाशित होने वाली स्मारिका में योग सम्बन्धी ऐसी ज्ञानवर्धक सामग्री को शामिल किया जायेगा जो देश-विदेश से आने वाले लोगों की योग सम्बन्धी सभी जिज्ञासाओं को शांत कर सके।

योग सप्ताह के आयोजन तथा स्मारिका प्रकाशन के उद्देश्यों की सफलता के लिए मेरी शुभकामनायें।


(डा० के.के.पाल)

हरीश रावत



मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

संदेश

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देहरादून - 248001

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0135-2650433

फैक्स : 0135-2712827

संख्या U.O. 43 मु.प्र.का. / 2016
दिनांक 09.02.16

मुझे यह जानकर प्रसन्नता हुई है कि परमार्थ निकेतन एवं उत्तराखण्ड राज्य पर्यटन विभाग के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव का आयोजन किया जा रहा है, एवं इस अवसर पर एक स्मारिका का भी प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है।

'योग' एक प्राचीन भारतीय जीवन पद्धति है, जिसके द्वारा शरीर, मन और आत्मा को एक साथ लाने का काम होता है। योग के माध्यम से शरीर, मन और मस्तिष्क तीनों को स्वस्थ किया जा सकता है। वर्ष 2016 का अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव अपने उद्देश्यों में सफल होगा, साथ ही इस अवसर पर प्रकाशित की जा रही स्मारिका में संकलित किये गए लेख व जानकारियाँ पाठकों के लिये लाभप्रद होंगी, ऐसी आशा है।

योग महोत्सव के सफल आयोजन एवं स्मारिका के सफल प्रकाशन हेतु शुभकामनाएं।


(हरीश रावत)

स्वामी चिदानन्द सरस्वती
परमार्थ निकेतन, पो.ओ. स्वर्गाश्रम,
ऋषिकेश, उत्तराखण्ड

दिनेश धने

मंत्री

पर्यटन, संस्कृति, तीर्थयात्रा प्रवर्धन,
धार्मिक केले एवं युवा कल्याण विभाग



उत्तराखण्ड सरकार

कक्ष संख्या : 115/116

विधान सभा भवन

देहरादून-248001

फोन : 0135-2665410

फैक्स : 0135-2665411

मोबा. : 934/011/16

दिनांक : 01-02-2016

सन्देश

प्रति सम्माननीय -

यह बड़े हर्ष का विषय है कि परमार्थ निकेतन द्वारा पर्यटन विभाग उत्तराखण्ड के सहयोग से दिनांक 01 मार्च, 2016 से 07 दिवसीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव का आयोजन किया जा रहा है, जिसमें विश्व के कई देशों के सैकड़ों योग जिज्ञासु प्रतिभाग करेंगे।

इस सुअवसर पर ऋषिप्रणीत भारतीय प्राच्य विद्या "योग" के विश्वव्यापी विस्तार में परमार्थ निकेतन, ऋषिकेश की बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है तथा विश्व में जग-जग तक यह विद्या पहुँच सके एवं मानव मात्र के कल्याणार्थ एक स्मारिका का प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है। कुछे आशा ही नहीं वरन् पूर्ण विश्वास है स्मारिका में इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव में विश्व के अनेक देशों के योग जिज्ञासुओं की योग विज्ञान की भारतीय संस्कृति से तथा उत्तराखण्ड एवं भारत के पर्यटन से जोड़ का सहेगा। पर्यटन विभाग एवं आपका सहयोग से इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव का साथ हमेशा आम जनमानस की मिलता रहे। ऐसी मेरी अभिप्राय है।

मेरे आपके द्वारा प्रकाशित स्मारिका की सफलता की कामना करते हुए सस्था के बहुमुखी विकास हेतु पदविवर्धनों की अपनी ओर से हार्दिक मंगल शुभकामनाएं व्यक्त करता हूँ।

(दिनेश धने)

स्वामी विद्वानन्द सरस्वती,
परमार्थ निकेतन, पौड़ी स्वर्गाश्रम, ऋषिकेश
उत्तराखण्ड-248304

सुरेन्द्र सिंह नेगी

मंत्री

शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, परिवार कल्याण, जायुष,
अपुष शिक्षा, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी, उर्दा सैनिक कल्याण,
गन्ना विकास एवं बीनी उद्योग



उत्तराखण्ड सरकार

विधान भवन, देहरादून

कक्ष सं. : 102 (A)

फोन : 2668766 (का.)

फैक्स : 2665900

मोबा. : 9837922262

" सन्देश "

यह हर्ष का विषय है कि ऋषिप्रणीत भारतीय प्राच्य विद्या "योग" के विश्वव्यापी विस्तार में परमार्थ निकेतन, ऋषिकेश की बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है तथा प्रतिवर्ष आयोजित होने वाले अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव में परमार्थ निकेतन का अति विशिष्ट योगदान है। जैसा अवगत कराया गया है कि वर्ष 2016 में दिनांक 01-07 मार्च को अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव परमार्थ निकेतन परिसर पर आयोजित किया जा रहा है तथा इस अवसर पर एक "स्मारिका" का भी प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है।

मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि जिस प्रकार से परमार्थ निकेतन द्वारा ऋषिप्रणीत भारतीय प्राच्य योग के विश्वव्यापी प्रसार-प्रसार एवं विस्तार में सहयोग एवं बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है, उसी प्रकार से भविष्य में भी परमार्थ निकेतन द्वारा अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका एवं सहयोग प्रदान किया जाता रहेगा तथा वर्तमान वर्ष 2016 में आयोजित होने वाले अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव के सफल आयोजन में परमार्थ निकेतन का विशिष्ट योगदान रहेगा। प्रकाशित होने वाली स्मारिका में भारतीय योग दर्शन के विभिन्न पहलुओं एवं प्रसिद्ध योगाचार्यों के लेखों का भी समावेश किया जायेगा।

मेरी ओर से अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव के सफल आयोजन एवं प्रकाशित होने वाली स्मारिका के सफल प्रकाशन हेतु आपको एवं परमार्थ निकेतन परिवार को हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं।

पुनः शुभकामनाओं सहित।

आपका

(सुरेन्द्र सिंह नेगी)

स्वामी विद्वानन्द सरस्वती,
अध्यक्ष, परमार्थ निकेतन,
पौड़ी स्वर्गाश्रम, ऋषिकेश,
पौड़ी गढ़वाल।

शत्रुघ्न सिंह
Shatrughna Singh



मुख्य सचिव
Chief Secretary

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संदेश

मुझे यह जानकारी हार्दिक प्रसन्नता हुई है कि परमार्थ निकेतन, ऋषिकेश एवं उत्तराखण्ड पर्यटन विभाग के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में आगामी 01 से 07 मार्च की तिथियों में अन्तराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव का आयोजन किया जा रहा है। यह महोत्सव उत्तराखण्ड प्रान्त एवं यहाँ के निवासियों के लिए शुभ एवं लाभप्रद हो, मेरी यही कामना है।

योग एक ऐसा स्वास्थ्य विज्ञान है जो जन्म से लेकर जीवन के अन्त तक मानव के साथ अभिन्न रूप से जुड़ा हुआ है। योग का अभ्यास मनुष्य को आन्तरिक व बाह्य दोनों रूप से स्वस्थ बनाता है। इसलिए हमारे स्वास्थ्य विद्या के मार्गदर्शकों ने योग को जीवन के लिए महत्वपूर्ण बताया है। देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड तो योग की जन्मभूमि रही है। यहाँ से अपनी योग विद्या को परमार्थ निकेतन सम्पूर्ण राष्ट्र व विश्व में फैला रहा है, इसके लिए मैं इस प्राचीन आध्यात्मिक आश्रम को साधुवाद देता हूँ। पर्यटन विभाग ने इसे अभियान के तौर पर स्वीकारा है, यह पर्यटन एवं उत्तराखण्ड के लिए हर तरह से लाभदायक है।

मैं परमार्थ निकेतन व पर्यटन विभाग के इस सम्मिलित प्रयास की सराहना करता हूँ तथा कामना करता हूँ कि अन्तराष्ट्रीय योग महोत्सव में देश-विदेश से पधारने वाले योग-प्रशिक्षु यहाँ से पर्याप्त ज्ञान लेकर अपने-अपने यहाँ जायेंगे तथा इसका प्रचार अपनी कर्मभूमि पर करेंगे।

मेरी पुनः मंगलकामनाएं।

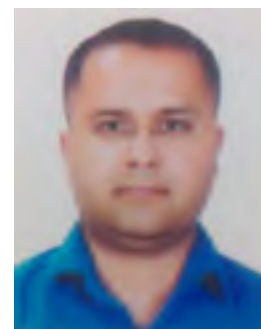

(शत्रुघ्न सिंह)
मुख्य सचिव

Shailesh Bagauli I.A.S.
Secretary



Department of Tourism
Government of Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand Secretariat
4-Subhash Road, Dehradun-248001
Ph.: 0135-2713534
Fax : 0135-2713537



Message from Secretary, Tourism and Culture

On behalf of the department of Tourism and Culture for the Government of Uttarakhand, we are glad to organize the annual International Yoga Festival jointly with Parmarth Niketan and to welcome tourists from across the world to the holy land of Uttarakhand. The International Yoga Festival has grown year by year in proportion and international acclaim, attracting people from every continent of the globe. This festival is one of the great highlights in Uttarakhand each year; and it is our pleasure to extend the ancient, timeless art of yoga from this holy land to each corner of the earth.

Our goal as the Tourism department of Uttarakhand is to share with visitors the unique sights and adventures of our land. We hope you will also have time to explore the great bounty that this beautiful state has to offer. On behalf of Uttarakhand Tourism, we welcome you to India and to the holy land of Uttarakhand.

BLESSINGS FROM H.H. PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI

I
It



Dear Divine Souls,

I am so glad to welcome you all to the holy banks of Mother Ganga, to the lap of the sacred Himalayas, to this land which is the birthplace of yoga. As our Uttarakhand State Tourism Department's logo explains, "Uttarakhand: Simply Heaven."

It is not a coincidence that you are here in such a holy place. You are truly the chosen ones to be here, to be able to imbibe the ancient and timeless nectar of yoga. The International Yoga Festival is not only a festival where people learn yoga; rather, the festival itself is yoga – a divine union of the east and west, the north and south. On the banks of Mother Ganga, people of every country, every culture, every color and every creed are coming together as one family, connecting to the Divine within themselves and to the Divine within others. It is a time of uniting not only one's hands to one's legs, but a time of uniting oneself to the Divine, to the Divine that exists in every single one of you. Yoga is not only for health of the body; rather it also brings health, balance and stability to the mind, heart and your entire being.

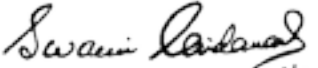
Know that you have come home, here at Parmarth Niketan. This is your Himalayan home. Everything that your soul needs is here in abundance: serenity, inspiration and the divine touch. Come, sit by the banks of Mother Ganga, absorb the divine energy of saints, sages and rishis who have meditated and performed yoga here for centuries. Be touched and transformed by the divine, sacred energy of this holy place. Surrender, surrender your grudges, pains, difficulties and obstacles into the flowing waters of Mother Ganga. Let go, and let Ganga wash away the barrier between you and the peace, joy and light your life is meant to embody.

I always say, "Come to nature, be with nature, and change your nature". Let your soul and spirit reach the height of the Himalayas in whose lap you are sitting. Let your joys, sorrows, attachments flow like the water in the Ganges. Become like the sunrise which brings light and warmth each day and a new day to all – with no discrimination, no vacation, no hesitation, and no expectation.

I extend great thanks to all our dedicated teachers who have traveled from every corner of the globe to come and offer their experience, enthusiasm and expertise to the Festival. I also offer great appreciation and gratitude for the commitment and dedication of the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and GMVN for their great commitment and dedication to the propagation and dissemination of the science and art of yoga.

May God bless you all with the continued awareness of the Divine within you and continued connection to the Divine Source.

With love and blessings always,
In the Service of Humanity,


Swami Chidanand Saraswati

President, [Parmarth Niketan \(Rishikesh\)](#)
Co-Founder, [Global Interfaith WASH Alliance](#)
Founder, [Ganga Action Parivar](#), [Divine Shakti Foundation](#)
& [Interfaith Humanitarian Network](#)

BLESSINGS FROM SADHVI BHAGAWATI SARASWATIJI

Dear Divine Souls,

It is such a great joy and blessing to welcome you all to the holy banks of the Mother Ganga river, to the lap of the Himalayas, to the birthplace of yoga, a place where for thousands of years saints, sages and rishis have performed their meditation, their yoga and attained enlightenment. It is a great honour and joy to be organizing this festival in cooperation with the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and GMVN.

The International Yoga Festival is a beautiful time of seeing the world come together in the name of yoga, or union. We have a union of countries, cultures, colors and creeds, a union of different lineages of yoga, a union of saints, yogacharyas and seekers.


This week as our world International Yoga Festival family gathers together we will unite with our inner selves, with the Divine and with the Divine embodied in and reflected by ourselves and each other.

During this transformative and sacred week, we will learn asana, pranayama, meditation, philosophy and so much more from world renowned yogacharyas. We will delve into hatha yoga, ashtanga yoga, raja yoga, kundalini yoga, so many other forms of yoga and also of course the triveni sangam of bhakti yoga (devotion), gyan yoga (wisdom) and karma yoga (taking yoga off the mat and into service of the world).

During the week you are here, imbibe not only the teachings but also the divine touch and transformation of this sacred place. Let the waters of Mother Ganga wash over you, and let the blessed atmosphere transform your whole being, filling you with joy, love, peace and the true union or "yoga" of body, mind and spirit.

With love and peace from the holy banks of Mother Ganga,

In His seva,



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati

Director, [International Yoga Festival](#)

President, [Divine Shakti Foundation](#)

Secretary General, [Global Interfaith WASH Alliance](#)



REVERED SAINTS, YOGACHARYAS & TEACHERS



H.H. Pujya Swami
M.M. Asanganandji



H.H. Pujya Swami
Avdheshanand Giriji



H.H. Pujya Swami
Ramdevji



H.H. Dr. Pranav
Pandyaji



Dr. H.R. Nagendra



H.H. Pujya Mooji



H.H. Pujya Prem
Babaji



H.H. Pujya
Radhanath Swamiji



Acharya Balkrishanji



Ven. Bhikkhu
Sanghasenaji



Bruce Lipton



Bharat Mitra



Gurmukh Kaur
Khalsa



Sharon Gannon



Saul David Raye



Dr. Vandana Shiva



Tommy Rosen



Sadhvi Abha
Saraswati



Sadhvi Bhagawati
Saraswati



Rujuta Diwekar



Swami Parmadvaitiji



Swami
Santatmanandaji



Padmashri Bharat
Bhushan



H.S. Arun



Laura Plumb



Kia Miller



Mohan Bhandari



Gloria Latham



Yuva Dayalan



Akira Watamoto



C.M. Bhandari



Gurushabd Singh
Khalsa



Jules Febre



Bijay Anand



Hikaru Hashimoto



Bharath Shetty



Roberto Milletti



Francesca Cassia



Brian Siddhartha
Ingle



Erica Kaufman



Anand Mehrotra



Maa Gyaan Suveera



David Wei



Yogrishi Vishvketu



Yogiraj Vishwapal
Jayant



Parmanand Aggarwal



Shilpa Joshi



Dr. Radhika Nagrath



T.A. Krishnan



Dr. Fharzana Siraj



Mert Güler



Sukhmandir Singh
Khalsa



Indu Sharma



Chandanni Miglino



Dr. Anjana Bhagat



Satya Kalra



Komilla Sutton



Bhavini Kalan



Krishnamurthy
Mohan Raj



Dr. Andrea Paige

MUSICIANS AND ARTISTS



Sivamani



Runa Rizvi



Prince Ea



Anandra George



Sangeeta



Gil Ron Shama, One
Source Waking Up & the
Interfaith Oneness Band



Kirtaniyas



INAUGURATION OF THE YOGA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



More than 1200 participants from more than 85 countries participated in this year's International Yoga Festival. Classes were held from 4:00 am until 9:30 pm with more than 70 revered saints, yogacharyas, presenters and experts from nearly 20 countries around the world.

Ashtanga Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Vinyasa Yoga, Bharat Yoga, Deep Yoga, Shintoh Yoga and Somatics Yoga are just a few of the more than 150 different offerings throughout the week. There are also classes in meditation, mudras, Sanskrit chanting, reiki, Indian philosophy and much more. Further, spiritual discourses will be held by revered

spiritual leaders from India and abroad. There will also be cultural dance/music performances highlighting the culture of this Himalayan Garhwal region as well as music from musicians from Israel, Australia and the U.S.

The official inauguration took place at 11:00 am and was graced by the presence of the Honourable Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Harish Rawatji, Shri Dinesh Dhanaiji, the Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Uttarakhand, Shri Shailesh Bagauliji, Hon'ble Secretary of Tourism, Uttarakhand, many revered spiritual leaders, saints and all the yogacharyas and presenters.



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati gave the official welcome and there was an impressive, awe-inspiring yoga demonstration by the rishikumars of the Parmarth Gurukul. A group from China also put on a beautiful Chinese yoga dance. There were special blessings by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Pujya Sri Mooji, and Pujya Sri Prem Babaji.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji explained, "Yoga is union. It is not just union of our heads to our knees or our hands to the floor. It is union of the self to the Divine. Here during this week, don't focus only on making your bodies strong and flexible, but focus on making your inner self strong and flexible." He further emphasized that, "Uttarakhand is the birthplace of yoga and you are all the chosen ones to be back here to imbibe the divine science."

The Honourable Chief Minister, Shri Harish Rawat said: " I welcome our friends, brothers and sisters from more than 70 countries. Although we have the worlds' nationalities represented today, here on the banks of Mother Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayas, we are merged

into the universal nationality of Yoga. There are two Ganga rivers flowing here – one the actual river flowing next to us, and the other is the Yoga Ganga. We are grateful to Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji who has dedicated His life to yoga for sharing the great teachings and bringing so many people to Rishikesh for this event."

The Honourable Chief Minister also shared the plans for Yoga Maha Kumbha in the Ardh Kumbha Mela and other yoga events to take place throughout the state together jointly organized and led with Parmarth Niketan, and under Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji's guidance and vision.

The Honourable Minister of Tourism, Shri Dinesh Dhanai welcomed all the participants and expressed his great joy that so many people came from across the world. He expressed also great gratitude to Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji for organizing the yoga festival and taking it to such a great international level.



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Director of the International Yoga Festival, told all the participants:

"You have all been called here to India, to Uttarakhand, to the holy banks of Mother Ganga for a special reason. This is not like a yoga conference in London or Paris or New York or Sydney. In this sacred land of Rishikesh, you not only receive teachings but you also receive the divine touch and divine transformation. The sage Patanjali described eight limbs of yoga, beginning with the yamas and niyamas and ending with samadhi or divine ecstasy. Here at this unique festival, we aim to provide classes and programs that give you teachings and experiences of the

first seven limbs. The eighth, samadhi, happens by the grace of Mother Ganga."

Returning yogacharyas Laura Plumb, Kia Miller and Francesca Cassia shared what a great gift and blessing it is to come "home" to Parmarth Niketan and take part in this special one-of-a-kind festival. They all deeply appreciated Pujya Swamiji and his mission throughout the world.

Francesca Cassia of Italy shared: Coming back to The IYF, always opens my heart and my soul. It makes me ponder about the miracle of life and the power of





transforming our life into a living blessing. Here on the banks of Mother Ganga we soak in the sacred source of our souls and we create, all together, a better world. Inspired by the ever flowing, Ganga, humbled by the presence of so many Acharyas and our beloved Gururji we step into our journey to empowerment. Enjoy the festival. Here you will find: opportunities to grow, a reason to stay; inspirational people, people to connect with who are dedicated, diverse, and multi-talented.

Remind yourself daily who you are destined to be and be inspired by our Divine Gururji, Sadhavi and their amazing vision.

Kia Miller of Los Angeles, USA shared: I love to turn people onto The International Yoga Festival where they get

an authentic taste of the ancient tradition of yoga. For me this is so much more than a festival, it is a coming home to a world wide community of people who have fallen in love with yoga, Parmath Niketan and Rishikesh in general.

Additionally, Sharon Gannon, Founder of Jivamukti Yoga and yoga teacher to so many stars in New York City, shared her great excitement to join the Yoga Festival for the first time.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister and Hon'ble Tourism minister gave a beautiful rudraksh sapling to the yogacharyas.

Additionally a new beautiful coffee table book with gorgeous photographs of Yoga by the world famous



Taschen company was launched by the photographer, Michael O'Neill of New York. The book is titled Yoga: The Architecture of Peace. The book includes photographs of yogis from across India and across the world including revered saints, H.H. the Dalai Lama, BKS Iyengar, Pratabi Jois, as well as famous stars including Sting. The introduction was written by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji.



DAY ONE 1



THE INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL BEGINS WITH PROGRAMMES AND CLASSES THAT PROMOTE TOGETHERNESS



The first day, the morning began at 4:00 am with Kundalini Sadhana, Exploring the Realms of Consciousness by Sukhmandir Singh Khalsa of California, USA and Osho Dynamic Meditation at 5:30 am by Chandanni Miglino and Chris Miglino of Los Angeles, USA. At 6:30 am, the offerings included: Traditional Hatha Yoga by Sadhvi Abha Saraswati, Contemporary Yoga Flow by Roberto Milletti, Meditation by Maa Gyaan Suveera. There was also a special sunrise over Ganga meditation led with soothing and melodious mantras chanted by Anandra Gerge of USA.

After a beautiful breakfast in the gardens, the morning asana special class included a 2-hour program of yoga taught by four different yogacharyas, for 30 minutes each, so all of the participants could sample a bit of the different offerings of the Festival. This special session of a “Union of Yoga” on the banks of Mother Ganga was led by: Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa, Tommy Rosen of California, USA, H.S. Arun of Bangalore and Sharon Gannon of New York, USA, the founder of Jivamukti Yoga.



Highlights of the afternoon sessions included Sufi Meditation by Mert Guler of Turkey, Jyotish by Komilla Sutton of USA and Deep Yoga by Laura Plumb of USA. There was also Somatic/Feldenkris Movement by Brian Ingle of Ireland as well as a Lila Yoga by Erica Kauffman of Pennsylvania, USA.

In the evening, all participants gathered together to take part in the sacred and divine world famous Ganga Aarti ceremony at Parmarth Niketan.



After dinner, a vibrant kirtan was led by the Kirtanias from California, USA. The Kirtanias, well known for their fusion of traditional Indian style vocal music with multi instruments left the audience mesmerized. After the kirtan, the participants were treated to the beautiful traditional cultural dance and song of Garhwal by a group through the Tourism and Culture Department of the Government of Uttarakhand.

Participants were so enthusiastic and ecstatic to be in such a beautiful and sacred place and to have the opportunity to study with such revered masters.





DAY TWO 2



The 2nd Day of the **28th annual, world famous International Yoga Festival** began with 4:00 am Kundalini Sadhana by Gurushabd Singh Khalsa followed by the pre-breakfast classes including: Kundalini Yoga with Bijay Anand, Osho Dynamic Meditation by Chandanni Miglino and Chris Miglino of Los Angeles, USA, traditional hatha ashtanga yoga with Sadhvi Abha Saraswati and recovery from addiction through yoga by Tommy Rosen of California, USA.



Tommy Rosen said, “Feelings left unprocessed are buried alive! They will act as an energetic blockage to the happiness and health of an individual. Later, if left unprocessed, these energetic blockages will cause a variety of emotional and physical symptoms, which will get more and more serious unless the person shifts onto a path of healing. The minute you start to look away from discomfort, pain and trauma is the minute you allow the seeds of addiction to be planted. We habitually avoid the present moment. That has become our addiction. In the final analysis, we are primarily addicted to looking away.”

After breakfast, the morning intense asana classes took place with Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa of California, USA teaching Kundalini yoga, Jules Febre of New York, USA teaching Jivamukti Yoga, as well as CM Bhandari, former ambassador to Poland and UAE, originally of Ranikhet region of Uttarakhand, India teaching the Marma chikitsa. Laura Plumb of San Diego, USA taught Hanuman Namaskar – including asana, mantra and kirtan.

While teaching Hanuman Namaskar, Laura Plumb explained: "As the Son of Vayu, Hanuman represents the





power of prana, and the power of a mind turned inward to the light of the heart. Focus your mind on that light within, and breathe into that power. Feel your divine self alive and true."

At 11:00am, more yoga classes continued, including Shinto Yoga, a therapeutic practice that blends Hatha Yoga with Japanese ancient Shinto techniques, taught by Hikaru Hashimoto from Japan. Kia Miller from Los Angeles, USA led a beautiful Kundalini yoga class, and Sharon Gannon, the founder of Jivamukti Yoga from NY, USA taught Jivamukti Yoga.



After enjoying their lunch in the sunshine, some highlights of the afternoon included a talk on naturopathy by Andrea Paige from Bali, Indonesia, meditation by Maa Gyaan Suveera of India, a special talk by Rujuta Diwekar, bestselling author, famous nutritionist and dietician to the stars, titled "Mitahar - the yama of eating," Diwekar, classical Hatha Yoga with Sadhvi Abha Saraswati and Indu Sharma and Kundalini Yoga with Sukhmandir Singh Khalsa.

Rujuta spoke passionately and convincingly about the correct way of eating which is the exact opposite of



This was followed by a deep satsang with renowned spiritual leader Shri Mooji, originally from Jamaica and now living in Portugal. In a beautiful advaita Vedanta format, Sri Mooji took questions from the audience which he turned back onto the seeker, sending him/her deeper into the inner quest to find that ever-present answer within, and simultaneously to realize that there is no questioner, there is no answer-er and there is no question....



the deprivation and restriction so many "diets" espouse. Rujuta explained: "It is so important to bring back the lost wisdom about food. Yoga inspires us to eat local, seasonal, fresh food using timeless recipes handed down from one generation to another. This allows us to have both the inner and outer environments in a state of balance and harmony, bringing us closer to the very purpose of yoga." Her talk was hugely popular and everyone walked away looking at their daily menus and their relationship with food in a brand new way.





In the evening, all participants took part in the sacred and divine world famous Ganga Aarti ceremony at Parmarth Niketan. This was followed by beautiful, devotional music and classical Indian dance performances by the Kirtaniyas.



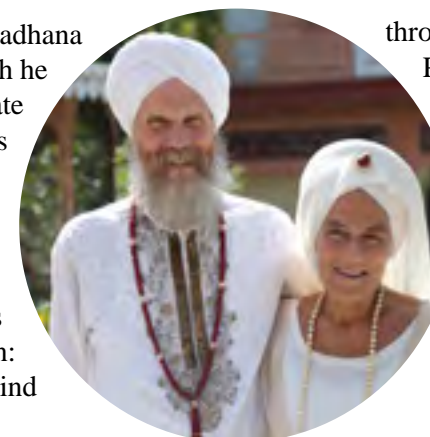
**SEE MORE
PICTURES HERE**

DAY THREE 3



The morning began with Kundalini Sadhana with Sukhmandir Singh Khalsa in which he explained, "Happiness is a natural state of consciousness. Everything else is disease. Everything else is imbalance. Happiness is who we are, what we are. This is our birthright."

Highlights of the morning classes included Indea Yoga Foundation: Coordinating Body, Breath & Mind



through asana by Bharath Shetty of Mysore, Pranayama with Yogiraj Vishwapal Jayant and Traditional Hatha Yoga with Sadhvi Abha Saraswati.

The morning intensive classes included Jivamukti Yoga by Jules Febre of New York, USA, Iyengar Yoga twists with H.S. Arun, Vinyasa Yoga by Krishnamurthy Mohan Raj of China, Deep Yoga by Laura Plumb of San Diego,



USA, Kundalini Yoga by Gloria Latham of Vancouver, Canada, Traditional Hatha Yoga by Kia Miller of Los Angeles, USA and Odaka Yoga by Roberto Milletti of Italy.

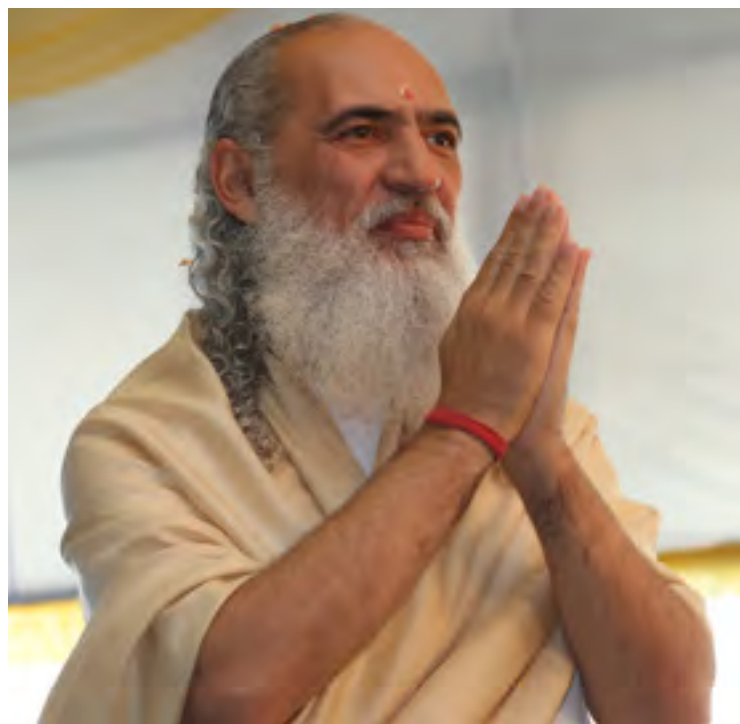
Kia Miller explained that: "Creating intelligence in the body leads to an intelligent approach to life. This class will take you on an exploration into your own innate power to create. Our work with the breath through pranayama helps us to dissolve the veil that covers our True self. Therefore, in the end, you will see that we are only uncovering that which is already there. That is the true state of Yoga."



H.S. Arun, renowned Iyengar Yoga teacher from Bangalore explained: "Yoga is not a workout, it is working in. Yoga is not about burning calories, it is to preserve energy by stopping the seeping energy'

After lunch, yoga classes resumed and included Kundalini Yoga by Gurushabd Kaur Khalsa of Los Angeles, USA, Aromatherapy, Wellness and Healthy Living by Dr. Anjana Bhagat of India and meditation by Maa Gyan Suveera. The Kirtaniyas of California, USA well known for their fusion of traditional Indian style vocal music with multi instruments and classical Bharatnatyam dance gave an inspiring class in Bhakti Yoga.. This was followed in the afternoon by a beautiful and uplifting





satsang with renowned spiritual leader Shri Prem Baba from Brazil, who spoke about Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion and the importance of love in our life. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions that were so beautifully answered.



In the evening, after the divine Ganga Aarti, the participants were treated to a special sound and mantra chanting program with Anandra George of Hawaii, USA combined with devotional songs by Sangeeta Levin of Chile, South America. This was followed by an enthralling dance performance by the rishikumars of the Parmarth Gurukul. By the end of the night all the participants were dancing joyously on the stage with our Rishikumars.



SEE MORE
PICTURES
HERE

DAY FOUR 4



After the early morning Kundalini Sadhana with Gurushabd Singh Khalsa on the 4th day of IYF, the morning classes began with a class of Meditation from hand by David Wei, Existential Bliss - Awakening Ananda by Anand Mehrotra, Traditional Hatha Yoga Asana with Sun Salutations and mantras by Indu Sharma, Vinyasa Meditation Flow: Connect with the Pure expression of Body Intelligence by Akira Watamoto and Sunrise Nada yoga by Anandra George before breakfast.



Chandanni Miglino, from Iran explained, "We've traveled here for all corners of the earth to come together in celebration of Life, of truth of Unity. What better way than to bow together towards our heart in recognition of the tie that binds, our Divine Breath. We are here together in one of the greatest gatherings of Unity and peace on earth at the International Yoga Festival at the beautiful and sacred Parmarth Niketan Ashram. "



After breakfast, classes included Yogi Yoga: Therapy for the spine with Mohan Bhandari, Ayusha yoga with Parmanand Aggarwal and Shilpa Joshi, Jivamukti Yoga by Sharon Gannon, and Indea Yoga by Bharath Shetty of Mysore, Marma Chikitsa by C M Bhandari & Charat Singh and Atma yoga by Saul David Raye.





Bharath Shetty of Mysore, explained: "Nā hathath, nā bhalath' (no force, no pressure). Connect every movement of your asana with your breathing.... Feel the yogic energy around you at Parmarth and connect yourself with the bliss of Himalayas and the flow of Ganga

Later in the morning, the intensive classes included Kundalini yoga inspired class on Self expression: Throat center, seat of expression & creativity with Kia Miller and Gloria Latham, Heart opening set to release fear and build trust, Yuva Yoga by Yuva Dayalan of Hong Kong and T.K. Krishnan and Hips blooming flow by Francesca Cassia.

Francesca Cassia said “Coming back to The International Yoga Festival always opens my heart and my soul. It makes me ponder about the miracle of life and the power of transforming our life into a living blessing. Here on the banks of Mother Ganga we soak in the sacred source of our souls and we create, all together, a better world. A world made of positive vibrations and vibrant transformations and a world where we can be our best Selves. Inspired by the ever flowing, Ganga, humbled by the presence of



so many Acharyas, we step into our journey to empowerment. The journey may be arduous but it is an important step in the road to becoming your best self. Enjoy the festival. It is a wonderful medium that combines physically calming exercises while opening a channel for motivation and deep understanding. Here you will find: opportunities to grow, a reason to stay; inspirational people, people to connect with who are dedicated, diverse, and multi-talented.

Afternoon sessions included a special talk by Dr. Radhika Nagrath, a reputed, scholar and author on Yoga & Stress Management, Reiki with Maa Gyaan Suveera, Yoga Nidra: Shivohum with Sadhvi Abha Saraswati, Kundalini Core concepts: Attributes of awakened consciousness, Kundalini Shakti by Sukhmandir, an American Sikh from California, USA and Buddhist meditation by Ven Bhikku Sanghasena.

This was followed by another beautiful, deep, inquisitive and thoughtful satsang question-answer session with Pujya Shri Mooji after which everyone took part in the sacred Ganga Aarti.

For the evening program, our Rishikumars entertained the audience with their graceful yoga poses as well as with their beautiful and creative spiritual and cultural dances.





DAY FIVE 5



The 5th Day 4:00 am Kundalini Sadhana was led by Sukhmandir Singh Khalsa, an American Sikh and disciple of Yogi Bhajan, and the focus was Love & Service, pranayamas and use of sound (naad).

The early morning, pre-breakfast classes included Lily Surya Namaskar Sequence with Erica Kauffman of Philadelphia, USA, Tuning to the Frequency of the Divine with Tommy Rosen, Bandhas & Locks with Akira Watamoto of Japan, and Kundalini Namaskaram flow with Bhavini Kalan of South Africa. There was also

sacred chanting and Nada yoga at sunrise on the banks of Ganga with Anandra George of Hawaii, USA.

After breakfast, the intensive classes included Devi Sadhana, Ganga Yoga with Asana, Pranayama and Mantra by Laura Plumb of San Diego, USA, H.S. Arun led the Iyengar Yoga class on Inversions to Balance, Passion, Emotions & the Ego, and Bharat Shetty taught Indea Vinyasa Yoga. A Kundalini yoga class on “Caliber of Life – Understanding your goodness” was taught with world famous Kundalini Yoga teacher Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa,

and Saul David Raye from California, USA taught Earth Prayer.

In the Ganga Yoga, founded and taught by Laura Plumb under Pujya Swamiji's inspiration and blessing, Laura said: "Go with the Flow. Let Go & Let Ganga. Surrender to divine will. Open your heart and recognize its natural generosity. Let yourself be a river of love. Be the compassion we all seek in the world. Give and Forgive. Pujya Swamiji always says, "Ganga gives and she forgives." Ask yourself, by Ganga's example, what are you ready to forgive? How can forgiveness open the rivers of compassion in your own life? Ganga teaches us generosity of heart. She purifies our past, refreshes our soul, and carries us to the ocean of the heart. Through Ganga, we learn to be a river of love for the world."



These intense classes were followed by a beautiful bhakti-filled discourse on the “Yoga of Love” by Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati and Buddhist Meditation with Buddhist Lama, Bhikkhu Sangasenaji of Ladakh.

Sadhviji explained that "When we deeply love, whether that love is focused on our child, our parents, our husband, wife or a friend, if the love is true and deep, we are loving God. God, divinity, is the essence, the core of all of us. If we only love the form or the body, that is called lust. If we love the essence of the person, then we are loving God. So, what is most important is that we should just LOVE."





After a beautiful lunch, the participants had numerous offerings including a talk on Ayurveda by Vaidya Balendu Prakash, Kundalini yoga with Bijay Anand, a Rumi love meditation with Mert Guler, melodious, divine mantra chanting with Anandra George and Ganga Flow meditation with Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati. Anand Mehotra, of Rishikesh India taught a dynamic class entitled Opening the Ecstatic Gates to the Heart: Practice of Asana, Pranayama, Kriya, Mudra & Meditation, and Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa taught Kundalini Yoga class entitled Magnificent Grace. The students were, as always, enthralled by the depth and breadth of the teachings offered.



Anand Mehotra explained that, "The goal of the Sattva Practice is to grow and evolve as human beings to our fullest capacity. Through our practice we transcend all limitations based on ideological differences. We heal and the planet heals with us."



In the evening, all participants gathered together to take part in the sacred and divine Ganga Aarti ceremony. Everyone joined for a sacred and divine campfire in honor of the holiday of Holi, which included a special Swaha, "letting go ceremony" in which the participants opened up their hearts, let go, and made space for new beginnings during this divine season. They put supari seeds into the fire as a symbol of any grudges, pain, anger or obstacles in life.



Pujya Radhanath Swamiji gave a beautiful program on the Yoga of Love and Bhakti in which he shared divine stories from the life of Bhagawan Shri Krishna and stanzas from the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam which emphasize that the practice of devotion, full, complete, surrendered love for the Divine, is the highest and most complete path of Yoga.



[SEE MORE PICTURES HERE](#)

DAY SIX 6



A special visit of the Hon'ble US Ambassador marked the sixth day of the International Yoga Festival. The morning began with 4:00 am Kundalini Sadhana led by Gurushabd Singh Khalsa of Los Angeles CA. Hikaru Hashimoto of Tokyo, Japan taught Paramita Dharma Yoga - Understanding the Heart Sutra and Zen Meditation. Akira Watamoto from Japan taught the integration of the body-mind-relationship with asana alignment. Anand Mehrotra from Rishikesh gave a class on Sattva Yoga, combining asana, pranayama, meditation, kriya, and wisdom. Roberto Milleti of Italy taught a class on Odaka Yoga, while others listened to the soothing, melodious mantra chanting by Anandra George as the sun rose over the banks of Mother Ganga. Parmanand Aggarwal and Shilpa Joshi also shared their wisdom with the participants on science and yoga and Chandanni and Chris Miglino led an Osho Dynamic Meditation.



In the intensive asana classes, Bharath Shetty taught an innovative Hip Opener and back bending asana class. H.S. Arun of Bangalore led a special unfolding backbend class, Tommy Rosen taught an invigorating and flowing Vinyasa class in the Ashtanga style/tradition and Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa of California, United States led a Kundalini Yoga Class. This was following by a inspiring discourses by Radhanath Swamiji and Swami Shantatmanandaji.





After enjoying their lunch sitting on tables in the sunshine and dining tents, all participants joined together for a beautiful and transforming session on One Source Waking Up. The speakers included Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Bharat Mitra, founder and president of Organic India and Uplift, Dr. Bruce Lipton, bestselling author of the Biology of Belief and internationally recognized leader bridging science



and spirit, Ron Sharma, a well known writer, musician and communicator of peace, dialogue and harmony through music and Prince EA, a young poet whose mission in life is to create positive, inspiring and thought provoking content that spreads awareness to his listeners/viewers to recognize the power, peace and equanimity within themselves. Everyone was inspired by the speakers, and danced along for world peace, singing together “OM Shalom, Salaam, Amen”.



This was followed by a sacred Ganga yagna and aarti ceremony in which everyone from all corners of the world gathered together to give thanks to the Divine, by any name, any form, any religion. All participated with great love and devotion.

In the evening we had a very special musical performance with renowned musicians from Israel, Iran, Yemen and Australia led by eminent Israeli artist Gil Ron Shama and his interfaith band. They filled the hall with the deep musical and mystical experience of true Oneness.



They shared their music with the message of love and harmony and concluded with a special song for world peace, based on the chanting of "Om Shalom Salaam Amen," a song of unity written by Shri Bharat Mitra, Founder-President of Organic India and the Uplift Movement. All the audience joined together in the spirit of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, bringing together the world's cultures, countries, colors and creeds in beautiful yogic union.

This special song was recorded in each location and will be part of a unique music video. The song will ultimately be chanted by one billion people from all over the world, singing together.....

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DAY SEVEN



The official concluding session was graced by the presence of His Excellency the Governor of Uttarakhand, Shri Krishna Kant Palji, many revered Interfaith spiritual leaders, saints and all the yogacharyas and presenters.

Clean, Green & Serene Pledge took place with participants of more than 70 nations as a part of the Swachhata Revolution, followed by the lighting of the lamp. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati gave a welcome and introduction speech and the Participants and the Yogacharyas shared their experiences from the week-long IYF.

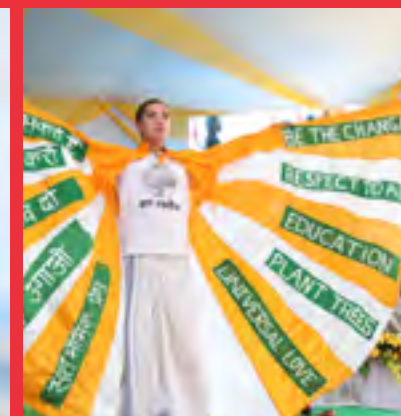
HE the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Shri Krishna Kant Palji said,"As I entered today for the concluding ceremony of the International Yoga Festival, I could feel the positive vibrations permeating every being and everything. Truly Rishikesh is the place where Yogis began their journey to the depths of Yoga. From them it went on to touch everyone all across the world." He urged all participants to similarly take the touch of Yoga and transform their world through its message and through its application in their everyday lives.



HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji concluded the programme with His blessings and words of inspiration to all of the participants and Yogis. He said "Yoga is more than the union of our head to our knees, it is the union of ourselves with the Divine. In that union what comes forth is the spirit of divine service and of the intention to give back. I am so proud of all my Yogis from 85 countries who have come together today, even after the festival has concluded, to take the practice further not just on the mat but off the mat and into our every day lives."

H.E Hon'ble Governor presented the Rudraksha Mala to all the Yogacharyas and everyone joined in a beautiful

Global Peace and Unity Song presented by Musicians from Israel, Australia, U.S. and other countries with world famous drummer Sivamani, who gave a magnetic, energetic and ecstatic drumming concert with his beautiful wife Runa singing. Everyone danced and sang along with joy and love. Address by His Excellency the Governor of Uttarakhand, Shri Krishna Kant Palji and vote of thanks by Hon'ble Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Uttarakhand Shri Shailesh Bagauliji. The program was followed by a sacred Ganga aarti ceremony in which everyone participated with great love and devotion.



The day began with a Kundalini Sadhana by Gurushabd Khalsa at 4 am. Then a beautiful, devotional kirtan took place on the banks of the Ganges, invoking the energy of the divine feminine through their beautiful songs dedicated to the Divine Mother by Anandra George of Hawaii, USA. Erica Kaufman gave a beautiful Lila Yoga class, Hikaru Hashimoto taught a Shinto Yoga class incorporating Dharma Yoga and Hatha Yoga, Krishnamurthy Mohan Raj led an Ashtanga Yoga class and Yogiraj Vishwapal Jayant taught a wonderful pranayama class.



After breakfast, CM Bhandari & Charat Singh from U.P., India, taught a yoga philosophy class focusing on pranayama, bandhas and concentration techniques to cleanse the body and to enhance powers of concentration. H.S. Arun from Bangalore, India led an Iyenger Yoga class and Mohan Bandhari, originally from Rishikesh and now in China, guided a Classical Hatha Yoga class. Parmanand Aggarwal and Shilpa Joshi from India also taught a class on health and healing through yoga and Kia Miller led a beautiful Kundalini class. Kia Miller said, “I love to turn people onto The International Yoga Festival where they get an authentic taste of the ancient tradition of yoga. For me this is so much more than a festival, it is a coming home to a world wide community of people who have fallen in love with yoga, Parmath Niketan and Rishikesh in general”.



The morning was then continued with Yoga of the Heart Pranayama, Asana & Meditation by Chandanni Miglino, Lila flow series by Erica Kaufmann, Traditional Hatha Yoga Series by Indu Sharma. Jules Febre led a beautiful Jivamukti yoga class filled with divine energy, Padmashi Bharat Bhushan taught about yogic management of diseases, and Tommy Rosen gave a class in “Accessing the Keys to the Kingdom within”.



After lunch, classes included a talk by Dr. Uday Shah on Spiritual Science – Aura & Yoga research. Maa Gyan Suveera taught her beloved Reiki class, Vaidya Balendu Prakash & Shikha gave a beautiful talk on Yoga & Ayurveda, and Swami Paramadvaitiji gave a class in Environmental Yoga. Sangeeta Levin took the class on a journey of the sacred healing of music and Mert Guler led the class on Sufi Meditation.

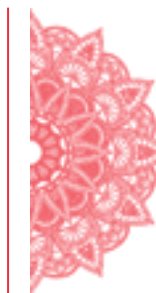






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MAHA SHIVRATRI



INTERNATIONAL MAHA SHIVRATRI CELEBRATIONS
ON THE BANKS OF MOTHER GANGA



The conclusion of the the festival coincided with the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri. More than 1100 participants from 85 nations joined together, as one family, to celebrate and rejoice on the occasion by joining in a special Shiva Abhishek on the banks of Mother Ganga and bathing in the extraordinary drumming and music by beloved, respected and world famous percussionist Sivamani.





The participants were so deeply touched and transformed to be learning yoga, pranayama and meditation in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, in the birthplace of yoga, on the banks of the sacred Ganga river. Each evening they performed yagna/havan and Ganga Aarti, singing joyfully and exuberantly. On their last day, they offered their love and gratitude to the Lord of Yoga, to Lord Shiva, and were in tears having to depart their Himalayan home, leaving with intentions to come back again and again to the sacred land of Himalayas, which was truly simply heaven.





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PICTURES
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YOG MAHA KUMBHA



FIRST EVER YOG MAHA KUMBHA BEGINS



A historic, first ever, four day Yog Maha Kumbha festival took place in Pantdweep, Haridwar, jointly organized by Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and Parmarth Niketan, from the 8-11th March. This year, the celebrations were planned to coincide with and extend the 28th Annual, International Yoga Festival celebrations at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), held from 1-7th March, and jointly organized by Uttarakhand Tourism, Parmarth Niketan and GMVN, to the heart of the Ardh Kumbha, the sacred city of Haridwar.



The morning began with Kundalini Sadhana with Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa. The festival was inaugurated on the 8th of March by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Harish Rawatji, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, joined by the world-famous percussionist, Sivamani and his beautiful wife Runa Rizvi, as they performed for the opening of the Yog Maha Kumbh four day celebrations. The inaugural ceremony was also blessed by Dr. Pranav Pandiyaji, Vice Chancellor of Dev Sanskriti Vishwa Vidyala, Pujya Swami Brahmswaroop Brahmachariji, Head of Jai Ram Ashram, Pujya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Harichetanandji, Head, Udhaseen Haridwar Seva Ashram, HH Ven Bhikkhu Sanghasenaji and many other revered saints. Dr. Vandana Shiva, famous eco-feminist, scholar, and activist, was also present to inaugurate the festival, which opened on International Women's Day, the 8th of March, and gave the message of how Organic Uttarakhand was crucial and key to protecting and preserving the sacred land and soil of the Himalayas.





There was also a special International Women's Day panel led by Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji and other international female Yogacharyas and experts speaking on the importance of protecting the divine feminine in all its forms, especially to honour and respect the female body as well as to protect and preserve Mother Nature. Young female students from local schools also performed.





There was a beautiful Ganga Aarti ceremony in Har Ki Pauri led by Pujya Swamiji and joined by all yogacharyas and yogis from around the world, as well as an extraordinary performance by soulful and popular singer Kailash Kher in the evening, bringing the audience to its feet while dancing to many hit Bollywood numbers and songs dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Lord of Yoga, and in honour of the International Women's Day.



[SEE MORE PICTURES HERE](#)

LOVE AND ONENESS AT THE YOG MAHA KUMBHA



The second day of the Yog Maha Kumbha in Haridwar, began with Iyengar Yoga by Shri HS Arun and Yuva Yoga by Dr. Yuva Dayalan. Followed by a beautiful guided Yoga Nidra by Sadhvi Abha Saraswatiiji.

After lunch, there was a panel discussion led by Devaa Haley Mitchell, Stephen Dinan, CEO of Shift Network, Philip Hellmich,, Stephen Dinan and Sandra that focused on the need to be as Yogis--to live our lives in a way in which we are conscious of our carbon and water footprint. They led everyone in a pledge to follow simple lifestyle changes such as becoming Vegetarian that could make a global difference. It was followed by Naad Yoga and divine kirtan by Anandra George from Hawaii and her students.





There was also a beautiful satsang by Pujya Prem Babaji from Brazil, who invited hundreds of his devotees to pledge and join Pujya Swamiji's vision and our collective mission to serve Mother Ganga and Mother Nature for the welfare of all.



YOG MAHA KUMBHA CONCLUDES WITH YOGIS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD RALLY AND PLEDGE FOR MOTHER GANGA



On the concluding day of Yog Maha Kumbha there was beautiful satsang with Pujya Mooji, in the divine presence of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (Pujya Swamiji), with whose vision much of the Yog Maha Kumbha had been planned and organized, and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawatiji as well as many other eminent dignitaries that included more than 1000 yogis from many nations. Over the course of the three day festival more than 2000 participants joined from more than 85 nations.



Yog Maha Kumbha concluded with a special musical performance with internationally renowned musicians from Israel, Iran, Yemen, Australia and many other countries, led by Bharat Mitra, Founder- President of Organic India, Prince EA, American rapper, spoken word artist, music video director and rights activist, and eminent Israeli artist Gill Ron Shama and his interfaith band. They shared a special song for world peace, called One Source Waking Up, in the spirit of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, bringing together the world's faiths with the sacred chanting of Om Shalom Salam Amen, signifying a yogic union of countries, cultures, colors and creeds.





The ceremony was joined by Mela Adhikari Shri SA Murugesan and his team who were handed over changing rooms designed and created by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, of which Pujya Swamiji is the Co-Founder, not only to provide safe enclosed spaces for women to change after taking a holy dip but to also raise awareness by providing messaging all around the four walls for people to remember the need for keeping our rivers and our communities clean and free from Open Defecation. Many of these changing rooms have been handed over to the Mela Administration to install at key locations.

More than 1000 devotees, led by Pujya Swamiji, rallied together along the banks of Mother Ganga from Pantdweep to Har Ki Pauri singing the Oneness song and taking a historic pledge at Hari Ki Pauri for preserving and protecting the sacred River Ganga and all of Mother Nature, so that festivals like these can continue to attract and inspire people from all across the world and all over India in a message of peace and oneness.



[SEE MORE PICTURES HERE](#)



QUOTATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

Viktoria Ahlman - Sweden: "I came here looking for something and I found out I already have it, now I can just enjoy the moment and the festival...you can always get more!"



Jessica McMiller - Australia: "I'm a yoga teacher from Australia, it's my first time in India. I'm at the festival to deepen my knowledge and further my carrer".



Wei Yu, Zhu Hong Mei, Dong Xing Li from China: " we came last year and liked it so much that we came back to learn more"



Carolina Simrat - Brazil: I've been here in Parmarth before but not during the festival. I'm excited to be a part of it now, will stay afterwards for Kundalini teachers training."



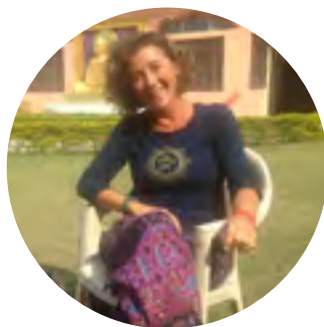
Chris & Chandonni Miglino group (left to right) from Brooklin NY- US
Destiny Batista, Louisa Active, Andrea Dela Cruz: "It's a new and very diverse enviroment, by Ganga, we're enjoying very much and having lot's of fun"



Cristiana Idehara -Brasil: "I'm loving the classes and the food is excellent"



Carla Gheller - Italy: "I've been practicing Iyengar Yoga for about 15 years but it's my first time here. I'm enjoying it very much, it's all very nice"



YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOGA OFF THE MAT



"PARMARTH NIKETAN" LITERALLY MEANS
"AN ABODE DEDICATED TO THE WELFARE OF ALL."



OUR INSPIRED INITIATIVES

Global Interfaith WASH Alliance

The faiths come together to help ensure Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for all.
www.washalliance.org

Parmarth Niketan

The largest ashram in Rishikesh and one of the largest interfaith spiritual institutions in India, Parmarth is home to the world-renowned evening Ganga Aarti ceremony and the annual International Yoga Festival.
www.parmarth.org

India Heritage Research Foundation

Committed to education, healthcare, interfaith harmony and the upliftment of women. IHRF has also created ashrams in Mansarovar as well as the world's first comprehensive Encyclopedia of Hinduism
www.ihrf.com



Ganga Action Parivar

Bringing together networks and partnerships of the world's preeminent researchers, environmentalists, engineers, religious and business leaders, as well as members of the general public. Together, we work towards creating thoughtful solutions to the numerous problems plaguing the Ganga and its tributaries.
www.gangaaction.org

The Divine Shakti Foundation

Dedicated to the holistic well being of women, their children, and orphaned/abandoned children, and to all of Mother Nature and Mother Earth.
www.divineshaktifoundation.org

Interfaith Humanitarian Network

Providing relief and rehabilitation during times of natural disaster. Most recently and ongoing humanitarian efforts have been in Uttarakhand floods of 2013 and Nepal Earthquake of 2015.
www.projecthope-india.org



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