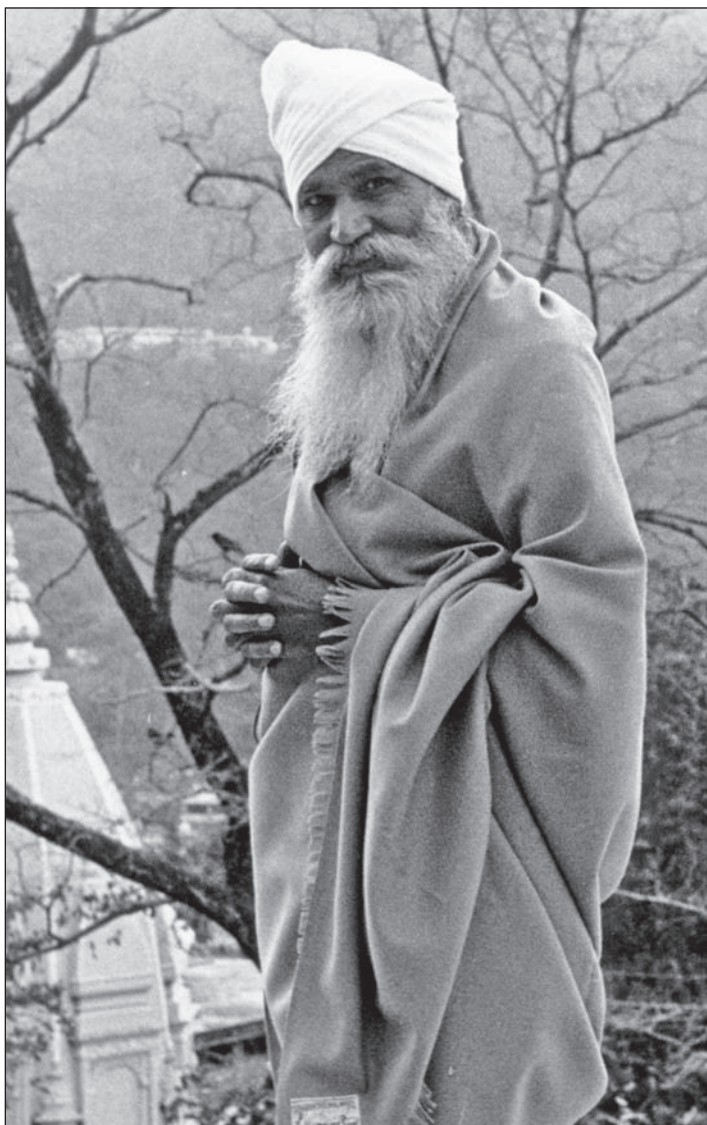


# Integral Yoga® Teachers Association Newsletter

Volume XIX, No. 1, February 2011



## The Easiest Way By Sri Swami Satchidananda

Excerpt from *An Evening with Swami Satchidananda*

Somehow, as I was coming here to the hall, I thought: What is the easiest way to get over all the obstacles? Because we all want to grow. We all want to be nice. We all want to be wonderful people. We all want to be divine angels. That's why if somebody says, "Oh, you're an angel," you're so happy. If somebody says "devil," you really become that devil. So that means we all want to be called as fantastic people, because that is what we are originally. In truth we are all angels, we are all divine. Haven't we read from the scriptures that God made humans in His own image? So God has made people in His own image. Humans must be God—divine. There's no doubt about it.

But somehow we seem to have forgotten that, and we seem to have gotten involved with some kind of lower animalistic tendencies. Some of the great men have said that even in the human form there can be many animals hidden, and consciously or unconsciously we seem to be recognizing that. Haven't you heard people saying, looking at somebody "Oh, that man? He's a cunning fox!" This is addressed to a human being. "Look at him! Howling like a dog." "Him? Oh, don't go near him. He's a snake." Or, "Oh, He is just a cow. He's soft." We use these terms. "Oh, he is a lion." People are even proud of calling themselves "Lions" nowadays. Don't you know that there is a group of lions? I once thought that I'd be meeting all the lions there when they invited me. But they're all human beings.

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# The Goal of Integral Yoga

The goal of Integral Yoga, and the birthright of every individual is to realize the spiritual unity behind all the diversities in the entire creation and to live harmoniously as members of one universal family.

This goal is achieved by maintaining our natural condition of a body of optimum health and strength, senses under total control, a mind well-disciplined, clear and calm, an intellect as sharp as a razor, a will as strong and pliable as steel, a heart full of unconditional love and compassion, an ego as pure as a crystal, and a life filled with Supreme Peace and Joy.

Attain this through asanas, pranayama, chanting of Holy Names, self-discipline, selfless action, mantra japa, meditation, study and reflection.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.  
Ever yours in Yoga,



# Integral Yoga® Teachers Association

*Founder: Sri Swami Satchidananda*

The Integral Yoga Teachers Association is a membership association open to all Integral Yoga teachers. Its mission is to provide mutual support and spiritual fellowship, to share information, to provide inspiration, and to conduct ongoing training and guidance.

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## Letter From The Editor

Every flower is a soul blossoming in Nature.  
—Gerard de Nerval



Greetings from Yogaville! Spring is on the horizon here and we are anticipating a countryside bursting with color; a time of tree blossoms and fragrant flowers. Along with the changing colors spring brings with it the beginning of a higher key for our programs department. We look forward to the buzzing of both bees and program participants who come for renewal, learning and practicing a way of life that may be different from their day to day routines.

In addition to the promise of Spring we cherish the Winter time here in Yogaville as well. It is an opportunity to practice the rhythm of the seasons by going inward to release the grip on our normal daily activities a little bit. In combination with the colder weather and the occasional snowfall, we're at those times encouraged to seek within and go "behind" our sometimes overactive mind.

In this issue we have a variety of articles from our upcoming presenters and others, including Sri Gurudev's insight

on an easier path to enlightenment. Master Sivananda speaks on practicing honesty and faith, Satchidananda Ashram's Executive Director, Ganesh MacIsaac shares new developments at the Ashram, and our Integral Yoga senior swamis share insights from the path.

Make sure to take a look at the upcoming programs being offered the remainder of the Winter and continuing into Spring on page 19. We have some really wonderful presenters offering teachings and practices that can transform your life.

We hope you enjoy this issue and please let us know if we can be of any further service to you through this newsletter.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti,  
Bharata Wingham

# Honesty and Faith

by Sri Swami Sivananda

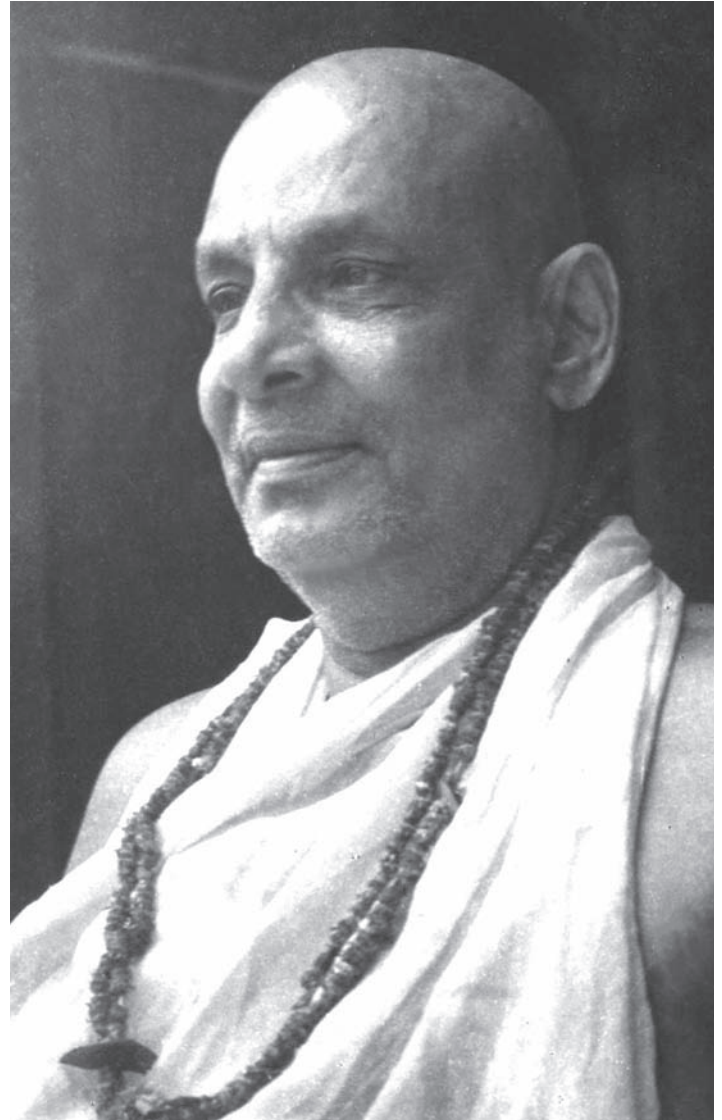
Excerpt from *Honesty and Faith*

Honesty and faith are the subtle bonds that serve to hold individuals together in corporate life. They go together. If honesty did not exist one man would not believe another. Faith and trust between man would die out. Suspicion and doubt would fill all minds, and life in society would soon become impossible. Fear and deep distrust would reign supreme. Each would regard all others as his enemies.

An honest man is readily trusted by all. All feel a sense of security in dealing with him. They know that they can rely upon him. They come to repose faith in him. This helps smooth dealing and harmonious relationship. The honest man also finds it easy to do his work. Man fully realised the importance of this virtue and thus you have the adage, "Honesty is the best policy." But it is much more than a mere policy; honesty is also the best principle to adopt in life. It must become a principle both subjectively and objectively, 'self-regardingly' as well as 'others-regardingly.' You must be honest with yourself, i.e., true to your inner self. You must be conscientious. Then you must also be honest in your dealing with others. Both are indispensable. If you regard honesty merely as an expedient and temporary policy, then it becomes hypocrisy.

Honesty is not a virtue meant only for any particular section of mankind, as loyalty is to the subordinate, chastity is to the married and filial piety and obedience is to children and students. Honesty is a universal virtue that must be cultivated by every human being. Masters, servants, parents, children, doctors, lawyers, merchants, businessmen, judges and administrators, all without exception should be scrupulously honest. It is a sacred duty and moral obligation in the interest of social solidarity.

An honest person is dear to the Lord. He showers His Grace and blessings upon such a one. Honesty never goes unrewarded in the long run. The honest person comes to be honored by all.



## Reflections from a Retreat

by Swami Ramananda

It is difficult to express adequately the gratitude I feel toward so many people and for so many things in this life....

- To my mother first of all and my amazing assortment of brothers and sisters, to my dear friends hosting me in Georgia, to my beloved NY IYI family, to my spiritual home at Yogaville, and to all the close friends who have supported me in so many ways.
- For my spiritual master, Sri Swami Satchidananda, and his ever present guidance and grace, for the blessing of a body that functions in miraculous ways, for the abundance in which we all live—not wanting for basic needs, for the daily miracle of light and life force that has expressed so profusely as nature, for the spiritual teachings and examples of countless saints.

- For the ultimate gift of awareness – that enables me to experience this life, to be present for the secret holiness of moments, to feel a heart overflowing with gratitude and devotion, to know the vastness of stillness, the joy of service and the natural flow of compassion for beings of all kinds from bugs to babies.

- I pray that I remember to make good use of all that I have been given, to take joy in being an instrument of love, free from anxious longing for myriad things, to take proper care of this body-mind entrusted to me, returning again and again to the source within, that I be guided by that Light, to enjoy the gift of each person and place, trust in the purpose of every challenge and find the fun in the Divine play.



# The Easiest Way

(Continued from page 1)

So that means there are these tendencies hidden inside. I'm not here to tell you how we got them or when and where. That I will leave alone, or else there will be some controversial questions coming. "Oh, did we live before?" "Are we going to live after?" Incarnation, reincarnation, and so on and so forth. I will just leave it to you people to decide that. But we do seem to have all those tendencies. We seem to recognize them. Sometimes we enjoy eating, eating, and overeating. We forget why we eat. We think we are living to eat. Whereas Gandhiji said: "Isn't it better to eat to live than live to eat?" Because we are controlled by the lower tendencies; the tongue and the eyes and the senses seem to be controlling us.

In the yogic theory, it has been recognized that most of our sensual and lower tendencies are located in the lower half of the trunk. Certainly most of you might know about the six or seven psychic centers, the chakras, or the six lotuses and the seventh, one-thousand-petalled lotus. They are psychic centers located along the spine. The lowermost one is the *muladhara*, at the base of the spine. Then comes the *swadisthana* at the *sacrum*, then the *manipura* at the *navel*, then the heart—*anahata*, and the throat, *vishuddha*, and the place between the eyebrows, *ajna*. And then the *sahasrara*—the crown *chakra*. These are nothing but psychic centers. You can't just operate on the body and see those centers there. Sometimes they are personified as lotuses with several petals. There's no lotus or petal growing in there, but actually they are psychic centers with different faculties. Each center controls certain tendencies of the human being. Normally it is recognized that below the *anahata*, or heart *chakra*, we have the lower tendencies. The heart and above, we have the higher tendencies.

So the divine is above and the devil below. That is the reason why it's always better to meditate either on the heart or above the heart. Because if you direct your attention to any place, you are going to energize that place. So, by our attention, if we are going to energize the lower *chakras*, we may have certain problems in handling them. If we could always draw our attention upward, these problems more or less get weakened. Then they won't dominate in our life. So it's the easiest way to control the undesirable senses.

It's recommended to meditate either on the heart or above. Of course, according to the different attitudes, tastes and temperaments you can visualize a light or some deities or some form which you like the most and feel that it's presiding there. It's only to keep your mind there. If you like some particular form or a light, whatever you like the most should be imagined there, so that you can easily keep your

attention in that place. Automatically the higher potentials are developed at the cost of the lower tendencies. For example, if there is a dark room, and if you don't want the darkness you cannot beat the darkness out. The easiest way to get rid of the darkness is to just bring a light inside. Bring in the opposite. If there is hatred, sow a little love there. Then that will slowly dispel the hatred.

So the divine is above and the devil below. That is the reason why it's always better to meditate either on the heart or above the heart. Because if you direct your attention to any place, you are going to energize that place.

According to the great sage Patanjali, who formulated the Yoga Sutras, this is called *pratipaksha bhavana* — thinking of the opposite. If you do not want something, don't think of it and say, "I don't want it, I don't want it. I don't want it." Even if you say: "I don't want it," you are thinking of it. The more you think of it, the more it will be there. You may say "I don't want it," but it is still there by your very own thinking, because as you think so you become. Instead, just ignore it and bring in something that you want to develop and slowly the undesirable elements will go away.

Last night at the Ashram, I gave a simple example which I once learned from an automobile garage. My books are like that. I seldom read a book, but I read many things from the people who work in the road, in the garage and in the farm. So once I was witnessing a man who was servicing a car, greasing it. He said that he was going to take away the old grease and put in new grease. I was really curious to know how he is going to take away the old grease. Was he going to take out everything, clean the old grease and then put the new grease in? No. He didn't do that. He filled a pressure gun with new grease and then he just squeezed it there and to my surprise the old grease was squeezed out. So the new grease took the place of the old grease. When it went in, it pushed out the old undesirable one.

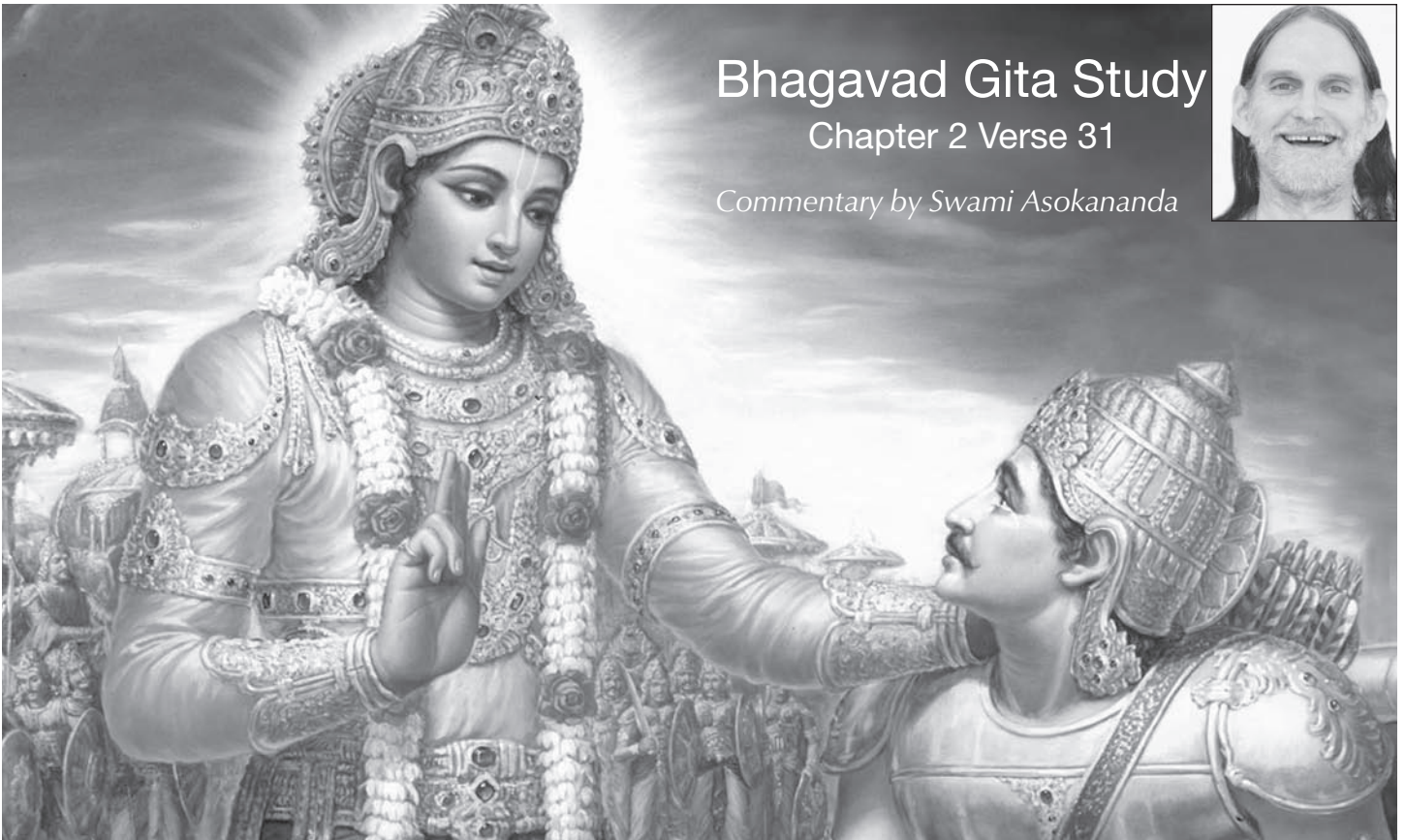
Ah, that is a beautiful thing to do in our life, because we have a lot of frictions in our lives. All we have to do is put in some new grease. Squeeze a little love in. The hatred is pushed out. It's very simple. And that is what is meant by *pratipaksha bhavana*. I could understand what Patanjali meant when I saw the man at the garage squeezing the old grease out. So it's a matter of replacement. You can't empty a place—it's a known theory. What we call a vacuum is not really a vacuum. It's not that there is nothing there. There's not even a single place where you can say there's nothing. It is always full everywhere. That's why *poornamada poornamidam*. "It is always full, ever full." You can never empty a place. But if you don't want what is there, you just put something else in. Then it's moved out. You can replace things but you cannot empty them.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

# Bhagavad Gita Study

## Chapter 2 Verse 31

Commentary by Swami Asokananda



**Furthermore, reflecting on your inner nature and responsibilities, you will find no reason to hesitate to go into battle. For a Kshatriya there is no greater good than to fight in a righteous war.**

Up until now, Sri Krishna has been empathetically stating that due to the indestructibility of the *Atman*, Arjuna is not really killing anybody and should not hesitate to fight in this war. Arjuna may be thinking, “Since nothing can ever be destroyed, why should I bother fighting?” That’s the problem with the lofty heights of Vedantic philosophy—it can be used to justify any choice we make. So, in this verse, Krishna gives another reason that Arjuna should not run from the battle. He comes down to a perspective that Arjuna and the rest of us can more easily grasp.

Krishna now introduces the term *swadharma*. *Swadharma* is often translated as “duty,” but this definition doesn’t really do it justice. *Swadharma* is our duty based on the way we are naturally suited to express ourselves. According to the mental *samskaras* and temperament of the personality we have in this lifetime, there is a type of work that both feels right for the individual and leads the soul to unfold its potential. When we come in touch with our *swabhava*—our inner nature—we will discover our *swadharma*—the proper mode to express that nature in this birth.

Krishna is calling upon Arjuna to fulfill his *swadharma* as a *Kshatriya*. In society, someone has to stand up to face “*adharmic*” forces, defending *dharma* and maintaining the rights of all. While ordinary folks tend to focus on preserving their own lives, *Kshatriyas* are made differently. They feel ready to give up their lives in order to see that unrighteousness

does not flourish. *Kshatriyas* are to society what white blood cells are to the body. Someone needs to come forward to remove that which is harmful to the society or its members. *Kshatriyas* naturally put the good of the whole over their own self-interest. They do not even see this as a sacrifice.

Though Arjuna’s mental clarity is shaken at this moment, in his heart he knows that if he steps aside and allows these aggressors to prevail, he will have turned against his own inner nature, and that it will be hard for him to live with himself. But to make sure that Arjuna understands the great opportunity that is being presented to him, Krishna uses the same term that Arjuna used at the beginning of the *Gita* when he begged for Krishna’s guidance. Krishna says that there is no surer way of gaining “*sreyas*,” his ultimate good, then to go through with his duty now. If Arjuna holds onto his *swadharma*, it will lead him toward *Moksha* or final liberation.

So, what does this verse mean for you and me? Even though while performing our *swadharma* we will feel like a fish in water, we will all run into inevitable challenges. We will still face *karmas* that seem too much for us to bear. Like Arjuna, we will find ourselves in battles that bring to the surface all our self-doubt. This is our soul’s “righteous war.” This is not the time to shake in our boots and look for some escape route. With the Self as our charioteer, this is the time to stand our ground and do what we know is true in our hearts. There will most likely be painful consequences, but that is in the short-term. In the long-term, in other words, from the perspective of *sreyas*, we will come out better and stronger persons. At least in retrospect, we will be grateful for these battles and how they turned out to be a blessing in our life.

# Letter from the Executive Director: Ganesh Maclsaac

Dear IYTA members,

*Om Namah Sivaya!*

Greetings—and best wishes for success in all your endeavors in the coming year. I hope your personal practice and your classes are going well.

I have been serving as executive director at Yogaville for about a year. It has been a challenging and thoroughly enjoyable experience so far.

The Ashram will be trying to reach out to check in with all of you by phone and e-mail. We need to know how we can serve you more directly. I hope you will share what you have experienced and learned on your path with us. You can help us be better at what we are doing here. Following are some recent developments that we want you to know about.

A new Kitchen Internship program is beginning March 1, 2011. The Farm Internship program is continuing, with some great new staffing additions. Our Beloved guest service staff members, Mataji and Vimala, are heading up the *Sadhana* Immersion program, for those who are seeking a deeper personal *sadhana* schedule.

The Ashram has a new department called Group Services. These folks will work with Gopal Watkins and the IYTA staff to offer Yoga and other groups a variety of ways to give your students an experience of Yogaville. You could come with your students (or just a group of friends) to enjoy the Ashram lifestyle in this beautiful country setting. For people who are fitting an occasional yoga class into a busy schedule of work, family, etc., the chance to unplug and focus within for a few days can be a revelation.

If you want to manage your own program or retreat with your group, the LOTUS Conference Center offers a comfortable private space with a world class view of the James River valley. It has accommodations for up to 20 people, with a meditation room and full kitchen. Also, there is a sauna and hot tub on site. If you prefer to eat at the Ashram, van service can be provided. Of course, there is the usual Saturday night *Kirtan/Satsang* experience.

If you need more info on what's going on at Yogaville, call (434) 969-3121—Guest Services Department ext. 147 and Day Manager Office ext.113.

Blessings to all.

A dedicated, long-time devotee of Sri Swami Satchidananda, **Ganesh Maclsaac** met Sri Gurudev in 1973 and was initiated in Detroit during that same year. From 1979 to 1980, he served at the New York Integral Yoga Institute; and in 1981, he was one of the pioneers who came to serve at the newly established Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville in Buckingham, Virginia. In 1982, Ganesh relocated to Washington, DC, to join the staff of Omnicomp, a computer business; he remained at Omnicomp until 1985. In 1986, he moved back to Yogaville to serve at Integral Yoga Distribution, which he built up from a humble ashram department to a thriving book distribution company. He continued to serve as manager of Distribution until 2010, at which time he became the ashram's Executive Director.





# Color, Sound and Yoga

By Sachi

Each of our body's organs has its own vibration. The sum of all of these create our own, very unique, vibration. This can be likened to an orchestra. Each instrument is different, each has its own part to play. When all the instruments are playing perfectly, the music is divine! When all the various vibrations that make up our "song" are in tune and working well, we experience a sense of health and well-being. What can we do to maintain our harmony?

We all know that eating well, getting enough rest and maintaining our Yoga and meditation practices all help. But what about the outside influences? Let's consider the effects of color and sound.

Sound and color are vibrations. These vibrations have the power to enhance our private practice as well as the class environment for our students. Of course we know this to some degree. But great joy is in the deep knowledge, and utilization of this knowledge, to benefit ourselves and our students.

We live in a world of dual polarities. This is described beautifully as "Yin and Yang" in Asian philosophy. So, just as the power of color and sound can serve as an enhancement, it can also work as a detriment. Often these influences are taking place on an unconscious level. Bringing their influences into our conscious awareness enables us to provide a more healing environment in our body, our homes and our teaching space.

Here's a fun way to tell how different colors affect you. Find a small room with a window, usually a bathroom works well for this experiment. Take any sheer, solid-colored cloth to cover the window. I suggest solid so you only have one color influencing you at a time. Often scarves do nicely. You can trade with friends to get a variety of colors.

Cover the window when it's light outside, even better when the sun is shining through. Close the door and sit quietly.

Allow yourself to be fully immersed in the color. Really feel the effect the color has on you. It's helpful to keep the cloth up for a few days. Keep the door closed and *feel* the impact of the color when you open the door. As you deepen your color awareness, you unlock an intriguing world!

What about sound? You know how you feel after a beautiful *Kirtan* session, with the various names of God vibrating within you. Perhaps you have a Crystal or Tibetan bowl that when sounded elicits a specific feeling in you. Which emotions are stirred in you when you hear someone speak to you with love? How do you feel when spoken to in anger? Why do you think fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances choose the specific sounds they use? Sound, like color, has so much to do with our energetic field.

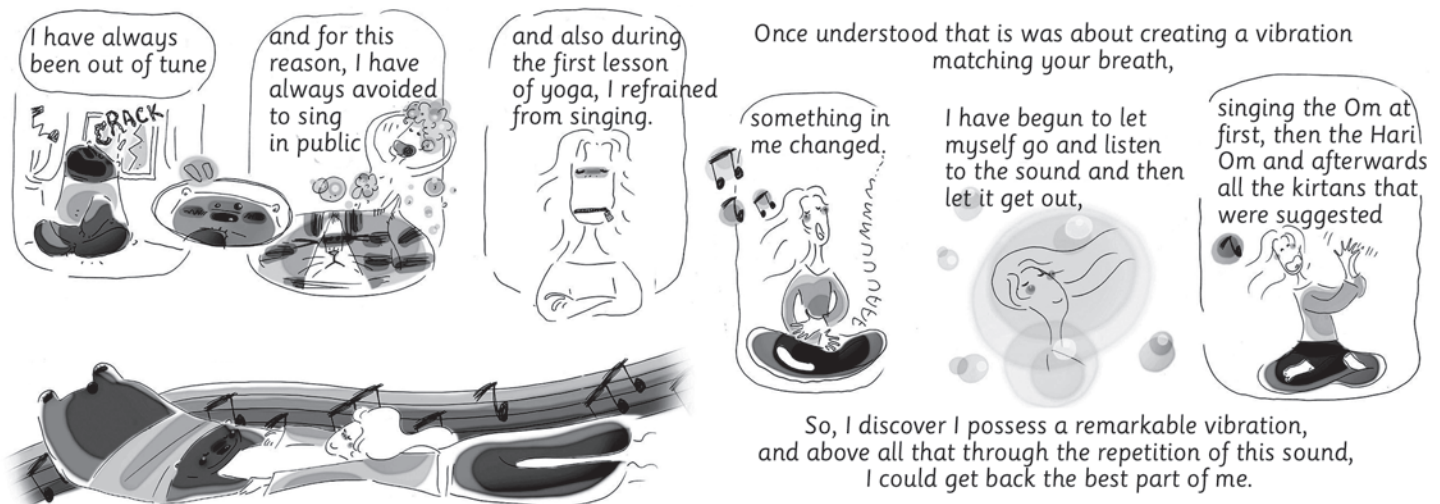
A friend of mine who is multilingual once gave me great advice. I was living in Paris and having trouble learning the language. "Just listen to the song of the speaker. Don't even try to understand what they are saying" It sounded crazy, but I did it anyway because languages seemed to come so easy for him. Now here is the odd part! Not only did I begin to learn French but I also began to really understand the French people, not just what they were saying!

For your health and well-being, as well as for that of those you teach, be observant, experiment, and let color and sound work their healing powers on you and all those you come in contact with!

*Sachi is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine and a Nationally Board Certified Diplomate in Acupuncture. She has been working with sound and color vibration for 20 years. Check her web site SachSpirit.com*



Come and learn more in Sachi's upcoming workshop at Yogaville, *Healing Powers of Color & Sound*, March 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>.



# Camp Yogaville isn't just for kids anymore!

By Haris Lender



As I look back at ten years of running Camp Yogaville, I have many thoughts and emotions associated with my experience. But which ones you ask? ALL of them!!

My husband insists I haven't experienced "ALL" of them but I beg to differ; Camp time is an emotional roller coaster. It used to take two weeks of physical recovery time for me. But it was all still WELL worth it. It now takes much less time, and when I leave I know I have just offered the greatest service of my life. Here's a sampling of the many emotions and some of my greatest memories from camp.

## **Fear:**

The day before camp last year I saw a bear in the woods very close to the cabins. I had a lot of fear after that and being the Jewish momma that I am, I couldn't stop stewing over it all week. Of course Gurudev made sure that bear was busy all week and not at all concerned with Camp Yogaville.

## **Worry:**

Many years ago at camp we had an unfortunate night that involved A LOT of bees and VERY large horseflies, five asthmatic kids and a broken window in Mrs. Raji's building. Talk about worry. I wasn't sure whether I was more worried for the health of the kids or of me when Mrs. Raji found out about the broken window. That was a bad night at Camp Yogaville. Oh yeah!, one summer Gurudev visited and I promised Prem that NOBODY was sick in the room. Then, the child serving the cookies to Gurudev sneezed onto the plate. I worried for a week about Gurudev's health.

## **Rage:**

We once had a kid urinate on the steps of one of the cabins. I'd have to say that that night I felt a bit of rage, but I'm a yogi and I got over it quickly!

## **Frustration:**

I remember (but barely) the early years when I was sleeping in the cabins with the kids, helping to cook the meals, running the activities, driving the van, and doing whatever else was needed for the seven campers and three counselors. When a counselor would call me the day before camp started to cancel, I thought I would have a breakdown. I know better now. Now I over-hire, because I "expect" someone to cancel, and so frustration from a lack of help doesn't happen anymore. Overstaffing is the key to minimizing frustration.

## **Pride:**

I started out running this camp for many reasons, but most of all so my own children could have a yogic experience at the Ashram. When my 18-year-old just recently wrote a phenomenally moving essay on how camp has changed her life on so many levels, I had a deep sense of pride for my own child, and of course for the hundreds of other kids who have had this same experience and will carry this knowledge with them for years to come. In my own Kids' Yoga company

we say we are healing the planet one peaceful child at a time, and I feel confident that it all began at Camp Yogaville!

## **Anger:**

I'm a Yogi! I keep it in my pocket...

## **Happiness:**

Every year the entire camp stands up on the stage and performs a skit. We work hard all week on this and run out the door when it's over to head back to camp for our end-of-camp party. The feeling I experience at the end of Satsang is the happiest moment of my entire year! It also involves a bit of "relief."

## **Joy:**

This year at Satsang a few of our very bohemian counselors began to dance during Kirtan in the back of the room. One by one each kid turned and saw the dancing and ran to the back to join them until eventually just about every camper and every counselor and some parents were dancing too. I have never had so much joy in my heart as I did at that moment. It was utterly beautiful to see! And I know that Gurudev watched every moment of it and that he, too, was joyful that he created this amazing environment that would allow for this freedom.

## **Depression:**

It is common for the kids to experience depression at the end of camp because they don't want to leave their new family. One year I remember watching a small group of kids cry for many hours after our closing ceremony, saying that they didn't want to leave their best friends for another year. Things have gotten better since the advent of Facebook!

## **Guilt:**

I am always amazed that we fill up but don't turn away 100 kids. What's up with that? This is the greatest camp on the planet! I feel guilty that more kids don't know about it or don't have the resources to be there with us. I come to terms with this emotion by just knowing that the kids who were meant to be there are there, and they are the lucky few!

I hope you are getting the idea. Camp is everything to me. Every emotion, every part of my being, and every day I am working on some part of it for the coming year. I have an AMAZING staff of creative, cool, funky counselors and we have all learned so much from each other. This upcoming summer is my 11th and final year of being the Director of Camp Yogaville.

I can't compare my camp experiences to anything else in this lifetime and pray that I will have the opportunity to experience this blissful feeling in my other ventures. I thank the Ashram, the community and all of the campers and parents that have helped me along the way. I apologize for



any mistakes I might have made along my journey. They were all part of the plan to create the best camp on earth!



**Haris Harini Lender** is a certified Integral Yoga teacher. She offers classes on Yoga, meditation and kirtan in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she lives with her husband, four children and a slew of doggies. Highly creative, she teaches an exciting one-hour, fun-and-games Hatha Yoga class for children, and has just finished producing her first Yoga DVD, *Yoga with Haris*. She is also an expert camper. Harini has completed a one-month Outward Bound course, has lived with Masai warriors in Kenya, East Africa, and has served as a Brownie Troop leader.

Register your kids for camp this year! Camp Yogaville is the week of June 21–28, 2011

Learn more about **Harini** at her website [www.YogaWithHaris.com](http://www.YogaWithHaris.com)



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## Living an Enlightened Life

By Matthew Flickstein

Everything that arises, disappears; whatever is born, dies. Nothing escapes the cycle of birth and death. It is important for us to directly and experientially realize that there is never a point in time when something “exists” and is not in the process of becoming something other than it was just a moment before. All suffering comes from attachment – trying to hold on to that which is perpetually changing – and all attachment comes from delusion. We need to learn to live in the clarity and space of non-attachment, neither grasping nor pushing anything away. The key is to just be present with what arises from moment to moment, without holding or resisting. At the same time, it is essential not to fall into the trap of denying the relative existence of our psychophysical organism and the world of experience it presents.

Compassion is the willingness to play in the field of dreams even though you are awake. Approach life with joy, enthusiasm, love, and an open heart. Take delight in the manifestations of life: It is all a play of consciousness, and it is really all play. If something appears serious or burdensome—even death – then we are lost in delusion. The “field of dreams” is this world of the senses with all its myriad forms. Being awake is the direct knowing that there is no one who suffers, no one who is born, and no one who dies. It is the five aggregates that are born and die. Who we are has never been born and never dies.

In actuality, there is no one who is expressing compassion to anyone else. It is all part of the play. The world is our mirror. There is only consciousness rising and falling along with its objects; it is all selfless. Whatever we see as being real is a

projection of our own mind. It is where our mind is stuck or identified with the illusion.

Nothing exists – not even nothing. Existence and non-existence are both concepts. Not holding anywhere is freedom beyond measure.

We must die to each moment and allow life to express itself through us. Our lives may not turn out the way in which the ego has imagined, but when we surrender to the truth of what is, we will find freedom beyond measure as surely as the river finds its way to the sea. When we move beyond the dualistic world, there is a rebirth into the deathless. We finally come home to a place that we have really never left.



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In 1982, he co-founded the *Bhavana Society Monastic and Meditation Center* in West Virginia. He currently travels internationally, leading retreats, teacher training programs and spiritual pilgrimages. Matthew Flickstein has published three books, *Journey to the Center: A Meditation Workbook*; *Swallowing the River Ganges: A Comprehensive Practice Guide to the Path of Purification*; and *The Meditator's Atlas: A Roadmap to the Inner World*, through *Wisdom Publications*. He has also produced two spiritual documentaries entitled *With One Voice* and *Eastern Mystics*.



# Yoga Practice for Strength and Flexibility: The Abdomen

By Lakshmi Sutter

The abdominal muscles play a key role in supporting the physical body – from flexing and rotating the trunk to holding the torso upright to supporting the lumbar spine. They help to hold the pelvis in place (with assistance from the hamstrings and the *gluteus maximus*), thus preventing the forward (anterior) tilt of the pelvis. These muscles also allow the diaphragm to make a full excursion with deep breathing and hold in our critical digestive organs (as well as the enteric nervous system – our second brain!). Almost all of our movement activates them in some way, and they in turn are involved in many forms of cohesive movement. This is the realm of *agni*, or digestive fire, that keeps us in good health when properly managed.

Beyond the physical body, the abdominal region serves us energetically and emotionally as well. Our energy is said to be stored at the area of the solar plexus, near the navel. With proper care, our *prana* is better managed when we find balance in the abdominal region. Our “gut reactions” also emanate from this region, suggesting that it is a vital area to care for to ensure we respond appropriately.

While the fitness industry often promotes six or even eight pack abs, Yoga actually does not. We do want strong abdominal muscles to support all the functions listed above, but we suggest some softness to facilitate full diaphragmatic breathing. Symbolically, some suggest that a soft vulnerability is a desirable Yogic trait. This balance between abdominal strength and flexibility might be considered a metaphor to the core of our own being.

As I was preparing this issue, I drafted the outline of what the Universe suggested that I write. Then, I conducted the typical research and consulted trusted sources to make sure that I was in tune to the appropriate channel (and not making anything up)! I have had a few opportunities to study

with a Yogin named Doug Keller, so I generally check his books and web site to see if he has anything to say on the assigned topic. It turns out that Doug, who has been writing articles for *Yoga Plus Joyful Living* (now renamed *Yoga International*, as it was previously) for the past few years, has already written the first part of what I outlined regarding anatomy and *asana* practice. Since he posts these articles free of charge on his web site, there seems no point in my re-writing essentially the same material – please simply visit [www.doyoga.com/a\\_yp\\_articles/Y+1\\_08.pdf](http://www.doyoga.com/a_yp_articles/Y+1_08.pdf).

He explains anatomy beautifully and has better graphics than what we can publish here. For those of you without home Internet access, it is worth a trip to your local library. In short, he

strengtheners; however, it is especially important to ensure the shoulder blades rest gently on the ribs in this pose rather than flaring out (to prevent shoulder injury, but that’s a topic for another issue!). If your upper body lacks adequate strength to hold this pose, allow the knees to rest on the floor. You will serve yourself better by building the strength to hold this *asana* with the shoulder blades in a safe place than by practicing it improperly. Practice this pose the next time you are on your mat and feel the work required of the core. It’s a great pose to insert into your practice – so long as the shoulder blades are resting on the rib cage.

To target the oblique abdominal muscles, practice the lying spinal twist, *jathara parivartanasana* (Figure 1).



Fig. 1

recommends a progression of leg lifts into forward boat pose and then to spinal twist, which reach all four of the abdominal layers that create our core.

Another pose to support the abdominals beyond the leg lifts and *paschima navasana* progression is the plank pose.

It’s helpful as an all around

When bringing the legs back to center, engage the abs without recruiting other muscles. One way to tell is to by observing the neck; if it tightens, then



Fig. 2



you are recruiting other muscles—try to isolate the abs. As you gain strength, straighten out the legs and slowly move from side to side with the breath (Figure 2). The revolved triangle, *parivrita trikonasana*, also engages the oblique abdominals. In this asana, create a horizontal line between the tailbone and crown of the head. It's easy to let the head drop out of the plane of the pose (Figure 3).



Fig. 3

Let your awareness on the muscle group creating the movement drive the transition into and out of the *asana*.

The innermost layer of abdominal muscle, the *transversus abdominis*, is probably best strengthened through *pranayama* techniques such as *kapalabhati* and *bhastrika*. If you have dropped these techniques, consider bringing them back into your *sadhana*—more than just your abs will benefit!

As a tribute to our new editor, we mustn't forget the importance of laughter in our lives. Laughter brings a long list of benefits—one of which is engaging this strap of muscle located deep within the abdominal layers.

*Uddiyana bandha* will support the abs and fan the digestive fire. Integral Yoga considers this a practice suitable for

experienced beginners, and we teach it in intermediate level classes (Hatha 2). To practice this “flying up lock” (Figure 4):



Fig. 4

Stand with the feet about shoulder width apart. Exhale fully to empty the lungs as much as possible (residual

air will remain) while simultaneously bending forward and positioning the hands on the thighs.

Straighten the arms and lift the torso to an angle of about 45°.

With the air still out, draw the abdomen in and up; keep the head in a neutral position.

Before the need to inhale, release the *bandha*, stand erect, and then inhale.

Rest for a moment before continuing. Three rounds are recommended; the final round may include *agnisara dhauti* for those who know the technique.

The practices described here all build strength. Recalling that the yogin seeks balance, it can be useful to have an opposing abdominal stretch. Be creative in finding the abdominal stretch that counters your strength building – try poses such as bridge (*Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*) (Figure 5), bow (*dhanurasana*) or wheel (*chakrasana*). This will ensure that the strong abdominal muscles are flexible enough to support the deepest breathing.



Fig. 5

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Join **Lakshmi Sutter** on March 25–27 for *Back to Basic Introductory Yoga Weekend*.



# Gems of Integral Yoga Hatha

By Satya Greenstone

Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda was an accomplished yoga master who came to the west in 1966 and offered the traditional Yoga teachings and practices in a way that was unique. Even though the class is called Integral Yoga Hatha, it is a complete Yoga practice. Each class contains asana (physical postures), *pranayama*, *kriyas* (purification practices), *Yoga nidra* (deep relaxation), *pratyahara* (control of senses), chanting, *mantra* repetition and meditation. Sri Gurudev always presented Yoga as a comprehensive spiritual path not just a physical practice. For those seeking the physical benefits of Yoga, of course that is readily available, but the Integral Yoga Class itself opens the doorway to a more all-inclusive understanding and practice of the Yoga lifestyle.

Sri Gurudev's emphasis was on using a regular asana practice to gain the maximum health benefits with the minimum number of asanas. This approach prevents one from becoming *stuck* in the physical asana aspect of Yoga and allows one to maintain a healthy body and peaceful mind in order to experience a more useful life.

Sri Gurudev presented us with a core sequence of asanas for daily practice. One of the primary benefits of this sequence is to experience balance on all levels of our being. The practice balances the endocrine system on the physical level and on the more subtle level it balances the prana or vital life force throughout the system. The asanas are performed with a meditative attitude. Sri Gurudev advises that our awareness during an *asana* should be on the *benefit* of the pose. The concentration should be directed toward the vital organ, gland, or area of the body that is receiving the flow of prana. By placing the awareness on a particular area of the body, the *prana* is directed to that area. (Actually, it is the awareness or concentration that sends the prana to the particular area of the body.) This greatly enhances the benefit of the *asana*.

As one becomes more comfortable in a pose, the asana can be held for a longer period of time. To progress in the Integral Yoga Hatha practice, there is no need to keep adding additional poses. The practice deepens and advances as the poses are held longer with greater concentration (from 3 - 30 minutes depending on the pose (see *Integral Yoga Hatha* book for details). It is the nature of the mind to always keep jumping, seeking change and variation. Sri Gurudev offered us many optional poses to "play with" in order to keep the mind occupied with variety but still stay on track with our Yoga practice. These poses can be added to, but not substituted for the basic sequence of poses.

The Integral Yoga class is designed to give the student a feeling of complete relaxation and an experience of Peace and Joy. This experience can be replicated in every class or practice session. It is this experience of Peace that is the goal of Yoga.

## Developing a Personal Yoga Practice

At some point one may feel the need to make a transition from being a Hatha Yoga class attendee to being a more involved yogi. This means developing a personal practice where one makes the connection to one's own inner Peace on a daily basis. In fact this connection with our Peace within becomes the most significant aspect in one's day-to-day life. Having made the connection, one continues throughout the day's activities full of energy and radiating Peace.

The most essential aspect of developing a personal practice is *regularity*. This may sound mundane and obvious, but the reality is that life itself gets in the way of a regular Yoga practice. We find ourselves putting our Yoga practice on the back burner while taking care of all the other *important emergencies* of life, and we find ourselves becoming stressed out and needing the very practice that we don't have time for.

First: take back the *time* needed for practice. This has to be done by analyzing one's life schedule and realistically finding a time for Yoga. Probably this will mean either getting up earlier or staying up later. Pick one—you can't do both. It is best to have a consistent time.

After you have the time, you need a *place*. Create a place, a sacred space where you are comfortable and free to practice without interruption. This is *your* time and place. It should be clean, well ventilated and have whatever is necessary for you to do your practice with no distraction. Turn off the phone and TV: avoid chaos and go within. Gurudev says that preparation is 90% of the practice. If everything is ready, it will be easy to get started and continue.

Practice taking the core sequence of Integral Yoga Hatha to make it your own. Depending on the time available to you, create a practice of asana, deep relaxation, and pranayama leading into meditation. If the time is limited, reduce the amount of time in *asanas* so that the *pranayama* and meditation time is never lost.

Over time, the personal practice of Hatha Yoga will grow and change according to one's needs. Although the basic core sequence remains the foundation of the practice, optional poses may be added and varied depending on the goal and need of the time.

For Example:

- Someone concerned with his/her weight may want to do more repetitions of *Surya Namaskar* and more standing poses.
- Someone wanting to sit comfortably in Lotus Pose or some other meditation pose may need to do more hip opening asanas, and poses that protect the knee, by strengthening the muscles surrounding that area.

- Someone wishing to build upper body strength may find more arm balances and shoulder stretches very helpful for keeping them limber.
- Someone with digestive problems may concentrate on more twists and poses that massage the abdomen.
- Someone whose practice needs a good push might choose a new, challenging pose and work with that for some time.

The specialty areas will change from time to time, but the foundation remains the same. This simple and balanced approach given by Sri Gurudev leads one to a body of health, strength, balance, and flexibility and a Peaceful mind.

Take some time at the end of every day to reflect on your practice and daily activities. Observe the transformative effects of the Yoga practice taking place in the body and mind. It can be a great help to maintain a spiritual diary or journal.

*Satya Greenstone has been a student of Sri Gurudev for almost four decades. In 1978, she and her husband started teaching at the Yogaville Vidyalayam and for 17 years taught at this elementary school for the Ashram community children. Since 1999, she has been a primary teacher for the Basic Yoga Teacher Training Program. Satya has been practicing and teaching Integral Yoga for many years, gently adapting the Yoga practices to any individual needs and always finding a way to encourage and inspire the students.*

Satya will be presenting at Yogaville, "Re-igniting the Yogic Fire: A Teacher Renewal Weekend", May 5-8, 2011. She will also be leading "Restorative Yoga Teacher Training" on June 19-26, 2011. ([www.integralYogaprograms.org](http://www.integralYogaprograms.org))



Adopting a pure, *sattvic* yogic diet will greatly enhance the benefits of the Yoga practice. Sri Gurudev always recommended a pure vegetarian diet for Yoga practitioners.

These simple practices incorporated into daily life will lead one to a life of health and happiness. In the words of Sri Gurudev:

*Health is your birthright, but not disease;  
Strength your heritage, but not weakness;  
Courage, but not fear;  
Bliss, but not sorrow;  
Peace, but not restlessness;  
Knowledge but not ignorance.*

*May you attain this birthright, this Divine Heritage  
to shine as fully developed Yogis, radiating  
joy, Peace and knowledge everywhere.*

*Om Shanti. Shanti. Shanti.*

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## Yoga for Intuition

*By Amy Weintraub, MFA ERYT-500, Author of Yoga for Depression*

When I work one-on-one with clients on the mat, we find that we are aligned in more ways than the details of posture. We enter an intuitive field together as we harmonize our breathing (*pranayama*), align with intention (*sankalpa*), activate our inner knowing with sound vibration (*mantra*), and clear the space for vision (*bhavana*) to arise. Alice is a forty-eight year-old academic writer, wife, and mother who suffers from chronic ill health, the result of years of living with anorexia and bulimia. When she opens her eyes after our centering, it is not unusual for me to already intuit her intention (*sankalpa*) as well as her vision for what she wishes to enhance in her life (*bhavana*). Neither of us are surprised when I lead her into a heart-opening restorative pose because I already "know" she is feeling constricted around her heart, or when I have her roaring like a lion in a warrior pose to release the anger she feels at her ill health. Nor are we surprised when she says that she feels the presence of one of my deceased teachers laughing at her, telling her that her anger is not about her health but about the unwritten novels waiting inside her.

How is it that Alice and I align like this? First, we are cultivating our intuition, actually activating the parts of the brain that enhance our inner knowing through our Yoga practice, and second, we are doing so in the safe container of our loving connection, a connection where we both feel seen, acknowledged and understood. The recently deceased former priest and poet John O'Donohue said, "When you really feel understood, you feel free to release yourself into the trust and shelter of the other person's soul."

In the mirroring that is occurring as I lead her through yogic practices, we are developing the seat of intuition in the middle of our brains. We are vibrating the pineal gland and the pituitary gland, associated with what the yogis call the third eye, the seat of intuitive wisdom. The visualization exercise (*bhavana*) we do in our centering meditation directs the energy toward the third eye. We activate the glands with sound (*mantra*) and with breath (*pranayama*). Later, after a gentle but active posture (*asana*) practice, I

guide Alice to rest in child pose with her hips on her heels and her forehead on the mat, soothing her sixth *chakra* (*ajna*), her wisdom center. In this position, I invite her to use a tone that the yogis believe vibrates at the brow point, or the third eye. Then, we practice a simple inversion, so that energy is stimulated at the crown of her head, and again, we use sound (*mantra*) to vibrate from the seventh *chakra* (*sahasrara*), her connection to the cosmos, down to the pineal gland, further activating her intuition.

Throughout Alice's practice, we are also activating the second center of the brain associated with intuition, the middle of the right temporal lobe, often referred to as "the God center." This area of the right hemisphere is closely connected to the limbic system, considered to be the emotional brain, so it follows that the relational aspect of our loving connection creates fertile ground for intuition. Alice often arrives feeling anxious and overwrought, so in addition to alternate nostril breathing, we may practice some left nostril breathing to activate the calmer, more intuitive right side of the brain. At the end of our session, I guide Alice into a deeply relaxed state in corpse pose (*savasana*) with the practice of *Yoga Nidra*. She emerges feeling calm, centered, clear, alert to her inner knowing and ready to write from this place. In the two years that we've worked together, Alice has completed a draft of her first novel.

## Practices

### ***Bhavana* and *Pranayama* (visualization and breath control)**

Sit in a comfortable position with your spine erect. Calm your mind with a few deep breaths into the bottom of your lungs, allowing your belly to expand on the inhalation and to soften on the exhalation. Now bring into your mind an image for inner peace from which your intuition may flow—perhaps a still pond or a brilliant red rose or the yin/yang symbol. If an image does not arise in your mind, then simply think the words, "inner peace."

Since alternate nostril breathing is contra-lateral, try breathing through the left nostril to enhance the intuitive "God center" in the middle of the right temporal lobe, and then follow this with some balancing alternate nostril breathing.

Sit in a comfortable position with the spine erect. Make a fist with your right hand then release your thumb and your fourth and fifth fingers. This is a hand gesture called *Vishnu mudra*. Place your thumb against your right nostril and inhale for the count of four through the left. Close both nostrils, closing the left nostril with the fourth and fifth fingers. Hold the breath for the count of four to sixteen (less if this is difficult—do not strain), visualizing your image for inner peace. Exhale through the right nostril for the count of eight.

You can repeat this twelve times, and then follow it by a round of six alternate nostril breaths. For alternate nostril

breathing (*nadi shodhana*), use the same hand gesture. Closing off the right nostril, first exhale through the left nostril and then inhale through the left. Then close the left nostril with the fourth and fifth fingers and exhale and then inhale through the right. Close off both nostrils, then exhale through the left. Continue for two more rounds.

### ***Asana* (posture), *Seated Yoga Mudra* with *mantra* (sound)**

To bring a soothing energy to the third eye center, located behind the brow point at the center of brain, we'll vibrate the pituitary and pineal glands with a simple inverted posture and tones, called *mantras*. *Yoga Mudra* is a pose that brings oxygenated blood to the brain. Think of all those juicy neurotransmitters that you've stimulated with your *bhavana* and your *pranayama* flooding your synapses.

To start, sit in a kneeling position and either interlace your fingers behind your back, or if your shoulders are tight, hold a strap with eight or ten inches between your hands. Inhale and raise your arms. Exhale, dive forward, and raise your arms as high as you comfortably can behind you, bowing to your own inner knowing. Place your forehead on the mat with your arms above your head. Bring your image for inner peace to your brow point and chant the low tone of *Aum*. Let it vibrate through your cranium. Do this several times.

Now roll up onto the crown of your head, fingers still interlaced (or holding the strap) behind you. In this position, chant the tone of *Aum* with the lips closed, teeth gently touching. Do this three times, and then slowly return to your forehead. On an inhalation, rise to the starting position, keeping your fingers interlaced (or still holding the strap). On an exhalation, release your hands letting them float back to rest open on your thighs. Bask in the energy of the cosmos flowing through you now.

After releasing this pose, students often report the experience of feeling an open channel at the top of the head, all the way down to the root *chakra* at the perineum. If that is your experience, too, imagine the healing wisdom of the cosmos flowing through you, and know that there is no separation between this wisdom and your own awakened intuition.



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# The Power of Breath

*By Edward Harrold*

Breath is something we take for granted. It's an involuntary action by the body so we rarely pay attention. And, we definitely don't understand the value in using breath for better health and fitness. The "power of breath" is an unknown in our culture.

The average person has 21,600 breaths every 24 hours (15 breaths per min X 60 min X 24 hours) and about 60,000 independent mental thoughts. Our breathing process is the foundation of all of our brain function and 12 energy systems of the body. Breathing is also the only physiological function that we can control, if we wish. Otherwise, it occurs from the intelligence of our autonomic nervous system on its own. Depending on how you're breathing, the autonomic nervous system sends signals to our parasympathetic (rest and digest) or sympathetic (fight or flight) systems. The nervous system reacts to the breathing of the body every second whether we are awake or asleep. Rapid or shallow breathing strongly decreases parasympathetic response.

Our respiratory system draws life force wind in and out of the body. The diaphragm and intercostal muscles make up the muscles of the inspiration and the rectus abdominal muscles contracting make up the expiration. This system feeds our cardiovascular system . . . the lungs and heart are in charge of ventilation and pumping energy into our cells. The cardiovascular system fuels our moving parts that are our neuromuscular skeletal system. These two systems respond to the commands of the brain and send movement instructions through the nervous system through our 600 or so muscles and 206 bones.

The respiratory system also supports our digestive and lymphatic systems, two systems paramount to processing the foods we ingest and in removing toxins and imbalances from the body. When the respiratory and digestive systems are working harmoniously, you're well on your way to a good strong, healthy nervous system. Keeping our nervous system in the parasympathetic response is crucial to physical and mental health and longevity to the average life span of our cellular body.

The best "drug" we have on the planet right now is oxygen and optimal breathing. Proper breathing is the best thing we can do for ourselves to restore and revitalize the body and mind at the cellular level of life. Everyone can do it. The problem is we were never taught the optimal way to breathe when we were young. Learning something new later in life can feel awkward at first, but once we get past the initial baby steps, it's actually quite refreshing and builds confidence and a positive attitude. Learning something new always has a mental and physical component.

There are 3 areas where breathing is most effective for overall health and well-being. First, as a tool to reduce stress and anxiety. Since how you take breath in sends signals to

the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, you want to use breath to control the mind and to facilitate the relaxation response. I mentioned above that we average 15 breaths per minute in a resting state. This amount of breaths per minute generates the sympathetic response. So, even at a resting state, the average American is living in the sympathetic response. It shouldn't be hard to imagine how heart disease, anxiety and stress disorders are plaguing our country.

Second, for all sports training. Most athletes breathe through their mouth. Remember this basic rule of thumb . . . the nose is designed to breathe and the mouth is designed to eat. The mouth is no better equipped to breathe than the nostrils are to eat food. Mouth breathing is a human emergency breathing technique to allow the body a quick burst of energy to remove the body from a life-threatening situation. Chronic shallow breathing and mouth breathing is well-documented to advance the cellular aging process not just in body, but the brain cells; it also slows digestion and the removal of body wastes as well as dehydrating the body.

The imbalances described above impact every athlete. Along with physiological interference, the athlete is always in a battle internally with their mind and their perception of what they think is happening in the present moment. Reaction is everything to an athlete. Reacting without the imprints from the past or the fear of what might occur in the future.

Proper training for an event is critical. Hope isn't a time proven strategy. You can create so much more heat in the body training by breathing correctly. In other words, raise the heart rate and blood lactate levels through manipulating the breathing process rather than destroying muscle fibers. Training is about creating internal environments where heat builds internally and wastes are removed without destroying muscle mass.

It's become so uncivilized for me to mouth breathe while exercising. If you breathe correctly, you will never under train or over train. You will hit your mark every time. There are times for mouth breathing in performance, but it shouldn't be the norm . . . especially in training. Outdated and antiquated training styles teach you to use the mind to over power the body . . . no pain, no gain. Push through it at whatever cost. Those lower qualities of the ego cause so much more harm. Have you ever watched an animal? Every animal on the planet breaths through its nose unless it feels threatened. That's why the animals on the planet are more relaxed most of time, unlike humans who are stressed out most of the time. They live in the parasympathetic state and we live in the sympathetic state. And science tells us we have the largest brain?

So, create a relationship with yourself through nasal breathing facilitating a body OVER mind approach. Watch how this challenges your athletic performance and natural gifts. The body is always honest and honesty leads to a happier, healthier you.

Third, breath is a powerful tool for weight management programs. Because of how closely linked the respiratory system is to the digestive and lymphatic systems, proper breathing is essential in counteracting the imbalances of these two systems for folks employing weight management.

For weight loss, breathing the warm air through the nostrils rather than the cooling effects from mouth breathing is the most effective place to start changing patterns. When the diaphragm muscle thickens and strengthens from the breathing exercises, the brain sends signals to the body to burn fat rather than our precious sugar reserves. When our breath changes, it allows for growth against habitual behaviors creating suffering in our lives. Food is just energy to stay alive. It's not something to use to process emotional peaks and valleys. Learn to slow down your nasal breathing when the body asks for more fuel. The body will make suggestions to what it craves and the portion size. The mind accepts, rejects or says, "I don't have data to make the proper food selection right now." Take a few more slow breaths and wait for the next suggestion from the body with patience; please.

So, how do you breathe? We're going to cover 3 basic breathing techniques for you to introduce into your daily life. Let's begin with learning the 3-part breath. You can try this even as you're reading this article. Begin with some long, deep, nasal breaths. Start by slowing down the inhale and notice how the mind reacts to the slower paced inhalation. Next, slow and lengthen the exhalation for the body. Now, imagine that your torso is a glass. When you pour water into a glass, it goes to the bottom and makes its way to the rim. Well, imagine your breath doing the same thing. Breathe down into your abdomen, fill your ribs and up under your collar bone. Exhale completely, drawing your navel back to remove all the carbon dioxide. Just breathing like this for a few minutes slows down the brain waves and relaxes the body where there is unhealthy tension creating the space for disease to form.

Another tool in harnessing the "power of the breath" is to make a soft resonant sound in the throat when breathing. In yoga, it's called "ocean sounding" breath. Practice this by contracting the upper muscles in the back of the throat, constricting the windpipe. It's a sound that draws the mind inward and creates concentration on the present moment. The sound of the friction of the gases moving through the throat allows built up fats, phlegm and mucus to be removed from the warm heat emanating from a contracted throat. With an open ventilation system to the lungs, more energy is available for the digestive system to remove and assimilate wastes from the food and fluids we eat and drink.

The third breathing technique is alternate nostril breathing, also a yogic breathing tool to balance the left and right cortex of the frontal lobes of our brain. We basically have two independent brains in one skull. The left side of the brain is imbued with motor skills, cognition, linear thoughts. The right side of the brain is creative, spacious, relaxed. The left side is masculine, the right side feminine. Left side is solar and warm. Right side is lunar and cool. Every three hours, one nostril becomes more dominant than the other. This means that more air will pass through the most open nasal channel. This function of switching dominant nostrils is the foundation of the body's heating and cooling system. It's how we maintain our body temperature of 98.6. Left nostrils fuel the right brain and right nostril the left brain. This forms an X pattern across the forehead.

Every 24 hours, there is roughly 10 minutes where the left and right nostril are in balance and are both open organically. With alternate nostril breathing, we can circulate the air across the respiratory glands of the brain and stimulate both cortexes to align as one. This is called "the zone". You've heard this term used with athletes or musicians. Accessing the finest qualities of each cortex is essential to a more joyful, happy human life.

Oxygen is the most abundant gas on earth for life. The more oxygen you can handle without raising your heartrate, the less chance your cells have of getting sick and diseased. The more oxygen you can handle, the stronger fire you'll have in the belly to get things done during the day and go beyond the imprints from the past that have frozen folks in fear and inadequacy. Life's tough, but you're tougher. Take action today. This is your life. It's not a dress rehearsal. Time is ticking. Your story is the best story ever written.



*Edward Harrold is a studio owner of Comfort Zone Center for Whole Self Health in Delaware, a Director of Yoga & Sports Training for The Kripalu Institute For Extraordinary Living and originator of the Flexibility For Athletes® program. He has released a series of instructional DVD's and Video Podcast workouts. He trains with sports teams teaching the Flexibility For Athletes® program to enhance athletic performance and endurance.*

Join Ed June 3-5, 2011 in Yogaville for a weekend of invigorating workouts designed to re-energize your body, mind and spirit allowing you to get fit through a spiritual practice.

To learn more about our approach to Yoga, health and fitness, visit our website(s) at [www.comfortzoneyogacenter.com](http://www.comfortzoneyogacenter.com)

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## The IYTA Column

*By Stephanie Smith*

We here at Integral Yoga Teachers Association are wishing you blessings of Peace, Love, Joy, Growth and Abundance in 2011. Winter is here at Satchidananda Ashram, Yogaville VA. As I write this a thick snowy blanket covers our quiet

village. This time of year draws many deep within to a quiet focused sadhana.

Here is my update since the last issue in November. Our

fall Basic Teacher Training concluded late November with seventeen graduating students. The training was guided by Satya Greenstone. Twelve presenters and support staff contributed to the month long course. Satya Greenstone said, "Congratulations and Welcome to the Graduates of the Fall Teacher Training Program. Your class is a shining example of the Unity in the Diversity. You all came from such diverse situations, backgrounds, and life styles....lived together as one family and now are going out to share the Light of Yoga with one and all. That is the Glory of Yoga. JAI GURUDEV!!!

Om Shanti."

Sri Swami Satchidananda's presence was deeply felt throughout Yogaville this Thanksgiving. Satsang Coordinators, Diana Brinkman and Swami Joytirmayananda, held a poignant all faiths ceremony to honor and give thanks in display as diverse as our worldwide sangha. Over two hundred community members gathered in gratitude. Guru Priya and Bobby, two of our resident chefs, prepared a delicious feast, which was enjoyed by the over two hundred grateful diners. Many family members and friends of the ashram attended the ceremony and meal. Perhaps consider leaving the cooking to us and sharing your holiday at Yogaville next year.

Ananda Shakti began fundraising/organizing *Christmas in Buckingham* in late November. *Christmas in Buckingham* provides holiday gifts, treats, caroling, and spirit to many of Buckingham County's under-served community members.

Spirit echoed throughout Sivananda Hall, and our hearts, with a gospel holiday concert featuring Revered Robert Cardwell and friends. The concert took place along with a delicious community sponsored/supported bake sale. This festive event raised funds for *Christmas in Buckingham*. The pure altruistic joy, which emanates from Ananda Shakti, our Assistant Manager of the Housekeeping Department, Reiki Master, and Founder/Executive Director of the Literacy for Tykes program is deeply inspiring. Literacy for Tykes has just finished its second equipping and encourages parents in 7 counties, including Buckingham, to share books with their children regularly. ([www.LiteracyForTykes.com](http://www.LiteracyForTykes.com))

The actual date of Sri Gurudev's Jayanthi (birthday) is December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Celebrations included chanting and a Jayanthi Puja at Chidambaram. His spirit remains strong, and the day honored him well. Jai Sri Gurudev.


Gopal Watkins, the Director of our Integral Yoga Teachers Association, worked diligently on the 2011 printed Teachers Directory. The cover is gorgeous and beams the energy of the lotus temple from Yogaville into your home and office.

Winter Basic Teacher Training begins January 23<sup>rd</sup> and Spring TT begins April 27<sup>th</sup>. For our members looking forward to Intermediate Teacher Training, the summer offering begins June 26<sup>th</sup>, and early registration is highly recommended.

Please feel free to contact us anytime. We are always happy to serve you. 434-969-3121 ext: 177 [membership@iyta.org](mailto:membership@iyta.org)

Enjoy fresh air and a serene country setting.


# Satchidananda Ashram




Winter / Spring Programs


# Yogaville®

*Transforming Lives*




**Mukunda Stiles & Chinnamasta**  
 Tantrik Yoga Secrets  
 March 18-20, 2011  
 Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy  
 March 21-25, 2011






**Alan Finger & Sarah Platt-Finger**  
 ISHTA Yoga: India's Sister Sciences—  
 Hatha, Tantra and Ayurveda  
 April 1-3, 2011




**Cyndi Lee**  
 Om Yoga: Yoga, Body, Buddha Mind  
 April 8-10, 2011

**Natasha Risopoulos**  
 Align Your Flow  
 May 6-8, 2011



**Sharon Salzberg**  
 LovingKindness Meditation  
 April 15-17, 2011



**Swami Karunananda**  
 Raja Yoga Immersion Experience  
 May 16-22, 2011

1-800-858-9642

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



# Integral Yoga Senior Speakers' Schedules

Please contact local representatives for times, costs, pre-enrollment requirements, schedule changes, etc.



## Swami Asokananda

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| March 11-13    | Deepening Your Meditation               | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org         |
| March 25-27    | Workshops in Victoria, British Columbia | Contact: Jenny Hyndman<br>rjhyndman@shaw.ca            |
| April 29-May 1 | Integral Yoga Retreat (Athens, Ohio)    | Contact: Arjuna Biknevicus<br>al.thunderbear@gmail.com |
| May-June       | Programs in Europe                      | Contact: Parvathi Faini<br>paola108om@yahoo.it         |



## Swami Karunananda

- |                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Monday, 7:30 pm | Ongoing <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> classes for Ashram and community residents |  |
| March 18-20     | Power of Pranayama workshop for teachers and experienced practitioners  | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org           |
| April 8-10      | Meditation Retreat (sponsored by the Fairlawn NJ IYI)                   | Contact: NJIYI<br>201-796-7585<br>integralyoga@gmail.com |
| April 28-May 1  | Spring Silent Retreat   | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org           |
| May 16-22       | Raja Yoga Immersion Experience  | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org           |



## Swami Ramananda

- |                       |                         |   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Jan. 21-Feb. 28, 2011 | ITT and other programs  | Buenos Aires, Argentina<br>mirabais@yahoo.com.ar  |
| March 12, 10-1pm      | Cultivating Forgiveness | Mind Body Institute of<br>Athens Regional Medical Center, Athens, Ga<br>Contact: armc.org/mbi, 706-475-7329 |



## Satya Greenstone

- |                  |  |  |
|------------------|--|--|
| February 26-28   | Programs in Gibraltar and Spain                          | Contact: shanti27@telefonica.net               |
| March 5-April 16 | Programs in Portugal<br>info@quintadacalma.com           | Contact: Quinta da Calma                       |
| May 5-8          | Re-igniting the Yogic Fire:<br>A Teacher Renewal Weekend | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org |
| June 19-26       | Restorative Yoga Teacher Training                        | Contact: SAYVA<br>www.integralyogaprograms.org |

# Upcoming Programs at Yogaville

## February

- 11-13 Sweetheart Yoga: The Amazing Potential of Couple Relationships *with Nina Priya David*  
11-13 Easeful Body, Natural Breath, Peaceful Mind: Exploring Deeper Present –Moment Awareness  
*with Dijon Carew*  
18-20 Your Real Strength Lies Within *with Satya Greenstone and Candi Lavender*  
25-27 From Depression to Serenity, Healing with Yoga *with Premashakti Alvis*

## March

- 4-6 Quick Fix Yoga *with Jodi Tata*  
4-6 Yoga of Forgiveness: A Course in Miracles *with Bharata Wingham*  
11-13 Diving Deeper into Meditation *with Swami Asokananda*  
11-13 Medical Yoga for Sleep Enhancement *with Rev. Mala Cunningham, Ph.D.*  
18-20 The Power of Pranayama (For Teachers and Health Professionals) *with Swami Karunananda*  
18-20 Tantrik Yoga Secrets *with Mukunda Stiles and Chinnamasta*  
18-20 Healing Powers of Color and Sound *with Sachi*  
18-20 The Power of Pranayama *with Swami Karunananda*  
19 Free Introduction to Meditation *with Rev. Bhagavan Metro*  
21-25 Ayurvedic Yoga Training *with Mukunda Stiles*  
25-27 Laugh-a Yoga® Certification *with Bharata Wingham*  
25-27 Back to Basics *with Lakshmi Sutter*

## April

- 1-3 ISHTA Yoga: India's Sister Sciences of Hatha, Tantra and Ayurveda *with Alan Finger and Sarah Platt-Finger*  
1-3 Thai Yoga for All *with Jyoti Watanabe*  
7-10 iRest Yoga Nidra (Non Dual) (For teachers) *with Richard Miller*  
8-10 Om Yoga *with Cyndi Lee*  
8-10 Peaceful Weight Loss workshop *with Bhanu Passalaqua*  
8-17 10-Day Peaceful Weight Loss *with Bhanu Passalaqua*  
15-17 Loving Kindness Meditation *with Sharon Salzberg*  
16 Free Introduction to Pranayama workshop *with Bhaktan Eberle*  
17-May 15. Spring Basic Hatha Teacher Training, Instructor: *Dijon Carew*  
22-24 Moving Meditation *with Swami Dayananda*  
28-May 1 Spring Silent Retreat: Yoga for Real: An Authentic Journey for Experiencing Inner Peace  
*with Spiritual Directors: Revs. Bhagavan and Bhavani Metro*

## May

- 5-8 Reigniting the Yogic Fire *with Satya Greenstone (For teachers)*  
6-8 Align Your Flow *with Natasha Risopoulos*  
7-14 Yoga Vacation in Tuscany, Italy *with Ram Wiener and Parvathi Paola Faini*  
8-15 Yoga Therapy for People with Cancer Training – Part I *with Jnani Chapman*  
13-15 Basic Meditation *with Mataji*  
16-22 Raja Yoga Immersion Experience *with Swami Karunananda*  
19-22 Yoga Therapy for People with Cancer Training – Part III *with Jnani Chapman*  
20-22 Making Yoga Therapeutic *with Steve Weiss (For Teachers and Health Professionals)*  
21 Free Kabbalah and the Yoga Teachings workshop *with Prahaladan Mandelkorn*  
27-30 Heart as Wide as the World Chanting Retreat *with Krishna Das*



Integral Yoga® Teachers Association  
108 Yogaville Way  
Buckingham, VA 23921

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