

Integral Yoga® Teachers Association Newsletter

Volume XIV, No. 2 May 2008



Surfing the Gunas

by Sri Swami Satchidananda

There is a beautiful prayer of offering, or surrendering everything unto God, which explains our proper relationship with the *Prakriti Dharma* (the law of nature). It is usually repeated at the end of any practice: meditation, *japa*, *puja*, chanting, everything. Whatever you do, toward the end you can say this prayer:

*Kayena Vaachaa Manasendriyair Vaa
Buddhyaatmanaa Vaa Prakriter Swabhaavaat
Karomi Yad Yad Sakalam Paramai
Naraayanaayeti Samarppayaami*

It means, "Oh Lord, the Cosmic One, I offer everything unto You. I offer all the actions done by the body, word, mind, senses, intellect, and the soul that have been due to the functioning of the qualities of the nature or *Prakriter Swabhavat*. *Swabhava*

is the inherent nature of something; *Prakriti* is the One Lord in manifestation. All that you see as manifested has this *Swabhava* or its own nature, which is constantly tossed by the three qualities and uses the body to do things. So, whenever you feel dull, then you know that the *tamas* has taken over.

Then, sometimes you feel that you can't sit quiet, you have to do something. You might even say, "I'm in this mood; I'll never do it." All of a sudden the mind has gone into a *rajas* tendency. At that moment things get done. "Make hay while the sun shines!"

When your mind is dull and lazy, however much you push, you find it difficult. At such times, you get annoyed. "Oh, I've been doing so much, so much, constantly. I'm not even appreciated, however much I do." The mind goes on like that.

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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,



Letter From The Editor

Here at Yogaville everything is lush and green, and there's a lot of sneezing! In this beautiful spring environment, everything is bursting with new life and pollen. Our bodies naturally eject this lovely, life-making stuff that happens to be an irritant for our respiratory systems.

It seems like a great time to take a cue from nature—thinking of renewal and, also, considering what irritates us (impedes our progress) and letting it go.

As Yogis, we should never become stale and dull. Some mistake dullness for spirituality! But that's a tamasic state. Ideally, a Yogi will be alert, fresh, full of joy, ready to meet each moment as brand new.

Then there's the equivalent of pollen—things that are truly wonderful and helpful in the right place but are not useful for particular individuals.

It's a great time for a spiritual spring cleaning.

Take a little time and think about it. Are there aspects of your Yoga teaching that have become boring for you? (And, worse yet, for your students!) What about your personal spiritual practice? Do you feel stuck, stagnant? These plateaus happen to everyone. It simply means

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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that it's time to shake off the dust and find ways to rejuvenate your practice and your teaching. Of course you know that, if your own practice has lost its joy, that will be reflected in the way you share with others.

Another thing to consider: Are there habits or lifestyle aspects that you want to consider "sneezing out"? Don't do it because you "think you should;" do it if you realize it's holding you back. Exchange the pollen that's irritating you and slowing you down for pixie dust (or whatever term you like) that actually helps you fly!

Of course, a great way to refresh your teaching and your own practice is through the many great programs at the Ashram. Sometimes just a simple visit without a formal program can do wonders at uplifting our spirits, inspiring us and sending us forward.



Enjoy a happy spring. And may you also find yourself springing forward.

Om Shanti,

Rev. Prakasha Shakti



The Four Sources of Knowledge

Sri Swami Sivananda

Inspiration, revelation, insight, intuition, ecstasy, divine sight and the supreme, blissful state are the seven planes of knowledge. There are four sources of knowledge: instinct, reason, intuition, and direct knowledge of *Brahman* (God) or *Brahma-Jnana* (knowledge of God).

Instinct

When an ant crawls on your right arm, the left hand automatically moves towards the right arm to drive the ant away. The mind does not reason here. When you see a scorpion near your leg, you withdraw the leg automatically. This is called instinctive or automatic movement. As you cross a street, how instinctively you move your body to save yourself from the cars! There is no thought during such kind of mechanical movement.

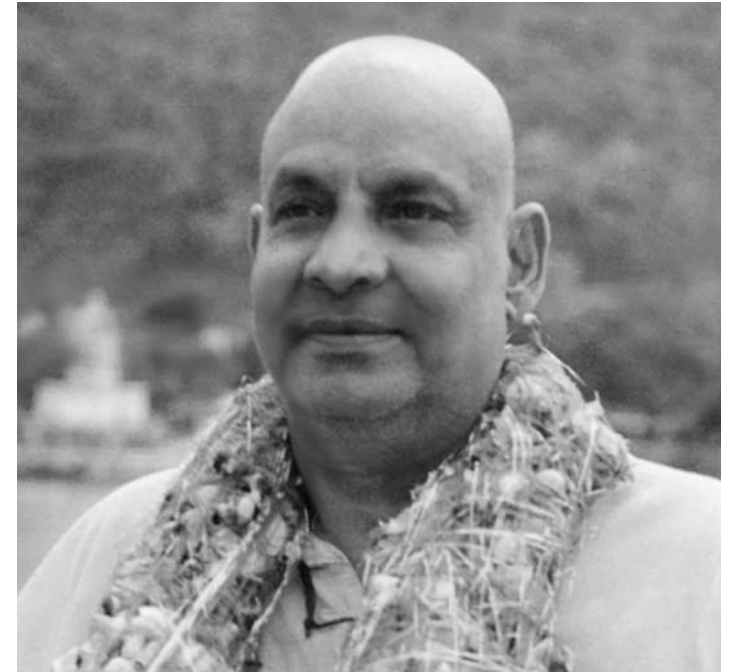
Instinct is found in animals and birds also. In birds, the ego does not interfere with the free, divine flow and play. Hence, the work done by them through their instinct is more perfect than that done by human beings. Have you ever noticed the intricate and exquisite work done by birds in the building of their beautiful nests?

Reason

Reason is higher than instinct and is found only in human beings. It collects facts, generalizes, reasons out from cause to effect, from effect to cause, from premises to conclusions, from propositions to proofs. It concludes, decides and comes to final judgment. It takes you safely to the door of intuition and leaves you there.

Belief, reason, knowledge and faith are the four important psychic processes. First you have belief in a doctor. You go to him for diagnosis and treatment. The doctor makes a thorough examination of you and prescribes certain medicines. You take them. You reason out: "Such and such is the disease. The doctor has given me some iron and iodide. Iron will improve my blood. The iodide will stimulate the lymphatics and absorb the exudation and growth in the liver. So I should take it."

Then, by a regular and systematic course of these drugs, the disease is cured in a month. You then get knowledge and have perfect faith in the efficacy of the medicine and the proficiency of the doctor. You recommend this doctor and his drugs to your friends so that they too might benefit from his treatment.



Intuition

Intuition is personal spiritual experience. The knowledge obtained through the functioning of the causal body (*Karana Sarira*) is intuition. Sri Aurobindo calls it the Supermind or Supramental Consciousness. There is direct perception of truth, or immediate knowledge through *Samadhi* or the Superconscious State. You know things in a flash.

Professor Bergson preached about intuition in France to make the people understand that there was a higher source of knowledge than the intellect.

In intuition there is no reasoning process at all. It is direct perception. Intuition transcends reason but does not contradict it. Intellect takes a seeker to the door of intuition and returns. Intuition is *Divya Drishti* (divine vision); it is the eye of wisdom. Spiritual flashes and glimpses of truth, inspiration, revelation and spiritual insight come through intuition.

The mind has to be pure for one to know that it is the intuition that is functioning at a particular moment.

Brahma-Jnana

Brahma-Jnana (knowledge of God) is above intuition. It transcends the causal body and is the highest form of knowledge. It is the only Reality.

Laughter Yoga

by Bharata Wingham



Babies don't get jokes. Yet they love to laugh and have fun. I saw a video recently on YouTube of a father giving what appeared to be a two-year-old child, pieces of paper to tear up. Each time the toddler tore the paper, he would laugh and roll around in stitches. When we were young children we found the most simple things funny as can be. But, between then and now, something happened. That something is called the rational and logical mind.

However wonderful the development of our logical mind is, it remains an excellent servant, but poor master. The logical mind says that we need a reason to do things in life. We normally feel we have to come up with a good reason for what we do, or want to do. Otherwise, we often feel we can't justify it. And this can keep us from doing things we would love to do in life; we can't come up with a good reason for doing it!

Mr. Spock Never Laughs

Laughter Yoga is a way to discover and break through the logical mind's endless loop. We experience this in the laughing Yoga sessions by first demonstrating how our laughter and joy has become hostage to the logical mind. We believe that, "If something is funny, then I laugh. If it is not funny then I don't laugh." Very logical, but extremely limiting. After all, how many times have you ever seen Spock laugh?

Practice in laughing for "no reason" can help us break out of this mental trap, and allow us to experience the benefits of laughter any time we like. Otherwise, we can lose the ability that we enjoyed as children, and we may lose the great health benefits that laughter can bring to us. And the good news is the body doesn't know the difference between real laughter and fake when it comes to producing the feel-good chemicals in our system.

The emotional, physical and spiritual benefits of prolonged laughter are becoming very well known and publicized. I won't go into it much here, but many medical reports have been issued regarding the positive benefits, such as releasing

endorphins which boosts our mood and confidence levels. Laughter sessions can boost our immune system by releasing T-Cells in our blood system. Prolonged laughter also is considered a form of pranayama as it increases oxygen intake, which helps clear and calm our minds.

Back to the Future

Laughter Yoga, an ancient new idea, goes back thousands of years to India, where it was known as Hasya Yoga. Hasya means laughter in Sanskrit. In our modern times we have great need for laughter and the ability to experience the joy we found as children. Laughing Yoga is a formal and disciplined way to let go and experience our own and others' inner child. The benefits, like all the great Yoga practices begin to permeate our lives outside the sessions.

We tend to smile more, laugh more, with more awareness of how much of our own lives can be seen in a more humorous light. Practicing laughing Yoga is also a practice of Maitre, friendliness. As we laugh more we are more friendly, cheerful and outgoing.

Laughing Yoga sessions are like opening an infinite fountain of joy, bliss and happiness. Laughing for no reason primes the pump of our inner joy, and allows for the "imprisoned splendor to escape." Laughter is a gift we give each other. People are attracted to happy laughter; it is a Universal Language of the Soul.

Opening Our Clown Chakra

Opening our Clown Chakra is one of the great tasks in spiritual development. This is accomplished as we begin to allow ourselves to let go and play the laughter games. The purpose of the games is to encourage the child inside to come out and play, laugh and have fun for no reason. In Zen Buddhism, a very high level of consciousness is the

"wise fool." We learn that we aren't "laughing because of anything, but in spite of everything!"

Laughing Yoga Certification

At Yogaville, we offer a certification to lead Laughing Yoga Sessions. I believe that Laughter Yoga will be a tremendous force for unity in the coming years. It has already been demonstrated how the power of laughter can bring people together from all backgrounds by such events as the 10,000 people who gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark, to celebrate World Laughter Day in 2000.

As Yoga teachers we can add a new and wonderful dimension to our classes by including a portion for laughter. Some teachers are even including laughter in some of the asanas! Laughter can have a great transformative effect on us.

Let Sri Gurudev give us his advice on Laughing for No Reason:

"Laughing is the best medicine There is no better medicine than just laughing. It lightens the mind and exercises the body. You don't even have to do bhasrika; when you laugh, you are doing pranayama. Just laugh. Ha, ha, ha. See? Laughing is

the best medicine... because laughter exhilarates the whole system. It releases all the tension. We should learn to laugh well. Probably some day instead of the satsang I would like to put on a Laurel and Hardy movie or something. Or I Love Lucy. Yes, probably for a short time all this Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga business should pause and we should just have 'laughing Yoga.'

"Someone will say: 'What is that? The Swami was sitting there and laughing, laughing, asking everybody to laugh.'

"When you laugh, you relax. Relaxing, relaxing, relaxing. Free from all tensions. That will make you forget all your worries. Remember, nothing is going to be permanent. Even the so-called problems will pass away soon. When you laugh at them, they become simple, they become minor. When you take it seriously, they assume a big shape."

Bharata Wingham is a certified Integral Yoga® instructor, a facilitator for A Course in Miracles, and a laughing meditation trainer. For thirteen years he hosted and produced a national cable television program on A Course in Miracles. He presently lives at Yogaville® with his six-year old son Chaitanya, leads laughing meditations several times a week and offers Laughing Meditation Certification programs. Bharata's next certification training course will take place September 5-7, 2008.



Surfing the Gunas

continued from page 1

A sane person will see that you are in a *tamasic* state, and he won't force you too much.

Sometimes we get into an in-between, very balanced state. You feel like doing but not overdoing. You are neither dull nor too excited. It is a kind of sane, tranquil state. This is the *sattvic* state of mind.

Any of these attitudes can just happen, without even your wanting it. That is the proof that the mind is being tossed by these three gunas (qualities of nature). When there is wind, the unprotected flame flickers; when there's no wind, it is steady. It is not just the motives of the mind alone. Our mind is part of the Cosmic Mind, part of Prakriti or nature. So, when the waves—the *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* waves—come, it gets caught in that.

Shelter

We can develop the strength of mind to overcome these tendencies of influences. We can make an ordinary flickering lamp into a hurricane lamp. If there's no shelter, if it's not well protected, you have to always keep it indoors; you can't even open the windows. The minute you open the windows, the flame goes out. But, if you shelter it with a nice chimney, you can take it even into the middle of a storm. That's what is called a hurricane lamp, the flame is the same; it is well-sheltered. Properly sheltered, it can face the hurricane. The mind is like that. You can build up the strength of the mind. Then it can face all situations.

All these movements are caused by the *Prakriter Swabhava*, the nature of the Prakriti, because everything is made out of these three gunas. If there are no changes in the gunas, everything is tranquil. That is the end of the cycle. In that *pralaya*, or equilibrium, they all stand still. So, in a way we need *rajas* and *tamas* as well as *sattva* to keep the world going. It is the *rajas* and *tamas* that create the entire show. If you read the seventeenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, you will see that everything is divided by these gunas.

Giving with the Gunas

Even charity is divided into these three categories. Once Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach told a story about the "holy miser." He was not really a miser, but he looked like one. Why? Because he didn't do anything to advertise what he did. He hid everything; he did all his good acts in secret. He didn't want any praise for what he had done. That kind of charity is *sattvic*.

The *rajasic* charity is when you give something with a good purpose—like building a church or a hospital—but you want recognition. During the consecration ceremony, you want people to come and take photographs of you and the building and put it in the headlines. It is charity, but it's for name and fame—*rajasic* charity.

Another way is to be lavish, spend plenty of money, buy a lot of food and drink and invite hundreds of friends. "Come on, drink as much as you want." That's *tamasic*. It doesn't really help people to grow.

Meditation

Meditation can be *tamasic*, *rajasic* or *sattvic* also. If you meditate all by yourself without others even knowing that you are a Yogi, a meditator, people will think you are just an ordinary person. You simply go quietly when there is nobody around and just sit and meditate. That is *sattvic*. Please don't think I am discouraging group meditation by saying this. That kind of meditation is very helpful, but we can do it with the proper attitude. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, if you are really a meditator, you will do it when everybody is asleep. You may even make others believe that you are going to sleep. Lie down; then, when the lights are off, get up quietly and meditate. If anybody turns on the light, you can immediately lie down again. Let people think you are just sleeping there. That is very *sattvic* and quiet.

In *rajasic* meditation, you want everyone to see what you are doing. You might be feeling a little dull; but, if you see somebody coming, you sit up stiff and straight. When the person passes by, you sag again. It's all for show. You do meditate, but you want others to say, "Oh, look how long she sits for meditation."

The *tamasic* meditation is when you sit and immediately go to sleep. You don't even worry about what people think.

Equanimity

Excitement or *rajas* is a form of disturbance of the mind. The opposite, depression or *tamas*, is also a disturbance. What we want is the middle, the balance. Balancing is tranquility or *sattva*. That is what we call *samadhi*. Don't think that *samadhi* means to sit and forget the body and mind and everything and sit like a rock for months. If that were the case, what would be the difference between you and a rock? Real *samadhi* is to keep the mind in *samatwam*. *Samatwam* means equanimity. "*Samatwam Yoga uchyate*: Equanimity is Yoga." *Samadhi* is that *samatwam*. Keep the mind well-balanced under all conditions.

That is why I always give the example of a wonderful surfer. The one who surfs well is one who can serve well. If we learn to surf, we can learn to serve. Whatever kind of waves there are, the surfer still maintains his balance. He enjoys the challenging waves. A person who really knows how to surf will even be waiting for the biggest waves. Why? He or she knows how to balance. It is the same way with waves of life. One who knows that balance can be anywhere and everywhere.

What's Happening at Yogaville

by Lakshmi Sutter

Hari OM!

It seems with every issue of our Newsletter, we have Academy staff transitions in place to announce to you. Earlier this spring, Mitra Somerville joined the Teacher Training staff. Many of you may know Mitra. He is a longtime resident of the New York IY Institute, having served as a trainer for many of the non-residential TTs in New York. Yogaville has been pleased to have Mitra among us since last Fall, and the Academy welcomes him for the upcoming training season, where he will be busy working with fellow Academy staff behind the scenes to deliver all the programs we offer!



Not only did Mitra arrive at the Academy, but so has a new telephone system, broadband Internet and a general facelift!

We've finally joined this century! We've tossed the old style dial-up Internet connections and jumped onto the broadband wagon for faster web access. We believe this will better serve you all in our ability to transmit larger documents and receive high-resolution photos for publication. It also facilitates our ability to identify and access information on the web that may be of interest to you. You'll also appreciate it when you are here for your next TT and need to check your email! In addition to our two computers in the Academy lounge, the library has wireless connections available.

With the arrival of the fiber optic lines that make broadband possible, we also upgraded our telephone system. For those of you trying to reach the IYTA or anyone at Yogaville in March, you may have noticed the challenges we faced! We're catching on to the new system, and we look forward to serving you at some new and some recycled extensions. For your records, Academy staff can be reached at the main Yogaville number, 434-969-3121, with the following extensions and email addresses:

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If all of that wasn't enough, Yogaville is getting a facelift this spring. To minimize annual maintenance, crews have been replacing our wood siding around the quad area with a lighter color, maintenance free siding that is expected to last for decades. The Lotus Conference Center also has been upgraded with new bathrooms and improved accommodations.

Yoga Therapy Certification

As Yoga teachers, we all know the many therapeutic benefits of a regular Yoga practice. Many of us also specialize in adapting Yoga for different conditions. Not surprisingly, the emerging profession of Yoga Therapy is drawing attention as its advocates navigate its relationship to our western medical system. Integral Yoga has a long and rich history in therapeutic applications of Yoga. This year, I will be scoping a certification program in Integral Yoga Therapy offered through the Integral Yoga Academy. The program will likely offer two levels of recognition and use our existing specialty teacher training programs to develop areas of expertise. This process is in its infancy and will be unfolding in the coming months. Stay tuned to the Forum for updates!

OM Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

Membership Updates

by Marien Chodl

If you have a particular question or a need not being addressed, please contact me at the Membership office, and we'll gladly help you find answers; we may even be able to use your question for future updates!

Conference Theme Selection Announcement

We are enormously pleased to announce the 2008 Integral Yoga Teachers Conference Theme Contest winner!

But, before we do, we'd first like to thank each member who submitted an entry; we received great ideas. The competition was close, and we thought we could even merge all the ideas into a single theme. In the end we chose just one, and it is:

*Supreme Bliss: The Gift of Giving
How We Share Yoga and the Quiet Rewards We Receive*

Congratulations to Carla Indrani Schmidt for submitting this theme, along with its corresponding outline.

Thanks a million Indrani, for your entry and outline; it's a very dynamic theme, which we can explore on so many levels!

And once again, thanks a million to our wonderful contest participants and also to all our IYTA members for truly showing Sangha spirit in action!

Welcome to the World!

Please join me in congratulating our IYTA member Keely Divyajyothi McPhearson and the brand-new addition to her family.

Divyajyothi writes: "Oona Plum McPhearson was born at home on January 31, 2008, a healthy girl, weighing 7 pounds and 19 inches long. Kali Morse, from IYI New York, was our amazing doula, and we are all so grateful for her presence and assistance at the birth."

Congratulations Keely, may you be a wonderful guru, may Oona glow in the path of Yoga, bringing you Love and Joy!

2008 Revised Basic T. T. Manuals Available

Over the past year Integral Yoga® trainers throughout the organization have been working on an update for the Basic Teacher's Manual, and that update is now available.

The Revised Basic Teacher Training Manual includes:

- Changes to benefits to reflect more accurate medical knowledge for the following poses: Bhujangaasana, Janusirshaasana, Sarvangaasana, Matsyaasana, Arddha Matsyendraasana.
- A revised "Integral Yoga Hatha For Children" section.
- An added section on Jnana Yoga from "To Know Yourself" by Sri Swami Satchidananda, replacing the short Jnana Yoga piece we had in the manual.
- A Bhakti Yoga section by Sri Swami Satchidananda.
- Rewritten "Getting Ready to Teach" in Section 2 of manual

Added to the Manual:

- Music for Om Shanti.
- English translations for all practices, along with the Sanskrit titles for both core and optional poses.
- Revisions, updates and notes on: Ardha Matsyendraasana, Bhujangaasana, Yoga Nidra, Kapaalabhaati, Jarthara Parivartanaasana, optional pose Ardha Padmaasana, Sethu Bandhaasana after Salabaasana, Badraasana, Tadaasana, Savaasana, Advaasana, Virabhadraasana II, Garudaasana and Surya Namaskaram.
- Updated "Timing" Page.

The list above briefly describes the most recent updates and can be an invaluable tool in your teaching repertoire whether you are an experienced teacher or relatively fresh from the Academy.

As an IYTA member, you can order a copy of the manual mailed to you for \$25.00 plus shipping (contact the IYTA Membership office for current shipping rates to your zip code). For non-IYTA members, copies cost \$40.00 plus shipping.

Sanskrit Pronunciation Aid Online

Learn to correctly pronounce the Sanskrit names of asanas easily and without fee from audio clips on www.tilakpyle.com, a website created by Yoga teacher Tilak Pyle. You will hear the pronunciations given by Sri Gurudev as well as other great Yoga masters.

Yoga Alliance CEUs: Did You Know?

Did you know that you can earn Yoga Alliance (YA) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) simply by contributing to this Newsletter? Well, you can!

The continuing education standards call for a certain amount of training and teaching experience every three years. To continue to be part of the registry, a RYT 200 or 500 will need to teach a minimum of 45 classroom hours of Yoga, AND accumulate 30 CEUs, at least 10 of which must be contact units.

While you can accrue the contact units by way of workshops and programs, you can obtain the non-contact units by way of home or independent study.

YA recognizes that home study can be an important component of continuing education. One non-contact CEU comes from five hours (300 minutes) of non-contact study. Non-contact CEUs can be accrued by any of the following activities:

- Reading a book or article that supports the deepening of your Yoga practice and understanding.
- Working with a Yoga video or study with a Yoga tape that supports the deepening of your Yoga practice and understanding.
- Taking an on-line course related to Yoga.
- Taking a correspondence course related to Yoga.
- Being mentored by telephone through a Yoga-related program.
- Publishing Yoga books or articles in newsletters/newspapers/magazines.
- Developing Yoga class materials for distribution to students.
- Producing Yoga videos or Yoga tapes.

As part of your non-contact CEU documentation, you may be required to write an explanation of each activity and how it influenced your practice and/or teaching of Yoga. For in-depth information regarding Yoga Alliance Continuing Education requirements, you can log in online at www.YogaAlliance.com, or call YA toll free 877-964-2255.

We are always looking for ways to expand our services and benefits, and we like to encourage and engage our members in Sangha participation.

This above, dear Teachers, can indeed be the best of both worlds: earning continuing education credits while at the same time enriching and contributing to our IYTA Community.

As always, feel free to contact me at the IYTA Membership office if you have any questions, comments, or if you would like to place an order.

OM, Love and Light!
Marien, IYTA Membership Coordinator
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Special Programs

The Art of Teaching

June 5 – 8, 2008

Expand your teaching "tool kit" while enjoying a weekend at Yogaville! Join one of San Francisco's favorite teachers, Kristie Dahlia Home, and Yogaville's own Lakshmi Sutter as we polish our teaching techniques. Over the week-end, we'll explore tricks that make good Yoga teachers great - including hands-on adjustments, gross and subtle anatomy, sequencing, the art of touch, yogic healing and much more. Of course, this will all be nestled in the peaceful environment of Yogaville, where you'll have the opportunity to recharge at the well! IYTA members receive a 10% discount.

Raja Yoga Teacher Training

with Swami Karunananda

July 7-27, 2008

Deepen your personal understanding of and learn how to share with your students the philosophy and psychology of Yoga in a dynamic and meaningful way. Raja Yoga is a comprehensive system for purifying, strengthening, and harmonizing all aspects of the individual—physical, mental, social, and spiritual. It is the science of self-mastery and a guidebook to higher consciousness, offering practical tools for self-transformation.

Raja Yoga Teacher Training provides a unique opportunity to study and learn how to apply these great teachings in your life. You will also be trained in public speaking and teaching skills, so that you can effectively share these concepts and practices with others.

This Training takes place only every other year. Don't miss a great opportunity this Summer!

For more information or to register for these training programs, visit www.integralYogaprograms.org or contact ARC at arc@Yogaville.org or 800-858-9642. IYTA members receive a 5% discount.



Poses We Don't Love

by Lakshmi Sutter

When I was invited to use this space to explore “unpopular poses,” my mind immediately started categorizing the poses I’ve heard students tell me they love to hate. It reminded me of a “special” class I used to sneak in for my longer-time practitioners when they didn’t expect it. In these classes, I surreptitiously polled students about which poses they least enjoyed. I then created an Integral Yoga class at the appropriate challenge level weaving together the unloved poses — creating some of the students’ worst nightmares! Because these were folks I knew quite well, I felt some leeway as to what I could get away with, and I also had a good sense of their capabilities. This is not something I would do when walking into a room of new beginners with whom I had never shared a class. I present these thoughts to you as an option for playing with your students in the most loving way — encouraging them to cultivate an attitude other than resistance toward poses they might find difficult.

My approach attempted to invoke a shift in their attitude toward a pose and then to see if we could find a way to make the experience more comfortable for them — in both mind and body. I would encourage them to nudge something here or there, offer a prop, or even suggest they tell themselves throughout the experience that this was a delicious conformation to behold. Sometimes they would look at me as if I were evil itself; other times we’d laugh together. And there were precious times when it actually worked and the students was able to relax into a shape never before accessible to them.



From my examination, I find there are really two schools of thought:

One school suggests that we should practice the poses we dislike even more than we might a pose we enjoy, so that we can come to love and embrace even those we dislike. If you

subscribe to this approach, it becomes even more important to find a way to love the shape you’ve created because you will be practicing it a lot! Off the mat, we begin learning to embrace a person or situation that is less than comfortable.

Another school of thought submits that if you really find a pose to be uncomfortable, unsteady, or anything else that leads you to dislike it, well, then don’t do it! The theory is: Why subject yourself to something you know you don’t like? This might teach us to avoid recurring situations where we know we will lose our peace.

Taking these lessons off the mat can be quite transformative!

Not surprisingly, some of you shared your philosophy when you shared your poses with me. Most of those responses fell more in line with the first school of thought presented above.

Personally, I find that the poses I don’t like the most actually hurt me! For me, in this body, that usually means uncomfortable pressure in the area of the chest. I find this most extreme in *Salabaasana* (locust) and *Mayuraasana* (peacock). I do find it interesting that, as a general rule, I love backward bends and arm balances; it’s the added challenge of the arm positions in these particular poses that just seems incongruent with my body. Checking that I practice what I teach, I have made attempts at nudging and propping, and as beneficial as these poses may be for one who can access them with steadiness and comfort, I have not found that point! I do find *Salabaasana* more comfortable with the arms modified alongside the body; and, if my ego will allow me to hang out in the preparatory position for *Mayuraasana*, I can stay in the “yogic zone”.

To bring it closer to home, I queried Forum participants to share the poses they “love to hate” — and, if you really don’t dislike any poses, at least to identify those considered unpopular. I found it striking that the reported “poses” also included deep relaxation and pranayama!

So, I offer to you, beloved IYTA, your collective least favorite poses! Of course, there are elements that many of us will love, and others won’t like any of it. I’ve made suggestions for modifications to make the practice more comfortable. (Try one modification at a time until you discover whether one change makes a bigger difference than another.) There are many others that you may know aside from these. Remember that your body is unique, and your bony structure could well be dictating the limit that you reach. If the pose is beyond your comfort, simply skip it or make your own substitution. Be sure you are practicing your *Yamas*!

As you find a sensation that you might interpret as discomfort, see if you can create a micro-movement — of the body or mind — to shift your pose away from what you may not enjoy. Even try doing less. From an emotional perspective, you might ask yourself why you are feeling distracted by a given pose. Explore if there are *samskaras* buried that might be contributing to your opinion. Each time your mind suggests that you don’t care for a pose, ask for an answer that touches deeper than the most obvious.

Surya Namaskaraam (Sun Salutation)

If you tend to be energetic more times than not, try practicing slowly. Lethargic? Pick up the pace. Feel free to bend the knees as you flow and to replace positions six and seven with a few rounds of cat/cow.

Virabhadraasana modified (Peaceful Warrior)

[From Warrior II, let the back arm rest toward the back leg as the spine moves laterally and the front arm moves up alongside the ear.] Watch to see if there is a collapse of the rib cage on the side of the back leg. Consider less intense lateral flexion or even repositioning the foot of the front bent knee.

Parsvotanaasana (Pyramid)

Check the position of the feet, and place the feet as far apart as the hips (so the front heel will no longer align with the instep, or even the heel, of the back foot). Move the back foot to a position of maximum comfort. Bend the front knee.

Virabhadraasana III (Warrior III)

Use the help of the wall to support the back, upraised foot. Alternatively, rest the fingertips on the floor (or blocks) to support with balance.

Bhujanagaasana (Cobra)

Lift the body less. Spread the legs out wider behind you. Engage the gluteus muscles. Place the hands closer to the waist than you might usually practice.

Salabaasana (Locust)

Position the arms alongside the body with the palms down. Widen the legs.

Dhanuraasana (Bow)

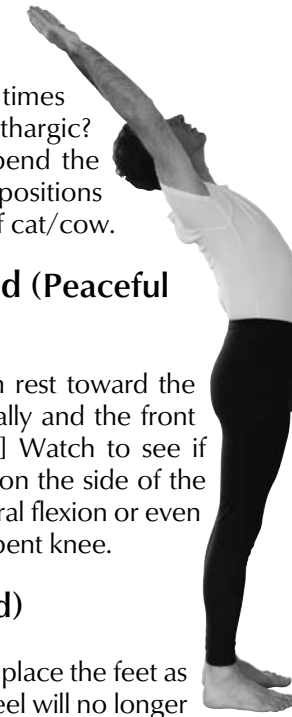
Widen the knees and feet (ensure there is no torque on the knees). Lift less.

Balaasana (Child’s Pose)

Widen the knees and/or the feet. Use a cushion between hips and heels. Rest the chest on a bolster.

Paschima Navaasana (Forward Facing Boat Pose)

Hold the legs up with the arms. Completely round the spine. Rest the chest on a bolster.



Konaasana (Wide-legged Forward Bend)

Narrow the width of the legs. Completely round the spine. Rest the chest on a bolster.

Koormasana (Tortoise Pose)

Bend the knees more deeply. Completely round the spine. Hold the hands in front of the body, perhaps at the ankles.

Sirshaasana (Headstand without the wall)

Practice stage I of the Headstand to build strength. If your proportions don’t support this asana, it may be best to practice another!

Sarvangaasana (Shoulderstand)

Use a blanket under the shoulders. Hold Arddha Sarvangaasana with the weight in the hands and no weight on the neck.

Marichyaasana (Sage)

Use props to lengthen the arms.

Hanumanaasana (Split)

If you don’t have the hip flexibility to “square” the hips, let them relax to the side.

Mayuraasana (Peacock)

Place the hands in a comfortable position. Separate the elbows slightly.

Yoga Nidra (Deep Relaxation)

Welcome the sensations that arise, despite how uncomfortable that might be!

Pranayama and Closing (meditation and chants)

Practice more to truly know the benefit so you can inspire others!

Wouldn’t it be fun to try this IYTA “Nightmare” class as an experiment—energetically connected, geographically located wherever you live—and compare the collective experience? Once you’ve tried the class, it might be fun to take the discussion back to the Forum to see how it went for the group.

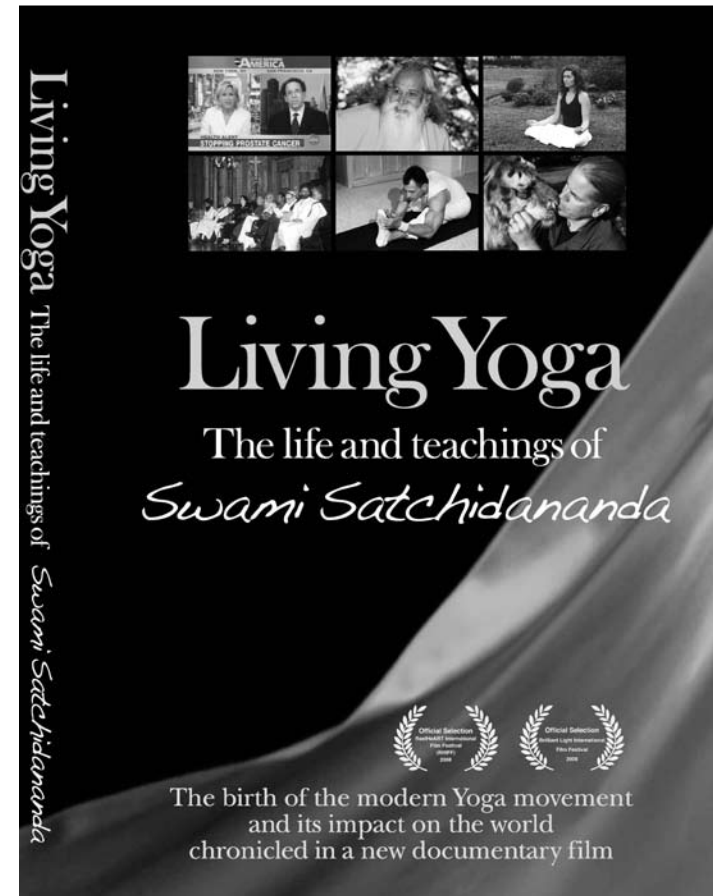
Special thanks to the following IYTA members who participated in the Forum inquiry: Clarissa Sevika, Alliano, T. Vijay Bonestroo, Leela Ellis, Meera Gall, Ganga Goldstein, John Hawkins, Candi Lavender, David Scarbrough, Lynn Somerstein, Anandi Tallman, Trish Verbyst, Prema Werle-Smith.

Living Yoga

A Beautiful New Film about Sri Gurudev and Integral Yoga

by Rev. Prem Anjali

At last! A beautiful DVD representation of Sri Gurudev's teachings and the meaning of Integral Yoga.



LIVING YOGA: The life and teachings of Swami Satchidananda is the first film to really showcase Integral Yoga as well as the multifaceted benefits and applications of Yoga in general. Produced by Integral Yoga in association with Stories To Remember, LIVING YOGA shows how Yoga has been instrumental in this and so much more:

- Medical therapy applications and breakthroughs proven by Dr. Dean Ornish to reverse heart disease (and new studies in prostate cancer underway)
- Improvement in grades, attitude, focus, flexibility and adaptability of children, including those with special needs
- Peacemaking efforts and bringing people of all faiths together in respect and appreciation for the unity within our diversity.

The film is divided into five main sections: Asanas, nature, balance, wellness, and interfaith. Each section opens with an inspiring quote from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali chanted by Dr. M.A. Jayashree of Mysore, India.

According to Karen Karuna Kreps, a Yoga teacher with over 30 years' teaching experience: "I think this film might be one of the best teaching aids and promotional tools a Yoga teacher can have."

LIVING YOGA opens with Sri Swami Satchidananda (Sri Gurudev) talking about the goal of Yoga, which really gives an overview and summary of the heart and soul of the film. He says:

Your goal should be to be easeful. You disturb your ease by doing wrong things and you call yourself diseased. To be peaceful—if a person lives based on this "I, me, mine," he can never, never be peaceful. And then to be useful. Nothing will disturb you if your life is based on selflessness. You can always be peaceful; and, when you are peaceful, you are a happy person.



After a brief biography of Gurudev's life, retold by him, pop artist Peter Max recounts early meetings with Gurudev: "The yogic type of thinking about love and peace was in the air as a fashion; but for it to truly become part of your lifestyle, not just an idea, was very, very big. I said to him, 'Swami, America needs you.' I remember, he kinda laughed and slapped his knee. 'Why? America needs me? Well, if America needs me maybe I'll come.'" Cut to scenes from the Woodstock music festival which Gurudev opened and which earned him the affectionate title of "Woodstock Guru."

One of the wonderful and very helpful features of the film is that you can access the major sections (or chapters on the DVD) by selecting them from the main menu. Yoga teachers will find the chapter entitled, "Yoga Asanas" a very useful segment to show students, because it features Sandra (Amrita) McLanahan, M.D. giving an overview of the physiological benefits of a full Yoga class.

Dr. McLanahan, a resident of Yogaville, has for many years been one of the nation's leading experts on the medical

effects of Yoga. She served for 20 years as Director of Stress Management Training for the Preventive Medicine Research Institute, where she was a crucial part of the research team led by Dean Ornish, M.D. Dr. Ornish's research established that heart disease can be reversed by a combination of a low-fat, high-fiber vegetarian diet, Yoga, meditation, and group support.



There is another breakout chapter titled "Yoga and Wellness" that features Dr. Ornish and, also, Mehmet Oz, M.D. (author of You: The Owner's Manual series and a regularly featured guest on "The Oprah Winfrey Show"). In this chapter, a compelling recovery story is told by Richard Cripe, now a certified Yoga teacher who healed himself of heart disease through Yoga and the Ornish program. In this section, Dr. Ornish discusses his latest research with prostate cancer patients.

Dr. Oz describes in detail how Yoga enhanced his personal and professional life and the medical benefits he's observed with patients:

Yoga allowed me to get my body focused on something so my mind could be freed to focus on emptiness. So, although the asanas are important, it was the deep breathing and meditative aspects of Yoga that provided the deepest lessons. These tools, which at a very basic level for a healthy human, have benefit, provide an incremental benefit to folks who have illness. In particular, if you can combine Yoga with meditation, you begin to see medicinal benefits in a whole slew of different areas, including management of arrhythmias, asthmatic conditions, autoimmune problems—places where our body has gone a little bit awry and can be rebalanced and reset if you can use a tool like Yoga.

For Yoga teachers who are branching out into Yoga therapy, this section is an extremely useful teaching tool, and it's something that Richard Cripe has been screening

during the presentations he makes at hospitals and medical centers on the medical benefits of Yoga. Recently, he gave a presentation to the St. Louis Association for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation. Richard explains:

There were four presenters during this program, and I was the only person there who wasn't a physician. We began by showing LIVING YOGA's chapter 8 (section on Yoga and Wellness). Then they introduced me to give the rest of my presentation. It was wonderful because showing this segment from the film had established my credibility before I even got on the stage! Here's Oprah, Dr. Oz and Dean Ornish talking about the benefits of Yoga, and then you hear my story. I walked onto the stage to the biggest applause and excitement! That's the power of media [laughs!] LIVING YOGA is a wonderful forum to establish credibility for Yoga teachers and stimulate discussion about the intricacies of Yoga and how that can work with lifestyle changes.



The filmmakers faced many challenges in creating the film. As Joshua, the film's writer/co-producer describes, "Initially it was overwhelming, daunting. Here is Sri Gurudev, who had dedicated his life to helping people around the world awaken to their true Self—one of the truly great teachers in Yoga history—and here we were, outsiders to the community. I'd never had the privilege of studying Integral Yoga. My hope was that, by combining whatever understanding I had of the Yoga traditions with Shiva's (the film's director) terrific skills as a filmmaker, somehow all that would allow us to adequately portray Sri Gurudev's extraordinary life and achievements."

Joshua and Shiva wanted to provide viewers with practical insight into Gurudev's teachings and, at the same time, create an engaging viewing experience. How to accomplish this? One of the ways is vividly evident in the section on "Yoga and Nature." Shot entirely on location at The Institute for Greatly Endangered & Rare Species (T.I.G.E.R.S.) in South

Mark Your Calendar

Cardiac Yoga® T. T.

M. Mala Cunningham, Ph.D. & Staff
June 12–22, 2008

The Cardiac Yoga® Teacher Training is an internationally known program designed to educate and train certified Yoga teachers and medical personnel to work with cardiac patients and their spouses. Participants in this comprehensive training program learn to adapt basic concepts of Yoga and meditation to the special needs of the cardiac patient.

This training includes lecture and experiential components from respected experts in the fields of cardiology, exercise physiology, Yoga, meditation, spirituality and psychology. The overall goal of the program is to train and certify Yoga instructors to teach Yoga and stress management to cardiac patients in a medical or private setting.

Prerequisites

This course is available to certified Yoga instructors from all traditions and to medical personnel. Some exceptions for admittance may apply. Please direct your inquiries to the Academy Administration, 434-969-3121, ext. 153.

VNA CNE Hrs: 75 (approximate)

Yoga Alliance Hrs: 75 (approximate) ★RYT 500

Adapting Yoga for Any Setting: Stress Management Teacher Training

Swami Ramananda, Swami Vidyananda & Jo Jaya Applebaum
June 13–22, 2008

This unique and innovative program trains Yoga teachers to adapt the full spectrum of Integral Yoga® practices to populations in many settings, including hospitals, schools, corporate workplaces and Yoga studios. You will learn how to reframe the concepts and practices of Yoga to make them accessible and inspiring to individuals from many walks of life. This approach can be used in personal growth coaching, stress management and other mind/body wellness programs.

Prerequisite

Available to certified Yoga teachers of all traditions who have a minimum of six months of experience teaching Yoga.
VNA CNE Hrs: Part 1: 75 (approximate)
Yoga Alliance Hrs: Part 1: 75 (approximate) ★RYT 500

Children's Hatha Yoga T. T.

Madhuri Flynn and Inga Ishwari Benson
June 22–29, 2008

Learn to teach Yoga postures, deep relaxation and meditation to a population that can benefit and make a difference in the world: children aged 5-12. This course is based on the innovative curriculum that has been consciously constructed over the past thirty years at the Yogaville® School (Yogaville Vidyalayam).

In this course, you will learn to:

- Adapt the basic Yoga poses for children
- Introduce optional postures that are great for kids
- Teach children how to relax and meditate
- Educate kids in yogic philosophy they can grasp and incorporate
- Teach children how to chant
- Develop stories with spiritual teachings and lessons
- Adapt yoga to various environments, including public schools, gyms, preschools and religious houses of worship (churches, synagogues, etc.)
- Teach kids ranging in age from preschool to elementary school

Prerequisite:

This course is open to certified Yoga teachers from all traditions. All applicants must be familiar with the Integral Yoga Basic Hatha Level I class.

VNA CNE Hrs: 60 (approximate)

Yoga Alliance Hrs: 60 (approximate) ★RYT 500

Gentle Hatha Yoga T. T.

Hamsa Spagnola
June 22–29, 2008

This training program provides a solid foundation for Yoga instructors who would like to:

- Learn how to adapt the basic Yoga postures for students with physical limitations,
- Learn how to teach Gentle Yoga classes and
- Possibly specialize in teaching Gentle Yoga, Therapeutic Yoga or Restorative Yoga in special venues, such as hospitals and senior centers.


In this course, you will review the fundamentals of the asanas in the Integral Yoga Hatha I class and discover creative ways to modify poses for students with physical limitations. You will learn how to integrate restorative poses into your classes and use visualizations, pranayama and meditation for healing. You will also look at ways of incorporating yogic philosophy from Raja Yoga so your students can have a deeper, more meaningful experience of Yoga that they can apply to their daily lives.

VNA CNE Hrs: 60 (approximate)

Yoga Alliance Hrs: 60 (approximate) ★RYT 500

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July 3–6, 2008


Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy
Mukunda Stiles
July 28–August 1, 2008

The Secret Yoga
Graham Schweig, Ph.D.
August 1–3, 2008

10-Day Interfaith Silent Retreat: Awakening to the Inner Light
August 8–17, 2008

Teaching and Practicing Partner Yoga
Heike Mayer
August 21–24, 2008





1-800-858-9642 www.integralyogaprograms.org

Integral Yoga Teachers' Conference 2008

August 29 – September 1

Supreme Bliss: The Gift of Giving

How We Share Yoga and the Quiet Rewards We Receive

The small differences we make every day add up to big differences. We change lives with small acts. Recognizing that we grow when giving, we can examine what we hope to give to our students, to the community and to the world.

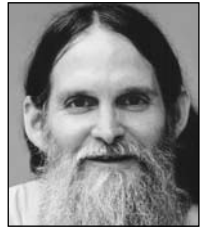
In addition to the gift of one another's presence, we will share time and space with some of Integral Yoga's most senior teachers. Swami Asokananda will speak on making our teaching a spiritual gift. Swami Karunananda will work with us to deepen ways that we share the breath. We'll hear medical updates, including some exciting news with Medicare, from Dr. Amrita McLanahan. As well, we'll be inspired in giving from Swami Priyaananda and sent out to inspire our own students with stories by Rev. Prakasha Shakti Capen.

Join us August 29 - September 1 for our 2008 Integral Yoga Teachers Conference.

The next conference won't happen until 2010; so make the space in your life to wrap up your summer with fellow teachers at Yogaville!

INTEGRAL YOGA SENIOR SPEAKERS' SCHEDULES

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



Swami Asokananda

May 2008 European Tour:
Gibraltar, Spain, Belgium
Germany, Italy, London

Contact: Rev. Padma Priya
padma@computronx.com



Swami Karunananda

May 23-25 Raja Yoga Workshop

Bermuda IYI
Contact: Parvathi Marshall
441-295-0190
francesmarshall@logic.bm

May 30-June 1 Pranayama & Meditation Workshop

Same as above

July 7-27 Raja Yoga Teacher Training

Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville
800-858-YOGA
arc@iyiva.org



Swami Ramananda

May 29 Making Peace with Each Step

ADK Yoga
Plattsburgh, NY
(518) 561-2869
www.adkyoga.com

May 31 Work, Love, Lunch & Laundry—Integrating Yoga Into Daily Life

Same as above

June 13-22 Stress Management Teacher Training

Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville
800-858-YOGA
arc@iyiva.org

June 22 Getting a Grip—The Keys to Personal Mastery of Life

NY Integral Yoga Institute
202-929-0586
www.iyiny.org

July 1-August 5 Study Group on Raja Yoga

NY Integral Yoga Institute
202-929-0586
www.iyiny.org

July 11 Understanding the Bhagavad Gita

NY Integral Yoga Institute
202-929-0586
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July 19 Moving with Sound Into Bliss

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MAY

15-18 Inside the Yoga Sutras: Deeper Still

16-18 Yoga & Scoliosis

23-25 Healing in African Ritual & Culture

23-26 Inner Tantric Yoga

30-June 1 Hatha Yoga & the Subtle Body

30-June 1 How Yoga Can Heal the Body & the Mind

JUNE

2-20 yama therapeutics(sm) Yoga Teacher

Training

5-8 Pathways to Radiant Health

5-8 The Art of Teaching

8-12 Yoga Therapy: Structure & Function

12-22 Cardiac Yoga® Teacher Training

13-15 Yoga for Athletes

13-22 Stress Management Teacher Training

15 Father's Day

Lord Siva Nataraja Shrine Anniversary

18 Wesak Celebration of Lord Buddha

20-22 A Golden Practice

20-22 Moving Onward and Forward

22-29 Camp Yogaville

22-29 Children's Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

22-29 Gentle Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

27-29 Divine Presence Through Hatha Yoga

28-July 19 Bharata Natyam Dance Camp

JULY

3-6 Krishna Das: Chanting Retreat

6-27 Intermediate Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

7-27 Raja Yoga Teacher Training

11-13 Surfing the Sea of Change

11-13 Seven Dimensions of Consciousness

19-20 Guru Poornima

20-Aug. 2 Bharata Natyam Dance Camp

25-27 The Breath Body

25-27 Basic Meditation

27-Aug. 24 Basic Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

28-Aug. 1 Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy: Mukunda Stiles

AUGUST

1-3 Clear Your Life

1-3 The Secret Yoga

6-17 Prenatal & Labor Yoga Teacher Training

8-17 Ten-Day Silent Retreat

16 Mahasamadhi / Mahagururatri

18-21 Post-Partum Yoga Teacher Training

21-24 Teaching & Practicing Partners Yoga

22-24 The Sufi Way of the Heart

29-31 Gratefulness Retreat



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