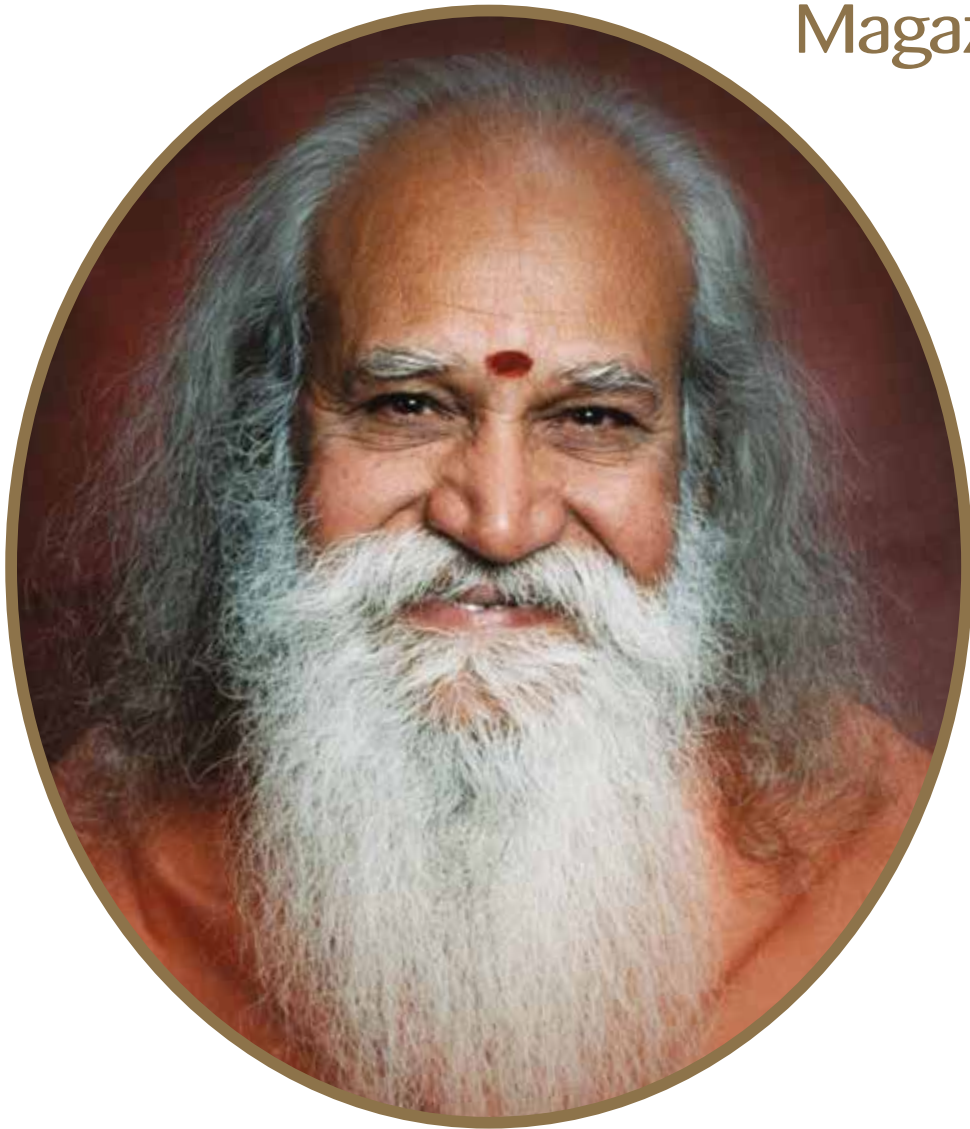
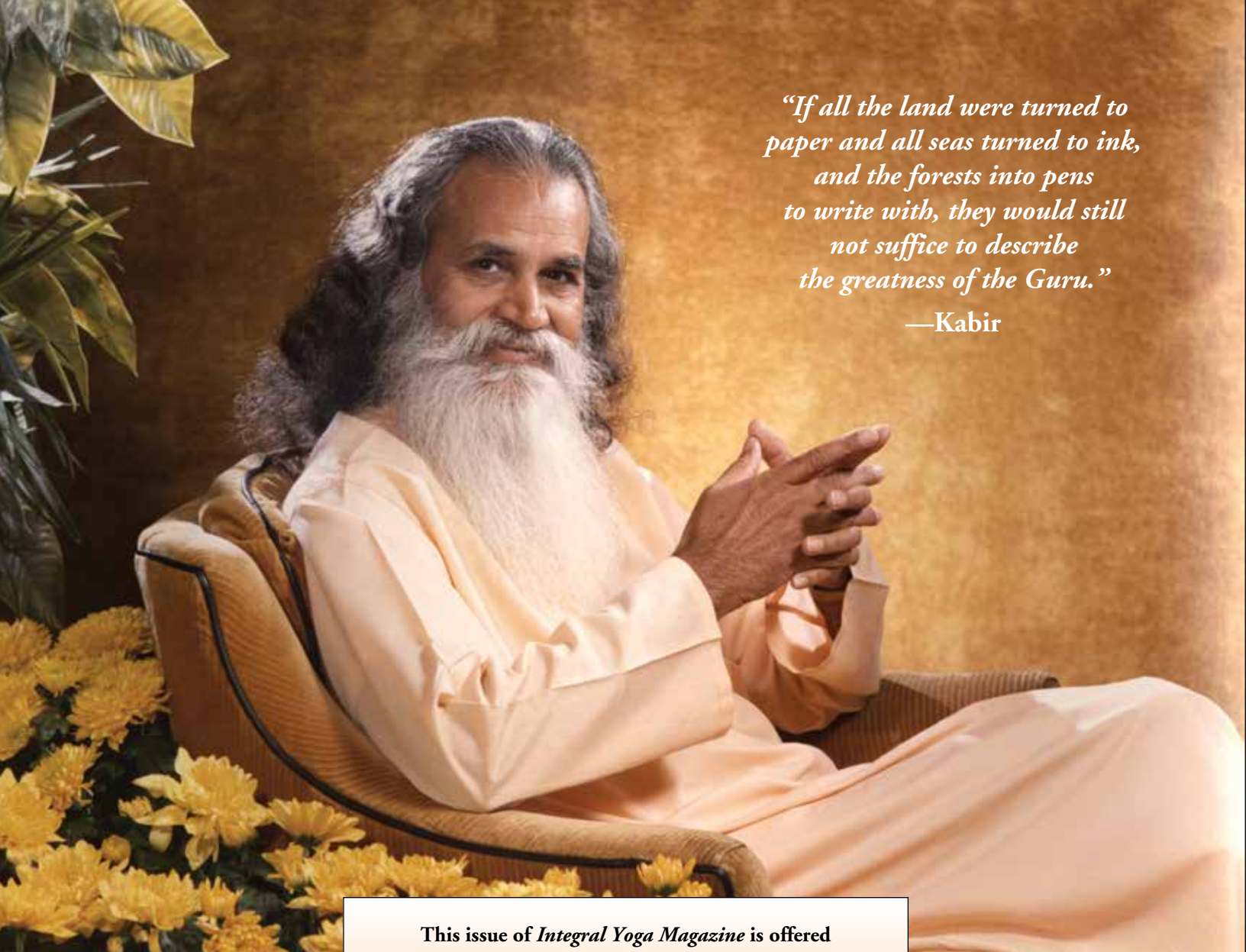


Integral Yoga[®] Magazine



Celebrating Integral Yoga's 50th Anniversary
Special Commemorative Issue

SPRING / SUMMER 2016



“If all the land were turned to paper and all seas turned to ink, and the forests into pens to write with, they would still not suffice to describe the greatness of the Guru.”

—Kabir

This issue of *Integral Yoga Magazine* is offered as a grateful and loving homage to Sri Gurudev Swami Satchidananda, who, 50 years ago, brought the teachings of Integral Yoga to the Western world.

“It is through the work of pioneers such as Swami Satchidananda that Yoga has gained acceptance and recognition across the world.”

—Sri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

“Integral Yoga represents the history, the teachings, the practices, and the most essential tenets of Yoga.”

—Elena Brower, author, *Art of Attention*, founder of Teach.yoga

“In the Yoga world, there are fancier, hipper, and more famous schools, but no other Yoga organization has done as much service to so many people as Integral Yoga.”

—Joshua Greene, author, *Swami in a Strange Land*

“Swami Satchidananda was one of the early pioneers in bringing the knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta to this country. Had it not been for his contribution we wouldn’t have seen the popularity of Yoga that we see today, which is mainstream. I salute him for helping to change the course of the world.”

—Dr. Deepak Chopra, spiritual teacher, author

“Sri Swami Satchidananda’s multimodal, holistic Integral Yoga teachings give everyone permission to match the practice to the practitioner. This approach has kept Integral Yoga a fully alive practice of transformation and healing for 50 years.”

—Amy Weintraub, Founder of LifeForce Yoga and author of *Yoga for Depression* and *Yoga Skills for Therapists*



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Integral Yoga®:
Spring/Summer 2016
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Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville®
ISSN 0161-1380.

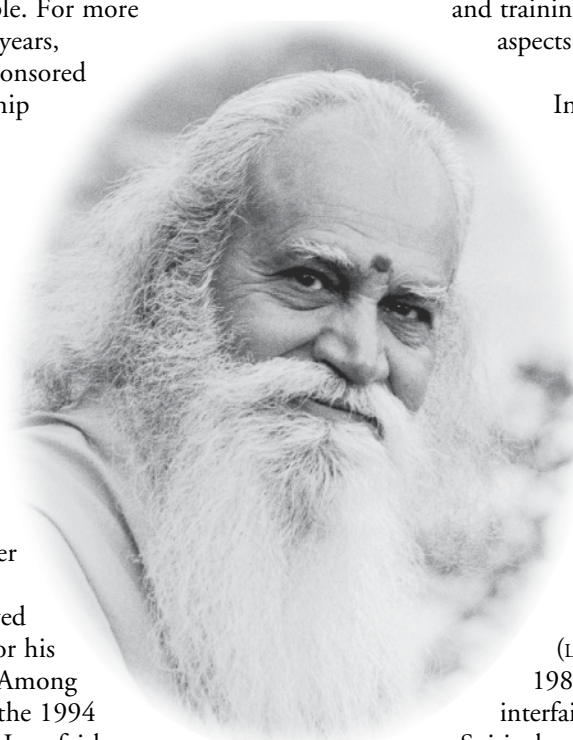
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HIS HOLINESS SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA FOUNDER OF INTEGRAL YOGA®

His Holiness Sri Swami Satchidananda (Sri Gurudev) is one of the most revered Yoga Masters of our time. Sri Gurudev's teachings and spirit guide us toward a life of peace and religious harmony among all people. For more than forty-five years, Sri Gurudev sponsored interfaith worship services and conferences. His teachings advocate respecting and honoring all faiths and he was invited to share his message of peace with many world leaders and dignitaries. Over the years, Sri Gurudev received many honors for his public service. Among recent awards: the 1994 Juliet Hollister Interfaith Award presented at the United Nations and the 2002 U Thant Peace Award. In honor of his birth centennial in 2014, he was posthumously awarded the James Parks Morton Interfaith Award. In addition, he served on the advisory boards of many world peace and interfaith organizations.

Sri Gurudev founded, and is the guiding light for, the worldwide Integral Yoga® Institutes. Integral Yoga, as taught by Sri Gurudev, combines various methods of Yoga, including Hatha Yoga, selfless service, meditation, prayer, and a 5,000-year-old philosophy that helps one find the peace and joy within. Integral Yoga is the foundation for Dr. Dean Ornish's landmark work in reversing

heart disease and Dr. Michael Lerner's noted Commonweal Cancer Help program. Today more than 25 Integral Yoga Institutes and Integral Yoga Teaching Centers throughout the United States and abroad offer classes and training programs in all aspects of Integral Yoga.



In 1979, Sri Gurudev was inspired to establish Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, a large residential community in Virginia based on his teachings. Guest stays, retreats, and programs on all aspects of Integral Yoga are available. At the center of Yogaville® is the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS), dedicated in 1986. This unique interfaith shrine honors the Spirit that unites all the world religions, while celebrating their diversity.

Sri Gurudev is the author of many books, including *Integral Yoga Hatha*, *To Know Your Self*, *The Living Gita*, and *The Golden Present*. He is the subject of three biographies, *Apostle of Peace*, *Portrait of a Modern Sage*, and *Boundless Giving*, and the documentary, *Living Yoga*. Integral Yoga Publications disseminates the teachings of Sri Gurudev through books and Shakticom through audio-video programs. Integral Yoga Distribution also makes available books, tapes, and gift items from a wide variety of spiritual paths and well-being resources.

In August 2002, Sri Gurudev took *Mahasamadhi* (a God-realized soul's conscious final exit from the body). Chidambaram, his *Mahasamadhi* Shrine, is open for prayer and meditation.

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SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA'S YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

By Sri Swami Venkatesananda

In the history of the world there have been sages, saints and prophets who have practiced and preached one or the other modes of approaching the goal, which is Self-realization. It was Gurudev [in this article, "Gurudev," "Swamiji" and "the Master" refer to Sri Swami Sivananda] who insisted "It is not enough to practice any one kind of spiritual discipline, however well you may strive to do so. Every aspirant should incorporate in his spiritual program all the items of all the Yogas or modes of approaching God."

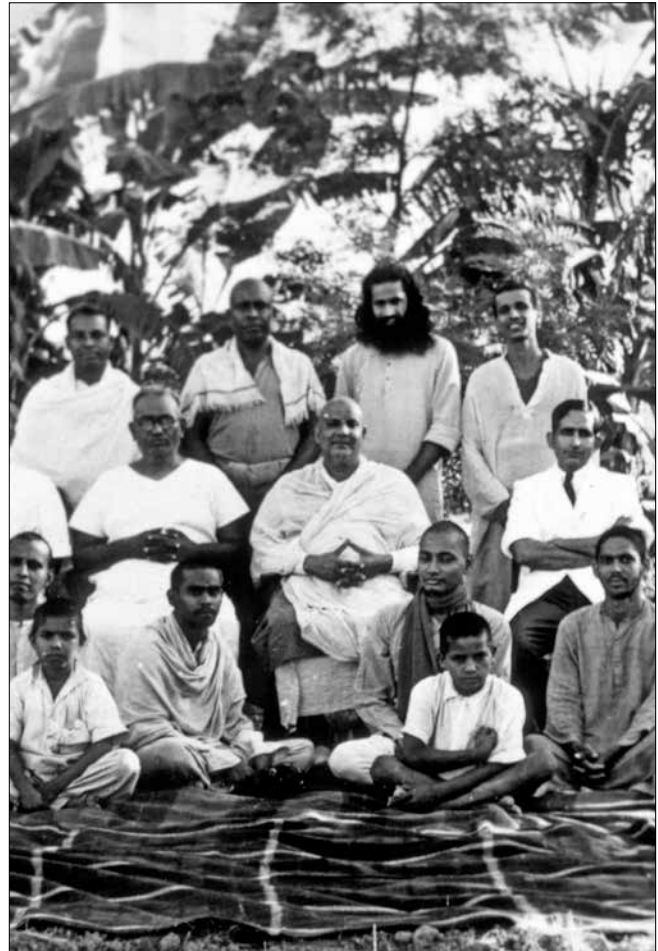
Gurudev had no doctrine of his own. He re-delivered the same message that has from the beginning of time been given to us by the divine. His own unique approach to the science of Yoga can be called "The Yoga of a Little" or the Yoga of synthesis. He warned us that only the harmonious development of the entire being could take us easily to the goal. He composed a rather simple but beautiful little song, which he himself sang in the *Mahamantra* tune at every meeting he addressed, especially during his All-India-Ceylon Tour in 1950.

"Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little. Mix a little, move a little, serve a little, give a little, work a little, rest a little, study a little, worship a little. Do asana a little, *pranayama* a little; reflect a little, meditate a little. Do *japa* a little, do *kirtan* a little, write mantra a little, have *satsanga* a little. Do all these, little, little. You will have time for all."

Was the Master against doing more of these wonderful things—like *japa*, asanas, or meditation? You ask, "Why only a little, why not much?" Then, we go on to interpret this to mean, "Do at least a little." But he really meant just this, "Do a little of each, don't specialize." That was the message—because the thing that clamors for specialization is the ego, for the specialist is admired by the crowd. Specialization fattens one's ego, weakens the spirit of tolerance and understanding, and creates contempt and hatred.

Yoga is harmony. A beautiful, symmetrical, and integral development of the total being, which means exercising every aspect of your personality every day. Otherwise there is an imbalance of personality, which is no Yoga. In Gurudev's way therefore you cannot spend too much time per day on any one practice, whatever it may be. A true follower of Swami Sivananda can only do a little of all. Thus there is harmonious development, health (wholeness) of body, mind, and spirit.

Throughout his life he was passionately devoted to making knowledge and service available and free to as many



Swami Sivananda (seated, center), Swami Venkatesananda (front row, 2nd from right), Swami Satchidananda (back row, 2nd from right).

people as possible. These two were unique passions of the Master—health and service. Once when someone in the Ashram wished to prepare a correspondence course from Swamiji's writings, publishing one lesson a month and making money from the project, Swamiji agreed. But once it was done, Swamiji immediately put the lessons back into book form and had them published for immediate distribution, mostly free.

How to be healthy? What does "health" really mean? Health by definition means *wholeness*. You cannot have physical health at the expense of mental health. There is no such thing as physical health. Health being wholeness cannot be divided into physical, mental, and spiritual. A harmonious development of both body and mind was Gurudev's specialty. Frequently in his writings on Yoga physical culture, he comes back to mental health, spiritual well-being. If the mind is completely disorganized and neurotic, the body cannot be healthy, however many asanas you practice, for however long, however perfectly.

HOW I CAME TO THE WEST

By Sri Swami Satchidananda

During a satsang (spiritual discourse) that was held on April 11, 1987, someone asked Swami Satchidananda: "Would you tell us about your background?" At first, Sri Gurudev jokingly responded: "My background, hmm? I don't know whether I have any ground at all!" And then he warmly yielded to the request.

I can just say that I am fortunate, in a way, to have been born into a family of pious parents. Mother and father were my first teachers. They instilled faith in God in my heart. And, somehow, from then on, I never worried about anything. Everything just fell into the proper places. Even while I was a little student, I always felt that God was guiding me.

Luckily, our home was a place where almost all the sages and saints who walked that way used to come and stay. That's another great benefit that I got. Any time someone walked into my childhood house, that person would always see some saintly person staying there. We were able to serve these people, and they, in turn, were able to bless us or instill in us a little more of God's knowledge. I sat at their feet and learned a lot. For eight years, I stayed in various places, at the feet of many sages and saints. Ultimately, I heard of another great saint in the Himalayas. I went there to see him and that was, more or less, the culmination of my search. Swami Sivanandaji was well-known all over the world. He was a great ecumenist. People of all religions used to go to his ashram.

Even after that, I had no idea of going out to do anything—preaching, teaching. No. It just simply happened. Some devotees who came to Rishikesh saw me. I don't know what they saw in me. But they wanted me to come to their country, Sri Lanka. Maybe they thought that I could speak their language [Tamil] well. For some reason, they called me to come for a few months. I went there and served there for thirteen years. And from there, I was invited to Japan, Hong Kong, Manila, Bangkok, and other places. I went only by invitation.

After I had been in Sri Lanka for thirteen years, a filmmaker from America came to the area. You see how Providence works? The filmmaker, Conrad Rooks [*Chappaqua, Siddhartha*], happened to be staying in a nearby hotel, and he had been casually asking the hotel owner, "Is there anybody who can teach me a little Yoga?" The hotel owner was the mayor of Kandy, and he said, "Why, yes; I do know of someone. I practice Yoga with him, and I can introduce you." And that's how Conrad came to know me. He was sort

of a skeptical and naughty boy. You know, 1960s hippie. He called me and said, "I'm not going to take much of your time; fifteen minutes is enough. I have just one or two questions about *kundalini* and this and that." I said, "Well, fine; come. After 10 o'clock everyone at the ashram goes to bed, and I can give you a little time." So, he punctually arrived at 10 o'clock. We started talking and talking and talking. All of a sudden, he looked at his watch; it was 4 o'clock in the morning! Something had happened. He wanted to stay with me; he didn't want to go back. Then, his lawyers, who had business in Paris, sent telegrams asking him to come back because there were some problems there.

He went back, and after three or four weeks, without even asking me, he sent me a ticket to Paris. British Airlines phoned me and said, "There is a ticket waiting for you to go to Paris. When are you going?" I said, "I don't know; who sent the ticket?" The man told me the name, and I said, "All right. But I can't just leave everything and come right away. Give me two weeks." He replied, "Okay; anytime you say, we'll book you." So, after two weeks, I came, thinking that maybe I would spend a month in Paris. But then, Conrad wanted me to visit other places, to meet all his friends. He wanted me to go to New York. I was to come to New York for two days. But the two days became five months. Still, I couldn't stay continuously, even though they insisted, because my ticket was to expire. Everyone agreed that I had to go, but they said that they would see to it that I would return. I flew to Colombo, and who was there to receive me? The American Ambassador to Sri Lanka himself, who was a close friend of mine. He said, "I don't know what you have done to our people in America. They have sent me letters and telegrams asking me to pack you up and send you back there."

And that's how I came to America. It was not anything that I did. Something, Providence, pushed me. Even after I returned to America, the students, as sponsors, could have easily gotten me a visa. But they went crazy, saying, "No, no. You should be here as a minister, on your own merit." So, they applied for a special category, that of religious minister. The American government had never before opened that channel to anybody. After a few months of dodging the issue, the Immigration Department finally replied: "According to our understanding, Yoga is not a religion so he cannot be considered a religious minister and we cannot issue the visa." Immediately, everyone, including some rabbis, Protestant ministers, and Catholic priests, started writing to the Immigration Department. They all became close to me. There must have been about 600 letters sent, a very big pile. As a result, the director of the department felt that he should at least see me in person, so he called me to come for an interview, and I went.



Swami Satchidananda's revered mother and father pictured (seated on either side of Swami Satchidananda, 2nd row) during their visit to Sri Lanka, late 1950s.

At the interview, the first question asked was: "Why do you want to live in this country?" I answered, "Sir, to be honest, I am not very keen about that." The director responded, "What? Am I hearing right? Are you speaking correct English?" "Yes, Sir," I said. "Then why did you apply?" I explained, "Sir, it's not me. All these people filled out the form. They wanted me to sign it, so I signed it. It's because of their pressure that I signed and requested to live here. It's not that I want to come and stay here or do anything."

The director said, "Do you know that in the history of American immigration, we have never come across a man like you, applying to come yet saying that you are not keen in having this visa." Then, of course, we had a longer conversation, during which time he said, "I have a little difficulty, because, thus far, we have been sending missionaries to other parts of the world. We have never gotten any missionaries here. We don't need that. And if I say yes to you, I will have to answer to many of the people here, and I don't want to do that." I said, "Then, sir, if you don't want to say yes, then say no; I will not be at all unhappy. You are not saying no to me. You are saying no to the others. There are other people who are looking for me to come to their countries."

The director felt so bad about that, that he said, "Well, I will send the pile of letters, the whole file, to the federal government. Let them decide, because I don't want to

open a new channel." Probably, by that time, the federal government knew about my work here, so as soon as the file went to their offices, someone called the director of the Immigration Department and said, "Please ask the Swami to stay here; we are processing his visa."

Sincerely, I am nothing. In fact, compared to many people, I am not even a great scholar or a big man or even a thinker. All I know is that some unseen power is just making me do things and I am doing. I'm comfortable that way. That way, I never have any room for anxiety, worry, or depression, or, even the other side of that, for excitement. Now, you might say, "Oh, here is this big community, Yogaville, with this big hall, filled with lots of people." Do you think that I'm excited about that? I still have the old suitcase that I came with. Who knows? At any moment, they can say, "Hey, get out; we don't need you any more!" For me it's whatever God wants.

The one thing that I can say is that wherever I went, I became a very close friend of many other religious people, clergy. We used to gather now and then. I always felt terribly bad to see the world fighting in the name of God and religion. In fact, world statistics clearly prove that more people have been killed in the name of God and religion than for any other reason. Is that what we want? Is that why we look for God and religion? No. If there is anything that could save the world, it is only God and religion. But,



Swami Satchidananda with Conrad Rooks and his mother at Paris screening of Chappaqua, 1966.

unfortunately, it is God and religion that are destroying the world. Every problem is based on the attitude, “My religion, your religion. Even within the same religion, it is, “My sect, your sect.” Look at what’s happening in the world. Why do we have this insanity? Because we don’t understand what religion is.

It is religion that should help us to understand the spiritual oneness, to make us feel more at home as one family. If there is anyone who separates another individual, saying to that person, “You are different from me,” using religion to make that claim, then he or she is not a religious person at all. Thinking about these kinds of situations has made me pray, “God, use me in any way you want. I would like to see that in Your name we become one family.” Luckily, as soon as I came to America, within the very first week, I became good friends with Rabbi Gelberman. Then, Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk, also became my great brother. And, then, I became close to many members of the clergy; we used to gather and talk. During one of the retreats that we attended, we even organized an interfaith service, which we called the “Yoga Ecumenical Service,” [now the Light of Truth Universal Service]. We arranged an altar, and right in the middle of the altar, we placed a candle, one light as a symbol of God for everybody. All the various clergymen and clergywomen sat around the altar, offering worship to that one light.

We held these services for several years. Then, at some point, we wanted to have a permanent place, a sort of symbol; and, somehow, the idea came that this place should be in the form of a lotus. Soon, someone asked me, “Why in the form of a lotus?” I had thought that a flower is something beautiful and that the lotus flower is accepted as a symbol by many religions. So, the idea came: Why not

make the lotus into an acronym and say LOTUS? And, then, I started calling it the “Light Of Truth Universal Shrine.” And that’s how the idea of the LOTUS came to be.

Even then, there was something celestial happening. Searching for a site, we located various places. We tried Santa Barbara, California, but it didn’t work out there. Then, we started to work on a LOTUS at the ashram in Pomfret, Connecticut. That didn’t work out. We looked at various locations in the southeast, but we weren’t happy with any of them. On the way home, I was taken by a small plane to the location in Buckingham, Virginia, that is now Yogaville. As we flew over this place, I saw the river and said, “Hey, this river seems to be attracting me. Is there any place like this close to the river?” The realtor, who was also in the plane, replied, “Swami, this very land will be coming on the market within a week.” Immediately, we landed there, somewhere on the farm. We searched to find the owner before he put the property on the market. “We’ll buy it,” we said. Somehow, Virginia had become the place. God brought us here. But where would the money come from? Previously, the great singer, Carole King, had donated her beautiful Connecticut ranch. I now told her that I would like to sell that property to buy the property in Virginia. She said, “Do whatever you want.” Thus, the money was provided, the land was provided, everything just came.

And then there was the LOTUS. Without even a cent in our hands, we began digging the lake. Some of you might think that when I dug the lake, I found some treasure. As we were digging the lake, I was digging into the hearts of many people. Many people simply heard about the LOTUS and appreciated it without even knowing me. They said, “This is what we want!”



Integral Yoga Retreat (l-r: Fr. Maloney, Rabbi Gelberman, Swami Sachidananda, Br. David), early 1970s.

What does it all mean? If you start something that is dear to God and beneficial to humanity, it is God's business to take care of it. That's all I can say. Otherwise, who am I to build such a beautiful monument as this. It's unique in all the world. Even the contractors had said, "You're crazy. We have never seen a building shaped like this." I told them, "You start. And, at any point, if you convince me that you cannot do any more, we'll stop it there. Even if it's halfway done, it doesn't matter, because it is not my work; it is God's work."

So, every minute, I see the Glory of God. Look what God can do with a simple, ordinary individual like me. That is God's Glory. If God had picked up a Ph.D., a big scholar of theology, this and that, then it would have been nothing unusual. God just picked up an ordinary dry leaf to show God's Glory. Even at this minute, I'm not expecting anything. "God, guide me." The next minute, "Make me do; I am doing; that's all. If you don't want me to do anything, I'll be happy to sit and sleep."

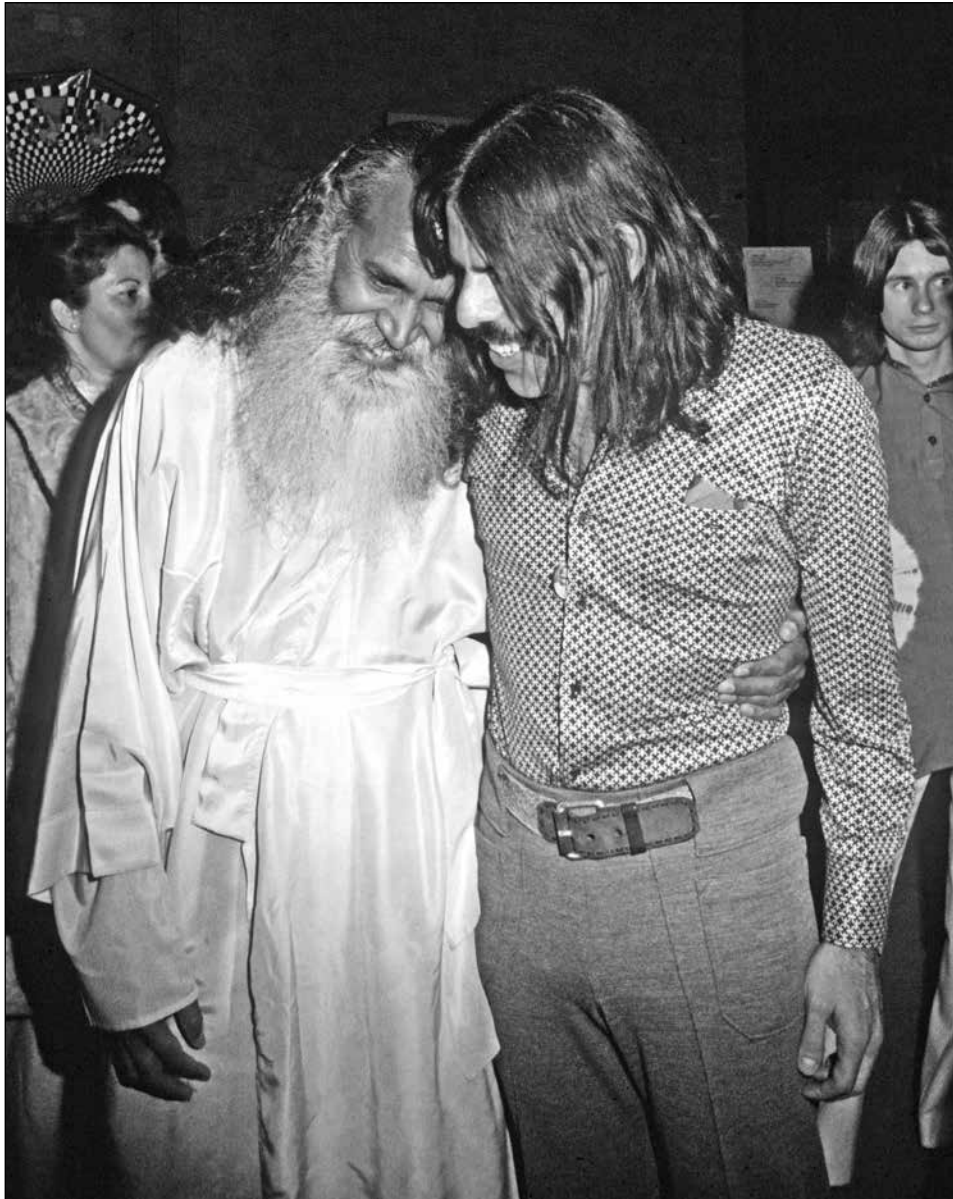
In fact, sometimes my ego comes in. For the past few months, I decided not to do anything much here, and I told everyone, "You all take over and do everything. Let

me just retire, and I'll sit and watch you." In a way, that's what I'm thinking that I'm doing. But, I'm surprised to see that my itinerary is fully booked. Just because I said, "I am not going to do anything more," now, within the coming few months, I have to travel to so many places. Even this morning, someone asked, "Is that what you call 'retiring?'" That makes me feel: Who am I to retire? Whatever God wants me to do I should do. Even retiring is not in my hands. If God feels that I have done enough, that I am no good any more, then God will put me aside.

My entire life is guided by that. Just give yourself in the hands of God; you don't have to worry about anything. Don't even worry about your toothbrush. God will bring it to you. Yes. I have seen that. Simply because I would say, "Ah, that's a nice toothbrush," and the next day, somebody would give it to me. In my own life, in my own little, humble experience, I have seen this. The more you give yourself to God, the more you are free, the more you are peaceful, the more you are happy. And God can do beautiful, beautiful things through you. Just don't put your ego forward: "I can do something. God, I will do this. You will do that." No. It's either all you or all God. Better that way. And I am for all God.

BRINGING THE SWAMI TO AMERICA

By Peter Atman Max



Peter Max with his beloved Swami, 1966.

Since meeting Swami Satchidananda, the last 50 years have been the best years of my life. I've learned so much from Gurudev; even the way I met him was miraculous. It was 1966—a time of psychedelic experimentation among the youth and Yoga was virtually unknown in America. As an artist, I was on a creative retreat, experimenting with new modes of expression through the medium of collage. Before I became an artist, I had almost chosen a career as an astronomer, having had a strong fascination about the universe—planets, stars, galaxies, novas, nebulas, and the vast distances in space. One day I decided I was going to try and find out what the universe and life was all about through my art and decided to create a large collage of the universe in my studio in New York's Upper West Side. I worked on a large table that was about five feet square and began assembling photographs. I worked on the collage for almost 16 hours a day for three days.

When it was complete, I wanted to be able to see the whole image, hoping it would give me a perspective on the universe and what life was all about. But it was so big that in order to see it, I had to climb up a ten-foot ladder and look down at it. There I was, at two in the morning, climbing a ladder up to the ceiling. When I looked down at my collage creation, however, I didn't really see anything that was a cosmic revelation; I was hoping to see something that was beyond belief. I was very frustrated and disappointed, especially since I had worked very hard on it.

I reached my arms up to God and wanted to scream, but suddenly realized that my wife Liz and our baby son, Adam, were asleep in the next room. So, instead, I did a kind of dry, silent scream while I closed my eyes and wished for an answer to my quest. Suddenly, with my eyes closed, I envisioned a cloud that opened up and a man with a white beard appeared through it and said, "Relax, everything is okay."

I felt a new sense of peace and began to relax as I descended the ladder. It was now three a.m. and as I was about to go to bed when my phone rang. Who could be calling me at that hour? I picked up the phone and a man said, "I'm so sorry. I'm calling from Paris and forgot the time difference. My name is Conrad Rooks." He told me that he was making a film in Paris and somebody had shown him a brochure of my collages. He loved them and asked if I could come to Paris and give him some ideas for visuals and color treatments for his film.

"When do you need me there?" I asked. He said, "I'd like you to come tomorrow." I said, "I'm sorry, I really can't. My wife just had a baby." So I said goodnight and went to bed. As I drifted off to sleep, all I could think about was the vision I had on the ladder of the man with the white beard. The next afternoon, someone knocked on my door. I opened it and a man who was wearing a Zorro hat and a black coat that hung down to his ankles was standing there. "Hello, I'm Conrad Rooks, the man who called you last night," he said. "What are you doing here?" I exclaimed. "I thought you said you were in Paris!" "When you said you wouldn't come, I decided to get on the next plane and here I am," he declared. I invited him into the studio and when he saw my collages on the wall, he let out a loud "YAHOO," throwing his hat up to the ceiling and letting it fall to the floor.

After he looked at my art and we talked a bit, he said, "I'd like you come down and meet my friends. They're sitting on a bench across the street on Riverside Drive." "Your friends? Who are your friends?" I asked. "I've got Alan Ginsberg and William Burroughs waiting downstairs to tell you about my film." I couldn't believe my ears! So we went downstairs, and there sure enough was Ginsberg and Burroughs. They both told me about the extraordinary underground film that Conrad was making, *Chappaqua*. They persuaded me that the film needed my creative input and that I should go to Paris. So I decided to go.

When we arrived in Paris, we went to the Hotel Napoleon Bonaparte. Conrad picked up the house phone and said, "Hello, Swami? I've got the American artist with me. Can you please meet us downstairs for breakfast?" I had heard the term "Swami" before, but thought it was a man who could do special, paranormal feats and didn't know it was a monk or holy man. The elevator door opened up and a tall, dark, magnificent man walked out wearing orange clothes and a beautiful long beard. The moment I saw him, I knew that it was the man in my vision. As I shook his long, slender hand, I looked into his deep brown eyes, and was enchanted by their beauty and dynamic presence, which I realized was emanating from within.

After breakfast, Conrad said, "It's time to go to see the rushes of the movie." We went to a screening room and while I watched episodes from his extraordinary film, I heard the "*Om Shanti*" chant. I had never heard any sound like that before and didn't know where it was coming from. Then the camera zoomed in on a huge banyan tree and as it panned down, I saw the Swami sitting under the tree chanting, "*Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*" I turned to look at him and he smiled back, saying, "That's me." I still had no idea what he did, but everything about him was so wonderful! The Swami left the screening a little early and I wanted to follow. I was not as interested in the film as much as I was about the Swami; I just wanted to be with him. So after the Swami left, I stayed for a few more minutes and then said to Conrad, "You know, I'm a little tired myself. Maybe I'll go back to the hotel. By the way, what room is the Swami in?" Conrad said he was in room 776.

As soon as I entered the hotel, I went directly to the Swami's door, although I didn't want to disturb him. But as I got there, I found the door open and saw the Swami, sitting against the backboard of the bed, almost as though he was expecting me. He said, "Come, come. Come on in." I was so excited to talk with him one-on-one. I asked, "What do you do?" "I'm a monk," he said. "Oh, that's really nice. From India?" "Yes, from India. But now I have an ashram in Kandy, Ceylon."

He saw that I was more than curious about the things he was telling me, so he reached up for a book on the shelf and opened it. He turned to a page that had an illustration of a person seated in lotus with a line of seven golden circles over him. He pointed to them, saying, "Those are called *chakras* and, in Yoga, we try to awaken them all. The middle one is the heart *chakra*." He continued to show me the book and I was completely fascinated. He told me about the different branches of Yoga and I asked him if he could show me a Yoga posture. He stood up straight and tall and started to demonstrate a sequence of moves. I picked up a blank envelope from the desk, and did a little drawing of each posture. I still have that envelope with the drawing.

We became friends and I spent the next five or six days with him. When I wasn't working with Conrad, I tried to

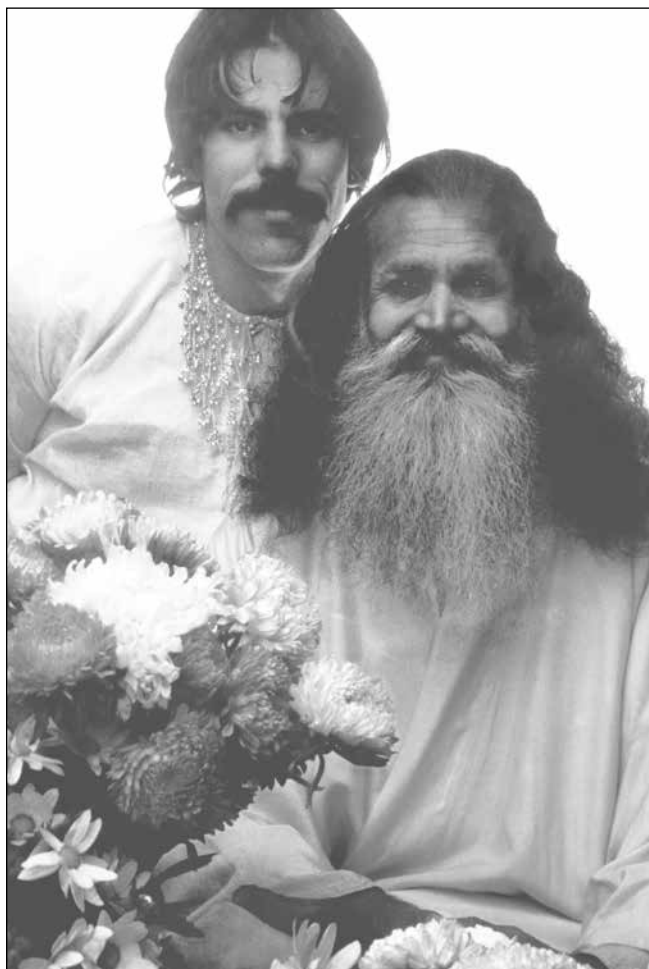
spend every moment with the Swami to learn as much as I could from him. The last day I was in Paris, I said to him, "Swami, America needs you very, very much. It would be really nice if you could come to America." "America needs me?" he asked. "Why?" I told him that the youth were experimenting with drugs to expand their consciousness and the whole country was undergoing great change. His teachings of Yoga were what we needed. I also spoke to Conrad about bringing the Swami to America. Then the Swami told me, "Okay, if there's a need, I'll come."

I flew back to New York and when I got home, my friends all asked me to tell them about Paris and the film, but all I could talk about was the Swami. He was going to arrive three days later and I was very excited. I went to JFK airport to pick him up but missed his arriving flight and couldn't find him at the airport, so I turned around and quickly went home. When I returned to my apartment, he was already there, chatting with my wife, Liz.

She told me that when he arrived and she saw his strange clothing and unusual, long beard, she was so astonished that she quickly closed the door in his face. Then she worked up the courage to re-open it and asked, "Are you the Swami?" She was embarrassed but he gave her a beautiful heartfelt smile. When Liz and I were alone in the kitchen, she asked me what we were going to do with him, and where we could put him up. I told her that we would work it out, as he was a very great Swami. But at first, she thought it was strange that I, a 26-year old man, with a young wife and newly born son, had brought this 52-year-old man with shoulder-length hair and a long beard into our house.

The best we could offer him to sleep on that first night was a fold-up bed in the middle of the living room, which he accepted graciously. Early the next morning, at five a.m., I had to heat up a bottle for our baby and tiptoed through the living room to get to the kitchen. As I peeked over to see if he was sleeping, I noticed that the bed was made and he was sitting in the corner in lotus pose, meditating. I was so inspired, I just had to know what this was about and wanted to learn how to do it so much. Later that day, we walked in Central Park and talked about many things. I told him about the hippies, and the new social, political and artistic movements that were happening. When we got back to my apartment, I excitedly called all my friends and invited them to come up and meet the Swami.

At six that evening about 45 people showed up. The Swami was sitting in lotus on the couch. Some of those who came in to meet him had just smoked a joint and were a little stoned; others had a cigarette in their hand. Some sat in chairs and others laid down on the floor with their legs stretched out in front of them, their feet towards the Swami (they didn't know it was considered disrespectful in the East). As the Swami started to speak in his soft, gentle voice, the people got very calm and relaxed. Those with



cigarettes began to put them out and those with their legs stretched out began to sit up straight and even crossed their legs to emulate the Swami. The whole room grew very quiet and was filled with a sense of anticipation and wonder.

After speaking for about two hours, the Swami closed his eyes and silently led us into our first Yoga meditation. Afterward, we all went into the kitchen and shared our experience and discussed what we could do to keep the Swami in New York. One of my friends said, "I know what to do." He put his hands in his pockets and dropped whatever money he had on the Formica table. Everybody followed that gesture and dropped \$5 and \$10 bills on the table. Between us, we gathered about \$100, and that was the birth of the Integral Yoga Institute.

Peter Max is one of America's most popular and successful artists. He has had numerous one-man exhibitions at museums in America and throughout the world. Max has also extended his artistic expression beyond conventional walls, and has painted "canvases" as diverse as a U.S. postage stamp, a 250-foot World's Fair mural, the 600-foot wide Woodstock 1999 stage backdrop, and a Boeing 777 super jet for Continental Airlines. More about Peter Max can be found in the best-selling book, "The Universe of Peter Max," and online at: www.petermax.com

IN THE BEGINNING

By Victor Arjuna Zurbel

It was in 1966 that I decided that the drug experience I had just come out of was going to be my last. I was able to see that there were many obstacles I had placed in the path toward Self-realization, one of which were the chemicals I was taking to get there. I realized that I was really getting no closer each time, because the drug only catapulted me forward and then brought me back to the same place I was before, leaving me dependent on it to get me there. I really wanted to find the source of all joy and peace. And I somehow felt that there must be a better way of getting there. But what it was I had no idea.

It was then that my friend Peter Max, who was having a similar experience, called me up to invite me over to visit a Swami who had just arrived in New York. So there I was in Peter's apartment, legs crossed, puffing on a cigarette, throwing questions at a Swami. As soon as I got back home, Peter called me, asking, "Well, what do you think?" "Interesting guy," I said. I was still trying to digest what and who he was.

"Do you want to help me find an apartment here, where we could set him up and take classes?" Peter asked. I tried to remain non-committal, but Peter managed to persuade me, so we began to search for an apartment. Then, out of the blue, a guy came forward and offered his apartment for free. The only catch was that it was in the worst shape I had ever seen any apartment in New York. I vetoed it immediately. But, once again, Peter convinced me: we should take it and fix it up. That weekend. So, even though I was just about to go away on a long-needed vacation, I cancelled my weekend plans.

But there was still a problem: to get that place in order over the weekend would take a small army, and so far all we had were ourselves; almost everybody we knew was going away for the weekend. Besides, how do you get a group of people in New York to fix up an apartment for someone they have never met or even heard of, with no remuneration of any sort? Impossible.

A Lesson in Karma Yoga

By Friday afternoon, the only person I had managed to get to help was my girlfriend Runa. But Peter had said a friend of his would come, and he was determined to go ahead. When we got to the apartment Friday night, there were about a dozen people waiting—all strangers to each other, ready to go to work to fix up a place for another stranger.

At the end of the weekend we were all exhausted, but we had a spotless, beautiful apartment. Then the owner, who had been away all this time, walked in. There was a major misunderstanding: he said we were free to use the



Arjuna Zurbel (far right) with Swami Satchidananda at Woodstock, 1969.

apartment during the week, but that he crashed there on the weekend. Well, you can imagine how we felt. And just then, in walked the Swami, whom none of these people had met yet. He introduced himself, and sensing something was wrong, inquired about what the problem was. We told him about the situation and Swamiji thought it would be best to leave it and look for another place.

"Oh, no," one of us groaned. "You mean all this work was for nothing?" Swamiji slowly and calmly looked at each of us, while he was taking stock of the situation. "Do you all belong to a club or group of some sort? Or, do you all attend the same university and live in the same dormitory?" "No," we replied. He continued: "What I am wondering is, how all you people came together to do all this wonderful work? Are you not all friends?" "We are now, Swami," someone said, "but when we started, we were all strangers." He rhetorically asked: "So, who said 'all this work was for nothing' then?" Then we looked at each other and we all felt that the work was certainly not for nothing.

Swamiji then added, "In the East we call such work Karma Yoga. Work without expectation of reward. It is a wonderful practice." I was gradually beginning to get an idea of who Swamiji was. At this point Runa whispered in my ear that I should invite Swamiji to stay at my apartment, and Swamiji, after making sure that it would in no way be an inconvenience, accepted.

Parks and Museums Inside

Swamiji arrived the next morning. It was then that I found out for sure who he was and what our relationship was going to be. I was very busy with work and had very little time to be with him during the day, so I told him of all the places nearby he could visit by himself. "The Museum of Natural

History is one block away, the American Historical Society is on the corner and Central Park is just across the street.”

He warmly replied that he had been traveling around the world and would be quite content just to stay inside. I felt he was a little unsure about traveling by himself, so I offered to break away at lunch time and escort him to the museums and park. It was a beautiful day. But he looked into my eyes with warmth and said, “I will really be quite happy to stay inside. I have many parks and museums within me.”

What happened then is difficult to put into words. I felt that I too wanted to discover the parks and museums within myself. I didn’t know it at the time, but I had just accepted Swamiji as my Guru. Tears of joy streamed down my cheeks as I bid Swamiji a good day and took off for my office.

Further Lessons in Yoga

I had warned Swamiji that I would be home very late that night. I had a large bedroom with two beds and offered Swamiji the large one and took the little one for myself. I came home at about three in the morning, quietly took off my shoes and changed into my pajamas, and tiptoed into the bedroom. There, to my wonder, was Swamiji lying flat on his back with his palms up, looking like a corpse (he was actually in *Savasana*, the corpse pose).

I got into bed and then realized that I had to be up at seven, but the alarm clock was on the table next to Swamiji’s bed and the outlet was underneath his bed. Resigning myself to the fact that I was not about to go crawling under his bed at three in the morning, I went to sleep. But I didn’t go right to sleep. First I turned this way, then that way. Swamiji’s stillness, however, was making me very aware of my own movements, to the point that I felt like an animal next to him. So I just rolled over on my back, put my hands alongside my body and went into the most wonderful dreamless sleep I had ever had.

I woke up fully refreshed, looked at my watch, and saw that it was exactly seven o’clock. Swamiji was not in bed. He was sitting on the living room floor on my Hopi Indian rug, had some incense burning, and was meditating. I went into the bathroom to shower and shave and when I came out Swamiji was holding a coffee mug, offering it to me to drink. And then he said, “I saw you come in so quietly last night, as not to disturb me. Very nice of you.” “But Swamiji, if you saw me come in, then I must have disturbed you.” “No disturbance,” he reassured me. “If the mind is restful during the day, it does not even need sleep. I just rest the body, and put the mind away, sort of like putting it in a drawer. If I need it, I take it out, and then gently put it back again.”

The little things that happened in the weeks that followed could fill the pages of a whole book. But I’ll just say that



Swami Sachidananda at the Oliver Cromwell Hotel, New York, 1966.

I had the extraordinary privilege of having Swamiji’s acquaintance as a friend, only slowly discovering the depth and magnitude of his being. So everything I was learning was by the way of gentle example. How to move chairs, close doors, sleep, eat, etc. Before Swamiji moved in, my apartment was a storehouse for antiques and old junk. And when he left and moved over to the Oliver Cromwell Hotel two weeks later, it was spotless.

The Rest is History

In my apartment those first two weeks, about 10 to 25 people would come each evening for casual lectures, and when we moved to the Oliver Cromwell Hotel only two weeks later, there were 25 to 50. And that was where Swamiji started to teach Hatha Yoga. He gave the classes himself and soon the proficient students began teaching. Then when it grew larger, we incorporated the Integral Yoga Institute and moved over to 500 West End Avenue. The rest is history.

There were many opportunities in those early days to obtain notoriety on TV and in the press, but Swamiji wisely steered away, anticipating wrong exploitation. The Integral Yoga Institute grew like a tree. Swamiji nurtured it like a gardener, checking the condition of the soil, replanting it with care every time it grew too big for the pot, snipping off the top a little so some nice branches could come out, and when the time was right, letting it take root in a beautiful building on West 13th Street, where it remains today.

Victor Arjuna Zurbel has enjoyed a long career in graphic design and has served as an art and creative director for ad agencies and the Peter Max studio. Zurbel also develops freelance book projects and creative digital media. He recently co-wrote Peter Max’s biography, The Universe of Peter Max, for Harper Collins.

THAT VERY FIRST DAY

By Peter Petronio

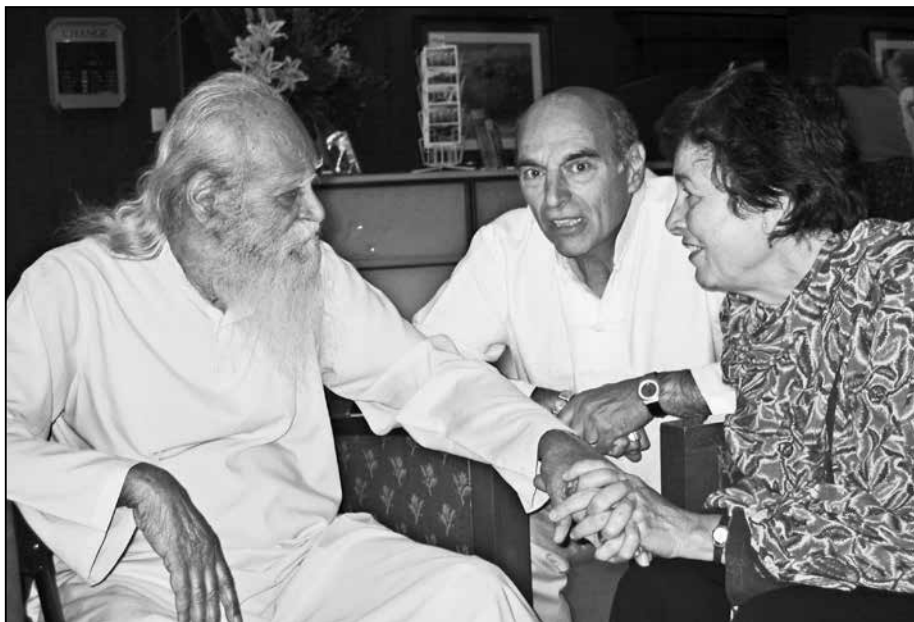
In 1966, I and my friends—a band of young artists, designers, writers, poets, musicians, performers and thinkers—were enraptured by the spiritual quest. This was quite unusual for a bunch of guys from Brooklyn, but so be it. We were reading Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*, Isherwood's *Ramakrishna and his Disciples*, and watching Alan Watts' TV program on Zen and Western thought.

So, one fateful day, I was sitting in my studio when Peter Max called and said, "He's here." I asked, "Who's here?" And he said, "The Swami I told you about; he arrived last night. Come right away. He's just sitting there waiting for something to happen." So I showed up with Victor Zurbel and three other close friends. Gurudev was sitting by a window that overlooked the Hudson River. As I entered, he stood up and I witnessed his rising figure in saffron robes, his long beard, and his glowing smile of welcome and understanding. I was—to use the phrase of the times—simply blown away.

We all sat down and tried to make conversation. We had no idea of who he was, where he came from, what his stature was within the spiritual universe and what we, as eventual disciples, were required to do. So we just talked about "things." My first revelation was an answer to a question I posed regarding an article in *Esquire* magazine, which had reported the recent breakthrough in the physics of matter and anti-matter in the outer reaches of the universe and its effects on the magnetic fields that influence life on Earth. Well, I thought, what was he going to say about this?

"Dear Peter, that's simple, just turn on the radio and you will understand everything. There are energy fields all around us, passing through us all the time—it's just a matter of tuning in. The mind created the radio and the mind, your mind, has the power and capacity to receive great thoughts and emotions—and that's what Yoga is all about." This went on for a couple of hours and it was time for a break. While we all scampered into the kitchen to prepare a "hip" vegetarian lunch, the Swami retired to a guest room, probably tickled silly by our group of young, sincere, and open-minded seekers.

It was then, in a moment of fortunate lucidity, I said: "We can't let this man go. We have to do everything possible



Peter and Sarah Petronio with Swami Sachidananda, Paris, 2002.

to keep him here." We moved the Swami into the Oliver Cromwell hotel on West 72nd Street. There, Sarah and the other friends cooked his meals. In the evenings, we would all gather for a family chat and our first hatha lessons. The rest is history.

Thirty-six years later, Gurudev was passing through Paris on his last voyage to India. He met with my family for lunch and he was so excited to show me his new Sony personal organizer. He flipped it on video mode and played the film of his opening prayer at Woodstock. He was so happy to share it again. I wondered why, of all things, would he keep this video so close to himself. At that moment, it occurred to me that, of course, he gave us so much of himself—more than we will ever imagine. But we, all of us, gave him much also. And he loved us for the opportunity he had had to change our world. When I walked him to the car that was taking him to the airport our eyes met and lingered for a moment, and he looked at me in such a way that I understood that I would never see him again on our earthly plane, and he said "See ya' around."

Born in Brooklyn, educated in New York, and living in Paris, Peter Petronio, is an internationally recognized creative consultant, designer, and photographer. Married to Sarah, a jazz tap dancer, choreographer, and writer, they have two children—Ezra, a publisher and art director and Leela, a performing artist in rhythm tap dance and percussion. Peter says, "Home is where the heart is and Gurudev will always reside in our hearts, wherever we may be."

SEEKING PEACE IS AN INSIDE JOB

By Brian Brahman Berman

A line in one of Rumi's poems says, "Let the beauty you love be what you do." I longed my entire life for peace and its beauty and depth when experienced. Peace has always been at the center of my life, guiding me. After a troubling childhood in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II, the Vietnam War became a turning point for me. My life was on a destructive path where drugs and depression were leading me toward a certain end. Following failed attempts at peace activism, I turned inward to discover that peace is an inside job.

After quitting my job at IBM in early 1970, I drove to Dallas, Texas, and stayed with Josie, a friend of a friend. I awoke the next morning and saw her arranging carnation flowers onto string. I asked what she was making. She told me that Swami Satchidananda was coming to visit. She explained that he was a holy man from India. We headed to the airport. A small group of people had gathered there with flowers and small children, many in white clothing, reminding me of the first time I saw the singer Donovan and of my association with the flower children of my generation. Soon the passengers began filing out of the gate, and when the Swami appeared, I was startled to see that he was the person I had seen in photographs at the Electric Lotus in New York City, including in a life-size cutout. There he was in the flesh, and the aura of love and peace that surrounded him was what I had been seeking throughout my life.

The Swami was escorted to a seating area where he could meet each of us. I had longed for a man of peace, love, and joy and here was such a man. When I sat and listened to the Swami, his talks were much about inner peace and the importance of living in balance. "Equanimity is Yoga," I remember him saying. My life had been far from that, especially through the anti-war protests and the drug years. From what he spoke about, I sensed that I had a lot of work ahead of me to realize that state of peace that he said is within us all.

Soon the Swami flew on to his next destination. I had stepped into a new world of possibilities that I did not yet know how to maintain. My world was about avoiding the pains in life through music and drug use. My relationships were lacking honesty when it came to telling the truth about how unhappy I was feeling inside. What was this peace that the Swami talked about, and how does one experience it? I returned home with my eyes and heart opened to new ways of living. I read *The Autobiography of a Yogi* and about how Paramahansa Yogananda came upon Sri Yukteswar in an alley. I felt a similar pull from Swami Satchidananda when he stepped out of that airplane, and spending the week with him was life-changing; he might be my Guru!



Berkeley, California Integral Yoga Institute, 1971 (Brahman Berman in front row, far right).

Soon afterward I heard about an Indian music and peace festival in Val Morin, Canada. Along with my friends, I hitchhiked there. What was the most amazing at that gathering of Yoga teachers was to be with Swami Vishnu Devananda, Swami Venkatesananda, Swami Chinmayananda, and Swami Satchidananda. Each Swami gave talks, and it was always Swami Satchidananda who spoke directly to my heart. I found his wisdom teachings resonating as the truth within me. I was inspired and convinced that I would return home and start a Yoga center there.

I thought I should first go and get trained in yogic practices and was advised to take the Integral Yoga Retreat with Swami Satchidananda in Santa Cruz, California in September 1970. Some friends and I drove out to California in my VW and entered into the silent retreat. Each of us received initiation into meditation by being given a mantra personally by Swamiji. That mantra was the seed that

helped my inner peace grow. We dived in fully, and I had a burning desire throughout the retreat to ask Swamiji a very important question. The retreat came to an end, and I sat in prayer asking for a sign that I could ask my question.

Someone entered the hall where I sat praying and informed me that the Swami was leaving and that if I had a question I had better run. I raced as fast as I could and I saw a car surrounded by devotees. I made my way into the crowd. The door to the cabin opened and the Swami stepped out and walked directly up to me. He said, "You have a question for me." I bowed and posed this dilemma: "If I return home, I know that I will be influenced to take drugs again. What do you suggest is best to overcome this weakness in me?" He said that those who have no need to take drugs, like the ones who live in his Yoga centers, are the right company to keep. He advised me to move near to one of those centers and become involved with people who were living the yogic practices. He suggested San Francisco, and off I went.

My friends and I were first given temporary shelter at the Integral Yoga Institute (IYI) and then asked whether we would like to live in Berkeley and help start an Integral Yoga center there. We said yes. I immediately took Teacher Training and began leading Hatha Yoga classes. I learned about Swamiji's interfaith message of peace building among all faiths: "Truth is One, paths are many." I loved that, as I have always had a strong, core belief that we are all one humanity, one global family.

One night I had a dream that was life-changing. Someone was following me, and I greatly feared who it was, so I ran as fast as I could up to the cabin where I had once lived and quickly began locking the doors and windows. Then I remembered that the door was a Dutch door and the top portion was unlocked. I ran over to it just as the door opened, and standing in front of the door was Swami Satchidananda. When I looked into his eyes, my fear disappeared as I felt his loving, peaceful presence. Then, like a spirit, he moved right through the door, up to me, and then into me. My fear was gone, and I felt that Swamiji was now forever within me as my guide and Guru; I wouldn't need to be with him physically to receive his guidance.

Once when Swamiji was visiting the Los Angeles IYI, he gave me the name Brahman. That visit came after many of us had attended an Enlightenment Intensive with Charles and Ava Berner. The intensive consisted of a week of self-inquiry, a vegetarian diet with large doses of vitamins and homeopathic cell salts, and working in pairs for sixteen hours a day. Many of us had very powerful experiences, and some asked Swamiji about these. He was very kind and asked, "Have I ever said you are not enlightened?" Then he gave us a powerful metaphor, which has stayed with me ever since. He said that if we went into a natural-foods store and saw a very large, totally ripened piece of fruit,



Brahman (wearing his HOLOS design pendant) with proclamation from city of Ojai's mayor declaring Ojai an "official International City of Peace."

we'd probably be suspicious that it had been force-fed. He explained that the intensive was similarly forcing us to ripen quickly, rather than naturally. My desire for enlightenment shifted that day, from a forced approach to a more naturally unfolding process.

I learned two other memorable lessons during that visit. The Los Angeles IYI had a large backyard with a pool, visible from the neighboring houses. Many of our members would sunbathe nude, as it felt very natural to do so. Some complaints had been lodged, and Swamiji gave us another gentle lesson in one of the great axioms from the Bible: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." He said that if we thought about how our neighbors felt, we would be more respectful of them and not carry on in public view.

The next lesson came at a cost to Swamiji. While entering the IYI, he stepped on a sewing needle that had been dropped on the carpet. To see him in physical pain was so very hard, but to hear his words when he talked to us about being consciously aware of our actions and how they might affect others was clearly one of the strongest lessons I received. We were all in tears, as it was not easy to remove the needle from his foot. I felt some shame, for it had been our duty to clean and prepare the house for his arrival.

I moved to Portland soon afterward and, in the fall of 1971, traveled back to Santa Cruz to attend another silent retreat with Swamiji presiding. Those retreats were great at teaching me to live in peace that is strengthened through a daily yogic practice with others. Performing selfless service by cleaning the campgrounds, engaging in advanced Yoga practices like the use of string neti, and learning how to



California IYI members reunion, 2011.

cleansing the stomach were some of the highlights for me. Later, I flew to the New York IYI to receive additional training at the Horizon Center, where Yoga and meditation classes were being taught for those needing a positive alternative to drug use.

I began to have some burn-out symptoms from my busy practice. I contacted Vijay at the IYI in San Francisco, and he suggested that I come and help with the beginning stages of Yogaville West, in the former Siegler Hot Springs Resort in Lake County, California. The healing waters, the living in community with my Yoga brothers and sisters, and the work that was needed to restore the property were very grounding and healing. My life at Yogaville West was full of adventures, but the most pivotal moment was a private meeting with Swamiji regarding my challenges with celibacy.

I was in my early 20s. I had been living like a monk for a couple of years, and now I felt the challenge of what to do next. Swamiji was scheduled to visit and I asked for a private meeting. He greeted me warmly, like a father, and I described how I was at a crossroads about whether to stay single or to find a partner and live a householder life. The

first thing he shared with me was that if I wanted to love and serve everyone equally, then it was best to be a monk, for as soon as you create a partnership and have a family, you will have preferences and will favor your partner and family. Yet, when one is seeking Self-realization, both are equally good paths.

He then asked me why I had this question. I told him I was filled with sexual desire, and no matter how many cold showers or centering meditations I did, I felt a strong biological urge. He asked, "Where is that biological urge?" I said, "In my body." He responded with a story. He asked me to imagine that I was in the midst of lovemaking when there was a knock at the door. I would need to put some clothing on and answer the door, and I would find a telegram that I would immediately open. The telegram would say that my parents had been in an accident and were in the hospital. He then asked me, "Would you go back to your partner and continue the lovemaking?" I replied, "No, of course not." He said, "That's what." He helped me recognize that desire is birthed in the mind and that my mind had fed this desire for sex. He suggested that I continue to find, through meditation, how the mind was feeding those desires and just observe but not act on them.

I was very happy that I had that private meeting, knowing that either path—as a monk or as a householder—was welcomed in Swamiji’s teachings. I received a very important lesson that day, which applies even today, as to how my mind continually presents desires often disguised as ideas, concerns, or wishes. To observe thoughts without acting on them gives a freedom that took many years not only for me to understand but also to release me from feeling that I must act on them.

After my “biological urge” talk with Swamiji, the unexpected happened. We had a ten-day silent retreat at Yogaville. At the retreat I met Shakti, a beautiful yogini, and after the retreat we began to spend time together. We fell in love and wrote to Swamiji for his blessings and to ask whether he would marry us. He wrote back, “Beloved Brahman and Shakti, you have my blessings, and I won’t be returning to the United States for quite some time. Please ask Sant Keshavadas to preside over your wedding ceremony.” Sant Keshavadas belonged to the ancient lineage of singing saints and exemplifies the tradition of Bhakti Yoga, or devotional mysticism.

Shakti and I were married, soon were expecting a child, and decided to move out of Yogaville West to start preparing. To move from living with our spiritual family to live on our own was a huge emotional challenge for us both. Our daughter Saraswati was born and within a year we were ready to move and live near Yogaville East. We reunited with the Integral Yoga community, and were happy to see Swamiji again and receive his blessings.

We had many marital challenges, and Swamiji would comment that we lacked maturity. Once he gave us a blessed orange, of which we were to give some to Saraswati, and when I ate my piece it got stuck in my throat and I was filled with a fear of death. The next time I saw Swamiji, I took him a mango. He looked me in the eye and said, “Where did the man go?” That was his way of cracking open the ego. After a year of living near the Ashram, we still felt separate as householders struggling with our responsibilities as parents. The less we saw Swamiji, the more we felt called back to California to live. So, after two years, we moved back. We were also expecting our second child, Jayan. We shared our lives with our Yoga friends in the Bay Area, but this move marked the time where our lives were full of marital challenges and parental responsibilities that we couldn’t overcome. After a few more years, we separated and then divorced.

Our IYI involvement waned during those years, and it wasn’t until Swamiji presented the LOTUS project at an Indian restaurant in San Francisco in the early 1980s that I got to see him again. I was very pleased to see that his vision for the LOTUS temple was coming together. My last personal connection with Swamiji occurred in 1998, when I called him and once again received his blessings. There



Brahman, with his daughter Saraswati, 1972.

was no sense of lost time or distance. I felt the oneness of our relationship and that he would continue to guide me from within.

I will forever be grateful for the life lessons and guidance I received from Swamiji. From my earliest days of seeking peace both inner and outer, I longed to find someone who lived and exemplified our human potential as peacemakers. Swamiji came to me to fulfill this purpose.

Brahman Berman was instrumental in the founding of the Integral Yoga Institute of Berkeley and Yogaville West (both in California). After raising a family, in 1988 he began citizen diplomacy work in Russia and Costa Rica. Following the 9/11 tragedy, he became a Compassionate Listening facilitator and co-director of the Jewish-German Reconciliation Project.

He and his wife, Lisa, facilitate healing and reconciliation workshops in the U.S. and Europe. Berman is trained in Hakomi Therapy and Attitudinal Healing, and taught Yoga and meditation for many years. He is an award-winning sculptor and teacher. The theme of his artwork is “art for peace.” www.HOLOS4peace.com

THE BEGINNING DAYS AT 500 WEST END AVENUE

By Karuna Kreps

I first learned of Swami Satchidananda when I was 16 and saw his striking photograph on the front page of the *Village Voice*. The caption read something like, “Flower children meet Swami Satchidananda at JFK Airport as he returns to New York, after completing the world tour that first brought him to the United States.” The address where he taught classes, the Integral Yoga Institute at 500 West End Avenue in New York, was one I had heard about during the big 1967 Peace March up Fifth Avenue in protest of the Vietnam War, when I had fallen in step with people who were chanting “*Hare Krishna*” and who had taken those classes.

Within months of my first Hatha class, I started doing Karma Yoga and serving as the afternoon receptionist. I’d help people sign in for the classes and collect their \$1 donations. As I listened through the green curtain for each class to go into deep relaxation and meditation, it was my job to get everyone waiting for the next class to talk in a hushed whisper. The elevator man released crowds of newcomers to the fifth floor, apartment, zoned residential-commercial on New York’s Upper West Side. A poster with the same picture I’d seen in the newspaper announced, “The Science of Yoga is over 4000 years old, but it may be new to you. It is not a religion, yet it encompasses all religions. At 500 West End Avenue, the door is open to meet Swami Satchidananda. And when you leave, you may find that another door is open.”

Swamiji, as everyone then called him, lived in the back two rooms of the large, five-bedroom apartment. His bedroom overlooked West End Avenue, and his office overlooked West 84th Street. They were linked by a bathroom and a long interior hallway, off of that was the walk-in closet which was his meditation room. The classes were taught by some of the senior students (Hari, Bhaskar, Rama, Sita, Siva, Shankar, Shree, and Vijay) in the combined living room-dining room area, with the six-foot, colorized photo of Swami Sivananda overseeing everything. The rooms were empty except for carpeting, a few wall photos and a candle on the mantle of the non-functional fireplace.

Hari and his wife, Hamsa, a top fashion model, lived in the master bedroom at the other end of the hall. Parameshwari lived in one of the two little rooms originally meant for servants; the other one was used as the women’s dressing room. Men changed behind a curtain in a narrow hallway between the dining room-meditation area and the foyer. Students crowded into the little sitting area, where we proudly displayed a few books about Yoga (which were rare in those days) and booklets that were for sale outside the kitchen door.

In the afternoon, when I arrived from school, I’d be told if Swamiji was still resting, as he did after lunch. I’d wait for



Swami Satchidananda inside 500 West End Avenue, 1968.

his buzzer to come over the telephone and announce that he was open to receiving calls and visitors. I learned how to cook fresh vegetables in the large eat-in kitchen, which later would become the main entrance for the IYI. The traffic in and out of Apartment 5B had become so great the building management asked us to have students use the service elevator in the back of the building.

The first time I saw Swami Satchidananda, I was taking a class, and he walked through the room to get to his residence. Long hair and beard were unseen on anyone over age 30 in those days so I thought he wandered in by mistake. The next time was when I felt someone correct my leg position in the relaxation pose and I opened my eyes to see that it was the same man. He had paused to oversee the class that was being taught by his young student, Hari. I realized at that moment that this man in an orange caftan was actually someone of high status and wisdom from whom I could learn. Everyone around Swamiji knew that he was special and different, but most of us weren’t quite sure with whom we were dealing. We were constantly impressed by his apparent equanimity and detachment and by his uncanny ability to repair things like broken toasters. Slowly we caught on that, out of respect, we should hold doors open for him and carry his packages.

At 500 West End, Swami Satchidananda taught the Intermediate Hatha class until 1968, and I was fortunate to have taken a half dozen of those classes with him. He taught *Bhagavad Gita* class on Saturday mornings. At first, his public lectures were given in the living room, seated under a photo of his Guru, Sri Swami Sivananda, between the two windows, with their long orange curtains that overlooked West End Avenue. His seat was a blanket and



Karuna (far left) and Guruprem enjoy a rowboat ride with Swami Satchidananda, New York, 1969.

towel placed on top of a Swedish-modern coffee table that did double duty as his office desk. When we could no longer fit everyone into the space, lectures moved to the basement of the Universalist Church and, later, to its main sanctuary.

When the large apartment across the hall became vacant, a group of Yoga students decided to move in, commune style. There was one married couple, Shankar and Uma and their baby girl, Sasi, who would fall asleep on Sri Gurudev's lap when he gave lectures. Devi had to herself what was meant to be the maid's room. Two women—Shanti and Brahmi—lived in one bedroom, and three men—Bhaskar, Ravi, and Guruprem—shared the living room. The dining room was turned into an extra classroom. The kitchen was always filled with people and usually it was a mess. Everyone was, as Sri Gurudev described us, “a little screw-loose,” but it was so much fun to be there. Something very special, very important was going on and we wanted to be part of it.

We gathered at dawn for morning meditation and Hatha Yoga. We had outrageous, jam-packed *kirtans* with guitars and drums. We celebrated birthdays with parties for each astrological sign. Over three summers, Swami Satchidananda was invited to run things at Ananda Ashram in Harriman, New York. We piled into cars and drove out for weekends at the lake house. If you were really lucky, you'd be invited to ride in the car with Swamiji.

Most of the household maintained jobs to help pay the rent, and the administration of the Integral Yoga Institute was handled by a couple of full-time workers, a board of directors, and lots of volunteer Karma Yogis as the IYI grew and grew in size and stature. Soon more people wanted

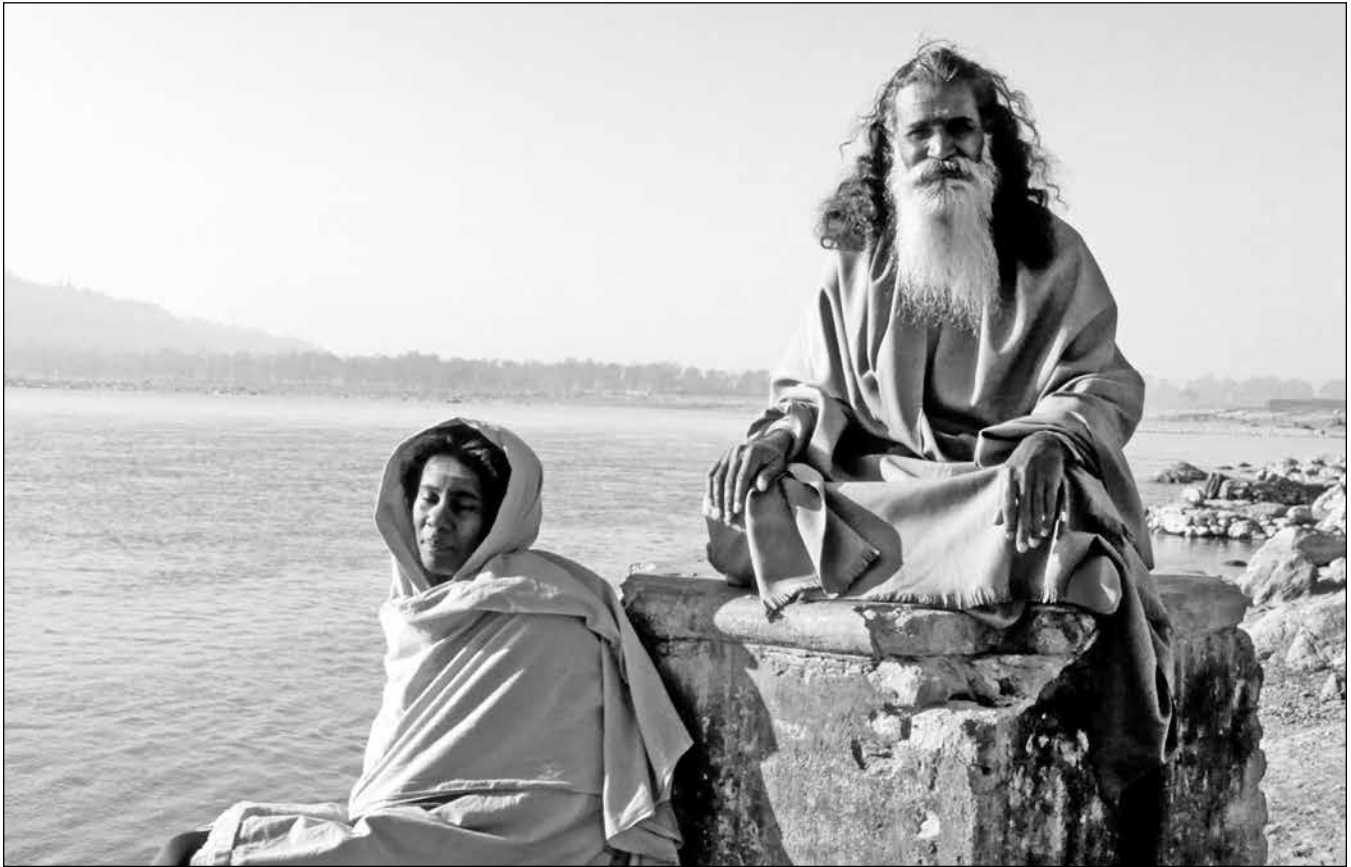
to move in: Annapoorni, Shankari, Kanniah, Sheela, Janardhana, Kumar Buckman, and Madhava. Sri Gurudev moved to a separate apartment on the 11th floor, and three other apartments in the building were occupied by Integral Yogis. Orange curtains started taking over more and more windows visible from the street.

I remember feeling so envious of those who lived in the IYI, for they were called the “Integral Yoga family.” They shared meals together and Sri Gurudev came to their “household meetings.” As a minor, I could only be a visitor, not a part of the household. I commiserated with Kumar Kramer, who was in the same situation. Everyone else living there was older and had already been independent. I graduated high school on a Friday in June, 1970 and moved in by Sunday. That summer, the IYI outgrew 500 West End Avenue, and the current building on West 13th Street was purchased as the main headquarters. It was the end of “the old days” and the beginning of a new era for Yoga in New York and the world.

Karuna Karen Kreps, RYT 500, taught classes of all levels at the Integral Yoga Institute in New York from 1968 to 1982. She was responsible for maintaining IYI teaching standards in the early 1970s. She has traveled with Sri Swami Satchidananda, staffed Yoga retreats, and lived at the Integral Yoga Institute. Founder and director of Net Ingenuity, Karuna built the sites integrallyogamagazine.org, swamisatchidananda.org, lotus.org, IYTA.org and LivingYogaMovie.org. For the past ten years, she served as senior editor of Integral Yoga Magazine. For more information, please visit: netingenuity.com.

INTEGRAL YOGA: LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

By Swami Karunananda



Alice Coltrane with Swami Satchidananda, Rishikesh, 1968.

Looking Back: The Past 50 Years

The 1960s

Throughout history, there have been identifiable shifts in our global consciousness—events and movements that have sparked major changes in society, culture, art, science, religion, and politics. In this ever-changing matrix of innovation, exploration, and discovery, the 1960s stand out as a pivotal moment, when powerful forces were set in motion that continue to transform who we are, what we believe, and how we live. The flourishing of Yoga in the Western world is part of that story.

If you were old enough to be aware of and young enough to be open to the whirlwind of change that was happening in the sixties, your consciousness was inescapably shaped by that experience. The hearts and minds of the youth who were growing up in the United States were jolted by the assassination of beloved and influential leaders, like President John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Vietnam War and the civil rights movement were in full swing. The rise and reach of the military-industrial complex was a topic of increasing concern.

It was a time of confusion, disillusionment, questioning, and searching. From that fiery cauldron emerged the hippie counterculture movement, which rejected the war and middle-class values, seeking instead a more natural, organic lifestyle and looking to Eastern philosophy for new direction and insight. Enter the Beatles and there was a musical revolution that gave voice to that quest and accelerated the transplanting of Yoga into Western society.

Sri Swami Satchidananda Arrives in the West

The sincere seeking of the youth attracted an influx of Eastern mystics and masters, Yoga adepts and teachers; among them was Sri Swami Satchidananda. He was soon surrounded by a group of hippies who were fascinated by his long, flowing hair and bright orange robes. His more sophisticated followers cautioned him against associating with those “pigs” and said that any respectable people would leave if he spent time with them. His response to their concerns was prophetic: “Well, if they are pigs, then I must be a mama pig, because *they are my kids.*”

That initial recognition set the tone for the Integral Yoga organization that was to develop worldwide. From the

outset, there was a strong sense of *sangha*, or spiritual community, and a deep feeling of connection to both Swami Satchidananda and one another. The Integral Yoga Institutes (IYIs) were not only teaching centers; they were spiritual homes, havens where one could find support and inspiration, friendship and fun, on the journey of self-discovery.

People from diverse backgrounds began flocking to Swami Satchidananda's talks. Gurudev (as he was called by his students) presented the classical teachings of Yoga in a way that was accessible, relevant, and took into consideration the capacity and culture of Westerners. He lifted our hearts, helped us to quiet our minds, and pointed to another way of life—one filled with hope, optimism, community, and new meaning.



Swami Karunananda

Birth of the Integral Yoga Institutes

With a look, a word, a touch, he ignited the Spirit within us, and in 1966 the Integral Yoga Institute was born. 1970 was a landmark year, when the buildings that were to house the New York and San Francisco IYIs were purchased. It seems that a Higher Power interceded to help secure both of these properties, probably because of the important role they were to play as pillars of the Integral Yoga organization.

When the day came to sign the papers for the purchase of the New York Integral Yoga Institute building, at 227 West 13th Street, we were short about \$1,500 for the down payment. On that very day, Alice Coltrane, who was a student of Swami Satchidananda's, happened to be meeting with him. During their visit, he received a phone call informing him of the urgency of the situation. After the call, Alice inquired whether anything was needed for the center. Gurudev replied that there were no pressing needs. After a little while, she thanked him and left, only to return a few moments later to retrieve her purse, which she had left behind. She had been planning to send a donation, but took this as a sign that she should not wait, but give the funds immediately. She wrote a check for \$1,500, the exact amount that was needed, and the deal was closed.

In San Francisco, a beautiful Victorian mansion was found that would be ideal for an Integral Yoga Institute. Again, financial problems arose: we had little money for a down payment and needed generous terms for the mortgage. At the same time, a wealthy young couple was offering to buy the house for cash. The owner was a retired army officer, and one can imagine what she must have thought looking at us with our flowing hair, bell-bottoms, and bangles. Yet somehow, against all logic, she was moved to sell the house to us, and 770 Dolores Street became home to the San Francisco Integral Yoga Institute. The New Age movement

sweeping the country and later the world found a fertile womb in the San Francisco Bay area, and the San Francisco IYI played a prominent role in the spiritual birth and renewal that were occurring.

Over the next decade, new centers sprang up all over the United States and throughout the world. Inspired by Swami Satchidananda's example of the peace that comes from living a selfless life, many people became whole-time members, dedicating themselves totally to their *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and service. Seeing their faith and commitment, energy and enthusiasm, Gurudev decided to take everything to another level by establishing ashrams, where many more people could come to live and immerse themselves in a yogic lifestyle. Thus, Yogaville East, in

Pomfret Center, Connecticut; Yogaville West, first in Lake County and then in Santa Barbara, California; and finally Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, in Virginia, were founded.

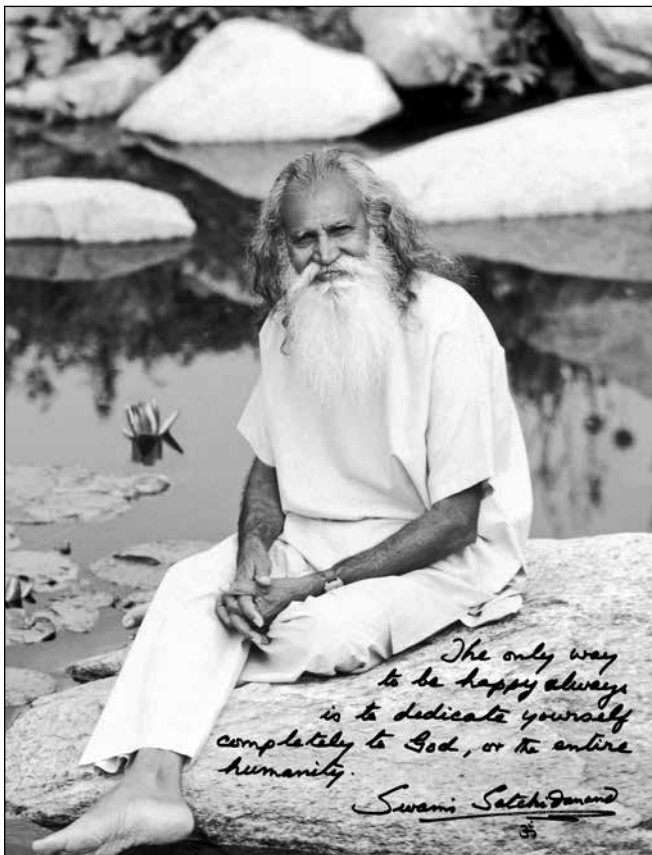
Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, Virginia

In 1979, 655 acres were purchased in Buckingham, Virginia, to serve as a residential community, a teaching center, a spiritual sanctuary, and the headquarters for our international organization. Starting with a small group of devoted disciples, in less than a decade, the Virginia countryside became the site of a dynamic Yoga village.

Describing the purpose of Yogaville, Sri Gurudev said: *"We should always remember why we came here: not just to be with a group of people, not for the place, not for the beauty. We have come here with one purpose: to reform ourselves, to refine ourselves, and to set examples for others. Continue your good work as one mind, one heart, in many bodies. Let the whole world be proud of you all. Those who want to see a better world should be able to come here and see that in a miniature world. If we succeed in making this place beautiful, peaceful, happy, and healthy, our mere living here and praying will help the outside world."*

"My vision of Yogaville is a little heaven on the earth. It is a village filled with people who follow the yogic principles. Everything conducive to Yoga will be seen there. Our goal is to make a beautiful Yoga community. If we can't make this little world of ours a happy and harmonious place to live, there is no point in talking about global harmony or global peace."

Looking back, one can see with greater clarity the depth and scope of Swami Satchidananda's universal and global vision. He came not only to transmit the ancient teachings of Yoga, but also to plant seeds that would change the world. He used to say, "Coming together is the beginning. Working together is progress. Living together is success."



The Goal of Integral Yoga

The IYIs and Satchidananda Ashrams were crucibles in which we not only practiced Yoga, but also put our practice to the test by learning how to live together with people from different faiths and backgrounds, of varied temperaments and perspectives. Integral Yoga was not only about personal transformation and realization; it was about peace for the entire world.

Swami Satchidananda made this dual intention very clear when he stated:

“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 crystal; and a life filled with Supreme Peace and Joy.”

The formula was simple: any change we wish to see in the world needs to begin with us, as we are part of the world. Instead of feeling angry, apprehensive, or depressed about things we can’t change, we can work on that which we, and we alone, can change—ourselves. When we experience and become established in the peace that is our true nature, our very presence and all that we do will be a source of healing, comfort, harmony, and peace.

MOVING FORWARD: THE NEXT 50 YEARS

Spiritual Practice

The entire world is yearning for peace. It is the need of the hour. Political remedies are temporary fixes at best. The one enduring solution is to experience peace in our own hearts and then express it in our lives. That is why spiritual practice is so important, especially today. Scientific and technological sophistication have become so subtle, so profound, that we are unlocking the secrets of nature, tapping into tremendous power. The potential for so much good, as well as the capacity for destruction, are at our fingertips.

If we are really concerned about all the critical issues facing the world today—environmental pollution, climate change, terrorism, religious and political strife, poverty, world hunger, and so on—our personal practice of Yoga needs to be prioritized. Our continued existence and the very life of our planet depend on more and more people understanding, and ultimately experiencing, that the same Spirit dwells within and unites us all. If we care about our children’s and our grandchildren’s future, each one of us must do all that we can to bring this awareness into the world.

Some scientists are saying that we have reached the “tipping point,” that there is no turning back from the harm being done to our planet. Yoga teaches us that the power of the Divine dwells within us. Many years ago, a big earthquake was predicted for California. It never happened. When Swami Satchidananda was asked about it, he replied that the earthquake did not occur because of all the people who were praying.

We are more powerful than we realize. Sri Swami Sivanandaji wrote that if our thoughts are noble, holy, and strong, they set into vibration every sympathetic mind. Unconsciously, all people of like mind take in that thought and then send out similar ones. The result is we set into motion great forces, which work together to overcome the negativity and selfishness in the world.

As Integral Yogis, as a worldwide *sangha*, we can make a difference by devoting some time every day to meditation and prayer, finding the peace within and praying for the well-being of all creation. If we want the nations of the world to release centuries of mistrust, intolerance, and hatred, we can begin by cultivating forgiveness and loving-kindness in our own hearts.

A little practice every day is better than a lot once in a while. Even fifteen minutes, twice a day, spent in meditation can be effective. If that seems like too much, we can start with any amount that we can’t possibly find an excuse not to do. Even if the goal is small, our commitment should be strong. That way, we will be planting and nurturing good seeds that will grow over time. It’s better to have a small goal with strong commitment than a big goal with weak commitment.

The same holds true for Hatha Yoga practice. If our lives seem too busy for a full routine, we can resolve to do a small amount daily. Even one asana will suffice, because chances are that once we begin we will do more. The benefits we experience will motivate us in that way.

Selfless Service

When the body is easeful and the mind peaceful, the life becomes useful. Each one of us has a role to play on the world stage. Wherever we are, whatever we do, we can strive to actualize Swami Satchidananda's guidance: "With every minute, every breath, every atom of our bodies, we should repeat this mantra: dedication, dedication, giving, giving, loving, loving. That is the best Yoga which will bring us permanent peace and joy." We can carry this spirit of selfless service into our family, workplace, school, and community.

One of Swami Satchidananda's favorite sayings, (which he even had inscribed on his personal stationery), comes from the *Bhagavad Gita*: "*Tyagat shantir anantaram.*" He interpreted it to mean, "The dedicated ever enjoy supreme peace. Therefore, live only to serve." On the auspicious occasion of the golden anniversary of Integral Yoga, why don't we embrace this wisdom teaching as our motto for the next fifty years? It is something we can all do, irrespective of our age, residence, education, or occupation. Put it as a screensaver on your computer, phone, or tablet. Write it on sticky notes and place them as reminders around the house or office. Every night, reflect: Have I done my best to live that way today? Where have I failed? How can I do better? We don't have to withdraw from the world to achieve spiritual goals; we can transform the world around us by our own right attitude and actions.

One way of doing that is by bringing together clergy of different traditions, local *sangha*, friends, and leaders in the community for a Light of Truth Universal Service. This unique and moving ceremony, in which representatives of different faiths offer prayers to a central light, is one of Swami Satchidananda's greatest gifts to the world and a centerpiece of his interfaith mission. It is a beautiful and powerful way to convey the message of LOTUS, the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine: "Truth is One, paths are many." In a time when the world is tearing itself apart because of religious intolerance, cultivating interfaith dialogue and harmony is of paramount importance and a contribution that we are well poised to make.

In our service as Integral Yoga teachers, we can share with others the fullness of what Integral Yoga has to offer. It is a comprehensive system that purifies, strengthens, and harmonizes every level of our being, leading gracefully and naturally to spiritual awakening. It is a complete spiritual package that addresses all aspects of the individual—will, emotions, and intellect—and provides a pathway to realization for people of varying tastes, temperaments, beliefs, and capacities. We can guide people not to limit their practice to the physical level, but to explore and go deeper.

Samadhi

Once at a *satsang*, Gurudev announced that he was going to tell us about the *samadhi* for Integral Yogis. Needless to say, we were stunned. Probably everyone was thinking, "Wow! There's a *samadhi* for us!" Even today, how many of us really believe that we can attain this state of higher awareness?

Then, he described *sahaja samadhi*, the easy, natural *samadhi* experienced while we are serving in the world. In that state, we retain dual awareness. Simultaneously, we feel the underlying unity, or Spirit, as well as the diversity—the myriad names and forms. It's as if we experienced the depths of the ocean, where it is always peaceful, and the waves on the surface at the same time.

Rooted in the unity, we can skillfully and dynamically interact with the diversity. Gurudev told us that the practice of Integral Yoga was preparing us for that attainment. Abiding in that state of higher consciousness, our very presence—our every thought, word, and deed—would help to restore peace and balance to the world.

With faith—in God, Gurudev, the Integral Yoga teachings, ourselves, and one another—we can draw all the strength, guidance, and support we need for this spiritual journey. There is no greater contribution we could make in the next half-century than to lead lives of discipline, devotion, and dedication and offer ourselves completely for the benefit of all.

As we move forward into the future, we can carry in our hearts this resolution given by Swami Satchidananda: "*From this day onward, my life will be all-embracing and harmonious. Let me learn to accept all the various approaches of people, because everyone is looking for the same happiness in life. Let me not condemn anybody because he or she looks a little different, thinks a little different, or acts a little different. Let me realize the spiritual unity behind the diversity and remember that we are all members of one divine family. Thus, in my own small, humble way, may I contribute to the peace, joy, and harmony of the world.*"

Swami Karunananda is a senior disciple of Sri Swami Satchidananda. In 1975, she was ordained as a monk into the Holy Order of Sannyas. She has over 40 years' experience teaching all aspects of Yoga and specializes in workshops, retreats, and Teacher Training programs that focus on the science of meditation, the philosophy of Yoga, personal transformation, and Yoga breathing techniques for better health and well-being. She developed, and for over 25 years has taught, the Integral Yoga Teacher Training programs in Raja Yoga and in Meditation. She is the author of Awakening: Aspiration to Realization through Integral Yoga and a contributing editor for The Breath of Life: Integral Yoga Pranayama and for the Integral Yoga Magazine. She also serves on the Board of Trustees and as the Chairperson of the Spiritual Life Board at Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville in Virginia.

TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS-BLISS

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA'S INTEGRAL YOGA

By Sharon (Padma) Gannon

त्यं ब्रूयात्प्रियं ब्रूयान्न ब्रूयात्सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयादेष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

*satyam brūyat priyam brūyan na brūyāt satyam apriyam
priyam cha nānṛitam brūyādeṣa dharmah sanātanaḥ
—Manusmṛiti 4:138*

The above verse is from an ancient Sanskrit scripture which says, “Say what is true, say what is sweet, but do not say what is true, but not sweet, nor say what is sweet but not true—so no harsh truths and no sweet lies.” Swami Satchidananda was the embodiment of this perennial wisdom. He walked this Earth as truth, consciousness, and bliss. For the many years that I had the good fortune of his blessed association, I experienced his ability to draw what was best out of a situation, as well as out of people. He spoke the sweet truth, conveying what was good and beautiful in the world and in people’s souls.

He may have had that keen ability of an accomplished master to see God everywhere, referred to in the yogic teachings as *sarvatmabhav*. In his presence fear, worry, self-consciousness, and complaints about other people appeared as they really were: small and petty. He taught us many invaluable lessons, for example: to always remain calm and cultivate a peaceful mind and a useful body; to not worry about what other people think of you—instead, focus on what God thinks of you. If people gossip and spread unkind lies about you, respond to them as if it was a wrong number and simply hang up the phone. He demonstrated how the cure for disease is selflessness; to become well all one has to do is to simply drop the “I” and replace it with “we.” “I-llness to we-llness” was one of his many brilliant contributions to medical science. He said that the way to be happy is to bring happiness to others. He reminded us that God is the ultimate doer and so he advised us to do our best and let God do the rest.

David [Life] and I met Swami Satchidananda twenty-three years ago. We had been invited to present an asana dance performance at the 6th Unity in Yoga Conference held during Memorial Day weekend, May 27-31, 1993, in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The conference celebrated 100 years of Yoga in America. The lineup of esteemed presenters makes current Yoga conferences seem quite pale. On arrival I was star-stuck at the list of conference presenters, which included, internationally

known Yoga masters: Sri Brahmananda Saraswati, (who was to become my own Guru-ji), Yogi Bhajan, Amrit Desai, Dr. Pratap, Liliias Folan, Kali Ray, Rama Jyoti Vernon (who founded Unity in Yoga, which became the Yoga Alliance), and the luminous, elegant, incomparable, Swami Satchidananda—the celebrated “Woodstock Guru.” I was told at the time that he was almost 80 years old, which I could not believe—his complete physical composure and the twinkle in his eyes conveyed a timeless enlightened soul beneath the ochre robes of a swami.

Our asana dance performance was scheduled as part of the closing ceremony on the final day of the conference. I remember being backstage in the large auditorium and peeking through the curtains to see if anyone had showed up for the show, as we were told that most people would leave the conference early in order to beat the traffic. But there he was—Swami Satchidananda sitting front row center next to Yogi Bhajan! I excitedly ran back to the dressing room to tell the other members of our company. David, who was focused rehearsing his solo—which was to appear as the finale, freaked out. “What? I can’t go out there and perform dressed like this, in front of them!” Actually David was not so much worried about being dressed as being undressed. Our Yoga dance piece was titled “Shakti Rising” and it was an interpretation of the rising of *kundalini* or consciousness through the seven *chakras*.

David was dancing the crown or *sahasrara chakra* and he was very scantily clad in only a dance belt, which covered his front but left his buttocks exposed. His solo was done entirely while he was standing on his head with his back to the audience—which meant he would be literally baring his buttocks—albeit with a colorful snake painted on his body but non-the less bare buttocks—for all to see, including the most revered Swami Satchidananda. We all had to work very hard to convince David to go through with the performance, which he did, and he did a splendid job.

After the performance we were all backstage surrounded by people congratulating us. A woman approached us, who turned out to be Swami Satchidananda’s long time assistant, Premanjali, and she said, “Gurudev, Swami Satchidananda, would like to meet you.” David turned and promptly found the nearest exit. I ran after him only to find he had locked himself in the bathroom. When I knocked he emphatically declared, “I’m not going to stand there while he chastises me; I was crazy to go on stage in front of him—I’m too embarrassed.” After pleading with David to no avail, I turned to go back to the group.

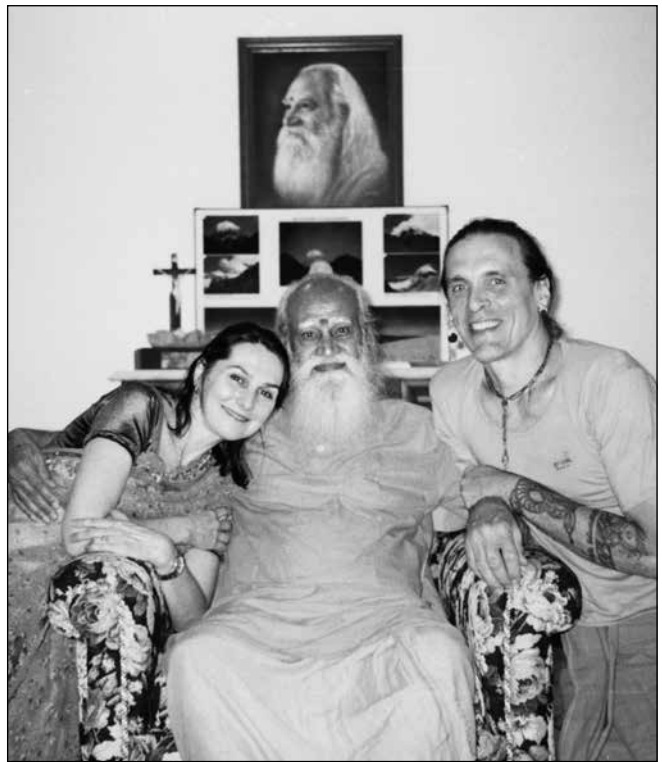
Walking toward me was Gurudev. “Where is the snake-man?” asked Gurudev. I pointed to the locked bathroom. He knocked gently on the door and said, “When you’re finished please come out, I’d like to meet you.” After a moment or so, David opened the door and stepped out. Gurudev was there with folded hands. He bowed his head and said in such a slow, calm, and totally sweet and sincere voice, “The dancing was superb, such a creative display of Yoga asanas—bravo! Your costume reminded me of how the *sadhhus* dress in India.” There was not a trace of negative judgment in his words; only streams of light and love flowed from his being, enveloping us and canceling out any trace of self-consciousness or embarrassment we may have had. David and I were speechless and gazed on while Gurudev continued, “I hear you have a Yoga school called Jivamukti? Ah, living liberated! Can I come and visit you there?” “Yes of course, Swamiji, anytime, you are very welcome, we would be honored,” we stammered.

Several months later, we received a phone call from Premanjali, saying that Gurudev was in New York City and there was time in his schedule when he could visit our school. He did come and he graciously gave a talk and stayed for hours afterward. To most normal people, worried about competition, profits, and so on, the presence of our brand new large Yoga school would have appeared as a rival competitor to his Integral Yoga Institute, just blocks away. But he made it clear that there can be many different flowers in the same garden and the bees will be attracted to what is sweet and beautiful. “You are teaching Yoga in an authentic way,” he told us. “This is sweet and beautiful. I see no need to worry, the world is big and New York City is big enough for all of us!”

From that time on we became close friends. I remember he would telephone us often. He also always called us on New Year’s Eve to wish us a Happy New Year. He graced us with a very flattering endorsement for our first book, *Jivamukti Yoga*. In 2002, we were invited to a United Nations ceremony in New York City to see him receive the U Thant Peace Award. We also traveled to Yogaville in Virginia to visit him at his home and met his “talking fish” who, in a Bobby McFerrin voice, sang, “Don’t worry, be happy.”

Shortly before he left his body, he invited us to come with him to India, as he wanted us to see his hometown, Coimbatore, in Tamil Nadu, where as a young man he had worked in the family automobile, truck, and machinery business. He was delighted to share with us some of the memories of his past life as a mechanic and his love for racing cars. We were delighted and humbled to share such intimate association with this illuminated spiritual giant who was also the kindest, sweetest, and most forgiving being I have known.

This year we joyfully celebrate 50 years of Integral Yoga—the method of Yoga that the great saint, Swami



Sharon Gannon and David Life with Swami Satchidananda, Coimbatore, India, 2000.

Satchidananda gifted to the world. Yoga means to unite, to bring together. In Gurudev’s own words, “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.”

Sharon (Padma) Gannon is co-founder of the Jivamukti Yoga method. Time magazine named Jivamukti Yoga one of the important forms of Hatha Yoga taught in the world today. Sharon and David Life have traveled extensively, teaching and presenting at American, European, Canadian, Asian, and South and Central American conferences.

In 1999, they established the Animal Mukti Free Spay & Neuter Clinic of the Humane Society of New York City, which was the first free spay and neuter clinic in the city. In 2008, Farm Sanctuary awarded Sharon and David their Compassionate Living Award. In 2003, Sharon and David established the Wild Woodstock Jivamukti Forest Sanctuary, a 125-acre wildlife refuge in upstate New York to provide protection for many diverse species of animals and plants.

Sharon and David have co-authored four books on Yoga: Jivamukti Yoga, Practices for Liberating Body & Soul, The Art of Yoga, and Yoga Assists. Sharon is the author of Yoga and Vegetarianism and Simple Recipes for Joy. She and David also have produced the popular DVD, Transform Yourself with Jivamukti Yoga.

50 YEARS OF INTEGRAL YOGA—ENVISIONING 50 MORE

By Chandra/Jo Sgammato

On July 31, 1966, Yoga master Sri Swami Satchidananda set foot on United States soil for the first time. The acclaimed Pop artist Peter Max had been invited a few months earlier by the filmmaker Conrad Rooks to meet and study with Swami Satchidananda in Paris. That experience convinced Max that he had found the secret to feeling happy and peaceful all the time.

“Please come to America,” Peter Max said. “The youth of America need you.” “If they need me,” the Swami said, “I will come.”

Soon a diverse group of artists, musicians, art directors, photographers, and lots of other people were discovering that Yoga poses, deep relaxation, breathing practices, and meditation made them feel better than they’d ever imagined possible. Peter Max and friends organized talks and Yoga classes, at first in the Oliver Cromwell Hotel, on West 72nd Street near Central Park, where Swami Satchidananda was being hosted, and then in an apartment they rented for him at 500 West End Avenue. That set in motion the founding just a few months later, of the Integral Yoga Institute of New York, on October 7, 1966.

In 2016, Integral Yoga turns 50 years old; it has more than 5,000 current teachers and 30 learning centers on six of the seven continents. Yoga was new to the Western world when Swami Satchidananda arrived and is now practiced by an estimated 20 million Americans.

Swami Satchidananda taught what he termed “Integral Yoga,” a synthesis of six branches of classical Yoga aimed at purifying and calming the body and mind. He encouraged selfless service to others, which would help anyone discover and maintain the peace and happiness that were, he said, the birthright of all. His message resonated with many people in the 1960s who were looking for a way of living that was deeper and more meaningful than what they perceived as society’s superficial, materialistic, and unjust conventions.

In January 1969, Swami Satchidananda delivered a lecture and several of his students gave a Yoga demonstration at New York City’s world-famous Carnegie Hall to a standing-room-only crowd. In August 1969, he opened the Woodstock Music and Art Festival and told the audience of 400,000 “The entire world is going to watch this. The entire world is going to know what the American youth can do for humanity.” He was thereafter referred to affectionately as the “Woodstock Guru.”

Integral Yoga Institutes, teaching centers, and ashrams opened in the late 1960s and early 1970s across America.

Those centers, along with many public talks and retreats, drew thousands of people from all walks of life to the teachings of Swami Satchidananda and Integral Yoga. Some were drawn when they simply saw his photograph; others said they had had visions of him long before ever actually learning of or meeting him. Many have described the experience of connecting with this teacher in these words: “. . . and that was it!” Some knew they would follow his teachings and dedicate their lives in service to this Guru, and many have been with him ever since.

Swami Satchidananda was one of the featured speakers at the Holy Man Jam, which was part of the 1970 Whole Earth Festival in Boulder, Colorado. His talk there led to the immediate founding of an Integral Yoga Institute in Boulder. In August 1970, the first Integral Yoga interfaith retreat was held, at Annhurst College in South Woodstock, Connecticut, and attended by more than 400 people, including two members of the music group the Young Rascals and the singer Laura Nyro, all of whom had become students. The singer-songwriter Carole King also became a devoted student of Swami Satchidananda’s.

Many other multi-day silent retreats were held, like the one in Monticello, New York, in 1973, where hundreds of people came together to learn and live the yogic life and take mantra initiation, dedicating themselves to a path of personal growth and peace. The retreats offered people a chance to experience ashram life for up to ten days.

The Integral Yoga Hatha class was for many people their first experience of Yoga. Hundreds of Integral Yoga teachers were trained and they taught thousands of students in all kinds of settings—community centers, schools, prisons, hospitals, churches, drug treatment programs, and universities. Those early years of Integral Yoga laid the groundwork for the immense popularity today of the ancient science of Yoga.

In 1972, Swami Satchidananda spoke to his students about his vision for Yogaville, a “Yoga village” where seekers would live together practicing the yogic teachings, a large community where they could grow organic food, educate their children, and create a community based on yogic values and high ideals. Yogaville West was founded in Lake County, California, north of San Francisco, in 1972. Yogaville East was established in Pomfret, Connecticut in 1973.

On the first Earth Day, in 1972, Swami Satchidananda and the New York Integral Yoga Institute were featured at a huge rally in Union Square Park in New York City. Integral Yoga Natural Foods had recently opened and was for a long time the only place in the city where people could buy natural,

organic vegetarian food. It remains the city's only 100 percent vegetarian market consistent with the teachings of Yoga. Integral Yoga Natural Foods in Charlottesville, Virginia opened in 1975 and is true as well to Swami Satchidananda's vision of healthful eating that also benefits the planet.

When Swami Satchidananda envisioned a temple to honor all the world's faiths and a place with plenty of room for a Yoga community to grow, Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville, Virginia was born. In 1979, 655 acres of land were purchased an hour outside of Charlottesville, Virginia, in Buckingham—a beautiful rural location on the James River. On the Guru Poornima weekend in 1986, after years of planning and hard but loving work, the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS) was dedicated during two days of ceremonies that brought religious leaders from all over to Charlottesville and Buckingham to celebrate the world's first shrine to house altars for all the major faiths.

A pivotal moment in the history of Integral Yoga and preventive health and wellness came when a young medical student named Dean Ornish found that his stress and depression were relieved when he practiced Integral Yoga, and he embraced Swami Satchidananda's teachings. Convinced that these practices could reverse heart disease, he applied the most sophisticated medical tests and research to prove the efficacy of those ancient precepts. He made history with his best-selling book *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program to Reverse Heart Disease* and inspired many others in the Yoga world and the medical profession to develop Yoga programs for an array of chronic and life-threatening conditions.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Integral Yoga expanded and helped to spark the current popularity of Yoga in the West. Yogaville grew, attracting more spiritual seekers each year. Swami Satchidananda traveled and spoke all over the world, at Yoga conferences, peace conferences, interfaith gatherings, and more. He met with religious and civic leaders and served on the advisory boards of numerous Yoga, interfaith, and world peace organizations. In recognition of his humanitarian service, he received many prestigious honors and awards.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Swami Satchidananda began to remind his students that he had taught them everything he could and that they should continue to apply his teachings in their lives and live by example, inspiring others. He was invited to India in August 2002 for a world peace conference and while in India, he entered *Mahasamadhi*, when a God-realized soul makes a conscious final exit from the body.

Integral Yoga had to find its way to manifest the Guru's legacy and his supreme trust in them to carry his teachings forward and to further generations. The administrative boards and leadership have continued to dedicate their lives to ensure the successful continuation and spirit of the Integral Yoga organization. The beauty of the Integral Yoga

community is that it blossomed organically in 1966 thanks to the desires of a few people who saw the value in its teachings. It has continued to grow over the years because more students, volunteers, and future Yoga teachers keep coming through the doors of its many centers and onto the land at Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville.

What does the future hold? More opportunities to bring Yoga into formerly unconvinced quarters: veterans' hospitals, mental health institutions, corporations, and more. The emerging field of Yoga therapy holds great promise with its recognition of the healing power of Yoga in the modern age. As we look toward the future, we also look to the members of a new and younger generation to bring their vision to the running of all the centers and the Ashram to ensure the continuity of Swami Satchidananda's teachings.

A wonderful recent development is the establishment of the Integral Yoga Global Network, a group consisting of heads of centers and representatives from all over the world. Its mission is to communicate, connect, and collaborate with all Integral Yoga teachers. To that end, it has recently completed a website to serve all. Please enjoy visiting www.integralyoga.org.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Integral Yoga, let's pause to honor each person who was here in the 1960s and every decade after. In gratitude for their service, in awe of what all have accomplished over the past 50 years, let's contemplate the next 50 and how we, and those still to come, can continue to share the great gifts we have all received on this path. The world is in more need than ever of peaceful approaches to resolving conflicts small and large. Our planet will benefit greatly as more people embrace Integral Yoga's approach to vegetarianism and clean, healthy living. Each person will delight in the knowledge of their own peace and joy, love and light. As Sri Gurudev himself said, *"Let the light of Yoga shine in your very own life. Set examples for others. You are not going to teach something by your words or actions, but your very life should be the teacher. That is what real Yoga is."*



ChandraJo Sgammato has practiced Yoga her entire adult life. After a career in book publishing and as an author, she became a certified Integral Yoga teacher in 1998. She was hired as a receptionist at Integral Yoga Institute of New York, where she has served in a variety of areas, including the founding of Yoga At School™. Currently she is the general manager of the New York IYI and a member of the Integral Yoga Global Network.

LIVING THE TEACHINGS: THEN AND NOW

By Swami Ramananda

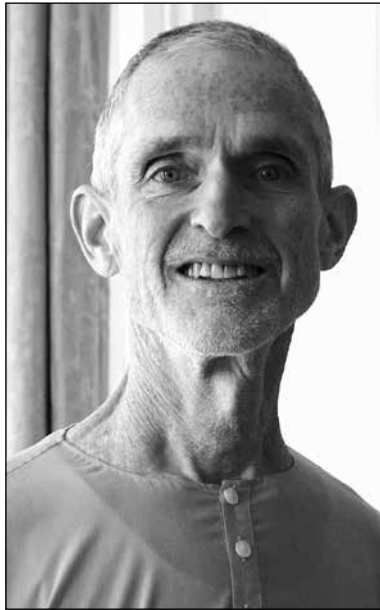
Many of Swami Satchidananda's early students were young and didn't have careers or families of their own to take care of. They were deeply inspired by his living presence and teachings, and gave themselves wholeheartedly to Yoga practice. In those early years, silent retreats were attended by hundreds who happily camped or crammed into tight quarters to be present.

In 1970, buildings were purchased in both New York City and San Francisco, and both Integral Yoga Institutes filled with residents eager to immerse themselves in a yogic life. Those accommodations often consisted of large rooms divided by sheets and with numerous mats on the floor, sometimes housing as many as 25 or 30. Some of the residents committed themselves even further by taking *sannyas* (monastic) vows, emulating Swami Satchidananda and his life dedicated to service.

Count me among those swept up in a wave of enthusiasm for the pursuit of Self-realization. I was among those who puzzled over the conflict between religions that all claimed to be the only way. The teachings of Swami Satchidananda addressed all those issues with such depth and lucidity. Many of us experienced a high that replaced the drugs we had experimented with, relishing the sense of community and support we found by diving into our Yoga practice together. Not only did Yoga represent something that gave meaning to our lives, but transforming ourselves felt like a significant response to the ills that plagued our world.

So inspired, I made up my mind to take *sannyas* vows and, in 1979, gave away everything I owned. I packed my clothes into my pickup truck, drove to the Ashram and handed over the truck and the small amount of savings I had. My intentions were sincere but I had a lot to learn. I threw myself into the Ashram schedule and tried make myself into a good yogi.

Compelled by the same, forceful mentality predominant in our Western culture, I didn't recognize that I was simply repressing my thoughts and feelings in order to create a spiritual persona. Living in spiritual community inevitably exposed to all of us our selfishness and attachments, a process that Swami Satchidananda called "rubbing and scrubbing" one another. It was sometimes humiliating to see how petty my desires were, especially if Gurudev pointed them out.



We all have to learn that we cannot simply bypass our hidden darkness; we have to face it. While the practices of Yoga can bring powerful experiences, we may have to look deeply into our addictive behavior or emotional distress. Many of us from those early days had to complement our Yoga practice with the cultivation of self-acceptance and mindfulness, or engage in some form of therapy to release the unresolved emotions that were tied inside us like psychic knots from the past.

Swami Satchidananda taught us to analyze our suffering in order to unearth the way it is rooted in the ingrained belief that a special achievement and/or a stellar reputation can make us happy. He also made clear that Yoga practice is focused

not just on mastering the mind but on opening the heart by serving others. Though we hear stories of how yogis isolated themselves in caves or jungles performing intense practices, Sri Gurudev guided us to be involved in the world.

Once, after practicing Hatha Yoga and meditation for many years, Swami Asokananda and I asked Swami Satchidananda whether we should deepen our practice by devoting more time to it. He paused thoughtfully and encouraged us instead to bring our practice into the way we lived, to make our service a meditation. He was a living example of how the energy and focus we gain can be channeled into whatever we do.

That became more and more important to understand as many of those early students found life partners, started families, and embarked on career paths to support them. Some of them had little or no time for the practices they had learned and needed to see that Yoga can just as easily be practiced in a conversation, in a business office, or with one's children as on a Yoga mat or in a class. It can mean seeing and serving God in our neighbors. Sri Gurudev's playful saying "Do your best, leave the rest" is readily applicable to anything we do and guides us to find the joy in the doing, not in the outcome.

Swami Satchidananda began to ordain Integral Yoga Ministers in the late 1970s, making clear that married and single yogis could be just as committed to living the Yoga teachings as *sannyasis*. He explained that true renunciation is defined not by a name or an orange robe but by an inner attitude of selflessness, of considering the well-being of everyone instead of only our own.

The idea of living the teachings became the cornerstone of the formal Teacher Training program that Sri Gurudev instituted in the mid-1970s. He felt that Yoga teachers should first of all experience for themselves the benefits of all the practices and learn to integrate them into their lives. In a stroke of genius, he devised a safe and simple Yoga class format that, when followed, creates a profound experience, quieting the mind and thoughts to reveal a personal center of peace that one can learn to access at will.

That method of Teacher Training and the accessible style of practice have enabled thousands of students to become teachers and offer classes all over the globe. The easy-to-follow outline of asana, relaxation, *pranayama*, and meditation empowers students to develop a home practice instead of relying on a teacher. It makes it equally easy to adapt the practices to the amount of time one has and to the physical and mental condition of students.

Because of that, Integral Yoga has been customized so that its powerful healing effects may be taken safely to populations with heart disease, cancer, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, mental disabilities, and a host of other conditions. Integral Yoga trains teachers to work with pregnant women, parents and babies, children, teens, the elderly and dying, as well as students capable of subtle, advanced practice.

I have been practicing Yoga for more than 40 years now and have watched its proliferation—not just geographically, but into almost every segment of our culture. Yoga practice has been combined with Pilates, Tai Chi, dance, massage, psychotherapy, and a host of healing modalities. New “styles” of Yoga appear regularly, teachers seeking to put a personal signature on what they offer, as Yoga classes and accessories have grown into a \$16 billion industry.

Has all this tainted the practice and diluted its original purpose? No doubt, a whole spectrum of Yoga classes and teachers can be found, from the most superficial and commercialized to the most closely aligned with Self-realization. In many communities, the most popular forms of Yoga are dynamic styles that offer a workout-like experience, and those may appeal to many people because the physical effects are more dramatic than with a subtle practice. But that form of practice can simply be another way of expressing the same, “Just do it” mentality that we subconsciously allow to compel many aspects of our lives, and it lacks the transformative potential of Yoga.

I also believe that the emergence of a technology-oriented culture is creating an addiction to the continuous stimulation of messages, images, and sound bites, and that may prompt more people to seek a Yoga practice that offers internal stability. Fortunately, Swami Satchidananda and

the other Yoga masters from India stayed long enough in the West to establish a foundation of authentic Yoga practice that is available and will endure.

As with many services available to the public, Yoga students must find classes that meet their needs. Those seeking relief from the stress of measuring up to some image of success or are interested in spiritual awakening will naturally gravitate to a more meditative method. There, they can disengage from the embedded mental stories that govern their relationships to the world around them.

My own teaching has evolved so that I give more and more emphasis to the importance of separating ourselves from the stream of thought that normally defines us. I almost always begin classes now by reminding students of the original intention of Yoga. I am continually experimenting with ways to guide students to listen honestly and respond to the sensations in the body as it is, instead of imposing some idea of how it should be. I encourage a deeply focused attention in order to cultivate a non-reactive awareness that frees a practitioner from conditioned thinking and over time exposes a deep form of inner contentment independent of circumstances.

Of course, Yoga will continue to evolve. Stress from many sources seems to be increasing, and Yoga and meditation are being proven to be successful in reducing it and helping people heal from both physical and mental illnesses. Because Integral Yoga is uniquely effective in addressing those conditions, I believe its practice will be incorporated into many institutional settings, such as hospitals, senior centers, prisons, rehabilitation facilities, hospice sites, corporate environments, and universities.

Integral Yoga has both a strong administrative foundation and a proven method for training teachers. I believe that if we can find creative ways of supporting and collaborating with our teachers worldwide, the number of centers already in existence will double in the next 50 years. One thing won't change: the teachings that have transformed lives and brought peace to many hearts are timeless.

Swami Ramananda is the Executive Director of the Integral Yoga Institute in San Francisco and a greatly respected master teacher in the Integral Yoga tradition, who has been practicing Yoga for over 40 years. He leads Yoga teacher training programs in San Francisco, and offers a variety of programs in the United States and around the world. He is a founding board member of the Yoga Alliance and currently serves on the Certification Committee of the International Association of Yoga Therapists. For more information, www.integralyogasf.org.

YOGA, MEDICINE, AND TRANSFORMATION

An Interview with Dean Ornish, M.D.

Integral Yoga Magazine (IYM): Please tell us about your relationship with Swami Satchidananda.

Dean Ornish (DO): Let me begin by saying that I wouldn't be alive today if it weren't for Swami Satchidananda—because I was very close to committing suicide when we first met back in 1972. There's an old saying that: "When the student is ready the teacher appears," and that was certainly true for me. He really saved my life at a time when I was despondent. I was in medical school and had a spiritual vision that was more than I could handle, which was that nothing could bring lasting happiness. And this realization, combined with the feeling that I was never going to amount to very much—and even if I did it wouldn't matter anyway—was profoundly depressing. I had gotten a case of infectious mononucleosis that wiped me out. When my parents realized I wasn't doing well, they brought me home to Dallas to recover. My plan was to get well enough to kill myself.

I was at home when Swami Satchidananda—central casting's idea of a swami, with saffron robes and a long white beard—walked in the door and he gave a *satsang* (spiritual discourse) in our living room. He started off by saying, "Nothing can bring you lasting happiness," which felt very validating because that's what I had figured out—even though everyone else was saying, "Oh, get married, get rich and famous, and you'll be happy." While he affirmed what I was realizing about lasting happiness, he was beaming and I was miserable! I wondered, What am I missing here?

He went on to say—and this is what really turned my life around—that nothing can bring you lasting happiness because you have it already, if you only don't disturb that. He explained that, in the process of misidentifying where our peace and happiness come from, we end up running after so many things that we think are going to bring it to us. Doing that, we disturb the inner peace we already have—if we would just stop disturbing it. It's one of the great ironies of life.

Swamiji liked to make puns, and when people asked him if he was a Hindu, he'd say "No, I'm an Undo," which I really love. The process of Yoga and meditation—and for that matter virtually all spiritual practice—is not about bringing us a sense of peace and well-being but, rather, to help us to identify and undo what disturbs our own innate peace and health and well-being. If we have to get our well-being from outside ourselves then everyone who has what we think we need has power over us. But if the question becomes, "What am I doing that is disturbing my own inner health and well-being?" That's very empowering because that's something I can do something about.

IYM: How did these teachings influence the way you pursued a career in medicine?

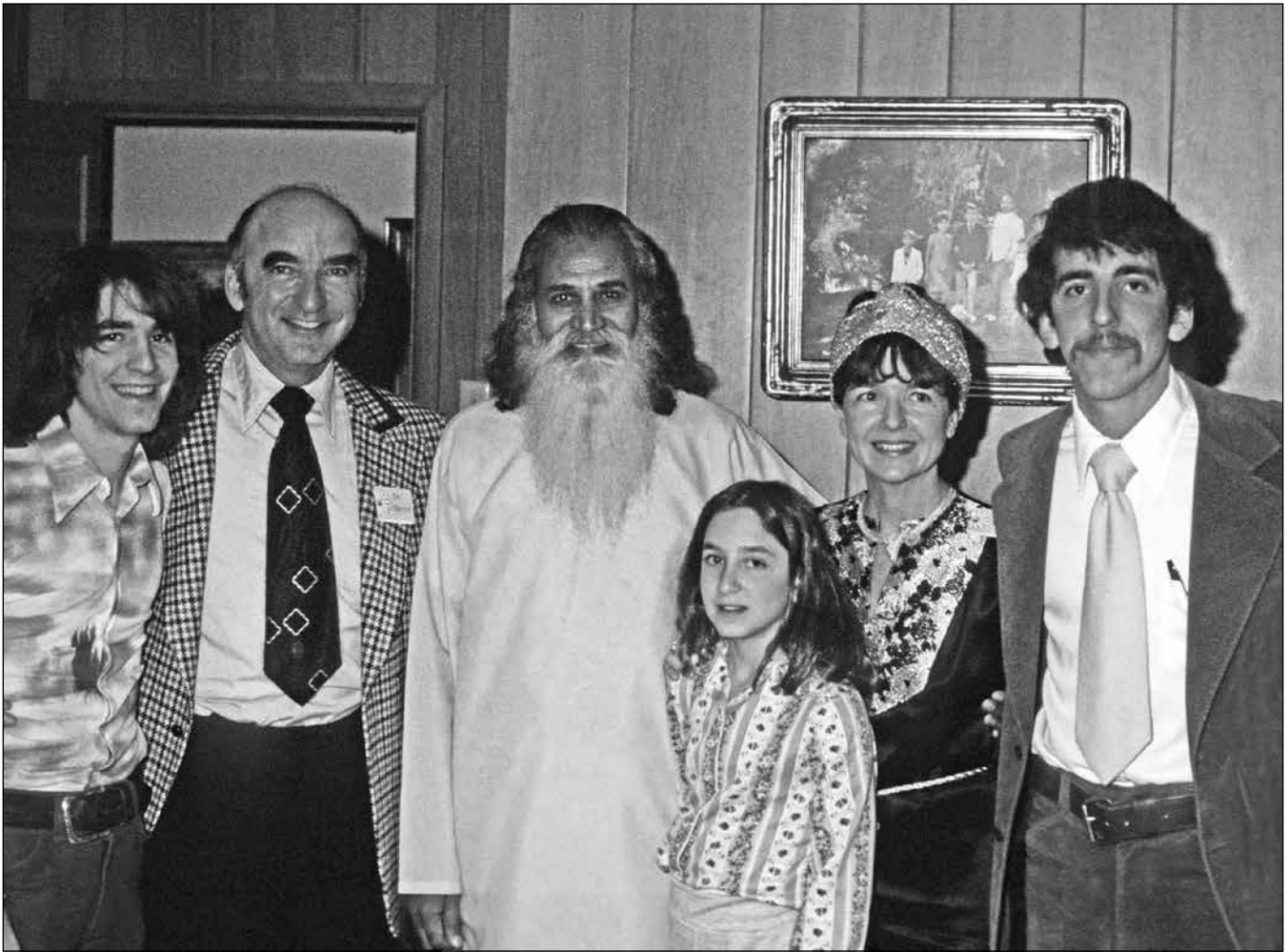
DO: Swami Satchidananda's teachings form the basis of the Lifestyle Medicine Program I developed. Lifestyle Medicine is the most exciting trend in medicine today. A healthy lifestyle not only helps to prevent disease, but oftentimes can reverse it. I've been doing work in this area for almost 40 years. And we've been able to use these very high tech, state of the art, scientific measures to prove how powerful these very simple interventions can be.

We first showed that heart disease was reversible and later we showed that type 2 diabetes could be reversed. When people are put on blood pressure medications, cholesterol lowering drugs, or diabetes medication, they ask the doctor, "How long do I have to take these?" the doctor usually says, "forever." When we began our research with heart disease, we were able to show for the first time that even severe heart disease could often be reversed when people made intensive changes in diet and lifestyle. That, I learned from Swami Satchidananda: whole foods, a plant-based diet, moderate exercise, various Yoga practices, basically an Integral Yoga Hatha class—meditation and breathing techniques, and progressive relaxation, along with what we euphemistically call "social support," which is really love and intimacy. Eat well, move more, stress less, and love more. Sometimes people have a hard time believing this—that simple changes can have such powerful outcomes, but they often do.

One of the most important things that I learned from Swami Satchidananda was that he would always ask, "What's the underlying cause?" revealing a causal chain of events that leads to a problem. If we can treat the underlying cause and not just literally or figuratively "bypass" the problem, our bodies often have the remarkable capacity to begin healing. Underlying causes are, to a large degree, the lifestyle choices that we make each day: what we eat, how we respond to stress, whether or not we smoke, how much exercise we get and, perhaps most important, how much love and support we have.

IYM: Fifty years ago, there was no such thing as Lifestyle Medicine. Now, it's gaining wider acceptance.

DO: I think Swamiji would be pleased to see the convergence of forces now that finally makes this the right idea at the right time. The limitations of drugs and surgery are becoming increasingly well-documented. In a crisis, drugs and surgery can be lifesaving, but our randomized trials have shown that, in people who have stable heart



Dean Ornish (pictured with his parents, brother, and sister) met Swami Satchidananda at the Ornish family home in 1972.

disease, angioplasties, and stents really don't work nearly as well as people once thought; in most cases they don't prolong life or prevent heart attacks.

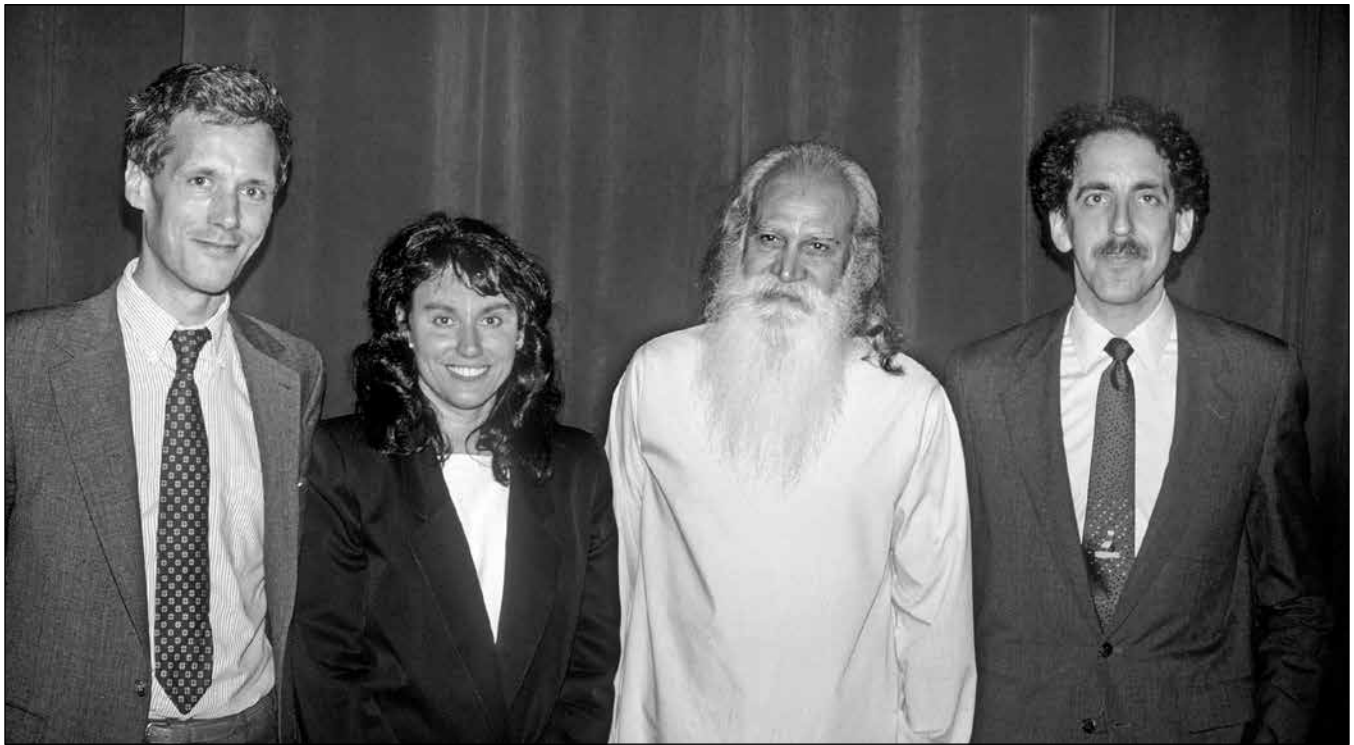
Half of the American population is either diabetic or pre-diabetic. Getting your blood sugar down with drugs doesn't prevent the premature deaths and the horrible complications of diabetes nearly as well as reducing it with diet and lifestyle, at a fraction of the cost, and the only side effects are good ones. In men with early stage prostate cancer, it turns out that maybe 1 out of 49 men, with early stage prostate cancer benefits from surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy—the other 48 either end up as impotent, incontinent, or both at huge personal and economic cost for no real benefit. We've been able to show in a randomized trial that when people make the prescribed lifestyle changes, they can often slow, stop, and even reverse the progression of middle and early stage prostate cancer. What's true for prostate cancer will actually be true for early stage breast cancer as well. We also show that when you change your diet and lifestyle in these ways, it changes your genes.

IYM: How does it change our genes?

DO: I remember years ago hearing Swami Satchidananda talk about how you can even change your genes by changing your diet and lifestyle and I thought, *Oh wow, this time he's really gone too far!* But, now, it turns out that's true! We did a study and we found that in just three months over 500 genes were changed—up-regulating or turning on the genes that keep us healthy, down-regulating or turning off the genes that often cause chronic diseases, particularly the genes that cause chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and the oncogenes that promote prostate, breast, and colon cancer. In three months over 500 genes were affected just by changing diet and lifestyle. These changes could actually lengthen telomeres (caps at the end of DNA strands that protect chromosomes) thus beginning to reverse ageing at a cellular level. In all of our studies we found that the more people changed, the more they improved at any age.

IYM: Do insurance companies now cover Lifestyle Medicine?

DO: In 1993, through our non-profit institute, we began training staff in hospitals and clinics to deliver our lifestyle programs. We found that even though we got better clinical



"Mind-Body Connection" symposium, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1987 (l-r Dr. Michael Mitra Lerner, Dr. Sandra Amrita McLanahan, Swami Satchidananda, Dr. Ornish).

outcomes, bigger changes in lifestyle, larger cost savings than had ever been shown, and better adherence as well, a number of sites closed down because we didn't have reimbursement from insurance companies. The painful lesson was that, if it's not reimbursable, then it's not sustainable. So that began a 15-year journey with Medicare to provide coverage for our program and after 16 years of review they created a new Medicare benefit category to cover our program. That became really important because, if you change reimbursement, you change medical practice and even medical education. We've now expanded across the country to help create a new paradigm of health care rather than sick care that's very rewarding for physicians and other health care practitioners.

Instead of a doctor having to see a new patient every 10 minutes, which is profoundly unsatisfying for both doctors and patients, Medicare will pay for 72 hours of training which we divide into 18, 4-hour sessions. So there is an hour of supervised exercise, an hour of Yoga and meditation (who would have thought 15 years ago that Medicare would be paying for Yoga and meditation?) an hour of a support group, which is creating a safe environment where people can talk openly and authentically about what's really going on in their lives, and an hour of a group meal with a lecture.

After they have finished those 72 hours, they continue to meet among themselves, which is why we are getting 85 percent to 90 percent adherence to our program after a year, which is unprecedented. A lot of doctors think, *Oh my patients still take their cholesterol lowering drugs, but there*

is no way they are going to change their lifestyle to this degree, and yet the adherence to statin drugs like Lipitor is not very good—half to two-thirds of people are not taking them after just 4 to 6 months, and yet we are getting 85 percent to 90 percent adherence to our intensive lifestyle program after a year.

Now that Medicare is paying for the program, many of the other major insurance companies are covering it too. If you change reimbursement, as I mentioned earlier, it helps change both medical practice and even medical education. It all really stems from the experiences that I had with Swami Satchidananda and the guidance in modeling what we are doing; it really goes directly back to him.

IYM: The experiences during the 1970s, when Integral Health Services opened?

DO: Yes, back when I was a medical student in the early 1970s, I met Amrita (Sandra McLanahan, M.D.), one of Swamiji's early students. With his guidance, she started the country's first integrative medicine clinic in Putnam, Connecticut. She doesn't really get a lot of credit for that, unfortunately, but it was really the first one. I visited and she had a whole team of practitioners working with her, and that's what we do now: We have a doctor, a nurse, a Yoga teacher, an exercise physiologist, a psychologist, and a dietitian working together as a team.

IYM: Why do you think it's taken so long for wider acceptance of this approach?

DO: When you're challenging the conventional wisdom it can be threatening, but that's also a part of what makes it meaningful. I was talking with someone in government recently and I said, "You know, it took 16 years for Medicare to approve our program" and he said, "Only 16 years?" The wheels of change sometimes move slowly, and that's one of the things that I learned from Swamiji. He would look at things over lifetimes, not necessarily just this lifetime; whatever work you do in improving yourself carries forward and really the work that we do is what I call a "conspiracy of love." If I went to the insurance companies and said that we want to teach people how to quiet down their minds and bodies so they can experience inner peace, and develop more compassion for themselves and others and lead lives of service and love, they'd say, "You're out of here buddy!" So, it took us decades to get this far.

IYM: Are there other Integral Yoga teachings that helped shape your approach?

DO: One of the things I learned from Swamiji was that when someone is suffering there's an openness to change that you don't always find. He and I used to talk probably once every week or two for decades—it was a really deep personal relationship. I remember when I first started talking with him and I'd say, "I'm really hurting." He'd say, "Good!" and I'd say, "Wait, no, that's not good, it's bad." Then, he'd explain, "No, it's good because now there is an openness and a receptivity to change that might not have otherwise been there." So when we work with people who have just had a heart attack or have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, there is a receptivity to change that we don't usually take advantage of as doctors because we don't have the time or training to do that, but in our program that's what we do. I can't tell you how many people have said things to me like, "Having a heart attack was one of the best things that happened to me." At first I said, "What are you nuts?" Then they'd tell me, "No, that's what it took to get my attention, to get me interested in making these changes that have transformed my life to such a degree that might not have happened otherwise."

We can learn to reframe suffering and view it not as punishment or as something bad but, rather, as information, as a teacher that's saying, "Hey, listen up, pay attention! You are not doing something that is in your best interest." One of Swamiji's favorite examples was that if your house is on fire, you can cut the wires to the fire alarm and just go back to sleep, but you've just killed the messenger and the fire will just get worse. So much of what I was trained to do in medicine was to metaphorically cut the wires to the fire alarm; literally or figuratively bypass the problem or kill the pain with drugs or other things, as opposed to saying, "How can we use that as a doorway or as a catalyst for helping people transform their lives for the better?"

IYM: Yoga is so popular today, but the interest seems to be primarily in Hatha Yoga as either exercise or stress management.

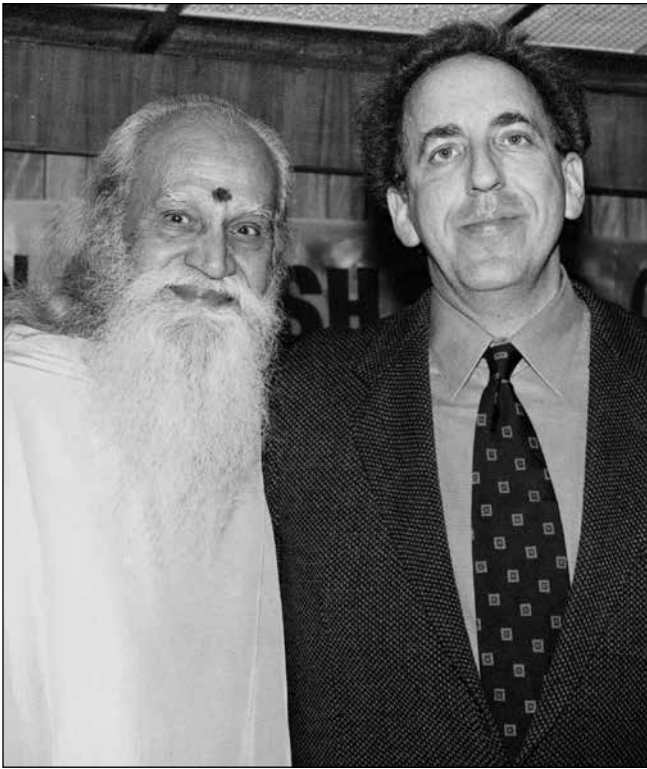
DO: Hatha was the part of Yoga that was always the least interesting to me. I got interested in it differently than most people because my interest came out of my own sense of existential pain. I remember being in India with Swamiji once and there was a yogi who was doing all these amazing Hatha Yoga contortions trying to get Swamiji's attention and he was deliberately ignoring him. Afterward I asked, "Why were you ignoring him?" and he said, "Well, it was just ego. You know, 'Look at me, look what I can do. I can twist myself into a pretzel.'" One of the things I love so much about Swamiji's teaching is that he always said, "Yoga is not about learning to stand on your head; it's about learning to stand on your feet." Another of his puns was, "We're born fine, and then we de-fine ourselves" and we get stuck in all these definitions of who we are that isolate us from other people.

The ancient yogis didn't practice Yoga to simply manage stress. Yoga offers powerful tools for transforming our lives, for quieting down our minds and bodies to enable us to experience the inner sense of peace, but also to transcend the sense of being a limited person. Yoga enables us to have the vision that on one level we are separate—you're you and I'm me—but on another level, we're a part of something larger that connects us all, that ineffable transcendent state; that oneness, that unity, whatever name you give to that.

We see so much violence and suffering in the world, so much of it is related to, "my way is the right way" type of thinking. When Swamiji built the LOTUS temple he gave the world a tangible example of how to heal the illusion of separation that is the root cause of so much suffering. He showed us that yes, we can enjoy the diversity, but we can also be grounded in the underlying truth of love, compassion, transcendence, and service that are part of something larger that connects us. To me, in my limited understanding, this is really what healing is at the deepest level.

IYM: What are our greatest health challenges today?

DO: The real epidemic isn't just heart disease, or diabetes, or even depression, it's loneliness and isolation because of the breakdown of social networks that used to give people a sense of connection and community. We have lots of ways of numbing, or killing, or distracting ourselves from that pain and so one of the things that Swamiji always used to say, as I mentioned earlier, is that pain is there as a messenger to say: *Pay attention, you're not doing something that's in your best interest.* I am continually impressed by how dynamic these underlying biological mechanisms are, how quickly people can get better or worse depending on



Opening of first Ornish Lifestyle Program in India, 1999.

what they're doing, when they make these changes and how they can not only help us live longer but improve the quality of our lives so that we can live better as well.

IYM: How do you motivate people to make positive lifestyle changes vs. feeling that your program is restrictive?

DO: When you commit to eating certain foods and not eating other foods, is that restrictive? It can be seen that way or it can be saying, "I am choosing not to eat certain foods because I feel so much better that it's worth it." I ask patients, "Why do you want to live longer?" They'll say, "I want to be able get rid of this pain so I can watch my kids grow up, so I can dance at their weddings, so I can go back to work." If what you gain is so much more than what you give up it reframes those choices and makes them meaningful, and if they're meaningful then they are sustainable.

One of the things that I learned when I was suicidal was that it's not necessarily a given that people want to live longer. The biggest selling prescription drugs in this country are the cholesterol lowering drugs and also anti-depressants. Telling someone who is lonely and depressed that they are going to live longer if they just change their diet and lifestyle is not that motivating. It also showed me that it's not enough to focus on giving people information and expecting everyone's going to change; if that was the case nobody would smoke. We have to work at deeper levels, not just the behaviors, not just the information, but the deeper levels: the psychosocial, the emotional and even the spiritual

dimension. If people have a sense of meaning and purpose, they are much more likely to make sustainable changes.

Seventy years ago, Viktor Frankl wrote about this when he looked at concentration camp survivors and found that the ones who survived were not necessarily the strongest or the healthiest, but they were the ones who had the strongest sense of meaning and purpose. This is something that Swamiji often talked about, that these are important questions to ask ourselves, because if we can really get in touch with what brings us a sense of meaning and purpose then it enables us to live a much more joyful life, not just a longer life.

I also learned from Swamiji that we all have an inner guru; an inner teacher, inner wisdom, sometimes it's called "the still small voice within." At the end of a meditation or a Yoga class ask yourself, *What am I not paying attention to that I need to listen to*, because that voice speaks very clearly, but very quietly. It gets drowned out by the chatter of everyday life but when we can listen to that it can be an incredibly powerful force for change.

IYM: Where do you see the interest in Yoga heading in the next fifty years?

DO: I think it is going to move away and expand beyond Hatha Yoga into more of Yoga's spiritual basis; that people will use meditation not simply to manage stress more effectively but to become more mindful of the issues really going on in their lives, leading them to ask themselves: *Where does my sense of peace come from? Where does my sense of health and well-being come from? What am I doing that's disturbing that? How can I live a life that's more congruent with a sense of meaning and purpose and therefore more joyful?*

I think that is the level that Swamiji was always helping guide us toward. He used to say that Hatha Yoga is just a doorway to get people to be able to sit still long enough in meditation so that they can then do this deeper work; it's only the beginning. What I learned from Swamiji more than anything and more than from anyone I have ever met before or since, is that he really understood the roots of suffering, the roots of healing, and the roots of what enables people to live a joyful, meaningful life. These are the lessons that have been the guiding principles for me.

Dr. Dean Ornish is resoundingly recognized as a leader in health, healthcare, and medicine. For almost 40 years, Dr. Dean Ornish's series of scientific research studies have been empowering the way millions of people think about the simple lifestyle choices they make each day in dynamic relation to their health and well-being. Dr. Ornish is a revolutionary thought leader, a powerful professor, a beloved author and respected advisor to some of the world's most powerful leaders. For more information: www.deanornish.com.

MAKING YOGA MORE ACCESSIBLE

By Reverend Jivana Heyman

*“Adapt, adjust, accommodate, bear insult,
bear injury, highest sadhana.”*

—Sri Swami Sivananda

Teaching

The question I often ask myself is, *How can we adapt the practices of Yoga without watering them down?* Is there a way to make all of Yoga accessible to people with disabilities, chronic illness, seniors, or people who will never find their way into a Yoga class? Sometimes in adaptive Yoga there is a tendency to focus only on the physical practices and we end up with a chair exercise class. When we simplify Hatha Yoga we often lose the subtle practices, which is unfortunate and unnecessary. Ironically, the subtle practices of *pranayama*, *Yoga Nidra*, and meditation are the most universal and accessible of all the physical practices.

Unconscious discrimination may be one of the reasons this happens. In our culture, people in these communities are often seen as less than, and unworthy. In teaching Accessible Yoga, I emphasize the core teaching of Yoga—that we are all the same in spirit: Yoga is really about transcending our physical form and connecting with the universal Spirit. With this understanding, a Yoga class for people with disabilities becomes an opportunity for us to guide people within to connect with their true Self—the same opportunity that we offer all our students in Integral Yoga.

Also, the teachings of Raja Yoga can be applied universally and hold much power and potential. I’m finally recognizing that making something accessible is very different from dumbing it down. In fact, making something truly accessible demands mastery and creativity.

I’ve found that it’s often people who have been oppressed or who have survived pain and suffering who can transform themselves when given access to the practices of Yoga. In the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali’s first teaching in Book 2—the portion on practice—is Kriya Yoga, which means Yoga in action. It is a three-part process: *tapas* (accepting suffering as a tool for spiritual growth), *svadhyaya* (reflection), and *Ishvarapranidhana* (surrender).

When you take these three parts together, they form a powerful tool for Self-realization. As soon as suffering arises we can make a choice to react to the pain or to learn from it. If we are open to learning, then we ask ourselves, *what have I done to create this? Where is my attachment?* That’s a process of reflection. Once we identify the cause of the suffering—which is always one of our attachments—then



Reverend Jivana Heyman

we can surrender to God. The attachment that we have is a misunderstanding. We are looking to the external world for happiness and fulfillment when that peace is found only within.

Kriya Yoga is a corrective process. We are misaligned when we seek happiness outside of ourselves, and that is the cause of all suffering. An experience of suffering is an opportunity for reflection and self-analysis, the true work of a yogi. We see where we are attached, where we have bound ourselves. Then, through surrender, or faith, we unbind ourselves and release the grip of that attachment to experience freedom.

This inner Yoga is the core of a solid Yoga practice. Fancy asanas are great, but as Swami Satchidananda always said, “Yoga is not about standing on your head but standing on your feet.” I realized that the way to encourage growth and transformation in my students with disabilities was to give them access to the full spectrum of teachings.

Karma Yoga

Swami Satchidananda teaches us, “There’s nothing wrong outside; it is all in the mind.” He says that Yoga is based on self-reformation, which means that we are responsible for changing our own perspective rather than trying to change the world to make it fit our personal preferences. Most activists would have a hard time with that concept.

Activism generally implies that you want to change the outside world. There's a lot of ego in that; even if the work you're doing is positive, it's still about you.

Trust me, I tried to change the world, and it was very stubborn! I've also tried to change my husband, my parents, and my kids. I wasn't very successful, so now I try to take a different approach. I think it's similar to what I hear people talking about when they refer to spiritual activism. To me spiritual activism is service: Karma Yoga.

Karma Yoga has a goal different from that of activism, although they may look the same on the surface. Karma Yoga is a form of love. It's not about volunteering a few hours a week; it's about dedication and pouring your heart into your work and into all your actions. I think Karma Yoga is the most challenging path of all because we're always doing something. Is it possible to dedicate every breath, every step, and every email? Swami Satchidananda always said, "The dedicated ever enjoy supreme peace, therefore live only to serve." Can we do that? I'd like to say that my motivation is pure and egoless, but that's just not true. My ego is alive and well, and we are currently in negotiations (but that's another story).

The teaching and sharing of Yoga can be a great vehicle for service, but teaching Yoga is not necessarily service if it's done to build your ego or just to make money. As Yoga teachers we hold in our hands the most precious gift: peace. We have a responsibility to share that gift with the world and to do so with love and compassion.

The Future of Specialized Yoga

My current project is the creation of the Accessible Yoga Network. It will start as a directory of teachers and organizations that serve those populations. The project has been in the works for some time, but now I'm even more inspired since Yoga Alliance implemented its new Yoga therapy policy. As I've expressed directly, I feel that its policy will discourage Yoga teachers from getting training in how to bring Yoga to special populations, since doing so is often referred to as Yoga therapy. Basically, Yoga Alliance is not allowing training hours in Yoga therapy to be used toward Yoga Alliance registration, and it is not allowing registered teachers to use words related to Yoga therapy in their online profiles.

The Accessible Yoga Network will be a resource for prospective students to help them find the right Yoga teacher and the right Yoga class. Honestly, I can't tell you how often people will ask me for a referral for a Yoga teacher in their area. It will also be a platform for teachers and organizations to connect with their communities regionally and according to their service. For example, teachers who specialize in sharing Yoga with students with Parkinson's disease can find one another through our network.

I also want to set a minimum standard for training in the area of Accessible Yoga. I have great respect for the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT), yet not everyone interested in this work will be able to take an 800-hour training, after a 200-hour basic training, and become a certified Yoga therapist.

I feel there is a large gap between the world of Yoga Alliance and that of the IAYT, and I hope we can fill that void. It's not a coincidence that the gap is where we find the most sensitive and marginalized members of our community, such as people with physical and intellectual disabilities, invisible disabilities like PTSD or fibromyalgia, people with larger bodies, members of the LGBTQ community, the financially disenfranchised, and others. A major part of the Accessible Yoga Network will be a pledge of service and a commitment to share Yoga with those who don't currently have access.

December 3 is the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities—an international holiday of sorts. In December 2015, I was honored to be invited by the United Nations Human Rights Commission to share Accessible Yoga during its celebrations in Geneva, Switzerland. It was an amazing experience to be part of an international event of that scale and to be at the United Nations, which is emblematic of our potential to come together as one world family. In fact, I really felt overwhelmed by the energy of the building—that famous conference room where the desks are in a big circle and the names of all the countries around the world are displayed in front of their representatives.

What surprised me the most was the similarity between the mission of Accessible Yoga and the message of the world's disability organizations, all of which had representatives present. Their message was one of personal empowerment and recognizing the potential of every single person regardless of physical or intellectual ability. They explained that there are more than a billion people with disabilities around the world, and many are not granted basic human rights. Swami Satchidananda teaches us that we are one universal family, and each of us is an aspect of the Divine. The disability rights community is expressing the same idea, that each person is worthy of respect, independence, and freedom.

After that experience, I was inspired to consider ways to serve internationally and expand the message of Yoga for all. So, we've broadened our service to include the celebration of another international holiday: June 21, the International Day of Yoga, which celebrates Yoga as part of India's cultural heritage. We are trying to bring awareness to the fact that Yoga is for everyone, and we are offering to support the organizers of the International Day of Yoga with information and imagery that is inclusive and accessible. As I always say, "If you have a body and a mind you can do Yoga."



2015 Accessible Yoga Conference.

Integral Yoga's 50th Anniversary

Swami Satchidananda gave the world a precious gift in the form of Integral Yoga. What a joy it is to celebrate 50 years of his service and all those who have served in his name. It's remarkable how much energy he had to propel the teachings so far and wide.

For the Yoga community at large, I think this anniversary is a chance to reflect on the teachings of a modern Yoga master. There has been tremendous growth in the Yoga world in these past 50 years—from almost nothing to a booming business. So many people are practicing. The problem is that most Yoga students aren't being given access to the subtle and profound teachings that Swami Satchidananda offered.

This anniversary is an opportunity for all Integral Yogis to recommit ourselves to service and to our own personal *sadhana*. I think it's also an opportunity to reflect on the next 50 years of Integral Yoga—and not only reflect but also create a clear plan for how Integral Yoga can continue to grow and flourish into the future.

I'm a member of the relatively new Integral Yoga Global Network, as well as the Teachers Council. In both of those bodies there is a renewed interest in international collaboration among our centers and teachers. One example of that collaboration is the beautiful new global Integral Yoga website: www.IntegralYoga.org.

I also see a potential for growth through our affiliated

programs, like Accessible Yoga. There are many organizations like mine that grew out of Integral Yoga. Maybe there's a way to harness the energy of those programs and reconnect them with Integral Yoga. I would encourage all of us to take the opportunity of the 50th anniversary to consider how we can give back to Integral Yoga for all it has given to us.

I would love to take this opportunity to thank Swami Satchidananda for showing me a path to peace and for being an example of a true yogi. His dedication to service and to seeing the Divine in everyone and everything is a guiding force in my life.

Reverend Jivana Heyman, E-RYT 500, is the founder of Accessible Yoga, which is an international organization dedicated to sharing Yoga with all. Currently, Accessible Yoga offers annual conferences, Teacher Training programs around the world, Ambassador Programs, and an online directory, the Accessible Yoga Network. Jivana is also co-owner of the Santa Barbara Yoga Center, manager of the San Francisco Integral Yoga Institute, and an Integral Yoga Minister. He currently serves on the Integral Yoga Teachers Council and with the Integral Yoga Global Network. His passion is making Yoga accessible to everyone, and empowering people with the Yoga practices. The tools of Yoga can transform our lives by teaching us how to find that refuge of peace within ourselves, no matter what is happening to us or around us. That is the most empowering gift of all—the gift of peace. For more information: www.AccessibleYoga.org.

MY FIRST INTEGRAL YOGA EXPERIENCE: TWO TEACHER TRAINERS LOOK BACK

By Kali Morse and Rashmi Galliano

We have been leading Basic Integral Yoga Teacher Trainings for many years now and of course, one of the first practices that we share with the teacher trainees is *Surya Namaskaram*.

My (Kali) first experience of *Surya Namaskaram* was in the early 1970s in the Main Room at the New York Integral Yoga Institute. I put my white towel down on the carpeted floor beneath the picture of Sri Swami Satchidananda and there began my experience of the practice of Hatha Yoga. I remember in that first physical application of the process of “twelve positions flowing one into another,” feeling that this connection of movements was divine choreography. I was a dancer and had learned a lot of steps in choreographic sequence, but this sequence was different somehow. The way it was communicated to the students was unique. Coordination of breath and movement was specifically emphasized, but we were also encouraged to feel energy flow with the breath—the expression of that thing called *prana* (life force). I seemed to understand innately what it was about as the movement became much more mindful and sacred. In hindsight it certainly was a plus that my practice evolved that day beneath the picture of Sri Swami Satchidananda, whom I would soon identify as my teacher.

Unlike Kali, I (Rashmi) do not recall my first *Surya Namaskaram* experience. I started practicing Yoga in 1984, but it was about the asana rather than *Surya Namaskaram*. It wasn't until 1992 that I started to take classes that incorporated Sun Salutations. What I do remember about practicing Sun Salutations was that they were more Ashtanga-based: jump-backs, *chatarunga*, and so on. I don't even know how I got through them, but I do recall getting really sweaty and incredibly sore!

Not until I discovered Integral Yoga did I recognize the beauty and fluidity of the practice. The Integral Yoga Sun Salutation practice is beneficial no matter what challenges are experienced. I always come back to these beautiful positions, with modifications if necessary. There is a grace and purity in the simplicity of the practice, and there is really no other reason to practice the flow other than how Swami Satchidananda taught it: twelve positions that flow one into the next, serving as a general tonic for the body and a warm-up for the asana practice.

Now we both have the privilege of introducing the practice of *Surya Namaskaram*, year after year, to new students in open classes and in Teacher Trainings. Naturally, we both practice this beautiful sequence almost daily as part of our own personal *sadhana*. It's important to remember that the practice is about *prana*. It's also crucial to keep the practice simple, as Swami Satchidananda taught; too much

movement may interrupt the flow of *prana*. We encourage our students to listen deeply to the body-mind on each day of practice; the movements then serve to attune our sensitivity to where we are on any given day (physically, emotionally, psychologically) and to adjust our ongoing practice gently in light of that valuable information. This approach comes from the way we have been taught to convey the teachings of Integral Yoga. The practice is about meditation—structurally and physiologically informed—but always aligning this information with absolute attention to breath—the energetic flow. We feel inspired to practice in this way; it is the path that leads us to the center of our being.

The elegant Integral Yoga sequence of asana that Swami Satchidananda taught his students is beyond words. *Surya Namaskaram* is the warm-up that points the arrow to the evolution of asana that Integral Yoga students have been practicing for 50 years.

For me (Kali), it has been about 45 years of practice and it's as if I were practicing for the first time with every round. I complete my 70th trip around the sun this year, and I have no doubt that, from my first *Surya Namaskaram* to my last, I've been blessed with sacred teachings from a Master. He has guided me powerfully with the gift of inviolable interpretations of Raja Yoga, the *Bhagavad Gita*, including the six branches of Integral Yoga, and Ashtanga Yoga.

I (Rashmi) can only aspire to be where Kali is in her 70th trip around the sun! In the meantime, I'm inspired by her because Kali carries Swami Satchidananda's teachings so close to her heart and, through Gurudev, has guided me on this glorious pathway of peace, joy, love, and light!



Kali Morse, E-RYT 500, currently serves as Director of Teacher Trainings at the New York IYI. She has taught Hatha Yoga and meditation in many different settings and has been training Hatha Yoga teachers in the Integral Yoga system for more than two decades.



Rashmi Galliano, E-RYT 500, is a Basic and Intermediate Level teacher trainer at the New York IYI. She has been teaching there since 2006.



INTEGRAL YOGA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Reverend Lakshmi Barsel, Ph.D.

When Swami Satchidananda first came to the Western world, we, his students, were largely a bunch of very rough stones. Yoga was just one of the elements making up the so-called alternative lifestyle practices, which in the United States, often included the proverbial “sex, drugs, and rock and roll.” At that time he adapted the ancient, sacred teachings of classical Yoga to our needs—both the needs that we thought we had and the needs that were ever present but hidden from our gaze.

I recall a time when a young man, new to Yoga, expressed his interests in life as being good food, fast women, and fast cars. He asked Swami Satchidananda how Yoga was going to help him. Sri Gurudev immediately put the man at ease by explaining that Yoga would increase his enjoyment of all those things by helping him digest his food better, giving him more energy for all those women, and focusing his mind so that he could drive those fast cars with greater control and agility. That was the illuminating way Sri Gurudev was able to connect with people and demonstrate how Yoga could meet them wherever they were and open doors that would lead them to the greatest heights.

Integral Yoga contains the essential classical Yoga teachings of the enlightened masters who designed the practice of Yoga thousands of years ago. It lays the foundation of Yoga practices with moral precepts (the *yama* and *niyama*); it integrates the action of Karma Yoga (selfless service) with the devotion of Bhakti Yoga; and it integrates the body in Hatha Yoga with the breath in *pranayama*, the senses in *pratyahara* (sense control), and the mind in concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*), and *samadhi*. Any of these perfectly crafted practices—even in a very watered-down form—bring harmony to the body, mind, and spirit.

Once, many years ago, I began corresponding with a prisoner. A friend of his in prison had taught him a few Yoga postures, which seemed to energize, strengthen, and relax him in a way that he had never experienced before. He began to practice those asanas regularly on his own. Then, some very unexpected things started happening. When he watched movies with noble heroes in them, the stories would bring him to tears. He hadn’t cried in years. Usually the prison experience is a very dehumanizing one; it numbs the emotions and leaves the heart wounded and calloused. Out of nowhere, his emotions were being reconnected with his heart and his heart healed. He knew it was the Yoga, but how was it doing it?

That question motivated him to reach out to us to find the answers. He began to study the teachings of the great Yoga masters like Patanjali and Vyasa and to read all of

Swami Satchidananda’s books. Yoga is an integral part of his life now, and he is often asked to teach the Hatha Yoga portion of the Eastern religion classes at his prison.

That is the way it is for many people. They may not be incarcerated behind concrete walls, but they often live in their own, self-made prisons, longing for a different life. We are all searching for happiness. The 21st century seems to offer a lot of possibilities for pleasure, but the more we pursue that pleasure the more true happiness eludes us. We experience an ever growing dissatisfaction with our lives. Often a catalyst comes when something goes wrong: a loved one dies, we lose a job, or we go through a divorce. Then we start searching. We might join a Yoga class at a gym, or a friend might tell us about a silent retreat at “this cool Yoga place in Virginia way out in the country.” We search the Internet for “Yoga,” and then there it is—Yogaville.org or IntegralYoga.org. Finally, we take the leap and show up on the doorstep of Satchidananda Ashram or an Integral Yoga center.

A saying goes, “When the student is ready, the Guru appears.” I’ve lived at Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville now for thirty-three years. Year after year I’ve watched the right people come here at the right time. Their stories are distinct, but they are all ready for new solutions to their problems. Integral Yoga programs and retreats serve as the gateways to those solutions. Some people absorb as much as they can, then take it home and share it with others. Others come again and again. Still others come and stay. A few will never be able to come but connect with us through the Internet or through Swami Satchidananda’s books and DVDs.

Right now more people are coming to our centers than ever before, and more seem to be a perfect match for Integral Yoga and our Integral Yoga community. They come, and they don’t want to leave. Many who visit Yogaville extend their stays and try to find ways to live permanently in this residential Yoga community.

One of our more long-term programs at Yogaville is the Living Yoga Trainee (LYT) program, in which people come and stay at the Ashram to live a yogic lifestyle for one month to three months at a modest cost. They serve the Ashram selflessly by helping us in the kitchen, with housekeeping, and however else they are needed. They are guided in the study of the ancient yogic texts and practice Hatha Yoga, *pranayama*, and meditation, all led by senior teachers of Integral Yoga. If they wish, they may participate in a worship service (*puja*) every morning. They enjoy the good company of like-minded seekers and thrive here.

For twenty-five years I've taught the Living Yoga Trainees at one of their weekly scripture classes. I often ask them the basic questions, "Where do you come from? Why did you come? Is this program meeting your expectations?" They come from all over the country and around the world. Their ages can range from late teens into the 80s, but most of them are young, often in their 20s and 30s. Their answers to my questions continue to amaze me and leave me in awe at the level of their understanding and their keen desire to attain spiritual goals. From a space of genuine sincerity they tell me that they are here to grow closer to God, align themselves with the True Self, or become better people. The LYT program is working for them and exceeding their expectations.

Our latest community newlyweds, Ramdas and Prashanti Wilson, are graduates of the LYT program and may serve as examples of what the future holds for Integral Yoga. They came at different times to our community: Ramdas to sort out his feelings about a career that was not working for him and Prashanti to heal from a divorce. Yogaville spoke to them. They stayed longer. After the kitchen internship program, Ramdas became one of our beloved chefs. Prashanti arrived later but immediately felt drawn to the community and the lifestyle here. She extended her time after the first month of the LYT program and somehow ended up in the kitchen working with Ramdas. They slowly got to know each other and found themselves to be kindred souls dedicated to the teachings of Swami Satchidananda and believing in the future of this sacred place.

Another one of our life-transforming programs is the Integral Yoga Basic Teacher Training program. This program is designed to immerse the teacher trainees in a yogic lifestyle. They not only learn how to teach a basic Integral Yoga Hatha class; they also experience the fulfillment of living a yogic lifestyle and bonding with a group of people who want to love, serve others, and purify their bodies, minds, and souls. It is often the graduates of this program who return to Yogaville as our second generation of leaders, and they form the backbone of our community. Wonderful examples of such teachers serving and living at the Ashram are Shankari Bowmaster, director of Group Services, Rukmini Ando, director of Program Development, Jivada Fritts, director of the Integral Yoga Teachers Association, Sita Rose, Academy Manager, Ambika Cristelli, director of Guest Services, and many more.

The third group of amazing yogis who are becoming our leaders and molding the future of Integral Yoga are the adult children of first-generation students of Swami Satchidananda's. Some of this group of yogis grew up in Yogaville, but most of them were raised in other places but with Sri Gurudev's teachings as part of their lives. Our webmaster and director of Shakticom, Sam Eberle, is an example of one of these second-generation yogis. Bhuvaneshwari, our program coordinator, is another. Adharsh McCabe (whose father was the LOTUS architect



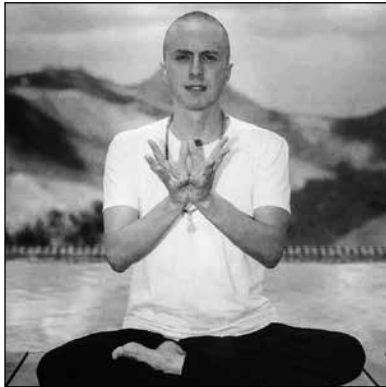
Reverend Lakshmi Barsel

and whose mom is now living in Yogaville) moved here with his family several years ago. He served as a Day Manager and then Operations Manager. His wife, Sri Devi, served in housekeeping and managed the Lotus Conference Center until she enrolled as a full-time student at the University of Virginia. Recently they had to move away, but they stay connected, as do other Integral Yogis who see Yogaville as their spiritual home.

Once Swami Satchidananda told his students that they would never live to see the full fruition of the seeds that were planted in the 20th century. We are getting a glimpse of that truth as we see the seedlings of his service and the past 50 years of Integral Yoga sprouting up and putting forth leaves and blossoms. That growth is bringing the great souls who are continuing to build our community and take Integral Yoga out into the world, a world that desperately needs the eternal yogic teachings. I see only the most radiant of futures for Integral Yoga, and I know it will continue to grow well beyond our humble beginnings, in 1966, far into the new millennium.

Rev. Lakshmi Barsel, Ph.D. became a dedicated student of Sri Swami Satchidananda in 1979. She and her husband Rev. Paraman Barsel live at Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville, Virginia and, ever since, have been a part of building the community and teaching and serving those who come to Yogaville. She is an Integral Yoga teacher and has also taught at the Yogaville Vidyalayam, served at the Ashram Reservation Center, and directed Yogaville's program development and advertising. She now serves as a volunteer, directing the Satchidananda Prison Project.

INTEGRAL YOGA TEACHERS: THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I'VE LEARNED IS . . .



Swami Sachidananda's teaching about seeing life as a game. He said, "Play, play, play." When I took Teacher Training, I was going through very emotional processes (separation, death of my grandmother, my mother's cancer). Through Integral Yoga, I learned to find the lightness within the body and mind. Today, I feel more secure, more peaceful and my practice and the way that I try to spread the teachings of this legacy are happier and lighter.

—Roberto Arjuna El Check Jr., Brazil



Three essential teachings that illuminate my path: 1) Strive for self-improvement and the improvement of others, 2) Respect there are many paths to the same goal, and 3) Practice: peace is love. It's a miracle to have the blessing to sit at the feet of a Satguru and I am committed to bringing the teachings of Integral Yoga into the field of education where it is greatly needed.

—Dr. Ram Bhagat Richmond, Virginia



Something that one of my trainers in Basic Teacher Training shared with me: "Trust the practice." It's true. The practice of Yoga—in or out of class—even when I'm not sure of myself, always renews my faith in the practice. I've never left a Yoga class—either as a student or a teacher—wishing I had done something else. I'm always curious if it works the same for others. Often enough, it does. So I'm inspired to continue on this lovely path. The very best advice for daily life is the "Four Locks and the Four Keys" (from the *Yoga Sutras*).

—India Henson, Birmingham, Alabama



The realization that we can unite the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual parts of our being in a single practice; that when we practice with devotion and surrender, even daily activities can be experienced as the essence of Yoga.

—Lidia Priya Amaral Lopes, Brazil



From Swami Sachidananda and how he taught very profound things in a playful way, with humor. His approach to teaching and communicating inspired me to found Creative Yoga Therapy (CYT), which provides creative, playful, profound approaches to Creative Clinics for marginalized populations and their caregivers. His approach to teaching and communicating inspired me to learn more about Hindu arts and integrate them so people from other cultures, with other beliefs feel comfortable and benefit from CYT. I've been successfully sharing Yoga in challenging situations because of what I learned from Swami Sachidananda. And, I also have a much happier personal life!

—Nina Priya David, New York City



The experience of interfaith understanding, to put into practice respect for all spiritual paths, and be open to various forms of devotion.

—Ricardo Mitra Gaya, Brazil



The importance of *pranayama* and meditation. I started doing breath work at home, which led me into an intense exploration of meditation. My asana practice completely changed as a result. My body became more calm, confident and joyful. With the help of my IYTT instructors, I breathed and meditated my way through emotional baggage. My heart and my body became light. It becomes a bit easier to make the lifelong journey that is Yoga if we drop unnecessary burdens.

—Loretta Czernis, Ontario, Canada



You don't have to push at 100 percent capacity to get the benefits of Yoga. I invite my students to practice at whatever level feels right—if it took everything they had just to get to the mat that day, I give them permission to do a 10 percent practice. I believe that letting students choose for themselves how hard they want to “push” each time teaches them to tune in to themselves better, respect their changing energy levels, and feel that the energy they do expend is for their own sake and not mine.

—Stephanie Crowley
Redwood City, California



To learn how to go back home to my Self—my real home. I try to focus within, move away from my personal interests, and direct my energy to what I can do to for the well-being of all. I learned that everything flows from inside out. That allows me to embrace principles of truth, compassion, humility, giving, acceptance, and gratitude. I do my best to live the teachings: “Be Good, do good.” And just the opportunity to serve gives me gratitude. In a place where there is no selfishness, there is plenty of space for the blossoming of the true essence of Being. And that alone is a divine blessing.

—Vania Sunita Marques, Brazil



That keeping my peace while serving others selflessly is a daily practice. Sometimes finding my peace feels very selfish but if I don't (find my peace), I will not be able to serve my students. Finding a balance between these two takes much work and my meditation practice is a big help because it gives my mind some ease so that I can make decisions with more clarity.

—Yvonne Vani Brown
Charlotte, North Carolina



The importance of *sangha* (community). By nature, I'm an introvert, which was the appeal of Yoga as a means to physical health. The calmness of Satchidananda Ashram was soothing, as was the “quiet table” in Sivananda Hall for our meals. However, the last week of our Teacher Training gave way to the *Mahasamadhi* services for Sri Swami Satchidananda. I never met him, and was only just getting to know the depth of his teachings. Seeing his Ashram community come together in such a loving and respectful way moved me greatly. In the years since, across the many miles, this *sangha* has been the rock on which my strength abides.

—Brahmi Romero
Washington, D.C.



“Take is easy, but not lazy.” I apply this teaching from Gurudev to my life all the time and I try to teach it to my kids. Many times we are too hard on ourselves and we need to take it easy. But, if we take it easy, and go step-by-step, bit-by-bit, we can get even further than we could ever imagine. And that is what I try to bring to my life and remind myself every day.

—Renata Gaertner, Sarasota, Florida



To have an easeful body, peaceful mind, and then a useful life. It reminds me of the importance of having balance in life—dedicating time to take care of the body and mind, as it makes us ready to serve others. In serving and bringing others happiness, I forget myself and experience true happiness. During Teacher Training I was invited to practice gratitude every day before going to sleep. It was a simple exercise of saying thanks for at least three things. I continue to do that every day. I'm grateful for the teachings, my teachers, the opportunity to practice Yoga, and to let Yoga change my life.

—Artur Arya, Brazil



“Sounding,” a tool I learned in the Prenatal Yoga Teacher Training. This allows for fast, meditative deliveries and helps keep the perineum intact. The women who took my class never needed stitches after childbirth. As a youngster, the most meaningful teaching I remember Gurudev saying was something like, “I am just like you. Do not put me on a pedestal, we are all divine reflections of God.”

—Mariposa Oxenberg M.S., CNM, Los Angeles, California



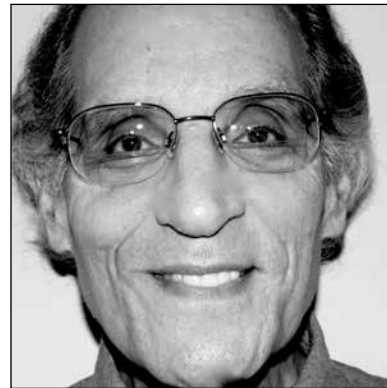
“Be Easeful, peaceful, and useful.” I heard this at my first Teacher Training at the Integral Yoga Institute of New York and at the time I thought it to be a nice platitude. As I progressed into a full time Yoga therapist, I now understand the depth of such a simple phrase. Every day I go to work making sure that I am in the right state of mind—easeful and peaceful— so I may be useful and serve others. Thank you Gurudev!

—Brandt Bhanu Passalacqua, Northampton, Massachusetts



Yogas chitta vritti nirodha: the restraint of the modifications of the mind—stuff is Yoga. To me, this is the lynchpin around which all other *sutras* revolve. When I first studied Raja Yoga, I clearly remember Swami Ramananda saying something like, “First your mind talked you into eating the ice cream, then it started saying you shouldn’t have eaten the ice cream (dramatic pause) —how can you trust your mind?” I have been asking myself that question ever since. Luckily, the *Yoga Sutras* give clear instructions on bypassing the mind, not getting caught up in its whirlwinds.

—Beth Hinnen, Denver, Colorado



Mantra and the value of its repetition in our everyday life. Gurudev said: “Strictly speaking, there’s no other practice that’s necessary for spiritual growth. Many great sages and saints have done nothing but repeat the mantra . . . the easiest and the best.” He also emphasized the importance of prevention being better than cure, devotion to God, Yoga postures, breathing, and meditation. Yet, within that context, he prioritized the importance of mantra repetition.

—Robert Padman Bernstein, Orlando, Florida



The three yogic teachings that are collectively known, in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, as Kriya Yoga: *tapas, svadhyaya*, and *Ishvara pranidhana*. As a life coach, I have many tools to help me guide my clients to find the answers within. But perhaps the most powerful are those three yogic teachings. I ask clients to inquire: *How can I use the pain that is keeping me from moving forward in a productive way?* Once blocks are identified and overcome, it’s time to take action.

—Kamala Berrio, Oakland, California

INTEGRAL YOGA IN INDIA: A LEAP OF FAITH

By Djahariah Mitra

Every Monday night I escaped the realities of New York City by walking into the Integral Yoga Institute (IYI) and being enveloped in its calming embrace. My passport was stamped with the receptionist's friendly smile, as I was directed to the stairs to climb my way to classrooms Rose or Lotus, Gold, Aqua, or Lavender, or my favorite, Heaven.

Out of the noise, crowds, and grime of the city—out of the noisy chatter, crowded thoughts, and grime of nonsense in my mind.

In *Savasana* I always felt like I was falling to one side—even laying flat on my back I was off balance. Finally after a year of practice I suddenly realized one day that I wasn't falling anymore. That was the beginning of my journey into Yoga.

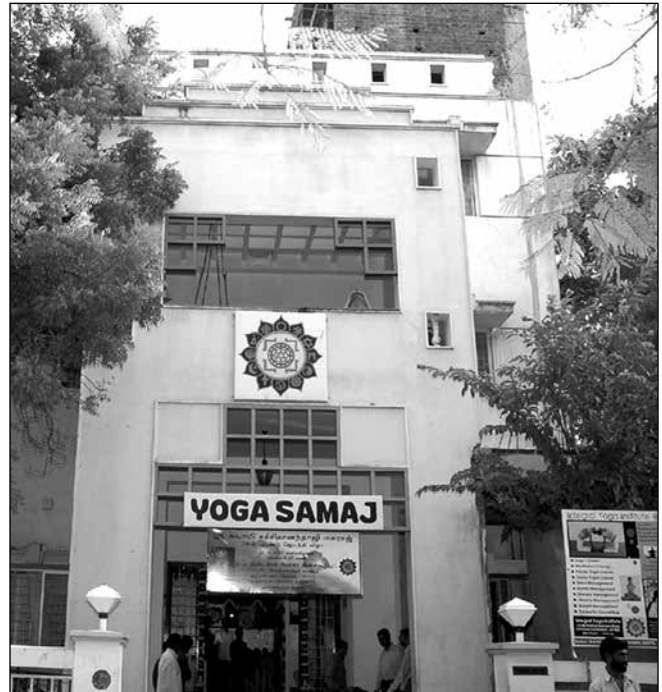
After years of practice, my Basic Teacher Training, and teaching for a year, I decided to do my Intermediate Teacher Training at the IYI in Coimbatore, India. I had never been to India but intrinsically knew that moment would be my only chance to drop everything and be open to whatever adventure lay ahead of me. It isn't often we have the opportunity and ability to be so independent. It was a leap of faith, an acceptance of being off course or ready to change course.

Arriving at the IYI felt like coming home. It was familiar in such a vastly and drastically different culture. I left my sneakers outside on the steps under the All Faiths Yantra and walked barefoot on the cool floor into serenity. I was greeted with kindness. A kindness that struck me with a lump in the throat in a world that seems to forget that basic act.

Staying at an ashram allows us to live yogic philosophy with support and understanding—to try to give every moment to living truth, purity, humility, compassion, selflessness—surrounded by others trying to do the same thing. When I left the ashram to continue my travels (I ended up staying in India for nearly a year), I was homesick for my Integral Yoga family.

India was a paradox of intense beauty, desperate poverty, deep warmth and friendliness, constant barriers as a woman, and myriad diversity of beliefs and experience. I lived with Catholic priests, traveled with swamis, swam in the Ganges, rode on the back of motorcycles through normalized chaos, and taught Yoga to school teachers and middle-aged women. I meditated on rooftops, in caves, on the beach, and at the *Samadhi* Shrine of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Traveling to India was incomparable to any other travels in my life before or since.

India didn't magically bring enlightenment or peace or a finding of myself. It intensified the quest for all of those things. It deepened my understanding of the degree I let



myself be distracted and how desensitized I had become to other people's suffering. India opened my heart.

While traveling to India was a physical departure, a daily challenge, an overcoming of tangible obstacles, it reflected the same work we do anywhere in the world even in our own living rooms. Yoga is a departure, an escape from the outer, from our focus on the outer, from our self-imprisonment. Yoga is traveling inward to our true selves.

Djahariah Mitra began traveling at the age of three, lucky to have parents with a connection to the world and the desire to satisfy the need to experience that connection. She chose the degree of World, Arts and Cultures at UCLA as a continuation of that interest and as a catalyst to travel extensively and live in



different countries. She continued her study of culture and movement by delving deeper into her Yoga practice. Inspired by the peace she felt at the Integral Yoga Institute in New York City, she trained to become a Yoga teacher. She spent a year living in India studying Yoga from asana classes to meditation and Sanskrit chanting workshops. She is the author of Dancing in the Bamboo Forest: A Travel Memoir. She blogs about yogic philosophy at djahariahmitra.com.

GOING GLOBAL

By Hersha Chellaram

“By renouncing the world, you don’t lose anything. Once you give yourself up to others, all others will give themselves to you. In the beginning of this life, people often said to me, ‘Why are you renouncing? You have thrown away your house, your wealth, everything. What are you going to gain?’ I would tell them, ‘It may look like I am giving up something, but I know that I will gain everything.’ Really, you don’t lose anything by renouncing. Instead, the more you give, the more others will take care of you. Forget yourself completely, and you will find that the entire world is yours.”

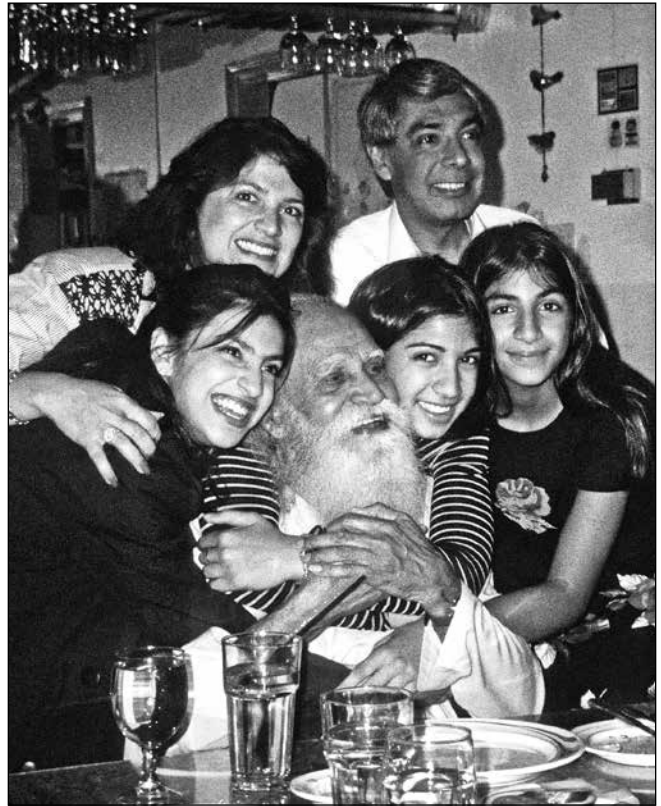
—Sri Swami Satchidananda

These words, from the book *Sri Swami Satchidananda: Apostle of Peace*, became the foundation for Sri Swami Satchidananda’s life of global service to humanity. He belonged to the entire world as he traveled to all corners of the globe igniting the spark of light and love for thousands of students from all walks of life.

I was recently at a family wedding where my cousin was getting married to a young man from St. Maarten. As we were becoming acquainted with the extended family, one woman mentioned that, as a child, she had sat on Swami Satchidananda’s lap, as a youth had sought counsel from him during times of need, and to this day follows the teachings she received from him. She is now living in Hong Kong, married with children. Immediately she became connected to the Integral Yoga *sangha* in Hong Kong. Strangers coming together from opposite ends of the Earth in Swami Satchidananda’s name: that is his legacy.

Traveling the globe was Swami Satchidananda’s destiny. Who would have thought that a young man from a small village called Chettipalayam, outside of Coimbatore, in South India, would become a world spiritual leader? From his early days as a *sadhu*, he traveled through South India, from Palani Hill to Kanyakumari, visiting many holy masters along the way, including Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo.

When Swami Satchidananda finally found his Guru and was initiated into the Holy Order of Sannyas by Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj at the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh, he was blessed and encouraged to travel further. He undertook an all-India tour to spread the teachings of Yoga, and, at the request of his Guru, was sent to Sri Lanka to establish branches of the Divine Life Society.



Hersha, her parents, and sisters in Virginia, 1993 (clockwise from left Sherina, Kamilla and Mohan Harilela, Lakshmi, Hersha, Swami Satchidananda).

His service did not stop there in Sri Lanka. In the 1950s, he traveled across Asia, starting with a pilgrimage to holy Mount Kailash in the Himalayan mountains through Kashmir. After that, he was invited by several students to come to the Far East. He traveled to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan and met many people who became his students and who are still dedicated to his teachings and service today.

From Sri Lanka in the 1960s, Swami Satchidananda received another invitation, this time to travel to Europe and the United States. The year 1966 marked the formation of Integral Yoga as an organization. His service continued to grow and soon Swami Satchidananda was receiving invitations from places all over the world including Europe, Russia, South America, and Africa. I remember when my family invited him to travel to Ghana, in Africa, and he stayed with us at my maternal grandparents’ home. We traveled together and escorted him to Europe, where he was received by many beloved students. We all shed tears when we had to say farewell to him as he continued onward. Like the Olympic torch, he was a light that was shared and passed around the world to give hope to so many people.



Hersha assists one of her Yoga students.

Today there are more than 30 Integral Yoga centers and over 5,000 Integral Yoga teachers worldwide. Swami Satchidananda's students are not only Yoga teachers. Thousands of them may never teach Yoga, but continue to remember him and use his teachings as a guiding light.

Integral Yoga has always been an internationally oriented organization. Looking at the Integral Yoga All Faiths Yantra, we find the symbols of the major world faiths and symbols for faiths less well-known and those yet to become known represented as part of one whole. Swami Satchidananda made inclusiveness and unity a foundational part of his Integral Yoga teachings and his life. He made each person he met and every one of his students feel special. Whether a student was an accomplished musician or artist, or really had no abilities in those areas at all, he accepted every offering of music or art with great love. He made himself available to people regardless of their time zone, answering the phone at any hour, should a need arise. The Guru-disciple relationship truly knows no boundaries.

Some of his students made formal commitments to service becoming Swamis or Ministers; some moved to Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville; while others opened Integral Yoga centers in different parts of the world to help share the message of peace and selfless service. Those teachers have become beacons of light for others.

Swami Satchidananda predicted many times that the world would feel smaller and smaller with the development of new technologies that connected people more easily. That is certainly happening. Over the past 50 years we've witnessed the birth of a small spiritual organization that has grown into a multinational one. Since the *Mahasamadhi* of Swami Satchidananda, the Swamis, Ministers, senior teachers, and long-time students have kept the flame alive and have worked hard to preserve and share the sacred teachings of Integral Yoga—and live them by their example.

The first generation of Integral Yoga teachers has passed those teachings to a new generation that has found a connection to Swami Satchidananda without having

physically met him. This younger generation has a global vision; world travel is easier, and connecting to someone on the opposite side of the globe is a click away. The future of Integral Yoga lies in continuing Swami Satchidananda's embrace of new technologies and adapting his teachings to suit the times.

In the early days of Integral Yoga, the Ashrams, Institutes and Centers were worlds away from one another, but now we've become closer and closer. This ability to be more interconnected has given rise to the Integral Yoga Global Network, whose mission is to connect all those teaching and practicing Integral Yoga. Having such connectivity means that as an organization we have an opportunity to collectively support one another and collaborate. Our global community can now easily connect, communicate, and share our practices, stories, and resources.



Swami Satchidananda in Japan, 1961.

Today, if you walk into any Integral Yoga center around the world, you'll find cultural differences, but also unity in the beautiful diversity of Integral Yoga's members. The future of Integral Yoga will see the global *sangha* coming even closer together. Our next generation may do things slightly differently, but we have a mutual understanding that, while we have our own ways of sharing what we have learned, the teachings remain the same. Although our backgrounds, traditions, and methods may differ slightly because of our own cultural backgrounds and traditions, the essence of Swami Satchidananda's legacy will forever remain: "Be easeful, peaceful, and useful. And, in the words of Swami Sivananda, "Be good, do good. Love all, serve all."

Hersha Chellaram is a lifetime student of Sri Swami Satchidananda's, having been introduced to him as a young child through her father, the late Mohan Harilela. She offers Integral Yoga classes and teacher trainings in Hong Kong and currently serves as the chairperson for the Integral Yoga Global Network. Hersha works with many charitable organizations and has set up a non-profit organization called YAMA: Yoga Arts Meditation for All. She has contributed numerous articles on Yoga and health to various publications internationally, including Namaskar Magazine, Global Health & Travel, and Integral Yoga Magazine.

IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

By Greg Turiya Liotta

From 2008 to 2009 I lived at Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville, in Buckingham County, Virginia. I returned to “the world” in 2009 to take a job in the West Indies, where I spent four clumsy years stumbling all over myself in an effort to integrate the experience and practices of the ashram into “the world.” I returned home to the United States in 2013, settling in Austin, Texas.

The transition and integration process from ashramite to citizen of the world was challenging. I was consumed with anxiety about how to maintain the peaceful consciousness I’d cultivated during a year of rigorous *sadhana* (spiritual practice)—primarily meditation, prayer, veganism, Yoga, and chanting. That’s a common concern as one prepares to leave the safe cocoon of a spiritual community.

If you’ve never lived in such a place, you can’t begin to imagine how healing it is to be greeted by *everybody* with a bow, hands clasped together in prayer mudra, and the word “*Namaste*” (“The divine light within me bows before the divine light in you, for they recognize their sameness”). It can change your life: the peaceful mindfulness cultivated by one’s sitting in silence for the first 30 minutes of lunch, surrounded by a panoramic ring of photos of saints from all traditions, photos of Swami Satchidananda everywhere, the chants of Krishna Das reverberating all over the place, and the pervasive, loving serenity that permeates the atmosphere.

At first it all seems weird. After a while, it becomes natural, a healing balm to all one’s broken places. Soon the normal interactions of the mundane world begin to grate on you like nails on a chalkboard. Like most, as I approached my departure date I asked every monk, every sage, and even the occasional saint who passed through there with the question, “How do I maintain this vibration out in the world?” And they *all* answered with the same message: “Your *sadhana* will protect you. Wear it like a cloak.”

What I have learned in the seven years since I left the ashram may be more important than anything I learned or experienced while I was living there: The ashram doesn’t end at the ashram. Life after the ashram becomes an extension of the ashram experience, including the relationship with one’s mind, and everything afterward will be flavored by that experience. The good news is that once you’ve lived in a place like that, you never really leave.

Arriving at the Ashram

Before my arrival, my biggest mistake was to think the ashram was going to be a paradise, a heavenly realm, where I could escape the harshness of the world and find inner peace. What really happened was that the conditions



Greg Turiya Liotta

were created to make it easier for me to experience my *own* peace. The place is beautiful and peaceful, yes, but the illusion can persist that the peace has to do with place rather than consciousness. That illusion can generate fear about going back into the world.

When I lived at the ashram, I’d venture most weekends into Charlottesville just to experience a little bit of civilian life. By evening I’d be scurrying back into the peaceful haven of the ashram, glad that I was no longer out there in the world. To an ashramite, the sounds, the pace, and the frantic energy of the world can be irritating.

Swami Satchidananda taught that it’s only by immersion in that realm (the world) that one gets to actualize the consciousness of *sat-chid-ananda* that’s cultivated within the ashram, but confronting the grating sounds and harshness and *rajasic* quality of life in the world is enough to make the student mistrust that wisdom.

I was idealistic to the point of delusion, about my chances of sustaining that consciousness out in the world. I had

been meditating for two hours a day, chanting for several hours daily, practicing Yoga, and carrying a gentle mind. As a result, I overestimated the extent of my emotional and spiritual progress and made plenty of lofty statements about “carrying the ashram into the world”—that were more wishful poetry than truth. Out in the world, the sounds (music), the company (social influences), the diet (from *sattvic* to *rajasic* to *tamasic*), and the lifestyle become a matter of choice rather than structure. All those variables act on the mind and the body, driving an increase of emotional reactivity.

Arriving Back in the World

Almost immediately upon my arriving back in the world, I was greeted with the kind of stares that let me know that people were not seeing “the divine” within me. That lack of respect and acknowledgement, and in some cases fear or even hatred, is the ground from which many people greet one another in the world. I missed the gentle bows and the “*Namaste*” and felt the sting deep in my soul.



The mourning commenced immediately, and I tried to numb myself. Within a month, I began eating the local cuisine, which consists mostly of chicken and goat. That had a palpable effect on my consciousness. The more meat I ate, the more fear and aggression I felt. My mind went into shock before my body did. I passed through a long period of grieving that had no healthy outlet in a world that didn't know what it was like to live for an extended time in the loving womb of a spiritual community. Because I relocated to the Caribbean, not a soul could guess I would be suffering. The truth is that there was no beauty that compared to the loving presence emanating from the ashram. We liked to attribute it to Swami Satchidananda, but maybe it was the Guru just waking up within me.

One of the most significant markers of spiritual maturity is the manner in which relationships with friends from the ashram unfold in the diaspora. My strong ties with many people from Yogaville have endured. With some, there's a lifelong bond that was forged in the fires of that holy place. People whom I haven't seen in seven years are nestled in a very safe spot in my heart; at any point in our lives we could come to one another and offer sanctuary.



Then there are others with whom I have had conflicts, mostly through social media. While I was living in the ashram it was pretty easy to avoid conflict. I had a few dust-ups—referred to in the ashram as “rubbing and scrubbing” in a nod to Gurudev's genius use of humor in his teaching. Otherwise, there wasn't much drama. For the most part, life there is slow, and opportunities to pause and sink into silence are built into its framework. That kind of lifestyle does wonders for one's temperament and takes the steam out of a good many grudges and resentments. I didn't make friends with everybody while I lived there, but it's hard to make enemies in such a place.

Continuing to interact with people in post-ashram life raises additional challenges, however. The rubbing and scrubbing continues, but without the buffer of the daily *sadhana*. Sometimes the underlying craziness of people rises to the surface out in the real world, and you have to decide how to deal with that. More accurately, my *own* underlying craziness sometimes drives the bus, and casualties ensue. When I'm eating a *tamasic* (profane) diet, engaging in “worldly” pleasures, and not attending to my *sadhana*, the *chid* ain't so good. I find myself relating to people mainly through the lens of fear rather than the loving lens of *sat-chid-ananda*.

A Journey into Hindsight

When I left the ashram, Reverend Vimala Storey, a beloved friend, stored most of my belongings until I returned to the States. The parcel was delivered to me after five years in storage. It was a time machine. I found myself reflecting on some relationships with people whom I once cherished in the ashram but who were no longer in my life. It dawned on me that my ashram life has not ended but has actually continued in the realm of the real world. I was hit with a wave of sadness to think of how I have failed to honor some of the relationships I established in that sacred space.

I reviewed my role in those breakdowns. I noticed the difference between the way I related to the world when I lived in the ashram and the way I related to the world once I had left the ashram. Although my life in the ashram was not trouble-free, relatively speaking it was a cakewalk. People were more patient with me there, and I was far more patient with me there. In turn, I was far more patient with others. Having patience with oneself and others is a special form of grace that paves the way to easeful life.

Of the residents, particularly the monks, living there, some were very loving and available for a relationship. Some were emotionally distant, and some clearly didn't favor me—they're human, so yeah, they can have dislikes—but I never felt attacked or condemned. As a result, I enjoyed the rare gift of living in a place where there was no violence going on in my own mind—not toward myself, not toward others. That sense of peace is precisely what leads the student to ask, How can I preserve this once I go back out into the world?



Reverends Bhavani and Bhagavan Metro

Shortly before leaving the ashram, I spent time sitting with Reverend Bhagavan Metro, one of the true sages there and a rock in that community since the early days of Yogaville. He very gently suggested to me that perhaps I could learn to be more tolerant and forgiving of those who offended me. He quoted a teaching given by Sri Swami Sivananda, Swami Satchidananda's Guru: The highest *sadhana* is the ability to bear insult and injury without retribution. Though I wasn't aware at the time, I was quite a distance from that ideal. That became clear within months upon after I'd re-entered the world.

Over the years, little by little, certain relationships have fallen by the wayside as I have reacted to perceived insults. When one is living in a rural spiritual community, each relationship looms a bit larger because one encounters almost every person on a daily basis. Out in the wider world, it's quite easy to disregard fallen relationships. Once you strike a person off the list, you may never have

to see that person's face again. If a relationship is being carried out primarily through social media, all you have to do is delete the person. But if one looks at life from a broader perspective and sees it as one entity, then all those relationships are revealed as areas within the self that beg for healing. The situation is reduced to exactly what all the sages said to me before I left the ashram: "Wear your spiritual practice like a cloak, and it will protect you." Indeed.

Where I Am Now

The form of my spiritual practice has taken many twists and turns, crossed many peaks and valleys, and changed many times since I left the ashram. Eventually, I returned to the same *sadhana* I had enjoyed while living there because a steady spiritual practice involving breath, silence, and the repetition of sacred names is fundamental to my emotional and mental health. My capacity to be of any service in this world depends *entirely* upon my spiritual practice—just as they said! That is a non-negotiable in my life.

A good gauge of how well that is working is how well I'm able to maintain smooth relations with people, including those I met at the ashram. Bringing graciousness and gracefulness into my relationships is precisely what "bearing insult without retribution" means. That is a mark of a great soul. In my experience, it was easy to feel like a "great soul" when I lived among all those sages and saints, eating my organic vegan food, meditating, chanting, praying, practicing Yoga, and performing service all day long, without really being challenged much. Easy.

If you're just looking for a break, a little vacation away from the rigors of your mind or your life, then Yogaville is the perfect place to go. If you're like me, and feel as if your soul had been dragged across a gravel parking lot, life at the ashram can be a healing balm. But if you are a serious seeker and considering spending any length of time there, it may be helpful for you to know that once you've been there, you never quite leave. Part one of the ashram is your stay there, and part two is the life you live once you leave. The rules of the game are the same: Get up before sunrise, do your practice, dedicate yourself to service—just as Swami Satchidananda always said.

Greg Turiya Liotta is a counselor, coach, and facilitator utilizing a synthesis of spirituality, mythology, psychology, and cutting edge research on the mind-body-spirit connection. He combines more than two decades of clinical experience with 30 years as a student of the Mysteries, including 10 years apprenticeship under a Lakota shaman and 10 years as a practicing yogi and teacher of Yoga and meditation. With a background in shamanism, Sufism, Yoga, hermeticism, and metaphysics, Greg helps people integrate all paths in order to cultivate deep spirituality in the practical, day-to-day business of life. Currently he provides Transpersonal Tele-Counseling, coaching and seminars to executives, teams, and leaders all over the world.

LIVING INSPIRED LIVES: SOME INTEGRAL YOGA SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ALUMNI SHARE REFLECTIONS

The Integral Yoga global community is so proud of its children—many who attended the Integral Yoga Vidyalayam—who, as adults, have gone on to become accomplished in their fields, including award-winning actors, musicians, and filmmakers.

Mohini Shapero-Arditi, 43

Assistant Director of the Virginia Marx Children's Center, State University of New York



“The teachings of Yoga have given me the backbone for my life. I strive to walk this path with love and kindness.

When I find myself faltering, I gain strength from the simple, yet powerful tools that Yoga has provided: breathing and mantra.”

Atman Binstock, 42

Virtual Reality designer and developer; Chief Architect, Oculus VR



“I have no doubt that growing up at the Ashram had a huge influence on who I am now. The school was great and I

felt free to study things I loved. I still practice meditation and I remember Swami Satchidananda always reminding us, ‘No appointments, no disappointments.’”

Markus Byron, 44

Architect, designer, photographer, business owner



“The Vidyalayam left a long lasting impact on me, and my view of life. I learned how life could be balanced—we

could play, live, and enjoy while still learning. There were limitless outlets

to pursue creativity and that helped me develop a passion for creativity. I still practice hatha daily.”

Gopica Clark, 35

Hospitality industry executive (Singapore)



“Swamiji used to say, ‘Live an easeful, peaceful, useful life. Eat to live, live to serve.’ As simple as those words are, it shows a

dedication to others that we don't often see in the general population. All that I am now is formed largely because of my time in Yogaville.”

Rivers Cuomo, 46

Musician, songwriter, front man for the band, Weezer



“Being in the presence of Swami Satchidananda, an enlightened being, was special. The Ashram itself

was so nurturing and creative. In school, if I had any crazy idea, I'd be encouraged to try it out. That's how we were encouraged to learn.”

Scott Sadhu Dinsmoor, 41

Video editor, Warner Brothers Studio



“I grew up with Gurudev and Integral Yoga in my life. As a result, Yoga has always been the prism through

which I see the world. Without this, I certainly wouldn't be able to live in Los Angeles, work in television, and keep myself centered and focused on a yogic life.”

Raja Rajeshwari Mandelkorn Drame, 30

Independent media professional; co-producer, “Music Shoals”



“I love my Integral Yoga community. I love my village. It is all love—no matter who you are or where you come from. We share the value of

love for world peace. Knowing true community as a child has led me to continually strive for that.”

Amy Kamala Fiske, 33

Fine artist and filmmaker



“For me, being a ‘child of Integral Yoga,’ means meditation, asanas, healthy eating. It means mantras, discipline, higher balance,

holistic medicine, alignment with nature, vibrational attunement, and a conscious, loving, empathic approach to all living beings.”

Asha Goodman, 31

Vice-president, PR firm Sacks & Co., Nashville



“The Vidyalayam and growing up in Yogaville instilled a great sense of independence and personal drive within me. The way we

were taught was very hands on and specialized, but also very independent and self-regulated. It taught us from the value of being self-motivated and curious.”

Darby Haley, 24

Logistics Specialist for the US Navy



“The Ashram will always be my home. It opened me up spiritually, allowing me to see the world, and the people in it, in a

different light. Everyone who chooses to cross paths with Integral Yoga does so for different reasons. Regardless of the reason, it’s more about what you leave with than why you came.”

Lakshmi Harilela, 33

Professional chef and food photographer (Hong Kong)



“Swami Satchidananda taught us the values of love and kindness. The teachings of Integral

Yoga have greatly impacted my life personally and professionally. My food company is now fully vegetarian and its been amazing to see the positive response from our customers. I now also teach Yoga part-time.”

Padma Knight, 42

Case Management Specialist at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children



“I’m not sure there’s a way to measure the effect of growing up in Yogaville and attending the Vidyalayam,

which had such a strong impact on my development and worldview. Even though it’s been years since I’ve lived there, the Integral Yoga teachings are with me and influence how I live.”

Ambha Lessard, 38

Insurance Liability Specialist



“The friendships and connections I made are positive, strong, and last today. I’m a life-long vegetarian.

The beliefs and teachings are a part of my soul and now, as a mom, I’m trying to pass along what I learned. Gurudev’s influence has helped me, especially at times when extra guidance is needed.”

Stefan Krishna Lessard, 41

Musician, songwriter, bass player for Dave Matthews Band



“I found imagination, creativity, inspiration, and truth at the Vidyalayam and that stayed with me. I find

Swami Satchidananda’s laughter in my thoughts when I take life too seriously. I share teachings from my childhood with my children, and that good, kindhearted living leads to amazing things in one’s life and soul.”

Vani Li MacIsaac, 27

Executive Assistant at Los Angeles film production company



“Beyond fundamentally shaping my core values, I think the early exposure to different theologies and the emphasis on

self-reflection strengthened my ability to think critically, and underlined the value of doing so. The Ashram and wide range of visitors and residents really fostered my interest in people and in storytelling.”

Iana Sundari Malcolm, 35

Yoga teacher and blogger



“It was the memory of Gurudev’s words that taught me how to move forward and remain balanced,

calm, and kind when, in my 20s, I lost my mother to breast cancer. I have built my entire life around those foundation blocks and I am forever grateful.”

Ellen Meera Mangum, 25

Children’s Yoga teacher and volunteer at Montessori pre-school



“I’m grateful for how much I learned while growing up in Yogaville; it made me the person I am today. At the

Vidyalayam, I met so many people from around the world, prompting my interest in psychology and cultures. Being both a camper and counselor at Camp Yogaville made me realize I love working with kids.”

Theresa Nandini Martinez, 38

Owner, director, lead instructor for Dance from the Heart, LLC



“Gurudev’s teachings will always be with me in my heart and Yogaville is the only place that I consider my true

home. Integral Yoga inspired me to keep an open heart and mind, taught me so many life lessons that I can share with others.”

Bala Otto Menendez, 45

Park Supervisor for New York City Department of Parks & Recreation



“Swamiji was family to me. The Ashram prepared me for my work with the Parks Department,

where everything doesn’t always seem to work correctly.”

Gopal Metro, 38

Yoga teacher; Web developer, musician and co-founder of band, Bella Morte



“As a role model, Swami Satchidananda’s positive influence on my life has been immeasurable.

Integral Yoga is the foundational philosophy of my life: ‘Truth is one,

paths are many,' 'Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate,' 'Serve all, love all,' are just a few core tenets that guide me."

Radha Metro-Midkiff, 43

Esthetician, owner of Tirtha Salon and Spa and Radha Skin Care



"Growing up in the Ashram, I learned that it's important to always have an attitude of service. If you perform all your tasks as if

you are just serving, then the Universe will take care of the rest. I also learned to be kind and compassionate."

Zachary Jai Nields, 41

Emergency management and incident response software developer



"If having such a broad cultural and spiritual exposure to many different people wasn't enough, the guidance and example Gurudev

gave us made for an unparalleled environment. Thanks to him, I was able to grow up in a place, and with people, that I would never trade for any other experience."

Genevieve Oba, 40

Yoga teacher



"It was special to learn Yoga from an early age. I participated in the children's Yoga video with Swami Satchidananda.

I remember how relaxing and calming his voice was. I've carried that sense of calmness with me all these years later and it's something I am constantly trying to impart in my own teaching."

Leela Petronio, 44

Professional tap dancer, member STOMP, owner/choreographer, Hip Tap Project (Paris)



"I always remember Swamiji's glowing, loving presence in my life. Though a holy man, he was like a grandfather with wise and funny stories. In times of crisis, I think, "Swamiji would say . . ." Peace, unity, and love are my driving forces and I bring people together through rhythm, music, and dance."

Raquel Raji Rubin, 23

Expressive Arts Therapy graduate student



"Swami Satchidananda was like a father, but more so a friend. As I look back, I appreciate all the time I spent with Gurudev and as a part of the Integral Yoga community. The teachings of Integral Yoga instilled so many important values within me."

Liev Schreiber, 48

Actor and director



"I saw the benefits of meditation during my time at the Ashram but I never developed a relationship to it until I became an actor. I use meditation as part of my warm-up for theater acting."

Sumati Steinberg, 48

Registered nurse and wellness director; Yoga teacher



"All aspects of my personal and professional life have been positively colored by Sri Gurudev's teachings. The

only book that I have had beside my bed is his translation of the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, because it's the perfect guidebook for how to live a happy life."

Cassandra Sharada Stish, 51

COO, Coshx Labs, Inc; Buckingham County Supervisor



"There was a wild streak in me that Sri Gurudev knew and acknowledged. He never asked me to tame it. He never asked me to change. He loved me unconditionally. He saw something else in me—he saw the Divine, and he had faith that I would awaken to that knowledge in time."

Purnima Trifonova, 25

Director of a seven-location Yoga Studio Collective



"The ethics and life long principles taught to us at the Vidyalayam support me immensely as I continue to navigate a world often lacking kindness and compassion. This has been the most meaningful tool provided by Yogaville and the Vidyalayam. It has made such a difference in my life."

Bharati Winston, 34

Elementary school teacher



"When I find myself faltering, I gain strength from the simple, yet powerful tools that Yoga has provided: breathing and mantra. I am thankful and honored to have spent my first sixteen years living at Yogaville and continue to live my life with the teachings of Gurudev as my guide."

INTEGRAL YOGA: OVERVIEW OF A GLOBAL ORGANIZATION

When Sri Swami Satchidananda arrived in the West, the distinctive teachings that he brought with him integrated the physical discipline of Yoga, the spiritual philosophy of India, and the interfaith ideals that he pioneered. Those techniques and concepts influenced a generation and spawned a Yoga culture that is flourishing today. Swami Satchidananda's contributions to Yoga in the Western world are vast.

YOGA AND WELLNESS

Swami Satchidananda's approach to mind-body health was decades ahead of its time in the West. He defined disease essentially as a state of "dis-ease" that could be remedied (and prevented) by a vegetarian diet, stress reduction through the Yoga practices and philosophy, and living a useful life of selfless service. This holistic approach sparked a revolution in evidence-based Yoga therapy treatment programs for cancer, heart disease, immune diseases, physical disabilities, PTSD, addictions, and more. The beauty and bounty of nature inspire Integral Yoga practitioners to live with gratitude and reverence for our planet, to use natural, organic products, and be earth-friendly in all activities.



INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

Swami Satchidananda considered himself a world citizen and served on the advisory boards of numerous world peace and interfaith organizations. Widely recognized as one of the pioneers of the interfaith movement, he sponsored interfaith services and conferences for over 50 years. Integral Yoga is based on interfaith values. Swami Satchidananda taught that all faiths share essential universal principles, and he encouraged Integral Yogis to respect and honor the unity in diversity.

INTEGRAL YOGA PROGRAMS

Hatha Yoga Classes

Integral Yoga centers and teachers offer classic traditional Yoga practices, as developed by Swami Satchidananda, for all ages, bodies, and abilities. Many also offer Yoga classes for special health conditions and populations—such as classes in Prenatal, Postnatal, Flow, Restorative, and Gentle Yoga—serving expectant and new moms, toddlers, teenagers, the physically disabled, the elderly, veterans, incarcerated people, and more.



Retreats and Workshops

Integral Yoga Signature Retreats have been conducted since 1970. They offer an opportunity to relax and strengthen the body and mind through a deep immersion in silence, the many practices of Yoga, and a variety of presentations. Workshops led by talented individuals on a wide variety of Yoga-based subjects are offered year-round at our Ashram, Institutes, and Centers.

yoga at work®

This program is organized by the Integral Yoga Institute of New York and provides an opportunity to improve employee productivity and morale through Integral Yoga. This convenient service delivers an Integral Yoga instructor to any campus. Each program is tailored to the individual business environment.

TEACHER TRAINING

One of the first and most respected schools of Yoga teacher training in the world, Integral Yoga maintains four Registered Yoga Schools (RYS®) with Yoga Alliance®. Integral Yoga Teacher Training has been offered for more than 40 years, and there are over 5,000 Integral Yoga teachers worldwide. The 200-hour training is a hands-on program designed to give aspiring teachers the knowledge and qualifications needed for success as a Yoga teacher. Intermediate and advanced certification programs are also

available. Integral Yoga is also regarded as a pioneer in the Yoga therapy field, with numerous programs and trainings that address special populations and common health challenges.



Hatha Yoga

These certification programs train individuals to teach beginner, intermediate, and advanced Integral Yoga classes. These programs have been refined and expanded over the past four decades.

Adaptive/Gentle Yoga

This training focuses on adapting the Integral Yoga practices to meet the needs of any individual—regardless of students’ physical, mental, or emotional conditions. Teaching techniques learned in this training will give more options for accommodating people with limited mobility, students in private classes, and various levels in group classes.

Children’s Hatha

A residential certification program covering how to lead a group of children in all the basic practices of Integral Yoga and meditation, with dynamic discussions, lectures, and practice.

Meditation

This certification program qualifies teachers to teach a variety of meditation and breathing practices to anyone seeking the benefits of a quieter mind.

Pranayama

Pranayama (yogic breathing) is now widely adopted as an effective stress reliever and aid to meditation. Trainees learn to guide students through practices that purify the body, as well as calm and regulate the mind.

Prenatal, Labor/Delivery, Postnatal Yoga

These three training programs enable teachers to gain extensive experience with asanas and the other Yoga practices as tools well-suited during pregnancy through childbirth.

Raja Yoga

A comprehensive training program taught by the most senior and respected Integral Yoga trainers on how to illuminate the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.

Restorative Yoga

Restorative Yoga poses can be offered as an alternative to regular asanas when students are low in energy, or during times of stress, illness, healing, or crisis.

Stress Management

A unique and specialized program that gives Yoga teachers a strong foundation in understanding the nature of stress (psychological and physiological).

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Immersion programs are available at some centers. Programs such as Living Yoga Training, Ashram Yogi, and various internships are offered at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville and several of our Integral Yoga Institutes that offer an urban ashram experience.



Living Yoga Training (LYT)

This month-long program provides the chance to develop a steady practice that can be integrated into one’s daily life. The LYT (pronounced “Light”) program provides participants with guidance to assist them to grow spiritually through Karma Yoga, Hatha Yoga, meditation, and *satsang* (spiritual gatherings). An integral part of the Ashram,

trainees serve alongside like-minded spiritual seekers, forming new friendships and experiencing the unique environment of Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville.

Ashram Yogi

Open to LYT Program and Integral Yoga Teacher Training graduates, the three-month Ashram Yogi program supports participants as they go deeper into the teachings of Integral Yoga through *sadhana* (spiritual practice), *svadhyaya* (study of sacred texts), and Karma Yoga (selfless service). Internships in the Ashram’s vegetarian kitchen and organic farm are also available as part of this program.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Integral Yoga has always included comprehensive programs for children to help promote the health and peace that are the birthright of every child. From the first U.S. state accredited elementary school to include a Yoga curriculum to teacher training programs and Yoga summer camps, Integral Yoga has been a leader in Yoga education for children for over 30 years.



Youth Classes

Filled with singing, chanting, and age-appropriate asanas, Integral Yoga children’s classes also introduce anatomy, breath work, deep relaxation, and meditation. Most centers and teachers offer classes for children.

Camp Yogaville

An annual weeklong summer camp for children ages 8-12 at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, with daily Hatha Yoga, *kirtan*, outdoor activities, crafts, and more.

yoga at school™

Yoga helps students improve their health and concentration, find alternatives to violence, and develop a lifelong interest in wellness. This service—organized by the Integral Yoga Institute of New York—delivers a customized program, including classes for students, teachers, staff, and parents.



INTEGRAL YOGA CENTERS AND NETWORK

The first Integral Yoga Institute (IYI) was founded in New York City, in a large apartment on the Upper West Side, in 1966. In 1969, some pioneering Integral Yogis traveled to California, while others set up IYIs in Connecticut and New Jersey. Over the next decade IYIs and Integral Yoga Centers opened all over North America.

New York

In 1970, a beautiful brownstone on West 13th Street, in Greenwich Village, was dedicated as the permanent site of the New York Integral Yoga Institute. More than 6,000 students each month attend 125 Hatha Yoga classes. Courses, workshops, and trainings are also offered.

San Francisco

Next to Dolores Park, overlooking downtown San Francisco, this Integral Yoga Institute was founded in 1970. Thousands of people come through the doors each year to take the many classes and programs offered.

Integral Yoga India

In the 1970s, Swami Satchidananda’s birthplace home in Chettipalayam, South India served as headquarters for the first Integral Yoga Institute in India. Free medical camps and social services were provided to the surrounding villages and a few Yoga classes were taught. In early 1990 a house was purchased in Coimbatore. In 1996 the IYI expanded to a new facility with living quarters, teaching rooms, and a large hall for lectures and various functions. Today, the Integral Yoga Institute offers guest stays, Yoga and meditation classes, workshops, teacher trainings, specialized Yoga trainings, and organizes pilgrimages of South Indian holy sites.

Integral Yoga Europe

During Swami Satchidananda’s travels throughout Europe in the 1970s, more and more students surrounded him and expressed interest in starting Integral Yoga centers. In 2008, the IY European Council formed and became Integral Yoga Europe—an association of the many Integral Yoga centers and teachers throughout Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Gibraltar, Germany, United Kingdom,

Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Norway. Through its website, IntegralYogaEurope.com, the association maintains a calendar listing and directory, and it also organizes the bi-annual “European Integral Yoga Event”—a 5-day Yoga retreat for students and teachers.

**International Headquarters:
Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville®**

In 1979, Swami Satchidananda founded Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, Virginia, as an optimal environment in which to study and live the principles of Integral Yoga. Swami Satchidananda described his vision for Yogaville as a sample “heaven on earth,” where people of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds come together to live the teachings of Integral Yoga. This Yoga village in the rural countryside, bordered by the James River, serves as a residential Yoga community, a teaching center, a spiritual sanctuary, and as headquarters for the global Integral Yoga organization. Some 10,000 people visit Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville annually for guest visits and day trips, and to participate in workshops, teacher trainings, residential programs, celebrations, interfaith gatherings, and silent retreats. Yogaville offers a number of sacred spaces and features comprehensive facilities including classrooms, guesthouses, retreat and conference centers, library, offices, teashops, affiliated credit union, and more.



Integral Yoga Global Network

In 2014, the Integral Yoga Global Network was formed to bring connection, communication, and collaboration among the different Integral Yoga centers and communities around the world. Part of Integral Yoga Global Network’s service is to find ways to share Integral Yoga information and teachings with different countries in different languages. In 2016, IYGN launched IntegralYoga.org, Integral Yoga’s official international website, which will soon become multilingual.



INTEGRAL YOGA SERVICES

Interfaith Education

Swami Satchidananda was inspired to create permanent places where all people could come to realize their essential oneness. In 1986, he crystallized these ideas by building the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS) in Virginia, the first interfaith shrine to house altars for all of the world’s faiths. LOTUS India opened in 2014.

Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS)

Located in both the United States and India, the LOTUS shrines are unique temples dedicated to interfaith understanding and the Light within all faiths. They are the first shrines of their kind to house altars for all the major world faiths and to also recognize other known faiths and even yet to be known faiths. The main sanctuary has 12 altars for the world’s faiths surrounding a central altar. A column of light rises from the center to a hub of light at the top and then divides into 12 rays illuminating each of the 12 altars. The message of the LOTUS—“Truth is one, paths are many”—is given without one word being said. This message is demonstrated through symbols and the deep experience of peace and unity one feels inside the LOTUS.

LOTUS Center for All Faiths (LCAF)

The outreach arm of the LOTUS, LCAF’s staff networks with other interfaith organizations, attends interfaith conferences and events, conducts interfaith worship services, organizes educational interfaith programs—including a year-long series of classes at Yogaville on each of the faiths depicted on the Integral Yoga All Faiths Yantra.

Integral Yoga Monastic and Ministry Orders

Some of Swami Satchidananda’s students have dedicated their lives in selfless service to humanity, choosing the path of *sannyas*, or monasticism. Some other students have made a formal commitment to service as ministers. The Integral Yoga monks and ministers serve the public in many ways, such as offering spiritual support, officiating weddings, blessing newborns, and conducting interfaith worship services.

Light of Truth Universal Service

This interfaith service provides an opportunity for clergy of diverse faiths to discover the commonalities that inform those faiths. It creates a unique opportunity for those attending to experience, firsthand, the essential unity of those faiths. Today, this service is widely celebrated around the world.

All Faiths Yantra

A yantra is a geometrical pattern used for meditation. When mantras are meditated upon, certain images are brought out—like liquid crystallizing into a solid form. In this way, the Integral Yoga Yantra was revealed to Swami Satchidananda in the 1960s. During the 1980s, he added twelve petals—one for each of the ten faith traditions represented on the altars in the upper sanctuary of the LOTUS. He included two other symbols: a circle with stars inside to represent other known faiths and an empty circle to represent faiths and wisdom paths yet unknown. This new version was renamed the All Faiths Yantra.

Integral Yoga Kirtan

Created in the 1980s by Swami Satchidananda, this interfaith *kirtan*, was, perhaps, the first of its kind in the world. It includes a series of chants utilizing divine names from the major world's faiths. It is chanted each week at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville and at Integral Yoga centers around the globe.



Service in Satchidananda (SIS)

SIS is a non-profit international network of charities established in honor of Sri Swami Satchidananda and based on his core teaching of selfless service. SIS funds global projects that are working in a sustainable way and giving back to their local communities. Projects include the Satchidananda Prison Project, medical camps (free surgeries in India), building schools, offering education scholarships, disaster relief, free Yoga to underserved populations, providing essential living items to communities in need, and more.

Teacher Services

The Integral Yoga Teachers Association (IYTA) and the Integral Yoga Academy (IYA) offer a variety of educational and support services to teachers, therapists, and healthcare professionals. A membership organization, the IYTA facilitates continuing education and provides professional development guidance. In addition to teacher services around the world, Integral Yoga's headquarters is the site of the IYA, which includes the School of Yoga Teacher Training, School of Therapeutic Yoga, Continuing Education Programs, and customized trainings.



EDUCATION

Satchidananda Jothi Niketan International School (SJN)

SJN is a fully residential, CBSE co-ed school located in Kallar, South India. The academically rigorous curriculum is based on the principles of Integral Yoga and encourages students to excel in scholastics, sportsmanship, and principles of universal brother- and sisterhood.

Integral Yoga School (Vidyalayam)

The Integral Yoga School (Connecticut) was the first state-accredited elementary school to include a Yoga curriculum. The curriculum provides elementary-school level educational studies based on Yoga teachings, ethical and spiritual training, and academic excellence. In 1980, the school moved to Yogaville in Virginia and was renamed the Yogaville Vidyalayam (Temple of Learning).

Fine Arts Society

Inaugurated in 1984, the Fine Arts Society aims, through its classes and programs, to encourage the fine arts of music, dance, and drama among people of all nations with respect for the various traditions and cultures of the world. Its further mission is to affirm the unity of art and spirituality and to promote peace, good will, and harmony through the arts.



NATURAL FOODS

Satchidananda Farm

Swami Satchidananda taught the benefits of a plant-based diet, long before those principles became trendy. Today, Satchidananda Farm delivers a steady stream of freshly picked organic veggies to the Satchidananda Ashram kitchen. This six-acre, fenced farm contains a greenhouse and two hoop houses for growing crops in early spring and winter. The farm is a joyful spiritually uplifting environment where the plants are tended through awareness and prayer.

Integral Yoga Natural Food Stores

To support people in the transition to a vegetarian diet and to make yogic foods more accessible, Swami Satchidananda founded New York City's first 100 percent vegetarian health food store in 1972, which embodied the principles of Yoga in all of its operations. Today it remains the only 100 percent vegetarian health food store in New York. In 1980, Integral Yoga Natural Foods opened in Virginia and it is the oldest standing original organic food and supplement store in Charlottesville.

MULTIMEDIA

Swami Satchidananda's talks have been transcribed and compiled into books, and his classes and talks are also available on audio and video. His books have been translated into many languages. Most titles are available from Shakticom, Integral Yoga Distribution, and Amazon.com.

Shakticom – Integral Yoga® Multimedia

Shakticom has been producing audio, video, and film programming since the early 1970s. In addition to recording the talks of Swami Satchidananda, it is the studio responsible for producing *Yoga with a Master*, *Integral Yoga Kirtan*, and documentary films including *Living Yoga: the Life and Teachings of Swami Satchidananda*. Shakticom.org operates as the retail marketplace for Integral Yoga Publications and other Yoga and wellness books and media.

Integral Yoga® Distribution

Integral Yoga Distribution—one of the largest wholesalers on the U.S. East Coast—has been the primary source of books, CDs and DVDs, as well as other Yoga and wellness products for thousands of natural food stores, Yoga studios, and teachers for over 30 years.

Integral Yoga® Publications

With over 40 titles, Integral Yoga® Publications has been continuously publishing the teachings of Swami Satchidananda and Integral Yoga since 1974.

Integral Yoga® Magazine

America's first Yoga magazine, *Integral Yoga Magazine*, was founded by Swami Satchidananda in 1969. This journal and its website include articles and interviews on Yoga-related philosophy, practice, health, news, and much more.

Integral Yoga® YouTube, Podcasts, and Livestream Channels

Integral Yoga's YouTube channel and *Yoga Wisdom* podcast feature talks and programs by Swami Satchidananda and Integral Yoga master teachers. Yogaville Livestream has been online since 2011 broadcasting Yoga and spiritual life programming. The service now has hundreds of recorded events.



Integral Yoga Archives

A vast repository of well over half a million items dating from the 1940s to the present that includes books, transcripts, handwritten and typed documents, newspaper and magazine articles, audio and videotapes, photos, films, artwork, and other items. The Archives is committed to preserving, digitizing, and restoring its assets. As part of this effort, a collaboration has been forged with Digital ReLab, whose state of the art Starchive™ software and technology will be able to make the archive's contents accessible, in the near future, to the public.



INTEGRAL YOGA TIMELINE

- **1966** Sri Swami Satchidananda arrives in Europe & USA
 IYI (Integral Yoga Institute, 500 West End Avenue) New York is founded
- **1969** Woodstock Festival is opened by Swami Satchidananda
Integral Yoga Magazine is published
 IY centers open in Europe
- **1970** *Integral Yoga Hatha* is published
 IYI New York opens on West 13th Street
 IYI San Francisco opens
 IYI New Jersey opens
 First IY 10-day retreats & interfaith worship services (U.S. East & West Coasts)
 IY drug rehabilitation programs begin
- **1971** IY prison programs begin
 IYI India is founded
- **1972** Integral Yoga Natural Foods (New York) opens
 Yogaville West (California) opens
- **1973** Integral Yoga Publications & Multimedia (Shakticom) established
 “Swami Satchidananda” album release by Columbia Records
- **1975** “Swami Satchidananda” & “Yoga for the City” TV documentaries air (New York)
 Yogaville East (Connecticut) opens
 IYI Montreal opens
 Integral Yoga Teacher Training program begins
 Integral Health Services, America’s first integrative medicine clinic, opens
 Swami Satchidananda ordains first of his American students as Swamis in Holy Order of Sannyas
- **1977** Integral Yoga School (Connecticut) opens as 1st state-accredited elementary school with Yoga-based curriculum
 Dr. Dean Ornish begins first research study on reversing heart disease using Integral Yoga-based practices
- **1978** *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, with translation & commentary by Swami Satchidananda is published & becomes best-selling version of Yoga’s foundational text
- **1979** IY headquarters is established at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, Virginia
- **1980** Swami Satchidananda ordains first Integral Yoga Ministers
 Integral Yoga Natural Foods (Virginia) opens
- **1981** Integral Yoga School (Yogaville Vidyalayam) opens in Virginia

INTEGRAL YOGA, as taught by Sri Swami Satchidananda, offers a synthesis of six branches of classical Yoga: Hatha, Raja, Japa, Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana Yoga. Its aim is to purify and calm the body and mind in order to experience the peace and joy that is our true nature. Integral Yoga practitioners bring that peace into the world by fostering interfaith dialogue and leading service-oriented lives. Founded in 1966, there are currently 30 Integral Yoga centers on six of the seven continents and 5,000 teachers worldwide.



- Swami Satchidananda cofounds first interfaith seminary in America
- **1982** Ontos Yogaville, Australia opens
- **1984** Fine Arts Society of Yogaville opens
Integral Yoga Distribution opens
- **1986** Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS) opens in Virginia
- **1989** Swami Satchidananda becomes advisor to Unity in Yoga, which later becomes Yoga Alliance
IY Raja Yoga and Meditation Teacher Trainings are established
- **1990** Dean Ornish's "Program for Reversing Heart Disease" is published in *The Lancet*, opening the door for Yoga therapy
- **1991** Nataraja Shrine (Yogaville) is dedicated
- **1992** IY Center Brazil opens
- **1993** Integral Yoga Teachers Association is established
- **1996** Lotus Center for All Faiths is founded
- **1997** Satchidananda Jothi Niketan (School) opens in India
- **1999** Integral Yoga is a founding member of Yoga Alliance
- **2002** *Mahasamadhi* of Sri Swami Satchidananda

- **2003** Integral Yoga Academy opens
IY Argentina is founded
- **2007** IY Center Taiwan opens
- **2008** IY Hong Kong Sangha is founded
- **2009** Integral Yoga Europe forms
Service in Satchidananda is founded
- **2014** "Global Garland," worldwide yearlong celebration of the birth centennial of Sri Swami Satchidananda
Integral Yoga Global Network forms
LOTUS-India opens
- **2015** Swami Satchidananda Special Collection is established at University of Virginia's Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
- **2016** Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources grants Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville highest degree of eligibility to be nominated as a Virginia Historic District
IntegralYoga.org launches and global yearlong celebration of Integral Yoga's 50th anniversary begins



OUR JNANA YOGA GURU

By Reverend Vidya Vonne, M.F.A., E-RYT 500

Swami Satchidananda could be funny, playful or stern depending on the need of the moment. He helped us with our family and work lives, our relationships, and the development of our communities. He rode a tractor as easily as he rode a horse; he was comfortable with popes and presidents, wild animals, children, and babies. But, ultimately, he was a *Jnani*, one whose consciousness is one with the All. I say that, not because I'm capable of knowing this because I myself dwell permanently in that consciousness, but because, early on, Sri Gurudev gave me a few glimpses into his experience. I was way too young to know that such experiences are rare, too innocent to even know what I was experiencing. No doubt he knew that a part of me was ready to catch a glimpse, but most of me had and has a long way to go to catch up to that experience.



Vidya (front row, far right), pictured with Swami Satchidananda at an outdoor luncheon, early 1970s.

The first glimpse: The Los Angeles Integral Yoga family was awaiting Gurudev at LAX. We seemed to fill the entire lounge in our flowing white and pastel clothes, and I'm sure we had "flowers in our hair!" His plane was late, and we were chanting, playing tambourines, and smiling a lot. Finally Gurudev appeared. He seemed a glowing giant, a head above us as we followed him out. He was serene in peach silk, yet his feet firmly on the ground in his sensible black shoes. At one moment, as his gaze swept the crowd, our gazes crossed. The airport disappeared! I disappeared. There was *nothing*—total void! His gaze passed me by, and the world literally popped back into manifestation! What was that? Had he just shared with me for one instant what he had access to always?

The second glimpse occurred during an outdoor luncheon behind the IYI. Someone beckoned me forward and said that Gurudev needed a glass of water—my first chance to do him a personal service! I rushed to the kitchen, found the most beautiful glass I could, polished it to a brilliant shine, and filled it with water. Rushing back, I handed it to him. Frowning, he held it up so that it was directly over his plate, filled with Indian food. No smile: "This glass is not clean!" Uh-oh. I knew it was as shiny as could be. He beckoned me to look *through* the glass, and of course I could then see the "dirt," the coloration, from the foods on the plate below. My awareness took a lurch open as I recognized that objects are not independent, that everything is connected, and that something as clear as glass is bound to reflect what is around it.

A third experience came as I arrived late for a lecture where Gurudev was speaking to a huge crowd at UCLA. I reached the door and, standing in the opening, saw Gurudev looking out over the vast assemblage as he spoke. Then I saw that all the people were inside of his awareness (including me!); nothing was outside of him. The usual perception was in effect turned inside out. *Was this what he was experiencing?* That was how it felt. I blinked, and I could see the world in the "usual" way again.

Fourth: Gurudev was being driven up to the Los Angeles IYI. I was on foot, coming home from work. He caught sight of me and stopped the car. He rolled down his window, and I looked into his eyes. There was nothing there, an emptiness so vast that, I was stopped in my tracks. There were no thoughts, feelings, memories; no judgments; no opinions reflecting in his eyes. There was a void.

Words cannot explain *jnana* (wisdom or pure awareness). It is transmitted by a look, a touch; by the mindless mind of the *Jnani*. How fortunate to be touched for even a moment by such a one.

Reverend Vidya Vonne offers Teacher Training and other programs at Yogaville and in Santa Barbara. Her next program is Integral Yoga Basic Teachers Training at the Santa Barbara Yoga Center from August through October 2016. She will also instruct Basic Teacher Training at the IYI in India from January through February 2017.

GETTING HIGH OR GETTING LOW?

By Ed Staskus

A long time ago, during the age of flower children, when Yoga was gaining traction in the United States, an Indian Guru with a flowing beard, Sri Swami Satchidananda, was invited by the avant-garde Pop artist Peter Max to visit the country.

Three years later, accompanied by twenty-four young yogis, he was the opening speaker at Woodstock, the 1969 music, arts, and peace festival.

Drug use ran rampant among the estimated half million in attendance. “There were a lot of good trips at Woodstock,” said the co-promoter Artie Kornfeld. “But, there were some bad ones, too.” The festival’s public address system kept up a running commentary. “The brown acid that is circulating around, please be advised there is a warning on that.” Freak-out tents dotted the muddy pastureland in upstate New York.

Although not a user himself, Sri Swami Satchidananda was tolerant of the hippie generation and didn’t condemn its members’ search for a higher consciousness: “They heard about the drugs, and they innocently wanted to try, not knowing it was going to disturb them. They were just interested in that peace. But many of them are intelligent people. When they found that it was not going to be lasting and genuine, they dropped it.”

Swami Satchidananda did, however, offer Yoga as an alternative to drugs. As one student noted, “My teacher always said, if you get high, you have to get low. He suggested getting off the pendulum and living in balance. That’s Yoga.” Most of the old-school Yoga masters were like that.

“If you have to be addicted to something, be addicted to doing *sadhana* daily,” said Yogi Bhanan, who introduced Kundalini Yoga to America in 1968. “You are not free by taking drugs. You’ll always be dragging your life.”

“Yoga is a light which, once lit, will never dim,” said Sri B. K. S. Iyengar. “The better your practice, the brighter the flame. When you inhale you are taking the strength from God. When you exhale, it represents the service you are giving to the world.” He didn’t mean flaming up the bone, nor did he mean inhaling a puff of *bhang*. He meant a different kind of magic dragon.

Before the age of flower children some of India’s *sadhus*, or holy men, smoked chillum pipes packed with *ganja*, hashish, and tobacco. The purpose was to keep their minds focused and strengthen their energy for penance and meditation.

“The purpose has never been intoxication,” explained a contemporary *sadhu*, Sri Saraswati. “It is supposed to reduce sexual desire.” *Sadhus* have been known to go naked in the dead of winter, which might explain things.

Bhang or *ganja* has long been smoked in India. It is associated with immortality. Four thousand years ago in the Atharva Veda, which is known as the *veda* of magical formulas, it was celebrated as a “sacred grass.” Fakirs, renowned for being able to tie themselves up into knots and even survive being buried alive, have for centuries fortified themselves with it. They believe it is a gift from God. As Willie Nelson said, “God put it here. What gives anyone the right to say God is wrong?”

The crusade against drugs began in 1914 after the United States opium commissioner revealed that per person more Americans were consuming habit-forming drugs than were people anywhere else in the world. Marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, among others, were legal then as long as they were accurately labeled with their contents and dosage.

After alcohol consumption became legal again, in 1933, President Roosevelt made it a point to praise the International Opium Convention, and the race to criminalize drugs was on. In 1971, as he was winding down the war in Vietnam, President Nixon declared a new war on drugs.

From 2001 to 2010 more than 8 million marijuana arrests were made nationwide. Ninety percent of those arrests were for possession. More people were arrested for possession of marijuana in 2011 than for all violent crimes combined.

The number of drug offenders locked up in federal and state prisons has increased thirteen-fold since first lady Nancy Reagan declared, “Just Say No,” in 1982. Today the war on drugs, all the criminalized drugs, costs about \$51 billion a year, according to the Drug Policy Alliance. The only people winning the war on drugs are the drug gangs.

Today, in states where marijuana use is legal there are Yoga studios where Yoga and pot freely mix. “I go more deeply into the asanas,” said Mark Smith, a novelist who has practiced Yoga for more than twenty years, sometimes under the influence. “Part of the point of Yoga is to relax the body. Marijuana helps a lot of people to do that.”

Nevertheless, the whole point of Yoga, not just part of the point, aims at your realizing who you are, not who you are on drugs. Who you are isn’t what kind of a house you live in or what kind of a car you drive, or whether you prefer Golden Goat to Ghost Train Haze.

If those things are who you are, you don't need Yoga. You've already got everything you want. Your house, your car, and your Ghost Train are doing it for you. Yoga is different. You have to do it for yourself. It's not about the gravy train. Yoga is about effort and self-awareness.

It isn't about anyone's hobbies or politics, whether someone teaches high-school science or thrives on tech in San Francisco. It's about the inner being beneath the externals. It's about practicing with dedication, be it asana or meditation or any of Yoga's other aspects, and cultivating detachment. It's not about cultivating the back forty with *bhang*.

Swami Satchidananda said in one of his teachings, "There is a natural way to unfold your consciousness and expand your mind. Imagine that you want to go from the ground floor to the top floor. If somebody puts you into a rocket and launches you, you won't land comfortably because you are not moving within your own capacity. If you really want something genuine and pure, you need not go out and search for it. It's already given to you. Your peace, happiness, health, spirituality—anything you want, all these things are in you. Mind expansion should be practiced consciously, through concentration, meditation, controlling the senses, and working on the physical body with Hatha Yoga and breathing exercises. Then you will see gradual, safe progress."

Intense breathing with a bong at hand is one thing. Intense Yoga breathing, which also triggers the production of endorphins, is another matter. They are two different ways of breathing, of seeing. "I'm going to teach you how to get high on your breath," said Yogi Bhajan.

Although drug use is a personal choice, it has consequences. Many studies, from such sources as the National Institutes of Health and the *Journal of Psychiatry*, have demonstrated that marijuana, depending on the dose, has a negative impact on cognition. Using radioactive markers, researchers at the University of Texas have shown that cocaine decreases blood flow to the prefrontal cortex of the brain, mimicking what happens to people who suffer a stroke. The less said about heroin and methamphetamine, the better.

Just as drugs do, Yoga changes the brain, but in a different way. Over time the brain learns to pay attention to the present moment and calm down.

Cognitive research at the University of Illinois has found that test scores improve after people practice Yoga. A



Ed Staskus

twelve-week study by the National Institutes of Health demonstrated that Iyengar Yoga alters brain function, increasing cerebral blood flow.

"Yoga thickens the layers of the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain associated with higher learning, and increases neuroplasticity, which helps us learn new things and change the way we do things," explained Dr. Loren Fishman of the Columbia Medical School.

One of the legacies of the age of flower children is the notion of looking beyond established ideas, of pushing boundaries and thinking for yourself. Widespread drug use and Yoga both became mainstream with the advance of the counterculture, although one practice went to Ecstasy and the other practice followed the path to a different kind of consciousness.

Recognizing that ripe tomatoes are a fruit is a form of knowledge. Wisdom lies in not putting one into a fruit salad. "The attaining of higher consciousness cannot simply be gained by the use of a drug," said David Frawley of the American Institute of Vedic Studies.

The following quotation from Swami Satchidananda continues our "fruit" analogy and adds to his cautions about instant *samadhi*: "You don't want your fruits and vegetables to be ripened quickly with chemicals. You want a natural growth. Let your system also grow naturally. Let it be refined naturally. And then, at a certain point, you will be a fit instrument."

Swami Satchidananda brought the teachings of Integral Yoga to the Western world during the 1960s—the heyday of turning on and dropping out. Fifty years later, his message is as potent as ever: "You can attain all you seek by the sincere practice of Yoga. And when I say Yoga, I do not mean Hatha Yoga alone. Yoga means everything: asanas, *pranayama*, sense control, concentration, meditation, purity of mind, a dedicated life, a compassionate heart, a strong will, and forgetting one's own selfishness. All these things should be expressed in our lives. Then you will become strong, peaceful, joyful, and useful."

Edward Staskus lives in Lakewood, Ohio, on the northeastern edge of the Rocky River valley. He is a regular contributor to Integral Yoga Magazine and his feature articles about Yoga are available at www.paperbackyoga.wordpress.com.

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Integral Yoga Magazine would like to thank the following donors for their generous support. These donors help to sustain *Integral Yoga Magazine's* mission and its projects that serve as vital vehicles of H. H. Sri Swami Satchidananda's teachings and service around the globe.

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