



B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Editorial

Fear and mastery of the vital body

By M. G. Satchidananda

Fear manifests itself in many forms: worry, embarrassment, competition, physical tension, insecurities both great and small, doubt, nervousness, shyness, guilt, and defensiveness. It drives much of what we think, do and even say. Consequently, we suffer throughout our daily lives. Fear and other difficult emotions may also upset the balanced secretion of the endocrine sys-

tem's hormones, which over time reduces our ability to resist disease, and contributes to stress related illness, both physical and mental. Too often, we come to believe that like the weather, there is little or nothing we can do about it. Especially as we age, our habits reinforce it, and we may give up efforts, even hope, to combat it in its various forms. However, we will see that through the

practice of an integral Yoga, one that includes transformation of the vital body, we can learn to gradually free ourselves of fear, and in doing so master the vital body where it resides. Here is how.

The first step: understanding fear, how and why it affects us

As students of Yoga, you are familiar with the concept of the five bodies: physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual. The vital body is the seat of the emotions and desires. Your feelings and impulses to act or to speak move through it. It is slightly more subtle than the physical. It animates the physical. It has its own anatomy, including the thousands of energy channels or nadis and chakras, the psycho-energetic centers from which the nadis radiate. It manifests as the first level of the aura. You do not have to be clairvoyant to see it. You can see a bright glow around those who are rested, healthy and energized through regular exercise and a balanced nourishing diet. Around those who are not, you can see a gray dullness, which may be tinted with a color such as red or brown. It is grosser than the mental body, the playground of imagination and memory. Still more

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subtle than the vital and mental bodies is the intellectual body, where abstract thoughts, ideas, and words arise. The five bodies interpenetrate one another. Movements in one of them set off an immediate chain reaction in the others. Understanding the flow of impulses from the vital body is the first step in mastering fear and other negative emotions. But merely understanding the distinctions between these five bodies and their movements will not provide to you much lasting benefit. They remain as concepts, as distant from your life as books on a shelf, usually forgotten in the rush and distractions of life. The second step is meditation, learning to go into the present moment where awareness of the inter-action of the five bodies. Awareness of these distinctions is referred to as discernment, viveka, and discernment makes a person wise. Its seat is our most subtle body, the spiritual body, the bliss body. The third step is shifting the allegiance of the vital body away from the ego.

The second step: the development of awareness and discernment

As students of Yoga you have the advantage of being able to put to good use the tool of discernment in your daily by becoming aware of fear and other negative emotions before they cause you to say or do something which you may later regret, or to take your mind on a wild ride. You can train yourself to become more aware in many ways. By taking a few slow deep breaths you can calm the vital body, and immediately enter the present moment. By doing breathing exercises, pranayama you will strengthen and energize the vital body, and so escape inertia and fatigue. When you practice yoga asanas, do each one with full attention to the sensations that arise in the present moment. Interpret them. Do each one as though you were doing it for the very first time. Awareness expands as a result. By regularly practicing yoga postures and pranayama you will become calmer, and you will be able to go deep into meditation, without falling asleep. By regularly going deep into meditation, with concentration, detaching from the incessant movements of the mind and vital, awareness grows, and by so doing you will feel calm, centered, and more detached from the impulses, emotions and desires as they arise in the vital body during daily life. Their regular practice will also weaken and gradually remove the deep seated habits which now cause your vital body to respond with emotions such as fear, desire, anger and pride. This is the work of purifying and mastering the vital body. The regular practice of asanas, pranayama and meditation serve to re-establish an optimal functioning of your glands, creating well being and the optimal conditions for managing the stress of daily life.

Life seen from the perspective of the vital body

Here are examples of movements of the vital body:

1. Feeling lonely, you call a friend, and exchange feelings and laughter
2. Looking at your watch, you realize that are going to

be late for your appointment, you feel anxious and start walking or driving faster.

3. Your partner asks you why you neglected to take care of some important matter, and you begin to speak defensively.

4. You turn on the television and share the emotions of the movie drama or the excitement of the news broadcast.

5. Receiving a letter from the tax department, or an unexpected bill, the muscles in your chest tighten and you let out a swear word.

6. Waiting for someone to arrive, you wonder why they are late, and your finger begins to tap nervously, and feel anxious.

7. After a long day at work, arriving home, feeling physically fatigued, you reach for something to drink or eat, a sugar rich beverage or food, or alcohol.

8. Feeling depressed or anxious you turn to smoking or consume or a pill.

9. Stepping outside, feeling the cold winter air or rain, you nervously run to the car

In each of the above examples, one can analyze the chain reaction of movements which occurs between the physical, vital, mental and intellectual bodies. In some of the above examples, the chain reaction begins with the physical body: number 2, 7 and 9. In some of the above it originates with an impulse in the vital body: number 1, 4, and 8. In others it originates with the mental and intellectual bodies: number 3, 5 and 6. The movements are nearly instantaneous. They are also habitual.

Behind all of these bodies lies pure consciousness, the spiritual body, the Self, the Witness. It does not do, feel or say anything. It merely witnesses. It is the one constant in your life. Like the thread which holds the string of pearls together, we rarely even notice it. It witnesses all of the events, every detail of our life. It is independent of the grosser bodies, including the brain, as indicated by recent scientific experiments and quantum physics.

By becoming aware of what is aware in deep meditation, and then by cultivating the perspective of the Witness towards the movements of the physical, vital, mental and intellectual bodies, gradually one becomes established in a state of "Self-realization," from moment to moment, as the consequences of one's past thoughts, words and actions, one's karma, runs down. One avoids creating new karmic consequences by acting without preference, without personal desire, being calm and aware. And as a result, habits, whose sum largely determines one's karma, gradually lose their force.

The third step: shifting the allegiance of the vital body away from the ego

The third step in mastering the vital body begins when one begins to shift the allegiance of the vital body from the ego and the fulfilment of its desires and preferences to that of the spiritual body itself, its aspiration for the

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Interviews with residents of our Kriya Yoga Ashrams

By M. G. Satchidananda

Editor's note: I asked all eight members of our ashrams in Bangalore, Sri Lanka and Quebec a series of questions. Here are their answers.

1. Give a short introduction or yourself. ...your name and what you do for BKY? Include if you are married and have children.

Vinod Kumar (Bangalore): I am very happy to mention that I have been associated with Babaji's Kriya Yoga Trust here since early 2002, I am responsible for managing the graphic design, printing, and distribution of our ashram's publications, the organization of the initiation seminars throughout India which are sponsored by Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas, and for teaching weekly Kriya Hatha Yoga classes which help to prepare some persons for initiation into Babaji's Kriya Yoga. I also conduct regular satsang meetings of initiates. I am married and live in the ashram with my wife, Lata, and our two children. I am an Arts graduate from Bangalore University.



Vinod Kumar

Lata: I am the wife of Vinod Kumar who is the man-

ager of the Ashram in Bangalore. We have two beautiful daughters, Meghana who is 12 years old and Varsha who is 6 years old. I am a B.Sc graduate from Bangalore University. I am a Math Teacher, but work for the ashram these days supporting the ashram office in a variety of ways.

Vidhya Roopa: I am 33 years old, Tamilian, a member of the Bangalore Ashram staff for the past twelve years. Before joining it, I finished a Bachelors of Science degree here in Bangalore. I am married and my husband Dhanush and I have two children a daughter Shreeya who is 10 years and a son, Chirag who is 5 years.

Rohit Naithani: I am 38 years old. I have been helping Marshall Govindan since 1998, when we first met in Badrinath. I have a Bachelors of Commerce degree from a university in Dehradun where I live during the winter with my wife, Madhulika and daughter, Maitraye, who is two years old. From May to November I live in Badrinath, where I have lived most of the time, except winters, since



Lata Kumar

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Editorial *continued*

True, the Good, the Beautiful. This is the longest and most difficult part of the process, for it involves the complete purification of the vital body itself of desires and unconscious, habitual emotions and impulses, born of egoism. The ego, the habit of identifying with the body, emotions, desires, mental and intellectual movements, is a fundamental part of our human nature. To not merely transcend our deeply flawed human nature, as is the goal of most spiritual disciplines, but to transform it, to perfect it, is the goal of the tantras, the teaching of the perfected ones, the Siddhas. By seeking to emulate them, we may concentrate on what we are to become, and avoid identifying with what must be purified within ourselves.

This purification is referred to as tapas, which means "straightening by fire." It refers to any voluntary self-challenge to purify whatever habit or limitation in one's human nature one focuses one's intention and willpower upon. It begins with the creation of a clearly worded intention. For example, if one seeks to master the mind, it might be something like "I enjoy being the Witness to the movements of the mind." If one seeks to overcome a habit, for example, over eating: "I choose to eat only when I feel physical hunger, and I stop at the first signs of fullness." If one seeks to overcome fear it might be something like "I take a deep breath, center myself, and

remain calm whenever I begin to feel fear (or tension, insecurity, worry, doubt, nervousness or any other of its manifestations)." Next, one must exercise one's willpower when faced with objects of desire, or habitual distractive states of mind. And one must persevere in the face of resistance, patiently, often calling down the support of a Higher Power to overcome it.

Kundalini Yoga: awakening our potential power and consciousness to master the vital body

The Yoga Siddhas, who developed Kundalini Yoga, have given to us the most effective means of accessing our potential power and consciousness, kundalini. By directing pranashakti mentally through the energy channels of the vital body and into its' chakras through asana, pranayama, mantra, meditation and internal worship the vital body begins to serve the inner Divinity, and the manifestation of perfection incarnate. We have the wonderful techniques of Kriya Yoga, the poetic writings of the Siddhas, and the examples of Babaji and the Siddhas themselves to empower, guide and inspire us. By forming clear intentions, exercising our willpower, and invoking the guidance and support of the Divine we can and are mastering the vital body, banishing fear and all allied negative emotions and desire, born of egoism, from our lives. □



Interviews *continued*

1986. In that year, my father established the first bank branch there. I have an internet shop there. Since the year 2006 I have helped Marshall Govindan to organize pilgrimages to Badrinath and the Kumba Mela. Since 2008, I am employed by Babaji's Kriya Yoga trust as the Badrinath ashram manager, responsible the construction of an ashram there.

Candaswamy: I am the Secretary of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Ashram Trust, in Sri Lanka. I was born in 1939. I am married with three grown children. I divide my time between our Ashrams in Colombo (Dehiwala) the capital, and Katargama, at the southern tip of this island. I first became interested in Yoga in school. Later I joined the Army. In 1975, I was initiated into Babaji's Kriya Yoga by Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah. I served him for many years in India, helping him to build the Babaji temple in Parangipettai, where Babaji was born. During much of the civil war here I lived in his San Thome, Chennai ashram. I have known and worked with Marshall Govindan since 1980, when he came to Sri Lanka for nearly one year to conduct Yoga classes and to begin the construction of our Ashram here in Colombo. We also worked together from 1986 to 1987 when we helped Yogi Ramaiah to build a college of Yoga therapy and clinic in Tamil Nadu.



Candaswamy

Krishnaveni: I'm Krishnaveni. Assistant Secretary of BKYO Ashram in Sri Lanka.

Amrit: I am the office manager at the Kriya Yoga Ashram in Quebec for the past one year.

Sukha: I identify myself by the name of Stephano Sukha Pandavas. I am a yogi by heart, and I am responsible for managing the maintenance of the beautiful, mountain top Kriya Yoga Ashram in Quebec, where I have lived for more than five years.



Sukha

2. *How did you become interested in Babaji's Kriya Yoga? And when were you initiated in BKY?*

Vinod Kumar: My association with BKY began in a surprising manner. Since my teenage years, I had been practicing a few Asanas, and breathing techniques. During early 2002, I met Mr. Walter Carrel III (Neelakantan) at the printing press, where I worked. He had brought some of the Ashram's first books for publishing, and while I was editing these, How I Became a Disciple of

Babaji and Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga Tradition, I found myself reading some of the paragraphs. Reading those paragraphs was that significant, inspirational moment that finally brought me here, even though it took two more years to get initiated into Kriya Yoga. I received initiation in 2005. Here I take the opportunity to mention "Marshall Govindan Satchidananda" is my first Kriya Yoga master. I have lived and worked at the ashram since that year and taken all the Initiations. I also underwent a special "Hatha Yoga Teacher" training from Durga and himself, in 2008 and 2009, and am teaching Kriya Hatha Yoga regularly since then.

Lata: I joined this ashram in 2007, though I am very regular in my practice ever since 2003, when Walter Neelakantan, the previous manager, taught me some yoga asana and pranayama to me help me maintain perfect physical health. After reading the book Babaji and 18 siddhas I was inspired and I got my first initiation in October 2006 and the second initiation in January 2007 by Marshall Govindan and the third initiation in 2009.

Vidhya: After beginning to work in the ashram, I developed an interest in Babaji and his teachings. I was initiated in Bangalore by M Govindan Satchidananda in 2001. I attended the Kriya Hatha Yoga Teacher Training with Durgaji in 2008.

Rohit Naithani: In October of 1999, Marshall Govindan and Walter Neelakantan came to Badrinath where I had been living most of the time. Together with a guide



Vidya

and two porters we trekked to Santopanth Tal above Badrinath. We spent several days there until the snow fall became too heavy. Govindan told me about Babaji and how his teacher, Yogi Ramaiah had come there in 1954. Govindan showed me the 18 postures for the first time at Santopanth Tal. We had no more communication until 2006, when after I sent to him an email offering my services. He entrusted to me the responsibility of organizing a pilgrimage to Badrinath with 55 participants from around the world. In July 2007, Acharya Vyasa came to Badrinath, and I was initiated by him there.

Krishnaveni: I have been practicing Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga from the year 2000. The first time I saw Babaji's picture, I lost my heart to him. I had an opportunity to watch the film "Baba" in 2002. The film gave me faith in Babaji and inspiration to be initiated. I was initiated in 2006 at Colombo. I attended the Kriya Hatha Yoga teacher training with Durgaji in 2008.

Amrit: I was initiated in Babaji's Kriya Yoga in 2006. Before discovering Kriya Yoga, I had already been through some deep experiences of spiritual conscious-

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ness, but ended up feeling like there was separation between myself as a person, and my spiritual consciousness. Then I met a medium who gave me some advice, including the practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, which would allow me to become an "integral spiritual being".

Sukha: I was initiated in 2005 by Satchidananda. As a young lad, I was drawn to mysticism, science, music, considered myself to be a seeker, an explorer. I was curious from a young age: not only about the visible world, but especially about the invisible worlds I had read about. I eventually arrived at a spiritual gem that made me discover the art of Kriya yoga: the Autobiography of a yogi. That changed my life!!!

3. *How do you share Babaji's Kriya Yoga with others, particularly at the ashram? Your work? Teaching?*

Vinod Kumar: Yes, I great take pleasure in sharing the practice and benefits of Kriya Yoga. While teaching, in return, I learn many things. When I receive inquiries I enjoy giving information about our five-fold path of Kriya Yoga and initiation.

Lata: I help to maintain the ashram, answer the telephone, meet visitors, help with the sale of our publications.

Vidhya: I share Kriya Yoga with my children, the persons who come to the ashram for classes, visitors, and to the students in the local public school where I teach most mornings. As the Ashram Office manager, I have various job responsibilities, processing orders for our publications from distributors and individuals, book keeping, maintaining accounting records, financial statements and correspondence with our auditor and the government, updating of our database, mass mailing of publicity using our database, controlling the accounts payable function; supervising an office assistant who is responsible for shipping.

Rohit: Whenever I am in Badrinath and even in Dehradun I tell about our ashram and the activity about our trust and about Marshall Govindan.

Candaswamy: I share by practicing Babaji's Kriya Yoga, publishing books on Kriya Yoga in Sinhala, and distributing its publications in Tamil and English, organizing free public classes, seminars and retreats at our two ashrams.

Krishnaveni: At our Ashram, we conduct the five-fold path of Kriya Yoga on every Sunday. This includes a free public class. On Thursdays, we have satsang, karma yoga, a special puja, followed by a Yagna (chanting around the fire). I also work as a Yoga instructor teaching Kriya Hatha yoga in many places in Colombo.

Amrit: In my work, I always try to be pro-active, with

awareness, honesty, and simplicity. I regularly look for new ways to improve the quality of my work, to better serve Babaji's Kriya Yoga. I teach weekly free public classes in Hatha Yoga at the ashram.

Sukha: By living and working at the center, I exchange ideas and experiences with people from all over the world. By maintaining this ashram, with its incredible shakti energies, I help to support the work of the great teachers who are here, and their efforts to share the techniques and literature of Babaji and the Siddhas.

4. *What is the significance of Babaji in your life? How do you feel serving Babaji's Kriya Yoga has affected your life?*

Vinod Kumar: Every breath, action, thoughts for the past 10 years is because of Babaji. It is only because of Mahavatar Babaji, I have seen immense changes in my every part of my personal, family and social life. I feel I am really blessed serving Babaji's Kriya Yoga. I want to continue till my last breath serving it, for the benefit of true seekers, while my own potential unfolds, learning and practicing this holy science. In my experience "Self-Realization" or "God-Realization" is the highest effect of the practice of the teachings and scientific techniques given to us by Mahavatar Babaji.

Lata: I and my family consider Babaji to be our Father, guiding us in every way. After beginning to practice his Kriya Yoga, our family is running smoothly and happily without any obstacles. I am always happy and I think it is my great privilege, with so many blessings, to serve Babaji's mission. Since I was initiated my life changed. My anger and desire for worldly life came down and I found mental peace. I am better able to handle all situations well.

Vidhya: I had no idea about Yoga and the Siddhas when I joined, as a young woman. I was a materialistic person attached to worldly things, but my life changed 360 degrees. I realized that I am in the right place; I knew the Divine Self in me as I started practicing the 1st level Kriyas very seriously. I became spiritually mature, pure, disciplined and I became able to control my thoughts, moods, actions and I could watch myself. I was transformed totally. Today all that I am is because of this Ashram and this Ashram's samskara. This makes me a unique person. Other members of my family witness me as an example of a spiritual person. The nature of multi-tasking I do being a wife, mother, Yoga teacher, Ashram office manager (cooking, cleaning, laundry, maintaining house, teaching my children, their project home work, teaching yoga to children in the school, evaluating them, Ashram accounts, audit, sales, bills, emails, database, driving my scooter in the traffic of Bangalore. Yet I am happy to be working for BKY because Babaji's support is always there. I am blessed by his grace, in all ways truly blessed, I joined here in year 2000 and to this day, I feel love and respect for Ashram and my work.

Rohit: Babaji is my ideal and my guru and neither I

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nor my family are able to express the feelings we have for him. He has given to us our daughter.

Candaswamy: He is everything for me.

Krishnaveni: I can simply say that because of Babaji I am still alive in this world. He is everything to me. Serving Babaji's Kriya Yoga is leading me towards higher consciousness. It changed my entire life. It made me as a loving and friendly person and helped to realize that "Love is Babaji and Babaji is Love".

Amrit: My devotion to the Self can take many forms, but it is usually not something I will try to describe, or to define. I prefer to simply say that I'm always looking to serve Babaji's Kriya Yoga with the best of my knowledge and capacity. Also, I am thankful to Kriya Babaji for giving me the opportunity to have a job which combines "spirituality" with "concrete action", which I find to be a direct continuity of my life path.



Amrit

Sukha: The significance of Babaji is the goal in itself, he represents the spotless grace of the divine, the utmost greatness that humanity can achieve in this universe. To work for one of the great masters is a blessing and a privilege. It brings deep responsibilities and requires commitments which are not always easy to follow, but which are so rewarding spiritually. Discovering Babaji and serving him is like having a steady powerful light guiding you through the obscurities of life and knowing that His presence and love is present for all of eternity; because nothing is impossible in the hands of Babaji, he is my guide, my friend, my father, my mother and without His grace, I would probably be sinking in the depths of my emotions and fear; but by knowing and feeling that He is the driver of my little chariot, I am reassured that I will reach my destination, Jai Jai Babaji, may His grace flow to all living creatures.

5. *What benefits do you receive and what personal challenges do you encounter working at the ashram?*

Vinod Kumar: the practice of these sacred kriyas brings me utmost peace, bliss, self-confidence and these are greater than all pleasurable physical commodities or sensations put together. My attraction towards the sensory world is becoming less. The days when I practice Kriya Hatha Yoga twice a day is calmer, joyful, more peaceful, compared to other days. And these days I sometimes work until late at night, and I wake up early in the morning. These days meditation is delightful, with fewer thoughts. Practicing mauna (silence) is always a challenge for me, but as I usually prefer not to speak, I somehow manage to practice it every day at least for awhile.

Lata: It is very difficult for me to answer this question.

The benefits are many, the best I can say is "I am trying my level best to know the principle of "Who am I"? Why I am here? "And the biggest challenge is to develop this ashram's mission of sharing Babaji's Kriya Yoga for the benefit of everyone all over the world.

Vidhya: I don't face any "personal " challenges in my work place, believe me! trust me. The ashram staff, we are like a small family.

Rohit: I feel that He has given to me great strength and energy since 2008 when I began to develop the ashram in Badrinath. Every day has brought new challenges related to its construction and in all aspects of daily life. But somehow the problems and challenges are resolved through His grace.

Candaswamy: My biggest challenge was maintaining the ashram during the 25 year long civil war, from 1993 to 2008. During the 1983 riots many of our students were murdered. Our ashram was taken over by others, and I spent many years in litigation to regain control of it. As it is on the beach only a few yards from the ocean, when the tsunami came in 2003, it was almost completely destroyed. With Govindan's support and Babaji's grace it has been rebuilt and expanded with a large hall, guest rooms, shrine to Babaji, yagna peetam, and other facilities. Managing all of this has required great effort. Now I have many persons helping me from both the Hindu Tamil and Buddhist Sinhala communities.

Krishnaveni: I really feel very happy to work at the Ashram. My physical health is a challenge for me.

Amrit: My job at the Ashram is definitely the one for which I have had the most responsibilities. This has helped me to develop a certain confidence, when confronted to decisions/actions to take. I also learned to become more conscious of my own limits, and to assert myself as the person I am, because "to surrender oneself is not to forget oneself".

Sukha: Taking care of a big piece of land by myself most of the time, with all of its equipment can be pretty demanding, especially with the extreme weather that we experience in this region. I need help! So I would like to encourage initiates to participate in the work study program we offer here, for anywhere from a month to a year. To work and serve Babaji and His mission, helping to spread His is so important. It will change your life! It has made me realize the insignificance of my own personal agenda, and opened my heart to universal love. While I still have unique aspirations and goals, these I direct towards the Divine, and my life becomes my yoga.



Krishnaveni

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Personal Questions

To Vinod:

1. *What has been your experience living in the ashram with your wife and children for so many years?*

Living in the ashram with my wife and children for the past 7 years, all of us have experienced the presence and guidance of Babaji in some way or the other. And in a few incidents Babaji proved he is really guiding and protecting us. His guidance is sometimes beyond my comprehension. Since these incidents are so personal, I would like prefer not to share them.

2. *How many books does the ashram sell on average each year in India? Which of our books sell the best in India?*

We sell about Rs. 9.00,000 (or \$16,700) worth of books every year. More than 3,500 copies. 90% of this comes from book distributors, and the rest from individual sales. Babaji and the 18 Siddhas, Voice of Babaji, Patanjali, Bogar, Kriya Yoga Insight along the Path, Yoga Toolbox, and Kailash, are the titles of books that sell well in India compared to our others.

3. *Do people in India widely know who Kriya Babaji and the 18 Siddhas are?*

Yes, people are becoming more aware of Babaji and to some extent the 18 Siddhas, perhaps because they have read the Autobiography of a Yogi, or seen the film BABA by Tamil film actor and superstar Rajanikanth, or because they have read Babaji and the 18 Siddhas or our publications: Tirumandiram, Voice of Babaji, Patanjali, and Boganathar.

4. *Have you seen the interest in Yoga change over the years that you have been at the ashram?*

Yes, I have seen an increasing interest in Yoga is taking place; people are keenly looking forward to get introduced to Kriya Yoga. Most of them find us after reading the Autobiography of a Yogi, and then find us on the internet, then call us.

To Lata:

Can you give us some idea of a typical day at the ashram?

Typically, we receive many people who want to buy books or have questions about Kriya Yoga.

One day, about two years ago, we received a gentleman, a yoga practitioner from the Himalayas, who came to the ashram to purchase some of our books. He stayed with us for more than eight hours. He said that he is living only by drawing energy from Sun and he would not accept our offer of refreshment or fruit. He noticed a very high level of energy in the main hall, and said he getting from it, as much energy as he usually gets from the Sun. He had an incredible physical presence, with strong muscles, was extremely calm, patient, had glowing skin, and shining eyes.

On another day, we had a visitor, a man who had spent more than 20 years with the late Swami Rama of Rishikesh. He, himself is a saint from the Himalayas. He was brought to the ashram by the relatives of a close, initiated student.

To Vidhya:

1. *Tell me more about your experience of teaching children in the local schools? How is Yoga regarded by school officials? How have you seen children benefitting from Yoga? Have teachers spoken to you about how Yoga has helped individual students you have worked with?*

Teaching yoga to children is my personal challenge because I start by 8.30 a.m. and teach until 12.30 p.m. in afternoons for Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, a series of five consecutive classes in various age groups, from pre kindergarten children (3 to 4 years), fun yoga up to the 10th standard children (14 to 15 years).

Children are real fun but because each one is different, handling 45 children in each session, keeping them occupied and maintaining discipline is a challenge. Some children overdo it; some children are lazy; some are hyper-active; some children just practice exactly the way we teach. The officials in the Schools here believe that Yoga is a spiritual activity, which is very important for all children to learn and cultivate in their lifetime. I feel that from the yoga practice the children gain mental strength and become physically stronger and emotionally calm. Teachers recently referred me to some children who have allergies, coughs and respiratory problems due to air pollution. I taught them special asanas that increase one's lung capacity and as a result these children felt immediate relief after practicing the asanas.

2. *What difficulties do people in India have in practicing Yoga? In the West, Yoga asanas are practiced widely, but meditation is still considered to be difficult and its benefits are less understood. Is it easier and more common for people in India to practice asana or to meditate?*

People in Indian face difficulties doing Yoga because of their family, lack of personal space to practice, and a lack of free time to practice. Many are too lazy to practice. People in India like to practice meditation more than Yoga asanas. People in Indian are more religious and they like to meditate which makes them enjoy the spiritual experiences. With Yoga they have to work with their physical bodies, and they often believe that it is only for persons who have health problems, so they ignore the need to learn and practice it. But some people are aware of the need to remain healthy, fit and fine physically and mentally.

To Rohit:

1. *What difficulties have you faced in the construction of the ashram in Badrinath?*

In the beginning, we had difficulty with getting the landlord who sold us the land to sell his entire plot. Later, he was willing to sell us more. Then, soon after we began clearing the land and building the foundation, in August 2008, the state government banned all construction in the temple towns of the upper Himalayas. This was because many people believed that there had been too much unregulated development in recent years in these

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About Kriya Yoga and Acharya Satyananda

By Marina Kapur

From time to time, we ask ourselves, why am I here, what is the best thing for me, how can I be happy, healthy, successful, be at peace, be a better person and still fulfil my responsibilities to myself, my family, my work and the world?

As I support business leaders, their companies and their families, to navigate through business, society and life in a manner that reflects their passion, purpose and priorities, this



Satyananda

is a question that is often raised. My response is, "start with your truth." To live in truth needs an understanding of Who I Am. The starting point is self realization and self awareness, on which conscious creation is built with mindfulness and self mastery. When I know myself, I can lead myself, I can make a difference. I have been practicing hatha yoga since 1995. In reading Autobiography of a Yogi many years ago, I recognized Mahavatar Kriya Babaji and wanted to experience the original ancient Kriya Yoga. This dream (like so many others) came true - I completed my initiation into Babaji's Kriya Yoga in 2011 with Yogacharya Satyananda.

What a Gift! Kriya Yoga wrapped up all my learning of Raja Yoga with Brahma Kumaris, Sudarshan Kriya and Padmasadhana with Art of Living, Isha Yoga with the Isha

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Interviews *continued*

sacred places. But despite the ban we continued to make some progress. Finally the ban was lifted in August 2012. We have also had some difficulty from local officials and even sadhus, who are suspicious of us because our ashram is the first that is being developed by persons from Western countries in Badrinath or in any Himalayan place. It is only the third ashram being developed near the temple of Sri Badrinarayan, on this side of the Alakananda River where there are no roads. Through Babaji's grace we are overcoming every obstacle, with patience and devotion.

To Amrit and Sukha:

1. *You have access to all of our publications. Which publications have you found most supportive of your sadhana?*

Amrit: I appreciate reading the Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas and, for the practice of the 18 postures, Babaji's Kriya Yoga: Deepening Your Practice. I generally appreciate the writings of the Siddhas, which are usually brief, but are a powerful source of inspiration, if we take the time to be receptive to it. We have several publications on the writings of the Siddhas. I recommend The Yoga of the 18 Siddhas: An Anthology.

Sukha: The quintessential one that comes to mind would be Patanjali's Yoga Sutras; it is the building block, the guideline, the mountain itself and the road that will lead us to the summit of realisation. I must say that I have a particular soft spot for The Voice of Babaji and Insights Along the Path was also one that helps me.

2. *As the Ashram managers you speak with many students and nonstudents who call for information and recommendations about our trainings and activities. You have taken all three Initiations, the Hatha Yoga Teacher Training, traveled with us on pilgrimage to the Himalayas and at-*

tended our Silent Retreats and Satsangs. How do you describe what one receives from these trainings and activities?

Amrit: I find that what is really transmitted through all of these activities is beyond words. During seminars or satsangs, the teachings definitely have a value, but what I always remember every time is the energy and inspiration that we receive, which supports us in our life and practice, and reinforces our aspiration. I believe, without a doubt, that our organization is supported by the Divine Grace, in everything that is accomplished by it. I highly recommend anyone to participate in our activities, whether it's an initiation, a retreat, a pilgrimage, simply to receive the benefits of this support. Do not hesitate to follow all three levels of initiation, and even to repeat them. Even if you are under the impression of not having well integrated the teachings (which is perfectly normal), at least you will know all of the tools that are available in the practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. Then you can integrate them at your own pace, and in a way that is the most adapted to your life. I would also like to mention that if you are interested by the Hatha Yoga teacher training, this training can really transform your practice of asanas, whether or not you wish to become a teacher.

Sukha: The pilgrimage fortified my belief in these deep spiritual teachings and was a major help in assessing an understanding of them. The pilgrimages give us support and even signs for our evolution on the path of Self-realization. All the places and activities allow us to have a direct contact with the teachings and to experience the shakti contained in sacred places. They also give us the chance to be outwardly devotional and share with fellow worshipers, and re-affirm our belief in these ancient teachings. □



Foundation, training in Power to Create with Landmark Education and Self Management Leadership with Oxford Leadership Academy, as well as Kundalini Yoga and Tibetan Yoga practices, which are effective in their own right, yet Kriya Yoga is powerful beyond words. Receiving the first initiation inspired me to continue with the second initiation seminar, and I now look forward to the advanced third initiation - to continue deeper into the journey, to meet Myself and my Creator.

Like other volunteers, I help organize Initiation programs and have participated in programs in Singapore, Mumbai, Delhi, Munich and London. Each time the experience has been beautiful and different. Now I understand why it has not been written about in detail – because *“words do not capture its magic”*.

Many Kriya initiates experienced and describe *“deep healing”* and *cleansing* physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Love and faith and mindful action with awareness replace fear, greed and unconscious automatic response of behavior. We get the confidence, power and courage to make brave decisions, supported by a heightened level of awareness, vital energy, inspiration and inner guidance, creativity, belongingness and a new sense of well-being, which makes us feel safe and secure that no matter what *“all is well”*.

Was there any conflict between Kriya Yoga and other spiritual practices? No, if anything. Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a holistic, integral approach, without compelling to any religious denomination, a “scientific art” and a purely spiritual practice, which discloses the secret ancient teaching of the Yoga Siddhas to us in modern daily life, and combines sacred rituals of body postures (hatha yoga), conscious breathing (pranayama), meditation (dhyana), chanting mantras (bhakti yoga), silence (mauna), realization of truth (jnana yoga), and realization of Self (samadhi).

Was there a conflict between Gurus? No, not at all! Actually, I feel that my earlier Gurus brought me to Mahavatar Kriya Babaji, and Babaji is preparing me to align with the Creator. No one is asked to withdraw from a personal Guru or a tradition one is committed to, there is no requirement to take Kriya Babaji as “one's only” Guru. Rather, we are taught and guided to identify, realize and become one with Guru within us.

Was there a conflict between any fitness requirements and my state of health? No, not at all, everyone does as much as is individually possible for them at each moment.

Like my co-participants, I am fortunate to have had Yogacharya Satyananda as my physical guide at one moment of time during my journey Home. However, when I first saw him, I saw a youthful yet ordinary-European looking man, without features one would “expect” to see when meeting a spiritual teacher of a traditional guru lineage from India - no long white beard, no orange robe, no garland, just in traditional acharya clothing, and definitely with no “guru attitude”, and I questioned how effective his teaching would be. Yet, like others, I was pleasantly surprised that my apprehension was unjusti-

fied. On the contrary, many of us thought afterwards, *“we could not have asked for a better guide”*. We saw, how his diligent, precise and patient *“teaching is whole and complete”*, the way he *“blends his knowledge of ancient Indian traditions, other belief systems and modern Western metaphysical science, makes you realize that the Kriya Yoga path really is a Universal practice”*, not limited to a religion, a sect, an “ism”, nor that it is any fashionable fad. With a fresh, vivid clarity and simplicity, he brings together and illustrates concepts, methods of practice, background philosophy and yogic science, purpose and benefits, differences and similarities to other traditions, so that *“the holistic manner in which he integrates the What, How and Why removes doubts, and answers even unasked questions.”* Satyananda's openness to generously share his wisdom with a *“genuinely sincere, humble and modest”* attitude, makes Kriya Yoga *“appealing, accessible and applicable”* to all; his *“innocent humor makes the journey lighter”*. And because of that lightness, it makes it possible for us to go deeper still. I believe, that is because he provides an authentic space for powerful inner experience – if we allow it, and because he is detached from the outcome - he realizes, each one of us will find our path to our personal truth at our speed and time, yet for sure, each one of us receives the gift of being touched in our heart, a glimpse of truth, a spark and a sense of hope.

The spiritual light awakens souls to their own inner beauty

To me, Satyananda is a practical example and inspiration of how our spiritual light works through all of us. His presence, attitude and message are reflected in these quotes he frequently uses, *“Whatever contains fear cannot ever be Truth”*, and *“Nothing real can be threatened – Nothing unreal exists”*, have profoundly influenced my outlook on truth, reality, trust and inner peace. In organizing his programs, I have witnessed Satyananda's attitude of compassion and gratitude. Whilst I got angry and upset about poor teaching conditions he has to tolerate outside Europe, he remained non-judgmental and accepting. Still, I wonder how we, the participants and volunteers, can reciprocate his devotion and commitment to us? If he can leave his privileged profession as a certified psychotherapist and psychologist to serve us, why can't we be more aware and responsible in the way we ensure best teaching conditions for us? Babaji selects people to be our guides – these beings are gifts to humanity. Therefore, like my fellow volunteers, I am grateful of the opportunity to serve Babaji by assisting also Satyananda. As Karthik, in Singapore says, *“being a volunteer gives me immense satisfaction, and deepens my sadhana through karma yoga.”* This passion to serve is shared by, for example Adya, Ashish, Bala, Celia, Jayanth, Joy, Narayani, Nar-simhan, Neel, Neschay, Sandeep, Sanjay, Subbiah, Sunil, Tarun, Vimala, Vinod, whom I personally know of, as well as other volunteers worldwide.

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News and Notes

Pilgrimage to Badrinath in the Himalayas, September 27 to October 14, 2013

Join us for an life changing, unforgettable pilgrimage to the place where Babaji attained soruba samadhi, the ultimate state of enlightenment. Travelling by bus from New Delhi, we will visit Rishikesh, Rudraprayaga, Joshimutt, Badrinath, and Haridwar. We will have group practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga at least twice a day in all of these places. Visit the new ashram in construction at Badrinath, where we will have a mantra yagna. See the details at <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm>.

Pilgrimage to the South of India, February 15 to March 4, 2013

Join us for an inspiring new itinerary, with daily group practice of yoga and meditation in some of the most powerful spiritual locations of S. India. We will visit ashrams and holy shrines in Bangalore, Nandi Hills (Tapaswiji), Tiruvannamalai, Pondicherry Tanjore, Palani, Coimbatore, Mysore. All are welcome. For details visit our website.

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec: June 14-16, and October 25-27, 2013; in Colombo, Sri Lanka March 8-10, in Martinique April 5-7; In Japan August 30-September 1.

Third level initiations will be offered with M. Govindan Satchidananda near Dole, France, May 1-8, 2013, near Frankfurt, Germany, May 17-24; in Quebec July 12 to 21, 2013; in Bangalore January 22-31, 2014. Attain the goal of Self-realization with powerful kriyas to awaken the chakras and to go into the breathless state of samadhi.

Applications for the work-study program at the Quebec ashram in 2013 are now being accepted. Contact satchidananda@babajiskriyayoga.net.

Silence retreats at the Quebec ashram are scheduled: April 12 to 22, May 24 to June 2, August 30 to September 8, December 26 to 31, 2013.

For details go to <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/event-s/Silence-Retreat-2013.pdf>.

Kirtan weekends are scheduled at the Quebec ashram: January 19 to 20, May 4 to 5, August 3 to 4, October 5 to 6, November 30 to December 1, 2013. For details go to <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/events/Kirtan-at-Ashram-2013.pdf>.

M. G Satchidananda completed his one year sabbatical from teaching in early November, with a third initiation in Brazil, November 13 to 22, with 26 participants.

A progress report and 15 recent

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M. G. Satchidananda with initiates in Brazil.

Profile *continued*

As I write this, I understand why Satyananda does not consider it important to write stories about himself and his life. He does not seek celebrity, guru or special status – ways to fall into ego games, although his knowledge, insight and wisdom are deep. His way of speaking illustrates he is aware that he serves as a channel and messenger for the highest teaching and The Great Teacher. His love of solitude and inner silence (in spite of having to constantly speak) reminds me of one of his favorite quotes from Kabir:

"I was looking for myself. And I found no self. I am no more. The dew drop is disappearing into the ocean."

I realize that there is much more that we can learn. Yet I am reminded of Satyananda's words, *"Don't believe me, find it yourself to be true, experience it yourself."* Thank you, Satyananda – we will! Marina.

(Quotes of other students set in italics)

M.D. Satyananda is member of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas since 2005 and gives seminars with initiation into Babaji's Kriya Yoga in various countries. Certified in Psychology and Psychotherapy, he has worked in clinical and corporation settings. After studying spiritual wisdom of the world since childhood and Vedanta and Yoga for more than a decade in India and the West, he dedicated several years exclusively to intense study and practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and to serving Babaji's Kriya Yoga and its students worldwide network with Karma Yoga. He has taken several pilgrimages to India's holy places and saints.

During first quarter 2013, Satyananda will give initiation seminars again in various cities in India and in Sri Lanka. □





Construction of the ashram in Badrinath.

photos of the Badrinath ashram construction can be viewed at: http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/ashram-india.htm#badrinath_ashram.

European Gathering of initiates and Acharyas May 24-26, 2013. For details go to <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/events/European-Satsang-2013-invitation-MGS.pdf>.

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Visit Durga's blog www.seekingthefirstself.com.

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Hatha Yoga Intensive: June 28 to July 8, 2013

With Durga Ahlund and M. Govindan Satchidananda at the Quebec Ashram

As a student of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, you are cordially invited to become a Teacher of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga! One of the best ways to deepen your own practice of Kriya Yoga and to serve others is by teaching this wonderful scientific art. This Yoga teacher training has been designed to meet the 200-hour International certification standards, as set up by the Yoga Alliance. A 250-page manual/workbook accompanies the course. On completion of an intensive 10-day residential training, you will begin a year-long process of teaching and study of spiritual texts and complete a final exam, which will not only fulfill training requirements, but also support your wellness and spiritual growth.

This program is largely experiential, focusing on personal transformation as well as developing professional skill. Students must be currently practicing Kriya Yoga, have taken the BKY 1st and 2nd level trainings and have a well-established daily practice. Participants must have practiced Hatha Yoga for a minimum of two years. This is an intensive training program and all participants

should have good physical and emotional health.

The 10-day residential course curriculum covers not only a thorough understanding of the mechanics of the 18 asana of Kriya Hatha Yoga, but also how Yoga works. You will learn the physical benefits and the theory behind the asana selection and what occurs energetically as you practice them. The course is comprehensive. The curriculum covers workshops on physical and subtle anatomy and physiology, pranayama (Kriyas and additional techniques), bandhas and mudras, meditation, self-study and philosophy. You will learn how to teach all of these elements of Yoga effectively. The training will develop your voice as a teacher by first deepening and expanding your own Inner experience and joy of Hatha Yoga and meditation. Instructors: Durga Ahlund, Marshall Govindan, Pierre Desjardins. The program begins in the evening of Friday June 29 and ends in the evening of Monday July 8, 2012. Click here for details: <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/hatha-yoga-teacher-training.htm>



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