

Saraswati River Yoga Newsletter

Editor: Judith Lockard

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Theme of the Month



Swami Shivananda Saraswati-
1887-1963

**SERVE, LOVE, MEDITATE,
REALIZE.**

Swami Shivananda, and his followers, have been a primary channel through which knowledge in the form of Yoga and Vedanta has been spread and practiced all over the world, especially in North America.

He stressed Karma Yoga, selfless service, which promotes purification through hard work, as a prerequisite for higher consciousness. He taught that through bhakti, self-giving love, and

ahimsa, non-violence, one achieves Sat-Chit-Ananda, Absolute Existence, Consciousness, or what we sometimes call Bliss or Freedom .

He saw Meditation as the link to keeping a flow of God-consciousness and thus of great importance in the path to spiritual development.

Synthesis Swami Shivananda Saraswati-like the traditions that we live out at SRY, promoted a synthesis of yoga Practices. He was a great proponent of bringing the practices into the world and emphasized working for others, hard labor in selfless service as a crucial part of transformation. But these were not to the exclusion of devotion or meditation.

He was very clear that the things that got in the way of Peace could be addressed through a comprehensive program that emphasized eating well and exercise (Hatha yoga) for the cultivation of a healthy body, mantra and devotion for the discipline and development of the mind, and meditation and self inquiry to reveal the way to universal consciousness. He taught that work frees up energy and recommended using the brilliance of the mind to liberate the consciousness. He had little patience for the busy mind if he thought that questions were sourced by it would prescribe more work

How this translates into everyday life:

The energy of Shiva is about noticing while you are in the situation, not necessarily having the perfect answer or action but about being in the experience noticing, being aware of all of it. If, as we hear in class, *what limits us is what we do not notice*, then the energy that allows us to notice more is what transforms our experience.

Fullness: One thing that I have noticed about myself is how much time I spend not in the present. Missing people is one way that I can do this. But if I think about it, when my time with them has been full and satisfying and real I do not miss them. I may want to see them again or think back fondly on our time together but if there is a sense of completeness in our connection, that we have been authentic and have said all that we needed to say to one another, there is no missing. It is when I have held back, not been fully present or neglected to speak up about something important to me, that there is literally a feeling that there is something missing

Noticing: Shiva is the energy of being fully present for the complete experience.



Consider my tendency toward ‘Staircase wit’; When I have not told the truth or have not spoken up for justice then I often have a case of ‘staircase wit’; ‘I

should have said this, When they said that, why didn’t I say such and such?. Much of what keeps my mind spinning is preparing for what I will say next time, second-guessing what I did or didn’t do in my last encounter or engaging in remorse for what I shouldn’t have done. Until I am capable of being fully present all of the time and noticing EVERYTHING, not picking and choosing thinking, ‘I already know what is important or what will happen’. This tossing of the mind keeps me from fully noticing everything. My mind can be brought under control through the use of japa. Japa, or mantra repetition, was something that Swami Shivananda stressed in the synthesis of yoga practices.

Stillness: The third form of practice that Swami Shivananda recommended was meditation or self-inquiry When I am confused or caught in my mind trying to figure something out, the habit of looking within and asking myself, ‘What do I want from this?’ What will this give me? ‘Who am I?’ can catapult me into the stream of god-consciousness and be the gateway to stillness. This practice of self-inquiry, not blaming or justifying but hooking my small mind to something larger, will take me into the flow of higher consciousness. Not assuming that I know, that there is no right/wrong but only behaving with integrity and tapping into the energy of stillness; It is always there underneath the tossing and veiling of my mind. and if I cannot seem to unhook, or find my way home, I can return to hard work done for others This is the path out. Work, Devotion and Self-Inquiry, according to Swami Shivananda and our SRY tradition, is the path to Transformation

Asana of the Month:

Natharajasana
Dancing Shiva.

How to practice.

Natharajasana is a fairly complex asana requiring plenty of warm ups. One must make sure the spine is warmed up along with the hamstrings being stretched, the upper part of the thighs warmed up as well as the shoulders being gently worked into. With all of that one must also balance placement of the asana in the line of sequence. Being a balance pose one must also make sure the body is not too fatigued when practicing.

Start in Tadasana:

Keeping the left leg in Tadasana bend the right knee and reach back for the ankle of the right foot.

Bring both knees together making sure that lowest part of the back remains elongated. Observe the relationship between the pubic bone and the tailbone. Level them off. More advanced students as you lift out of the waist bring the hips into a slight cat tilt position.

Rotate the palm of the left hand up.

Bow the index finger to the thumb taking jnana mudra.

As you bend at the hips keep the hips squared. Raise the left hand up towards the ceiling. Reach the right foot up and back. Keep the right foot flexed and active. Like in Dhanurasana (Bow pose) the foot should be moving as if to break away from the grip of the hand.

Also like in Dhanurasana arch the back up raising the heart and broadening the collar-bones.

Repeat on opposite side.

Yogis In The World

by John Fagan



“I can tell my dad’s single bite in an apple from thousands.” That was how the eight year olds’ story began. (Or something to that effect) I always loved that lead in. The girl’s father indeed, had crooked teeth, and vowed he would never have them straightened. Upon further exploration of the subject it became clear that something was caught in those slightly crooked teeth. This father was not trying to impart some warped sense of identity to his daughter. Rather, what he showed her was the tail end of a thread of truth she could pursue for the rest of her life.

In true Tantric fashion, and he doesn’t even know he is one, he dug up a much greater truth. He exposed a larger question about our societal macrocosm.

He would ask “ If everybody gets their teeth ‘fixed’ and everybody starts to look the same where will that lead us as a people? Where will we find individuality and difference of opinion”

At this point in our history, humans and particularly Americans find themselves in the “Information Society”. We have more channels than any TV watching youth would have ever dreamed imaginable. As a Saturday morning cartoon junkie I would have dropped any resistance to belief in dharma, (had I

known about it), if I knew one day there would be a cartoon network. Long before the advent of 24 hours a day cartoons CNN came on the scene. I thought ‘finally TV-obsessed America will start to learn about the world around them’. Who could have foreseen that they would actually play the same twenty minuets of news all day long? In a society that prides itself on being the information society, Americans remain sadly uninformed about events around the world and even at home. As big businesses began to buy up the media, the golden light that once had the potential to radiate truth became the golden light of tabloid profits. Objective reporting has been replaced by opinion, disguised as news. News items that could be less than flattering for the interests of the parent conglomerate don’t get reported. Critical analysis has been replaced by Where’s the Beef? Where we once had ongoing dialogue about beliefs and ideas, we have been cajoled into accepting and repeating catchy sound bites like parrots, as if it were news worthy or even information.

One of the many things that this yoga community has given back to me is the sense I am not the only one who is frustrated by these events. Yoga has also shown time and again that no one can do your work for you. In that spirit, a group of citizens concerned about the lack of critical analysis, the subtle and not so subtle insinuations that everyone else agrees with the program, have decided to get involved by helping to present a more critical analysis of world events through movies and moderated dialogue. The events are free and will be held here at Saraswati River Yoga on the first Saturday of every month at 7pm. The opinions in the movies and

discussions do not necessarily represent the views of SRYS.



CHAI CHAT

Om shanti dear friends,
I don’t know about you but I can almost feel my feet shushing through the mud thaw on the canal. Any day now, any day. Thankfully there will be no dragging through the mud in this column, and luckily there is always something to acknowledge or someone to celebrate here at SRY.

As mentioned in an earlier column, Joy Stocke met Aylin Collier in an airport lounge in Amsterdam waiting for connecting flights to Istanbul. If you remember, they reconnected at SRY. It seems that now the circle gets bigger. Joy will be traveling back to Istanbul on March 23 to interview Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, and while there, she will also take the opportunity to meet and visit Aylin’s mother.

We have another Aylin in our center. Aylin Green attends the Saturday morning pre-natal class. I hear that Aylin is a dynamic staff person at Grounds for Sculpture, lives two doors away from Barbara & Bill, and is one of the original members of Lambertville Coalition for Peace.

A reliable source has told me that Aylin and Christa Tinari (who, by the way, will moderate movie/talk night, April

2nd at SRY) *, both studied belly dancing last fall. I would imagine she really has a dancing belly now! Speaking of expectant mothers, we have one in our midst who I am not sure has gone public yet, so for now I remain stuck in silence. She knows who she is and on behalf of us all, a hearty CONGRATULATIONS.

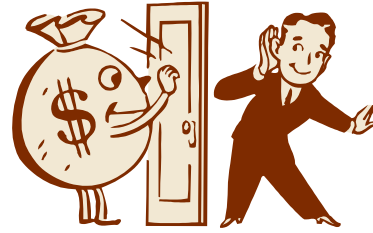
One of my sources just told me of another traveler. Saraswati River Yoga Apprentice Sally Miller has created rare free time for herself. Despite the demands of her profession as a chemical engineer and her weekend studies at SRY, she took very good care of herself with a sojourn to the Dominican Republic.



Talking about school, Maleese Schick, our wonderful Kid's Yoga Teacher has been accepted to Graduate School in Philadelphia where this spring, she will be studying sculpture. Stand in tadasana, Maleese and say TA-DA! We wish you a heartfelt mazel tov.

Jennifer Palmer returned to SRY for a short while before she returned to the Kushi Institute in Massachusetts for another month. A strong believer in seizing or creating the opportunities in life, a conversation with Jennifer is an inspiration.

Ernie Sulpizio had the great good fortune of creating work in Los Angeles after leaving the chill of Toronto and the blustery East Coast. Well, at least that was what he anticipated when embarking upon 2 1/2 weeks of work in California, only to discover mudslides and rain there as well. Welcome back Ernie.



Has anyone noticed the Help Wanted sign at SRY? There must be prosperity sitting on that front desk chair. Christa Tinari sat there between jobs and is now employed at the Langhorne Center for Peace. Ashley Glidden sits there and just got her first car (a Volkswagen Golf). It seems to be a lucrative position and I'm considering applying myself. Not only might it manifest something material for me but also I'd be privy to the first ear of gossip as people chat around the desk.

Well folks, I'm reconsidering those Thursday night yoga classes. I think I'm done watching Survivor. They have gone beyond the acceptable edge of competition, having added hands on aggression and violence to the challenges.

*See back page and *Yogis in the World* for more information on **reel justice'** movie/talk night

I'm wondering what we will all do when Gayle goes to Vermont over Easter weekend. She was thinking of this as her last ski trip of the season, but then thought the weather so unpredictable she might even squeeze in a few more trips before June. We will miss you Gayle, but a well deserved break...oops wrong word to say to someone going skiing. A well deserved vacation.



Charlene Schwartz and husband are off to Costa Rica this month on an Omega sponsored trip. He will be practicing art and she will be doing (who'da thunk it)... yoga. They also plan lots of hiking through the rich Costa Rican jungles and rain forests. I'm not hinting but feel free to bring me back a trinket Charlene, but please don't bring back any rain. We have seen enough for one season.

Well folks, as my guru Sri La Di Da used to say: 'Seasons come and seasons go but the memory of a great cup of chai lasts forever.' Until next time,

om shanti.

Chai chat lady

Conscious Cooking

by David and Kirin



David's cauliflower:

Here is a good recipe for a beginning Indian cook (If it turns out badly you can always blame David-as usual)

1 head cauliflower, broken into small flowerets
1tbs olive oil
1tsp cumin seeds
1tbs fresh ginger
1clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp turmeric
3/4 tbs coriander
3/4 tbs cumin
1/2 cup diced tomatoes
juice of 1/2 lemon
salt to taste

Sizzle cumin seeds, ginger and garlic
add ground cumin, ground coriander
and a little turmeric
add cauliflower
add diced tomatoes
when cooked
add salt and lemon juice

Very quick and simple Indian vegetable dish.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

Prenatal Yoga (Pre-registered Course)

with Zaira Leal

Saturdays, April 9 – May 14

8:45-10:30 am

Kirtan

With Michelle Clancey

4th Thursday of every month

8:15-9:15 pm *No Charge!*

Asana Basics Class (ABCs)

with Denyse Corelli-Nuccio

Fridays, 9:15-10:45 am

(Space is limited... pre-register or arrive early!)

Beginner's Monthly Intensive

with Yvonne Stuck

Sunday, April 10, 4:00-6:00 pm

Kids Yoga with Malese Schick

Thursdays, March 31 – May 5th

Ages 5-9: 4:00-4:45 pm

Ages 10-14: 5:00-6:00 pm

Movie Night at SRYS

Control Room

Saturday, April 2nd, 7:00 pm

Admission free

(see flier for more details)

Kirin and David at Pebble Hill

Sunday, April 3, 10:30 – 12:00

Kirin - talk and practice on the Divine Feminine. David – Asana Dance.

Creating and Sustaining Communities of Peace

- a practical and inspiring 3-day retreat on non-violence as a strategy for personal and social change.

Program developed by Fellowship of Reconciliation. Please contact Christa Tinari for details: 609-397-7290

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