

Mission: India

Nandini Sarkar meets Yogi Shree Satyam, founder of the Allahabad Kriya Yoga Institute, a passionate follower of Yogananda Paramahansa and consumed with a commitment to transform India

I discovered Yogi Shree Satyam of the Allahabad Kriya Yoga Institute on YouTube, while doing a search on Kriya Yoga. Certain things struck me while watching his videos. The yogi appears to be centred in his ajna chakra – the point of intuition between the eyebrows, and when he speaks his consciousness seems elevated or otherworldly. Shree

Satyam teaches that we must be wise, to be happy and problem-free. To be wise, we must realise that an ocean of infinite intelligence exists within us, and we can dip into the unlimited reservoir of knowledge for all the answers to our earthly problems. The yogi emphatically recommends Kriya Yoga as the tool to enter the cosmic gateway of omniscience and omnipotence. He recommends that Kriya be practised at least four times a day, and for a few minutes in

between work.

I have met and heard various Kriya Yoga teachers in the past, but I found Shree Satyam's conviction impressive. There was an added attraction – his ashram is purportedly built around the sacred banyan tree in Allahabad, under which Mahavatar Babaji had met Sri Yuktेशwar Giri in 1894, at the Kumbh Mela, and predicted the coming of Paramahansa Yogananda, the prophet of Kriya Yoga in the modern world. Another remarkable feature is that the yogi has stepped off the beaten track by spreading Kriya Yoga in the villages of Uttar Pradesh. Why has no one thought of it before? If Kriya Yoga is indeed the great redeemer, then it must be made freely available to all, irrespective of socio-economic standing. There was an extended weekend holiday coming up, and my husband and I decided to spend it at the yogi's Allahabad ashram.

Experiences of devotees

Entry to the Kriya Yoga Ashram and Research Institute in Allahabad, and a meeting with the yogi was facilitated by the delicate and gracious Meera Mata. An ex-Microsoft software engineer from Canada, Meera was earlier known as Sanjana Hasteer. Born in Singapore and a graduate in Computer Science from the National University of Singapore, Sanjana had read *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda in college.

After migrating to Canada and looking for an extra-curricular activity after office hours, she enrolled for Yogi Satyam's Kriya Yoga classes in Canada. Sanjana says Kriya Yoga practice cured her of psoriasis. Before meeting the yogi, she had gone to several doctors and was given hydrocortisone creams of different strengths to apply on her affected areas (face, elbows, and knees). It only gave short-term relief from her very painful condition, which kept recurring. Her psoriatic condition was physically painful, she was emotionally drained, and she had lost self-confidence. When Sanjana began Kriya Yoga practice, Yogi Satyam told her it would take six years for the complete change of her skin. She followed the Kriya Yoga diet and meditation prescribed by him and her skin came back to its natural form without any external medication. Meera Mata feels that by daily regular practice of the simple steps of Kriya Yoga taught by Shree Satyam, she can not only heal herself of any illness, but also increase her quota of patience, tolerance, confidence, determination, sacrifice, love, and caring for others.

Dr Anil Kumar, MD, DCH, a medical doctor of Indian origin, who was based in the US for 30 years, is another convert to Kriya Yoga, as a result of relief from highly aggravated medical conditions. Dr Kumar had undergone many surgeries during his stay abroad. Some of his ailments were persistent leakage from the rectum causing anus infection that lasted for 30 years (until he started to practice Kriya Yoga seriously), a

bypass surgery gone wrong and a series of lumbar surgeries leading to many neurological symptoms. Dr Kumar, now Swami Shantananda, states that as a medical doctor who has been on both sides of the 'knife', he now knows that surgery is an incomplete science. Had he known about Kriya Yoga earlier, he would not have undergone any surgical procedure, and would have cured himself through the regular practice of Kriya Yoga. Swami Shantananda feels that the public, the employer, and the government, will not only save downtime, money, and community resources, but also tremendously improve satisfaction and quality of life by spreading the Kriya Yoga teachings. He recommends attending the Institute's free course, and learning the complete spiritual science of Kriya Yoga sincerely for at least one week.

Meeting the Master

Yogi Satyam walks into the meeting room with a friendly smile, unescorted by any disciple, and without any fanfare. In the course of the meeting, we find him earthy, informal, unpretentious, and sometimes outspoken. A striking feature is the cloud of soft hair framing his face, like Satya Sai Baba's. Shree Satyam is consumed by love and it shows – a love for Kriya Yoga, a love for Paramahansa Yogananda's pioneering work, and a love for India. Millions of people have read *Autobiography of a Yogi*, have heard Yoganandaji's recorded speeches, and have read the SRF/YSS Lessons but speaking for myself, I have not met any person whose every word and action resonates with the master's life and message.

The yogi tells us that earlier he had a passion for politics and was a firebrand student leader but gave up politics when he discovered Kriya Yoga during a visit to Kolkata in his college days. Born in Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Shree Satyam tells us that he has been meditating spontaneously since childhood and was frequently ill as a child, because his family was not aware of the correct diet for a meditator. He states that Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yuktेशwar Giri have been his masters in previous lives. The yogi has been deeply influenced by Yoganandaji's poem, *My India*, and quotes the line, 'O India, I will be there,' several times. He has interpreted the line as a call to disseminate the ancient science of Kriya Yoga in India, in a major, all-pervasive way. India's present problems of rampant corrup-



The author rests in the shade of the historical banyan tree

tion, political apathy, social divisiveness, violence, and what he calls a lack of Indianness, all have one cure according to the yogi – the dissemination of Kriya Yoga.

Village Trail

Shree Satyam has made it his mission to disseminate Kriya Yoga in villages, among the common people and among school children. We were invited to participate in the village campaign the next day, to which we agreed. The targeted village in Hanumangarh was about 25 km away from the Allahabad ashram. When we arrived at the village, we were met by two local farmers, followers of the yogi, who took our group from door to door in the village. The simple village folk are astonished to find that the leader of the Kriya Institute whose name they have read in the newspapers during the recent Kumbh Mela, and whose ashram has been visited by Chief Minister, Akhilesh Yadav, in January 2013, would personally visit their humble homes. The yogi invited all the villagers to attend his evening Kriya Yoga camp to be held from 6 pm on the same day. He patted a young child of eight on the back, asked him to study commerce, and jovially predicted that the child will be the founder of a company that will employ 100-150 people.

At the appointed time, the group stepped out in their bus for the evening Kriya Yoga programme in the village. The Ashram conducts an audio-visual show on its projector for the villagers. They are shown how coun-

tries like America, which 150 years ago were vast tracts of jungle, have transformed themselves into developed nations through a deep love for their nation and a sense of community service. He asked the crowd, “Why Indians have not developed Indianness or love for the motherland? Why 1,400 crore rupees of the Ganga cleaning project were eaten up by middleman and no one protested? Why endless bribes have to be paid before any project can be launched in India, and why the political class demonstrates unbridled arrogance instead of a sense of public service?” He took the crowd through a pre-

sentation on Kriya Yoga, how it can transform individuals and India, and invited the crowd to the ashram on Sunday for the formal Kriya teaching session. He concluded by leading the crowd through a few simple exercises, and a few minutes of meditation.

Excerpts from an interview with Shree Satyam.

Why are we here on earth? What is the purpose of life?

(Smiles) My purpose is to spread Kriya Yoga. As for the others – ask them!

The aim of life is to realise the truth that we are manifestations of the omnipotent, omniscient, intelligent God. Knowing it, we can see the past, the present, and the future, in unbroken continuity, and overcome feelings of pain and pleasure, sorrow, and happiness.

Why are you such a vocal advocate of Kriya Yoga? Why do you not say that other meditation techniques are equally efficacious?

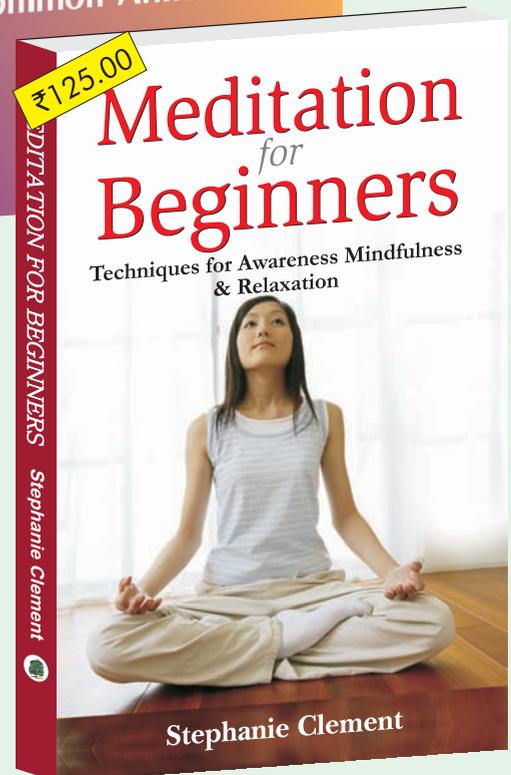
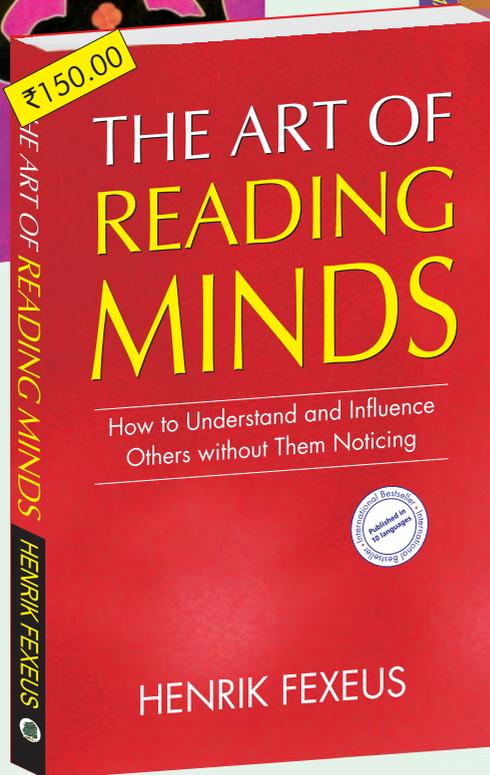
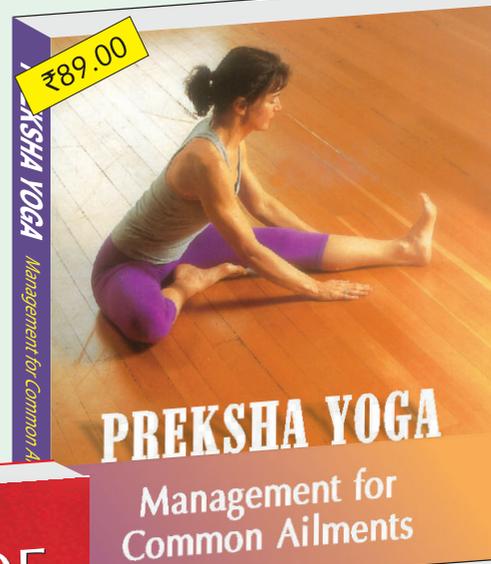
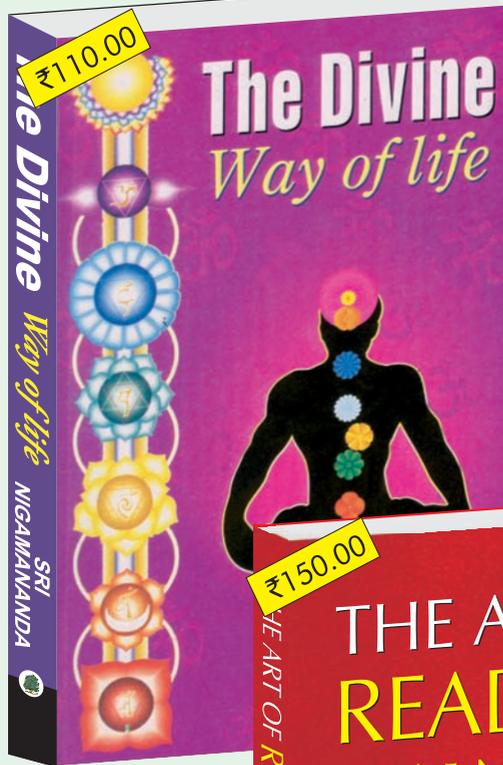
The efficacy of Kriya Yoga is proven to be far superior. Spiritual practitioners, including saints, who have practised other techniques have died from disease and suffered depression.

Kriya Yoga practitioners evolve much faster, enjoy lifelong good health, effortless material success, and uninterrupted peace. Paramahansa Yogananda was one of the greatest prophets, in the lineage of Masters like Jesus and Krishna, and his message must be taken seriously, if you wish to achieve all-round progress for yourself and for the nation. Let me state here, if the team members of *Life Positive* magazine practise Kriya Yoga daily for 10 minutes, the magazine will attract an uninterrupted flow of

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advertisements, and they will come unsolicited. If you teach Kriya to your team members at C-Quel, your business will grow in leaps and bounds and never close down. I started this Institute with a capital of Rs 640 and we have a bigger ashram in Canada. If I can do it, so can all of you by practising Kriya Yoga.

Paramahansa Yogananda founded SRF/YSS, taught Kriya in a certain way and left behind a Home Study course of lessons for posterity. Now there are various groups propagating different methods of Kriya practice. What is the right way to practice Kriya Yoga?

Follow the SRF/YSS methods – those are genuine. We teach exactly the same methods of energisation, Hong Sau, Om and Kriya initiation taught by Paramahansa Yogananda. The only difference is that SRF/YSS stretches its course over 180 lessons,

The aim of life is to realise the truth that we are manifestations of the omnipotent, omniscient, intelligent God

whereas we teach you the basic practices in a single week.

In *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Nagen Bhaduri tells the young Mukunda to develop anubhuti along with the practice. In his book, *A Search in Secret India*, Paul Brunton discovers at Ramana Maharishi's ashram that meditation means a state of nothingness. How does one develop anubhuti and achieve the state of nothingness?

Just as CV Raman cannot be compared to Einstein, Paramahansa Yogananda cannot be compared to Bhaduri or Brunton. Paramahansa Yogananda was a fully realised master and did not need any teachings from Bhaduri. Anubhuti or feeling will come spontaneously once you practise Kriya with love. It need not be forced. Can I ever explain the beauty of the Niagara Falls to you? You will need to visit and experience it for yourself. Start practising Kriya Yoga with love, you will find out for yourself.

You keep talking of head to toe meditation. What is it?

(Smiles) One speaks a language that everyone understands. When you want to experience God, I ask you to close your eyes and concentrate on your body from head to toe. God has manifested as head to toes. This body is nothing but condensed breath. In this state completely accept all that is happening to your body, pain or pleasure, comfort or discomfort. Do not call your experiences bodily changes but as God manifested. Reflect, if there is no head to toes how can you practise Kriya?

How may we convince teenage children to practise meditation?

Where there is yagya, heat emanates from the yagya fire. When parents practise Kriya, the heat of their Kriya yagya spreads to their children. I teach the energisation exercises to children to sow the seed of Kriya. If they feel inclined to practise the other Kriya techniques as well, good, if not, that too is acceptable. They will remember the teachings at the right time.

How do you know this banyan tree is the same tree under which Mahavtar Babaji sat in 1894 and called Sri Yuktेशwar during the 1894 Kumbha Mela?

Through intuition. Observe the many banyan trees in this vicinity – no other tree is as expansive or wide spreading as this one. Babaji embraced Sri Yuktेशwar under this very tree and bestowed the title of Swami on him. (Sister Gyanmata adds, “Sri Yuktेशwar’s disciples built a series of seven temples near this spot to commemorate the great meeting.”)

Do you feel connected to Yoganandaji?

How else would this confidence manifest? We have been together many times in the past, we are together now and we shall always be together. If you practise Kriya, the past, present and future will all become one to you. Though Sri Yuktेशwar is my master, he was privileged to have Yogananda play the divine drama of being his disciple. Realising Yogananda’s greatness, far greater than his own, Sri Yuktेशwar conferred the title of Paramahansa on him. John told Jesus he did not require to be baptised, but Jesus asked to be baptised to set an example.



Nandini Sarkar is Co-founder, C-Quel, a management services company. A lover of the spiritual Masters she is a follower in the Kriya Yoga tradition.

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