

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre Singapore



January 2011 Newsletter

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Workshops: -Neti Cleansing, 15 Jan, Saturday 2.30-3.30pm

-Spine & Flexibility, 22 Jan, Saturday 4.00-5.30pm

Courses: -Beginner Weekend Course starts 9th January 2011

-Beginner Weekdays Course starts 10th January 2011

From centre: -All Classes Resume on 3 January 2011

-All valid 10 & 20 passes are extended for another month

-On-going Restorative Yoga Class, every Monday 11.00am

-Workshops and Courses Schedule from Jan-May 2011

Mechanics of the Mind - article

In our search for happiness, we invariably turn to external objects and events for satisfaction. We think, "If I can just have that car," or "If I were just able to get that job," or "If I only lived in Arizona, then I would be happy." The mind may be stilled and at peace for a short time on attaining the desired object, but eventually it tires of its new toy, and seeks pleasure elsewhere. External objects fail to bring happiness. One may acquire new material possessions, a position with more responsibility, and a home in the country, but there always remains the same mind. Contentment is derived from the approach and attitude toward the external world, not from the objects themselves. Every person passes through easier and more difficult periods in his life. When the obstacles in life are confronted with a serene mind, then one lives more happily.

The challenge, then, is to gain control of the internal world. The mind is constantly conversing with itself-replaying past events, rearranging them into a better drama, planning for the future, discussing the pros and cons of this and that. By methodically slowing down its continuous ramblings, the internal dialogue, and focusing on positive and uplifting objects, it is possible to begin to understand the mechanics of the psyche and bring about a more effective life.

But the mind is an elusive animal to tame. So many theories exist as to how it works, yet the human mental process remains intangible. Why does one so often find himself caught in the same frustrations, the same problems? Free will does exist, but only when it is used to break out of the bad habits that have been developed in

life. It is said that this is a free society, but in truth, it is each person's own desired and emotions that bind him. Consider the friend who smokes cigarettes, daily disclaiming them, determined to stop "tomorrow." How many years has he been caught in this charade? He may truly want to be free of the habit, but lacks the necessary control of his own mind.

In a sense, the mind is like a phonograph record. It contains grooves, or impressions, called *samskaras* in Sanskrit. These *samskaras* are formed when certain thought waves, or *vrittis*, become habitual. For example, a man passes a bakery and sees a chocolate éclair in the window. The *vrittis* arises in his mind, "How delicious; I will buy that éclair." If he ignores that *vrittis*, and turns his mind to something else, no pattern is formed. But, if he identifies with thought, he gives life to it. He buys the éclair, looking forward to enjoying it as dessert that evening. Now, suppose he finds he must pass that same bakery every Tuesday and Thursday. Each time he goes by, he recalls that wonderful éclair, and purchases another. What was originally just a flash in the mind has become a force in his life, and a *samskaras* has been formed.

Samskaras are not necessarily negative. There can be grooves in the mind which are uplifting and those which bring one down. It is the express purpose of meditation to create new, positive channels in the mind, and to eradicate those which are destructive. It is an absolutely scientific process, but at the same time, the goal is spiritual. It is not sufficient to eliminate the negative. There must be a striving to develop love, compassions, a sense of service, cheerfulness, kindness, and the many other qualities which not only make one's own life happy, but which radiate to others.

Everyone wants to do his best. Each person would like to think that he is perfect. Yet despite repeated resolutions, every person finds himself so many times being less than what he would like to be. The cause of this predicament is the *ahamkara*, or ego. Sri Sankara, one of the wisest men of all times, stated in the *Vivekachudamani*, "Calamity is due to being subject to ego, bad agonies are due to ego, desire is due to subjection to ego; there is no greater enemy than ego." This *ahamkara*, is the cause of all bondage and is the chief barrier to the experience of inner Reality.

Ego is the self-arrogating aspect of the mind. It is the ego which separates the individual from unity with others and within himself, for the ego asserts "I-ness." *Ahamkara*, is the greatest obstacle to tranquility, for it is that which occupies the mind with whether we are better or worse, possess more or less, and have greater or lesser power than others. It is attended by desire, pride, anger, delusion, greed, jealousy, lust and hatred. The ego is the most difficult aspect of the mind to control, for its nature is such that it deludes even while one is striving to overcome it. It is that very part of the being that would not be controlled.

Through meditation, the play of the mind is witnessed. In the early stages nothing more can be done than to gain understanding as the ego is observed constantly asserting itself. But in time its games become familiar, and one begins to prefer the peace of contentment. When the ego is subdued, energies can then be utilized constructively for personal growth and the service of others.

**- Meditation and Mantras-
-by Swami Vishnudevananda**

I am Bliss - guru's teaching

"I am". That never changes, can never be changed. "I am" is the only place where you find peace, happiness. No other place. This is not only for yogis. The Bible says, "The kingdom of heaven is within you".

"Within you" means? When you open this body what do you see? Blood, flesh, marrow, kidneys. So that is not heaven. What this means is: look within that Self, that "I". So the search, the quest, is a search for happiness. This is our inherent nature.

What is the nature of fire? It is hot, is it not? Take the heat out of fire and there is no more fire. Heat and fire are one and the same. In the same way the nature of this "I" is bliss. It is not a quality of "I".

"I" is bliss. Bliss means "I". Ananda is a Sanskrit word, it means bliss. That is why we are searching for happiness.

We have lost this bliss, this inner bliss which thou art. The kingdom of heaven is in that "I", but we are not seeing this bliss, we are only seeing the reflected happiness through the senses, which are finite. But infinite bliss is within you, which is "thou art". It is not something that you are going to get, this bliss. You are that bliss.

-Swami Vishnudevananda-
-UPADESA-

Surya Namaskar / The Sun Salutation - posture



The Sun Salutation or Surya Namaskar limbers up the whole body in preparation for the asanas. It is a graceful sequence of twelve positions performed as one continuous exercise. Each position counteracts the one before, stretching the body in a different way and alternately expanding and contracting the chest to regulate the breathing. Practiced daily it will bring great flexibility to your spine and joints and trim your waist. One round of Sun Salutation consists of two sequences, the first leading with the right foot, the second leading with the left. Keep your hands in one place after you put them down and try to coordinate your movements with your breathing. Start by practicing four rounds and gradually build up to twelve rounds.

Benefits of Sun Salutation:

The Sun Salutation sequence is a complete aerobic exercise in itself, largely because of the two expansive movement – from standing upright with lifted arms down to the standing forward bend and back up again. A few rounds of Sun Salutation followed by a few minutes of deep relaxation would take only ten minutes of your day and would have an invigorating yet relaxing effect on your whole being. So why not start integrating it into your daily routine in order to reap some of the many benefits that the 12 simple, flowing movements have to offer:

- The wide range of movement mobilizes the whole spine and stretches and strengthens hundreds of muscles.
- The smooth alternation between forward-bending and back-bending massages the solar plexus, which, in turn, promotes deep, abdominal breathing.
- The systematic breathing (inhaling on each backbend and exhaling on each forward bend) increases the respiratory capacity of the lungs.
- The synchronized flow of muscle contraction and release rhythmically stimulates and relaxes the nervous system, eliminating a lot of stress. The Sun Salutation sequence is therefore a good nerve tonic.
- The flowing nature of the movements in harmony with the breath promotes a state of relaxed attention.
- The sequence of movements provides a full anterior (front) and posterior (back) stretch of the body – stretching everything from your hands, arms, armpits, chest, abdomen and throat to your thigh muscles, hamstrings and back muscles.
- The varied range of movement involved in the sequence considerably enhances flexibility of the hips, pelvis, upper back, neck and shoulders.
- As well as making you feel generally more vibrant and healthy, daily Sun Salutation practice will greatly enhance your yoga practice as it warms up the entire body, improving the efficiency of your muscles throughout the asanas

Beginner Course, Weekend Course starts 9th Jan, Weekdays Course starts 10th Jan'11





A systematic introduction to the theory and practice of yoga for beginners or for anyone looking to renew their practice. This course takes a step by step approach to develop strength, flexibility, good breathing habits, concentration and relaxation through:

- Yoga postures (Asanas)
- Breathing exercises (Pranayama)
- Relaxation exercises
- Introduction to 5 points of yoga
- 12 basic asanas and their benefits

Course meeting dates for **Weekday course:**

January: 10, 14, 17, 21, 24, 28, 31. February: 7.

Course meeting dates for **Weekend course:**

January: 9, 16, 23, 30. February: 13, 20, 27. March: 6.

Class duration: 90 minutes.

Fee: \$200 for 8 classes + 2 ongoing classes + YOGA Your Home Practice Companion Book.

Pre-registration and payment is required.

Email: info@sivananda.com.sg

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Nasal Cleansing, Saturday 15 Jan, 2.30-3.30pm - workshops



Yogic cleansing exercises are also called *Kriyas* using Water and Air to cleanse our physical body and purify our *Nadis* (energy channels).

Water cleansing includes nasal cleansing with water (*Jala Neti*) and with string (*Sutra Neti*). This exercise to remove excess mucus from the nasal cavity, improving your sense of smell and overall respiratory hygiene.

During *Jala Neti* exercise, warm salt water is made to flow from one nostril to the other and from the nose into the mouth in order to eliminate excess mucus.

Whereas during *Sutra Neti* exercise, a rubber string will go through nasal cavity to get rid of stubborn mucus.

Neti pot and rubber string are required for this exercise (available at yoga centre).

Air purification includes (not limit to) *Kapala Bhati* (active exhalation and passive inhalation) and *Anuloma Viloma* (alternate nostril breathing). *Kapala Bhati* consists of a series of short and active exhalations, alternated with passive, relaxed inhalations. The intense expulsions of stale air from the lungs increase the uptake of oxygen into the blood, which can be felt especially in the brain, making it an excellent way to improve your concentration, whether you are practicing meditation or need a quick mental boost at work or study. *Anuloma Viloma* is an excellent way to balance the nervous system, encourage the absorption of vital energy (*Prana*) into the body's subtle energy channels (*Nadis*) and energy centers (*Cakras*), and enhancing overall vitality and well being. Practicing it can calm you down when you feel hyperactive, stimulate you when you feel lethargic, and centre you when you feel distracted.

Date: **Saturday, 15 January, 2.30 - 3.30pm**

Who should attend:

- Current students who still could not feel the benefits described above, or still feel stressful during the practice.
- People prone to cold, sinusitis, asthma.
- People who aware of healthy living starts from physical and mental cleanse.

Fee: Workshop \$20 per person. A set of Neti pot & rubber string \$10.

Pre-registration and payment is required.

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Spine & Flexibility, Saturday 22 Jan, 4.00-5.30pm - workshops



The yogis believe, the flexibility of our spine determines our youth. Our spine contains the central nervous system for our body, and our overall wellbeing and mobility are determined by the health of our spine. The importance of maintaining a strong and healthy spine cannot be overemphasised. Learn how to take care of your spine, and maintain it in tip-top condition, in this workshop.

Date:

22 January 2010, Saturday 4.00 - 5.30pm

Fee:

\$20

Pre-registration and payment is required.

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