

## Profile: Acharya Dayananda

**I was invited to write a biography and to talk about my relation with Kriya Yoga for for a Profile article in the Winter 2012 Kriya Yoga Journal**

### Childhood

I was born December 17<sup>th</sup> 1953 in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Since a very young age I was already very attracted to spirituality. My parents and especially my paternal grand father was a very religious man. He wouldn't miss any opportunity to participate in a pilgrimage or to prayer. He was member of a Catholic Franciscan order and he loved wood carving for hours. He completed several religious sculptures from the Saints, Jesus and the Evangelists for the Church, friends or himself. He had even carved a rosary with big seeds and on each one there was a religious scene, a magnificent work. My spiritual relationship with him began when i was three years old. I would run away from my house to visit him, as he lived just next door. I loved to hear him telling me the stories of the saints, including Saint François of Assisi and brother André to whom he was deeply devoted.

At 6 years old when people asked me what would i like to do latter i used to answer « I want to become a married monk ». This doesn't exist in Catholicism. One can do nothing when the call is there it remains for ever. As we can read in the book *The Voice of Babaji* : « One cannot benefit from something if one is not ready to receive it. All growth comes from within. » Later on my grand father fulfilled my need for spiritual literature offering and lending me several religious books. When I was a child I loved to recite prayers and later at the age of thirteen during a dream a Goddess revealed herself and taught me a mantra: “ Om Namō Bhagavathe Vasu Devaya.” By that time I didn' t know its origin nor significance but enjoyed repeating it continuously. Ever since, I enjoy repeating mantras without any effort, like a second nature.

### Spiritual seeking

My mother became a Jehovah's Witness when I was six years old and since this time I began to read everything that I could about this religion. Some years latter I began to compare different religions. My mother without knowing had opened the door of all religions to me, awakening my everlasting curiosity and thirst for truth.

At the age of fourteen I read so much on Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, as well as Hinduism. I began practicing meditation and exercises in relaxation and astral travel. I wanted to demonstrate that no matter what one's religion is, it is people who make the divisions and that it is God who as the absolute ruler cannot be limited by a book, a region of the word, a people or a religion. Being a Catholic, I was told that God had written only one book, the Bible. As I saw that it was several ordinary persons who wrote such a huge amount in this book, for me, God could not be so small. I understood that in all of the authentic texts of asceticism and mystic Christianity or others which I read, the same thing was repeated. One must practice, master the mind, examine and correct one self. They all lead to the same goal: the Divine, but that each used different names: God, Self, Soul, the Supreme and others. This was the beginning of my search for Truth.

### **Kriya Yoga**

In the early 1980's I read *The Autobiography of a Yogi* and enrolled in the correspondence course of the Self Realization Fellowship. I was a part of this movement and several others for many years. In 1983, a friend invited me to attend a meeting where Kriya Yoga was being practiced, on Querbes Avenue in Montreal. It was there that I met for the first time an authentic yogi who, in my opinion, had gone beyond the theory and put into practice the teachings of his master. No matter what question one put to him, he turned me back towards the importance of practice. What came out of his mouth, was "practice, practice and practice," and nothing more. His name was Govindan, and he now known as Satchidananda. During this period he wore only Indian cloth like Mahatma Gandhi, something you never saw in Quebec. He conducted scheduled satsang meetings even when I was alone with him. Overall, a true and authentic person who lived in simplicity, without any pretence, concentrated on what was essential with great detachment. Before being a good master one must first be a good disciple and it is exactly what this yogi did; and I am here to bear witness to his devotion to his guru S.A.A.

Ramaiah. As incredible as it may seem now, he had a very beautiful voice, clear and strong, which made us appreciate the mantras and sacred chants.

Later, in November 1986, my nine year old son died when our house burned. This was a terrible event, but despite the pain, I received my first initiation into Babaji's Kriya Yoga in December 1986 in Washington, D.C. by Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah. He told me that he had lost his wife in India, and that despite everything, losing everything in fire was a great purifying force. My meeting with him and my initiation helped me to get through this difficult period in my life. In November of the following year I was initiated into the second level of Kriya Yoga in Yuma, Arizona again by Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah. Since then, I have repeated the initiations, I have never ceased to put into practice the teachings. On June 24, 2007 I was inducted into Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas in a ceremony conducted by M. G. Satchidananda

### **Recently**

In 2005, during my first voyage to India, I had the impression of having returned home after a long absence. It was so great to find myself in a country where spirituality was omnipresent. In 2009, I retired from a career as a manager in Montreal's transit authority for public transport, and plunged into a new position in the company of my wife. She owned a half way house for those who had lost their physical independence, and together we transformed it into a residence for those who have lost their cognitive autonomy from Alzheimer's disease, and for which there is a growing demand. This work required complete involvement for both of us. We worked long hours for months to fulfill the functional requirements of such a residence. The adventure was very beautiful on several levels. It made me understand the word of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Git: "Do your duty, but leave the fruit of your actions to me." People who suffer from this disease have no recollection of who you are. The work has to be repeated every day, with no recognition, and that is very good like that. Being with such persons moves us to live in the present moment.

### **Today**

Now that my wife and I have agreed to sell this residence for the mentally handicapped in order to begin a new phase in our lives, we have purchased a parcel of land 250 meters from the entrance of the Quebec ashram. We intend to build our home and live there, taking charge of part of the activities of the ashram. Doing so, I am dedicating my time to sharing spiritual and wisdom teachings, through classes, lectures, seminars and other activities. Through Babaji's Kriya Yoga I wish to share my humble experience. My deepest wish is to make the spiritual path as clear as possible in the minds of others, so that they can avoid many detours. For me, spirituality must be open to everyone with barriers due to race, religion, country, age, etc.

The goal of life is to dedicate oneself completely to becoming the perfect instrument for the Divine, realizing self fulfillment, and finally dissolving oneself into the universal self. Our sole obstacle is the ego, which is nothing other than the identification with the body and with movements in the lower mind. As one meanders through life one must not forget that only the self exists and that nothing can affect or destroy it. Also, that finally, Truth is omnipresent, all around us, and within us. We have only to seize it, nothing ever having been hidden. OM KRIYA BABAJI NAMA AUM OM TAT SAT