

Acharya Ishwarananda – introducing myself and Lilleoru community.

I was born in Estonia, on 2nd of March 1962. I graduated from high school and an engineering vocational school and served thereafter 2 years in the Soviet Army. I am married, father of 3 children who are grown up by now: son is 23 and daughters 20 and 18 years old. I've been the owner of several private enterprises and worked as an executive director. I live in Estonia, in the Baltic region of Northern Europe.

Estonia's capital is Tallinn. Our family lives 25 kilometers away in a small settlement called Vaida. I spend currently more time in the vicinity of Lilleoru, living in a small forest house that students built for me and I am building a new home for my family into SkyEarth eco-village next to Lilleoru.

I met my first spiritual teacher in the Soviet Army. He taught me Chinese martial arts, acupuncture and mystical Agni Yoga. This is where my 'inner path' started. My further journey in this field continued as an independent work.. I finished a school of Raja and Buddhi-Yoga where the studies lasted for a couple of years, and also I became initiated into various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, including Dzog-Chen. I used the teachings of Osho, Don Juan and other Native Americans, learned different techniques of healing and was interested in scientific discoveries. It has been always important for me to find answers to the question: how it is practically, beyond words and how to apply it by myself. In this life, I've been on this journey for about 30 years.

I started to teach people about 20 years ago. I shared practical knowledge, based on my own experience, and I use this way of teaching to this day.

At one point I had to make a choice – to dedicate myself either to business or teaching, as it was not possible anymore to uphold these two together. I asked for advice from my students and they wished that I would dedicate myself to teaching them and they promised to support financially. Such a relation of interdependence is there also today.

When I was in business, I acquired a piece of land in the countryside with the purpose to build a home for my family. The situation changed in time and we started to establish a learning center instead. Today, here is Lilleoru Self-Awareness Training Center owned by Lilleoru non-profit organization. But a home for my family did not get built then.

I am mainly teaching in Estonia and have given courses also in Finland, Poland and Germany. I received an invitation to teach in Brazil this autumn.

While being in close contact with the initiates of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, it became evident that their practices do not go well and many have quit practicing. I studied the reasons and discovered three kinds of obstacles: unstable awareness or 'monkey mind', and automatically rising emotions and mentality.

As the students do not have yet the experience of the real Self, there is no clear understanding of who I am and who I am not. There is also no clear understanding of what is going on in my inner world, what is the role of the real Self in shaping our lives and what kind of a tool is Kriya Yoga as means of changing one's inner world.

The solution to these problems appeared with the help of Babaji and as a result the preparatory courses for releasing emotions and mental conceptions were established. It became obvious that these same factors substantially hinder also lives of people who do not practice Babaji's Kriya

Yoga. As the techniques are effective and the results are immediate, these seminars became popular. I call these techniques cleansing exercises that precede the initiations of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and support practicing thereafter.

I don't initiate people into Babaji's Kriya Yoga before they learn and practice at least the techniques for releasing emotions. After eliminating these obstacles, Kriya Yoga appears in a different light and yields more fruit.

During recent years, I am focused on teaching the techniques for releasing emotions and conceptions, recognizing one's awareness and true Self. I give initiations into 1st and 2nd level of Babaji's Kriya Yoga.

I came across and practiced many teachings on my path, but when I take a look back and evaluate them now, I can say that either they lacked wholeness or answers to certain questions of my interest. This is my experience and it does not mean that these teachings are not good.

Years ago, Buddhist friends sent me the Russian edition of the book "Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga tradition" that they had bought in Russia. I read the book and the description of the five-body system set all my previous knowledge and experiences into place. A whole and holistic understanding formed. I found the contacts of the author in the end of the book and asked one close student to find out if M. Govindan Satchidananda could come to teach Babaji's Kriya Yoga in Estonia. He could not come himself, but sent his charming wife and it happened to be for her the first time to give an initiation. Techniques of the 1st level were interesting and meaningful for me. I understood that it was a 'real thing'. During Babaji's Samyama Kriya, Babaji said: "Teach Kriya Yoga to people". It was surprising and confusing and I did not understand what was going on. I asked Durga about it, but also she did not know. Later, Durga was talking with M. Govindan Satchidananda for a long time on the phone...

Perhaps this can be considered the beginning of my yogic path, although I did my first pranayama at the age of 14 and received the first experience of yoga nidra and awareness at the age of 16. I can say today that I was aware before Babaji's Kriya Yoga arrived to Estonia and I had independently found the true Self. Of course, 'independently' is a joke! I know today that Kriya Babaji was teaching me already then. I realized that he had always been with me, I just did not consider him to be a Teacher but my own insight. Or, good thoughts and intuition, inspiration, knowing. All in all, I got interested in Babaji's Kriya Yoga as it 'brought all the pieces together'.

During one of his many visits to Estonia, M. Govindan Satchidananda asked me if I would like to become an Acharya. He shortly introduced what it means and in conclusion I accepted these conditions. It was somehow a natural continuation of things. I had no wish to become an Acharya, nor did I have a wish not to become it. Some people say that they like to be an Acharya. It makes no difference to me, except the right to transmit very high and deep techniques to people. My respect and reverence to Babaji and Mahasiddhas who have shared these techniques with us!

I am currently giving 1st and 2nd level initiations of Babaji's Kriya Yoga.

I can say that there is nothing else in my life today but action with awareness – Kriya. Bigger part of that "what I am not" has dissolved through practicing. This is why I can say that I have practiced Kriya Yoga for about 30 years, including 5-6 years of Babaji's Kriya Yoga.

In honor of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, I want to say that the techniques of Babaji's Kriya Yoga are based on such deep knowledge about the mechanics of our inner world and the ways of affecting it, that it is beyond imagination how profound are these methods. Therefore, their authenticity is beyond question. My experience shows that the effectiveness of these techniques depends on stability and deepening of awareness, and right performance of the technique. It also depends on perseverance. But even more important is - Babaji's guidance.

In the initiation seminars, I have spoken that Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a very high teaching and does not open itself immediately. Patience and additional knowledge are needed here. As most people in Estonia are not accordingly prepared in advance, I focus my work mainly around the issues of becoming free from obstacles. The knowledge given in the preparatory courses clearly supports Babaji's Kriya Yoga students. Also Patanjali says that: "Yoga is the cessation [of identifying with] the fluctuations [arising within] consciousness" – emotions and mental processes are automatically arising phenomena.

When we started to work on the land of Lilleoru in the beginning of 90-s, nothing was there. Throughout the years we established the infrastructure, several houses, and the park of the Flower of Life with sacred sites from different spiritual traditions. A community formed and it is today the only intentional community in Estonia that has its own land and operates as an open center. People are united by teachings and ceremonies and care for the place. Lilleoru's non-profit organization is a member of Global Ecovillage Network and serves people as Haidakhan Babaji and Babaji's Kriya Yoga ashram. Certain ecological aspects, Vedic ceremonies, Kriya Yoga and other activities – serving the purpose to understand the existence and evolution of human beings – are important in our way of life. We organize different courses and invite acknowledged teachers from all over the world to share their expertise.

The territory of Lilleoru has evolved step-by-step and buildings rose according to our needs. The first house was built for spiritual practices and it holds also a kitchen and a sauna. The second was an outhouse with a cellar, a small workshop, rooms for handling herbs and a dormitory on the second floor. The third house was built by people who wanted to live in Lilleoru. We have our own well.

In the heart of our territory expands a unique park based on the ancient pattern of creation - the Flower of Life. The park with the surrounding landscape unites the heritage of various cultures and we use it for growing herbs. Kriya Babaji's yantra is placed in the center of the Flower of Life. The spirited murti of Shri Mahamunindra inhabits the small temple. The murti is made out of marble and is hewed after a real Mahasiddha (Old Haidakhan Babaji). Native American teepee, Ma Kali gate and Gothic Bell are also connected to the sacred geometry.

According to the Indian calendar, we perform regularly Havan or Yagya ceremonies. Summer and Winter dhuni were built for that purpose.

Some years ago we decided to establish a village for people who wanted to live close to the ashram. The project developed well and is currently in the phase of construction. Some houses are ready, some are getting ready soon and some families have not started yet. Builders design their houses according to liking and possibilities. The principles of natural building and passive house concept are applied. To view photographs and read more about our community visit our website lilleoru.ee

Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum.