

Kriya Yoga Acharya - Ishwarananda

Ishwarananda after teaching a class



Aerial view of Flower of Life Park at the Lilleoru centre and educational hub in Estonia



I was born in Estonia, on 2nd of March 1962. I graduated from high school and an engineering vocational school. I am married, father of 3 children who are grown up by now. 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, close to our capital Tallinn.

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 met my first spiritual teacher in the Soviet Army in the beginning of 1980s. He taught me Chinese martial arts, acupuncture and Agni Yoga. This is where my "inner path" started. Next, I finished a school of Raja and Buddhi-Yoga in Russia and became initiated into various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, including Dzog-Chen. I also used the teachings of Osho, Don Juan and other Native Americans, learned different techniques of healing and was interested in scientific discoveries. It has always been important for me to find out how things and processes function practically, beyond words and how to apply this knowledge in practice. In this life, I've been on this journey for about 37 years.

I started to teach people in 1992, sharing practical yogic knowledge based on my own experience. I use this practice-based 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 no longer possible to do both. I chose the latter, as my students wished that I would dedicate myself to teaching.

When I was in business, I acquired a piece of land in the countryside with the purpose of building a home for my family. The situation changed in time and we started to establish a learning center instead. Today, it has evolved into [Lilleoru](#) educational hub and ecological community, owned by the Lilleoru non-profit organization.

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 they lacked either wholeness or answers to certain relevant questions. This is my experience and it does not mean that these teachings are not good.

Years ago, a Buddhist friend sent me the Russian edition of Marshall Govindan Satchidananda's book "Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga tradition". Its description of the five-body system set all my previous knowledge and experiences into place. So I invited M. Govindan Satchidananda to teach Babaji's Kriya Yoga in Estonia. Durga Ahlund came in 2004 and gave the first initiation in Estonia. Techniques of the 1st level were meaningful for me, they were the "real thing". During Babaji's Samyama Kriya technique Babaji communicated to me: "Teach Kriya Yoga to people". It was surprising and confusing and I did not understand what was going on.

Looking back, I can say today that I was aware before Babaji's Kriya Yoga arrived to Estonia and I had found the true Self with the grace of Kriya Babaji. I realized that he had always been with me, I just did not recognize him as the Teacher and thought it was my own insight, good thoughts and intuition, inspiration and knowledge. But it was Babaji's Kriya Yoga that helped me to put all the pieces together and form a holistic perspective. My respect and reverence to Babaji and Mahasiddhas for sharing these high and deep techniques with us!

During one of his many visits to Estonia, M. Govindan Satchidananda asked me if I would like to become an Acharya. He initiated me as Acharya Ishwarananda in 2007.

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 in the course of intense practice.

Currently, I give initiations into all three levels of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. By 2017 more than 50 of his Kriya Yoga students had completed the training of becoming a Kriya Hatha Yoga instructor and over 30 were actively teaching all across Estonia.

In honor of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, I want to say that these techniques 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 these methods are. Therefore, their authenticity is beyond question. However, my experience shows that the effectiveness of these techniques depends on the stability and depth of awareness and the right performance of the techniques. It also depends on perseverance and patience because Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a very high teaching and does not open itself immediately. But even more important is Babaji's guidance.

As a teacher of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, I noticed that many students have difficulties in their practice. 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 yet have 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 a means of changing one's inner world. Also Patanjali says: "Yoga is the cessation [of identifying with] the fluctuations [arising within] consciousness" – emotions and mental processes are automatically arising phenomena.

It was also obvious that these same factors also create problems in the lives of people who do not practice Babaji's Kriya Yoga. The solution to these problems appeared with the help of Babaji and formed into the Art of Conscious Change courses in 2008. As the techniques for releasing emotions and conceptions, recognizing one's awareness and finding the true Self are effective and the results are immediate, these seminars have become 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 emotional obstacles, Kriya Yoga appears in a different light and yields more fruit.

In addition to teaching Kriya Yoga and the Art of Conscious Change courses I also give regular open lectures in Estonia and abroad on the relevance of awareness. Since 2010 I have been teaching internationally, in English as well as in Russian. To cater for the needs of the growing international body of students, the [School of Practical Awareness](#) opens its doors in Lilleoru in 2018.

NGO Lilleoru is a member of Global Ecovillage Network and serves people as Haidakhan Babaji and Babaji's Kriya Yoga ashram. In the heart of our territory expands a unique Flower of Life park based on the ancient pattern of creation. The park with the surrounding landscape unites the heritage of various cultures and we use it for growing medicinal 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, hewed after Mahasiddha Old Haidakhan Babaji. Native American teepee, Ma Kali gate and Gothic Bell are also connected to the sacred geometry. According to Indian calendar, we perform regularly Havan or Yagya ceremonies. Ecological awareness and activities helping to understand and support human evolution are important in our way of life.

Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum.