



Mandala Yoga Ashram

2019 Annual Newsletter

Inspiring articles & full details of upcoming Ashram courses including:

- Yoga Teacher Training Course 2019
- Festival of Yoga: Awakening the Heart
- Exploring the Chakras



Mandala Yoga Ashram

2019-21 Yoga Teacher Training Course (YTTC)



**Starts with a
7-day retreat in
September 2019.**

**Please contact
the Ashram for
details.**

A comprehensive and high-quality 2-year training programme in the Ashram, over 69 days and 500 hours, recognised by the Independent Yoga Network. An opportunity to significantly deepen your own yoga practice and gain the skills and experience necessary to become an inspiring yoga teacher.

You will learn from the very experienced team of six tutors and deepen your self-understanding in the transformative energies of the Ashram. There will be ongoing mentor support throughout.

Embedded within the course is a systematic training in how to teach both Yoga Nidra (deep meditative relaxation) and Meditation.

Places expected to book up quickly. Full details are in the course prospectus on the Ashram website along with the application form..





A Message from Swamiji

Dear Friends in Yoga,

Every year the Ashram hosts a summer Festival of Yoga. These festivals are special in that they are less formal than usual Ashram seminars and give participants the chance to spend time with fellow yoga practitioners whilst sharing quality yogic teachings. This year, the theme will be **'Awakening the Heart'**.

As humans, we are nourished by meaningfully communing with others and, in turn, we are nourished by our deep connection with others. This is why in yoga so much importance is given to embracing the heart. This opens us up to the promptings of our feelings and intuitions, allowing them to greatly enhance our experience of life and the quality of our lives. Moreover, when the qualities of the heart are added to our intellectual understanding, then we open up to the hidden potential that exists in all of us. We start to get a glimmer of the Spirit that moves within us, always present, but little acknowledged.

So, I invite you to join me and the Ashram team at this year's festival (see p34).

If the truth be known, all the paths of yoga are intended to open up the heart. When the heart awakens, we start to move out of our self-absorbed bubble and begin to really empathise with others. We start to care for others and to feel compassion knowing that everyone and everything have their place in the scheme of things. It's a compassion that is not only directed to other humans, but also towards other creatures. This compassion opens us up to a wider picture of existence and this, in turn, allows us to start to tune into the Essence of all.

Fellow travellers in this experience called life, may your heart open to your hidden potential and to what you are in Essence. ॐ

— Swami Nishchalananda



About the Ashram

Mandala Yoga Ashram is an internationally renowned centre of yogic knowledge. It is dedicated to presenting yogic science, including meditation, to those who are seriously looking to awaken joy and develop harmony and depth in their lives. Mandala Yoga Ashram is an independent institution which is not affiliated to any religious beliefs; it is only concerned with awakening the intelligence and potential which exists innate in each human being. It is one of the few authentic ashrams outside of India.

The Ashram was founded by Swami Nishchalananda in 1986 to teach and propagate traditional yoga to the modern world whilst maintaining its high quality and original purpose. He is an inspiring, much sought-after teacher, and the author of a number of modern classical yogic books.

Mandala Yoga Ashram hosts:

- Residential courses on a wide range of yoga-related subjects
- Outside day and weekend courses in your locality
- Yoga Teacher Training courses (YTTs) lasting two years

Besides participating in the above courses, you are welcome to come and stay to experience Ashram life. The Ashram is open to visitors most of the year, but closes in the winter. In 2019, the Ashram reopens on Monday 18th February, and closes on Friday 29th November.

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Newsletter Editorial

Welcome to this year's newsletter, which you'll notice is looking radically different. We hope that you will find it informative, inspiring and engaging. It is part of the ongoing evolution of the Ashram in how we present the timeless teachings of yoga and spiritual life in a way that resonates with both young and mature, and those experienced or new to the yogic path. The Ashram is open to all yoga practitioners who feel the inner calling to go deeper into what spiritual life is offering.

The new approach of this newsletter parallels the evolution of the Ashram website – www.MandalaYogaAshram.com – which was launched in late 2018. This new website is designed to make finding information and booking a retreat a quicker and simpler process. It has full details of all the Ashram retreats in 2019, building on the brief summaries contained in this newsletter.

This year we start a new Ashram Yoga Teacher Training Course. This is a unique course in the Ashram calendar. The core Ashram teachings are shared with the student teachers, enabling them to develop into confident and skilful teachers in their own right, who can in turn share the teachings with their own students. It runs over 69 days, all residential in the Ashram, over two years - see the inside front cover and Swamiji's article on page 7. We are expecting to be oversubscribed as it is the first time this course has been offered since 2015 so don't delay your application if you are interested.

A theme running through this newsletter is Awakening the Heart – see the article of the same name on page 9 and The Kind Heart article on page 17. Awakening the Heart is also the title of our August Festival of Yoga - see Mukti Mani's article on page 16 and the festival description on page 34. The festival promises a depth of heartfelt sharing, new inspiration and joy.

There are many other residential retreats in the Ashram this year designed to convey the life affirming and transformative potential of yoga and meditation. Over the Easter bank holiday weekend, there is a 5-day Tattwa Shuddhi retreat. In May, Swami GyanDharma returns to lead a 10-day PranaVidya retreat. In June, Swami Satyadaya leads a 7-day retreat focusing on The Kind Heart. In August, we are hosting a 10-day retreat Exploring the Chakras.

New retreats in 2019 include Restore, Replenish and Renew in February, giving you the chance to let go and relax into nurturing teachings with a gentler timetable. In April, Maha Sattwa is offering Being Still Here and Now, inviting you to explore the still silent spaciousness within. In May, Swami Satyadaya (Nick Edge) is leading the Healing Power of Nature, bringing the beauty of nature into our practice. There are also a host of other retreats on meditation, chanting, self-enquiry and mantra.

We hope you enjoy this Ashram newsletter and we would welcome any feedback you wish to give. In redesigning this newsletter, we give our appreciation to both Sophie Hryniewicz, and Kara Kelly who gave karma yoga time in late November. Sophie, along with the Ashram marketing team, gave the vision for the new design; Kara freely offered her professional design skills.

Wherever you are, you are very welcome to come and visit the Ashram to experience its teachings and energies, and keep in touch via the website, online Highlights newsletter and social media channels. Going deeper into yoga and spiritual life is a gift offered to each one of us. The purpose of the Ashram is to provide a wealth of practices, quality support and a sharing of inspiration to awaken this gift within your own life. ॐ

In service and appreciation, Swami Krishnapremananda

Everyone and everything in the universe, known and unknown, is part of the network of Reality. We may love and hate, we may accept and not accept, but these attitudes are just expressions of our individual mental conditioning. Whether we are disagreeing or agreeing, liking or disliking, let us be Aware. But what is it to be Aware? It is to know conclusively that the Source of our consciousness is intimately and inseparably identified with the Conscious Presence that underlies everything.

Sw. Nishchalananda.

Becoming a Yoga Teacher

by Swami Nishchalananda

Those who practise yoga are all well aware of its benefits. Teaching yoga as a qualified yoga teacher is a way of passing on to others the inspiration and practical benefits that we have received.

Teaching yoga gives us an opportunity to serve others, enabling us to help people to bring a new dimension into their lives. Remember that service (Sanskrit, seva) is an essential aspect of yoga; it helps to diminish our obsessive self-concern and

opens us up to a wider vision of life that includes everyone and everything.

Teaching yoga motivates us to deepen our own understanding and practice of yoga, which in turn effortlessly leads to our own inner growth. This qualifies us to share our knowledge and experience of yoga with our students in order to:

- bring an understanding, appreciation and improvement in the functioning of the **body**,
- balance and harmonise the **emotions**
- gain understanding of the **mind** and how it functions,
- facilitate the awakening of our innate **potential**,
- catalyse a deeper realisation of what we are **beyond** the mind and body.

As yoga teachers we are required to awaken our intuition and to become more sensitive so that we know what is appropriate for an individual student or for a group. We learn to 'feel' a situation and know when it is right to offer guidance and support, when to change tack, when to step back and when to be silent.

The time had come when it seemed naturally right to deepen my yoga journey and upon looking around, the Ashram course seemed to offer the richest, most comprehensive and authentic training in the country. The teachings are excellent and the course had a well-balanced and knowledgeable tutor team. I was drawn to this course because it explored the rich tapestry that is the yoga tradition in all its myriad aspects.

Ben Major

2015-2017 YTTC graduate

*Rooted in tradition and
yet always encouraging
of personal exploration,
the training built on my
personal practice to bring
the experiences I needed
to embrace the role of a
teacher. Highly recommended.*

Olivia Desborough

2015-2017 YTTC graduate

*The high standard of
teaching was excellent. The
friendships and wonderful
memories will stay with me
always.*

Susan Hefferman

2015-2017 YTTC graduate

As yoga teachers we start to develop humility; we don't think that we know everything or that we are the fountain of yogic knowledge, and the students, are ignoramuses. Rather we are open to the exchange between ourselves and the students in which everyone learns something – often the teacher more than the student.

Teaching yoga encourages us to override our inhibitions so that we gain confidence to express ourselves in public.

Through our own practice of yoga, we access inspiration and joy in ourselves; in teaching yoga we are enabled to awaken these qualities in others.

As a yoga teacher you will be helping to usher in a better society, now, and for our children in the future. Teaching yoga is a privilege and a joy. Do you have the time and motivation to train to become a yoga teacher? ॐ

Please contact the office for further details of the 2019 YTTC course.





Awakening the Heart Space

by Swami Krishnapremananda

One of the key stages of the spiritual path is that of awakening the heart space. Defined in Sanskrit as *Anahata* chakra, the heart space is the midpoint between our instinctual nature, and the full flowering of our awakening nature.

The opening of the heart gifts us with a more open and trusting relationship with life. Whilst we often feel separate, even isolated, from life, a maturing of the heart space brings the recognition, however dim initially, that we are innately connected to life as a wave to the Ocean. Furthermore the Ocean of Life itself has always, and will always, sustain and support us.

Yet our experience can feel very different. The heart is often blocked due to our unresolved conflicts, hurts and traumas. It is natural to temporarily close down the heart to protect us from painful emotional issues. However an ongoing closure, when the original pain is long gone, creates energetic blockages. It is like a heavy suit of armour which, though very necessary at some time to protect us, we still subconsciously wear in the absence of any current threat. We wonder why we feel heavy, burdened and lacking in spontaneity! In removing the armour we realise how much lighter, freer and natural we can be.

Removing this armour, however, takes courage and we can feel vulnerable initially. We need to feel safe, and/or with people we trust, before we can really let go of such habitual defenses. Yet such letting go is fundamental to the genuine healing and deepening of our heart and our path in life.

Integrating with other chakras

The opening of the heart is further supported by the clarity and spaciousness that arises from *Agya* chakra (the eye of intuition/ insight) and the self-empowerment arising from *Manipura* chakra (the navel centre). Without these two, opening the heart can simply lead to becoming overly sentimental or emotional. It can be commonplace to talk about 'coming from the heart' yet, without skillful integration with these other chakras, such talk can be superficial.



The awakening of *Manipura* brings self-empowerment, enabling us to step out into life with our feet grounded and head held high. Opening the heart

space can leave us feeling temporarily vulnerable or exposed. A strong core arising from *Manipura* helps to protect and strengthen us during this time. *Agya* chakra gifts us with greater clarity, discernment and spaciousness. This enables us to handle strong and challenging emotions and feelings without being overwhelmed. The clarity of *Agya* helps to keep our ship afloat even on stormy emotional seas.

Both *Manipura* and *Agya* chakras help us explore the heart space more deeply with a greater confidence and trust. This in turn illuminates the place of judgement in our lives.

Judgement

The ability to form judgments is a gift we are given; positive if used judiciously, and yet counterproductive if used in a more limiting or negative way. Judgment used positively can be called discrimination and arises from a calm mind informed by clear 'seeing'. This quality strengthens the opening of the heart and is a hallmark of the sustained practice of yoga and spirituality.

Negative or limiting judgment however compromises the heart. It often arises from our conditioning (the sum of our habits and experiences in life) and can be pernicious in the way it undermines our peace of mind and holistic well-being. We often use such judgment to build ourselves up by pulling others down, justifying how 'right' we are in doing so. A little reflection reveals

how this only undermines us further. Directed internally, such judgment is a habitual pattern that sustains a limited self-image.

How do you work with this form of judgment? As with many habits, it often plays out subconsciously. It is a significant step to begin to 'see' it arising. In the light of awareness, options arise - we can begin to let it pass through us without reacting; or we can bring forth the opposite, e.g. cultivating kindness or tolerance as an antidote to judgment; or we can realize the subtle pain we are creating for ourselves, and the freedom that arises in simply letting go.

Ultimately, everyone does their best, bound as we are by our own conditioning. We only see a fragment of the vast sequence of cause and effect that creates the unique conditioning of the person in front of us. If we had been also subject to the same cause / effect sequence, we would probably act in much the same way. This understanding helps bring an easier acceptance of others and, fundamentally, ourselves. In the space created, the heart breathes more easily and freely.

Yoga prompts us to live more and more in Awareness, whereby we utilise the beneficial aspect of judgment to help navigate our way forward with a trusting heart, and yet release its less positive aspects that only tend to further confine the heart in self-limiting patterns.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness offers us another way to heal our self-limiting patterns. It conveys a powerful healing quality that enables us to let go of painful issues, reclaim our essential power and live more in the



present moment. Yet it can take time for forgiveness to arise. We need to be honest with our self and our emotional reactions. Forgiveness arises gradually through patience and a genuine willingness to begin to let go.

Each one of us has an inner 'letting go muscle', in the sense of our innate capacity to let go of past hurts and grievances. For many of us however this muscle is chronically under used. We easily hang on to past grievances, making them part of our self-identity meaning our identity remains rooted in the past. We need to learn from and be informed by past events, but do we really need to cling to them? Life is like a river; it is always moving on, and the attitude of letting go enables us to flow with the current and live more fully in the present.



It is the patient and persevering application of yogic practices and attitudes that make the inner soil of mind and heart more fertile, enabling genuine forgiveness to take root and grow. As our capacity for forgiveness grows in strength, it has the power to soften and even heal our inner grievances and bring a genuine letting go, which in turn further frees and empowers the heart.

The Sanskrit word for forgiveness is *kshanti*, which has the word peace - *shanti* - embedded within it. This reveals the gift that forgiveness offers us – an abiding peace of mind and heart.

Gratitude

Gratitude is a natural fruit of a peaceful mind and heart. It was St Augustine who said that the greatest prayer was to simply say 'thank you'. This can sound simplistic, yet gratitude and

appreciation are powerful qualities when practiced on a regular basis.

We all have a personal agenda of how we believe life should be in order for us to be happy and fulfilled; 'If only life was like this... or that... then I would be content'. Yet we often experience the opposite. We start to wake up when we see clearly that life's agenda is far more real than our own, and furthermore see that our suffering ensues when we resist and argue with Reality! Instead of arguing with life, and having expectations of how life should be, is it not wiser to let go and nurture a trust in life as it is?

The remembrance of gratitude and appreciation helps us to say 'thank you' to whatever arises. It's often easier to feel appreciation when we feel on steady ground, but it can be even more potent to say 'thank you' when faced with a challenging situation! We may certainly need to act to try and rectify the situation. However, a sense of gratitude for 'what is' can transform an instinctive reaction into a more effective response. Challenges in life will certainly come, but it is the way we meet them that determines the depth of our understanding and inner growth.

Simply saying 'thank you' often brings a greater sense of lightness. The heart can breathe a little easier, and a smile can arise on the lips.

It is a timeless truism that as we give, so we receive. Generosity, balanced by a common sense understanding of our needs, sweetens the heart. Furthermore, it puts us more in the intrinsic flow of life, which naturally gives us what we need for our growth and sustenance.

Swami Krishnapremananda

Generosity

Simple and small acts of giving nurture and sweeten the heart. It could be inwardly wishing somebody well as you pass on the street, or smiling at someone in the recognition that they, although different to you, have similar hopes and challenges. Or it could be appreciating the aliveness of nature around you, or scattering seeds for the birds, or taking any opportunity to perform seemingly random acts of kindness with no particular motive other than to give something back to life.

It is this giving that enables us to feel a greater connection to the heart throb of life. After all, our greatest fulfillment in life does not come from acquiring worldly things, but in giving and receiving, and in loving and being loved.

Yet our heart space can easily become closed at times due to our habitual reactions to the events of life. This too needs to be accepted with patience.



In such times it is the simple acts of kindness, generosity, gratitude and appreciation to oneself and others that help to irrigate the heart again with the life-giving waters of our true nature.

Doors of my Heart is a chant often shared in the Ashram:

*Doors of my Heart, open wide I pray for
Thee (chorus)*

*Open wide open wide open wide and
set me free*

*Night and day, day and night, night
and day, I wait for Thee*

*Let me see, let me see, let me see my
Gurujī*

This encapsulates the awakening of the heart. Our practice can be like an inner prayer, or intention, for the heart to patiently blossom in its own time, freeing us more and more from psychological burdens and negativity. It is a gradual process, to be cultivated day and night, night and day. It can evolve into an increasingly ceaseless practice of living that supports our awakening, and which is further reinforced by mystical teachings which can come from many traditions. Ultimately it is the Intelligence within Life itself, that awakens our heart; we can simply bow down in gratitude, joy and wonder. ॐ

Dakshina: The Gift of Giving

by Reva

Dakshina is a monetary offering made in appreciation of the priceless gifts we have received from a spiritual teacher or teachings. Giving often comes with a hidden expectation of an exchange. Whether you are offering time, money, or help, it is difficult not to feel an unspoken entitlement to receive something in return, whether material or for expectations of attached status. *Dakshina* is different. Giving is done with an attitude of selflessness and without specifying criteria or expecting any reciprocal gain.



Donations often support a project or a group of people, usually connected to a feeling of wanting to help, improve or alleviate suffering. They are often linked to a moral, political or social stance. *Dakshina* differs; it is a spiritual practice based on feelings of gratitude. *Dakshina* is an act of surrender, and of trust.

Dakshina bridges the material and esoteric worlds. The practice tunes into a transformational cycle; the universal law that 'like attracts like', 'what goes around comes around' or, as in the Bible, 'as you sow so shall you reap'. When we give with openness the universal energies align with this vibration and we experience that same sense of openness appearing in different areas of our life. Nature echoes this law back to us with her cycle of life-sustaining giving and receiving: the seed forms the apple that is given back to the earth for new trees to grow, the fish gives its life so the bear can eat, the rain clouds become full and replenish the rivers.

At the Ashram we have periodic *havans* (sacred fire ceremonies) where we practice the act of giving symbolically to the fire. In yogic history the Vedic practitioners made offerings in their *havans*, such as rice, honey and ghee. They offered the best that they had. We can use this to remember that expressing our generosity in a limited way, holding something back or giving



something superfluous, comes from a fear of scarcity, of not having enough, of not trusting. This blocks the natural cycles necessary for life and transformation.

Dakshina invites us to give our best as a form of practice, honouring our teacher or the teachings that we are blessed to receive. When performed with dedication and understanding, the practice cultivates generosity and gratitude which brings us closer to the essence of the teachings and our own Self or Consciousness. *Dakshina* is a practice of devotion and expresses the longing of the seeker, bringing a deeper sense of connection to life.

In my own personal experience of giving *Dakshina* I have had times when I have been on a good salary and times where I have had very little financially and I have adjusted my monthly offering accordingly. The amount is not important; it is the practice that counts and the Heart behind the giving. *Dakshina* is not an invitation to forget your own needs but to make a selfless offering from an inner space of love and trust.



Friends of the Ashram

There are many worthwhile ways of expressing our generosity and giving *Dakshina* in today's world. One such way, if you value how the Ashram enhances the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being of so many, is to join **Friends of the Ashram**. It enables you to help safeguard the Ashram into the future, for the benefit of all those who visit. Alongside ongoing course income, and periodic donations, a steady and stable flow of income through Friends of the Ashram is an essential part of allowing the Ashram to function from a stable financial position in uncertain times.

By making a monthly affordable donation, you would become part of a much greater whole; a dedicated body of people who have been touched by the Ashram in their own experience, and who wish to support the Ashram so that it can continue to uplift and inspire the lives of so many.

More information is available on the Ashram website. To join **Friends of the Ashram**, kindly contact the Ashram office.

Annual Yoga Festival

by Mukti Mani

The Ashram is typically a quiet place; the birds make the most noise first thing in the morning, whilst the humans observe silence or mouna. There is a natural ebb and flow to Ashram life. Visitors arrive for courses, doubling or sometimes tripling the number of people here. Then they go and we return to the quietness of the dozen or so team members that keeps the place ticking over day to day.

This year's Yoga Festival saw the Ashram become as full as it can be, with over eighty guests. Despite this, or perhaps because of the communal effort of all these yogis, things ran smoothly and the place retained its trademark spaciousness. Like Mary Poppins' handbag there seemed to be room enough for everyone and everything that was going on.

The theme was Music, Mantra and Sacred Sound, which allowed a huge scope for diversity in the sessions offered; from three Devi themed kirtans with Louise Thorndycraft to exploratory sound and voice workshops, drumming circles, gong yoga nidras in the afternoon and bursting high energy evening performances led by Rajesh David.



The Ashram maintained its familiar approach to communal living, including periods of silence and stillness throughout the day. Guests started the day with hatha classes, followed by chanting and meditation. Karma yoga – the yoga of selfless service - took on a whole new value as everyone's contributions were essential for the running of the festival.

Every corner of mantra and sound was touched, ranging from the simplest and subtlest, to the grandest and most ecstatic. Guests were profoundly moved to tears as something deep inside was touched and then immersed in the joy of wild, free dancing as a group. Truly everything and everyone was welcomed.

Visitors were nourished with beautiful food from Kirsty and a small army of choppers, washers, preppers and servers. Creativity was channelled with the creation of the Mandala which everyone had a chance to add their own unique touches to. The strong connection of the group was clear at break times, where animated conversation was universal, and at the havan fire ceremonies where



everyone offered to the fire.

The energy of the Friday night kirtan threatened to take it through the night, with one new visitor to the Ashram commenting in awe: 'does everyone here play music and sing that beautifully?' Particularly special was the unique offering of each kirtanist; highlights included a family with two young girls singing their hearts out, an Irish trio led by Atma Jyoti

on the Mandolin and Tony's famous rain song inspired by his second home in Africa. Natural collaborations emerged, pulsing drumming energised, and at one point I returned to find everyone in a conga line around the Sadhana hall.

Even the rain on the last day didn't put people off. Those in tents elected to sleep inside, resembling a mass sleep over in the morning. I think, and I hope, everyone felt able to offer, receive and be held in the magic cauldron of the festival. Like Astrix and Obelix we were all stirring in the love. No doubt many people left already looking forward to next year's festival (see page 34). ॐ

A Kind Heart: the Doorway to Healing for the Self and Others

by Swami Satyadaya

There are few among us who do not aspire to live happy and fulfilling lives. We all want to feel connected, to love freely and to feel loved. It can be freeing to truly admit that this is a worthy aspiration.

However, events in our lives, especially when we are younger, can lead us to building walls around our hearts. Situations can be so threatening to our sense of survival that we cannot fully experience them; we internally isolate the event to protect us from the severity of the feelings. This is one definition of trauma.

Methods that once protected us become obstacles to living fully, blocking our capacity to love and receive love in the now. Our emotional responses and availability can remain frozen in time leading us to experience great suffering and frustration when we are unable to move on in our lives. The suppression of difficult emotions and experiences also drains us of the energy and vitality that we could bring to life in the present.

Luckily there are practices available to us that can help us take down the walls. This is not always easy. We are asked to open up to a sense of vulnerability and openness that can scare us. As Pema Chodron states: *'Many of us prefer practices that will not cause discomfort, yet at the same time we want to be healed.'*

While yoga contains practices that open the heart space, the Buddhist tradition can also be drawn on to awaken compassion to both self and others – practices that go straight to the heart of the matter if you'll excuse the pun.

Metta

Metta uses specific phrases to offer the intention of loving kindness to oneself and others. It's surprising how difficult it can be offer this practice to oneself and to feel able to receive it. This is not a sign that the practice isn't working; rather that we're becoming conscious of the places where we do not feel loved or worthy of love.

Tonglen

Tonglen is about acceptance, receiving and giving. Through a process of visualisation and imagination we begin to receive all the aspects of our self that have been hurt or denied into our hearts, and we return acceptance, kindness and love. In the Ashram when I lead *Tonglen*, I often feel a powerful release in my own heart while members of the group cry or experience their own pain. It is a privilege to share the possibility of letting go with others.

Living with a kind heart is not an act. It's not something we pretend to do so that we may appear more spiritual. The process of developing a kind heart can be challenging and, at times, painful. It is worth it.

As we begin to make peace with the whole of our story, we develop compassion for ourselves as we are and, therefore, for others. We realise that every person we encounter has their wounds and their armour that they carry with them day to day – that they too endure their share of suffering. ॐ

On the 6th December 2018 Swamiji initiated Nick Edge as **Swami Satyadaya**; *Awakening to the Truth of Compassion.*



In Recognition of Space

by Maha Sattwa

Space is something we don't usually notice much. We walk into a room and tend to look at the contents, the people, the furniture and all of the various objects in it. Perhaps we notice the decoration, but the one thing we never really pay much attention to is the space inside that room.

Similarly, looking at the trees in winter I find myself captivated by the pattern of the branches, forming a perfect progression from the thickest central trunk to the slightly narrower main branches, becoming ever slimmer, finer and more intricate towards the ends. The space between the branches is an integral part of that picture. It is the perfect foil for the branches, yet it is completely unassuming and goes largely unnoticed.

Space is the one thing common to all things. It is the unifying factor that holds all of creation within it. Not only is it ever constant, it is unaffected by and completely unquestioningly accepting of anything in it. Everything belongs, the two always exist in relation with each other. The nature of space, as we know it, is infinite, vast and all encompassing and seen from this perspective the objects within it, as numerous and unique as they may be, are like the merest specks of something within the greater picture of all of creation.

And so it can be with our minds. Once we have developed some degree of awareness, we notice the thoughts within our mind space as mental objects. Moreover, we can also develop an awareness of the space between thoughts or, put another way, of that mental space within which thoughts arise and move. From this vast and infinite spaciousness we can come to a place of acceptance of all that exists within it, leaving us with a feeling of peaceful silence where everything is just right with the world. ॐ





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with regular
donations

Attend one
of our many
courses at the
Ashram

Pass on our
newsletters

Become
a virtual
karma yogi
supporting
us from
home

Create a
sponsored
event to raise
money for the
Ashram

Set some
time aside
and visit the
Ashram as a
guest

Give a 'one off'
donation

Share our
online posts
with friends
and family

Mandala Yoga Ashram is a registered charity.

Supporting the Ashram

Our supporters are the lifeblood of the Ashram. There are far too many to name individually; we express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed their energy and time in various ways over the past year. A special thank you to the financial support we received enabling us to run our 2019 Bursary scheme (see website). The Ashram is, and always will be, a place of awakening for all.



Financially you can support the Ashram as a registered U.K. charity (No. 326847) in any of the following ways:

Friends of the Ashram: a way of supporting the Ashram and its ongoing growth and development into the future by giving an affordable monthly contribution. See the Ashram website for more details and also see the *Dakshina* article on page 19.

One-off Donation: if you would like to make a one-off donation, kindly visit our website or www.everyclick.com/MYA. It will be received with gratitude!

Gift Aid Scheme: this is an excellent way to support the Ashram as it enables us to reclaim tax relief on your donation, increasing the value by an extra 20%.

Making a Will: one of the most effective ways to support the Ashram is in your will. Whilst you may not be able to offer major financial support now, in your will you may be able to. For practical guidelines on how to make or change your will, please contact your solicitor.

Give as you Live: visit www.everyclick.com/MYA to find out how you can donate money to the Ashram everytime you shop online.

A Student's Perspective

by **Tony Sugden**, Ashram team member

Regularly in the Ashram there is *satsang* - 'in the company of truth'. To inspire others through *satsang* one must be clear enough of the mind's clutter, and well enough established in inner clarity, to allow the light of consciousness to shine through. The effect is to inspire others, because the clear expression of something real resonates with the truth in another. It's the same truth. When *satsang* happens, I become spellbound. My heart resonates with what is being expressed, and often I understand something in a more profound way than I did before. *Satsang* is a precious gift in this world of ego dominance and double-speak.

Listening to Swamiji giving *satsang* recently made me grateful that I live here in the Ashram. This is an environment where, potentially, everything serves to further the process of opening like a sail to catch the wind of Grace. This is the word I use to try and express that which shows me, limited as I am by the boundaries of my personality, how to see beyond those limitations. The intellect cannot perceive the mystery which is greater than, and beyond the realm of, the intellect.

I first became aware of Swamiji when I realised that he'd written many of the books I was using to study and practice yoga over the years, some of which were written in the name of his teacher Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Those books included 'Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha', and the excellent 'A Systematic Course in the Ancient Tantric Techniques of Yoga and Kriya'. He is from the same lineage as my first teacher, Swami Jyotirmayananda. Both trained at the Bihar School of Yoga, so I already knew that style of yoga practice, and it suited me well.

When I was accepted to live at Mandala Ashram, my goal was to enjoy whatever tutelage I could from Swami Nishchalananda. Some people say '*you don't need a teacher, you have wisdom in yourself*'. In telling me that, ironically, they try to teach me something! If someone has greater knowledge of a subject than myself, then I can certainly learn from them. Simple. It's absurd to imagine that we cannot learn from the experience and wisdom of the yogis and sages who, for



thousands of years have trodden the path before us. An arrogance of our time perhaps?

It's true that Swami Nishchalananda says 'There is only one Guru, it is within. When you have found it, you are home'. But while I am still living with some degree of uncertainty, ignorance even, then a teacher is absolutely necessary for me to

realise my fullest potential; to live a life where I am totally content, self-contained and comprehending my place in this astonishing world.

And actually, to be a student is a joy. There's no need to pretend to have knowledge (any teacher worth their salt will see right through that). Swamiji has great knowledge of Yoga, Tantra and Advaita and is an inspired teacher. This is not only my opinion but also that of many others who have benefitted from his teachings over the years. To return to the original theme, there is a mystical dimension to simply being in the company of one who lives the truth that you are seeking, of absorbing some of the 'atmosphere' of wisdom and experience beyond intellect, as if by osmosis. To me, Swami Nishchalananda is such a teacher, understated for sure; I never see him promoting himself, quite the opposite.

The first time I met Swamiji he intimated to me that serving one's fellow human beings can take away self-centred concern. He was right. When I made myself available to people who live in poverty (in East Africa), I stopped obsessively asking 'how am I?'; and focussed on others. My love of life grew without my noticing. That was my first encounter with Swamiji's intuitive way of teaching. Now, sometimes I ask questions and he gives answers, but mostly I just go about



my daily work (karma yoga), and enjoy Swamiji's company when I can. In this way I grow. Don't ask me how. Perhaps the yardstick is knowing how much time I spend feeling free, light in my being, and knowing intuitively when I go in the right direction (and also when I've trampled on my fellow human beings through my clumsiness). I come closer to the inner Guru, of



that I have no doubt, but I don't believe I will ever lose the wish to simply learn and absorb unspoken wisdom.

Without doubt Swami Nishchalananda has been the inspiration behind the Ashram since he founded it all those years ago. Slowly he is backing away from day to day involvement, but he is still available here teaching, giving *satsang* and sharing his joy of life. I urge you to take advantage of the teaching and experience of this Yogi of considerable stature, while you can. ॐ

Profound connection to a teacher is one aspect of *bhakti* yoga (the path of the heart). For some, the expression of *bhakti* will be to a symbol or form that represents the deeper truth hidden behind our day to day perceptions, or through the chanting of mantra and kirtan. For others this path will show itself in their relationship to a guide, also understood from an energetic point of view. Coming into contact with a person who has undergone significant transformation through their own spiritual path can catalyse great change in us. It is a resonant effect. This is the meaning of *Shaktipath*, transmission of energy. Change in one energetic system, you or me, is provoked by contact with another, the spiritual teacher. This is not everyone's path, and neither does it need to be, however for some it is an integral part of the process. ॐ

-Swami Satyadaya



A Space in Nature

by Mantrashakti

One of the reasons people come to the Ashram, aside from practising yoga, is the land itself, the grounds in which the human constructions nestle. As well as the many young trees which stand in the woodland next to Ladies' Walk, there are tall, mature trees all over the Ashram. There is a pine tree which was uprooted years ago in a storm, which now lies on its side, in a semi-wild area next to the marquee field. Many of its needles are still green. There is a mimosa tree near the main building which looks to me like it is dancing when we have high winds.



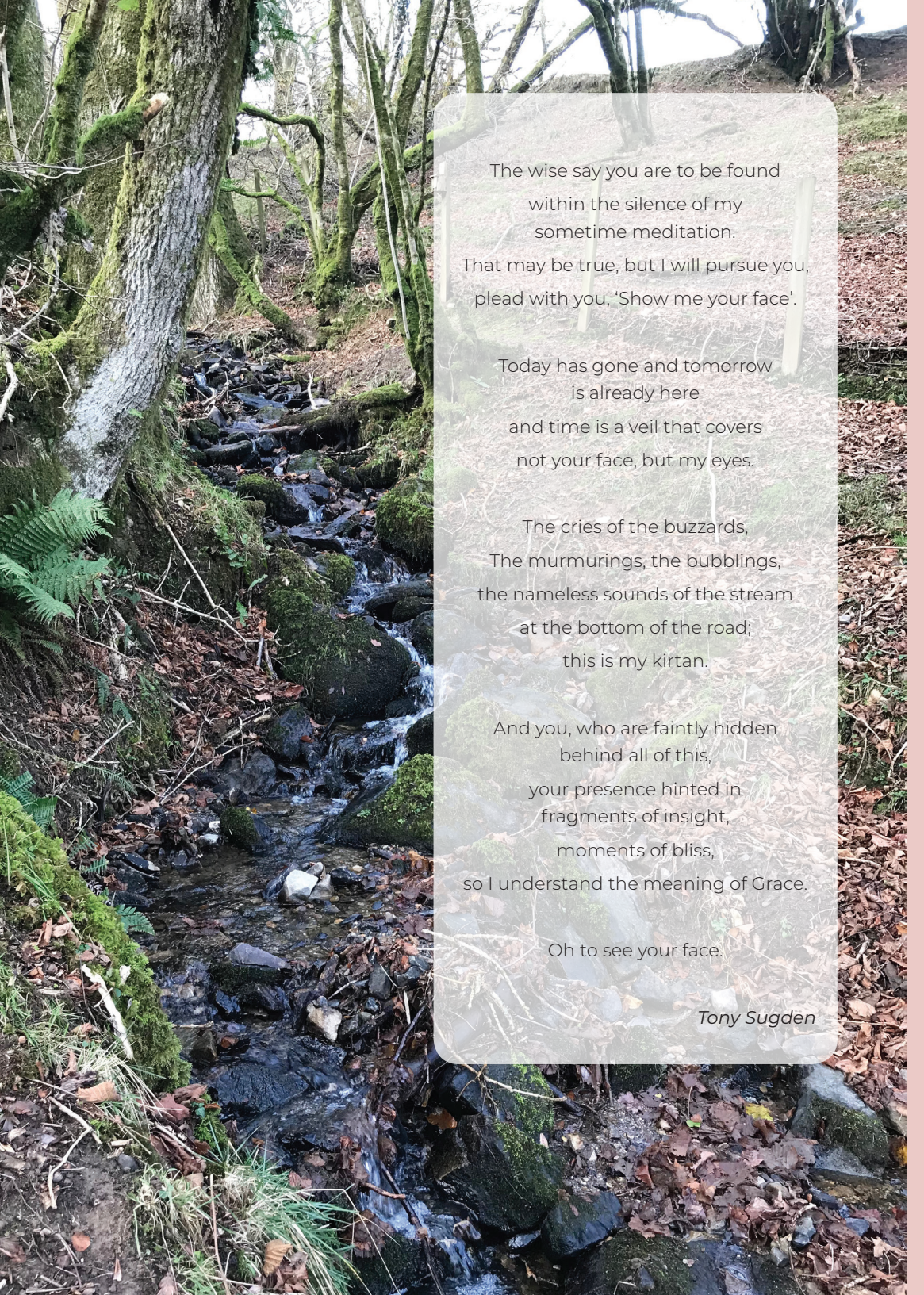
The weather was unforgettable in 2018; I recall being on the steep slope of the woodland, on a day of sunshine and snow showers. From down below came the sound of shamanic drumming to celebrate the Spring Equinox. The next morning the east wind brought us a blizzard, so team members and course participants had to clear snowfall from half a mile of track down to the main road. That was exhilarating, grit-laying and all.

The almost uninterrupted dry spell, from late April until late July, made for happy days, the sunshine putting big smiles on people's faces. Heavy rain returned on July 28th, when we happened to be celebrating Gurupurnima. During the fire ceremony, thunder was heard above and in the evening a magnificent rainbow appeared, whose radiant blue streak mesmerised me.

During the autumn there were more very strong winds which broke large branches on many trees and snapped one pine in half. Course students and guests eager to tackle garden tasks, heedless of mud and mess, are always fun to work with. Two men were happy to don wading gear, step down into the stream near the pond and clear the watercourse of natural debris.



In December many pine trees had to be cut back to enable new perimeter fencing to be installed. Over twenty barrow loads of branches were ferried to the car park and I had the pleasure of burning them one windy day. Thick smoke eddied around, the pine crackled louder and louder, and the bright orange blaze kept shifting direction as it ate up the wood. Epic. ॐ



The wise say you are to be found
within the silence of my
sometime meditation.
That may be true, but I will pursue you,
plead with you, 'Show me your face'.

Today has gone and tomorrow
is already here
and time is a veil that covers
not your face, but my eyes.

The cries of the buzzards,
The murmurings, the bubblings,
the nameless sounds of the stream
at the bottom of the road;
this is my kirtan.

And you, who are faintly hidden
behind all of this,
your presence hinted in
fragments of insight,
moments of bliss,
so I understand the meaning of Grace.

Oh to see your face.

Tony Sugden

Ashram Course Calendar 2019

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Booking an Ashram Course

To book a course please visit the Ashram website -www.MandalaYogaAshram.com/courses. You can also book over the phone via the office- +44(0)1558 685358. The course descriptions following are abridged. Please see the website for full information. Gift vouchers are available to purchase, valid for courses, stays or Ashram shop purchases. Please don't hesitate to call for any further help.



COURSE
FULL

Restore, Replenish & Renew

FEBRUARY | Thursday 21 - Sunday 24 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Reva and Mukti Mani**

A new restorative retreat suitable for all levels. Start your year with a 3-day immersion into the replenishing energies of the Ashram.

Emphasising relaxation and renewal, the day will begin at 7.45am with chanting and meditation, then include a gentle and accessible yoga class, an hour of karma yoga, a yoga nidra (deep meditative relaxation also known as yogic sleep) and an evening session of *satsang* (question & answer) and kirtan (group singing). There will be plenty of time to rest and simply be within the Ashram grounds. Participants will be given the space needed to connect back into themselves, leaving the retreat with a clearer focus and feeling revitalised and rejuvenated.

Suitable for all levels.

The Spring Equinox: Yoga & Shamanism

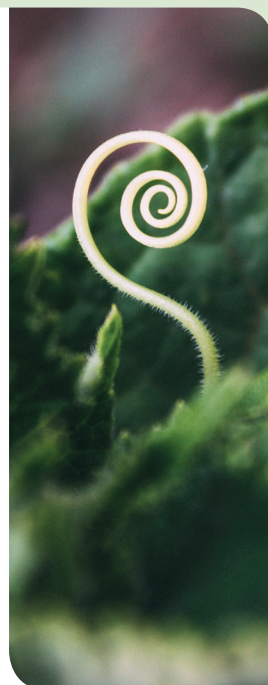
MARCH | Friday 22 - Sunday 24 • Cost: £170

Conducted By: **Reva**

The Spring Equinox heralds the onset of spring; it is a time when we literally and metaphorically plant seeds for the year ahead. During this retreat there will be an emphasis on gaining clarity on what 'seeds' you wish to incubate and plant in your life. We will work with the themes of manifestation, awakening and balance in your life.

The retreat will include hatha yoga, chanting, meditation, karma yoga, fire ceremony and kirtan. It will also incorporate shamanic teachings which support our connection to nature's rhythms, and a classical shamanic journey. Reva is a shamanic practitioner and a graduate of the Ashram's Yoga Teacher Training Course.

Suitable for all levels.



Ashram Life Taster Retreat

MARCH | Friday 29 - Sunday 31 • Cost: £170

Conducted By: **Swami Krishnapremananda**
and **Swami Satyadaya**

Have you been practising yoga for a while and are now considering the next step? This course is designed to help you go deeper in your practice. You will experience the benefits of spending time in the Ashram, a unique spiritual and nature rich environment.

The course will include an introduction to the different paths of yoga, daily question and answer sessions (*satsang*) and *hatha* classes. It will also include an introduction to the practice of meditation.

Please note that this course is part of our 2019 Bursary scheme. Places are still available through usual booking.

Suitable for all levels.



Being Still Here & Now

APRIL | Friday 4 - Sunday 7 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Maha Sattwa**

We live in a busy world filled to the brim with all the various things that shape and colour our everyday lives. Whilst this may give us some level of fulfillment it is invaluable to be able to, at times, step back from it all and come to a place of stillness. When we do this we find within ourselves a silent space that resounds with tranquility, harmony, clarity, insight and inspiration.

A variety of techniques will be covered including meditation, chanting, karma yoga (selfless service), and periods of Mouna (silent reflection).

Please note that this course is part of our 2019 Bursary scheme. Places are still available through usual booking.

Suitable for all levels.



Emotional Healing through Chanting & Meditation

APRIL | Wednesday 10 - Sunday 14 • Cost: £295

Conducted By: **Swami GyanDharma**

Chanting offers us a direct way to heal our emotions. To evolve in our self understanding, we need to be able to channel the raw energy of our emotions in wiser and more productive ways. Through chanting, the powerful energy contained within emotions becomes available to us for healing or deepening our practice. All we need to do is relax, use our voice and open up to the experience.

Swami GyanDharma will lead this retreat involving chanting, as well as meditation, yoga nidra and *havans* (fire ceremonies with mantra). Being in his transformative and life-affirming presence will be a central feature of this retreat.

Suitable for all levels.



Tattwa Shuddhi: Awakening to Our Essential Being

APRIL | Wednesday 17 - Monday 22 • Cost: £375

Conducted By: **Swami Nishchalananda**
and **Swami Satyadaya**

Tattwa Shuddhi is a powerful tantric meditation practice aiming to expand our perception and liberate us from spiritual ignorance and limitation. It is a process of meditation evolved by tantric mystics as a means of opening us up to our fullest potential. Tattwa Shuddhi brings clarity of mind, openness and receptivity, allowing us to see the unseeable and realise the unthinkable. It is a means to heal us from spiritual ignorance and misidentification and open us up to the mystery of our Being.

Three years yoga experience required.





Yoga and the Healing Power of Nature

MAY | Thursday 9 - Sunday 12 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Swami Satyadaya**

Quality time in nature, being present with what is, can be as effective as our formal yoga practice on the mat. Gifting ourselves the time to be present with our surroundings allows the restless mind to begin to settle. We can let go of our day to day troubles, our breathing can relax and deepen, and our heart soften. Most importantly it can stir the soul. It can ignite, or re-ignite, a sense of wonder and awe for life, and our place in it.

We will spend much time outdoors, immersing ourselves in the vibrant energy of early spring, in combination with *asana*, chanting, meditation and other Ashram practices. **Suitable for all levels.**

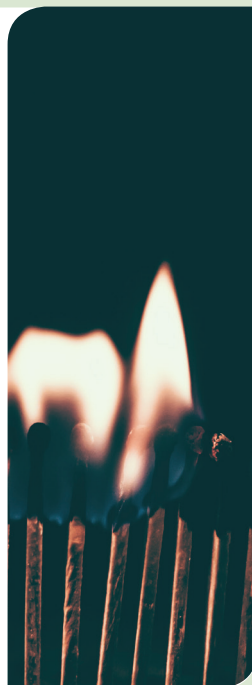
Teaching Yoga Therapy: for Anxiety & Burnout

MAY | Thursday 16 - Sunday 19 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Dr. Hania Kramlund** with meditation and *satsang* by **Swami Nishchalananda**

For the last five years Dr Hania has dedicated her work to patients with burnout syndrome. The number of patients suffering from this condition is dramatically increasing year by year. Being a doctor and a yoga teacher, she has experienced how effective yoga can be when applied as a tool in the healing process.

In this course she shares her experience to inspire yoga teachers and student yoga teachers to set up specific yoga programmes for these kinds of groups. The course will involve the study of physiology of stress diseases, how to use yoga to prevent and relieve symptoms, and interactive partner work.





PranaVidya: Exploring your Energetic Potential

MAY-JUNE | Thursday 23 - Sunday 2 • Cost: £495

Conducted By: **Swami GyanDharma**

Prana is the energy, gross and subtle, which pervades and underlies all things, it is often defined as 'Life Force'. PranaVidya means 'knowledge of energy' and it is a yogic practice for liberating energy and using it for healing. Prana is not only confined to physical vitality but it is that energy or force that gives rise to flashes of wisdom and life-transforming insight.

PranaVidya is concerned with acknowledging, sensitizing and awakening the subtle energy pathways within. Swami GyanDharma has been living and teaching yoga for over 40 years and has a distinct and much loved approach. **Some yoga experience necessary.**

Open Day at the Ashram

JUNE | Sunday 9 • Cost: FREE

You are invited to join us and experience the Ashram and its teachings. Whether young or old, a yoga beginner or experienced, are curious about the Ashram or simply want a day out – come and be our guest for the day!

There will be gentle sessions of *hatha* yoga (physical yoga practice) in the morning followed by a talk on Ashram life. In the afternoon, you will have the opportunity to practice yoga nidra (deep yogic relaxation). Come and stroll the beautiful grounds, enjoy a vegetarian lunch, meet old friends and make new ones. You can come and go any time between 10.30am and 4.30pm. There is no need to book your place in advance but if you are bringing a large group please let us know beforehand. You are welcome to offer your assistance to the Ashram team.

Suitable for all.



The Kind Heart: Practices of Compassion

JUNE | Saturday 15 - Saturday 22 • Cost: £395

Conducted By: **Swami Satyadaya**

Following the success and popularity of the 2018's Kind Heart course, comes a fuller programme exploring the practices of *Metta* (loving kindness), *Tonglen* (giving and receiving) and the Taoist practice of the Inner Smile.

The retreat focuses on cultivating compassion and unconditional love which sometimes flow easily and at other times can feel difficult and conflicted. The retreat practices invite you not to wait for some mythical time in the future, but to step into the practices of compassion right now. Swami Satyadaya is a well respected senior teacher at the Ashram, who also teaches seminars around the country.

Suitable for all levels.



Advaita: The Quest for the Essential 'I'

JULY-AUG | Wednesday 31 - Sunday 4 • Cost: £340

Conducted By: **Swami Nishchalananda**
and **Swami Satyadaya**

Nearly all of us whole-heartedly accept that 'I' am defined by the body/mind and the differing roles that we find ourselves playing in life. However, for thousands of years, yogis, sages and seers, as well as the yogic texts, have clearly stated this is fundamentally not the case.

We will investigate the nature of the 'I' in order to realise and reconnect with what we are on a fundamental level. The aim, through simple, yet profound and radical practice, is to gradually clear away the dust that covers our inner, pristine, diamond-like nature to reveal deep peace, joy and fulfilment.

Some yoga experience necessary.



Ashram Festival 2019: Awakening the Heart

AUGUST | Wednesday 7 - Sunday 11

Cost: £245 camping / £295 inside accomodation

With: **Swamiji** and other senior teachers including
Swami GyanDharma and **Monica Douglas Clark**

A joyful gathering of hearts and minds to celebrate the qualities of an Awakened Heart. This year's festival promises to be a melting pot of heartfelt sharing, learning and practices, and wonderful vegetarian food.

We will explore the qualities of the Awakened Heart and also how to work skillfully and compassionately with the Wounded Heart.

A celebratory four days of interactive workshops, inspiring sessions, *havans* (fire ceremonies), kirtans, hatha yoga classes and meditations, all in the Ashram's nurturing and transformative enviroment.



Exploring the Chakras

AUGUST | Friday 16 - Monday 26 • Cost: £495

Conducted By: **Swami Nishchalananda, assisted by
Swami Satyadaya & Swami Krishnapremananda**

The chakras are symbols that represent energy patterns constituting our embodied nature on all levels; they relate to specific physical organs, nerve plexuses, endocrine glands, emotional responses, mental patterns and psychic experiences that exist within each of us. In each moment of our lives their functioning defines the entire spectrum of human experience.

While the chakras function in all of us, they can be blocked and imbalanced. Unblocking, harmonising and energising them brings profound changes in our understanding, perception and behaviour. The chakras become vehicles of self-discovery, enabling us to truly fulfil our lives. Through practice, we can awaken hidden dimensions of our embodied existence; by awakening the higher chakras there is a quantum leap in our self-identity and we start to realise the Source of our Being.

This 10-day retreat will include in-depth explanations, combined with intensive and guided practical exploration of the chakras. It will emphasise practice, personal insight, experience and transformation.

Swamiji has a deep experiential knowledge of the chakras, which he skilfully imparts to his students. He has given many courses and retreats in the Ashram, throughout Europe and in India, initiating many practitioners into their own experiential knowledge of the chakras.

Some yoga experience necessary.





Song of the Heart

OCTOBER | Thursday 3 - Sunday 6 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Swami Nishchalananda**
and **Rajesh David**

Practices for awakening the joy and wisdom of the heart, alongside heartfelt sharing, mantra chanting and singing.

Love and compassion are innate in everyone; they simply need the opportunity to be expressed. Existence itself is deeply and tenderly interconnected, yet our natural heart qualities are obscured by the make-up of our personality. These practices heal the heart and transform negative emotions such as fear and resentment into friendliness and free flowing love. Rajesh is a devotional composer and singer with a background in Indian classical music. Guided by Swamiji, the emphasis of this retreat is on personal experience. *There will be an ongoing translation into French by Dhyana Bindu.*

Suitable for all levels.

The Sacred Feminine

OCTOBER | Thursday 10 - Saturday 13 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Reva**

This women's retreat offers a rare gift to share deeply. By disentangling ourselves from social, cultural and religious expectations, we can step more into our authentic being. Bringing a deeper understanding to the menstrual or moon cycle will give us the wisdom to navigate our internal seasons consciously. Simple yet profound practices will awaken and reconnect us to our womb space; our innate source of wisdom and power and the sacred vessel of creativity and life. Woven through this retreat will be an exploration of the qualities attributed to Goddess Durga – self-empowerment, determination, courage to face the challenges of life, and a wild Grace.

Includes daily hatha yoga classes, meditations, chanting and karma yoga. **Suitable for all women.**



Meditation: Gateway to the Unknown

OCTOBER | Thursday 17 - Sunday 20 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Swami Nishchalananda**
Swami Satyadaya and **Swami Krishnapremananda**

Through the state of meditation we start the process of calming the body and mind and tuning into the source of our embodied being. Meditation has the power to change our attitude to life and our self-identification.

We explore sensory perceptions and the mental chatter or stories, to listen deeper to what is beyond this.

The course will use the tools of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, breath awareness, mantra and symbolism and of course meditation to help participants reveal their real nature. There will be periods of mouna (silence) through the retreat to encourage a deeper process of introspection.

Suitable for those with some experience.



From Sound into Silence

NOVEMBER | Thursday 14 - Sunday 17 • Cost: £235

Conducted By: **Swami GyanDharma**

As we move towards the winter, finding ways to stoke the inner fire helps sustain us through the darker colder months. Mantras are tools that soften the heart and awaken us energetically. Chanting enables us to let go of repetitive thinking, release stuck emotional patterns, and become clear and still in the present moment. The quiet voice of the heart is then empowered to express itself in ever more joyful, creative and life enhancing ways.

This is a much-loved course that has been running at the Ashram for a number of years and includes chanting, meditation, *asana* and fire ceremonies. Swami GyanDharma makes seemingly difficult practices accessible to all.

Suitable for all levels.



Ashram Information

Planning your visit

First-time visitors are encouraged to attend one of our courses for their first visit, as these give a more structured introduction to the Ashram teachings and routine. We recommend ***Ashram Life Taster Retreat*** (see p. 29) as an initial introduction, however there are a variety of courses that are suitable for all..

Staying at the Ashram without attending a course can be very useful in that it gives you the time and space to practise yoga in its different forms and gain a deeper perspective on your life's direction. Kindly see our website or contact the Ashram office for more information.

Costs for staying in the Ashram outside of a course are:

£30 DAILY
(£30 deposit)

£180 WEEKLY
(£75 deposit)

£495 MONTHLY
(£195 deposit)

All course and stay costs include full board, yoga classes (according to the course or stay timetable at the time) and spiritual guidance.

Payment can be made by card, cheque, bank transfer or cash (whilst in the Ashram). If you pay by cheque, please make it payable to Mandala Yoga Ashram. Your deposit secures your place and is non-refundable.

Concessions are available for those in need, e.g. students, those on low income and senior citizens, at the Ashram Director's discretion. Children under 12 years of age stay free.

Enquiries & Contact

Tel: +44 (0)1558 685358

Office telephone hours: 9.30-12am daily
(except on quiet days, which are normally on Mondays and sometimes Sundays)

Email: info@mandalayoga.net

Website: www.MandalaYogaAshram.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mandalayogaashram

Travel directions for how to reach the Ashram are given on page 38, and also on the Ashram website. Please don't hesitate to contact the Ashram office if you do not have internet access.

Pantypistyll
Llansadwrn
Llanwrda
SA19 8NR,
Wales, U.K.



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK EDGE



How to Get to the Ashram

By train: you will need to come to Llangadog or Llanwrda train station on the Heart of Wales line (which runs between Swansea and Shrewsbury) and then take a taxi (see below). For train times and tickets:

The Heart of Wales Travel Centre: +44 (0)1597 822053 -often offers tickets which are significantly cheaper than standard rail fares.

National Rail: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk> or +44(0)8457 484950

By taxi: call the taxi in advance and ask them to meet you at the station. The taxi takes 15-20 minutes from either station. Local taxis:

Llandovery (Towi Taxis): +44 (0)7544 624411

Llandovery (Ray's Taxis): +44 (0)7775 210900

By car: if you use a satnav, or internet directions, the Ashram postcode is SA19 8NR and Ashram house name is 'Pantypistyll'. You may be directed to the neighbour's property a mile away but keep a close eye out for the Ashram signposts at the bottom of the Ashram track.

Arrival time: Plan to arrive by 5.30pm or earlier to settle in before supper at 6.30pm. If this is not possible, kindly inform the office beforehand.

Swamiji Biography

Swami Nishchalananda is the founder and spiritual head of Mandala Yoga Ashram. He spent 14 years in India, from 1971 to 1985, where he studied and practised the different paths of yoga. During this period he also conducted many seminars on yoga and meditation throughout the subcontinent in villages, towns and companies.



Swamiji returned to Europe in 1985 to establish Mandala Yoga Ashram and propagate the profound teachings he had received. From then to the present day he has been teaching yoga and yoga-related subjects in the Ashram and all over Europe. Many people have been touched by his inspiring yet practical, down to earth teachings and have realised a new meaningful dimension in their lives. He has also conducted and inspired Yoga Teacher Training Courses (YTTs) in the Ashram and elsewhere so that highly trained teachers can pass on the life-transforming message and teachings of yoga.

He feels that yoga is an invaluable practical system and way of life to bring meaning, wisdom and joy into our lives, thereby helping to harmonise society and bring peace into our troubled world.

2019 Seminars with Ashram Teachers

Ashram teachers give many day and weekend seminars in venues around the UK and Europe. These seminars give you the chance to experience the value and depth of Ashram teachings almost on your doorstep. This year **Swami Satyadaya** is hosting retreats in Glastonbury, Holy Island in Northumbria, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and also teaching at the British Wheel of Yoga Congress in Warwick. **Swami Krishapremananda** is teaching in several locations in Scotland, the North West, the North East and London, and also in Sicily for the European Union of Yoga Congress. **Maha Sattwa** is offering retreats in Essex. **Reva** will be teaching at the British Wheel of Yoga Wales annual festival, and also in Essex. **Mukti Mani** is holding workshops in Swansea and Cardiff. Also from the Ashram team, **Sophie** will be hosting kirtans at different venues. Please see the Ashram website for details.

Teacher Biographies

Swami Satyadaya brings an intuitive and reflective approach to his teaching. A born seeker, he is a passionate advocate of the path of gyana yoga. Currently the Ashram's Operations Manager, he teaches both within the Ashram and elsewhere, transmitting the teachings with a natural warmth, honesty and humour.

Swami Krishnapremananda is a senior Ashram teacher, having lived in the Ashram since 1997. His understanding has matured over the years through ongoing contact with Swamiji and other inspirational teachers, combined with sustained and dedicated practice. He directs the Yoga Teacher Training Course as well as teach on other Ashram courses and around the U.K. and Europe.

Maha Sattwa was drawn deeper into yoga and meditation 20 years ago. Through her ongoing immersion in Ashram life she continues to grow and develop, allowing her to bring an inner wealth of experience, compassion and sensitivity to her teachings, which she conveys in a clear, uncluttered and accessible manner.

Reva is a graduate of the Ashram's Yoga Teacher Training Course. She has followed the path of Siddha Yoga for over 10 years. She has a background as an analytic psychotherapist and shamanic practitioner. She is interested in the alchemical and transformational potential of yoga.

Swami GyanDharma has been practising and teaching yoga for 40 years, spending over 10 years in India. His life and actions are rooted in a meditative connection with his inner being, and the depth of his wisdom is conveyed through his teachings. He has been giving invaluable input to the Ashram teachings over the past seven years, sharing his unique presence and inspiration.

Mukti Mani has been practising yoga for seventeen years and has taught for six years. She has completed two teacher training courses: the Ashram YTTC and in South India. Particularly interested in *bhakti* and heart based practices from a range of traditions, she is also a trained Occupational Therapist.

Dr Hania Kramlund is a Swedish medical doctor, yoga teacher, and has a degree in orthopaedic medicine. She applies yogic techniques daily in her current work as an occupational doctor. She is dedicated to bringing a scientific perspective into the teachings of yoga.

Rajesh David is a devotional composer and singer with a background in Indian classical music. He has developed seminars on Nada Yoga and classical yogic texts which he has taught throughout the UK and abroad. He is a warm and experienced teacher and has a wide range of CDs.

2019 Ashram Course Teachers

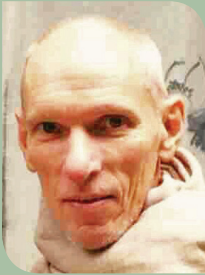
Please see pages 27-37
for course details.



Swami
Krishnapremananda



Swami Satyadaya



Swami
GyanDharma



Maha Sattwa



Reva



Dr. Hania Kramlund



Rajesh David



Mukti Mani



The Ashram has a vibrant energy field which encourages a quality of sharing with like minded people from the heart and a depth of practice.



Mandala Yoga Ashram

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