



# VINYASA KRAMA YOGA COURSE

With Colleena Shakti ~ Online Jan-Mar 2022

## SESSION 1 & 2: *January*

**LINEAGE: What is lineage?** - we do not see many models of this in the modern world

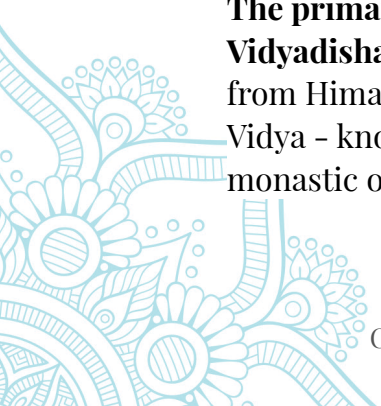
- **Unbroken chain of direct discipleship, 1 to 1 relationship/exchange**
- **A complete body of work** rather than isolated techniques
- The teachings are not information, rather it is about **entering a flow/stream of consciousness - a complete vision**
- It is taught in Yoga that we have to recognize authenticity - Elicit **\*discriminative intelligence**. Lineage is not about blindly following.
- Teachings have been submitted to the **trials of practice** (stood the test of time)
- **A build in security system** is often there to protect the teachings - to preserve the potencies.

## QUALITIES OF A STUDENT OF YOGA: Mumukshutva / Shraddha / Visvās / Bhakti

- First there must be that longing/desire for this kind of knowledge - (**Mumukshutva**) longing for liberation
- Admiration/sincerity/trust - (**Shraddha**) - develops over time and experience. Sutra 1.20 states that "the practice of yoga begins with faith"
- Faith (**Visvās**) - gives the yoga practitioner an inner light/ confidence. Weaves it all together.
- Devotion to some higher principle - (**Bhakti**) - makes the life of practice less dry. Extends the practice beyond mechanical technique and influences ones initial impulse/inspiration to practice.

## THIS LINEAGE OF VINYASA KRAMA YOGA

**The primary teacher and Sat Guru of Colleena is: His Holiness Swami Vidyadishananda Giri (Gurudeva)**, realized master of meditation/yoga adept from Himalayan monastic lineage. His name means: Swami - beloved teacher, Vidya - knowledge, Dish - absorbed in, Ananda - bliss, Giri - name of his monastic order. "The one who is absorbed at the source of knowledge." His



monastic Guru - Hari Harananda Giri (who is connected to the following masters: Paramahansa Yogananda, Shree Yuktेश्वar Giri, Lahari Mahasya, Mahavatar Babaji / Triambak Nath)

**Supplementary Vinyasa Krama Yoga studies with:** Shrivatsa Ramaswami. Occasionally we develop practices from his tradition which links to Krishnamacharya. Ramaswami taught VKY at Kalakshetra (prominent dance school of India) and wrote several recommended books including: *Vinyasa Krama Yoga*.

### WHAT IS VINYASA KRAMA YOGA?

- **Vinyasa:** here means: “artful” or “graceful” sequencing of one movement after another.
- **Krama:** refers to the very “specificly ordered” sequences (which are established by the lineage traditions)
- **Yoga:** “Union” of: Mind & Body, Subtle Body & Gross Body, Breath & Movement and Re-uniting with the true Self (Brahman)

Vinyasa Krama Yoga is a Himalayan system of yoga deeply rooted in traditions which date back to Vedic antiquity and are still practiced by monastics and yogis in the Himalayas. It is a breath (Prana) focused practice which synchronizes graceful flowing movements with each breath in series of choreographed sequences.

**It is an artful sequencing of breath control and asana as to prepare the body and mind for higher stages of meditation / awareness.** Synchronizing specific sequences of graceful, flowing movements with the Ujjai breath, this yoga is ideal for removing disturbances in the physical, emotional and energetic body.

**VKY allows us to experience the subtle movement of prana throughout our body.**

### BREATH:

Correct Ujjai breathing emphasizes movement of the lower abdomen (expansion / contraction) as it is synchronized with the breath. It is the breath that directs the movement - each movement simply layered on ever expanding the breath... until the point of saturation / satiation (parāvastha). Breath includes prana (the subtle component of breath) but prana itself is not breath.

**Yoga is often thought of as a harmonizing / integrating of body and mind: the breath is the link between the mind and body. Yoga Sutras**

**2.46**

**KRAMA:**

All of the asana are linked in such a way as to assist in this **expansion/contraction principle**. So with each inhale, the abdominal area expands (ex. when arms raise over head), and in each Exhale, the abdomen contracts (ex. Going into forward bends and twists).

**PRANA:**

The increase of prana (developed by the Ujjai breath) is deposited through out the body - especially in the joints. The practice offers deep rejuvenation, healing and a sensation of lightness in the body (a sign of increased sattva). The joints feel smooth and movement becomes supple as the muscle tissue, ligaments and fascia opens up and 'blossoms'. The tissues receive fresh blood supply which delivers important oxygen and nutrients in (because of increased to prana circulation) and flushes away toxins and stagnant energies. The logic is: first pranic circulation increases, only then can physical circulation increase. When you watch a master of VKY, it is so graceful. The breath and body begin to move according to the natural, unhurried flow of prana - (a different scale of time than the speed of thought in the mind!)

Prana is taken through 3 sources: (liquid, solid and gaseous) drinkables, edibles and breath.

**YOGA IS AN ART:**

**When mastered, Vinyasa Krama Yoga becomes an artistic expression; a flowing dance set to the rhythm of the breath. Graceful, fluid and strong,** it is no wonder that Vinyasa Krama Yoga is only one limb of the expression in this lineage which also includes Martial Arts practices (Kalarypayattu found in Kerala) and classical Indian dance traditions (considered advanced yoga vinyasa practice). Concentration (particularly mastery or transcendence of emotions) is the primary aim both in martial combat and dance (particularly abhinaya) as well as being the primary goal in our VKY practice.

**VKY EXISTS WITHIN A CONTEXT OF 'HIGHER' YOGA**

This practice is considered a preparatory practice - not an end in itself - for higher pranayama and meditation practices of the Kriya Yoga system. Such higher pranayamas focus not on the physical breath, but rather specific

movement and depositing of Pranam through circuits and energy centers of the subtle body.

---

## THE PRACTICE

### A few key points to develop your Vinyasa Krama Yoga Practice:

This practice seeks to balance the subtle influences within us - the Gunas: rajas and tamas, then bringing about sattva. We use this model to build daily practice which always includes these 3 components:

**Asana / Vinyasa** - Balances the **Rajas** - Removes Physical Disturbances

**Pranayam** - Balances the **Tamas** - Removes Emotional Disturbances

**Meditation** - Develops **Sattwa**

### MEMORIZATION:

The goal is to arrive at a meditative state (a quiet mind) where the movement is memorized and the body is simply moving with out thought. This can only happen through repetitive practice: mantra-like repetition. The same thing happens in classical Indian dance and marital arts - when the bhava is correct (mind is still), the movement is correct.

### KRIYA & PRATIKRIYA: An action and counter action

- Inhale and Exhale
- Forward bend and backward bend
- Action and non action (repose)
- Breath and contemplative repose
- Effort and non effort
- Focus on Kutastha (center of 2 eyebrows) on breath and in the heart center during contemplation

### PREPARATION FOR DANCE: Practicing at Shakti School of Dance

Because we use this practice as a preparation for intense study in classical Indian dance, the practice has been developed a specific way to meet the needs of our body/mind/spirit. The practice is rooted in the teachings of Swami Vidyadishananda, yet also invoke aspects of Srivatsa Ramaswami's teachings as well as needed therapeutic movements if the body calls for that (towards the end of the vinyasa practice). While Gurudev's practice will help one develop a meditative immersive state, Ramaswami's approach slightly keeps the physical



body more in the awareness. You may adjust the practice according to your needs, keeping in mind the guiding principles.

### Outline of our Practice at Shakti School of Dance:

- **Body scan:** develop proprioceptive concentration and connection to our posture, placement and anatomy which we are about to work with through the rest of the day (in dance). Correct lack of awareness in areas of past or potential injury.
- **Deep Ujjai:** prana saturation, open nadis / subtle body, oxygenate the entire body, expand respiration and circulation, immersive contemplation on the breath (meditation to still mind. A still mind allows for concentration.)
- **Beginning with Talasana:** start with traditional vinyasas which are memorized to bring about the meditative state of breath expansion/ movement layered with body expansion/movement. Let the body open with the breath in its own time. There is no rush....
- **Continue with Vinyasa:** towards the end of the practice if the body is needing some specific stretching/opening we weave in asana or therapeutic movements once the deep Ujjai breath and expansion/ contraction principle is firmly established. Whatever you do, let the breath lead the movement.
- **Pranayama practice:** To develop your pranayama practice, increase the number of rounds and also increase the duration. For example if you start with Dwimatrika Pranayama: 6 count INhale/12 count EXhale, increase by 3 counts and it becomes: 9 count INhale / 18 count EXhale.
- **End with Meditation:** A simple and profound meditation based in teachings of Upanishads is to ruminate on the internal sound current OM. Begin by chanting OM out loud 3 times, then continue internally chanting the sound of OM. It is traditional to also add the contemplation of light - the brilliant expansive light within the heart center. Like the light of the rising sun. As artists and human beings this helps us develop concentration and spaciousness within - to allow Bhava to blossom and flow!