



CELEBRATING T. K. V. DESIKACHAR
A Life in Yoga, a Legacy of Learning
June 21–24

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

7:30–9:00 pm | Welcome, Introductions, and Birthday Offerings

Leslie Kaminoff welcomes participants, introduces his copresenters, and describes the program. The evening includes a meditation on the theme for the weekend, “We Are the Lineage,” and each presenter will make a personal offering to their teacher, T. K. V. Desikachar, on what would have been his 80th birthday.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

6:00–7:00 am | Early-Morning Practice Sessions (choose one)

Living and Healing from Wholeness

Richard Miller

Yoga reveals what it is about ourselves that is already whole—that never needs healing, fixing, or changing. From this perspective, we are not practicing to become whole. We are practicing from our innate wholeness. With this understanding firmly in place, we can address what needs healing in the body and mind. Through a one-hour guided meditation, explore six essential inquiries that are part of the map of meditation handed down to us through the ancient teachings of Patañjali, Advaita, and Kashmir Unqualified Nondualism.

From Minding the Breath to Being in Prana: The Subtle Aspects of Yoga Practice

R. Sriram

Explore breath as a tool for stabilizing the body, centering the mind, and entering into the state of being—three possibilities based on the concept of breath found in the first three chapters of the Yoga Sutra. Grounded in this understanding of the breath, we develop subtle inner movements to strengthen our personal practice.

7:00–8:30 am Breakfast

8:30–11:30 am | Morning Presentations (choose one)

Sukha: The Practice of Doing, Non-Doing, and Receiving

Navtej Johar

Explore yoga, aesthetics, and poetics with Navtej Johar, a yoga practitioner and Bharatanatyam dancer. Navtej’s interest is in the sensory aftereffects of practice that are pleasant and sweet, (sukha), the result of mindful yoga practice, and the experience of rasa, or aesthetic pleasure that arises from viewing a delicately calibrated art object or performance. He views the body not as a means of toil, strife, or tapas, but as the prime recipient of the sweet aftereffects of practice. The presentation also includes a somatic session to relieve anxiety and release the inherent expanse of sukha along with meditation on selected sutras.

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The Diversity of Breath and Anatomy in Desikachar's Yoga

Leslie Kaminoff

The prime directive of Desikachar's yoga was to honor the individual. Leslie's obsession with the functional underpinnings of yoga and breath practice has led him to a deep appreciation of how important it is to embrace all the differences that make us who we are. In this lecture/demo/practice session, Leslie reviews his history with Desikachar and the origins of his search for an understanding of how his teacher's distinctive method of breath-centered yoga works on an anatomical level. Through a multimedia anatomy presentation combined with simple yet profound breath and movement explorations, participants can experience their unique expressions of body, breath, and mind.

11:30 am–1:00 pm Lunch

1:00–4:00 pm | Afternoon Presentations (choose one)

In Step With Oneself, Not With Time: The Endangered Role of Yoga

R. Sriram

In a world preoccupied with well-being and happiness, yoga has turned into a tool to serve these goals. This workshop takes a deeper look at what well-being and happiness are, in the language of yoga. Come explore Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, focusing on a sutra from each of the four chapters to help widen your perception of yoga and deepen your personal practice.

Hridaya-Granthi Bhedanam: Cutting the Knot of the Heart

Gary Kraftsow

Most of us recognize that we are caught up in a perpetual cycle of tension and suffering caused by what the Ancients described as avidya (ignorance), kama (desire), and karma (action). The Ancients called this three-fold bondage the Hridaya Granthi, or "knot of the heart," and prescribed an integrated path of practice to cut the knot, overcome suffering, transform our character, and realize our highest potential. This workshop explores this path in the context of dharma—focusing on the duty we owe to God, others, and ourselves. The session includes a presentation, discussion, and integrated practice incorporating asana, pranayama, mantra, nyasa, sankalpa, and meditation.

5:30–7:00 pm Dinner

7:00–9:30 pm | Illuminated Conversations, Part 1

Each evening, four presenters share their history and experiences, ask questions of each other and from the audience, tell stories, and share images from their personal collections of Desikachar and his teaching tradition.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 23

6:00–7:00 am | Early-Morning Practice Sessions (choose one)

Bandha is Bhakti

Mark Whitwell

In this class, Mark introduces asana, pranayama, and meditation as a seamless process. Asana prepares for pranayama, while pranayama creates clarity of mind that allows for natural meditation to arise.

Special emphasis is given to breath and bandha as the central feature and purpose of asana, and how breath and bandha create the appropriate alignment of asana adapted to individual needs. Asana with bandha (intelligent cooperation of muscle groups in the polarities of hatha yoga) can be considered a devotional practice or “whole-body prayer to life.” The session also includes a short introduction to Vedic chanting.

The Sukha Practice

Navtej Johar

This is a gentle session aiming at the repose that may result from mindful asana. Practice includes the visualization and observation of movement in dynamic asana, as well as the absorption of its sensory after-effects.

7:00–8:30 am Breakfast

8:30–11:30 am | Morning Presentations (choose one)

Sanctuary of the Heart

Mirka Scalco Kraftsow

Embody the sacred light of your heart, let it fill you up and be the space where serenity resides. Each day, each breath, each moment gives us the chance to remember this light within, and our devotion to returning to it becomes a powerful nectar of life. Through self-care of mind and body in daily life, we purify the vessel and clear the vision to allow this sacred light to shine beyond our individual selves. Mirka guides an experience of embodying the sacred light using traditional tools of yoga: conscious movement and breathing, mantra, nyasa or body prayer, and connection to sangha.

Embodying Core Healing: The Seven Chakras and the Play of Opposites

Richard Miller

Sankalpas are core inner feelings that provide our life with value, meaning, and purpose. They enable us to live our highest purpose in alignment with universal law. Their opposites—vikalpas—are core beliefs that take us away from living our heart’s deepest calling and mission. Hearing, welcoming, contemplating, and responding to these opposites is a fundamental teaching that needs to be woven into all of our yoga practices. This workshop explores healing core wounds amidst spiritual awakening by working with underlying beliefs that are stored somatically and energetically in the seven energy centers or chakras, leading to health, wholeness, and freedom.

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11:30 am–1:00 pm Lunch

1:00–4:00 pm | Afternoon Presentations (choose one)

Lessons from Desikachar for the Most Underserved Population in America

Larry Payne

T. K. V. Desikachar described yoga for three stages of life: shikshana (building stage), rakshana (maintaining stage), and chikitsa (one-on-one needs or yoga therapy). With the explosion of yoga's popularity, these stages have been misunderstood, leading to more yoga-related injuries than ever before, especially for Americans in midlife. Join Larry Payne as he shares rare video of Desikachar describing the three stages. Through lecture and practice, Larry offers teachings on midlife practice based on his personal study with Desikachar. Experience first-hand what Desikachar passed on about the safest postures and sequences as they apply to men and women in the prime of their lives.

T. K. V. Desikachar, Scholar, Teacher, Yogi, Friend

Mark Whitwell

Mark Whitwell offers personal reflections on the life of his teacher, T. K. V. Desikachar. From their early meetings in the 1970s, Mark saw Desikachar's unending hard work, his brilliance as a yoga teacher, and his compassion for humanity. Without Desikachar's clarity, dedication, and grasp of the Western mind, we would not have been able to understand the teachings that Tirumalai Krishnamacharya brought forth from the Great Tradition. Mark also describes Desikachar's friendships with the two Krishnamurtis, J. and U. G., and summarizes the key principles of yoga technology that he received from his teacher on the union of opposites by which the heart is revealed.

5:30–7:00 pm Dinner

7:00–9:30 pm | Illuminated Conversations, Part 2

Following the same format as Friday evening, four more presenters share their history and experiences, ask questions of each other and from the audience, tell stories, and share images from their personal collections of Desikachar and his teaching tradition.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

6:00–7:00 am | Concurrent Early-Morning Practice Sessions (choose one)

Mind Your Attitude

Mirka Scalco Kraftsow

In times of ease, in times of sorrow, in times of virtuous actions or injustice, we respond to the ever-changing world around us. With enthusiasm, self-reflection, and humility, we can cultivate friendliness, compassion, an open heart, and calm mind, regardless of the turbulence of worldly activities. Returning to our own self-care and the cultivation of these qualities, LoveWisdom naturally arises (a term inspired by Yoga Sutra I-33). Mirka guides an experience using the entire system to embody these qualities and help us stay resilient and vital in our response to life circumstances.

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The Morning Warrior Series

Leslie Kaminoff

This morning Warrior Series is a vigorous, flowing, breath-centered vinyasa that strongly works the feet, legs, and pelvis while it asks the spine to move in every possible direction; all without putting any body weight on the hands. The sequence is taught with an emphasis on flowing continuously with the breath, while also utilizing sensory awareness, gazing techniques, and visual imagery as a way of encouraging an individualized approach to the alignment of the poses.

7:00–8:30 am Breakfast

9:00–11:00 am | Closing Session: We Are the Lineage

Sunday's closing ceremony is an opportunity to summarize our thoughts and experiences and participate in Vedic chants led by the presenters.

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