

Self-Realization Fellowship

VOLUNTARY LEAGUE

 Newsletter

A Report on Our Recent Activities

SUMMER 2010

INSPIRATION FOR TRUTH-SEEKERS AROUND THE WORLD: SRF UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE

In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansa Yogananda recounted a prediction Mahavatar Babaji made about the future of the Self-Realization Fellowship work:

“Kriya Yoga, the scientific technique of God-realization, will ultimately spread in all lands, and aid in harmonizing the nations through man’s personal, transcendental perception of the Infinite Father.”

With these words in mind and with the help of your contributions, Self-Realization Fellowship launched a completely redesigned website in April (www.Yogananda-SRF.org). A “virtual ambassador” of our Guru and his teachings, the new website will be a source of inspiration and hope for truth-seekers around the globe.

A team of monastics, lay disciples, and professionals worked together under the guidance of Sri Daya Mata and the Self-Realization Fellowship Board of Directors to create the new website. Brother Paramananda, one of the senior monks who served on this team, summed up its purpose in these words: “Anyone who is seeking spiritual guidance, is interested in learning about meditation and yoga, or wants to learn about living the spiritual life, can visit our website at any time, from any place in the world, and receive inspiration from our Guru. It will be able to do what our SRF monastics cannot do—travel and lecture throughout the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

New features of our website include a “Meditation and Kriya Yoga” section that offers basic instruction for beginners on how to meditate (*photo next page*), as well as several guided meditations. There are also many other features that will appeal to both longtime devotees and first-time visitors, such as:

- Inspiring video and audio material about the Self-Realization teachings, including excerpts from audio recordings of Paramahansaji, and a “video satsanga” section in which Sri Daya Mata and other SRF monastics answer questions about the spiritual life.
- “Disciples Reminisce”—a section presenting first-person audio, video, and written accounts from those who knew Paramahansa Yogananda (*photo next page*).
- Database of meditation groups and centers searchable by address, city, or zip code—with instant display of interactive maps.
- “Share this page” tools, making it easy to send links to interested family and friends.
- Archives of our monthly *eNewsletter*, full of inspiration from the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, as well as Self-Realization Fellowship



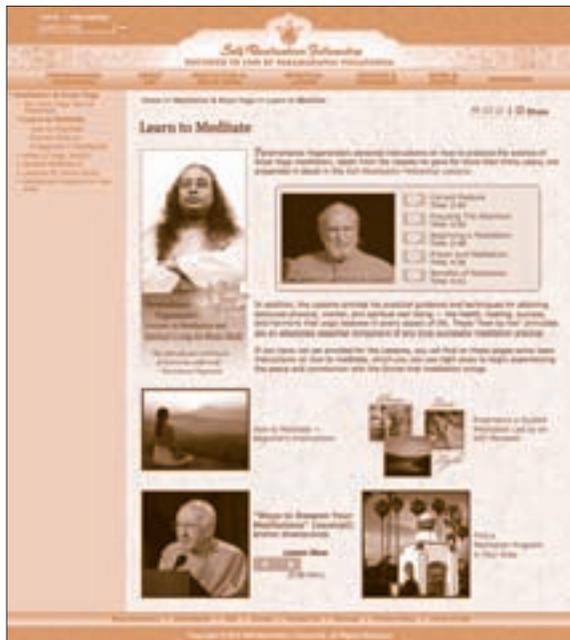
The new SRF home page

community news and events. (We encourage you to sign up at www.Yogananda-SRF.org/news.)

- Virtual tours of sacred sites founded by Paramahansaji.
- Video and audio of *kirtan* chanting led by SRF monastics at Convocation.

Our new website is a considerable enhancement over the original one, which debuted in 1996 with just six pages of content. It had grown to more than 1,000 pages during the past fourteen years, but the old interface and infrastructure grew increasingly cumbersome and inadequate as new material was added.

The new website represents just the first phase in ongoing redevelopment.



members and newcomers/spiritual searchers.”

“The new website is amazing. I felt myself inside the sacred grounds where my beloved Master walked by. I was filled with peace, love, and gratitude hearing the Guru’s voice. Unbelievable. This great work points out to thirsty souls the right way to the source.”

“One can tell that years of work and much thought and care went into this site—beautifully done. This site will be often visited at the lunch hour!”

“Greatest gratitude for what you have accomplished with this website! It is very well organized and thorough in its content. I enjoyed listening once again to the excerpts from Master’s talks and the reminiscences from his closest disciples.”



As we are able, we plan to translate key portions of the website into other languages (beginning with Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, and French, and adding others as time and resources allow). We are keeping track of all suggestions that come from users, and will continue to develop additional features as we see what is most useful to our visitors.

The enthusiasm so many of you expressed for this initiative was an important part of bringing the project to fruition. And we are grateful for the feedback received thus far, such as:

“The entire website radiates the light and essence of Master’s work and teachings. Such a great way to connect to SRF and Master’s frequency for both longtime

“I just wanted to say thank you! The new website is truly beautiful beyond measure, and a treasure trove for members old and new. Most of all, it has been a great tool to share SRF to friends and coworkers eager to ‘check out SRF’ by ‘reading on the internet.’ Within one day, five of my colleagues learned how to meditate using the videos and audio online!...I am so excited and glad to see that there is a SRF portal in cyberspace where we can connect, be inspired, and share Guruji’s teachings with others.”

Your gifts in response to our past Voluntary League Appeals helped us meet

the approximately \$125,000 cost of re-designing the website and online catalog, hosting fees, and other related expenses (not including the thousands of hours dedicated to this effort by our in-house personnel). Your continued support will help us to meet the estimated \$120,000 annual cost of website maintenance and further development.

We invite you to visit the new website, and thank you for helping to make it a reality through your past and present support of Self-Realization Fellowship.

HELP FOR SRF PUBLICATIONS CENTER

Located near the foot of Mt. Washington, the SRF Publications Center is where our Guru’s teachings—including website material, books and magazines, and the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons*—are published for dissemination to every part of the globe. We appealed to you last spring for help to replace the roof of the Publications Center, which has now outlived its 30-year life span. A portion of the proceeds from the Spring 2009 Appeal was set aside for this expensive and vital project, but the reali-

ties of the recession necessitated putting the work on hold for yet another year. We still need to raise \$140,000 to carry out this important investment in our Guru’s work, and your help at this time will be deeply appreciated.



PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA: RECENT WORK AT THE MOTHER CENTER

Paramahansa Yogananda took great interest in beautifying and sanctifying the grounds of the Mother Center (our international headquarters) so that they would be a natural and spiritual haven for all seeking peace and communion with God. Preserving this sanctuary for the inspiration of present and future generations is our privilege and ongoing labor of love, and one that your contributions to the Voluntary League Appeal help make possible.

(Right) Paramahansa Yogananda on the grounds of the Mother Center in 1934



The Spiritual Wishing Well

One of the highlights of the Mother Center gardens is the “Spiritual Wishing Well” originally dedicated by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1934. During the dedication ceremony, he made impressions of his hands and feet in the cement base, signed his name, and inscribed these words: “For Self-Realization I offer my hands, feet, and soul, and I pray all may do the same. Meditate and make the wish: ‘May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts.’ Awake! Sleep no more.” At his behest his saintly disciple Gyanamata

also imprinted her hands and inscribed her name and the motto she lived by: “God alone” (*photo below left*). Our president, Sri Daya Mata, who was present on this occasion, recalled that those in attendance could see that the Guru was thinking of all those who would come in the future to pray at this sacred spot.

With generous support from our members and friends, in 1981 we were able to enshrine this precious relic in a small Indian-style *mandir* to protect it from the elements. Also with your assistance, we have periodically hired professional conservators to guide our preservation efforts.

Last year, a conservator made a thorough inspection, carried out some minor restorations, and instructed SRF monastics in new methods of preserving and cleaning the cement base that has Paramahansaji’s inscriptions (a detailed and painstaking process). Based on her recommendation, monks and





employees from our Maintenance and Garden Departments recently installed a drainage system around the structure's base, replaced the irrigation system, and relandscaped the area with plants that require less water—all measures that reduce the destructive effects of moisture (*photo right*).

Thanks to these measures, our Guru's Spiritual Wishing Well will continue to be a focal point of devotional prayer and inspiration for future generations of devotees.

Your Voluntary League Appeal contributions in action: (Above left) SRF monk cleaning the Spiritual Wishing Well using methods learned from a professional conservator. (Above middle and right) SRF monks and employees in our Garden and Maintenance Departments installing a drainage system around the Wishing Well Mandir.



SPREADING LIGHT AND LOVE IN OUR WORLD



Our president and *sanghamata*, Sri Daya Mata, said, "Every thought of God you think, every sincere prayer and caring action, has redeeming power. Let us build with our prayers a shield of light and love that can encircle the globe and protect every soul from the influence of the forces of darkness, that peace and harmony may prevail in this world."

The results of our united efforts to share the transformative power of Paramahansaji's teachings can be seen in the letters received daily at the Mother Center. As one person wrote:

"The SRF teachings mean everything to me. They substantially transformed my life....The techniques are absolutely amazing and effective....Now I know that God is...and our most important mission in life is to... unite with Him. Nothing can compare to the feeling and knowledge that God is with me at all times. I can't thank Paramahansa Yogananda and SRF enough for this precious gift!"

As the liberating and uplifting teachings of our Guru continue to spread through SRF publications, our new website, and other media—and more subtly, yet powerfully, through the positive thoughts, prayers, meditations, and service of all his followers—each of you is surely helping to bring into manifestation his inspiring vision of "a United States of the World under God, in which each human being can be an ideal citizen of the globe with every opportunity for fulfillment in body, mind, and soul."

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Contributions in response to this appeal will be used to meet the general operating expenses of SRF and to further the projects described in this newsletter. Contributions may be used for other purposes in the event one or more of the projects is modified or canceled. Donations received later than 18 months after the mailing date will be credited to the most recent Voluntary League Appeal. Under federal law, Self-Realization Fellowship is deemed a public charity and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and a nonprofit, tax-

exempt corporation under the California Revenue Taxation Code. Accordingly, contributions to Self-Realization Fellowship are deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law for income tax purposes. Deductible donations can be made through outright gifts in the form of cash, appreciated securities, mutual fund shares, real or personal property, and other types of assets, and deferred gifts in the form of charitable trusts. Bequests to Self-Realization Fellowship can be made through a will or trust and are eligible for a charitable estate tax deduction.