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## C'mon, get happy: Isha guru preaches

July 9, 2004

BY LISA FRYDMAN Staff Reporter

Five minutes after 9, stuck in traffic, going nowhere fast. Meeting at 9:15. OK, forget the congestion, take control, relax, breathe.

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Relax? Breathe? C'mon, who has the time?

"We all do," says Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, a yoga master, mystic and the developer of Isha Yoga. "So you're stuck in traffic, or you have problems with a relationship. That's exactly when you can incorporate yoga into your life, and that's where you'll see the difference -- in your internal landscape -- especially your calmer reaction to things that are simply out of your control.

### ISHA YOGA FOR BEGINNERS

Sadhguru Vasudev will conduct three seminars that are free and open to the public.

"Yoga the Ultimate Union," 7 p.m. Thursday, Unity in Chicago, 1925 W. Thome, (773) 973-0007.

"Mystic's Musings -- a Glimpse of the Beyond," 7 p.m. July 16, Transitions Learning Center, 1750 N. Kingsbury, (312) 951-7323.

"Isha Yoga for Effortless Living, plus Q & A," 3 to 5 p.m. July 17, Donald E Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River, Rosemont.

*A seven-day, basic course in Isha Yoga led by Vasudev also will be offered July 21-27 at the Stephens Convention Center. For cost and more information, log on to [www.ishafoundation.org](http://www.ishafoundation.org) or call (630) 961-2079.*

"Setting your energies into turmoil and hoping to be peaceful is impossible. Only you -- not a better job, a nicer car, a pat on the back from the boss -- can bring you joy," he adds, his slightly accented tone warm, even and soothing. "If you focus only on external rewards, you will never find real joy, because the external comes and goes too quickly. People try to create an outwardly perfect life, but quality of life is based solely on the inward."

Sadhguru, an international speaker, author of four books and peace advocate, comes to Chicago next week from home in Coimbatore, India. His sanctuary is the sprawling Isha Yoga Center, a 64,000-square-foot meditation hall and program facility on 50 acres along the foothills of the Velliangiri

Mountains. His long, snowy beard, turban and mystical appearance belie the fact that he started as a secular businessman, once owning one of the largest brick factories in southern India.

A onetime scholar of English and American literature, Sadhguru was born to an



affluent family that had no involvement with spirituality or religion. He tells of how one day more than 23 years ago he was in a village, resting from a hard day's work on a hillside, when his walls crumbled. Literally. He had a spiritual awakening at 26 -- what he terms "unbounded awareness." At that moment, time stopped and he experienced a state of pure bliss.

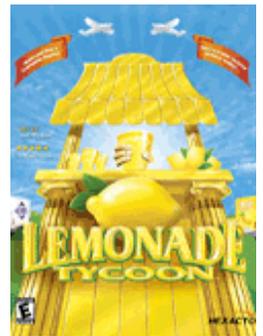
"I am by nature a very logical person, skeptical. My background was so far from any of this. Suddenly I had this experience that what I had considered as 'myself' was not just my body or what was contained in my body. The rock I was sitting on -- the trees, the mountains -- everything became me. It was a spiritual union. I know this sounds ridiculous, but it touched me so deeply that it changed everything in my life."

Since then, Sadhguru has devoted his life to bringing others along the same path of enlightenment, by using yoga as a way to unify body, mind and energy. The Isha program combines simple seated postures and dynamic breathing techniques (*pranayama*), as well as *Shoonya* meditation -- a process of conscious non-doing.

"Children, especially, are so much closer to their internal lives than adults," he says. "However these days outside influences are much too powerful, particularly the media. Kids are growing up too fast."

Is there an ancient secret to the pursuit of happiness? "So many people that I meet are pursuing happiness," Sadhguru says. "The trick is to *express* happiness ... connecting with the joy of [one's] own nature.

"I teach people how to release the physical, mental and emotional blocks to break through personal limitations and reach internal enlightenment. It's an inner science that involves the transformation of a limited being into an unbounded one, through which you can become master of your own destiny."



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