

//He Prabho Praseed Aum//

[**Editor's Note:** During my visits last year to the Shivayoga.net website, run by **Shankar Sagare**, I paused to read all the comments from the site visitors. I noted that a number of the comments were by visitors from Croatia. I was both surprised and intrigued. At the last Basava Samiti's Ganesh Chaturthi celebration, I asked **Shankar** about his knowledge of Shivayoga practitioners in Croatia. With his help, I requested a short article from a member of a Croatian Shivayoga satsang. Below is the response to my request from sisters **Sunita** and **Kavita** of the Zagreb Shivayoga Satsang.

According to **Shankar**, the Zagreb Shivayoga Satsang, apparently one of three such satsangs in Croatia, has approximately 10-15 Croatian practitioners led by **Lakshmi**, an ardent and devoted disciple of His Holiness Mahatapasvi Shri **Kumarswamiji**. **Lakshmi**, who's worldly name is **Dubravka Rukavina**, was given her spiritual name by Shri **Kumarswamiji**. **Lakshmi** first met His Holiness in 1990 while attending **Conference of Yoga and Spirituality** at Tapovan, Dharwad. Since then, she has become a dedicated practitioner of Shiva-yoga and Prayer-yoga and a staunch follower of Veerashaivism in her heart through personal everyday practice. **Lakshmi** has apparently translated many of Shri **Kumarswamiji**'s books and teaching into the Croatian language. She conducts weekly Prayer-yoga satsangs in Zagreb and teaches devotees the practice of holy mantras and of singing melodious Indian bhajanas.

My thanks to **Shankar**, and to **Sunita** and **Kavita** for their contribution. Below is their letter.]

Namaskar Mr. Deepak,

My sister **Sunita** and I (**Kavita**) are members of the Croatian Satsang and we are Shri **Kumarswamiji**'s devotees. In this letter or article I will try to explain to you how we started with Shiva-yoga practice and I will also tell you a few words about our Satsang in Croatia.

Once my sister and I happened to be in different parts of the world when we received an inner call from His Holiness Shri **Kumarswamiji** to start with the practice of Shiva-yoga and Prayer-yoga. We had no idea what it was all about, although we had heard about Shiva-yoga a few years before that. And so, even though we were separated from each other, we started searching and inquiring about Shiva-yoga simultaneously, asking questions like how to find the 'stone' to gaze at, which as we discovered later, was called Isthalinga. We were anxious to find out what it was precisely so we started collecting opinions from other people who might have known something about it.

In our everyday material life all doors seemed to be closed so it was obviously the most auspicious time for us both to step on the spiritual path and start building our spiritual life through sadhana. We had no right answers from people regarding Shiva-yoga because they did not know much about it either. Some of them even said we did not need it. At that time, while I was still living in London, my sister **Sunita** had already started practising Shiva-yoga in Zagreb, having received guidance from **Lakshmi**, Swamiji's disciple. Later, I also took initiation and started practising Shiva-yoga every day, so now it has become part of our everyday lives, something that came so naturally and will remain with us for the entire life. That is how we both feel. Our spiritual sister **Lakshmi** taught us the first steps in Shiva-yoga, like you teach a small baby to eat, walk, speak, sing, read and so on.

In Zagreb, we have a Satsang and we meet and practise Shri **Kumarswamiji**'s Prayer-yoga once a week. Our beloved Swamiji teaches us and speaks to us through Lakshmi. Lakshmi is a means for Swamiji to be physical with us before and after his Mahasamadhi. At first, it was a bit difficult for me to practise Prayer-yoga on my own at home, but after a few months practice and with the support of our Satsang group, it became so much easier. Since then I have never stopped practising Prayer-yoga. One can feel and enjoy its effects in one's daily life.

We know from Lakshmi that Swamiji had been pointing out the importance of our every day practice of Prayer-yoga and Shiva-yoga in order to be protected from all difficulties in this world.

There are people from other yogas visiting our Satsang. Our guests are always welcome to come and stay with us or they are welcome to go but the truth is they have all learned the technique,

the meaning and the importance of Prayer-yoga and enjoy singing Prayer with us. Satsang gives us an opportunity to read and learn about Veerashaivism and famous Veerashaiva saints and adepts, like **Allama Prabhu**, **Basava** and **Akka Mahadevi**, from rich Shri **Kumarswamiji**'s articles as well as from His speeches, talks, discourses and books translated into the Croatian language by Lakshmi. We learn from her about the meaning of the sacred mantras given to us by Shri **Kumarswamiji** and how to chant them properly before we can start with our own Anushtana. At the last stage of Prayer-yoga, home-made prasad is distributed to all the members of the group. The most delicious prasad is prepared by **Suhasini** and **Parvati**. Our Satsang is not the only one in Zagreb. There are Shiva-yoga and Prayer-



Members of the Zagreb Shivayoga Satsang

yoga practicants in Zagreb and Croatia in general who have chosen to form their own Satsang groups and work according to their own taste. Be it as it may, the truth is that Prayer is the most important part of **Sunita**'s and my life so we attend regularly. To feel the shower of Shri **Kumarswamiji**'s gracious and compassionate energy during Prayer is a blessing in itself and everybody who comes to Prayer even once can feel that.

Prayer-yoga is a powerful meditation with a strong purifying effect not only on one's environment but also on one's physical, mental and emotional body. The experience which Sunita and I had had in the very beginning of our coming to Prayer was that during the chanting of the Mahamantra //HE PRABHO PRASEED AUM// we were not supposed to even sit next to each other because we would immediately start laughing, not because it was funny, but because of a powerful cleansing process of our bodies through laughter. In short, whenever it used to happen, nobody took any notice of us and laughter gradually stopped on its own accord. Some people visiting our Satsang would burst into tears during prayer regardless of whether they actually participated in Prayer or were just listening and feeling the energy.

Satsang members meet for two hours on the auspicious day of Lord Ganesh which is Tuesday. Before Prayer-yoga meditation we sometimes practise Nadishodan Pranayam, beeja mantra meditation, various health promoting mudras or just sit peacefully and listen to the Indian meditation music. In that way we forget the outer world and turn inwards to find our own silence. This is how we prepare ourselves for the Prayer-yoga meditation conducted by **Lakshmi**. Our beloved Swamiji knows why He has chosen her to lead us on the spiritual paths of Shiva-yoga and Prayer-yoga. She has taught us to sing melodious Indian bhajans like Swamiji's favourite *Prema Mudita Manase Kaho* and *Yennadu Yavudayya* as well as others like *Ananda Sagara*, *Lingashtakam*, *Estuti(Badrinath bhajana)*, *He Ram*, etc. which we all enjoy immensely.

Some of us Satsang members visit Tapovan and Shantivan on a regular yearly basis and when we go back to Croatia, we bring Indian Prasad and Indian tea with special spices prepared by Shri

Balbhim Anna, Swamiji's sevak. Sometimes we also bring all the necessary ingredients for a delicious Indian dish called sushila and prepare a joyful feast, enjoying the flavour of the Indian cuisine which we like so much. At that time we are not in Zagreb but in our minds and in our hearts we are back in Tapovan, Shantivan, back in India. If anybody of you from America should happen to travel to Zagreb, Croatia, we would be happy to welcome you at our Satsang so that we may all enjoy our Guruji's blessings together. Our Satsang group is a tiny India in itself.

We are in a regular contact with our spiritual brothers in India, Shri **Sadashiv Golsangi**, Shri **Balbhim Anna**, Shri **Sunita and Kavita** as well as with Shri **Shankar Sagare** in America. Shri **Balbhim Anna** is a humble but strong and powerful disciple of His Holiness Mahatapasvi Shri **Kumarswamiji**. He and Shri **Siddhu Anna** continue to live in Swamiji's Shantivan and they do a great service to humanity, something that mere physical words cannot describe. Our spiritual brothers provide us with plenty of information from the field of yoga and spirituality. Nowadays, we are very grateful to **Shankar** for creating a wonderful website on Shri **Kumarswamiji** at <http://www.shivayoga.net>

Finally, in my opinion, Shiva-yoga is the Queen of all yogas. I am so happy and grateful to Swamiji that He has chosen us and given us to practise His powerful yet simple and easy meditation techniques.

Warm regards with plenty of Swamiji's blessings from **Sunita & Kavita** and the rest of the Satsang group in Zagreb-Croatia

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