Community Care and Transparency

The following information concerns the history involving Swami Satchidananda and some adult students. It reflects a commitment among members of the Integral Yoga community to cultivate ethical responsibility, transparency, respect, and care throughout our communities.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Swami Satchidananda engaged in sexual activity with some adult students. This crossed ethical boundaries within the spiritual teacher–student relationship. That relationship places particular responsibilities on the teacher and involves an inherent power differential.

Swami Satchidananda remains the founder and Guru of Integral Yoga, and the spiritual wisdom transmitted through him remains foundational to the Integral Yoga Tradition.

In the Yoga and Vedanta traditions, the Guru serves as a channel through which spiritual wisdom and grace are transmitted. The spiritual principle at work in this transmission is distinct from the Guru as an individual human being.

With this understanding, each person remains free to determine the nature of their own personal relationship with Swami Satchidananda.

Recognizing this spiritual transmission does not deny, excuse, or minimize what occurred.

We remain committed to learning from this history, strengthening ethical safeguards, and caring responsibly for the communities we serve. In that spirit, we offer the following statement:

A Statement of Acknowledgment, Regret and Hope

A community-developed acknowledgment, not an official statement of Integral Yoga governing bodies.

This statement, which is not an official statement by the governing bodies of the organization, grew out of dialogue among members who came together as the Community Renewal Group (CRG) seeking a way to acknowledge this history, express regret for past responses, and support greater understanding and care going forward. It responds to calls across the global Integral Yoga community for fuller acknowledgment of the history concerning Swami Satchidananda and offers an expression of regret and hope.

We acknowledge the women who came forward to speak about Swami Satchidananda engaging in sexual activity with them while they were his students. We recognize the courage it took to bring these experiences forward within a spiritual community in which he was deeply loved and revered by many. We also recognize the inherent power differential in teacher–student relationships and the ethical boundaries such relationships require, as well as the seriousness and care such disclosures deserve.

As a community, we did not always fully grasp the meaning and impact of what women told us when they came forward to describe their experiences. The culture did not provide the understanding, structures, or sufficient guidance needed to respond well, and many of us lacked the experience and capacity to know how to respond. As a result, responses sometimes included silence, disbelief, dismissal, invalidation, or an inability to engage with the compassion the circumstances required.

We deeply regret the ways women who came forward, and those who supported them, were not adequately heard, supported, or responded to with care. For those failures and the additional hurt they caused, we are deeply sorry. Looking back, we recognize that fear, defensiveness, divided loyalties, and limitations in understanding and capacity shaped some past responses. Recognizing these human limitations may help explain them; it does not erase their consequences or our responsibility to learn from them.

These issues have also brought pain, grief, mistrust, and division across the wider community. People hold deeply different experiences and convictions, including different ways of understanding and relating to Swami Satchidananda. At times, we have been unable to hold those differences without wounding one another further.

We cannot undo what has happened, nor do we expect everyone to arrive at the same understanding of the issues that have divided our community. What we can do is take responsibility for learning from past responses and strengthen our capacity to respond differently in the future. Acknowledgment must also be accompanied by action. We are committed to supporting more skillful listening, communication, education, and care.

Our hope is that we can become a community capable of holding the fullness of our history. This means learning to hold a difficult complexity: that Swami Satchidananda remains, for many, a great spiritual teacher and guiding presence, while also recognizing that aspects of this history have caused real pain and must be met with honesty and care. We believe the community can become more truthful and more mature by holding these realities together without denying either one.