

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Concentration: Making life sacred

By M. G. Satchidananda

Life is about choices. Ordinarily, we allow our choices to be dictated by our individual habits and tendencies, as well as those of the culture in which we live. The word "culture" comes from the Latin word *culte* meaning to worship or value the most. In our modern culture what is valued most are material things, personal freedom, consumption, entertainment and comfort.

Today, Mother Nature has challenged our materialistic culture with the COVID-19 corona virus pandemic. This provides each of us an opportunity to re-evaluate our priorities, our values and our culture. The current existential threat to humanity from such developments as climate change

and pandemics originates from the extremes of material culture. Individually and collectively we are killing ourselves with bad food, waste, pollution, social and mental disease born of materialism. Therefore, to heal ourselves and to survive as a species Mother Nature now gives us a choice: give up materialistic culture or die! Individually and collectively it is time to make sacred all of life. Making anything sacred requires one to view and treat it as part and particle of the One. It includes concentrating on That from which everything emanates and into which everything disappears, a timeless and infinitely spacious field of blissful consciousness.

How did the one become the many,

and how can the many become the One? Yoga answers this question not with philosophy or scripture, but with the techniques which enable one to experience oneness. By concentrating on a point, or bindu, or a sound, the nada such as the mantra Aum, or one of the seed syllables, the bija mantras, the yogi penetrates all of the 36 layers or principles of phenomenal nature known as the tattvas, and identifies with That, absolute being, consciousness and bliss.

This penetration of the profane worldly life to the sacred underlying reality, occurs in stages as the yoga sadhak develops not only the power of concentration, but the capacity, the purity, to dissociate from worldly life. Beginning with letting go of conditioning in the form of disturbing memories (vasanas) and negative habits (samskaras) as well as habits of living – comforts, distractions, waste of time, dispersion of mental forces in trivial pursuits and emotional impulses – the yoga sadhak pursues the objective of sadhana. Sadhana is everything done to remember "Who am I?" and to "let go" of the false identification with what I am not.

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Yoga as Purification: Tapas

The great questions of life "Who am I?" "How can I know God?" "How can

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I find lasting happiness in a world of suffering?" can only be answered, according to the great spiritual traditions, by a process of purification. As humans, we are deeply flawed because of our ignorance of the Self and because of egoism, which causes us to identify with the body and the mind. Our attachments and aversions cause us further suffering. Yoga offers a practical means for overcoming these human imperfections. While Yoga can be viewed from many different perspectives, one of the most useful ways of seeing it is as a complete system of self-purifica-



tion. Tapas, or austerity, is the use of vows, will-power and endurance to purify oneself, by overcoming the limitations of our habit patterns. According to Patanjali, "By tapas (austerity) impurities of the body and senses are destroyed and perfection gained." (II.43) (Journal Fall 2003)

Tapas begins with an intention or a vow to deny oneself some indulgence. It could involve anything: a physical pleasure, certain food, casual sex, television, or if sitting in meditation, making an unnecessary movement. It involves standing back from any particular attachment or aversion, or any thought or feeling of "I am this feeling, sensation or thought" and letting it go. This is known as "vairagya" or "detachment." This requires effort and will-power, and consistent repetition for an extended period.

Concentration as a vehicle towards Self realization

Concentration or "willpower" is not only a power to focus the mind on a particular object or task, but a vehicle to Self-realization. Concentration is highly valued in all mystical traditions such as Classical Yoga and Tantra for several reasons. It facilitates the penetration of mental and emotional movements of the mind, with all of their consequential suffering due to attachment and aversion. It brings one into an intimate state of communion or stillness with That in which all such movements appear and disappear. In this stillness, one transcends the egoistic perspective, the Self is realized. It enables one to free oneself of the effects of latent habits and tendencies, the determinants of present and future karma.

Such beneficial results from the regular development of

the power of concentration occur gradually and progressively when combined with the continuous and persistent cultivation of detachment which Patanjali emphasizes in the Yoga Sutras. This purification through detachment distinguishes Classical Yoga from shamanic and magical traditions whose objective involve the acquisition of power. Such traditions seek power to fulfil various desires. Wisdom traditions such as Classical Yoga seek wisdom or jnana: the capacity to distinguish the Self from the body-mind-personality, to distinguish what is permanent from what is impermanent, and to distinguish the source of suffering from the source of joy.

Patanjali's steps for developing concentration

Patanjali prescribes six steps for developing concentration: social restraints (yamas), observances (niyamas), asanas, pranayama, and sense withdrawal, or pratyahara, as means for cultivating concentration, or dharana. Note that the word "cultivation" has the word culte as its root.

All of the yogic techniques as well as the yamas, the five social restraints of non-harming, truthfulness, chastity, not stealing and greedlessness, invite the one and the same gesture – to do exactly the opposite of what human nature forces us to do. (See our Ebook Opposite Doing: The Five Yogic Keys to Good Relationships for an elaborate explanation of these).

The niyamas are intense, constant practice, or tapas (especially of vairagya or detachment), self-study, or svadhyaya, and surrender of the egoistic perspective to the perspective of the Witness, the Self.

The practice of asanas has as its objective the development of a relaxed stable position. Patanjali tells us that "From the relaxation of tension, endless unity (samadhi) is established. Thereafter one is invulnerable to the dualities" Yoga Sutras II.47-48.

With regards to the practice of pranayama : "As a result, the veil over the inner Light is destroyed. And the mind becomes fit for concentration." Yoga Sutra II.52 -53. This means that in the same way as a veil may be removed, thread by thread, pranayama has the effect of removing, one by one, the thoughts which in their totality, create an inner darkness. What is revealed is the underlying Light of consciousness. So, the experience of the inner light is not an end in itself. Concentration becomes simple as the mind, body and breath become calm.

Pratyahara, sense withdrawal, occurs "when the senses disunite themselves from their own objects and resemble, as it were, their own form of consciousness, in Yoga Sutra II.54. Otherwise, if one feels hot, for example, one says, "I am hot," and forgets the Self, our true identity. When one restricts the action of the five senses, for example, by closing the eyes and sitting comfortably with no distractions, consciousness ceases to identify with external sense objects, and the five senses become like consciousness itself: formless, calm and centered inwardly. The senses are like a mirror: when they are turned outside, they reflect

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the world of forms; turned inwards, they reflect the pure formless light. This requires discrimination in daily life, not just while sitting in meditation. We may cultivate it by choosing leisure activities which remind ourselves of our highest ideals and avoid those which stimulate unhealthy desires or which feed our negative tendencies.

The Tirumandiram contains ten verses on the subject of withdrawal (pratyahara) beginning with verse 578:

*Step by step practice mind's withdrawal
And look inward;
One by one many the good you see within;
And may you then meet the Lord,
Now and here below.*

Concentration as a means of Tantric sadhana and making all life sacred

Classical Yoga and Tantra provide guidance and tools to make our lives sacred. Tantra means to unite the material and the spiritual dimensions of life, and it refers to the teachings and techniques which facilitate it. Concentration, known as dharana in Yoga, is a fundamental requirement of all techniques.

This process may begin for some persons by dedicating one's actions to the Supreme Being. As Krishna says in the Gita, "dedicate all of your actions to Me". This is karma yoga. For those of a devotional or contemplative nature, it may begin with bhakti and raja yogas. Krishna admonishes us to concentrate on Me. In the Bhagavad Gita He says:

That Supreme Being, o son-of-Prtha, is to be won by love (bhakti) (directed to) none other. In Him all beings abide, by Him this whole (universe) is spread out (like a spider's web).
- VIII.22

Here, he does not condemn attachment as such, which

must concentrate it and channel it towards the Supreme Being. We must melt our innumerable desires into one all-powerful urge inwards and upwards. Desires are a centrifugal force with scatters our energy.

Tantric sadhana comprises two stages: (1) making sacred, cosmicization, of the human being and (2) transcendence of the cosmos, its destruction through unification of the opposites (sun-moon, ida-pingala, Siva-Shakti, liking and disliking, inertia and activity).

Concentration becomes a vehicle for this cosmicization of man, passing from worldly life to the sacred. In withdrawing from profane human life, the yogin finds another that is deeper and truer, the very life of the cosmos. Indeed, one can speak of the first yogic stages as an effort toward the cosmicization of man. To transform the chaos of biomental life into a cosmos – one divines this ambition in all the psychophysiological techniques of Yoga, from asana to dharana.

The yoga sadhak applies concentration to unify the most important functions of life: breathing and consciousness. On the psychomental plane, with concentration the yoga sadhak seeks to fix the flow of consciousness, to realize an unbroken psychic continuum, to "unify" thought. Even the most elementary of yogic techniques, the asanas, have a similar goal, to become conscious of the totality of one's body, felt as unity. The advanced techniques involve concentration on the nine openings of the physical body and the chakras and ida, pingala, and sushumna nadi channels of energy in the vital body with mantras and visualisation. The simplification of life, the calm, the serenity, the static bodily position, the rhythmical breathing, the concentration on a single point – all of these exercises pursue the same goal, which is to abolish multiplicity and fragmentation, to reintegrate, to unify, to make whole.

Make your home an ashram, a sacred space

Where to begin? Concentrate to bring awareness into your daily life at home where you can begin to work on your conditioning. By cultivating equanimity constantly during the highs and lows of life, the painful and pleasurable moments, the happy and unhappy times, you will gradually become a Yogi. We need more ashrams! An ashram is by definition the residence of a Yogi. So be a Yogi, and automatically your home will be an ashram! Make your autosuggestion: "I am calmly active and actively calm at all times."

You are not the mind. You have a mind. You are Being-Consciousness-Bliss, Satchitananda. And in order to fully realize this, in every moment, you must play the game of consciousness: constant Self-awareness. In Babaji's Kriya Yoga, many techniques or kriyas are taught to enable one to cultivate awareness in every moment and at all levels of existence, including the asanas for the physical, pranayama breathing for the vital, dhyana meditation for the mental, mantras for the intellectual and devotional bhakti Yoga for the spiritual dimension of our being. This brings

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is merely a directedness of the mind. His only concern is the object to which the mind clings. Since attachment to mundane things lead to self-alienation, only one way remains to fulfil the call of our "essential nature." This is to attach our mind to God and let ourselves be carried along the vigorous ascending current which begins and terminates in Him. Thus, instead of dissipating the mind's power by permitting it to run after so many objects of sense, we



How and why Yoga, Ayurveda and diet can strengthen your immune and nervous systems and treat particular pre-existing conditions

By M. G. Satchidananda

Natural and social calamities have been predicted by climatologists and social scientists for decades, while yogic seers have predicted these for centuries. While climatologists, social scientists and yogic seers agree that humanity is responsible for these, they differ on the question of how to prevent them. Climatologists prescribe sustainable energy sources. Social scientists prescribe economic and social policies. To prepare for difficult times Yogic seers prescribe strengthening of the nervous and immune systems of the individual through Yoga, diet and the yamas, or social restraints¹. However, they agree that we must act collectively with understanding and wisdom to respond effectively to widespread climatic and social challenges. We are all in this together!

While extreme storms, floods, fires, swings in temperature, and the rampant pollution of our waters and air may never leave our consideration, it has taken a pandemic to shut down countries and force us to change our social and economic behavior. The world has been knocked off its axis by Mother Nature with this pandemic. The plight of polar bears will never affect a critical mass within our collective consciousness, but the coronavirus may well move us to do what is needed.

Reports from experts in epidemiology indicate that those who have strong immune systems and no preexisting conditions, particularly of inflammatory diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, asthma and heart disease have a very low probability of developing severe symptoms of the corona virus disease or even any symptoms, even if infected by it.

Therefore, the best thing you can do to avoid harmful infection is to strengthen your immune and nervous systems and to now begin to treat the above mentioned inflammatory conditions through the wholistic practices of the five-fold path of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and its sister science, Ayurveda, India's indigenous treat science. Let's explore how and why they are so effective.

Signs of a weak immune system include:

- Repeated infections of any kind (like recurrent pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections).
- Feeling fatigued on a regular basis, despite adequate rest and sleep.
- Minor wounds that are slow to treat.
- Loss of appetite and decreased body weight.

Diet: The single most important change you can make in your life now is to stop consuming processed foods, which are often used as "comfort foods".

Ultra-processed foods are designed to be irresistible and to encourage overeating. Processing enhances palatability by adding sugar, fat and salt. Once we start eating them, it's almost impossible to stop. Our gastrointestinal tracts rapidly absorb fast carbs, and, as a result, our bodies don't feel full. So, we keep eating, and gain weight.

More important, fast carbs also promote insulin resistance, meaning the body can no longer regulate blood glucose. Insulin is a hormone the body produces to move glucose into the cells, which use it for fuel. When insulin cannot do this, sugar builds up in the blood and, over time, can harm the small blood vessels in the heart, kidneys and eyes.

This, in turn, can lead to metabolic syndrome, a constellation of symptoms that include hypertension, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist and abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels. Metabolic syndrome raises the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and other serious conditions.

As taught during the first initiation seminar of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, it is recommended to maintain a vegetarian diet, which emphasizes the principles of Macrobiotics and/or Ayurveda to promote energetic balance, with whole, in season, organically and locally grown plant based food. This will also help to reduce global warming, environmental pollution and to reduce the demand for non-renewable sources of energy.

What to eat to boost your immune system:

- Green, leafy vegetables: Kale, collard greens, spinach, cabbage and lettuce
 - Antioxidant-rich foods: Berries, artichokes, beets and dark chocolate
 - Foods with anti-inflammatory agents: avocados, broccoli, cherries, peppers and mushrooms
 - Lean proteins (vegetarian): beans, lentils
 - Bee propolis
- A high-fiber meal plan works through the gut microbiome to reduce harmful and excessive immune responses in the lungs, while boosting antiviral immunity. Examples include:
- Whole grains: Oatmeal, brown rice, bulgur wheat, quinoa and millet
 - Nuts and seeds: Almonds, chia, flax, sesame and hemp
 - Flours: whole wheat, almond, chickpea, buckwheat and barley
 - Legumes: Beans, dried peas and lentils

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- Fruits and vegetables with skins: Apples, cucumbers and sweet potatoes.

How Yoga can strengthen your nervous and immune systems and treat particular pre-existing conditions

Scientists have linked chronic stress with how likely you are to develop a cold if exposed to a virus, and how severe the symptoms will be. High levels of stress are known to reactivate infections such as herpes and to make your immune system less likely to respond to a vaccine. The stress hormone, cortisol, appears to be the major player in this immune suppression. It has been linked to high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, resistance to insulin, and “food seeking behavior” and consequent obesity. Typical contemporary stressors – worries about relationships, problems related to employment and finances, security, happiness and fulfilment – tend not to be resolved quickly, so the stress response system (or sympathetic nervous system) stays activated or is repeatedly reactivated. Stress is often fueled by habitual thoughts and emotions. Yoga postures, pranayama and meditation have been repeatedly found to lower levels of this stress hormone by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, which relaxes and restores hormonal equilibrium. Deep diaphragmatic breathing calms the mind and emotions. In meditation, one can learn to “let go” of worries and negative emotions, and to use the power of visualization and auto-suggestion to cultivate their opposite.

The lymph system carries lymph, a fluid rich in lymphocytes and other immune-system cells. The lymphatic system fights infections, kills rogue cancer cells, and disposes of some toxic waste products of cellular functioning. When you contract and stretch muscles, move organs around, and come in and out of yoga postures, the flow of lymph improves and with it, the functioning of lymphatic system. Fasting also helps it to catch up in processing such waste products.

How Yoga can treat diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes. People with Type 1, also known as juvenile-onset diabetes, due to the auto-immune destruction of that part of the pancreas which secretes the hormone known as insulin, must take external sources of it to regulate the level of blood sugar (glucose). Ninety percent of persons with diabetes however, have “adult-onset” or type 2 diabetes, in which their bodies may produce normal amounts of insulin, but their body becomes resistant to its effects and as a result their blood sugar rises. Why some persons develop such resistance is not known, but obesity and inactivity clearly make the problem worse.²

While some persons with type 2 take insulin (usually via injection) to improve blood sugar control, most are treated with oral medication and dietary measures. However, about 15% of people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes have a slowly progressing type 1, or “latent autoimmune adult diabetes” (LAPA). Both types

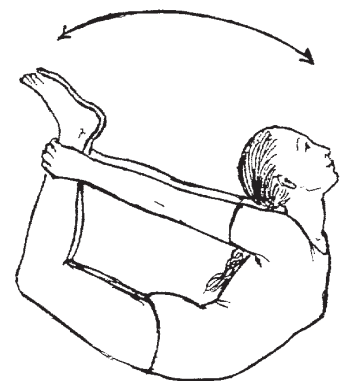
increase the risk of having a heart attack or stroke, and complications including kidney failure and amputations. Once you develop it, daily monitoring of your blood glucose level is required.

The good news is that with type 2 you may be able to prevent it or minimize its impact through regular exercise, keeping your weight down, and managing your stress. Yoga can help to prevent and treat diabetes in several ways. As a stress reducer, it can help you to reduce stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol which raise blood sugar levels, and which promote both overeating and the accumulation of intra-abdominal fat, and which in turn contribute to insulin resistance. By

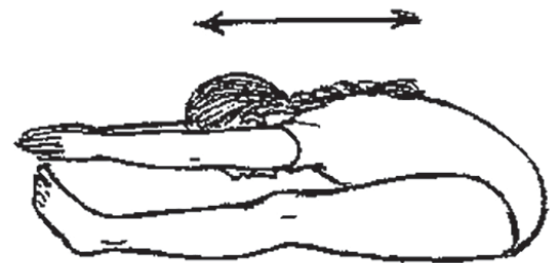
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Standing Crane Pose



Bow Pose



Sitting Crane Pose



Grasshopper Pose



Yoga, Ayurveda and diet *continued*

reducing these stress hormones the risk of heart attack is also reduced.

Many persons with diabetes also develop problems with their autonomic nervous system which controls blood vessels and various organs including the lungs and bowels. Peripheral nerves in the legs can also be damaged, leading to painful burning sensations, known as diabetic neuropathy.

Many studies have also shown that those postures which massage the pancreas, including the bow pose, sitting crane, standing crane, and grasshopper pose are effective in restoring its ability to secrete insulin adequately, as well as to reduce intra-abdominal fat. The practice of Yoga also increases willpower, self-confidence, contentment, and discipline, all necessary in any effort to lose weight or manage health issues.

Pranayama, meditation and practicing relaxation after each Yoga asana, and shavasana at the end of a session



Complete Peace Relaxation Pose

also enables you to manage stress and consequently to avoid over-eating.³

Keep moving. A recent study found that people with diabetes who walked two hours per week had a death rate in any particular year that was almost 40 percent lower than those who were more sedentary.

Get enough sleep. There is evidence that sleeping poorly contributes to the development of type 2 diabetes and to difficulty in managing it.

How Yoga can treat hypertension

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is sometimes referred to as the silent killer, because those who have it usually show no symptoms. It causes heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure and even dementia. It affects one in six people in the Western world, yet as many as a third of them are unaware of the problem, and of those who know they have it, less than a quarter keep it under good control. The optimal rate is 120/80, referring to the pressures when the heart contracts and relaxes respectively, while resting. Repeated readings of 140/90 are the threshold for the diagnosis of hypertension. Most doctors will first recommend nondrug measures including diet, exercise, salt restriction, and weight loss, for up to six months, unless the reading is very high.

"When the novel coronavirus first hit, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others put people with asthma at the top of their lists of those who might be the most vulnerable. But European researchers writing in the journal *Lancet* noted it was "striking" how underrepresented asthma patients had been. Earlier this month, when New York state released data about the top chronic health problems of those who died of covid-19,

asthma was not among them. Instead, they were almost all cardiovascular conditions."⁴

The Yogic practice of self-study, *svadhyaya*, can help you to control hypertension by regularly monitoring your blood pressure with a device, recording it in a diary and correlating it with your mood, what you have eaten, caffeine or alcohol you have consumed, how stressed you feel, and how much sleep you have had.

Many studies have shown that cardio-vascular exercise and the weight loss that often results can reduce blood pressure. Since a vigorous asana practice, for example with repeated Sun Salutation, can be intense enough to be aerobic, it has the potential to lower pressure. Tightness in the muscles exerts pressures on arteries, creating more resistance to blood flow. Therefore, asanas and massage can lower BP by relaxing them.

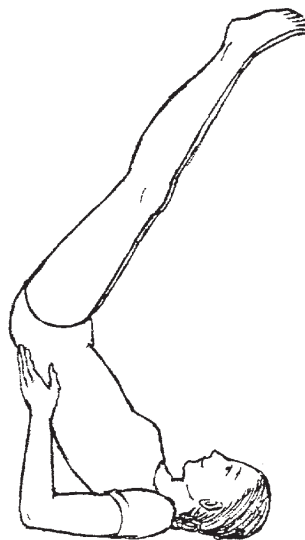
Recent studies of walking conclude that 8,000 steps per day, at a rate of 100 steps per minute, are needed to maintain cardio-vascular health.

Stress can increase blood pressure in the short term. More important in the long-term is the effect of stress on life-style choices. People suffering from stress are more likely to skip exercise, eat unhealthy food, drink alcohol, and smoke cigarettes, all of which can contribute to increasing blood pressure. Therefore, Yoga's ability to reduce stress through the practice of asanas, pranayama, meditation, mantras and chanting have been shown to lower blood pressure in several studies.

One of the most effective ways to reduce your blood pressure during the practice of asanas, is by making your exhalations twice as long as your inhalations to shift the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system towards the restorative parasympathetic side, and away from the sympathetic "fight or flight" side. Practice Ujjayi breathing by partially closing the glottis to facilitate concentration on the breath.

Chant "Om" or "Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum" in a soft melody. Not only does it extend the exhalation, activating the parasympathetic nervous system, but its vibrations soothe the nerves.

Yogic therapy may vary depending upon the person. The person who is overworked, exhausted from running around on nervous energy needs slower restorative postures including some inversions, such as *vibareethakarani* (topsy-turvey). The person who is stuck in a frustrating job or relationship, pent up



Topsy-Turvey Pose

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Yoga, Ayurveda and diet *continued*

pressure needs a more dynamic practice which include repeated standing poses such as Triangle pose and Sun Salutations.

How Yoga can treat asthma

Asthma is a condition in which the bronchial tubes in the lungs become swollen, constricted, and blocked with mucus secretions, causing the characteristic symptoms of wheezing, chest tightness, cough and shortness of breath. It has been linked to genetic factors, allergies, air pollution and stress. Dysfunctional breathing habits, such as chest breathing, mouth breathing, and reverse breathing, and poor posture contribute to it by preventing the lower lungs, richly supplied with blood vessels, from getting enough oxygen to fully replenish the blood passing through those vessels. Poor postural habits limit the movement of the diaphragm and the ability of the rib cage to expand and contract. The practice of asanas corrects poor posture, strengthens and loosens these muscles. It also strengthens the abdominal muscles which must be engaged during healthy breathing.

Most persons with asthma have much more difficulty in exhaling than inhaling because of the narrowing of the small bronchial tubes due to inflammation and mucus. These tubes expand during inhalation, but tend to collapse during exhalation, leaving too much stale air trapped, and less room for new oxygen rich air to come in, thus compromising the oxygen supply required by the rest of the body. In response, breathing becomes quicker, short, inefficient, and stressful. Rapid breathing causes carbon dioxide levels to drop, the blood to become more alkaline, and the blood cannot get as much oxygen as needed. This creates a vicious cycle where the asthmatic breathes even faster to bring in more oxygen.

The practice of pranayama with a ratio of 1:0:2:0, meaning an exhalation that is twice the length of the inhalation, and zero retention in between, serves as an antidote to the asthmatic condition, ensuring adequate absorption of oxygen. The practice of pranayama with abdominal breathing corrects the problems of chest breathing and reverse breathing. The practice of Asthma pranayama, wherein one inhales in stages, through the nostrils, quickly pulling down and releasing the diaphragm, and then exhales in stages through pursed lips, can help prevent asthma attacks. The practice of vipareethakarani asana with or without support can improve lung function.

People who engage in regular aerobic exercise have fewer asthma flare-ups, use less medication, and miss fewer days of school and work. Weight loss can be helpful, as overweight persons tend to breathe more shallowly, which can make the airways more likely to go into bronchospasm. Avoidance of polluted air, mold, chemical, environmental, and dietary allergens which can trigger inflammation and reduced lung function is also recommended. Dehumidifiers eliminate excess moisture that can lead to the buildup of mold.

How Yoga can treat heart disease

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women. More women than men suffer from heart attacks. In predicting heart attacks, doctors tend to focus on risk factors like smoking and elevated cholesterol, but science has uncovered strong evidence for other possible contributors. Type A behaviors, which are characterized by anger and hostility, a focus on achievement, and a sense of urgency about time, have been strongly linked to heart attacks in several studies. Other psychosocial factors include job dissatisfaction, loneliness, and an unhappy marriage. People with several other risk factors including being overweight, hypertension, diabetes, and inflammatory conditions have a much greater potential for heart attacks.

Stress hormones including cortisol, discussed above, induce changes that cause the blood to clot more easily. They also raise the blood pressure and heart rate, putting added strain on the heart and increasing its need for oxygen. "Although acute respiratory distress syndrome still appears to be the leading cause of death in covid-19 patients, blood complications are not far behind."⁴

Yoga's ability to lessen anger may lower the risk of a heart attack. It takes three hours physiologically for the body to get back its balance and many heart attacks occur within these three hours. Studies show that meditation lowers cortisol while increasing the "feel good" hormones of serotonin and oxytocin. With regular practice meditation can change the brain: the hippocampus grows, and the amygdala shrinks resulting in less stress and greater immunity. The above mentioned "psychosocial" factors underlying heart disease can be treated using many Yogic practices and teachings including:

1. The practices of "letting go" of thoughts and emotions, cultivating the Witness, detachment from the fruit of one's action;
2. Cultivating the opposite of negative thoughts and emotions using autosuggestions as taught in Kriya Yoga.
3. The cultivation of love and devotion through bhakti yoga transforms anger into feelings of love, acceptance, and gratitude;
4. Service to other with karma yoga;
5. The observance of the social restraints of Yoga, known as the yamas, including non-harming, being truthful, chastity, not taking what does not belong to you, and greedlessness.

Yogic practices to treat cancer

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body. Cancer develops when the body's normal control mechanism stops working. Old cells do not die and instead grow out of control, forming new, abnormal cells. These extra cells may form a mass of tissue, called a tumor. Cancer kills by invading key organs (like the intestines, lungs, brain, liver, and kidneys). At the

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Yoga, Ayurveda and diet *continued*

cellular level cancer is caused by changes to genes' DNA. But the cell is only the terminal of a long organic process and cannot be isolated from its surroundings and other body functions. Instead of focusing on the cell, a holistic approach requires us to change the blood, lymph and environmental conditions that have created malignant cells.

In the USA, the lifetime probability in 2020 of being diagnosed with invasive cancer is slightly higher for men (40.1%) than for women (38.7%). The four leading cancers are lung, colorectal, breast, and prostate. After heart disease, cancer is the second leading cause of death there. In ancient times and in traditional societies it is practically unknown. In 1900 it was about 4%. In 1950 it was only about 12 percent.

This progression of cancer tells us that it is the product of our own modern daily behavior, including our modern diet, thinking, lifestyle, way of cooking and eating, and environmental conditions. Consequently, it is a "pre-existing condition" for nearly everyone. We are all in a pre-cancerous state. The proper place to perform cancer surgery is not in the operating room of a hospital after the disease has run its course, but in the kitchen and in other areas of daily life before it has developed. For guidance in this, I recommend Michio Kushi's *The Cancer Prevention Diet*, which emphasizes a traditional diet, known as Macrobiotics, of whole organic foods, locally grown, in season, with a balance of energies.

In addition, as discussed above, the practice of asanas will improve the functioning of the lymphatic system, to remove rogue cancer cells and toxins from the blood. Studies have demonstrated that the practice of restorative asanas can accelerate the process of recovering from chemotherapy and invasive cancer treatments which involve radiation and surgery. Meditation also helps to avoid contributing factors to cancer, including poor dietary choices, stress, depression, anger and other negative emotions.

Ayurveda's approach to inflammation

Inflammation manifests as cancer, infections, fever, arthritis, aches and the other conditions discussed above, and according to Ayurveda as an excess of the element of fire, or Pitta. Pitta is one of the three doshas or grouping of the five elements of nature manifesting in a person's constitution. It is the grouping of fire and water. Vata is the grouping of air and space. Kapha is the grouping of earth and water. Pitta is therefore treated with cooling or heat dispelling therapy. As Pitta also contains the element of water, it is also moist, mobile, and light, so it can benefit from therapies which are drying, nutritive or calming. But the cooling therapy should be given first. The treatment of Pitta is intimately connected to the treatment of the blood. Most conditions of bodily heat, fever, inflammation, infection, or acidity also relate generally to Pitta. When deranged, Pitta will manifest itself in the above aberrations. Tastes that treat Pitta are sweet, astringent and bitter, as they are all cooling

in nature. Bitter taste being both the coldest and most drying of the tastes, is the strongest in reducing Pitta.

Alteratives are herbs that cleanse and purify the blood, help treat tumors and many kinds of cancer, dispel fevers, and work well in infections, contagious diseases and epidemics. They treat the flu, especially those with high fever. They cleanse the lymphatics and strengthen the white cell blood count. They include the cooling alterative herbs aloe vera, burdock, dandelion, echinacea, neem, plantain, red clover, sandalwood, and yellow dock. As diuretics they increase urination, a way of removing heat, acid and toxins from the body. This relieves Pitta.

The strongest herbs to reduce Pitta, are bitter tonic and antipyretic herbs: aloe vera, American colombo, barberry, calumba, chaparral, gentian, golden seal, golden thread, Peruvian bark, white poplar and special to India, chirata, kutki, and neem. They are also the strongest herbs to dispel fat, reduce excess weight and regulate sugar metabolism, and in this way may be helpful in conditions such as diabetes. They not only suppress fevers, they destroy infections, attack Ama, the toxins which have entered into the tissues and caused the fever. Care should be taken to use them only to the point where the viral, bacterial, or parasitical pathogen is destroyed.

Ama, the accumulation of toxins, undigested food or waste-materials, is the root cause of most colds, fever and flus, as well as chronic diseases of a weak auto-immune system, from allergies to asthma, arthritis and cancer. Treatment with bitter herbs must first aim at its elimination before rejuvenation. Bitter taste, composed of air and ether, helps separate Ama, whose quality is heavy, from the tissues and organs wherein it is lodged. It stimulates the catabolic processes of the body to break down foreign material and thereby relieves fevers.

Ama and Agni, the power of digestion, are opposite in properties. Ama is cold, wet, heavy cloudy, bad smelling and impure. Agni is hot, dry, light, clear, fragrant (aromatic) and pure. To treat Ama, it is necessary to increase Agni. Psychologically, Ama arises from the holding of negative emotions, which quench Agni, and cloud mental clarity of the mind. Physical Agni is also reduced. Undigested experiences become toxic like undigested food.

Once Ama is eliminated, there are many herbs which can be used to treat asthma. These include bayberry, cardamom, camphor, cloves, elecampane, flaxseed, garlic, mullein, myrrh, saffron, ajwan, asafoetida, bala and ephedra.

Ayurveda's approach to anxiety

Emotions of fear, anxiety, and nervousness are indicative of a Vata constitution. They may result in insomnia and mental instability, which in turn will weaken the immune response. Nervines are herbs that

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News and Notes

New! Stream or Download into your mobile phone, PC or tablet the New Video: Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga: Self Realization through Action with Awareness, 2 hour 5 minutes, in 20 segments, with M. G. Satchidananda and Durga Ahlund. For more details and to view 9 minutes of sample segments go to: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore-2.htm#bkhy_streaming_video.

"This is an earnest, unique and inspiring presentation, suitable for experienced beginners and intermediates."
– *Yoga Journal*

COVID-19 and Initiation Seminars in Babaji's Kriya Yoga. As authorities in many countries are now relaxing conditions which have been designed to restrict the movement and assembly of persons, and as the risk of infection from the COVID 19 continues to be very high, the Board of Directors recommends physical "social

distancing" as a corollary to the very first yama or social restraint: ahimsa, to do no harm. Therefore, it is not advisable to offer initiation seminars inside in person, until and unless conditions permit these to be given safely for everyone concerned and prevention or reliable treatment of severe cases is ensured and available to everyone. We are all challenged to act with a sense of responsibility for the health and economic well-being of everyone around us, not merely those pertaining to our own person. The teachings and sadhana of Babaji's Kriya Yoga to surrender the perspective of the ego can help us to meet this challenge.

We recognize that conditions vary widely between various countries and even cities. However, the virus does not care in what country or city you are in. It has

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Yoga, Ayurveda and diet *continued*

strengthen the functional activity of the nervous system and promote mental health. They are also effective for respiratory afflictions as they stop spasms of the bronchial tubes. They include aromatic herbs such as chamomille, mint and valerian which promote the flow of prana. These three are known as tridosha, as they have positive effects on all three doshas. Where there is a deficiency in nerve tissue, often due to poor nutrition, nutritive herbs such as ashwaghandha or licorice are needed. Nervine herbs that are cooling reduce fire and are therefore better for Pitta: chamomille, gotu kula, peppermint, spearmint, St. John's Word, wild yam. Those that are heating reduce Kapha and Vata, are indicated for physical lethargy and psychological conditions such as greed, desire, attachment, clinging to the past. They include asafoetida, basil, bayberry, eucalyptus, garlic, myrrh, nutmeg, sage, and valerian.

Pitta-type emotions such as anger and hatred create internal fire and can cause hypertension, insomnia, irritability and other mental and nervous imbalances that burn out the nerves. A calm and clear mind is usually a cool mind. Most herbs that act upon the mind, such as Gotu-kula, mint, chamomile and fennel are cooling.

These may be taken in small amounts or for a short term only because excessive use may further weaken the nerves by their drying action. They may also be over-stimulating. Too much of anything is too much. What sedates one dosha may stimulate another. Restoring and maintaining balance in our elemental physical and mental nature is the objective in both Ayurveda and Yoga.

Notes

1: "Opposite Doing: the Five Yogic Keys to Good Relationships, ebook, available in 5 languages at bookstore page of www.babajiskriyayoga.net.

2: Nearly half of all American adults are obese, and almost one-tenth are severely obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Moreover, both have increased since 1999, the CDC says. The agency says that obesity also now affects 1 in 5 children.

3: Babaji's Kriya Yoga: Deepening Your Practice, by Jan Ahlund and M. Govindan, available in 4 languages at bookstore page of www.babajiskriyayoga.net.

4: Washington Post, April 22, 2020, "A mysterious blood-clotting complication is killing coronavirus patients."



consistently demonstrated itself to be more dangerous than expected. Studies confirm that 'aerosols' exhaled by normal breathing, and not just only small droplets expelled by a cough or sneeze, contribute to spreading the virus in rooms (unlike outdoors). Consequently, one person in a closed room or airplane can quickly infect dozens of other persons within a few minutes, irrespective of governments lifting the restrictions due to economic pressure.

As the question has been raised of whether members of the Order can offer initiation online through any

cyberspace communications, like Zoom, during the pandemic, the Board is in unanimous agreement that initiations into Babaji's Kriya Yoga must continue to be offered only in person, to ensure confidentiality, but that introductory lectures can be offered online to anyone

Online satsang meetings, Yoga classes, questions and answers Many of our Acharyas are offering their support

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Concentration *continued*

about an integral development and ultimately perfection or siddhi at all levels, not merely a spiritual or vertical ascent.

When and how will you do this? As often as you can remember to do so! It is up to you! All Yogic sadhana or practices may be summarized as: "everything you do to remember who you are, and everything you do to let go of what you are not." You are probably reading this at home at this very moment. As you read these lines, can you allow part of your consciousness to stand back as a witness, watching your mind read these words? Can you continue to allow your consciousness to be divided into two parts: one part absorbed in seeing, hearing, doing, thinking, feeling and another part simply being aware of everything going on? If so, you will find bliss in each moment. You win this "bliss" whenever you are aware. This "game of consciousness" is the only game worth playing. Every time you remember to play it, you win, every time you forget to be the witness, you suffer, and lose. Even if your karma is delivering roses, and not rotten tomatoes to your doorstep, if you are absorbed by the drama, your mind will soon start worrying about when it will end, and so suffer.

So, make your home a place where you will practice this Yogic sadhana in every moment. What do we do at home? Eat, sleep, wash up, relax, play and do housework. Concentrate during all of these activities while practicing awareness as taught in Babaji's Kriya Yoga. Here are some specific suggestions in each of these areas:

1. Mealtime: when you sit down for a meal, make it a sacred activity, starting from the time you begin the meal preparation. Sing devotional songs or chant mantras, and cultivate the witness as you chop, cook, serve. When you sit down, say a prayer or chant the food dedication mantra: Ahm Hreem Kram Swahaa, Chitrya Chitra guptraya yamarupy dryah Om Tat Sat Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum. Chew each mouth full, practicing being the witness to everything experienced. Even when you are washing the dishes and taking out the garbage continue to cultivate this Self-awareness.

2. Housework and bill paying: The old dictum, "cleanliness is next to Godliness" applies here too. Maintain your home as though you are expecting God to visit you at any time. By creating a space of order, brightness and cleanliness you will experience more equanimity within

yourself. Cultivate the witness as you go about this activity. By learning to budget your expenses according to your revenue, and paying them on time, you will avoid much stress and so free the mind from disturbing reactions.

3. Exercise, bath and dressing times: Train your mind to focus inwardly as you go about the daily rituals of your Yoga postures practice, your bath and dressing time. Do one thing at a time, with part of your consciousness withdrawn from involvement in the play of the senses and the mind.

4. Playing with your children: Your children can teach how to regain spontaneity, laughter, and being in the present. Seek out opportunities to share with them what you love about life and encourage them to express themselves. Be a good listener not only to them, but to your own mind's reactions and inner dialogue. Be a witness, not just a doer.

5. Sharing with friends: Invite like-minded persons to join you in satsang, or "sharing of truth," remembering that the spirit has no form, and that what is truly important is to be, more and more, Who you truly are. Satsang may express itself in the form of sharing of the best of what one has appreciated or realized, song, chanting, fellowship, meditation, a session of Yoga postures, a meal, any expression or gesture of love and affection.

6. Practice yoga nidra to gradually replace sleep with Yogic rest. Start with the practice of conscious rest when you are not fatigued, and so reduce the risk of falling asleep. Learn to allow the body to rest, while keeping your awareness in the state of Self-awareness, not withdrawn from the physical plane.

By concentrating with Self-awareness, in the midst of the above activities, you will experience unconditional joy, or bliss and everything will become sacred. Bliss, or ananda does not depend upon whether the outer circumstances are agreeable or not, whether you get what you want or what you don't want. It depends only upon your being present, in a state of awareness of how it all is.

Resources (available at www.babajiskriyayoga.net):

Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas.

Opposite Doing: the Five Yogic Keys to Good Relationships, Ebook

The Tirumandiram



News and notes *continued*

to initiates and non-initiates through online streaming Hatha Yoga classes, as well as satsang meetings through cyberspace communications like Zoom. However, other Kriya Yoga techniques which are taught during initiation seminars cannot be shared during these. Their purpose is to encourage participants to meditate, and secondarily to give some inspiration. Questions from initiates about the Kriya Yoga techniques will be answered only in a personalized one-to-one setting, where confidentiality is ensured, either by email or a phone call or in person.

Third level initiations will be offered with M. Govindan Satchidananda in Quebec July 16-25, 2021. They will also be offered in 2020 by Satyananda in Germany, by Nityananda and Savitri in Spain, by Sita Siddhananda and Shivas in France, by Nagalakshimi in Brazil, by Nagaraj in Japan, and by Ishvarananda in Estonia. Attain the goal of Self-realization with powerful kriyas to awaken the chakras and to go into the breathless state of samadhi.

Pilgrimage to the new Badrinath Ashram with M. G. Satchidananda and Durga Ahlund, September September 16 to October 4, 2021: Join them in a life changing, unforgettable pilgrimage to the place where Babaji attained soruba samadhi, the ultimate state of enlightenment. Details are here: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm

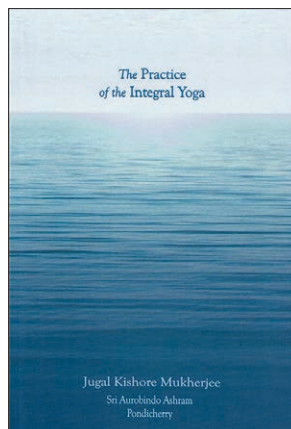
International Yoga Conference in Warsaw, Poland, November 27 to 28, 2021, with M. G Satchidananda and other distinguished speakers, in English and Polish. The event will be focused on promoting yoga in general and Babaji's Kriya Yoga in particular. It will include historic, health, spiritual and philosophical perspectives. More detailed info on the program and participation will be available soon. Contact email: poland@babajiskriyayoga.net

The Practice of Integral Yoga, by J.K. Mukherjee, is now distributed by Kriya Yoga Publications: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#integral_yoga_book

by Jugal Kishore Mukerjee, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Published in 2003. 366 pages. Price: USD\$16.90, CAD\$18.90 in Canada (inc gst). ISBN 81-7058-732-8. Softcover. 6 x 9 inches.

If you are inspired by the brilliance of the writings of Sri Aurobindo or your heart is called by The Mother and wish to understand in a nutshell how to practice their Integral Yoga, this is the one book you require!

If you want to experience in your body and mind what it is to "call down Grace" into your life,



this is the one book you require!

If you want to develop a clear and present knowing when Divine Will is interceding in your life, this is the one book/ you require!

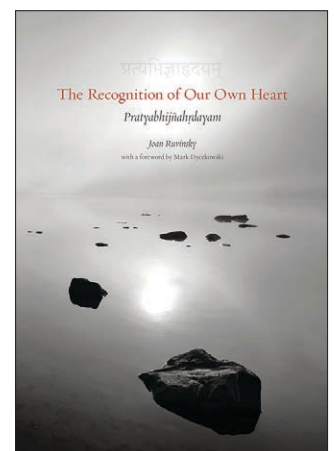
"We have enjoyed this book immensely. We met Professor Mukerjee, a sadhak of Integral Yoga for over 50 years, and a past director of the International Center for Education, in January 2006, at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. We were charmed by his clear message that living a divine life means being relentless in seeking out weaknesses and shortcomings in yourself and clearly and utterly determined in bridging the gap from where you are - to where you want to be....calling on the Divine, whenever necessary. He gives us the means in his book, "The Practice of Integral Yoga."

Interview with Marshall Govindan by Kelly Blaser, online streaming at the Power of Meditation Forum: August 3-9, 2020. "Transforming Difficult Emotions through Meditative Practices, Dharma Teachings, Self-Enquiry, and Creativity: <https://powerofmeditationssummit.com>

The Recognition of Our Own Heart: Ponderings on the Pratyabhijnahridayam, by Joan Ruvinsky with a foreword by Mark Dyczkowski, is our latest publication. ISBN 978-1-987972-15-3, 164 pages 7 x 10 inches, softcover April 2019, with more than a dozen artistic nature photographs Price: USD\$25.00, CAD\$32.55 in Canada (incl. gst).

In this gem of a book, non-dual yoga and meditation teacher Joan Ruvinsky offers up a beautifully illustrated interpretive translation of one of the foundational texts of Kashmiri Shaivism — twenty short verses that address fundamental and universal questions. Part poetry, part guidebook, part art, it conveys the richness and incandescence so characteristic of the lineage without losing sight of the last 400 years of philosophical inquiry, spiritual revelation, and scholarship.

In the footsteps of the Tantric masters of the medieval period — who were not only great yogis but also accomplished scholars, poets, musicians — Ruvinsky embraces the body, mind, and senses as pathways to enlightenment. In her distinctly poetic and down-to-earth fashion Ruvinsky reminds us to live directly, moment to moment, in the mystery. You already have what you need. She intones, "All contemplations are valid. There are no right answers, no dead ends, only pathways in the infinite." https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#recognition_heart_book



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News and notes *continued*

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Subscribe to the correspondence course, The Grace of Babaji's Kriya Yoga We invite you to join us in this adventure of Self-exploration and discovery, drawn from the books dictated by Babaji in 1952 and 1953. Receive by mail, each month, a lesson of 18-24 pages developing a specific theme, with practical exercises. For details go here: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#grace_course

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