

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Prayer versus Yoga

By M. G. Satchidananda

Prayer is not an activity which is mentioned in the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, nor the Yoga Upanishads. Why? This is an intriguing question whose answer requires an understanding of not only the nature of prayer, and how it differs from the yogic practice of meditation, autosuggestion and mantras, but also the purposes of Yoga, how you answer the questions "Who Am I?" and "What is my relationship to God?" In our tradition of Yoga, it also requires an understanding of the word "Guru."

What is prayer? How does it differ from the yogic practices of meditation, autosuggestions and mantras?

Prayer is a solemn request for

help, forgiveness or an expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship. It has four main types: adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplication. It is also an earnest hope or wish, and therefore contains an element of doubt as to its efficacy. It is one of the principle activities of any religion. It is a mental activity often mixed with emotion. Its absence in the literature of Yoga distinguishes Yoga from religion.

Meditation in Yoga does not include any request for help, forgiveness, nor any petition directed to God or a Supreme Being. It does not include an expression of hope or desire, nor any feeling of doubt. Concentration brings stillness and penetration of the ordinary mental and emotional activities to the eternal, infinite spi-

ritual dimension where the yogin experiences absolute being, consciousness and bliss.

An autosuggestion is a positive statement of change to motivate the subconscious, expressed in the present tense, and repeated when one is in a state of deep relaxation. Patanjali tells us in Yoga Sutra II.33: "When bound by negative thoughts, cultivate their opposite." To use an analogy, if the subconscious is like a computer filled software or analogously, with mental habits, conditioning and memories that direct ones thoughts, words and actions, then an autosuggestion is a program which is installed deliberately by the owner of the computer to effect a positive change. Much of what fills the subconscious was not put there deliberately. Life experiences leave impressions or memories automatically. When often repeated these impressions become stronger and become habits. So, if you want to remove them, the best way is not to fight them or try to suppress them, but to simply replace them with new programming.

Many persons believe in the power of prayer. Its effectiveness has been studied by science. Scientific studies at Duke University have confirmed that prayer is effective in

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accelerating the time required for someone to recover from surgery. But few make the connection between the power of suggestion and the effectiveness of prayer.

The yogic practice of autosuggestion makes no appeal to a higher power, a Supreme Being. Prayer does. Prayer often implies a feeling of helplessness or even doubt, despair, fear, regret, guilt or unworthiness. As such, it may be sabotaging the very power of suggestion. Like autosuggestion, prayer is most effective when it is expressed without any hint of doubt. For this reason, the preacher's admonition to pray with full faith, even certainty, that the Lord will do what is best, protects the prayer from the effects of doubt on the subconscious mind.

Mantras

While autosuggestions work at the level of the subconscious, they can help remove many of the bad habits and negative thinking which make your life difficult. However, there are spiritual practices such as mantras, that link us to superconscious levels, and which enable you to align yourself with the Will of your higher Self. By "superconscious" I mean the capacity to receive knowledge without using the five senses or memory. By "spiritual," I refer to that dimension of one's existence, which transcends time and space; that which is a constant, which never changes. It is formless and limitless. It is pure consciousness. It is the ground of your existence. All thought and events have their ultimate origin and destination there.



Govindan giving mantra diksa.

Unlike prayers, mantras are not petitionary. You ask for nothing, save the Lord or "That" itself. As such they help to free you from the grasping nature of egoism, the habit of identifying with the body-mind complex and all of its inherent movements. By definition, mantras are sound vehicles of consciousness, which can transmit a higher level of consciousness to the recipient in a process referred to as initiation.

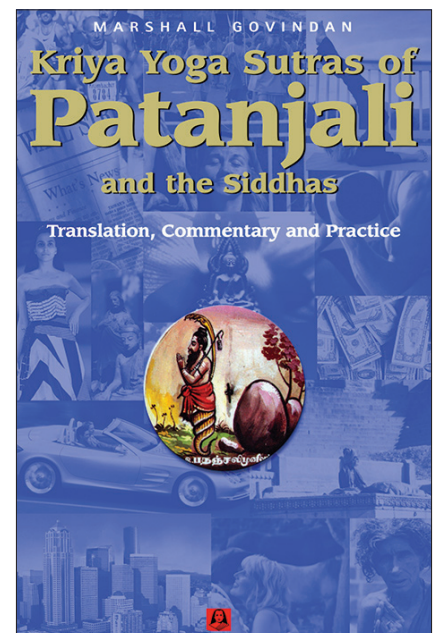
Mantras are a language between levels of consciousness, so it is important to repeat them with so much concentration that your consciousness both deepens and widens, like a seed, which grows into a tree. You suspend ordinary mental movements while repeating the mantra. In ordinary physical consciousness, your consciousness, even your identity is absorbed in the phenomena being experienced through the five senses. You are preoccupied with what we are seeing, reading, hearing, feeling

on the skin etc. In ordinary dream consciousness, which includes daydreaming, your consciousness is also contracted and absorbed in memories and imaginations like anxiety, desire, judgments. To gain the benefit of mantra practice, therefore, you need to concentrate on the sound or pronunciation of the mantra in order to penetrate the ordinary movements of the mind to the spiritual dimension. The benefit will be even greater if you can remember the sacred, higher state of consciousness experienced during the initiation into the mantra. That state of consciousness is a wide calm, and energy rich with presence, love, peace and silence.

The purpose of Yoga is to weaken the causes of suffering and to cultivate Self-realization, or samadhi according to Patanjali's in his Yoga Sutras II.2. The original cause of suffering, he states, is ignorance of our true identity.

From this, originate the other kleshas, or causes of suffering: egoism, attachment, aversion and fear of death. (Yoga Sutras II.3-9) Your answer to the question "Who am I?" evolves as you identify less with the physical body, personality, thoughts, emotions, our past, and more with a witnessing consciousness. As your identity evolves your conception of God also evolves. The practice of Yoga brings about an evolution in your identity: from I am my body, I am a mother, father, professional, male, female, fan of that team, member of that political party, I am cold, I am hungry, to simply I am. You identify with the Seer, or Self, not the Seen. You identify with That which never changes. You experience more and more a sense of unity with everything. I am in everything, everything is in me is experienced. As your identity so evolves, you realize that egoism, with its attendant attachments or desires, and aversions or fears, is the cause of your suffering, and you learn to "let go" of them.

In the ordinary egoistic state of consciousness, God is viewed as one who can help me to satisfy my desires or to avoid what I fear. Prayer is a means to communicate these wants. But when your aim is no longer to try to satisfy the ego's manifestations, but rather to rise above these and to identify with your true Self, to let go of them, to remain as a Witness, and merely to fulfill your



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Prayer versus Yoga *continued*

duties and follow a path which will enable you to remain in a higher state of awareness, then your relationship with God changes. Meditation replaces prayer. Seeking for a state of spiritual communion with the Lord or seeking guidance or wisdom replaces petitionary prayer. You trust that the Lord loves you and is guiding you. Therefore, you seek to listen to the Lord's wisdom and guidance by turning inwards.

What is my relationship with God?

This is the subject of theology, the study of the relationship between God, the soul, and the world. The belief in their reality is referred to as theism. The belief that these distinctions are not real, but illusory, and that there exists only One, referred to often as Brahma, in the Indian literature of Vedanta, is referred to as monism. The former is dualistic, and is embraced by all Western religions, Yoga, Tantra and the major sects of Hinduism: Saivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism. The latter is non-dualistic, is referred to as Advaita, and is embraced by the ten major Hindu renunciant orders, the dasami, founded by Adi Sankara, as well as by Ramana Maharshi, and a growing number of Westerners. In these nondualist traditions, as in Buddhism, there is no God, no soul, and the world is illusory.



Ramana Maharshi

Patanjali clearly answers the above question in Yoga Sutra I.24:

Ishvara is the special Self, untouched by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions or by any inner impressions of desires.

And he tells us the purpose of this relationship in the previous verse, I.23: (Note 1).

Or, because of one's surrender to the Lord, one successfully achieves samadhi, that is cognitive absorption.

Unlike both Samkhya, much of Vedanta, and Buddhism, Classical Yoga, as expressed in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, affirms the existence of God, Ishvara. This God is no creator. The cosmos, life, and man are created by prakriti, or Nature, from primordial substance. But Ishvara can hasten the process of realizing samadhi. He is therefore a god of yogis. He can come to the help of only a yogi, that is, one who has already chosen Yoga as his or her path. But Ishvara's role is comparatively small. He can bring samadhi to the yogin who takes him as the object of his concentration. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna makes similar assertions, and exhorts Arjuna to concentrate on "Me" alone. According to the above verse, reaffirmed in verse II.45, Patanjali tells us that this divine aid is not

the effect of a "desire" or "feeling" – for God can have neither desires nor emotions – but of a "metaphysical sympathy" between the Lord, Ishvara and the soul, purusa. In essence, Ishvara is a purusa that has been free since all eternity, never touched by the causes of suffering. Commenting on this verse, the sage Vyasa tells us that God does not submit to being summoned by rituals or devotion, or faith in his mercy, but that his essence, consciousness, collaborates with us the Self that seeks emancipation through Yoga. This relationship is therefore one of sympathy, born of Nature's purpose or design, to collaborate in the deliverance of the many "selves" (purusa) entangled in the illusory meshes of existence. (Note 2: Eliade).

However, what is for first importance in the Yoga Sutras is technique and the yogins will and capacity for self-mastery and concentration. Why, you may ask, did Patanjali, nevertheless, feel the need to introduce Ishvara? The answer is because Ishvara corresponds to an experiential reality: Ishvara can in fact, bring about samadhi, on condition that the yogin practices complete surrender or Ishvaraprahnidhana or devotion to Ishvara. Yoga Sutras II.45.

Having collected and classified all the yogic techniques whose efficacy had been confirmed by the classic tradition, he could not ignore the experiences made possible by the single process of concentration on Ishvara, (and affirmed in the Bhagavad Gita.) In other words, as Eliade points out: "alongside the tradition of a purely magical Yoga – one that called upon nothing but the will and personal powers of the ascetic – there is another, a "mystical" tradition, in which the last stages of Yoga practice were at least made easier by devotion – even though an extremely rarefied, extremely 'intellectual' devotion – to God....All in all, Ishvara is only an archetype of the yogin – a macroyogin." (Note 3). Unconditioned by time, Ishvara is the guru of the most ancient gurus." Yoga Sutra I.26.

What is my relationship to God according to Yoga Siddhantha, the teaching of the Yoga Siddhas?

Siddhantha, as expressed in the Tirumandiram, teaches that your conception of the Lord evolves as your psychological identity evolves. (Note 4).

These relationships include the following stages:

Charya: the servant, who is seeking, serving, and beginning to associate with others who are seeking the Lord;

Kriya: the friend, one who has found a path to the Lord, familiar with the Lord, and who performs rituals, either external ceremonies or internal practices;

Yoga: the son or daughter, the yogi, in which one begins to manifest the qualities of the Lord; and

Jnana: oneness; the sage, the wise one, or siddha, the perfected one, with knowledge of unity with the one, eternal, blissful, Siva.

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Prayer versus Yoga *continued*

These relationships all include aspiration for grace, and a progressive purification of the stains or impurities: ignorance, egoism, karma and delusion or maya. They are represented metaphorically in the change in your perspective as you look at a distant mountain (charya), then find a path up the mountain (kriya), become familiar with the mountain as climb higher (yoga), and finally reach the top of the mountain (jnana). The seeker of God or Truth initially “sees” God as remote and unknowable, but after finding a spiritual path, and concentrating on its discipline, one finally realizes union with That. This expresses monistic theism, in which one begins by considering God to be other than oneself, and ultimately to being the essence of oneself, Conscious-Energy, Siva-Shakti. The Tirumandiram refers to a progressive descent of divine grace through these stages of purification. (Note 5).

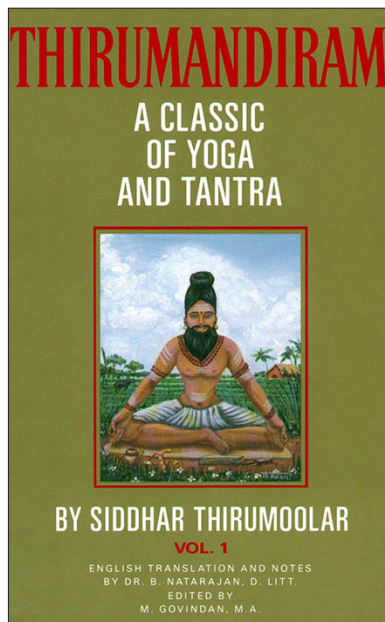
The Tirumandiram describes the five functions of the Lord: creation, preservation, dissolution, concealment, and grace. These manifest through His Shakti or power, according to 36 tattvas or principles of Nature, as well as through karma.

Grace pervades all of the five functions of the Lord and consequently everything that is created, preserved, dissolved, obscure and gracious in our personal lives. When we can perceive and appreciate this, moment to moment, our suffering ends immediately, and we see the face of the Lord. (Note 6).

The Siddhas teach that the Lord's grace is what leads the soul up the ladder of spiritual experience, easing the soul from the world slowly and revealing the greater light of wisdom and Self-knowledge. Grace is the compassion of the Lord. Unlike karma, it does not depend upon the merits or demerits of one's activities. It is the response of the Lord to the soul's aspiration for the True,



Gopuram with 5 Siddhas.



the Good, and the Beautiful.

*His cosmic form no one can grasp;
But the body composed of the five elements
He pervades so finely like milk in water,
The wonderful bliss I learnt to experience tirelessly.*
– Tirumandiram verse 450 (Note 7)

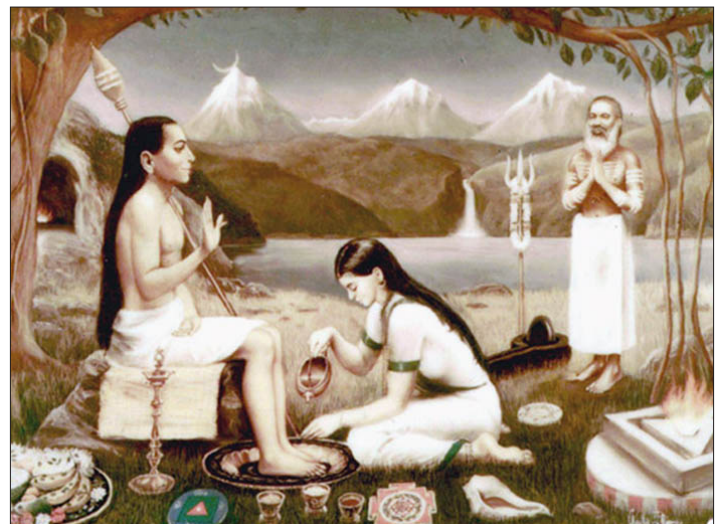
As long as obscurity lasts, one is unable to perceive the presence of the Lord within. But through the grace of the Lord, as one turns away from attachment to the body-mind-personality and purifies oneself of the stains, one begins to have spiritual experiences. With these, and the bliss they confer, one turns more and more towards the Lord within, in union. Ultimate bliss is found by the Lord's grace.

The Siddhas never praised any of the Hindu deities, nor encouraged the “half way” houses of temple worship. They were radical, in the truest sense of the word, and encouraged everyone to seek the Lord within, and to manifest That. Their great sayings included Anbu Sivam or “Love is God,” and Jiva (the individual soul) is becoming Siva, and “They are not two”. Their favorite conception of the Lord was as vettavveli, or “vast luminous space”. (Note 8).

Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a “guru yoga”

“Guru, God and Self are One,” is a great saying or mahavakya in the tradition of Yoga. It is one that I personally embraced from the moment that I glimpsed the greatness of Paramahansa Yogananda and Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah. It became crystal clear to me when I heard the verse of the Siddha Tirumular:

*The ignorant say love and Siva are two;
Love is Siva, they know not;
Love is Siva, once they know this;
Love abides as Siva.*
– Tirumandiram 270



Babaji's feet washing by Mataji.

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Prayer versus Yoga *continued*

It became the polestar of my life when I dedicated myself to the practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and His mission to share Tamil Kriya Yoga Siddhantam, the teachings of the 18 Tamil Yoga Siddhas. I am reminded of it every time I repeat Babaji's mantra "Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum."

The Yoga Siddhas worshipped their gurus. Nowhere in their writings do they praise any deity, or worship any smaller gods in temples, as they have realized their selves as Siva, the Supreme Being. Their Yoga is a Guru Yoga. Their poems typically begin with a salutation to their gurus. This is because they experienced God in the love of their gurus. They experienced the power of their love and in turn responded by manifesting love and even divine acts. I can attest to the power of this love and how it has acted



Govindan 1972 San Thome courtyard.

through me since the day in when I first spoke the words of a pledge, "My own being and pleasures I surrender absolutely and entirely to Kriya Babaji." The past 50 years has been one continuous karma yoga session which expresses this love and surrender to Babaji in everyone.

The word "Guru" literally means "dispeller of darkness". "Gu" means darkness and "ru" means light. "Darkness" is a metaphor for ignorance. Ignorance is the inability to distinguish what is permanent from what is impermanent, the source of suffering from the source of joy, and the ego bound personality from the true Self. So, the Guru is one who shows us how to remove the darkness of ignorance and to realize wisdom. When the veil of ignorance is removed, love shines as an all-powerful light within and without. The Guru is not a person. The Guru is a tattva, a principle of nature, by which Truth, Love, Beauty, Wisdom is revealed. It may manifest through anything which enables us to see profoundly the Truth behind nature's veils, which purifies of the malas or stains of egoism, illusion and karma. It could manifest through a book, the eyes of a baby, a sunrise, a spiritual experience, a mantra. When it manifests as consistently through a person, we often refer to that person as a "guru" but you must not forget that it is not the "person" which is the "Guru", but the teachings, the wisdom, the love which manifests through the person. The person is just the postman. By remembering this, you may avoid

the confusion which arises when the person's human limitations manifest.

The Guru tattva is also the principle by which Nature, creates, sustains and destroys all life in both our inner and outer universes, in whatever way is necessary for us pass from ignorance to wisdom, from egoism to Self-realization. It has existed since before the universe was created, and so transcends time and space. The Guru principle exists within everyone as the inner Self, so when we honor the outer Guru, we also honor our own Self. It is the impersonal Shakti, the spontaneous force which creates whatever is needed for the greatest expansion of sadhana. It is more powerful than the external guru because it always accessible.

The word Guru is also closely related to the word "Guna," which refers to the three tendencies, modes, constituents or qualities by which Nature (prakriti) moves us physically, emotionally and mentally: (a) tamas (inertia, fatigue, discouragement, doubt), rajas (activity, courage, planning and executing) and sattva (balance, equanimity, clear understanding). So the Guru is the one who shows us how to liberate ourselves from dependency on the Gunas. The Siddhas referred to their mission to do so as arupadai: showing the path to Self and God realization. Patanjali refers to this liberation as kaivalyam, freedom from the Seen in the Yoga Sutras II.25, III.50, III.55, IV.26, IV.32 and IV.34. In the very last verse of the Yoga Sutras:

Thus, the supreme state of Absolute freedom (kaivalyam) manifests while the qualities (gunas) reabsorb themselves into Nature, having no more purpose to serve the Self. Or (from another angle) the power of pure consciousness settles in its own pure Nature.

– IV.34 (Note 9)

Seek Babaji to become Babaji

Each of us is a work in progress. Individually and collectively as sadhaks, those who are engaged in the sadhana, or discipline of Yoga we are discovering our potential power and consciousness, kundalini, as well as the restraints of human nature and egoism. The resulting transformation of this process, however, will depend upon the extent to which the sadhak's mind and vital changes its allegiance to the soul or psyche, and away from the ego.

The ego cannot purify itself. It is only our higher Self, or soul, which is untouched by the ego's manifestations, that is capable of doing so. But how to bring it forward into the foreground of our consciousness? How to bring its influence to bear upon the ego? Certainly, the five-fold path of Babaji's Kriya Yoga provides many techniques which help to purify the subconscious, develop the necessary concentration, create positive mental imagery, and develop the intellect's ability to find wisdom. Our soul, or psychic being, however, remains behind the veil of the mind, the emotions and sensations, until and unless the sadhak concentrates inwardly and finds the

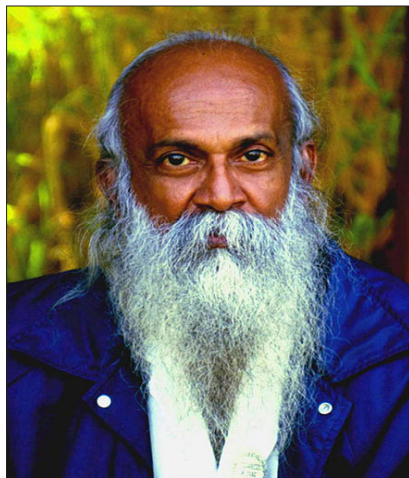
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The Divine Alchemy of Kundalini Yoga in light of Siddhantha

By M. G. Satchidananda

My teacher Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah often repeated that the goal of Babaji's Kriya Yoga is complete surrender on all five planes of existence, and that the practice of Kriya Kundalini Pranayama is the most effective means of achieving it. This teaching is repeated throughout the literature of the Yoga Siddhas, including The Tirumandiram.



Yogi Ramaiah

However, it is expressed in deliberately obscure "twilight" or metaphorical language to conceal its meaning to the non-initiate, who may misuse it. To help initiates of Babaji's Kriya Yoga to better understand the significance of its practice, we have published extensive translations of and commentaries on their literature. The study of their teachings, known collectively as Siddhantha, the ultimate purpose of Siddha yoga, will illuminate your practice or sadhana.

A new meaning of sacrifice

Yoga has its roots in the Vedic sacrificial fire ceremonies. They are performed to this day by hereditary priests in temples to invoke the blessings of the Lord. They are usually done, however, for material purposes. The Yoga Siddhas sought to remind us that such material purposes should not distract us from our ultimate spiritual purpose.

*Seek the Lord who gives the precious wealth
That renders bad all other wealth.*

*The sacrifice (they) perform, that brings
Inestimable wealth, yearning for the bliss.*

– Tirumandiram 220

Commenting on this verse in The Tirumandiram (Vol. 1, pp. 271–272), Dr. KR. Arumugam writes, "The essence of the Vedic and Agamic teaching is the recognition of one Supreme Being, and the seeking of His Grace by souls. This teaching is the precious wealth the Lord revealed, as man came to understand the meaning of spirituality. But men ignore this teaching and seek material wealth, the desire for which binds them to the cycle of birth and death. Realized persons seek the inestimable wealth of Lord Siva's Grace that brings supreme bliss. The sacrifices

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mystic light, the sweet presence of the Divine, the True, the Good, the Beautiful, which is immanent and transcendent. Guru, God and Self are One. During the first initiation, there is the technique to communicate with Babaji, the Guru of Kriya Yoga. This technique of communion with Babaji permits our soul, our higher Self, or as Sri Aurobindo calls it, our "psychic being," to come from behind the veil of egoism with increasing frequency, until there is a total identification with it. Complete Identification with our soul usually occurs only after a very long sadhana. This identification is marked by a very great joy which is present during all situations.

One feels immortal, that is, eternal. One feels the sweet Presence of the Divine.

But in the meantime, until the long process of purification and identification with the higher Self, or soul, is complete, the sadhak must turn inwards repeatedly, concentrate, and listen to its directives, and then obey them. It will reveal everything that must be purified in one's nature. It will shine its light on all that must be reformed or excised. The true sovereign that you are is waiting for you! It is not sufficient to be merely "mindful." Aspire to be the servant of the Supreme. Concentrate and seek the Divine within yourself to resist the impulse to manifest anger, pride, jealousy and to let go of fear, desire, old negative habits. With love and devotion to the Divine at all times and in all places, aspire to become its instrument, expressing kindness, perfor-

ming actions with skills and calmness. See the beautiful face of the Divine everyone. Let your heart sing to it with love and joy. Your soul will come to the foreground as the mind and vital become quiet, and it will direct your life. (Note: 10).

Notes:

1. Govindan, Marshall, Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas;
2. Eliade, Mircea, Yoga, Immortality and Freedom; pg. 74
3. Ibid, page 75;
4. Govindan, "How do we know whether we are progressing spirituality?" KY Journal: Volume 14 Number 3 - Fall 2007 and in Kriya Yoga Insights Along the Path.
5. Ganapathy, The Yoga of Tirumular: Essays on the Tirumandiram, page 36
6. Govindan, "Seeing the Manifestation of Grace," KY Journal: Volume 17 Number 2 - Summer 2010
7. Tirumular, The Tirumandiram: Classic of Yoga and Tantra.
8. Govindan, "They are not two," KY Journal, Volume 20 Number 4 - Winter 2014
9. Govindan, "Love, Grace and the Guru," KY Journal
10. Govindan, "Seek Babaji to Become Babaji," KY Journal

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Light of Siddhantha continued

they perform will be devoted to this goal.”

To this end, the Siddhas developed Kundalini yoga. To ensure that it be learned and applied for its true purposes, however, they insisted that the details of its practice be shared only by adepts in personal initiation and never in writing. Their descriptions of it in their poems, however, reveal its philosophical purposes and effects. These poems also reveal the essential elements of love and devotion, which invite Divine Grace. Grace can transform human nature, with its ordinary limitations as we will see below, just as alchemy can transform base metals, by invoking higher, hidden laws of nature.

For example, the initiate of Babaji's Kriya Yoga is taught that Siva, the name that the Siddhas gave to the Lord or Supreme Being, their source of inspiration, can be repeated as “Va”, meaning “come” in the Tamil language, and “Si” referring to the Lord's name, during the practice of pranayama. Repeating it this way conveys our highest aspiration for transcendental union. In response to this call of aspiration, Divine Grace can be experienced as the descent of “coolness” during this same practice of pranayama.

*The lustrous flame, our incomparable Lord,
the bright flame that resides in my inmost self,
The eyes of flame, transcending the seven worlds
Yet a cool flame He is, the leader of all sacrifices.*
– Tirumandiram 221

Here, Tirumular redefines sacrifice. Instead of making oblations into a ceremonial fire to the celestial deities to gain wealth for ourselves or our families, we should raise the fire that resides within, the Kundalini Sakti, so that it ascends to all of the chakras. Similarly, he reinterprets yaga or yagna (sacrifice) as an inner activity of yoga. See verses 337 and 338. Nowhere in the Siddha literature do the Siddhas praise the deities. Instead of worshipping them in stone images or temples, they encourage us to understand Kundalini yoga as inner worship.

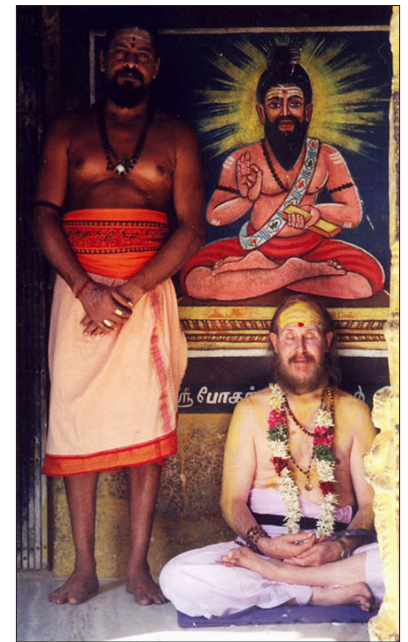
Tirumular emphasizes that sacrifices made in exchange for small gains actually cloud our view and conceal the real goal of seeking the Lord's Grace. The Lord, Siva, is the supreme flame that envelops and transcends the universe and fills the soul with supreme



Priests in a fire ceremony.

wisdom. The sun and the moon are metaphors for His two eyes. The sun represents the supreme universal consciousness that illuminates everything at all levels of manifestation. The moon represents the individualized consciousness. The sun is the one Eternal Witness. The moon is the reflected consciousness, or Witness, within each of us. His third eye, agni, represents supreme enlightenment that carries the soul across the ocean of birth and death. When the flame is cool, the Lord's Grace descends in the soul.

Siddhantha prescribes a progressive path with four stages: (1) chariya, service, Karma yoga; (2) kriya, worshipful activities, first external, then internal; (3) yoga, including the eight limbs of Astanga yoga, but ultimately Kundalini yoga; and (4) jnana, wisdom. Each stage prepares us for the next. As aspirants to Babaji's Kriya Yoga, we pledge to practice yoga not for our personal benefit alone, but for the benefit of everyone. This prepares us for the second stage, where Bhakti yoga helps aspirants cultivate love and devotion. This in turn enables us to access the Grace, power, and motivation necessary to continue yogic sadhana in the third stage. The awakening of Kundalini in the third stage brings samadhi and the realization of wisdom in the fourth stage. The four stages above can also be cultivated simultaneously.



MGS below Bogar and priest.

Overcoming the obscurity of misidentification

According to the Siddhas, Siva has five functions: creation, preservation, dissolution, concealment or obscurity, and Grace. They facilitate the education of the soul by giving it the experiences required to grow in wisdom and overcome the ignorance of our true identity, egoism, and delusion. Grace acts through all five of these, but we access it directly when we aspire to it, with love, by turning toward the Lord. These are represented in the hands and feet of Nataraja, “Dancing Shiva,” in the temple of Chidambaram.

Although consciousness permeates us at all levels, it is concealed by the soul's three malas, or stains: the anava mala, egoism and ignorance of our true identity, identifying with what we are not; karma mala, the

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Light of Siddhantha continued

sum of our habits and tendencies, the consequences of past thoughts, words, and actions; and maya mala, delusion of the mind. This concealment or obscurity manifests through the distraction of emotions, such as fear or anger, mental and intellectual agitation, desires, physical discomfort, and other obstacles, such as doubt, dispersion, lust, and laziness. Its purpose is to motivate us to become seekers, to seek the wisdom that will carry us beyond to Self-realization.

In this "Kundalini-yagna," when the prana is controlled, the passage of susumna nadi is opened, and Kundalini rises through it, piercing the six adharas or chakras below the crown chakra, where it merges with Para-Siva, Supreme consciousness.

On top of the central nadi one should experience the inner and the outer;

Snapping the fury of ahamkara one should consume the flood of bliss;

By precisely merging with Siva with an uninterrupted calmness,

One should attain the bliss of sleepless sleep;

Dance, oh! Snake! In rhythm, in rhythm.

– Verse 116, from Pambatti Siddha's Dance, Oh! Snake Dance

"Ahamkara" is egoism born of ignorance.

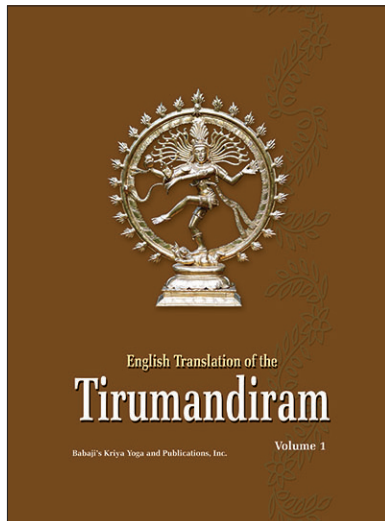
According to the Siddhas, the roots of liberation from the stains, mentioned above, are upward. As portrayed by Paambatti Siddhar in his poem "Dance Snake Dance," verse 113, there is no birth for those who have uprooted the roots planted upward.

And from the Bauls, a group of mystic minstrels from the historical Bengal region, a poem says:

The roots of the tree are planted in the sky,

And the branches on the earth.

This is how Kundalini yoga is structured. Inwardness and upward movement are its primary characteristics. Pranayama is the key, because it helps us divert our downward flowing seminal fluid and direct it upward. Sexual or seed energy, bindu, is sublimated into the spiritual energy, known as ojas, associated with the highest chakras in and above the head. Sublimation is a process of refining or purifying. Turning inward, away from the distraction of the senses, calms the mind and vital bodies. Just as a glass of water becomes



transparent when sediment settles to the bottom, so also consciousness becomes clearly distinct from the movements of the mind. In silence, we identify with That, conscious energy, Siva-Sakti centered in the crown.

The inverted tree, with its roots in the sky above the head, is a metaphor for the relationship between our human nature and our Divine source. We are created by the Divine. Our roots are the Divine. Siva, Supreme Consciousness, manifests all through Sakti, the primordial creative force. Consciousness is not an epiphenomenon of the brain, as some scientists claim without evidence. Consciousness upholds all.

The practice of Kundalini yoga raises energy from the lower psycho-energetic centers, known as chakras – where we identify with the physical body and its survival, with emotions, desires, and imagination, and where we are primarily preoccupied with survival, sex, and desire – to the higher chakras – where we experience love, creativity, insight, and spiritual illumination. Until the higher chakras are awakened, we identify completely with the lower psychological states. In addition to pranayama, as discussed above, all of the 18 Kriya Hatha yoga postures, as well as the practice of bandhas or muscular locks, direct energy from the lower to the higher chakras. Furthermore, they are practiced in a way to balance the left and right nadis, the ida and pingala, respectively, referred to as "ha" and "tha." The practice results in the opening of the central susumna nadi.

Course the breath in ways appropriate through nadis Idakala and Pingala,

Seat yourself in Asanas (comely), And agreeably direct the breath within;

Through Muladhara, that is triangle shaped, Upward ascend;

Verily may you see the Feet, Of Lord, that is Timeless Eternity.

– Tirumandiram 2173

Uprooting the gunas three, he who controls breath in Muladhara,

And courses it alternatively through nadis left and right,

In time measure prescribed will be immortal made by Him that is King of Beings Heavenly.

– Tirumandiram 615

Furthermore, the practice of the bija or seed syllable mantras particular to each chakra results in the rise of energy from the lower to the higher chakras. They energize, awaken, and integrate their corresponding psychological states. This reflects the basic principle of Tantra, that consciousness follows energy, and energy follows consciousness. Tantra refers to the body of teachings that seeks to integrate humanity's material and spiritual dimensions.

Continued on Page 9

News and Notes

Pilgrimage to the new Badrinath Ashram with M. G. Satchidananda and Durga Ahlund, September 17 to October 5, 2020: 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

Pilgrimage to South India January 3-21, 2021: For the first time in three years, we are organizing this tour to south India. Acharya Satyananda, with the assistance of Acharyas Sita and Nagalakshimi, will guide a group of initiates of Babaji's Kriya Yoga through the country of the Tamil Siddha Yoga tradition, this time with a couple new destinations for this tour and with New Year's eve in our ashram in Bangalore. Satyananda has guided our pilgrimage tours to India and has been teaching Babaji's Kriya Yoga in India for more than a decade. The tour is guided in English with translations into languages

of accompanying Acharyas. For details contact info@babaji.ca

Visit holy places of South India's ancient and profound spiritual culture, meet with several living spiritual masters, practice daily guided Kriya Yoga in sacred sites at ashrams, old temples, samadhi shrines, on mountain tops and at the water front, visit our own ashram in Bangalore and two ashrams of world-renowned saints in Tiruvannamalai and Pondicherry, and a vedic heritage ayurvedic resort at the Western Ghats, and travel through the beautiful nature of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, touching the sunny countryside of countless coconut trees, the beautiful Western Ghats mountain range, and the shores of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec August 28 to 30, and October

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Light of Siddhantha *continued*

Laya yoga

Another name for Kundalini yoga is Laya yoga. Laya means dissolution. Dissolution of the ego's false identification with what it, ultimately, is not: the physical, emotional, mental, and intellectual dimensions of human nature. Each of these corresponds to the elements or bhutas of ancient science: earth, water, fire, and air. They obscure our true, eternal spiritual Self, or consciousness, which corresponds to the fifth element, space.

The Siddhas' favorite description of the Lord, vettaveli, refers to vast luminous space. Just as water is needed to dissolve earth, fire is needed to dissolve water into steam, fire burns into air, and air dissolves into infinite space, our consciousness rises and expands and identifies with more sublime dimensions of existence. Egoism, the habit of identifying with what we are not, contracts consciousness around physical sensations, emotions, mental fantasies or memories, and intellectual ideas, to the momentary exclusion of everything else. This is efficient and effective for our survival and for many limited day-to-day tasks and relationships. But when the ego assumes an exaggerated role and causes us to forget our true identity, it is the primary source of our suffering.

In Laya yoga, we dissolve our ego's false identification with the physical (earth), into the emotional (water), into the mental (fire), into the intellectual (air), and ultimately the spiritual (space). Meditation on the 24 tattvas or principles of human nature bring us to the doorway of Self-realization and transcendence. The 24 tattvas include the five elements mentioned above, their five tanmatras or sense elements (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching), their five sense organs, five organs of actions, and the subconscious, the mind, the intellect, the ego, as well as five other

tattvas, which are the agents of maya or delusion (time, desire, karma, limited knowledge, and limited power). Asanas, or postures, and bandhas sublimate the energy with the physical body; Bhakti yoga, or devotional practice, sublimate energy in the vital body, the seat of emotions; pranayama and meditation sublimate energy in the mental body; mantras sublimate energy in the intellectual body. With synergy, they bring about cognitive absorption known as samadhi, when Kundalini energy rises to the topmost chakra. As this occurs, the descent of Grace is facilitated and manifests as the inner guru. Sri Aurobindo refers to this as the psychic being. As it comes to the foreground, it progressively guides and transforms us while our potential power and consciousness is revealed. We realize as our Divine Selves. We achieve realization of our Divine Selves, and identify with sat chit ananda – absolute being, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss – in the crown.

Om Namah Shivayah means "the result of sacrifice is bliss." In other words, when you give it all up, you get it all. The spiritual path begins when you are ready to experience nothing special, and to be no one special. Remember this as you sacrifice each moment to the next.

Recommended reading, available in several languages, from our e-commerce bookstore:

The Wisdom of Jesus and the Yoga Siddhas

Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Tradition

The Yoga of Siddha Tirumular: Essays on The Tirumandiram

The Yoga of the Eighteen Siddhas: An Anthology

The Yoga of Boganathar, Volumes 1 and 2

The Grace of Babaji's Kriya Yoga correspondence course

Truth Speaks, Civavakkiyam, ebook



News and notes *continued*

23-25, 2020 in English and June 12-14, and October 16-18, 2020 in French.

Third level initiations will be offered with M. Govindan Satchidananda in Quebec July 17-26, 2020. 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.

International Yoga Congress at Yoga Vidya, in Bad Meinberg, Germany, November 20-22, 2020, with M.G. Satchidananda, as one of the main presenters
During it, Satchidananda will give one lecture on Saturday from 8:05 to 9:45 am on Yoga Siddhantha. He will also offer a Satsang gathering of initiates, on Sunday from 8:15 to 11 a.m., as well as an initiation seminar November 22-25. He will also give a lecture on the Yoga Sadhana of Patanjali on Tuesday November 24 at 8 p.m. His 2 lectures, the satsang and the initiation seminar will be translated from English into German by Satyananda. This seminar at the Yoga Vidya headquarters includes accommodation and full board. The seminar begins Sunday at 4.30pm and ends Wednesday around 12pm. Contact: info@babaji.de for details

International Yoga Conference in Warsaw, Poland, November 27 to 28, 2020, 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!

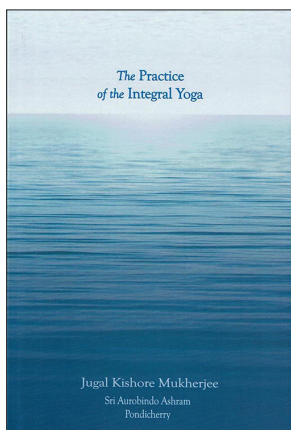
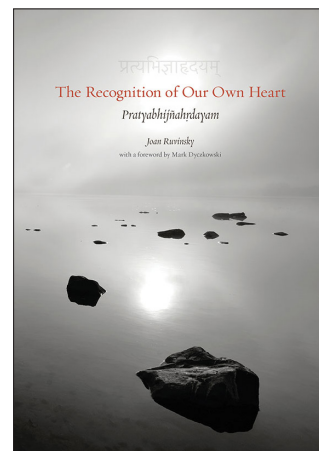
"We have enjoyed this book immensely. We met Professor Mukerjee, a sadhak of Integral Yoga for over 50 years, and a past director of the International Center for Education, in January 2006, at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. We were charmed by his clear message that living a divine life means 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."

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

New: Personal retreats at the Quebec Ashram, are now possible with prior reservations We are happy to announce that Jivani Johanne Abran and her husband Dhanyam Daniel Lacroix have moved into their newly



Continued on Page 11

News and notes *continued*

constructed home, 100 meters from the Quebec ashram, and that during the winter months and early spring, Jivani is willing to prepare meals for visitors who wish to have a personal retreat at the ashram. Between the end of April and the end of August, these meals can also be provided by Vajra Ira Davis. For more information: info@babaji.ca.

Visit our e-commerce site www.babajiskriyayoga.net for purchasing with your VISA, American Express or Mastercard all of the books and other products sold



Acharya Satyananda with 30 initiates at the 2nd initiation, February 9, 2020 in Mumbai, India.

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