

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Love is God, Anbu Sivam

By M. G. Satchidananda

What is my purpose? Why am I suffering? Who Am I? Eventually, everyone must confront these fundamental, existential questions. Yoga teaches that these questions can motivate each of us to free ourselves from the limitations of human nature. Finding answers to these questions is wisdom, or Jnana Yoga. A student of yoga, or sadhak, one who practices the discipline of Yoga, will benefit from understanding the wis-

dom teachings of the Yoga Siddhas, those who have overcome the limitations of human nature and have realized its potential perfection, known as siddhi.

The Siddhas teach that our human nature is subject to three stains or fetters known as malas: first, ignorance of our true identity, or egoism, known as the anava mala; second, maya, mental delusion; and third, karma, the consequences of our past thoughts, words, and actions. They

teach us that Yoga is the process of purifying ourselves of these three stains. By doing so, we weaken the afflictions, which are the source of our suffering, and become Self-realized.

In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali tells us:

Ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life are the five afflictions.

– *The Yoga Sutras, II:3*

These afflictions in their subtle form are destroyed by tracing their cause back to their origin.

– *The Yoga Sutras, II:10*

In the active state, these fluctuations arising within consciousness are destroyed by meditation.

– *The Yoga Sutras, II:11*

The five afflictions maintain our false identify and separation from the Self. On the subtle level, they exist as subconscious impressions (samskaras). They can be eliminated only by returning to the source through the various levels of samadhi (cognitive absorption), during which you repeatedly identify with the true Self. The little "i" becomes subsumed gradually in the great "I," and as it does, the subconscious impressions dissolve. In Verse I.12, Patanjali gives us

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the means: by the constant practice of detachment. Ask yourself, who is attached? Who is suffering? Who feels aversion?

Patanjali goes on to tell us about karma.

The reservoir of karmas rooted in the afflictions, is experienced in seen (present) and unseen (future) existence. – *The Yoga Sutras, II.12*

So long as the root exists, fruits also exist, namely birth and its experiences. – *The Yoga Sutras, II.13*

Because of virtuous and non-virtuous karma, there are corresponding pleasurable and painful consequences.

– *The Yoga Sutras, II.14*

He both defines Kriya Yoga and gives us its purpose in *The Yoga Sutras, II.1-2*:

Intense practice, self-study, and devotion to the Lord constitute Kriya Yoga.

They are used for the purpose of weakening any affliction and cultivating cognitive absorption.

To reach the state of enlightenment known as *asamprajnata samadhi*, Patanjali tells us:

For other yogins, the accomplishment of non-distinguished cognitive absorption is preceded by intense devotion, courage, mindfulness, cognitive absorption, and true insights. – *The Yoga Sutras, I.20*

See the first and second chapters, or *padas*, in my book *The Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas* for the commentaries on these verses.

Love is the vehicle and destination of Kriya Yoga

For Yoga students, without wisdom, without a clear purpose, it is easy to be driven by the values of our materialistic culture: competition, fame, appearance, individualism, health, wealth, and success. Yoga is even marketed by some as a means to achieving these materialistic goals. Following such a path will not free you from the afflictions, the stains of egoism, delusion, and karma, as outlined above. Therefore, align your practice of Yoga with its true purpose. Begin by defining that purpose as love itself. As you do, love will transform you. When love is your purpose, your understanding of it will grow. It will become unconditional. Love will be your vehicle and your destination.

Love is the divine spark in the soul of every being. It is revealed in the quality of selflessness, mercy, and compassion for all living beings. True love is the sacrifice of the ego. It is God's light embedded in the soul. When the soul sees this, "I" is overwhelmed with love. Tirumular tells us "Anbu Sivam," Love is Siva, or God:

The ignorant say that Love and Siva are two,

Love is Siva, they know not;

Love is Siva, once they know this;

Love abides as Siva

– *Tirumandiram, Verse 270*

God's grace is the highest form of love, pure and free from stain. Its only concern is for the soul. God's grace

makes possible all worldly things through which the soul can learn and redeem itself, experience the supreme love of God, and become one with it. God has given us the power of loving, by which the soul elevates itself to the world of Siva. Love takes us nearer to God. Other religions may say that God is love, but Tirumular tells us that love is God. This sacred verse is essentially mystical and must be experienced to be truly understood.

Love is the basis of Yoga in all its major forms (Bhakti, Karma, Raja, Jnana) and Tantra (transformation of our human nature into the Divine). In *Yoga sutra II.30*, love is expressed in the first limb of *Astanga Yoga*, the *yamas*: non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity, and greedlessness. These five social restraints regulate and harmonize our social life and create the foundation of our practice.

Love begins with loving yourself. If you cannot love yourself, how can you love others? In what ways can you love yourself? Physically, emotionally, mentally, intellectually, and spiritually!

How can you love yourself physically?

In reply to this question, the best advice I can give you is to become increasingly aware of the role that food plays in your life, and to eat consciously. Be a witness. Be conscious during all activity, including eating. Practice *Nityananda Kriya*, whether or not you have food, whether or not it tastes good. Cultivate awareness and equanimity. Do not be a slave to impulse. Take courses, read books, and experiment with simple vegetarian meals that are complete, tasty, and wholesome. Notice how you digest. Choose foods that energize you and help balance your predominant dosha.

Loving yourself physically also includes resting when you are tired. Avoid fatigue, which is an obstacle to Self-awareness. Get sufficient physical exercise so that your glands secrete sufficient endorphins, and your various internal systems remain healthy. Practice the fivefold path of *Kriya Yoga* to control the effects of stress. Regular practice of the 18 postures, *pranayama*, and meditation should be sufficient for this, but you are welcome to supplement it with other forms of physical exercise.

How can you love yourself emotionally?

Some of us treat our emotions like mosquitoes, but emotions are messengers. We should try to understand the messages they bear, rather than trying to kill or suppress them. Ask yourself "why?" whenever you feel angry, anxious, fearful, depressed. Use the fourth meditation technique, *Dhyana Kriya*, to reflect upon why the emotion arises and what it is trying to teach you. When you feel the emotions, ask yourself, "do I want to control, or do I want to be loved?" Then ask, "who wants to?" and "who Am I?" When love is infected by attachment, you will suffer when your expectations are not realized. By detachment, by letting go of what you expect to receive

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from others, you can avoid suffering and experience unconditional love, free of egoism.

You can transform the energy associated with negative emotions into positive emotions through Bhakti Yoga practices, such as chanting, devotional songs, ceremonies, and pilgrimages. For example, when you feel depressed, chant with feeling. Not only will this release difficult emotions, but it will also uplift your heart with love and devotion. This is far better than compensating for the negative feelings by overeating, drinking alcohol, smoking, or through other addictive behavior. Emotions can be your friend or your enemy. It all depends on how you use them.

How can you love yourself mentally?

At this level, we are concerned with what comes into your mind through the five senses. How do you feed yourself through your eyes, ears, skin, nose, and tongue? Do you seek forms of entertainment that fill your subconscious mind with images of violence, lust, anger, and fear? Do you try to nourish yourself with activities that merely distract you? Or do you choose images that inspire you and activities that help you cultivate equanimity and self-awareness?

How does your apartment or house look? Do you have untidy areas? Could you create a new space by giving away things you no longer need? Keep your space very clean and tidy. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Keep it as clean as you would like it to be if Babaji were coming to visit that day. Burn incense. Redecorate. Sing devotional songs. Play or listen to music that uplifts your mind and spirit. Reserve part of your home for your practice of Yoga. Make it your ashram. Be a Yogi!

Allow the Lord to express His love through your mind by creating music, art, and an environment that will serve others.

How do you love yourself intellectually?

What should you read? Does your reading material uplift you or merely distract you? Every day read some inspiring literature that will improve your health, uplift your spirit, encourage you to practice meditation, and contribute to your personal growth. There are wonderful classics such as the Bhagavad Gita, The Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas, The Bible, and the Upanishads. Study them. Read the many inspiring stories of the saints. They will help you overcome your problems.

Love involves expansion, and the intellect expands when it is allowed to be curious, to ask questions and seek answers, and to reflect. Too often, people join a spiritual group or a religion whose leaders claim to be the sole repositories of truth. They will often tell their followers not to read anything else or, even worse, not to question them – to accept blindly whatever they say. Frankly, this is the problem with religion. You abuse your God-given intellect by denying it, and this is the opposite of loving it. If God wanted you to be a sheep, God would not have given you a human brain. Take a scientific ap-

proach. Question, seek answers, experiment, record your experiences, study your behavior and reactions, and compare with others. Learn from all sources. Become the master of yourself. Don't let someone else master you! Do not surrender your power to anyone. Do not renounce your power to think and reflect. The intellect can't answer all questions, but it can solve many problems. Use it to compare your experience with what is taught in sacred texts.

Use your intellect to express your love through speech and clear communication. Use it to solve problems in all areas of human endeavour to make the world a better place. Allow the Divine to work through your intellect by guiding and inspiring you.

How do you love yourself spiritually?

Originally, the word spiritual referred to love itself. Today, however, it has become an ambiguous term that might refer to such things as communicating with the dead, mediumship, psychic powers, and astral travel. These, however, have little to do with true spiritual love. The best way to develop spirituality is to soak all of your thoughts, words, and actions in the nectar of love, even the smallest gestures of daily life. For example, treat your friends, family, and strangers with care and love. Notice how you think about others. Transform your thoughts. Try to see what is good and great in each person. By thinking ill of others, you only reinforce the negative traits in them and in yourself!

Speak only what is helpful or uplifting for others; otherwise, keep silent.

Cultivate Bhakti Yoga regularly. Set up a home shrine and place on it a picture or image of the aspect of the Divine that you most admire. Chant, sing, pray. By pretending that it is worthy of your unconditional love, you will taste such love. That experience will be so wonderful that you will want to include it in all of your relationships, whether with people, animals, or objects. If you feel drawn to groups, participate in group devotional activities.

Let the Guru guide you: becoming a co-creator with the Lord

The Divine, or Supreme Being, whatever name you give it, loves you. It also seeks to guide you through the Guru and through what Sri Aurobindo refers to as the "Psychic Being," the soul involved in nature. The Divine, and its human instrument the Guru, love you in your true nature, the higher Self or soul, with compassion and wisdom. If the Divine and the Guru were only compassionate, however, they could not guide you out of your life's illusion. You would misinterpret their compassion as love for how you are now. If the Divine and the Guru were merely wise but lacking in compassion, most likely you, as a disciple, would be crushed under the demand for self-transformation. Disciples are prone to misconceptions, projections, illusions, and delusions that prevent

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Absolute freedom in the post-humanist world

By M. G. Satchidananda

The transformation into another species is due to the vast possibilities inherent in Nature.

– Patanjali, Yoga Sutras, II.2.

Be Ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

– Jesus, Matthew 5:48

Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the most High.

– Psalms lxxxii,6, quoted by Jesus, John x.34

Absolute Freedom, what Patanjali refers to as kaivalya or what Sri Aurobindo called “Absolute Unity,” is the goal of Classical Yoga. In the last chapter of the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali elaborates on this final stage of Self Realization, which is never “final.” How could one limit that which is limitless, the Divine or his creation? Absolute Freedom necessarily requires that the future is yet to be written, by all of us.

The world is changing faster than ever before. We are all driven not only by inner forces which are the product of our human evolution, but also by forces which are external to ourselves, including technology, economic, media and political entities, science, as well as the environment. Trying to respond to the flood of ideas, promises and threats from these forces and their developments can leave us even more confused and inactive than before. While the most pressing issues for many persons include climate change, growing economic inequality, disruption in the employment market, and the threats of war, if we take a wider view, some will argue that all human problems are overshadowed by three interlinked processes:

“1. Science is converging on an all-encompassing dogma, which says that organisms are algorithms and life is data processing.

2. Intelligence is decoupling from consciousness.

3. Non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms may soon know us better than we know ourselves.”

– Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus*, pg.402

The above assertions are made by leading scientists in the fields of bio-technology, genetics, artificial intelligence and computer science. They are at the heart of developments being made by the biggest technology companies, including Google, Facebook, Amazon and others who are developing applications using Big Data, genetic coding, nano-robotics and bio-engineering to upgrade homo-sapiens into a new species, with godlike powers, even immortality. This evolutionary leap in humanity may produce a new elite caste, who will be as different from modern homo-sapiens as homo-sapiens were from Neanderthals.

While this may require decades or even a hundred years, we are all now beginning to experience the effects of the above assertions in the technological products of the pharmaceutical industry, “the internet of all things,” globalization, smart phones and social media. We are all making choices, usually by default, as to how we incorporate the new technology into our lives, and the lives of our children.

Before discussing the possible future implications of the above three assertions and related developments, it is necessary to understand the limitations of science, particularly with regards to its understanding of consciousness. Subsequently the relationship between science and humanism will also need to be discussed.

Science and consciousness

Science refers to the body of knowledge which has been accumulated as a result of the application of the scientific method and the formation of a consensus regarding those observations. As anyone who has attended a science class knows, the method includes four steps. First, the positing of a hypothesis, for example, that a bacterial infection can be treated successfully by the administration of a particular antibiotic. Second, the testing of the hypothesis in a controlled experiment with a sample size that is sufficiently large to enable to draw conclu-

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or delay a constructive relationship with the Guru.

At a certain stage in your loving relationship with the Divine, you will realize that you have the power and the responsibility to create your life. You go beyond the ordinary state of “dreaming with your eyes open,” to that of a visionary. You become a visionary. You remain faithful to your dreams, the dreams that you know are aligned with your path of wisdom and Self-realization. The Divine is no longer distant, and you feel that you are a co-creator with the Divine.

The Divine gives graciously. The Divine inspires. When you set your intention to make something happen, the universe conspires to support you in bringing about

its fulfillment. You may have to work hard to complete it, but you feel that you are not the doer, just the instrument. You are patient about the outcome, trusting that the universe will take care of it. You abide in the present moment, and things get done while you do what is required. You align yourself more and more with the will of the Divine. This happens, however, as you purify the ego's needs and preferences. Whatever the result, you feel blessed.

References: Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas; Tirumandiram; Kriya Yoga Insights Along the Path; Enlightenment: It's Not What You Think. All are available at the ecommerce bookstore at www.babajiskriyayoga.net



sions that are statistically significant. Third, the recording of the results of the experiment. Fourth, the sharing of these results with other researchers, some of whom attempt to replicate these results in their own experiments. When a sufficient number of experiments has yielded the same or similar results, these are added to the body of scientific knowledge. Unlike philosophy, it is empirical, and relies upon experimental testing of observable phenomena.

Until about one hundred years ago, physical science, which includes physics and chemistry, viewed phenomena as operating according to laws which were mechanical in nature. Since then, however, this Newtonian model, has been gradually proven to be inadequate, as the field of physics known as quantum mechanics first theorized and then demonstrated through experimentation, that observations were sometimes influenced by the observer. This has given rise to a debate as how this occurs and what is the nature of consciousness. There are two main schools of opinion in this debate.

One school, principally neurosciences holds that consciousness is an epi-phenomena of the brain. This means essentially that consciousness is created by electrochemical reactions in the brain, and that mental experiences fulfil some essential data-processing function. Without the brain, they theorize, consciousness could not exist. However, no one has any understanding how biochemical reactions and electrical currents in the brain create the subject object experience of pain, anger, or fear. Scientists can only observe these occurring in the brain while using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Epiphenomenalism is the belief that mental experiences of choice and freely willed action are basically illusions. They are the accidental side effects of purely physical events and cannot be the source of any action or event. In other words, I may believe that I am choosing to type these words now appearing on the screen, but in fact, the words are being created by a complex set of physical/chemical reactions – I merely think that I have the freedom to type whatever I wish. It would be a mistake to call this view scientific in the first place since it rejects, without adequate explanation, a large pool of data, related to your own subjective experience as agent of mental experience, as we will illustrate below.

The other main school, points to experiments that indicate that consciousness is independent of the brain. This debate is of particular interest to scientists in the field of artificial intelligence, as well as to anyone who is interested in spirituality, higher consciousness, Yoga or metaphysics.

What is consciousness? Those in the second group above would argue that it is a mystery. Some of them

would argue that it is inherently unknowable, as it is transcendent to all observable phenomena. Knowing requires observation. So how does the observer observe itself? Classical Yoga replies that this occurs in the state of samadhi, or Self Realization, wherein one becomes conscious of what is conscious. But samadhi defies scientific measurement, except in its physiological markers and neurological imaging.

Nearly all brain researchers insist that consciousness arises from the functions of the brain. However, they

admit that they do not know how consciousness arises, and they have no evidence that it does. If they have their way, the educated class will agree with them, evidence or no evidence. Since “consciousness is the result of brain activity and nothing else,” since consciousness is ultimately a matter of physics, there is a danger that neuroscience will one day be used to engineer society’s values and political goals. As we will

discuss much further below, this Orwellian, post humanistic world is their final frontier.

But suppose all their fundamental assertions are completely wrong? Suppose they’re never going to prove consciousness arises from the brain? Suppose all their efforts in this direction are dependent on nothing more than circular reasoning—assuming what they’re trying to prove?

“Consciousness must be a function of brain activity, because what else could it be?”

Let’s begin with a very simple version of what consciousness means, and in the process of doing so we will shed several key ideas of the brain researchers:

First right now, you’re reading the words on this page. You know you’re reading the words. You’re aware you’re reading the words. You’re conscious of reading the words. You “have that consciousness.”

Second: The brain is composed, according to conventional physics, of tiny particles. That’s all. The neurons and their pathways and the synapses and the neurotransmitters are composed of atomic and sub-atomic particles at their fundamental level.

Third: These atomic particles are the same as those that flow through all of nature, whether it is earth, water or air, our own physical bodies, or other planets. They move and interact according to the laws and physics.

Fourth: There is nothing in these particles or any combination of them that suggests knowing. There is no knowing.

Five: But somehow, in the brain, these particles give rise to you knowing you are reading these words at this very moment.

Sixth: That assertion is an absurdity, given point number 4, that there is nothing in these particles or any combination of them that suggests knowing.

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Seventh: And yet you do know. You know you're reading these words. You're conscious of that.

Conclusion: Since you do know that you are reading these words, that consciousness is coming from somewhere other than the brain, which contains no knowing. It is self-evident.

Despite this, some brain researchers refuse to accept it. They introduce a second absurdity: you're not conscious of the fact you're reading these words on the page, you only think you are. There is no such thing as consciousness. Consciousness is a bizarre illusion created by the brain. Therefore, there is no need to explain consciousness. It doesn't exist. It never has.

Here is a third absurdity introduced by these brain scientists: there is no you. "You" is another illusion. The individual does not exist. There is a brain-process which results in the illusion of an individual existing.

So, you're not there, and I'm not here, according to this line of argument. And it's built to sidetrack the stark facts that you do exist and so do I, and we're both conscious at this very moment, and there is nothing in the most basic composition of the brain to account for consciousness.

Such brain scientists do try to introduce all sorts of absurdities masked in complex technical language to refute what you and I know and can experience in the here and now. But we are not biological machines. We are not some illusion projected by the brain. But they cannot escape their own assumption that "all matter and energy are composed of atomic particles which have no consciousness at all". Therefore, they argue, the brain is composed of the same particles, and so, there is no reason to assume the brain can give rise to consciousness.

Consciousness, which does exist, must be independent of matter and energy. Researchers can hate this conclusion, but they have to deal with it. They refuse to deal with it in a straightforward manner.

Science and humanism

During the past several hundred years, humanism has gradually taken the place of religion in modern society. According to this new creed, the highest source of authority and for the meaning of life is no longer God, as revealed in scripture, nor his delegates, king and priests, but the individual's own experience. The free choices of individual humans are the ultimate sources of political and religious authority. Consequently, the power of kings, God's delegate, has been replaced by the power of assemblies and officials, elected by the people. Rather than to rely upon what the priest or scripture would command you to do or to believe, Humanism commands you to trust your feelings, to listen to yourself, be true to yourself, follow your heart, do what feels good. Consequently, moral relativism has replaced absolute ethical rules of

behavior and the classical virtues. In aesthetics, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" and music and art is judged as to how it makes us feel, rather than according to any objective standard. In the economic field, the free will of the consumer has replaced the artisan guilds, princes and city councils as to what may be produced. Modern humanist education believes in teaching students to think for themselves, rather than memorize how Classical Greek or Biblical authorities would answer any question. Even one's belief in God became subject to my choice to believe, whether I feel God's presence and my heart tells me he exists. If my inner voice tells me that there is no God, I will cease to believe.

Humanism also produced a new method for obtaining true knowledge. This was the scientific revolution. Previously, true knowledge was obtained by reading scripture and then applying logic to interpret its meaning and to apply it to any question. The scientific method, as discussed above requires the collection of relevant empirical data and their analysis using mathematical tools such as statistics and probability theorems.

But the scientific method does not lend itself to ethical problems. No amount of data nor mathematical modeling can prove that it is wrong to murder or to lie to your spouse. Humanism offered an alternative to scriptural authority. If we wish to know the answer to any ethical question, we need to observe with sensitivity our inner experiences, that is sensations, emotions and thoughts. By paying attention to these experiences and allowing them to influence us, humanism tells us that we will develop sensitivity. Humanism instructs us to seek out a variety of experiences to gain such ethical knowledge. It also supports the individual's search for spiritual truth.

The founding fathers of the American government, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams and Hamilton embraced deism, which sought to substitute reason for revelation and dropped the notion of an active God who intervened in human affairs. Deists did not doubt the existence of God, and some of them continued to embrace Christianity as a system of morality and cosmic justice.

As we will see in Part 2 of this article, the post-humanistic world, which technology is now delivering to us through modern media, bio-technology and genetic engineering, will depend upon whether we embrace the mystery of consciousness or deny its existence, and if we deny it, what will replace our assumed freedom of choice, our values and the freedoms that support the development of human potential. In Part 3 of this article, we will discuss the emergence of techno-humanism, as well as an alternate vision, the reform and renewal of liberal humanism which is informed by the wisdom and practice of Yoga. □

(to be continued)



Acharya Sita Siddhananda Mayi Ma

The only and unique relationship that exists is the one with God. All others are forms and expressions of this one only. Every situation reveals, reconciles and overall, gives us the opportunity to return towards the Self. The world is not a factor of remoteness but a means of remembrance of the divine essence present in all things.

It required me quite some time to be able to write this biography, I have questioned a lot the importance of stating in words the events that brought me here. It was then that I understood that the events in themselves are not the true subject of this testimony but rather the thread that had woven them in silence, since the very first breath, and well before. It is towards That that I bow down and address myself filled with gratitude. I recognise the presence of Guru being at my side since always.

I was born into a family who was practicing yoga, and thanks to my mother, I grew up in an atmosphere blessed by books and the teachings of great Yogis and Mystics that inspired me deeply. The child was in permanent intimacy with the Divine who was whispering prayers to her ears and was caressing her hair in the breeze of the wind.

At the age of five, two major experiences opened my mind. The first one occurred when my family and I were at a party. I was walking in a large garden when a holographic image of the Divine Mother revealed to me. She appeared at the top of a tree, in white and blue colors, with golden roses at her feet, and spoke to me telepathically. I received the direct and precise information that my little sister was drowning in the pool. Without trying to figure out what was happening, I ran for help from my older sister, and the following image was of my father coming out of the reception room all dressed up and reaching the pool in order to rescue my sister.

This significant experience was preparing me for another great initiation that was to take place a few months later—the death of my father in a car accident. All the details of this last day spent together with him remained precisely engraved in my mind, and revisiting them later I could recognise a mysterious sense of farewell in our gestures and interactions.

With his passing away I realised that death is not the end but a door to another world which I could reach through its links with the heart. Death became as close



Acharya Sita
Siddhananda Mayi Ma

as a friend to the child. I could perceive it by witnessing the beauty of the world, and in its contact my being was often delighted and rejoiced.

Yogananda's book was part of our home library, and I was chanting the name of Babaji before knowing him. On approaching my seventh year, my first big dream was to go to live in a Himalayan monastery. An irresistible calling animated me. Without knowing how, I hoped to go there before my birthday, knowing deep down that after this age it would not be possible for me anymore. I was very disappointed when it became clear that I had to stay in the world and perhaps get lost in it. With a broken heart, I had to accept it.

I found refuge in silence and in some of my favourite games. I loved to spend hours projecting my still attention on extremely small objects, like a grain of sand, until "forgetting myself" and entering an ecstatic state beyond names and forms. This going forth and back in altered states of consciousness happened regularly, with ease and great simplicity. It was the reality I was living in.

I also liked to focus my attention on sounds, in all directions, 360° degrees around me, and then gradually widen the sound sphere while diluting the listening process. Something inside was telling me that in this way I would hear God's voice, and this filled me with unspeakable joy. These games were also directed to other senses as well. I spent most of my childhood in this kind of exploration, as the outside world held very little interest for me. Later, I recognised in the techniques of Kriya Yoga some familiarity with these games. The sovereign presence of the Guru was already there to guide me.

The years passed like pages of a book, as stages of life radically different from one another followed. The Guru gave me the experience of many lives condensed in only one, without letting me become attached to any of them. Whenever I felt myself settling into a habit, or wanting to hold onto something, the Guru would bounce the setting or the scenery and offer me a totally new experience. Like Babaji with his stick banging the floor to indicate the departure to a new start, life did that to me.

As a teenager, I was holding onto the belief that life was a struggle and I needed to be strong. I then challenged myself. Whenever I found resistance within myself, I knocked down the walls and experienced myself in very unusual circumstances. It was quite instructive and useful to some degree; it was a form of tapas. But when I realized that these often extreme experiences came from my original belief, I decided to abandon it.

I left Brazil at the age of twenty, carrying in one arm my first child, and a small bag in the other. The Guru was teaching me detachment. We went to live on a sailboat for five years with the father of my child and the children yet to be born. Life on the water was very simple: the less

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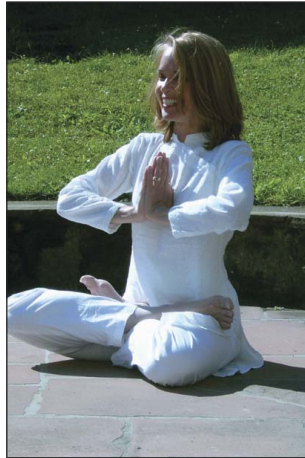


ABCs of deepening your practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga (Part 7)

By Durga Ahlund

(Editor's Note: Please refer to previous journals for more information on ways to achieve all the benefits possible from your practice of the 18 postures. Learn these techniques from an experience authorized instructor.)

The 18-Postures provide us with a wonderful system of physical exercise. To age gracefully, it is surely a practice that we should continue. Students often say they prefer to focus more on the pranayama, meditation or mantra and dismiss the asana. So, the point of these journal articles has been to emphasize that Kriya Hatha Yoga



is an integral part of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and a powerful form of self-observation, purification and unification. Use your practice of Kriya Hatha Yoga with an intention to consciously release the blockages and impurities in body, mind and emotions, which are obscuring the light within you. Focus on alignment, awareness, bandhas and spinal breathing and increase the length of holdings, and the asana can create the tapas required to reduce psychosomatic toxins and increase energy and light. Your Hatha Yoga practice is the foundation of your exploration of yourself.

–S–

Shakti – the creative flow of life empowered in your core. Awakened pranashakti is a divine ray of kundalini, an eternal, omnipresent energy. Once gently awakened

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Profile *continued*

we had in possessions, the further we could go. It was a world without papers, identification cards; no moorings, no address, no telephone, no money. The fruit from the forest and the sea were our food, the drinking water was offered from the sky. Each day was fully lived and unique. This direct contact with the elements became so intense that I can recall waking up at night at the slightest change of the wind's direction. I felt the movement of the waves, the depth of the ocean and the movement of the constellations of the stars inside me.

I learned to face the inevitable, to see death on the approach of storms in high seas and to savour getting away from the coast, the beaten track and the "civilized" world. The Guru was there.

In my thirties, I came back to earth with my arrival in France. There was the construction of a house, the working on the roots, the giving birth to children, the consolidation of the first chakra, interest in drumming and tribal rhythms. I was grounding myself progressively in a foreign land discovering the seasons and a totally different world. After the fluid and spatial openness of living for years on a boat, the Guru made me taste the scents of the earth. Like a seed, I returned to a state of gestation. A new life unfolded in me, educating and accompanying the children, growing and learning unconditional love and self giving.

It was then that suddenly one day, in a mysterious way, the name of Babaji started reverberate in my head, constantly. This name came from another time beyond memory, so strange and yet intimate, yet not from my

own thoughts. He was calling me by repeating his name. The time had come. I started looking for him and I found that he had always been there, present in my life. The more I was approaching him, the more the veil was dissolving, like a dream that had never really existed, I was discovering myself as I was discovering him.

This name, Babaji, in my mind, guided me to Scotland in the late summer of 2004 where Satchidananda was giving a first initiation in Babaji's Kriya Yoga, and where I met Durga for the first time. During its entire transmission, I was filled by a immense joy with an inner conviction that I had finally found what I had been so long searching.

An infinite gratitude overwhelmed me. At the end of the program all the participants formed a circle, hand in hand, to close the initiation, and in this unforgettable moment an extraordinary energetic discharge passed through the body from top to bottom. It was so intense making the body literally vibrate, and thus opening the path that was about to become my way.

I pray that everyone will find and then recognize such an encounter when it appears in one's life. May we have the strength, the humility and the faith to respond to the call. May we advance with a pure and determined heart, a serene mind, carried by the innocence of a child and the wisdom of a sage. May we be guided from the highest, anchored in the soil of the being.

May the dharma be fulfilled!

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum



Deepening you practice *continued*

within the body, the whole body is enhanced with waves of energy. This may be felt as a sudden rush, spiraling, or subtle fluttering, but with it, you begin to feel differently, think differently and act with a new view of the world, of yourself and others in it.

Shavasana – Each asana is a mind-body diagram, which circulates energy throughout the body. The asana moves blood, lymph, prana and waste products. During the relaxation stage the circulatory system carries the waste products that the asana released into it, to the organs of elimination such as the skin, the lungs and the colon. Asana followed by relaxation is more effective in removing the source of fatigue and ultimately the source of toxins. After each asana remain in relaxation for no less than thirty seconds in order to assimilate this exchange. In addition, a long shavasana at the conclusion of your asana practice is recommended.

Spine – Be aware of the position and suppleness of your spine and that it feels supported by the breath and musculature in every pose. Don't force any posture. Try to become intimately aware of the whole of your spinal column, aware of the flow of energy within it. Try this practice: Bring your awareness to the spinal column. Begin at the space of the perineum/cervix where you imagine mooladhara chakra to be. With one inhalation, swiftly move your awareness up through the spinal column from chakra to chakra, mooladhara to svadhistana (at the sacrum plexus), to manipura chakra (at solar plexus), to anahata chakra (behind the space of the heart), to vishuddhi chakra (at the back of the throat) and then into the center of the skull, to ajna chakra, directly behind the eyebrow center. Your awareness remains within the spinal column, as you take a breath in. Then with the exhalation, move awareness down the spine, from ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, svadhistana back to mooladhara. Your awareness should end at mooladhara precisely as your exhalation ends. Continue to breathe into the spine, breath and awareness moving together.

Spinal breathing in asana – Spinal breathing will establish the mind in the asana and stimulate the flow of prana. Deepen the body-mind connection by visualizing and directing inhalations up the spine and stimulate an increased flow of prana. In an asana, instead of taking the prana back down the spine with the exhalation, direct the prana outward from the spine, throughout the body, as if consciously expanding the prana to feed the tissues, cells and organ systems. In some asana, you may feel that expansion at ajna. Such internal focus will help you release, relax and strengthen the pose. You be able to hold the posture longer and bridge and integrate body, mind and spirit.

Surrender – Mental and physical surrender is as important to perfecting an asana as is strength, flexibility and suppleness. Aligning the body can help achieve the kind of relaxation required to let go and drop down into yourself. Relaxation allows the force of prana to flow freely, in a smooth and unified manner. Mental and phys-

ical relaxation releases resistance and contraction that block the current of the life force. Surrender requires you to let go of egoistic achievement and to achieve a willingness to embrace all experiences without judgment. Surrendering to the energy in the asana, in the moment helps you maintain balance and relaxation allowing the life force current to move along unimpeded. It brings about effortless holdings.

Sushumna nadi – Intensify your awareness of your spine even more and try to become aware of the subtle, psychic passage at the epicenter of your spinal cord. Bring your awareness to the spinal cord, into the subtle channel, the sacred passageway, the sushumna nadi. Be aware of this nadi running from mooladhara chakra to ajna chakra at the top of the spine. Visualize sushumna as a long, thin, luminous tube, a transparent pathway made up of light particles. Try to become immersed in the luminosity of sushumna nadi and “feel” the movement of light particles. Move within this tube of light, visualizing the lotus of mooladhara, svadhistana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi and ajna.

Maintain part of your awareness on sushumna pathway but add the breath. As you inhale, draw prana up from mooladhara, along the passage, to ajna. As you exhale, keep your awareness held in ajna, feel the expansion of prana. You can maintain awareness at ajna, even as part of your consciousness takes energy upward. Ajna drishti creates a magnetic pull on the prana within the sushumna nadi. Feel how your spine responds to this spinal breathing. It feels stronger more supported on the flow of prana. The breath moves, awareness moves, prana moves. Become aware of these forces moving within the luminous pathway. Be aware of the “feel” of the prana moving along sushumna. Surrender, and let there be nothing else but the ascending and expanding prana.

-T-

Tapas – a intensity of self-discipline and sadhana that generates heat and light in the body through the burning up of unconscious mental activities. Tapas works on karmas and creates friction, resistance, irritation, self-defensiveness and a desire to judge. It provides a means of breaking through personal preprogrammed patterns. Of easing karmic patterns and becoming conscious of conditioned unconscious thinking and acting. Tapas is required to transform unconscious psychosomatic blocks.

Tissues in body – Fascia is connective tissue that connects everything to everything and is a whole-body communication system. Even in scientific research and medical specialization the human body is no longer solely divided and observed as a separate system because all the systems are integrated through the nervous system and connective tissue. Yoga suggests that a system of nadis lies throughout the system of fascia and prana moves through it. [Research carried out at the University

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News and Notes

Pilgrimage to the new Badrinath Ashram with M. G. Satchidananda and Durga: September 20 to October 8, 2018, **for residents of India and Sri Lanka only, from May 19 to 31, 2018.** Join us for 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

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec June 15-17, 2018 and October 19-21, 2018.

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The new Ashram in Badrinath.

Deepening you practice *continued*

of Vermont and College of Medicine used high frequency ultrasound scanning acoustic microscopy to study meridian channels used in acupuncture (similar energetic structure to nadis) and found they follow the same fascia network in deep fascia and between organs]. Long holdings can help clear the meridian pathways (nadis) allowing prana to move freely through resistant connective tissues, joints, ligaments, tendons and skeletal system.

-U-

Ujjayi – Use ujjayi as you practice asana. Ujjayi will occur spontaneously as your concentration intensifies, but use it consciously to move into your areas of tension and tightness. Move on exhalations, with the soft, relaxing sound of ujjayi in the background. Awareness of this psychic breathing, the soft sound in the throat, the smooth, even-flow of the breath will continue to release, deepen and strengthen you in prolonged holdings. This gentle, rhythmic flow increases awareness and calms and stills the mind. Your whole being moves with the breath and the asana evolves. More energy is released into the spine, resulting in lightness, buoyancy, ease, effortless-ness. The pose succumbs in balance to joy.

Uddiyana bandha – Uddiyana means flying up, soaring; the great bird (prana) takes flight. The uddiyana bandha effects the solar plexus and generates a great deal of energy in the stomach and chest. It tones the sympathetic nervous system and is important on both a physical and psychic level. Fully contract the abdominal muscles backward toward the spine; both those muscles above and below the navel. Moolabandha, contraction of the perineum may spontaneously occur as you used the axillary muscles of exhalation. The pose achieves alignment, balance, and dynamic stillness.

-W-

Willful practice – Practice asana as a regular means of relaxing and nurturing your whole being, with a passive mind and ego subdued but consciously, willfully holding the postures for longer periods of time, concentrated on the position of the spine, the breath and what is

happening within the body. If you can hold the pose long enough with balance and harmony in body and mind, maintaining subtle penetrating awareness, the asana will become truly effective and shifts of consciousness will occur. Even karmic blockages held in the subtle bodies, revealed in the physical can be resolved. A willful, prolonged holding of an asana builds-up tension and energy but results in the deepest relaxation of body and mind.

-Y -

Yamas – The yogic teachings of self-discipline, the five yamas are critically important to understand, contemplate, meditate on and live by, throughout your lifetime: ahimsa, satya, asteya, aparigraha, brahmacharya. Establish yourself in behaviors of “right living,” which includes non-harming, compassion, empathy, truthfulness, non-stealing, simplicity, greedliness, charity, non-clinging, moderation and conservation of energy. Imbibe the complementary observances of the niyamas: saucha, santosha, svadhya, tapas, ishvara pranidhana. Radiate your commitment to attain purity and contentment, to observe yourself in all situations, to practice sincerely and fully, and to stay open to celebrate the sacred in All.

-Y-

Yoga – Yoga means to yoke, to unite body mind and spirit in its fullness, as one part of the cosmic whole. Hatha Yoga in its finest, highest, deepest philosophy is a preparation for and assists in the awakening of, the power potential of the prana shakti or kundalini energy. Through a regular, sincere regimen of Yoga you develop a perception of yourself as “energy.” You realize the physical body is matter, full of energy and empty space. You will become aware of the tactile sensations, miniscule flickerings and waves of energy that flow through the nadis of your body. You will become aware of how the prana flow affects your thoughts. You will accept your beingness as pure energy, which keeps you going through all the activities of the mind and senses, through the totality of all experiences with more creativity, inspiration, dynamism and purpose. □



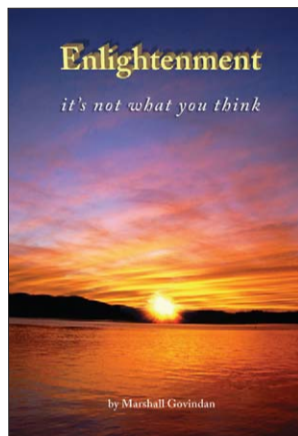


The new Ashram in Badrinath.

Third level initiations will be offered with M. Govindan Satchidananda in Quebec July 5-14, 2018. They will also be offered in 2018 by Satyananda in Germany, by Nityananda in Spain, by Sita Siddhananda in France, 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.

Celebration: This year we are celebrating the **25th Anniversary of the Quebec Ashram, founded in August 1992**, as well as the **20th Anniversary of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas, May 31, 1997**.

Enlightenment: It's Not What You Think, our latest publication, by Marshall Govindan, reveals how you can replace the perspective of the ego – the habit of identifying with the body, emotions, and thoughts – with a new perspective: the Witness, that of your soul ... pure consciousness. With compelling logic, practices for everyday life, and guided meditations, the book explains how you can free yourself from suffering, enjoy inner peace, and find intuitive guidance.. Enlightenment: It's Not What You Think is a must-read, for it is practical, simple, and meaningful... It is a decisive tool



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