

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

How to get the most out of your practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga?

By M. G. Satchidananda

Synergy is the short answer to this question, which is important to all sadhaks, or practitioners of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, whether you are a beginner or have been practicing for more than twenty years. Synergy occurs when two or more persons or things work together to produce a result that is greater than each of them could produce individually. Synergy occurs in organizations, tribes, and good marriages to name only a few examples. It also occurs in Babaji's fivefold path of Kriya Yoga, which

consists of Kriya Hatha Yoga, Kriya Kundalini Pranayama, Kriya Dhyana Yoga, Kriya Mantra Yoga, and Kriya Bhakti Yoga. The long answer can be understood by examining each of them.

Each of these five limbs or groups of practices develops one of the five bodies in particular.

In the physical body, Kriya Hatha Yoga includes asanas (physical postures of relaxation), bandhas (muscular locks), and mudras (psycho-physical gestures), which bring

about greater health, peace, and awakening of the principal nadis (energy channels) and chakras (centers). Babaji has selected a particularly effective series of 18 postures, which are taught in stages and in pairs. We should not care about the physical body for its own sake, but as a vehicle or temple of the Divine.

In the vital body, Kriya Kundalini Pranayama is a powerful breathing technique that awakens your potential power and consciousness, and circulates it through the seven principal chakras between the base of the spine and the crown of the head. It awakens the latent faculties associated with each of the seven chakras and turns you into a dynamo on all five planes of existence.

In the mental body, Kriya Dhyana Yoga is a progressive series of meditation techniques that teach the scientific art of mastering the mind: to cleanse the subconscious; to develop concentration, mental clarity, and vision; to awaken the intellectual, intuitive, and creative faculties; and to bring about the breathless state of communion with God, Samadhi, and Self-realization.

In the intellectual body, Kriya Mantra Yoga is the silent mental repetition of subtle sounds that awaken the intuition, the intellect, and the

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chakras. The mantra becomes a substitute for I-centered mental chatter and facilitates the accumulation of great amounts of energy. Mantras also cleanse habitual subconscious tendencies.

In the spiritual body, Kriya Bhakti Yoga cultivates the soul's aspiration for the Divine. It includes devotional activities and service to awaken unconditional love and spiritual bliss. It includes chanting and singing, ceremonies, pilgrimages, and worship. Gradually, all of your activities become soaked with sweetness, as you perceive the "Beloved" in all.

It is important to remember that the practice of any one of these affects the others in ways that you may ignore or not appreciate. Therefore, if you are struggling with the practice of any of the above, or if you feel as though you are no longer progressing, this article will demonstrate how your practice can benefit from applying the principle of synergy. It will be helpful to consider how this occurs, beginning with the most sublime dimension of our being, the spiritual, where you transcend all apparent differences and where all that is good originates.

The synergy of Kriya Bhakti Yoga

In the Spring 2017 edition of Kriya Yoga Journal, an article appeared entitled "The Nine Forms of Bhakti Yoga: the Path of Love and Devotion." In Bhakti Yoga, you cultivate your relationship with the Lord.

Who is the Lord? You may conceive of the Lord in any personal form you admire, for example, Jesus, Krishna, Shiva, Buddha, Babaji, a saint, or as the impersonal Supreme Being as absolute Being, Conscious and Bliss, Brahman, Supreme Grace Light. This relationship with the Lord will evolve along with your sense of Who Am I. At the beginning, the Lord may seem distant or the one to whom you pray to fulfill certain desires. The study of spiritual texts and accounts of saints who have experienced the Lord will guide and inspire you in this process of becoming closer to and intimate with the Lord.

The nine forms of Bhakti Yoga are:

1. *Shravana*. Listening to or reading sacred texts and stories. The Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Upanishads, and the Voice of Babaji can inspire and motivate you to love God, purify yourself, and model yourself on the spiritual heroes portrayed in these books. Particularly in your early years of seeking, these stories and texts can help you overcome the resistance that is born of old habits, memories, and tendencies.

2. *Kirtana*. Chanting, praising the Lord, devotional song; alone or with a group. The objective is not to make beautiful music. It does not matter if you cannot sing well. It can be done anytime. A very good time to practice Kirtana is when you are feeling sad, depressed, or anxious. The purpose is to transmute emotional energy into feelings of love, joy, and surrender. Begin while taking a shower to wash away difficult emotions!

3. *Smarana*. Remembering the Lord at all times. This can be done by recalling a favorite image of your favorite

form of the Lord, your ishtadevata, or maintaining a vision of the inner light of consciousness, the impersonal absolute Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. It can be reinforced by seeking the Lord through meditation, reading, metaphysical contemplation, pilgrimages, and worship.

4. *Seva*. Selfless service. Any activity into which you infuse love or express love for others is seva. Even if it is your job, it is selfless, if your motivation for doing it is without regard for your personal needs or recognition. It can be informed by Karma Yoga, in which you are not attached to the results, and you see the Lord as the Doer of all and yourself as a mere instrument, acting as a Witness.

5. *Archana*. Worship, alone or with a group; internal or external. Whether the object of worship it is made of paper, clay, metal, or wood, it represents the ephemeral and serves as a window on the Lord. In effect, you pretend that the object of worship is worthy of your unconditional love. As a result, you experience the joy of unconditional love, which begins to permeate all of your relationships.

6. *Vandana*. Salutation, bowing down before the Lord. This is done not only physically, but by focusing with great intensity all of your life energies on service and surrender to the Lord.

7. *Dasya*. Obedience to the will of the Lord. Repeat "Not my will, but Your Will be done."

8. *Sakhya*. Readiness to greet the Lord in all places and in all disguises or forms in the world.

9. *Ishvara-pranidhana*. Complete surrender to the Lord. In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, ishvara-pranidhana (surrender to the Lord) is the third element of Kriya Yoga. Together with the other two elements, detachment and self-study, surrender brings Self-realization and the weakening of the causes of suffering. Equanimity follows. You "let go and let God" take care of it. In Yoga Sutra 1.23, Patanjali further explains that, by surrendering our limited ego-consciousness to the Lord, we can also achieve Samadhi: Or because of one's surrender to the Lord, one successfully achieves cognitive absorption.

By cultivating any of the forms of Bhakti Yoga discussed above, you develop aspiration, or enthusiasm, for the practice of Yoga. Aspiration is the soul's longing for the True, the Good, the Beautiful, and Unconditional Love. It rejects the limited perspective of egoism and its manifestations, such as anger, depression, pride, desire, and fear. Consequently, if you prioritize the cultivation of Bhakti Yoga on a daily basis, you will experience the motivation to practice asanas, pranayama, meditation, and mantras. Resistance to practice and difficult emotions, born of egoism, evaporate in the joy of love and devotion, like puddles of water in the sun.

Transcendence becomes easy. You manifest the qualities of the object of your devotion, whether it is Jesus, Babaji, Krishna, Shiva, or Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

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Synergistic effects of practicing Kriya Mantra Yoga

Mantra repetition, known as japa, will also help you develop love, purity, humility, inspiration, and a one-pointed mind. Choose the name of the Lord as a mantra that most inspires you. Practice with a subtle aspiration to feel the qualities associated with the mantra that you are seeking to manifest. For example, calmness and detachment with the Shiva mantra. Love with the Krishna mantras. Abundance with the Lakshmi mantra. Wisdom with the Saraswati mantra.

Before beginning a round on your rosary, promise yourself that you will not allow your mind to wander until you have recited the mantra 108 times. Your power of concentration will grow, and consequently, your meditations will become deeper with far less distraction. Your willpower will become formidable. You will fulfill your intentions in all dimensions of life. Practicing mantras before meditation prepares the mind for one-pointed concentration.

The practice of repeating mantras replaces mental chatter, leaving a space into which inspiration can descend from your higher intelligence. Consequently, you will find more inspiration and inner guidance, born of intuition. When life presents you with problems, your practice of mantras creates the space in which solutions will appear. If the vital body is upset with difficult emotions, the practice of mantras will soothe it and calm the mind.

The practice of Kriya Mantra Yoga will help neutralize negative samskaras (habits) and vasanās (difficult memories to which you are attached). It will remove the obstacles to your practice of Yoga, including worry, doubt, laziness, sensuality, and instability.

Synergistic effects of Kriya Dhyana Yoga

Seven Dhyana Kriyas are taught during the first initiation. Their interplay is a superb example of synergy. The first, Shuddhi, the cultivation of detachment, helps you to perform the second, Eka Rupa, which requires concentration. That in turn prepares you for the third, Eena Rupa, and so on. That is why you are required to practice all of them on a rotating basis, and in each session, to briefly practice the Dhyanas from preceding days before practicing the Dhyana scheduled for that day. By practicing all of them, and not merely those that you find easy, your weakness will become strength. Otherwise, it is like going to the gym and exercising only the muscles that are already strong.

Furthermore, each of the Dhyana Kriyas have a different purpose and effect. The first one purifies the subconscious mind of negative habits and memories, which if not removed, may eventually kill your motivation to practice, your sadhana. The fourth develops your intellect, your ability to solve problems, and your powers of communication. This includes the ability to articulate doubts as questions and subsequently to seek and find answers and solutions. The fifth develops your ability to envision and manifest your dharma or mission in life and to exhaust desire. The sixth develops your intuition. The seventh cultivates your ability to communicate with your

highest source of guidance. Consequently, as your dharma becomes clear, as your ability to find answers and solve life's problems becomes inspired and effective, resistance is removed, as are many other obstacles to your practice.

Synergistic effects of Kriya Kundalini Pranayama and related breathing techniques

Kriya Kundalini Pranayama, taught during the first initiation, has more potentially powerful effects in all five bodies than any other technique in Babaji's Kriya Yoga. On the spiritual level, it raises the kundalini to the higher chakras and, in doing so, awakens the psychological states associated with them. It calms the mind, preparing it for meditation. It develops concentration, the power of visualization, and devotion to the Guru, and leaves the sadhak in profound peace, aware of the True Self. In doing so, it relieves physical tension and clears the vital of difficult emotions. As a result, the inner Guru comes to the fore, and aspiration for the True, the Good, and the Beautiful develops.

The practice of Brahmacharya Ojas Matreika Pranayama allows you to sublimate sexual desire into spiritual aspiration, transforming a source of distraction into a means of transcendence and spiritual realization. Practice of the many other pranayama techniques taught during the second and third initiations prevent and remedy a variety of functional disorders and diseases, including asthma, the common cold, insomnia, fatigue, and susceptibility to illness. They prolong your life and, in so doing, give you more time to attain the ultimate goals of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, which require physical incarnation.

Synergistic effects of Kriya Hatha Yoga

When the asanas are practiced regularly, meditation becomes easier because the body is able to remain at rest without discomfort. Asana practice can remedy the source of aches and pains and some functional disorders, which are a source of distraction. Unlike other systems of physical exercise, the practice of asanas activates the glands. As we age, their proper functioning becomes increasingly problematic to physical and emotional health. Practice asanas for at least 30 minutes a day.

When the 18 postures are practiced regularly, the nadis (energy channels) and chakras (psycho-energetic centers in the vital body) are awakened. Each posture directs pranic energy from the lower to the higher chakras. According to Tantra, consciousness follows energy, and so consciousness also rises. The psychological states associated with the higher chakras begin increasingly to direct your life choices. Not only can you remain more easily awake during meditation, but your meditations also become more susceptible to inspiration.

Practicing the 18 postures with sensitivity, attention, and awareness – meditatively – develops the emotional and mental state of equanimity. The vital body, the seat

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Is the Kingdom of Heaven within you?

Or why is your mind like a glass of water?

By M. G. Satchidananda

As mentioned in the Introduction to my book, *The Wisdom of Jesus and the Yoga Siddhas*, with the discovery of many new source documents in the Sinai Desert, and with the application of modern methods of textual analysis by scholars who are independent of institutional bias, most modern Biblical scholars will agree that the books of the Bible's New Testament are written at three levels of authenticity:

1. What were probably the actual words of Jesus, quoted in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but recorded several decades afterward.

2. What were probably interpolations, words attributed to Jesus by unknown sources.

3. What was said about Jesus or about his teachings by others, for example, Paul, in his "letters," which make up most of the rest of the New Testament, and which served as the basis for early Church dogma.

What do sayings at the first level reveal about who Jesus was and what his teachings were? Within Christianity and in the popular understanding of Jesus and his teaching, how much have sayings at the second and third levels distorted or obscured level number one? In chapter 5, of my book, we present a discussion of those aphorisms, which the 200 Jesus Seminar Fellows determined originated with Jesus Himself. In doing so, the answers to the first question above will become especially apparent. The second and third questions will be answered primarily in the next chapter.

The aphorisms discussed below have been selected from the most authentic aphorisms attributed to Jesus by the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar. They will also be compared to aphorisms from the writings of the Yoga Siddhas, to increase the understanding of their common source of inspiration.

The Kingdom of Heaven

While scholars agree that Jesus spoke often about the "Kingdom of Heaven," or the "Kingdom of God," the question arises as to whether these phrases refer to God's direct intervention in the future, including the end of the world, and last judgment, or did Jesus use these terms to

refer to something already present but elusive? The Fellows of the Jesus Seminar were inclined to believe that Jesus conceived the Kingdom of Heaven or God as being present all around but difficult to perceive. They did not believe that Jesus was referring to an apocalyptic vision, which was common among both earlier Jewish prophets and writers and later Church fathers, such as Paul and the author of Revelations. The confirming evidence of this conclusion lies in the major parables of Jesus: they do not reflect an apocalyptic view of history. Among his major parables were the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the dinner party, the vineyard laborers, the shrewd manager, the unforgiving slave, the corrupt judge, the leaven in the flour, the mustard seed, the pearl of great price and the hidden treasure.

The parable of the mustard seed expressed his vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, and was voted by the Fellows as one of the parables most certainly spoken by Jesus.

"The followers said to Jesus, 'Tell us what heaven's kingdom is like.' He said to them, 'It is like a mustard seed. (It) is the smallest of all seeds, but when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large plant and becomes a shelter for birds of heaven.'" (Gospel of Thomas Saying 20, with parallel verses in Mark 4.30-32, Luke 13.18-19, and Matthew 13. 31-32).

The metaphor of the mustard seed (proverbial for its smallness) is considered by scholars to be a good example of how Jesus considered God's domain to be: modest, common and pervasive, rather than imperial. They point out that the mighty cedar of Lebanon tree (Ezekiel 17:22-23) and the apocalyptic tree of Daniel (Daniel 4:12, 20-22) were the traditional metaphors used to describe God's domain. Jesus' selection of the mustard tree pokes fun at established tradition in a comical way. It is also anti-social in that it endorses counter movements and ridicules established tradition. The version in Thomas is considered to be closest to the original, as the versions of this in the Synoptic Gospels describe the mustard plant as a tree or biggest of all garden plants, thus accommodating

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of emotions and desires, becomes calm. You are better able to manage stress and calmly face the "edges" of fear and aversion when life brings new challenges. You become centered in the heart, where the psychic being, or guiding voice of the soul, resides and guides your actions. Your actions become less like impulsive reactions that are prompted by desire and fear.

Getting the most out of your practice

We recommend that you reserve time regularly, at

least twice a day, for you yogic sadhana (practice). Prioritize it in the early morning over any other activity, after your bath or shower. Practice some element of each of the five limbs every day. By doing so, the good effects of practicing any of them will be multiplied throughout all of your five bodies. We recommend that you practice regularly those in which you feel some deficiency or resistance, so that your personal weaknesses become strengths. Do enjoy even more practicing those that you enjoy the most. □



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the apocalyptic tree theme of the Hebrew scriptures, and misinterpreting the original message of Jesus. (The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?, pages 484-5)

The parable of the leaven in the flour also teaches us about the Kingdom of Heaven, and how reversing our human nature permits us to perceive it.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven which a woman took and concealed in fifty pounds of flour until it was all leavened." (Matthew 13.33, parallels in Luke 13.20-21 and Thomas 96).

This one-sentence parable transmits the voice of Jesus as clearly as any ancient record can, in the judgment of the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar. He uses three images in a way that would have been very surprising to His audience. "Hiding" leaven in flour is an unusual way to express the idea of mixing yeast and flour. It implies that God has deliberately concealed His Kingdom from us. The surprise increases when Jesus notes that there were "fifty pounds" of flour. In Genesis 18, three men, representatives of God, appear to Abraham and promise him and his wife that she will conceive a child soon, even though she is aged. For the occasion, Sarah is instructed to make cakes of fifty pounds of flour to give to the heavenly visitors. Fifty pounds of flour must be a suitable quantity to celebrate an epiphany (Greek - "the appearance; miraculous phenomenon"), a visible, though indirect manifestation of God. The third image is the use of leaven, regarded as a symbol of corruption by the Judeans. In the Passover celebration, bread was made without leaven. In a surprising reversal of the customary associations, the leaven here represents not what is corrupt and unholy, but the Kingdom of God. This is a typical strategy of Jesus, according to the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar (The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?, page 195) That God deliberately hides his Kingdom from us is one of the "five functions of the Lord," namely obscurity, according to Saiva Siddhanta (see below). It obliges us to seek Him, to overcome the delusion of the world.

In His Grace was I born;
In His Grace I grew up;
In His Grace I rested in death;
In His Grace I was in obfuscation;
In His Grace I tasted of ambrosial bliss;
In His Grace, Nandi (the Lord) entered.

– *Thirumandiram, verse 1800*

Thomas 113 tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is already here, but that we do not see it:

His disciples said to him, "When will the (Father's) imperial rule come?" "It will not come by watching for it. It will not be said, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Rather, the Father's imperial rule is spread out upon the earth, and people don't see it." (The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?, page 531)

Jesus' contemporary, the Yoga Siddha Thirumular affirms this same truth, that God's Kingdom is here, but that ordinary people do not see it:

"They who do not see the Treasure that surpasses all,
But seek the treasures that perish,
If within their melting heart they seek inside
They will see the Treasure that dies not."

– *Thirumandiram, verse 762*

On entering into the Kingdom of Heaven

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mark 10.25, with parallels in Matthew 19.24 and Luke 18.25)

This aphorism is graphic and humorous and exhibits Jesus' use of hyperbole and exaggeration. "It cannot be taken literally, which suggests that the whole discussion of the relation of wealth to God's Kingdom should be viewed circumspectly: does Jesus literally mean that everyone should embrace poverty as a way of life? Poverty and celibacy are aspects of the ascetic life that became popular in the Christian movement at an early date. The Fellows of the Jesus Seminar believe that these impulses did not stem from Jesus." (The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?, page 223)

This aphorism is also part of a complex of aphorisms, which describe how difficult it is for those with money to enter God's kingdom. The more material things one has, the greater the risk of becoming attached to them, and consequently missing "the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus had blessed the poor in the beatitudes, telling them that God's domain belonged to them, so he probably believed that in simplicity, one was closer to the living Presence of the Lord. It reflects the view that attachment to material things prevents one from realizing the spiritual dimension. (The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?, page 223) It is not the material things themselves that are problematic, but the desire and attachments for them, which cause us to lose sight of the Reality of God's Kingdom around us. It is the deluding tendency of the mind to fantasize, worry and become preoccupied with things, absorbed in them, rather than to live freely, identified as self-effulgent awareness, "in the light." He is also encouraging his listeners to go beyond the duality of poor-rich, hungry-not hungry, weeping-comforted, in other words the disease of the mind, in which one ordinarily identifies with one body, mind and emotions. One must purify oneself of desires, in order to transcend the ego's perspective that "I am the body" and its attachment to the body's pleasures.

"Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,

Blessed are the hungry, for you will feast,

Blessed are those who weep, for you will be comforted."

(Luke 6.21, with parallels in Thomas 54, 69.2, 58 and Matthew 5.3, 5.6)

The pairs of opposites employed in these beatitudes

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also reminds one of the practice of Yoga, which is “opposite doing.” Being still rather than moving, remaining silent rather than speaking, fasting, rather than feasting, cultivating pure consciousness in mental silence instead of permitting mental chatter. In so doing one is able to transcend the ordinary human consciousness, the perspective of the ego, and access the perspective of our soul, which is one of peace and unconditional joy, in short, beatitude.

In the Yoga-Sutras, Patanjali tells us that “By austerity, impurities of the body and senses are destroyed and perfection gained.” Yoga-sutra II.43 (Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas, page 109). Classical Yoga, as expounded by Patanjali tells us that we are dreaming with our eyes open, because we identify not with what we are, which is pure consciousness, but with what we are not, our dreams, the movements of the mind. This apparent and mistaken identification of the Self or Seer, with the manifestations of nature (the Seen) is the fundamental cause of human suffering and the fundamental problem of human consciousness. The Self is the pure, absolute subject, and is experienced as “I am.” But in ordinary human consciousness, the Self has become an object: “myself”, a personality, an ego ridden collection of thoughts, feelings and sensations which assumes the role of the subject. The habit of identifying with our thoughts, emotions, sensations, that is, egoism is the nearly universal disease of ordinary human consciousness. It is only by ceasing to identify with these, through the process of detachment and purification, that one can realize one’s true identity: the Self. The Self and the Lord have one common element, consciousness, according to Patanjali and the Siddhas, and it is by the realization of our true Self, that we can also realize the Lord, and be in His Kingdom. (Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas, page xxvi).

A glass of water

A glass of water, into which a little dirt is gradually added, is a metaphor for a person’s mind, individualized consciousness, into which experiences through the five senses are accumulated. When the sediment is allowed to sink to the bottom of the glass, the water becomes transparent. So also, when an individual’s memories and tendencies, *vasanas*, are not activated, when their buttons are not pushed by new similar experiences, one can see clearly the reality of life, without the mental and emotional distortions born of attachment and aversion. This may happen during meditation, when the mind is calm and quiet. However, just as the sediment remains at the bottom of the glass, and can be easily stirred up and cloud the water again and again, so also the deposits in our subconscious mind can cloud our minds when activated by new experiences. Therefore, one must purify the subconscious by “letting go” of attachments and aversions, and by remembering to maintain the perspective of the true Self, the Seer, the Witness, Pure Consciousness, the one constant throughout all of life’s experi-

ences.

A Personal Experience of Entering the Kingdom of Heaven

In 1971, Yogi Ramaiah initiated me into a powerful series of advanced techniques, after I had fulfilled many strenuous preconditions. I had to practice the techniques I had learned in the first and second initiations for at least fifty-six hours per week, for a total of fifty-two weeks, among other things, all the while fulfilling my obligations to work full time and perform community service. At that time, I worked as a caseworker for the Long Beach, California, Department of Social Services, servicing over three hundred families with dependent children. After completing this initiation, which spanned many hours over eleven weeks, Yogi Ramaiah sent me to Chicago to start a Kriya Yoga center. I did so, and continued to work as a caseworker. He also gave me a new assignment: save five thousand dollars so I could go to India for a year, where I was to engage in intensive practices. I saved the money by working nights as a taxicab driver, as well as in back-breaking work loading truckloads of merchandise by hand in a warehouse for \$2.10 per hour.

When I finally arrived in India, after a short orientation by my predecessor there, I quickly settled into a routine of Yogic practice in the ashram, which Yogi Ramaiah had established near his ancestral home, in the Chettinad area of Tamil Nadu. Alone, visited only by a servant who prepared my meals and cleaned, with no distractions (and no plumbing, and very little electricity) my aspirations to know God roared and soared. My call met with a response: a series of powerful meditation experiences, which filled me great peace and joy. Although nearly impossible to describe, because they did not involve “forms” or “visions,” but the expansion of my consciousness itself, I can recall how immediate was the Presence of the Lord and even amidst the most mundane activities of daily life: while bathing, water poured over myself at the well, eating the simple, spicy vegetarian curry and rice cooked over a dung fire, bumping along in a country bus to the nearby town of Karaikudi, bowing as I passed local temples, and reflected in the bright eyes of the local children who came to the ashram for Yoga classes and even in the sugar candy they were given to savor afterwards. I felt that I had entered, at times, a timeless realm, so great was the peace. The events were nothing out of the ordinary, but were beheld with the perspective of ever-renewing joy. God was everywhere in that simple life and the ensuing bliss was too.

Why should Jesus say that those who are poor, hungry, suffering and persecuted are blessed?

I embraced asceticism for eighteen years. Four of them were in India. When I lived there, I did not even own a shirt - just a pair of rubber sandals and a couple of pieces of cloth with which I covered my upper and lower body.

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A profile of Acharya Turyananda

By Acharya Turyananda

The path of grace was an icy mountain road in the Vercors mountain (the foothills of the Alpes) near Grenoble. Snow had fallen on the day before, with the south wind the weather was humid and very cold. With the change of wind, which signifies a movement of air from Siberia, this heavy snow had left a layer of ice on the road in this month of November 1984. A road on which a destination was being drawn: the abyss, the synonym of a certain death.



Acharya Turyananda

Yet by the single force of prayer, the colossal power of intention the unthinkable happened, as rapidly as a thunder. As soon as the prayer was stated it was realized.

Ejected from the car after it had crushed at the bottom

of the precipice, thrown into the air, up to the top of the highest trees. What did I say? Hold on! Tossed, tossed in the air by the single will of the Univers to play with the mind, with my mind: « God, let me land on my feet », afterwards nothing, the surrender to the eternal light, the total absence of light.

On that day I certainly had died and I resurrected.

God! But which God? I recall of the rhymes of the poem de Léo Ferret, the poet anarchist, "No god, no Master".

"And to furnish the sacrifice

With the fire of service

This procedure that watches out for

Those rejected by society

With the excuse that they probably have

No God, no master."

I was 20 years old.

I had not received any education to invoke God, I had

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I weighed one hundred and twenty pounds, standing five feet eight inches. It was very hot most of the time. I had no amenities in the places I lived. I ate my food off of a banana leaf - the simplest food, just like the illiterate farmers who lived around me. Even when I came back from my assignments in India, I lived as an ascetic, except when I went to the office, in disguise - in the Pentagon, wearing my "whites;" and later in Montreal, at Bell Canada and Teleglobe Canada, where I worked as an economist; at Industrial Alliance Insurance and finally the Desjardins Confederation financial giant, where I worked as a systems auditor. I did not sleep in a bed for eighteen years, ate only with my fingers, and did not cut my hair or beard. Ascetism was a powerful means of purification, I found. I let go of everything, inside and outside. I worked as an offering to the Lord, whom I perceived within everyone I worked with. I could feel within others that same spark of Divinity, which I perceived at the deepest level of my own existence. The surface level of my life was like waves on the surface of my ocean. I enjoyed it - all of it. While I was not "persecuted," I was definitely alone, except for periodic meetings, once or twice a year, usually at our ashrams in California or Arizona, with my teacher and fellow disciples. We shared a common purpose, commitment and work. Did I have perfect happiness? I do not know. But I felt present and deeply content.

The beatitudes (Latin - "perfect happiness") are paradoxical statements, which call for a deep reflection upon their meaning. Given Jesus' repeated assertions that the Kingdom of God is already present, the beatitudes are not

a promise of a future reward in some heavenly afterlife, as is usually interpreted by those who believe Jesus was announcing the end of the world. Are they not, rather, a challenge to his listeners to transform their condition into a means of purification? It is a direct challenge to let go of the feeling, "I am suffering," "I am poor," "I am hungry," and to realize that "I am not the body," "I am not my emotions," "I am not my suffering" and "I am not my mind." "I am" is closer to the Truth. It is a challenge to be the Witness of your life, to be the Seer, not the Seen.

Yoga teaches that the life ordinarily brings with it much suffering. This is because of ignorance of our true divine identity. Patanjali tells us in Yoga-sutra II.3, the causes of suffering: "Ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life are the five afflictions." When we suffer, we begin to question, and we seek wisdom to answer the fundamental questions of life: "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" "Why am I here?" "Why am I suffering?" We need the light of wisdom to see beyond our suffering. Wisdom is what dispels ignorance. Patanjali tells us that "Ignorance is seeing the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasurable and the non-Self as the Self." (Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, page 70). As we begin to realize wisdom and dispel ignorance, we can begin to see the grace of the Lord acting through our suffering, helping us to turn towards Him. If we apply the lessons of wisdom of Jesus, we can find our way back to the Lord in our life. We need not wait for heaven, we can begin to experience the joy of the Lord in every moment of every day. This is what the mystics discover. □



Profile *continued*

only the education of the mind, following the grand secular tradition of the Republic.

But how was this possible? Indeed, the experience was rude, I was overwhelmed by many interrogations, but without an answer, of not the irresistible one – moving on, stand upright to be able to understand. So, I went on, to understand, but to understand what? Am I immortal? How can a young man who is 20 years old, claim to be invincible? Then the quest. The quest for reason, what should I read? Whom should I meet? Where should I search? To be able to understand the base of this experience. My first readings involved the life of Gandhi, his life his work, the immense clamour of a hope for peace for all.

What an encounter! Tears of joy were overwhelming me as I was discovering him with all his majesty.

Then the reading of The course of things, by the French Zen master, Jacques Brosse, his first book published in 1958. And what if there was “a course of things”?

If there is one book that has always been with me it's this one. I have only read this one of his many works. I was confronted with the question at the end of this book where Jacques Brosse wanted to be a clairvoyant witness of the beings in the Universe. He concluded by writing: “May you only understand that there is no mystery in the Universe; the only mystery is the human himself, and it is because of this, everything seems to be a mystery to him.” But how is it possible that everything seems like a mystery to us because we are a mystery? I did not see what was the link?

Incomprehensible at the age of 20! It's much later, at the feet of Babaji that the mystery went away.

But before that, after death, I went through madness. During six years surcharged with risk taking, in climbing, exploration of caverns, extreme adventures, extreme work, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, coffee, all the ingredients which would undermine the mind. There was also the reading of the works of Blaise Cendrars, a poet of Swiss origin, who became a French national, and who wrote The Trans Siberian Prose, and Easter in New York. It was ecstatic reading, rooted in the reality of the early 20th century. His work fascinated me by its obsession with risk.

Life has always been here, it authorizes recovery and re-grounding. Then there was this voice that I started to hear. My instinct was telling me that I could trust it. This voice that was talking to me clearly, that was inviting me to follow its advice, to do what it was suggesting to me. I was listening, I was advancing, I was explaining to those who were trying to understand me by saying “my father told me”.

I was becoming a conscious being, the construction of a new man. My light father... Who are you? I was on a quest to find him. Far from all landmarks, I settled on the Reunion Island, which is a “Department” or official part of France in the Indian Ocean, near to Madagascar and the island of Mauritius. I lived there for 25 years.

I currently live in Grenoble, the capital of the Alps, an

important center of scientific activity in France. But before I was on this small island of Reunion, where more than 700 000 people live. They come from different parts of the world: Africans from Madagascar, as well as from the east coast of Mozambique, the descendants of workers imported by British colonialists: Chinese, Indians from Tamil Nadu, and Indo-Pakistanis who left India at the time of its Independence.

I discovered on this island a multitude of cultures, religions, ethics, and individuals united in diversity. I participated in Hindu ceremonies of walking on fire which involved incredible scenes of intensity of the devotion of the walkers. Scenes of transformation of matter by the invocation of mantras and prayers. Fire was not burning the flesh!

It was impressive. These were rituals that have largely disappeared today in India, but are still quite alive in Reunion, including the sacrifice of animals. In Réunion, some Hindu cults have been trapped for long time by the insularity of the island. This is less so today. I had the occasion to encounter Brahmins from the temple of Chidambaram who were living and worshipping in a temple in a residential area on the west coast of the island.

Reunion island has been formed from a volcano, that has remained on the same place since the Earth has started to solidify. Do you know that the mountains of the Deccan Traps that separate India into two parts were formed 68 million years ago during the same intense volcanic period? Today the volcano activity is less, but it is still present in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

It is in this tropical, cosmopolitan, and tolerant environment that I undertook this recovery and made a family. Three daughters were born: Myrtille in 1992, Mimose in 1995, Clementine in 1998. I was hired by a construction firm responsible for installing steel nets on the sides of cliffs above roads, to prevent landslides, and I eventually became its director, in Reunion.

I remember well the year of birth of Myrtille, because it's the year when I discovered Hatha Yoga with a teacher René Cardinau. His teachings came from a solar Mexican tradition and they enlightened all of my being.

Then, in the year of Clementine's birth, I met M. G. Satchidananda who initiated me into Babaji's Kriya Yoga during his first visit to Reunion. From that day onwards, the path was opening to the perspective for which I had been waiting for many years. I plunged into it with fervour.

But it was in India in January 2000 during a pilgrimage in Tamil Nadu, organized by the Order of Acharyas, and with the book of M. G. Satchidananda, Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga Tradition, as a travel guide that I can to progress. After travelling from Madras, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, and Pondicherry we arrived in Palani at the temple and samadhi shrine of the Siddhar Boganathar. There, amidst a group of fervent devotees, I discovered the meaning of surrender, in the most pro-

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ABCs of deepening your practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga (Part 6)

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.)

Yogic transformation requires sincere self-study, self-improvement and modification of thinking and behavior. This applies also to your asana practice. Observation of the restrictions in your body, prana, and attitude is the means of unmasking what needs improvement and modification. Hatha Yoga can be used to expose and release not only inflexibility in the body but also, in the mind.

Kriya Hatha Yoga offers us an opportunity to address inflexibility, tightness, tension, and energy blocked by body and mind. Blocked energy results from poor posture, poor eating habits, over-indulgences, and poor elimination of toxins: physical, mental and emotional. Conflict in the mind, negative thinking, or distortions in your own self-image can encode into your body protec-



tive mechanisms and "emotional memory that block the flow of energy. The body will consciously or unconsciously discourage any movement that touches near this memory. Typically, prana is not able to penetrate these contracted areas well enough to relax and heal it. However, a dedicated, conscious practice of asana can help you to gently uncover, confront and release these armored areas. By practicing the 18 asanas consciously and with intention, you can systematically move prana through tight and injured areas bringing comfort, purification and healing. You may also find that the practice disengages and frees you from the personal biases you once held about your body's limitations and its potential.

-O-

Observances – The observances, or yamas, so critical to progress in Yoga are equally important to living a good life. They lead to greater health and happiness for you and for those you love. These are disciplines that we should try to abide by and in? Ahimsa (non-harming - acceptance, loving kindness), satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing, non-coveting, being without envy or jealousy), bramacharya (non-lusting, non-fantasizing), and aparigraha (non-attachment). Living by these disciplines removes the obstacles that prevent us from knowing that

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found heart myself, during a stupendous flash of light. At the age of 36, I discovered with joy the path that I had been searching for, alive, lucid, and present within. I radiated divine light.

It was there also in 2005, while I was at the ashram in Quebec to participate for the first time in the third level initiation. During the third level, we advanced even further in the purification of our being, even higher in the opening of the consciousness of the higher chakras, always more concentrated on the presence of the Siddhas and of Babaji.

We had been seated for several days, when in a flash of light Babaji invited me to follow him, to participate in the incredible adventure of bringing to the world His word, His teaching but also to uncover the words of the beings of light, the Siddhas. It was an invitation to share the knowledge of this immense immaterial heritage of humanity, the teachings of the Siddhas. These are teachings of universal scope, without dogmas, without requirements, where the highest authority is our own experience, our own confrontation with the question "Who am I?"

Listen to the sound of silence, listen to the resonance in the most secret part of you "In myself I am only the peace and the calm..."

I realized that: "I am the sun of suns, shining in the sun above, I am the crystal light inside of the sun." I was penetrated by this crystal light, outside of time and space, and the world revealed itself as truth, while the "mystery" faded away, the veil rose, and the light took shape of matter.

In 2009 after long months of intense practice M. G. Satchidananda consecrated me as an Acharya.

Let us remember the vow : "My own being and pleasures, I surrender entirely, completely and indefinitely to Kriya Babaji so that all creatures may attain their purpose."

A perspective not only for this life, but for eternity as well!

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Satguru Babaji Nagaraj for infinite love that he conveys to every one of us, always and everywhere.

*Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum Jay Guru Jay
Turjananda*



Deepening you practice *continued*

we are whole and complete. Through consistent observation we can hope to live in truth. Only by living in truth can we establish harmony in body, prana, mind, heart and soul.

Obstacles – Those things, physical, mental emotional, which maintain our state of nervousness, anxiety, dissatisfaction, attachment, aversion, anger, fear. These are the things that have conditioned us and hinder us from health, happiness and the true knowledge of the self. That which obstructs us is always of our own unconscious creation. I once heard a beautiful truism: “sadhana is so difficult because I am the obstruction and I am the way.”

-P-

Panchakoshas – These are the five (pancha) sheaths (koshas) of the human organism according to Vedanta. The five bodies: annamayakosha... food sheath (physical body), the pranamayakosha (the vital body), manomayakosha, the (mental body), the vijnanamayakosha (intellectual body) and anandamayakosha (spiritual, bliss body). The health of one sheath always affects all the other sheaths and ultimately your wellbeing. You should not think that your asana only benefits the physical body. Your Hatha Yoga practice can positively affect all the parts that make up who you are.

Parasympathetic nervous system – Parasympathetic Nervous system is one of the parts of the Autonomic Nervous system that conserves energy as it helps to rest the organism. It slows heart rate, respiration and blood pressure and increases gland activity and helps with digestion. It is the counterpart to the sympathetic nervous system that stimulates the fight or flight responses. The 18 asana establishes balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system affecting balance in body and mind. They can help reduce sympathetic over-response due to mental and emotional stress.

Prana – Prana is all pervasive energy. It is the core fabric of all creation. It is the breath of life. With prana's first movement within him or her, the newborn infant takes birth. Prana is life itself. Only in its most limited sense can we say that prana is breath for also citta or mind is a subtle manifestation of prana. Prana, as mind has the capability to will, to change course without any external agent. So prana must be defined as a self-manifesting life entity, capable of changing itself. The prana sheath follows all the conscious and unconscious activities of the mind and emotions. Conflict and compulsiveness in mind and emotions will constrict and block prana from flowing freely to energize, rejuvenate and heal. The 18 postures done with awareness, breath and willfulness will integrate the mental and pranic sheaths in a way that can dissolve mental and emotional distractions and blockages and release the healing prana throughout body and mind.

Pranayama – The breath is the link between the inner and the outer worlds because the energy of the breath and the energy of thoughts are interrelated. As the breath

moves, so does the prana. As thoughts move, so does prana. Pranayama quiets the mind. As the prana slows, so does thought. Once you take voluntary control over your breath through pranayama, your thought processes automatically slow. By focusing the mind inward on your slowing, deepening, rhythmic breathing, your life force, the prana shakti is likewise turned inward. By developing and directing the pranic energy consciously as you perform asana, you can increase the energy of concentration and awareness. And if maintained in a static posture for a prolonged length of time, the pranas will become calmed and balanced and subtle states of mind and energy will emerge.

Pratyahara – To benefit most from your practice of asana, you must withdraw sense organs from outside influences and focus them internally to experience what is happening within you, in your breath, your energy, your mind, your heart.

Prolonged holdings – Holding posture for longer periods will give you the time necessary to stoke the fires required for purification. This is a form of tapas. You can intentionally use the asana practice as tapas to uncover and remove physical and psychosomatic blockages and toxins. Begin slowly to build time. Hold poses in comfort and with stability for at least three minutes. Work to progress toward five or ten-minute holdings, as long as you remain stable and comfortable... content and calm. Prolonged holdings will allow you to reach states of balance and perfection of posture, breath and mind, granting you access to your every brightening light of consciousness.

Perfection – A state of deepest relaxation and increased awareness is to perfect your Kriya Yoga practice. To reach this state you must advance in asana through all the means we have discussed. Advancing in asana does not mean that you have to perfectly perform more and more difficult or complex postures but that you perfect the asanas that you do. This requires time to absorb all that an asana is, and what it is doing to unblock, release, enliven and connect you with subtle prana. Perfection is the key that unlocks your ability to surrender to the guidance of the prana shakti. Perfection establishes a deep internal breathing that stimulates the prana shakti, which guides your practice and influences your life. More and more you find you are more effective in all you do. You work more consciously, deeply and compassionately. Your practice and your life seem more effortless, and graceful. You strive less and are more content with your life just as it is.

-Q-

Quiet – Try to do your postures with a quiet mind, a passive mind, free of judgment, frustration or boredom. The passive mind will widen and empty and begin as a witness to what is happening in the body, eventually experiencing peace, joy and exhilaration. Kriya Hatha Yoga

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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, unfor-



The new Ashram in Badrinath.

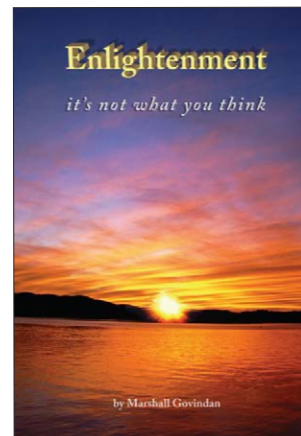
gettable pilgrimage to the place where Babaji attained soruba samadhi, the ultimate state of enlightenment. Details are here: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec October 20-22, 2017 and June 15-17, 2018 and October 19-21, 2018.

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.

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: Its Not What You Think is a must-read, for it is practical, simple, and meaningful... It is a decisive tool we can use for finding life's purpose." - Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph D, Spiritual Head, Himalayan Institute. 192

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Deepening you practice *continued*

begins with a ritual of mantra and the song of sun worship to stimulate relaxation and quietude, right from the beginning of your practice.

-R-

Relaxation – The first goal of Kriya Hatha Yoga is relaxation. To advance in asana you need to establish deep relaxation in body and mind. This means creating the space you need to relax all effort, while remaining aligned, strong and stable, in harmonious cooperative balance. You benefit the most from any asana when you are aligned and relaxed and able to utilize your deep muscles not just the superficial ones. That allows you to create tension in the muscles and increase muscular tone and length, and at the same time, soothe the nerve system, inducing deepest relaxation. On the outside the body is stretched firm and taut, yet inside the inner body is soft and fluid, in movement. There is no burden on the cardio-vascular or respiratory systems. You are creating space and conditions through the asana to increase, permeate and store prana for normal activity. The body be-

comes lighter, buoyant and filled with light.

Rest – Rest is integrated into the practice of the 18 Posture series. Every asana is a mind-body diagram, which circulates energy throughout the body. The asana moves blood, lymph, prana and waste products through the body. During relaxation, the circulatory system carries to the organs of elimination, the waste products that have been released in it during the pose. Toxins carried to the skin, the lungs and the colon, remove a source of fatigue. Remain in shavasana for no less than thirty seconds in order to assimilate this exchange. Let the relaxation after each posture be a true shavasana where the body is totally relaxed and the mind is peaceful and still.

Restlessness – Our objective in relaxation goes way beyond the normal concept of relaxation, our objective is immobility and stillness. To reach this state of immobility you must eliminate all restlessness in your body. The experience of asana is not that of a cessation of energy by inertia, but an increase of energy, an in-pouring and circulation of force in a still, relaxed and receptive body and mind. □



News and notes *continued*

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