



B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Seek Babaji to become Babaji

By M. G. Satchidananda

Each of us is a work in progress. Individually and collectively as sadhaks who are engaged in the sadhana, or discipline of Yoga we are discovering our potential power and consciousness, kundalini, as well as the restraints of human nature and egoism. In the early obscure stages of the path, most students attempt to practice various kriyas or postures with an aim of seeking relief from tension or suffering in the physical, vital or mental bodies. A few also seek guidance with the help of the

Yogic wisdom literature. If the practice becomes regular, the sadhak begins to enjoy better health, more energy, and greater calm. Glimpses of the deeper dimension of being, namely the spiritual, may also be experienced, when the mind becomes silent in deep meditation. But as wonderful as such spiritual realizations are, they remain fleeting, until or unless the manifestations of the ego, including fear, anger, desire and pride are subdued. There comes the growing realization that they are the

source of existential suffering. Many will merely seek distraction from suffering, ignoring Yoga's true purpose and promise. Others will seek to avoid what pushes their buttons, hoping that making changes *out there*, whether it be one's job, partner, friends, diet, or lifestyle, will rid them of suffering. But those who are both wise and sincere, will embrace the process of ego purification. The resulting transformation of this process, however, will depend upon the extent to which the sadhak's mind and vital changes its allegiance to the soul or psyche, and away from the ego.

The ego cannot purify itself. It is only our higher Self, or soul, which is untouched by the ego's manifestations, that is capable of doing so. But how to bring it forward into the foreground of our consciousness? How to bring its influence to bear upon the ego? Our soul is like a constitutional monarch who has delegated all of its powers to its ministers. When will these powers be reasserted by the kingly soul? Certainly, the five-fold path of Babaji's Kriya Yoga provides many techniques which help to purify the subconscious, develop the necessary concentration, create positive mental imagery, and develop the intellect's ability to find wisdom.

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Our soul, or psychic being, however, remains behind the veil of the mind, the emotions and sensations, until and unless the sadhak concentrates inwardly and finds the mystic light, the sweet presence of the Divine, the True, the Good, the Beautiful, which is immanent and transcendent. Guru, God and Self are One. During the first initiation, there is the technique to communicate with Babaji, the Guru of Kriya Yoga. This technique of communion with Babaji permits our soul, our higher Self, or as Sri Aurobindo calls it, our “psychic being,” to come from behind the veil of egoism with increasing frequency, until there is a total identification with it. Complete identification with our soul usually occurs only after a very long sadhana. This identification is marked by a very great joy which is present during all situations. One feels immortal, that is, eternal. One feels the sweet Presence of the Divine.

But in the meantime, until the long process of purification and identification with the higher Self, or soul, is complete, the sadhak must turn inwards repeatedly, concentrate, and listen to its directives, and then obey them. It will reveal everything that must be purified in one's nature. It will shine its light on all that must be reformed or excised. The true sovereign that you are is waiting for you! It is not sufficient to be merely “mindful.” Aspire to be the servant of the Supreme. Call upon the Divine for help in resisting the impulse to manifest anger, pride, jealousy and to let go of fear, desire, old negative habits. With love and devotion to the Divine at all times and in all places, aspire to become its instrument, expressing kindness, performing actions with skills and calmness. See the beautiful face of the Divine everyone. Let your heart sing to it with love and joy. Your soul will come to the foreground as the mind and vital become quiet, and it will direct your life.

My teacher frequently admonished us to “Seek Babaji to become Babaji.” Who is Babaji? You will know who is Babaji when you know who you are, and cease to identify with the ego's manifestations. In the Tirumandiram, this state is referred to as turiyatita, the state beyond turya, and is described in detail in its third tandiram or book. The word “turiya” literally means “the four,” but in the context of Yoga, refers to the state of consciousness beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, wherein the soul, through the body, vital and mind acquires knowledge and experience. In the fourth state, the soul experiences union, or identity with the Absolute Being, Consciousness and Bliss. In turiya, one is aware of his oneness with the deity contemplated. In turiyatita, the person has no such awareness. He or she is merged into oneness. Duality ceases. These states are known as avasthas, and Tirumular describes them in the eighth tandiram or book.

Patanjali refers to it as ishvara, “the special self, untouched by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions, or by any inner impressions of desire,” in the Yoga-Sutras I.24. The afflictions, or kleshas, are ignorance of our true identity, egoism, attachment, aversion and fear of death. The fruits of actions are our karma. By practicing the yamas (social restraints) and the niyamas (observances) sincerely, one purifies oneself of the kleshas and one exhausts ones accumulated karma. He also tells us in Yoga sutra I.23, “Ishvara-pranidhanad-va,” or “because of one's surrender to the Lord, one successfully achieves cognitive absorption. This surrender cannot be complete if it is limited to the spiritual dimension of our being. It must, necessarily, confront the mind, the vital (the seat of emotions and desires) and the physical bodies. How to do it? Begin by taking the perspective of the witness, and distinguish what is permanent from what is impermanent, the real from what is unreal, the Self, from the movements of the mind, vital

and body. Stand back from them and simply observe them. Moment to moment observation is necessary. Decide what must be let go of, and what may remain.

Self-surrender to the Divine, at all times and in all circumstances, is the both the vehicle and the ultimate objective of an integral yoga which includes all five bodies. The phrase “my God and my all” summarizes its heartfelt expression. The day that a sadhak surrenders to the Divine, the Divine itself intervenes in the life of the student and helps remove all difficulties and weaknesses, and brings joy into the consciousness with its Presence.

For this to occur:

- (1) the sadhak must feel the vanity of one's own self-potency; (2) he must believe with all his heart that there is Someone called Divine who really exists, loves him, and has the omnipotence to do anything according to Divine wisdom; (3) the sadhak must turn to the Divine alone as his sole and ultimate refuge. (Mukherjee 2003, 87)

In the surrendered state of consciousness, whatever one does or feels, all movements are made as an offering to the Supreme Being, in absolute trust, freeing oneself of responsibility for oneself, handing all of one's burdens to the Divine.

The sadhak's habitual consciousness and nature contain ample resistance and obstruction that works against this surrender. One must unreservedly abandon oneself to the sole guidance of the Divine. How to know if one has done so? Sri Aurobindo gives a detailed description of the inner mood of a truly surrendered sadhak.

I want the Divine and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realize him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his actions secret

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or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up ... All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done. (Aurobindo 1972, 587)

Consequently, it is the Divine itself that takes charge of the entire course of the sadhak's sadhana.

All can be done by the Divine – the heart and the nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed – if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance come and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humble and the will to surrender grows, this ought to be perfectly possible. (Aurobindo 1972, 586–88)

If the power of self-surrender is so potent, why does man fail to do it?

Why is it not done? One does not think of it, one forgets to do it, the old habits come back. And above all, behind, hidden somewhere in the inconscient or even in the subconscious, there is this insidious doubt that whispers in your ear ... and you are so silly, so silly, so obscure, so stupid that you listen and you begin to pay attention to yourself and everything is ruined. (Mother 2004, 257)

Does personal initiative then cease? No, the ordinary sadhak's consciousness and will are far from being united with the Divine's Consciousness and Will, as are a Siddha Yogi's. One continues to live in the separative ego-consciousness with all of its likes and dislikes. The essential principle to follow is to surrender the fruit or results of one's actions to the Divine; otherwise, one only acts for the ego's satisfaction. Sri Aurobindo describes the attitude one must maintain in all actions.

The Divine is my sole refuge; I trust in Him and rely on Him for everything and Him alone. I am utterly resigned to His Will. I will see to it that no obstacle on the way nor any dark mood of desperation, ever make me waver from my absolute reliance on the Divine. (Mukherjee 2003, 93)

The sadhak, however, should not become complacent, feeling that effort is unnecessary or that the Divine will accomplish everything. This is made very clear by the Mother:

But the supreme Grace will act only in the conditions of the Light and the Truth; it will not act in conditions laid upon it by the Falsehood and the Ignorance. For if it were to yield to the demands of the Falsehood it would defeat its own purpose. (The Mother 1972, 1,3)

There are conditions for everything. If someone refuses to fulfill the conditions for Yoga, there is no use in appealing for Divine intervention. (Nirodbaran 1983, 197)

An effective surrender does not necessarily ensure the sadhak against all future storms and stresses, but it does assure the absolute security of the sadhak's spiritual health even in the midst of life's tempests. The path is not guaranteed to be sunlit and scattered with rose petals. It has been guaranteed, however, that He will lead the surrendered sadhak to his cherished spiritual goal despite every possible misfortune in life. The surrendered sadhak also knows that misfortune and suffering are not in vain, but are sanctioned by the Divine for fulfilling a necessary spiritual purpose whose significance will be revealed in time. The surrendered sadhak knows and feels that the Divine is not far away or absent during his suffering, but sitting in the heart of his most acute difficulty, guiding the circumstances to lead the sadhak to union with the Divine. The surrendered sadhak also knows that every difficulty will bring great spiritual benefit if faced with courage, patience, and right attitude in a spirit of surrender. Finally, the surrendered sadhak knows that there is an underlying purpose leading to some future spiritual good. His mantra remains: "Let Thy Will be done always and everywhere" (Mukherjee 2003, 101).

Sri Aurobindo has described the four progressive stages in which the soul, or psychic being awakens and comes to direct the self transformation in all five bodies with aspiration, rejection, and surrender.

The first stage

The Psychic Being remains behind the veil of the inner being and the movements of the mind and vital. The lower parts of our being do not care what the soul wants. They respond habitually to desires and emotions, the need for physical comfort, and small likes and dislikes. Only occasionally will the psychic's influence become apparent: when there is a turning toward the spiritual life, love and surrender to the Divine, a yearning for the ineffable, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, and an experience of unconditional love, kindness, compassion, Ananda, bhakti.

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The second stage

When the inner being, the mind, and the vital "do care and obey the psychic, that is their conversion – they begin to put on themselves the psychic or divine nature" (Mukherjee 2003, 112). Aspiration develops in stages, and the Divine responds with grace. One turns inward and gradually loses interest in the old sources of external sensual attraction. The practice of aspiration, rejection, and surrender progressively opens the influence of the psychic being. More and more, one feels its power to

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overcome desire, anger, old bad habits, and other manifestations of the ego. One lets go of the past, ceasing to dwell on what has happened. One is intuitively guided to do the right thing, not because of a moral injunction, convention, or the expectations of family and peers, but because one knows inwardly what is true and good. One rejects what resists, what may cause harm, what is untrue or exaggerated. Unconditional love, kindness, ease, and bliss become one's state of being. But one might return to old patterns of thought and feeling. It is intermittently veiled by the movements of the inner being. One must continually strive to witness and not manifest deep-seated, habitual inner movements.

The third stage

The Psychic Being comes from behind the veil of the inner mind and vital to the foreground and remains there. It continuously directs the sadhana of aspiration, rejection, and surrender. It identifies what must be transformed, let go of, and purified. One feels continuously supported and guided. The Divine's Bliss and unconditional love color one's perceptions, even as karma delivers rotten tomatoes to one's doorstep. One abides as effulgent Self-awareness, the master of one's vehicles on the mental, vital, and physical planes. One discerns and lets go of the ego's manifestations in deeper layers of the inner being, including desire and fear. One feels like an instrument in the hands of the Divine, performing surgery, removing all that resists and expresses ignorance of one's Divinity. One becomes a co-creator. Miracles abound in daily life. One experiences life as ever-new joy.

In this stage, the allegiance of the mind, the vital, and even the physical to the ego is replaced by a new allegiance to the Divine within. One seeks perfection, *siddhi*. Perfection in a diseased body or in a neurotic mind is not perfection. With discerning wisdom, the psychic transforms these lower instruments so that they express the Will of the Divine. One develops an enthusiasm for the process of self-transformation. During this process, one discovers what has been hidden. One experiments with methods of transformation.

The fourth stage

At this advanced stage, the Psychic Being transforms the cellular and subconscious levels. From 1926 to 1940, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother experimented with fasting, sleep, food, laws of nature, and habits, testing their own bodies at the subconscious and cellular levels. It was a race against time, not unlike what the Siddhas described in their use of Kaya Kalpa herbs to prolong their lives long enough for the more subtle spiritual forces to complete the divinization. "Fundamentally," said the Mother, "the question is to know, in this race towards the

transformation which of the two will reach first, the one who wants to transform the body in the image of the divine Truth or the old habit in the body of gradually decomposing" (Satprem 1975, 330).

The work proceeded at a level that Aurobindo called "the cellular mind" ... "an obscure mind of the body, of the very cells, molecules, corpuscles" ... "this body mind is a very tangible truth; owing to its obscurity and mechanical clinging to past movements and facile oblivion and rejection of the new, we find in it one of the chief obstacles to permeation by the supermind Force and the transformation of the functioning of the body. On the other hand, once effectively converted, it will be one of the most precious instruments of the stabilization of the supramental Light and Force in material Nature" (Aurobindo 1969, 346).

To prepare the cells, mental silence, vital peace, and cosmic consciousness were necessary to permit the physical and cellular consciousness to enlarge and universalize itself. My research has found that evolutionary leaders such as Babaji, the Siddhas, Ramalinga and Sri Aurobindo require isolation to complete the fourth stage of the psychic being's transformation of human nature on all levels into the image of the divine Truth. Whether this occurs only individually, as with the Siddhas, or as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo as a collective evolutionary leap in humanity, the result of the descent of the supramental remains an open question. (Govindan, 2017)

"One must continually strive to witness and not manifest deep-seated, habitual inner movements."

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Classical Yoga and the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius

By M. G. Satchidananda

I recently finished reading the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. I was so moved by his stoic philosophy that I have decided to share with the readers of our Journal my explorations of its parallels with that of Classical Yoga. I will first introduce the reader to the person of Marcus Aurelius, the celebrated Roman emperor, the composition of his *Meditations*, the origins of stoicism, its influence in the Western Classical philosophical tradition to this day, before discussing the major tenets of the *Meditations*. A comparison of these with the tenets of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras will follow, and will hopefully illuminate the wisdom of both. After this, the question which I will ultimately seek to answer is how the Stoic admonitions and aphorisms of the *Meditations* can be applied by the modern student of Yoga as auto-suggestions. It has come to my attention that the *Meditations* are among the favorite philosophical works of today's millennials. Its prescriptions for self-mastery, community, virtue, and inner peace are just what we need in the 21st century, and as we will see, can guide and inspire your practice of Yoga. I encourage the reader to purchase or download the *Meditations*.

Who was Marcus Aurelius?

The great historian of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon informs us that Marcus Aurelius was the last of the "adoptive" Roman emperors in its golden age from 100 to 180 A.D. He was born in Rome in 121. His father died when he was a young boy. He was raised by his paternal grandfather. The emperor Hadrian, only months before his death, in 138 A.D. came to admire Marcus for his virtuous character, when Marcus was only seventeen, and adopted Titus Aurelius Antonius, the man who was to become the adoptive father of Marcus that same year. Emperor Antonius Pius, as he came to be known, promoted Marcus Aurelius, his nephew by marriage, and adoptive son, rapidly through a series of offices in the Roman state, including that of Consul, the highest office below that of emperor, in 140. When Emperor Titus Antonius died in 161, Marcus Aurelius, at the age of thirty-eight, was named Caesar, the supreme ruler or emperor, and Pontifex Maximus, the supreme religious authority in Rome.

Marcus Aurelius remained in Italy until 168 when he commanded the legions on the northern frontier in what is now Austria, where Germanic tribes were invading Italy and Greece. His triumphs were commemorated with a victory column and arch in 176, built in his honor in Rome and on coins. These prominent monuments project his public image. His life as emperor also in-

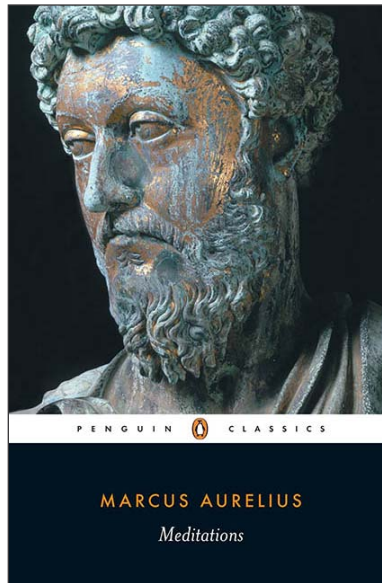
involved responding to the administrative affairs of state, natural disasters, famines, the plague, political rivals, urgent petitions, persecution of Christians. None of this history is visible in the *Meditations*, where his inner life is revealed. He never intended these to be published. They were written as admonitions to himself, but not for the exercise of political power. They are admonitions to the "directing mind," (hegemonikon) over emotions, such as fear and anger, impulses, as well as desires, with spiritual self-mastery as their objective. While in what is now Serbia, at the age of 59, while leading a campaign, he fell sick, and after one week, he died of unknown causes.

The Composition of the Meditations

The *Meditations* was composed in Greek, as it was the philosophic language, one that the author preferred over his native Latin, and as it helped him to "draw inward," to meditate. They are arranged in twelve books, with 488 short chapters, or journal entries, which vary in length from a few words to two or three pages. Most of them were probably written after he became emperor at the age of thirty-eight, sometimes during military campaigns, often at the break of day or first thing in the morning. They were written in his journal, directed to himself as admonitions, reflections and aphorisms. But they were preserved at some point with signs of careful composition and arrangement, especially in the first and last books. The reader is challenged to connect with them.

Stoicism

Marcus Aurelius was trained by Stoics as a boy. At the age of twelve he adopted the "Greek way of life," by wearing a rough cloak and sleeping on the ground. Being a "Stoic" has two meanings: a member of the Greek philosophic school which originated with Zeno in 331 B.C. and a person who represses his emotions and desires, and is indifferent to pleasure or pain, who endures. A Stoic was recognized not by what they believed (dogma), not by adherence to one of the four principal schools of philosophy, but by their toughness and austerity, even indifference to what humans usually valued most: family, wealth, power, reputation, even health. Socrates, who was executed in Athens even earlier, in 399 B.C. was held up as the Stoic ideal of the sage. Emulation of Socrates provided inspiration for adherence to the virtues including courage, justice, self-control, prudence, and the application of reason to reflect upon the soul, human nature, and to master impulses



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and desires.

For Marcus, the world or kosmos was ordered intelligently as a controlling macrocosm, with an intimate connection to the human microcosm. Nature, was intelligible through rational enquiry in the spheres of physics, ethics and logic. Nature is also providential and hierarchical, from the animate to the inanimate, from the human to the supreme rationality of the divine. Rationality is a fire connecting what is divine within the individual human being and the divine fire outside which orders and transforms the world. Unlike the other three Greek philosophic schools, who held the materialist view that world and all other aggregates of matter are the product of an infinite number of atoms moving blindly in infinite space, the Stoics held that the world is coherent, providential, serves some purpose in Nature's grand design. Nothing occurs by chance or accident, and nothing is wasted.

Human rationality, referred to by Marcus as "the directing mind," is a part of the directing mind of the kosmos, that brings elements together and dissolves them again. For Marcus, philosophy is to be practiced as a therapy for the soul, which he liked to refer to as "the very god (daimon) that is seated within you." These practices include living in the present moment and analysing life's movements as they occur frame by frame.

On the Supreme Being and its relationship with the soul

Theology concerns itself principally with the relationship between a Supreme Being, the soul, and the world. The major religions in the West and the bhakti traditions of India are dualistic as they view God and the soul as separate. Advaita Vedanta is monistic: there is only Brahma. Buddhism is also: there is only the void, and there is no soul, no self. Yoga Siddhantha is monistic theism: jiva is becoming Shiva, the individual soul is real, but as it purifies itself of karma, maya (mental delusion) and the influence of the gunas (the modes of nature) it realizes "I am that Supreme Being."

In contrast to the materialist schools of Classical Greek philosophy, Marcus Aurelius held views very similar to those of Yoga Siddhantha:

"And you have forgotten this too, that every man's mind is god and has flowed from that source." Book 12, chapter 26. (Note: all quotations in this article are from Martin Hammond's translation, published by Penguin Books, ISBN 978-0-140-44933-4)

"God sees all our directing minds stripped of their material vessels, their husks and their dross. His contact is only between his own intelligence and what has flowed from him into these channels of ours. If you train yourself to do the same, you will be rid of so much of what distracts you." – Book 12, chapter 2.

"Think always of the universe as one living creature, comprising one substance and one soul: how all is absorbed into this one consciousness; how a single impulse governs all its actions; how all things collaborate in all that happens; the very web and mesh of all." – Book 4, chapter 40.

Realization or recognition of the soul is accomplished by the inner exercise of virtues, indicated in this chapter:

"My soul, will you ever be good, simple, individual, bare, brighter than the body that covers you? Will you ever taste the disposition to love and affection? Will you ever be complete and free of need, missing nothing, desiring nothing live or lifeless for the enjoyment of pleasure? Or time for longer enjoyment, or amenity of place, space, and climate? Or good company? No, will you not rather be satisfied with your present state and take pleasure in all that is presently yours? Will you not convince yourself that all your experience comes from the gods, that all is well and all will be well for you, all that the gods see fit to give you, now and hereafter, in the maintenance of perfect Being which is good and just and beautiful, which generates all things, sustains and contains all things, embraces all things as they dissolve into the generation of others like them? Will you ever be such as to share the society of gods and men without any criticism of them or condemnation by them?" – Book 10, chapter 1

This echoes Patanjali:

"Ishvara (the Lord) is the special Self, untouched by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions or by any inner impressions of desires. There (in the Supreme) the seed of the manifestation of complete omniscience is unsurpassed." – Yoga-sutra I.24-25

The Siddhas conceived of the Lord as the supreme abstraction, as Truth, Beauty, Goodness (satyam, sundaram, sivam) or simply as That.

Like the Siddhas, his reverence of the Supreme Being was born of a continuous experience of the gods' power to make manifest. This was a moment to moment observation, a discernment and analysis of the parts which comprise what he called the "Whole."

"To those who ask 'Where then have you seen the god? What conviction of their existence leads you to this worship of them? I reply first that they are in fact visible to our eyes. Secondly and notwithstanding, that I have not seen my own soul either and yet I honour it. So, it is with the gods too: from my ever experience of their power time after time I am certain that they exist, and I revere them."

The salvation of life lies in seeing each object in its essence and its entirety, discerning both the material and the causal: in applying one's whole soul to doing right and speaking the truth. There remains only the enjoyment of living a linked succession of good deeds, with not the slightest gap between them."

One light of the sun, even though its path is broken by walls, mountains, innumerable other obstacles. One common substance, even though it is broken up into innumerable forms of individual bodies. One animate soul, even though it is broken upon into innumerable species with specific individualities. One intelligent soul, even though it appears divided." - Book 12- chapter 28, 29, 30.

Self-mastery

Patanjali defines Yoga at the beginning of his Yoga Su-

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Marcus Aurelius continued

tras:

"Yoga is the cessation of identifying with the fluctuations arising within consciousness." – Yoga-sutra I.2

Marcus Aurelius echoes this:

"Realize at long last that you have within you something stronger and more numinous than those agents of emotion which make you a mere puppet on their strings. What is in my mind at this very moment? Fear, is it? Suspicion? Desire? Something else of that sort?" – Book 12, chapter 19.

Patanjali summarizes the practice of Yoga in Yoga-sutra I.12: *"By constant practice and with detachment arises the cessation of identifying with the fluctuations arising within consciousness."*

Compare this to what Marcus says: *"Practice even what you have despaired of mastering. For lack of practice the left hand is awkward for most tasks, but has a stronger grip on the bridle than the right – it is practised in this."* – Book 12, chapter 6.

Classical Yoga prescribes five observances or niyamas: purity (shuka), contentment (samtosh), accepting but not causing pain (tapas), self-study (svadhyaya), and surrender to the Lord (ishvara-pranidhana) in Yoga -sutra II.32. Tapas, or accepting but not causing pain, reminds us of the stoic's willingness and capacity to calmly bear all manner of pain or suffering without anger or fear.

Like the Yoga Siddhas and Tantrics, both ancient and modern, Marcus Aurelius sought not merely to spiritually transcend, but also sought to transform human nature, to perfect it. The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo ashram writes with regards to any negative emotion: *"Don't manifest it in action. Until you regain your composure of mind and heart and reclaim your inner liberty completely, you will not act out the dictates of the impulsive vital body. Repeat: I shall not do it. Even a partial success will pave the road to eventual victory."*

"Live through your life without pressure and in the utmost contentment, even if all are clamouring what they will against you, even if wild beasts are tearing off the limbs of this poor lump of a body accreted round you. What in all this prevents the mind from preserving itself in tranquility, in true judgement of circumstance and readiness to use any event submitted to it?" – Book 7, chapter 68.

Modern psychology tells us that it is better to express emotions than to suppress them. Suppression leads to neurosis, and even contributes to psychosis in extreme cases. While bhakti yoga, whose devotional expressions are best suited to persons whose emotions dominate their mind, Classical Yoga advises not expression, nor suppression, but rather the continuous cultivation of detachment from emotions. Marcus also advises detachment through the exercise of what he refers to at the "directing mind," and admonitions to remain calm.

"If it is not right, don't do it: if it is not true, don't say it." – Book 12, chapter 17

"How does your directing mind employ itself? This is the whole issue. All else, of your own choice or not, is just corpse and smoke." – Book 12, chapter 33.

"That all is as thinking makes it so – and you control your

thinking. So, remove your judgements whenever you wish and then there is calm – as the sailor rounding the cape finds smooth water and the welcome of a wave less bay." – Book 12, chapter 22

"You should avoid flattery as much as anger in your dealings with them. In your fits of anger have this thought ready to mind, that there is nothing manly in being angry, but a gentle calm is both more human and therefore more virile. It is the gentle who have strength, sinew, and courage – not the indignant and complaining. The closer to control of emotion, the closer to power. Anger is as much a sign of weakness as is pain." – Book 11, chapter 18,10.

"First, nothing aimless or without ulterior reference. Second, no reference to any end other than the common good." – Book 12, chapter 20.

"Perfection of character is this: to live each day as if it were your last, without frenzy, without apathy, without pretence." – Book 7, chapter 69.

Unlike so many saints and mystics in search of God or Truth and who ran away from the world, Marcus Aurelius cultivated an inner retreat, even while he was emperor of the Roman Empire for twenty years, and at its peak, engaged in military campaigns in its defense on its frontiers. His words and his example are instructive.

"Men seek retreats for themselves – in the country, by the sea, in the hills – and you yourself are particularly prone to this yearning. But all this is quite unphilosophic, when it is open to you, at any time you want, to retreat into yourself. No retreat offers someone more quiet and relaxation than that into his own mind, especially if he can dip into thoughts there which put him at immediate and complete ease: and by ease I simply mean a well-ordered life. So constantly give yourself this retreat, and renew yourself. The doctrines you will visit there should be few and fundamental, sufficient at one meeting to wash away all your pain and send you back free of resentment at what you must rejoin." – Book 4, chapter 3

"Finally, then, remember this retreat into your own little territory within yourself. Above all, no agonies, no tensions... and here are two of the most immediately useful thoughts you will dip into. First that things cannot touch the mind: they are external and inert; anxieties can only come from your internal judgement. Second, that all these things you see will change almost as you look at them, and then will be no more. Constantly bring to mind all that you yourself have already seen changed. The universe is change: life is judgement." – Book 4, chapter 3.4.

What I find so attractive in the above meditations is Marcus's rational approach to life and his insightful prescriptions for mastering human nature's defects, with all of its emotions such as fear, anger and desire. Furthermore, he embraces everything as part of what he refers to as the Whole, in contrast to the gnostics which view human nature as inherently sinful, and many spiritual traditions, including those of Vedanta and Buddhism which view the material world at best as a distraction, and at worst as an illusion. He exercised illumined reason, like the jnana yogis, rishis and siddhas.

(to be continued in the Fall 2017 issue)



ABCs of deepening your practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga (Part 4)

By Durga Ahlund

The ABC's of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga will better explain how you can experience the 18 asanas as a total hygiene, a complete purification of the total organism, the physical and the subtle bodies – all five levels of your being – physical, vital energy, mind, consciousness and super consciousness. Asana works directly on the physical, but targets the subtle levels that lies behind it. Why not consciously utilize asana to create a bridge not only in vitality and health but also in dynamism, compassion and self-confidence. The ABC's will continue as a regular column in the quarterly, Kriya Yoga Journals. 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 experienced, authorized instructor.

A state of deepest relaxation and increased awareness is the ultimate goal of your Kriya Yoga practice. To reach this state you must advance in asana. Advancing in asana does not mean that you have to perfectly perform more and more difficult or complex postures but that you perfect the postures that you do. You must take the time to absorb all that the postures are, and can do to unblock, release, enliven and connect you with the flow of subtle prana. Perfection allows you to surrender to the guidance of the prana shakti. Perfection in asana establishes a deep flow of internal breathing which stimulates prana shakti that guides your practice. Perfection requires that you consciously make effective effort, that you work deeply and compassionately. It is a willful, graceful practice.

-E-

Effort and Effect – (The power of exertion.) Once you are able to feel energy and then consciously raise it through the power of exertion with Yoga (pranayama, mantra, bandhas and meditation) you link with the spiritual body. This linking stimulates the rise of energy in the spine, refining its vibration. A fire is stoked in the belly that supports your sadhana. To make this link, try to see, feel, visualize and move energy during your daily asana practice.

Edge – Learn to accept intensity as you deepen into your postures to more readily absorb all the benefits. Learn to play at the edge of a stretch to seek deep tissue release and purification of muscle memory. Pain and trauma harbored for years under tension and numbness can be released quite unexpectedly as emotion when you work in deep muscle tissues. Sometimes there may be a memory associated with the emotion. But usually the emotion merely comes up to dissolve and is released quite easily.

To play the edge: reach into the stretch slowly, yielding to the sensations that arise. Push and pause. Breathe, ob-

serve and relax. Push again slowly into the stretch (move on exhalation) until your body reorganizes to that new stretch. Slowly you reach your maximum stretch. Always yield to pain. You are not looking for pain, but if you feel pain back off to a lesser edge and breathe slowly and as deeply as the stretch allows. Relax and surrender to sensation and remain in the pose as long as you feel you are maintaining the "right" intensity, engaging the "right field of energy." It takes experience, time and compassion to work with intensity. It is a slowly learned process. Always move with the breath and with awareness, utilizing bandhas and visual focus points, known as dristhis. When you learn to work with intensity you will know when you should remain at an intense edge, and when you need to release back out of it. Intensity is exhilarating. Pain is not. You never accept pain, but you do learn to accept discomfort or mental restlessness. You will uncover your personal edges, not only physical, but also mental and emotional.

Playing the edge is an advanced practice to discover where the tightness and blockages have been established in your body and mind. However, the edge is always moving. Play as best you can to slowly dislodge each and every area of tightness you encounter. As you enter deep into an asana find the place where you can remain balanced in effort and alignment (external and internal), using ujjayi breathing to help release any arising discomfort. It is best to pause and witness each soft edge remaining there for longer lengths of time. This better prepares your muscles. Benefit comes from staying longer and longer at your edges without pushing harder or further. Knowing what edge to work with comes with experience and an awareness of your personality and attention to the moment. Each day your body is different, even for seasoned practitioners. Be attentive. Flexibility is affected by the slightest stress (i.e. being in a hurry) and not being physically warmed up or mentally or emotionally or physically prepared to hold a pose long enough for muscles to relax. Whether you are at a hard edge or a soft edge, the greatest benefit of an asana arises in the relaxation and enlivening energy that the stillness creates there. Find that!

Enlivening Energy – Through direct experience you can discover your energy body, the prana shakti. Experienced within the static holdings of asana are mudras of enlivened energy in the subtle channels. These mudras create movement that re-balances energy fields and the flow of prana in the body, and releases muscular tension. Enlivening energy can spontaneously move the body into an asana through the spine. The enlivened sensations

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Teaching Yoga classes in Sri Lanka

Acharya Kriyananadamayi assisted by Ahil Siva and Devaki offer Yoga classes to more than 450 children and 39 school teachers in remote, war torn northern Sri Lanka

(See links to photos at the end of this article. This mission was conducted with the financial sponsorship of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas.)

April 11, 2017: We are happy to inform all of the Order's supporters that we have received this report today from Acharya Kriyanandamay, of Colombo: "We went to Jaffna on 1st of April night and reached there on 2nd of April, 2017 morning. We had an informal meeting with the education department officers and Jaffna University Professors.

Monday, April 3 - we visited to one of the remote islands, Nainativu which is 40km from Jaffna town. It was a thirty minute boat ride followed by a one hour car drive.

We conducted a Yoga class for 130 students at the Sri Ganesha Kanista Mahavidhyalam school in Nainativu. The Principal, teachers and students were all very interested.

Continued on Page 10

Deepening you practice *continued*

and movement affects and alters consciousness.

-F-

Free of Force – Free of frustration. Never force a pose. Let go of any frustration you have about your performance of any asana. Try to find the position that allows you to enjoy every asana you practice.

Flexibility – Flexibility cannot be forced. Let the asana encourage the body to become more and more flexible, to allow more energy and sensation to flow through it.

Feedback – Look for feedback. "What is happening in your body as you practice?" Be aware of any discomfort or intensity in the stretch and if it is decreasing, increasing or staying the same. Is your breath smooth and even? Is your breathing deep and complete or has it speeded up? Are you holding your breath? Are you content, is there discomfort, is your mind passive, or bored and ready to come out, angry, emotional? Regardless, stay put. This is a purifying stage. Observe how you feel. Breathe deeply, relax a bit of effort and consciously choose to stay in the pose for two to three minutes, or longer. If you experience pain, slowly come out of the posture and rest well. Remain aware to what is happening in the resting stage.

Form follows function – The form of a perfect posture is secondary to the desired effect. "The desired effect is to remove tension and tightness in the physical body and to remove blockages in the subtle channels and to increase the flow of energy throughout the body. It is not about looking picture perfect or burning calories.

Feeling Good – When a yoga practice feels good, you get your energy moving. When this happens, you set up a "resonance" of healing that creates a strong field of well-being and mental intention that brings the whole body into a beneficial resonance. Practice with full attention. You will notice that good feelings will arise as you play with balance. Balance means relaxing and yielding to sensations that present themselves in every moment. Regardless if the immediate sensation is pleasure or discomfort, accept and experience every sensation and vibration, as long as it is not pain. Sensation can change

in the twinkling of an eye. Your sense of balance responds. Keep monitoring the nuances of sensation, and surrender to the impulses of energy. This creates a good feeling. Improperly aligned postures may feel good too, so balance is important. You will also benefit from the structural cues and feedback of authorized instructors to help you know if what you are doing is hindering your progress. However, sometimes holding a pose that is not perfectly aligned will ease your body into balance and correct alignment.

-G-

Guidance – It is important that you rely on the intelligence of the body/mind to direct your adjustment or determine when to release out of a pose altogether. Ours is a practice that never overrides the wisdom of the body but instead works with it. You need to be guided by the quality of your breath, tightness, pain, or the sense of opening and release. You should be encouraged to choose to come out of a pose earlier, or remain longer than other students even in a class. By degrees, you will begin to sense the right field of energy, or the wisdom of remaining in a pose, long after that first nudge of the mind to get out. Yoga is dynamic. The more Yoga you practice with effort and consistency, the more you will reap the physical benefits and build your prana shakti and dynamism. Prana shakti is dynamic and will guide your sadhana and your life. Yoga is not a pastime, hobby or exercise for the body. It is inner work and with sincerity it becomes a way of life.

Gaining control – A regular asana practice allows you to gain control over an enormous amount of energy. It grants control over your mental activities and emotions.

Grace – What is grace? It is deepest relaxation, stillness and immobility, the bliss that arises out of an increase of prana shakti. Grace is the in-pouring of force, dynamic energy, powerful and unifying on a tranquil and passive body. By exploring the potential energy of the body through a willful, dedicated, devotional asana practice, you will experience in degrees, shimmering, light and luminosity, stillness, space and joy.

(to be continued)



Teaching Yoga in Sri Lanka *continued*

Tuesday April 4 - we went to Kilinochchi which is 65 km from Jaffna. There we gave Yoga classes 90 students of Ambalpuram Vivekananda Vidhyalayam school.

Wednesday April 5 - we visited another island, Eluvaitivu, a 45 minute board ride from Jaffna, and at the school, Murugavel Vidhyalayam, we taught Yoga to about 65 students.

Thursday April 6 morning - We gave a Yoga class to Primary school students at Jaffna and later, in the evening we have taught primary school teachers from different parts of the Northern Province how to teach basic Yoga to their students.

Friday April 7 morning, at Thirunelveli, Jaffna, we taught a Yoga class to 40 Teachers, Professors and department officers from 12 different Zones of Northern Province. Afternoon - we taught a Yoga class to the United Nations UNICEF staff in Kilinochchi.

April 8, we returned to Colombo today morning. We have donated a set of all of our Tamil language publications on Yoga to the schools, education department, College of Education and UNICEF libraries.

During this trip, we had many wonderful experiences, and we are very satisfied with the response from the participants in the classes we offered. On this trip, we chose schools which are in remote areas of the Northern

province where no one takes any interest to visit because of transport difficulties and the distance. The boat service is available only four times a day.

Also, there were no vegetarian restaurants and hardly any shops, even to purchase bottled water or biscuits. There are no hospitals in these areas. Their main source of income is from fishing. The students are from poor families, and most of them have suffered during the 25-year civil war, which ended only a few years ago. Electricity service is sporadic. Some of the students are from the families which lost one or more family member during the war. Some of them wore torn clothing and shoes. Despite all these limitations, the students were very obedient, and they all showed interest in the Yoga practice. They said it was a blessing for them.

After the session for the school teachers, some of them came and hugged us, and said that now, after many years, they can also smile through all the difficulties in life. All these Teachers are from war affected areas and some have lost their family members during the war. Tears came to our eyes when we saw them smiling and laughing and when they accepted that Yoga can help them to overcome all the sadness in life. We are very happy that we were given this wonderful opportunity to share Yoga with them.

We have been asked by the officials of the Department of Education to return to Jaffna to teach Yoga to nearly 115 school Principals from schools in the Northern Province. They were very much satisfied with the classes we taught, and they told us that this Yoga practice will help both them personally and their students.

Update: May 15 from Kriyananandamayi: "I made another where to Jaffna for one week in early May. I met the Department of Education - Northern Province, Zonal officials and we had a discussion of offering training to few Teachers and some students from each of the 115 public schools in this region during five or six weekend sessions. Ninety percent of the school Principals are interested in sending their staffs for such a Yoga Teacher Training. Now this proposal has gone to the Minister of Education, Northern Province for approval. This may take some time.

We have sent our Tamil language Kriya Hatha publications to every school Principal.

I offered classes to two more schools. there were around 76 children and 9 Teachers who took part in the classes.

We plan to celebrate International Yoga Day 2017 in Jaffna and Kilinocchi. Hopefully from 20th June to 25th June we will do the awareness sessions in schools and some NGOs.

Herewith I am attaching the links of the photos which uploaded in Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1038451716289135.1073741858.100003729503742&type=1&l=66999ef6f8>



Children learning to meditate in Sri Lanka.



Continued on Page 12

News and Notes

Pilgrimage to the new Badrinath Ashram with Acharyas Sita Siddhananda and Kailash: September 1-18, 2017. Join us for a life changing, unforgettable pilgrimage to the place where Babaji attained soruba samadhi, the ultimate state of enlightenment. For the first time we will be able to fully use its facilities. Details: <http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm>

Pilgrimage to Sri Lanka December 29, 2017 to January 12, 2018, with Acharyas Satyananda, Kailash and Kriyananadamayi. See details www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pilgrimages-srilanka.htm

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec October 20-22, 2017.

Third level initiations will be offered with M. Govindan Satchidananda in Quebec July 14-23, 2017 and in Brazil in November 2017. They will also be offered 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.

Teacher Training course in Kriya Hatha Yoga at the Quebec Ashram: June 28 to July 11, 2017 in English and July 28 to August 9, 2017 in French: See details at: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/hatha-yoga-teacher-training.htm

New Ebook: "Truth Speaks" (Civavakkiyam) by a well-known "pious rebel" Yoga Siddhar Civavakkiyar, translation and commentary by Dr. T.N. Ganapathy and Dr. Geeta Anand. This is the collection of poems is famous for their non-conforming and revolutionary ideas besides their bluntness and forthright directness. It includes 530 verses on topics ranging from kundalini yoga to social issues. The forceful clarity and absolute sincerity of these songs jolt people out of their intellectual rut and conventional thinking. May be ordered from Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications. In USA and overseas: USD\$7.00, In Canada: CAD\$9.00 (inc gst). Number of color photographs- approximately 150 (total images 198), ISBN 978-

1-895383-85-0. 346 page Ebook.

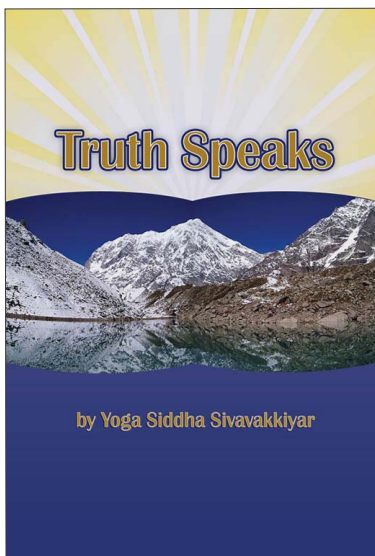
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Teaching Yoga in Sri Lanka *continued*

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