

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Eliminate the effects of Karma through Kriya Yoga

By M. G. Satchidananda

The subject of karma is both complex and mysterious for even advanced practitioners of Yoga. For this reason it is usually avoided by teachers. This situation exists despite the fact that more than ten percent of the verses in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali address the subject of karma. Understanding karma and how to eliminate its effects is essential to avoiding suffering and becoming enlightened.

Karma means the consequences of thoughts, words, and actions. The

Yogic literature refers to these as *vasanas* (tendencies) and *samskaras* (habits). All memories of your actions and their consequences are stored as subtle impressions in your subconscious mind.

Vasanas (tendencies) form gradually when you dwell on pleasurable or painful memories. The more you dwell on them, the stronger they become. For example, if you say something disturbing to someone and subsequently regret it, a tendency to feel guilty will become stronger. Suf-

fering increases. You lose sight of the inner joy and peace of your soul.

Samskaras (habits) form gradually when you repeat the same thoughts, words, or actions many times. Habits limit your freedom to act, think, and speak. When they are very strong or addictive, you become their slave. For example, you may be in the habit of eating whenever you feel emotionally depressed or anxious. Both *vasanas* and *samskaras* attract circumstances and events where you must confront desires and fears. Weakening or even eliminating their effects and consequent suffering is one of the primary purposes of Yoga. Patanjali elaborates on the subject of karma and suffering in Chapter Two, Verses 1–17 of The Yoga Sutras.

That which is to be eliminated is future suffering.

- Patanjali (The Yoga Sutras, II.16)

Inside

1. How to eliminate the effects of Karma through Kriya Yoga, by M. G. Satchidananda
5. The ABCs of Deepening Your Practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga, by Durga
7. Tadeu Arantes joins the Order of Acharyas in Badrinath, by Acharya Ganapat
8. Kitchardi: The Yogi Power Meal, by Acharya Skandavel
9. News and notes



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Three currents of karma running through your life

The law of karma is that all thoughts, words, and actions have consequences. No one can interfere with the law of karma. Birth, death, and all that happens in between depend on the law of karma. Karma determines the situation into which you are born in each lifetime. In the river of time, you are born and become at-

Continued on Page 2

Effects of karma *continued*

tached to others for a while. Then, karma carries you onwards.

To reach the other shore of the river of time, where you will no longer be subject to karma, you must learn to free yourself from the bondage of karma in this life. Patanjali tells us that there are three currents in this river of karma.

1. *Prarabdha* (active) karmas are being expressed and exhausted through the current birth. They determine the conditions of your life and include those of your family, the socio-economic conditions of your country, your DNA, and so on. Metaphorically speaking, they are the conditions of the river, and where, when, and how you entered it. For example, if you are born in a time and place where there are wars, famine, or natural disasters, the river may be filled with the debris of a storm or flood.

2. *Agama* (new) karmas are the karmas being created by your actions or inaction during this birth. They are like the effects of paddling your boat across the river.

3. *Samjita* (potential) karmas are those waiting to be fulfilled in future births. They require particular conditions in order to manifest.

The receptacle for all of these is known as the *karma-asaya*, “the reservoir or womb of karma” or “action deposit,” according to Patanjali in *The Yoga Sutras* (II.12). Their contents are unique for each individual. Even identical twins bring different *prarabdha* karma, as demonstrated by their personalities, even at a very young age. The potential karmas wait for an opportunity to come to the surface and express themselves through one of the *klesahs* (causes of sufferings), such as an attachment or an aversion, either in the present birth (*prarabdha*) or a future birth (*samjita*).

Overcoming the effects of karma

Your individual consciousness and the womb or suitcase of karma that you carry from one life to the next always conform to the laws of nature, *prakriti*, encompassing your natural environment. By sacrificing and giving away that which your ego believes to be yours, you pay off your karmic debts in the subtle realm. These karmic debts are the source of suffering. Hence, the *Kriya Yoga* pledge – to “surrender absolutely and entirely to *Kriya Babaji*, my own being and pleasures” – provides you with a powerful means of eradicating the effects of negative karma. Misplaced identity, egoism, is the root cause of suffering.

The cause (of suffering) to be eliminated, is the union of the Seer and the Seen.

- Patanjali (*The Yoga Sutras*, I.17)

If you speak or act consciously, you might avoid becoming involved in new or potential karmas. For example, instead of reacting emotionally to the disturbing words or actions of family or friends, speak only after reflection. Say only what is necessary and uplifting or helpful to the other person or to the resolution of the situation. The practice of *Yoga* has as its initial goal the

development of *sattva* (calmness), which enables you to speak and act consciously.

However, you have practically no freedom of choice about primary active karmas (*prarabdha*). That is why *prarabdha* karma is known as destiny and is nearly impossible to alter. It determines the kind of body you are born into, how long you will live, and whether you will be happy or unhappy overall. But by exercising your will consciously, through the secondary currents of karma, you can influence your primary karma or destiny in future births.

Remaining oblivious to the karmic causes of your current problems is like ignoring the causes of your physical illness or disability. When you ignore the effects of your present thoughts, words, and actions, you have no way either of eradicating their constituent elements – your tendencies and habits in this life – or of preventing their consequences for future births when they become active and form your destiny.

While karma is “action with consequences,” *kriya*, a word derived from the word karma, is “action with awareness.” To weaken the effects of negative karmas, those that cause you and others to suffer, apply these *Kriya Yoga* practices.

1. Cultivating focused attention
2. Exercising control over your senses
3. Strengthening your willpower and intention (*sankalpa shakti*)
4. Cultivating detachment, self-study, and autosuggestion
5. Observing the social restraints and four wise social attitudes
6. *Kriya Kundalini Pranayama* and the eighteen postures
7. *Kriya Mantra Yoga*
8. Aspiring to Divine Grace
9. Practicing Karma Yoga
10. Preparing the mind for the moment of death

You can avoid becoming distracted by useless or unnecessary actions and their consequences by cultivating the practice of focusing on whatever you are doing. Unnecessary actions create unnecessary consequences, including confusion and complications. Cultivating mindfulness, continuous awareness, and the perspective of the Witness, doing one thing at a time, and avoiding multi-tasking are all ways to do this.

Your senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch, under the influence of *tamas* (inertia, confusion, and doubt), cause you to be satisfied with the passing delight of momentary sensual pleasures. By cultivating *sattvic* calm in the mind through various yogic practices, however, you can engage in *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal). No longer a slave to the distraction of sensual attractions and aversions, the mind ceases to be scattered, and you avoid creating potential karmas in endless cycles.

Continued on Page 3



Effects of karma *continued*

Yoga recommends beginning with the mastery of the tongue, which involves taste and speech, by observing days of fasting and silence. All experiences must be digested and are therefore related to the tongue. When you remain silent, you avoid many complications, and your life becomes simpler and full of joy. When eating ceases to be emotional compensation, you become aware of the underlying sources of suffering and can then practice letting them go.

Developing willpower with intention

Developing sankalpa shakti (willpower with intention) provides the strength and guidance to change potential and new karmas. It allows you to cultivate the conviction that you can accomplish anything and unlock all of the mind's potential powers. It enables you to cultivate dharma, the soul's aspiration to Self-Realization and freedom from the ego's perspective and its habits and tendencies.

I am forever grateful to Yogi Ramaiah for providing me with the opportunity to develop willpower. At every stage of his training, he requested that I form clear intentions in the form of sacred vows or pledges. The first was the pledge of complete surrender at the beginning of the first initiation, when I was 22 years old. I was given the opportunity to join one of his yogic ashrams, which required the practice of yoga for eight hours each day, work in gainful employment for eight hours each day, and rest, sustenance, and service for the remaining eight hours.

I realized that, by dedicating myself to such a discipline, I could avoid my tendency to become distracted and carried away by many other interests. I needed to choose what was truly important. I reasoned that, if I was going to make steady, profound spiritual progress, such a way of life would be ideal for me.

In 1970, after successfully observing the various sadhana requirements of discipline during a three-month probationary period, and after making a formal pledge to continue observing these requirements, I was accepted into his new ashram in California. This sankalpa shakti was the vehicle that carried me through the next eighteen years. In 1982, he asked me to formally dedicate myself to a new pledge: to initiate others into the 144 kriyas.

Other vows include those made at the beginning of periods of silence, fasting, and tapas, when resolving to go on a pilgrimage, and the Kriya Yoga pledge of surrender.

Cultivating detachment, self-study and autosuggestion

Patanjali explains that the constant practice of vairagya (detachment) is the main method of classical Yoga.

By constant practice and with detachment (arises) the cessation of (identifying with the fluctuations in consciousness).

- Patanjali (The Yoga Sutras, I.12)

The regular, consistent practice of Shuddhi Dhyana Kriya, the first meditation technique in Babaji's Kriya Yoga, will make you aware of and cleanse the contents of the unconscious mind, the seat of your karmas. The

contents of our unconscious minds are like the contents of the basement of a house, with its door locked. After practicing this technique for several weeks and recording your meditations in a notebook, review what you have written and notice the things that repeat themselves. They are samskaras, or habits of mind, which contribute to your karma.

Notice also the memories, pleasant or painful, which recur over and over. These are vasanas or tendencies. Recognize them. This is one means of svadhyaya (self-study). Learn to let them go with the powerful Shuddhi Dhyana Kriya, as mentioned above. Also, attend the second initiation and learn to cultivate powerful antidotes to negative mental habits and tendencies by composing and repeating autosuggestions for positive changes in your life. These will form new potential karma.

When bound by negative thoughts, their opposite should be cultivated.

- Patanjali (The Yoga Sutras, II.33)

Observing the social restraints and four wise social attitudes

Your karma often involves your social relationships. The wise observe several social restraints, known as the yamas. They are: non-harming, truthfulness, chastity, non-stealing, and greedlessness, and are prescribed by Patanjali in The Yoga Sutras (II.29–41). Patanjali also recommends four attitudes.

By cultivating attitudes of friendship towards the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and equanimity towards the non-virtuous, the consciousness retains its undisturbed calmness.

- Patanjali (The Yoga Sutras, I.33)

By doing so, you will avoid being carried away by negative emotions and tendencies. Your life will become serene, and you will exhaust your prarabdha karma without creating new negative karma.

Raising kundalini through the practice of Kriya Kundalini Pranayama and the eighteen postures

All of the eighteen postures and the practice of Kriya Kundalini Pranayama raise kundalini energy from the lower chakras to the higher chakras. Consciousness follows energy and, as a result, your consciousness gradually frees itself from the psychological states associated with the lower chakras: survival, fear, and desire. As the higher chakras are energized, you become more dynamic, loving, creative, intuitive, and aware of the presence of the Divine. Consequently, you have the inner guidance and strength to overcome negative tendencies and habits, and move towards enlightenment.

Kriya Mantra Yoga

The mental repetition of bija mantras, as transmitted during the second initiation of Babaji's Kriya Yoga,

Continued on Page 4



Effects of karma *continued*

soothes the mind and diverts mental energy away from memory-driven tendencies, thus weakening them. Mantra repetition also increases awareness in the present moment and creates space for your higher intelligence to inspire you with creative solutions to life's challenges. Habits are replaced with creative intelligence.

Grace and karma

Karma can be amended by divine grace, which is beyond the law of karma. Babaji tells us that you can win this grace through intense yogic practice, known as tapas, that is, devotion or surrender to the Lord, service to the Lord in others, and satsang with the wise. This is why the cultivation of your soul's aspiration to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful or enlightenment will help you free yourself from the ego's manifestations, including desire, fear, anger, and pride. Grace is the response to the soul's call. It is available to everyone, but most persons never make the call.

Karma Yoga

As we have seen, our previous karmas can limit our freedom of choice through tendencies and habits. Nevertheless, the freedom we do have is sufficient to make us ultimately the creators of our own destiny. The law of karma is not fatalistic. Regardless of the level of freedom of choice you have, it can be used to create even greater freedom from samskaras and karma. Furthermore, Divine grace or providence will support those who help themselves. Knowing this, the wise look for opportunities to create good karma – that which brings happiness to others and yourself. Performing activities that involve good karma can help offset the consequences of bad karma – that which produces suffering for others and yourself – and purify you of negative tendencies and habits.

By listening to your conscience with sincere aspiration and faith, you can act selflessly, skillfully, and with love and, in so doing, weaken old karmic patterns and create new positive ones. That is Karma Yoga or selfless service. It can act upon your potential and new karma, the secondary currents of your destiny. Karma Yoga purifies your mind and emotions, because it is done with love and without attachment to the results. It is not complete in itself, but when coupled with meditation, devotion, and wisdom, it can bring you to the goal of complete surrender and Self-Realization.

Transcending the law of karma at the time of death

Only you can achieve freedom from karma. Transcending karma is the ultimate goal of Yoga. Only by practicing Yoga can you cleanse from the unconscious mind the negative tendencies and habits that form your karma. They also determine what happens at the time of death and thereafter.

Usually, most people die unconsciously, full of confusion and with little capacity to focus their attention on truth or philosophy. As a result, they reincarnate carrying

the same karmic seeds. The fear, grief, and desire from this life, and karmic seeds accumulated during lives even before this one, cloud the mind at the time of death, and the confusion continues in the afterlife. Yoga teaches that the train of thought at the moment of death determines the nature of the next birth. This is why yogis take many years to prepare the mind for the moment of death.

One who at the time of death remembers me alone becomes one with my essence. There is no doubt about it. Those who are fully established in yoga with an unwavering mind leave their bodies contemplating only on the Divine Being and thus reach the realm of the Divine.

- Bhagavad Gita, 8.5

If, at the moment of death, you can remain aware of the Presence of the Divine, let go of ownership of everything, including even your physical body, and embrace the True, the Good, the Beautiful, you will avoid such confusion. You will illumine the unconscious mind and leave the body full of grace, with joy and intention.

To prepare for this critical moment, the wise cultivate spiritually illuminating mental habits for years beforehand, particularly later in life. The longer and more intense your practice of Yoga, the more such habits will support you at the time of death.

Yoga also teaches that you may depart unconsciously from any of the body's nine openings, depending on the train of thought you are cultivating at the time of death. Knowing this, a Kriya yogi will open the shushumna nadi through regular practice of various kriyas and, at the time of death, will concentrate on the crown of the head, the brahma randhra or "door to the absolute," while performing the fifth pranayama kriya, and so merge with the Lord, Ishvara, the special Self.

Controlling all the gates, confining the mind in the heart, placing the pranic force in the crown of the head, thus fully established in Yoga, one who, remembering me alone, leaves the body with the sound of Om goes to the supreme realm.

- Bhagavad Gita, 8:8,10,12-13

Others are forced by nature to use one of the other nine openings and consequently enter various astral planes after death, and eventually enter into the conditions of subsequent births. So, your mental state, your habits, and your tendencies at the time of death determine the conditions of birth and destiny. They are the baggage that you carry and that determines what happens from life to life.

Karma and rebirth

In the Bhagavad Gita (6.37-45), Krishna tells Arjuna that if a tapawin (a yogi dedicated to intense practice) dies before reaching the goal, such a yogi will be born into a family of resourceful yogis. Patanjali, in The Yoga Sutras (I.19), refers to such yogis as bhava pratiyaya yogis: those who inherit the knowledge and experience

Continued on Page 5



ABCs of deepening your practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga (Part 2)

By Durga Ahlund

ABCs of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga will better explain how you can experience the 18 asanas as means of all five levels of your being – physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual. Why not consciously utilize asana to create a bridge between your physical and your spiritual being? In so doing you will gain more vital energy, better health self-awareness. The ABC's will continue as a regular column in on-going quarterly, Kriya Yoga Journals. Please refer to previous journals for more information on additional ways to achieve all the benefits possible from your practice of the 18 postures. Learn these techniques from an experienced, authorized instructor.

The goals of Babaji's Kriya Yoga are: 1) deep relaxation; 2) physical strength, vibrant health and wellbeing; 3) purification of the physical body, mind and subtle energies. Elimination of physical and mental impurities; 4) to calm and steady the mind through a devotional and meditative practice; 5) to define and refine energy. The posture series will awaken prana and eventually the potential power of the kundalini and strengthen its magnetic shakti energy. 6) to develop detachment and develop equanimity on and off the mat. 7) to master asana as a means of mastering oneself.

–B–

Balance – Balance is created in the body whenever it is simultaneously aligned and relaxed. Balance allows you to surrender the weight of the body to the pull of gravity. This should be a basic goal in each asana. Stability will be maintained when the posture is held with a balance of strength and flexibility. Stability does not mean being motionless. Balance is exploratory; it is working with the edges between too little tension and too much. Balance is grounded yet floating. It is flexible and fluid. It is feeling present. Alignment with diaphragmatic breathing brings about balance in the autonomic nervous system, which in turn alters brain chemistry and brings



Durga with students in the fish pose at the Ashram.

emotional stability. After responding stress, this enables you to return quickly to a relaxed state, Seek balance throughout life.

Breath – The breath is a key to maintain balance. There is no amount of flexibility, strength, stamina or concentration that can compensate for inhibited breathing. Poor breathing is due to tension, anxiety and habit and will block energy and keep muscles tight. Breathe properly and experience yourself extending further in an asana.

Understand the importance of breathing, smoothly and evenly, and coordinating the movements with the breath. Each smooth and even inhalation will encourage effort and increase strength. Move on exhalation to release tension and increase relaxation. Utilize ujjayi with diaphragmatic breathing. Ujjayi allows for deeper, safer entrance into and out of postures. It stimulates the flow of prana and encourages mental and physical relaxation.

Diaphragmatic breathing aids detoxification and builds

Continued on Page 6

Effects of karma *continued*

of yoga by birth. Such souls are very rare. They are attracted by parents who are endowed with the knowledge and experience to guide them in the path of yoga from birth onwards. Yogi Ramaiah often said that advanced Kriya Yoga sadhaks would be able to choose when and in which families they would take rebirth.

Others, whose practice of yoga is not intense, will come into rebirth with a mix of positive and negative samskaras, which will cause them to be attracted to the dualities of life and require them to search for some years before finding the spiritual path again. But because of the subtle impressions stored in the soul's karma asasya, or

womb, from life to life, it will be relatively easy for such souls to relearn what they have forgotten during the interval. However, this will not happen without some resistance caused by continuing attachments and aversions to objects in the sensual world. □

For further reading on these subjects (available at www.babajiskriyayoga.net online bookstore):

Kriya Yoga: Insights along the Path

The Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas

Enlightenment: It's Not What You Think

Your Mind: the Owner's Manual



Deepening you practice *continued*

strength and flexibility. Relaxed, long, deep diaphragmatic breathing will release the diaphragm and the accessory muscles of inhalation. Asana will help release tensions from the respiratory muscles.

Asana with attention to ujjayi breathing increases the removal of toxins in the body, releases blockages from the subtle nervous system and relaxes the mind. Emotions can arise, at times, when deeply-seated tension is freed from the musculature. But even with the release of emotion, the mind remains attentive and calm. By breathing consciously, you will observe, relax and truly let go. Your attention will be engaged in what is happening and disengaged from reacting. You can easily remain focused on the details of the posture and on bodily sensations.

The hissing, ocean-sounding breath of ujjayi is created as the air passes through the restricted air passage due to the partial closing of the glottis. The partial closing is similar to what happens when you whisper, or close your throat to hold liquid in your mouth to gargle. It is what allows pressure to build up before a cough. The glottis is just behind the larynx. If you partially close off the glottis you create a sibilant 's,' and a slight vibration of the soft palate, the sound of sleep before a snore become audible. Ujjayi is always practiced through the nose, with the mouth closed.

If you do not understand how to do ujjayi, try whispering, and feel the area in your throat that tenses when you whisper. Then, breathe deeply creating this same tension in your throat. Try to make the sibilant 's' sound smooth without pauses or jerks. The breath will be deep and diaphragmatic. You will need to maintain a continuous control over the muscles used in respiration. Your diaphragm is used during inhalation and the abdomen is used during exhalation. There should be a slight tension in the lower abdomen so that there is an expansion of the back, sides, and upper abdomen (utilizing the diaphragm and stimulating the solar plexus area.) The lower abdomen will not expand much anteriorly. Ujjayi will have a soothing effect on the mind and the nervous system.

Spinal breathing can also be used with each asana to develop a strong internal focus and to stimulate and raise energy through the spine. Bring attention to the spine in each asana that you practice. Learn to visualize the spine from the tailbone to the center of the skull and then to direct energy up the spinal column. From that practice, begin to feel energy flowing up the subtle spinal cord with each inhalation and energy flowing down on exhalation. Alternately, on exhalation, imagine and feel energy flowing out from the spinal column through the capillaries into the torso or focus awareness at the expanding energy at the ajna chakra. This internal focus will help establish your mind in the asana. Spinal breathing strengthens the posture and stimulates the awakening of kundalini, your potential power and consciousness. Through this practice, you experience that the bridge between body, mind and spirit is the breath. (You can learn this technique of spinal breathing from an experienced authorized instructor).

Bandhas – You can begin to use bandhas, muscular locks, as gentle muscular contractions for balance, alignment, safety and effectiveness. Just by tightening pelvic floor muscles, the perineum, the urogenital muscles, you will be supporting the sacrum, and strengthening and elongating the spine. By tightening the abdominal muscles, upper and lower, you will lift the ribcage and create internal leverage.

The bandhas, mulabandha, uddiyana and jalandhara affect the nervous and circulatory systems. They rebalance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. They help gain some control of nervous system and mind. Use of the bandhas encourages the right exertion, and will, where the whole personality participates. You gain conscious control, more easily, over the energy in the asana with bandhas, ujjayi breathing and mudras. Learn the bandhas precisely, from an experienced, authorized instructor then practice them and bring them into your asana practice. In asana practices bandhas are not held to a point of vibration and the breath is never held.

How to practice: Engaging mulabandha involves pulling the perineum and auxiliary muscles upwards and inwards. The auxiliary muscles can be identified as those that are triggered whenever do make a complete exhalation. The area to be contracted is different in males and females. In the male body the trigger point is at the perineum between the anus and the genitals. In the female body, it is at the cervix, where vagina and uterus meet. There are two other mudras that come into play in mulabandha: vajroli/sahajoli mudra (contraction of the urogenital muscles that you use to prevent urination) and ashwini mudra (contraction of inner and outer anal sphincter used to prevent defecation). These can be practiced separately. However, when first practicing mulabandha these two contractions will also take place. By contracting the urogenital muscles and sphincter muscles, muladhara chakra is stimulated at a central point. By pulling up all three points you may be able to feel where that central point is, which is the true point of contraction in mulabandha. Once you are able to clearly distinguish the different muscle groups, you can isolate and contract only the central point, and no longer use vajroli/sahajoli or ashwini.

Uddiyana bandha is accomplished by pulling the abdominal wall in and up as far as it is possible toward the spine. The abdomen will feel long and hollow and empty, the chest broad and full. There is contraction in both the lower and upper abdomen. Do not hold your breath. You will still be able to breathe deeply, but breathing will make holding the contraction more difficult. Notice that activation of the muscles of inhalation are retained when mulabandha is engaged during asana, even while exhaling. This will slow down exhalation. You will notice that there is a direct connection between the engagement of mulabandha and uddiyana. It is difficult to hold one with-

Continued on Page 7



Tadeu Arantes joins the Order of Acharyas in Badrinath

By Acharya Ganapati

(Editor's note: On October 6, 2017, during a special ceremony at the Badrinath ashram, Tadeu Arantes, an initiate of Babaji's Kriya Yoga for nearly two decades, became an Acharya member Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas and was given the name Ganapati. He shared with us the following text on this happy occasion).

If I had to summarize my entire life story in a short sentence, I would say that it made me a disciple of Babaji.

I was born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1951. And, since 1982, I am married with Marcia (acharya Annapurna Ma). This happy marriage gave me three children, Milena, Pedro and Marcela, and two grandchildren, Marina and João. I work professionally as a journalist, writer and teacher.

For more than three decades, I am researching intensely different spiritual traditions. As well as its connections with philosophy, sciences and arts. My study and my experience convinced me that "All is One". And, based on this monistic conception, I have written five books and a large number of articles, published in the media or in my personal blog. Traditions illuminate each other and what is obscure in one can be clarified by another.

Reminiscences of a spiritual past occurred to me very early – the first one before the age of five. But, at 13, the awakening of the critical thinking led me to reject my



Acharya Ganapati, Durga, Annapurna and Marcella Arantes.

original religion, due to the factual inconsistencies of the Old Testament of the Bible. With the intellectual resources that I had at the time, I could only take the biblical text to the letter. I did not know that each sentence comprises multiple layers of signification, and can be read in many different ways. Attached to the surface of

Continued on Page 9

Deepening your practice *continued*

out the engaging the other automatically. In addition, as you hold in uddiyana bandha you will notice an automatic tightening in the throat area.

Jalandhara bandha is a contraction in the throat engaged by lowering the chin onto the breastbone. In many of the 18 asana jalandhara is subtly held and in some postures, like shoulder stand it is held firmly. See our book, *Deepening your Practice* for more details.

Bodily sensation – What is a bodily sensation? This is what is happening in the body as you move through postures. Ujjayi breathing turns the mind inwards and so facilitates awareness of bodily sensations. The initial sensations are tightness in joints and muscles, discomfort, pain, tension, and the sense of blocked energy.

However, as you explore the body while lying vertically or standing or sitting horizontally you will experience subtle sensations, miniscule movements and waves of energy that flow up and down the length of the body, ebbing and flowing, responding to the prana that animates it. You may notice sensations of muscular and energetic release or emotional release. You may find your sinuses opening, your breathing changing in rate or

depth, or your breath becoming so subtle, even imperceptible. You begin to breathe in a new way. As the prana awakens from dormancy in some areas of your body, the range of sensations you can feel is vast, some subtle, some not so subtle.

Remember, holding onto physical, emotional or mental resistance will curtail the vibrancy of sensations. Let go, breathe and allow your body to bend. Alignment with mental relaxation is the key to melting away the physical barriers that prevent you from feeling the full range of bodily sensations. As you drop down into yourself during longer periods of holdings, with the bandhas and awareness engaged more sensations will appear. The longer you hold the asana aligned with ease, the more, tension and deep-seated pain in body and mind can be released.

Exploration of sensations becomes a spiritual practice to the extent that you surrender the perspective of "I am the body"... "I am my feelings, sensations, experiences," to the perspective of "I am the Witness." This occurs to the extent that the body, mind and breath become steady and balanced, resulting in inner stillness.

To be continued



Kitchardi: The Yogi power meal

By Acharya Skandavel

It's spelled many ways and technically just means a mixture of grains and legumes but when mentioned in an Ayurvedic context, the usual implication is that is a one pot meal consisting of long grain, white basmati rice, moong daal (split moong beans with the skin removed), vegetables and spices tempered in ghee.

Why moong daal? Of all the legumes/pulses/beans/, moon beans are the only one which is sattvic. Additionally, most beans tend to aggregate the vata dosha.

Why white basmati? Basmati rice cooks at approximately the same rate as moong daal and some ayurvedic sources will tell you that the rice bran can aggravate pitta dosha.

What's so special about Kitchardi? Kitchardi when cooked properly balances all doshas and has a unique ability to ground and nourish a person while simultaneously facilitating detoxification. It's also easy to make, economical and is particularly effective at mitigating inflammation. Perhaps most importantly, it's DELICIOUS. As we all know, if we aren't emotionally satisfied by a meal we'll end up seeking satisfaction elsewhere. Kitchardi obeys the Ayurvedic rule that all 5 tastes should be included in a complete meal.

What, no onions or garlic? The recipe below utilizes a spice called kalonji to replace the flavor we enjoy from onions and a spice called asafoetida to replace the flavor we enjoy from garlic. Both onions and garlic are less than sattvic and act as antibiotics. Whereas, they can be used medicinally, we don't want to inadvertently wipe out novel species of intestinal flora.

No nightshade vegetables – potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, capsicum (peppers of any kind)! They can all cause inflammation. You won't miss them.

Ingredients

Moong Daal (get at your local Indian grocery store. Origin is of importance. The Indian brands tend to have the most digestible moong daal. There is brand called 24 Mantra Organic that your Indian grocer can likely order for you if they don't carry it.

Long Grain White Basmati Rice (Indian grocery stores are now carrying a lot of organic products. Ask if they can obtain for you if they don't have in stock.

Organic Vegetables – squash, carrots, zucchini, bok choy, turnips... be intuitive and mix it up! See what's in season at your local farmer's market. Root vegetables are great for winter and help your kitchardi be even more grounding if you're feeling a bit on the vata side. *Do buy fresh cilantro as it's an important garnish and is particularly effective at helping rid the body of heavy metals and mitigating pitta imbalances.



Kitchardi: The Yogi power meal.

Per 1 cup of dry moong dal

Spices (seeds):

Fennel 1 teaspoon

Cumin 1 teaspoon

Kalonji (also called nigella) 1 teaspoon

Ajwain ½ teaspoon

* Mustard Seed ½ teaspoon (leave out if you have a pitta imbalance or it's summer time. It does help quite a bit with digestion though.)

Herbs (powders):

Asafoetida ½ teaspoon (usually found mixed with fenugreek, which is okay. Pure is hard to find but worth it.)

Coriander (crushed coriander seeds) 1 tablespoon

Turmeric 1 heaping tablespoon

Fresh:

Turmeric 1 heaping tablespoon (if you can find it organic, get it! If not, get conventional from the Indian grocery).

Ginger 1 heaping tablespoon

Curry Leaf 1 tablespoon (Easy to find fresh from Indian grocery. Dry is okay but just not the same. Curry leaf is an extraordinarily powerful antioxidant source).

When the moong daal or kitchardi is done cooking and you have tempered and added the above spices, also add a little less than 1 tsp of finishing salt to your moong daal or kitchardi. You can always add more later if you prefer. To view the video of Skandavel preparing kitchardi :

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/i9gaza4yxtu3rkb/Video%20Nov%2015%20C%208%2020%2019%20AM.mov?dl=0>
– Acharya Skandavel skandavel@babajiskriyayoga.net



News and Notes

Pilgrimage to the new Badrinath Ashram with M. G. Satchidananda and Durga: September 21 to October 9, 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.

Residents of India only are eligible to attend the pilgrimage to Badrinath lead by Vinod and Lata Kumar from May 19 to June 1, 2017. Details are here: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Quebec, June 16-18, 2017 and 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

Continued on Page 10

Acharya Ganapati *continued*

the narrative, I considered certain episodes as an insult to intelligence. So, discarding all the biblical mythology, I adhered to deism, assuming that God had, yes, created the world, but, then, the world happened to evolve itself in line with its "natural laws", without any new supernatural intervention, at least until the birth of Jesus.

From deism to atheism was a step. Because God is all or nothing: either God is fully present here and now or God had not been nor will be present anywhere and forever. Therefore, I became an atheist before the age of 14 and continued to be an atheist until 28. During this time, I had two remarkable spiritual experiences. At the first one, at 14, I went into a mystical ecstasy contemplating the starry sky. At the second, at 28, I was overwhelmed by awe and wonder when I read a scientific book on the theory of Big Bang and I learned of the extraordinary degree of the temperature of the universe during a small fraction of second after its beginning. I managed to suppress the first experience through foolish rational arguments. But the second definitely dissolved my materialism and brought me back to the spiritual path.

Before that, around my 21st year, I came to know about the existence of Babaji, through the Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramahansa Yogananda. This book was lost in the bookcase of my parents' house. And I looked at it carelessly, considering the miraculous facts described as a succession of absurdities. However, it was exactly the most miraculous of the chapters, the one in which Yogananda presented Babaji, that captured my attention with force. While the rational mind said that it was a pure nonsense, another instance of my conscience felt the quiet and gentle touch that, with time, would rouse it from its torpor. I put the book back on the shelf, but a seed had been planted in me.

That seed would germinate later, between 1987 and 1993, when I had the two most powerful spiritual experiences of my life, in sessions of "Holotropic Breathwork", coordinated by my friend and psychologist Doucy Douek (Acharya Saraswati Karuna Devi). During the first one, I witnessed the immensity of Divine Love. During the second, I was graced by the stable presence and overflowing blessing of Babaji. These two experiences redefined the

entire course of my life. Because, before I had returned to the spiritual path, my approach was purely intellectual. And the intellect is unable to give us the indisputable certainty that we need in the crucial moments of life. These two experiences gave me that.

Therefore, when I received, in 1998, the first and second initiations in Kriya Yoga, transmitted by our dear Satchidananda, I was already a devotee of Babaji for a long time. I have to confess that I attended the first initiation with some reluctance, because I thought that I already had my "own way", based on the mystic dimension of the Semitic monotheist traditions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and on the systematic and deep practice of the Our Father, the prayer taught by Jesus. But, as soon as I received the initiation, Kriya Yoga charmed me and became part of my life. Since then, I have not traveled a straight path: my practice had ups and downs, good times and bad times. What sustained it despite all the instabilities was the unshakable connection with Babaji. I believe that only now, after 18 years of practice, after having repeated many times the three initiations, after having visited many times the holy places in India, after having made contact with the literature of the Siddhas, and especially after having passed through the training for acharya, I am able to appreciate in depth the subtleties and the excellence of Kriya Yoga. I have to thank very much Satchidananda for his patience and solicitude.

My wife Marcia (Acharya Annapurna Ma), which is much more intuitive and assertive than me, has helped me a lot to overcome the hesitations and move forward in the practical life and the spiritual path. Her love is a daily source of nutrition.

In 2011, I wrote my best book until now: the recreation in Portuguese of 100 poems of Kabir. It was for me a very deep experience to connect the charming personality and the radical teachings of the great mystic of the 15th century, who was, at his time, a secret disciple of Babaji. Many times, the poetic solutions that I found surprised me, and I felt in them the invisible presence of my beloved Satguru. How could I thank him?

- Acharya Ganapati tadeu.arantes@gmail.com



News and Notes *continued*

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

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.

"Here, he delineates succinctly and clearly the time-tested techniques of these masters for eliminating obstacles—our deepest afflictions of fear, doubt, and all forms of grief and sorrow which obstruct the incessant flow of our intrinsic luminosity and happiness. 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 pages. US\$14.95 CN\$18.75

Order your copy from our website: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#enlightenment_book

Badrinath Ashram construction is nearing completion. We need your help! We have begun the construction of Phase 2, which includes two more apartments, a communal dining room, entrance gate, protective walls, yagna peetam, tapas room, and outdoor platforms. These may be completed by the end of June 2017. Our registered educational charity, Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas, needs your contributions to complete the construction of the ashram in Badrinath. See the latest progress report and photos here: www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/News-Notes.htm#badrinath_construction.

We also need your help fulfill the Order's planned 2017 program of sponsored activities. Make your contribution

online and see details of our Annual report and plans here:

www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/kriya-yoga-contribution.htm

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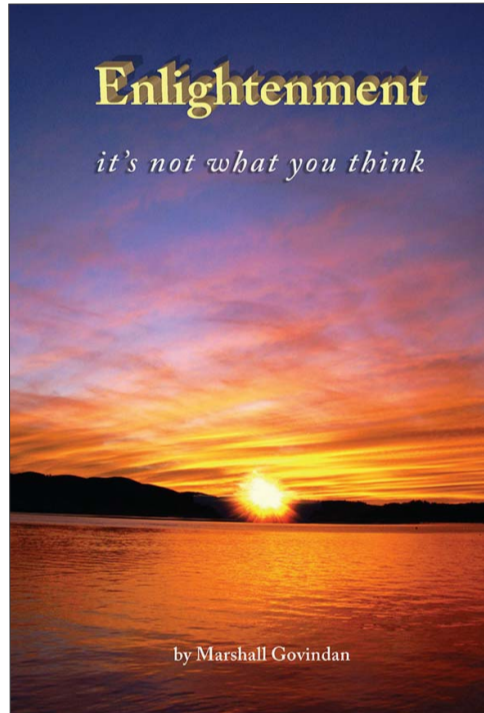
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Ashram under construction at Badrinath



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