

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Why does Babaji's Kriya Yoga have so many techniques and require daily practice?

By Durga Ahlund

Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a synthesis of Classical Yoga and Tantra. Classical Yoga, directly reflected in Babaji's Kriya Yoga is founded in Patanjali's 8-limbed path of Ashtanga Yoga: the *yamas* (restraints and ethics, things you shouldn't do), *niyamas* (personal practice, things you should do), *asana* (physical postures), *pranayama* (techniques of breathing to increase energy-prana), *pratyahara*

(withdrawal of senses), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), *samadhi* (cognitive absorption, communication with the Self). Tantra, in BKY is reflected in the techniques that we do to stimulate the awakening of, and to create balance within, our subtle energy centers, and in what we do to stimulate the gentle flow of creative energy, known as kundalini, into the brain. Tantra is also reflected in

our use of Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of mantra, mudra, and inner devotion. Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a serious path of 144 techniques. It is Art, and it is a Science.

Babaji's Kriya Yoga is an integral Yoga, and all the techniques work beautifully together on the whole body/mind complex to not only, liberate and free trapped and stagnant energy stored in the body and repetitive thoughts in the mind, but also to stimulate a flow of dynamic, creative energy throughout the being that has the effect of bringing awareness into our daily activities. It takes daily practice to become a way of life.

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Kriya Hatha Yoga

Kriya Hatha Yoga asanas are not done as a means of perfecting advanced athletic asana. The asanas are practiced regularly to calm, strengthen, and balance the body, to bring

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harmony to the autonomic nervous system, by balancing the sympathetic with the parasympathetic systems, and to release blocked energy and emotions stored in the body, especially in the lower three energy centers. The asanas are meant to increase circulation and restore health to the glandular systems associated with all the energy centers. The connective tissue, the fascia is stretched through the whole of the body, the muscles and joints are lubricated, and all the organ systems benefit. But in addition, this series of 18 asana, which incorporates *ujjayi* breathing, bandhas (muscular locks), spinal breathing, *drishti* (concentrated gaze) and awareness is designed to increase the flow of the energy of prana in the spine, by stimulating an acceleration of the upward flow of cerebrospinal fluid nourishing the spinal cord and brain. For the first, and most important aim of this posture series is developing deep relaxation and a sense of wellbeing. The objective is immobility and inner stillness, the doorway to realization. To reach this state of relaxation, the asana helps to eliminate all restlessness in the body. The ultimate experience of asana is not that of a cessation of energy through inertia, but an increase of energy, an in-pouring and circulation of vital force, in a still, relaxed, and receptive body and mind.

All the Kriya Yoga techniques prepare the body and mind for vibrant energy to flow unhindered throughout the whole of the subtle nervous system and throughout the energy field surrounding the body. In both the asana and pranayama, we can consciously liberate energy from the lower three energy centers and direct it upward within the spinal column to the mid brain. The practices increase the circulation of energy in and around the body and bring harmony to the body, mind, and emotions, while increasing vitality and dynamic energy. While the techniques work on the physical body, they have immense effects on the subtle and spiritual level of our being.

How do Kriya Yoga techniques form a bridge from the physical to the subtle and spiritual?

The physical body, mental body and subtle

body are intimately connected. You can't just work on one level and expect change in the being. The physical body stores traumatic events and is affected directly by our emotions (strongly negative and highly elevated). Each of our energy centers has their own stored information, glands, hormones, chemistry and neurocircuitry. *"Neuropeptides are hormones of emotions, secreted by the neurons in the brain and act as signaling molecules to neighboring cells. Neuropeptides and their receptors join the brain, glands, and immune system in a network of communication between the brain and our body. Our feelings literally alter the electrical frequencies generated by our bodies producing a nonverbal communication between the cells."* The whole body/mind complex must be addressed, if we want to rewire the brain and be free from our conditioned programs, an important aim of this system of Babaji's Kriya Yoga.

Kriya Kundalini Pranayama is a powerhouse of breathing, with no need for breath retention. *Kriya Kundalini Pranayama* (KKP) is a dynamic, intentional, willful, multi-faceted breathing technique, which systematically stirs up stored energy awakens the dormant or potential source of our energy, kundalini. The breath is clearly a bridge between the physical and subtle dimensions of our being and this pranayama is unique in its potential to do just that *without breath retention*. The conscious use of the breath in KKP increases and directs prana in the spine. The pranayama is complete and everything from the way we sit, to the spinal breathing and the ratio of inhalation to exhalation, the utilization of bandhas provides the pressure required to concentrate the prana in the spinal cord. The addition of the mudras (hand, fingers and tongue) and *drishti*, visualization, and extending the breath strengthens the North-South polarity in the body. The unique sequence of KKP will engage the sympathetic nervous system but also merge it with the parasympathetic nervous system to secure a calm stillness, in the being. All six phases of KKP are required to successfully stimulate a powerful electrical current of energy from the lower centers into the brain and up to

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Daily Practice *continued*

the crown of the head. And since we do **not** hold our breath for long periods of time, as is most often required for such powerful yogic pranayama, heart rhythm is not negatively affected.

So, what is occurring in the physical body?

Each time we practice Kriya Kundalini pranayama, we begin to accelerate the flow of cerebrospinal fluid CSF in the spine. By repeating the pranayama, a certain number of times, twice-a-day we can electrically charge its molecules. That molecular electrical charge induces a quickening of the CSF. Normally, cerebrospinal fluid requires twelve hours to complete its closed circuit around the whole of the spinal cord and brain CSF nourishes and gives a layer of buoyancy and protection to the brain and spinal cord.

Researchers using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) found that study participants had a "28 percent increase in the power and velocity of the cerebrospinal fluid CSF flow in the skull during simple yogic breathing when compared to spontaneous breathing. Of the yogic breathing conditions, Three-Part Breath, as taught in BKY, led to the most statistically significant increase of CSF oscillation. Moreover, heart pulsation was shown to be the primary driver of the CSF movements during all breathing conditions, with the exception of deep abdominal breathing, when there was a similar contribution of power from both respiration and heart pulsation." U.S. Department of Health. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/research/research-results/yogic-breathing-affects-cerebrospinal-fluid-dynamics-during-breathing-practice>.

Cerebrospinal fluid is made up of ionic salts in a solution. Ions can carry a charge and move about. The fact that the ions can move means the ionic solution can conduct electricity. Electricity is the flow of an ionic charge. We are running an electric charge up through the CSF in the spinal cord. The electrical charges of this ionic solution induce a spiraling field of electromagnetic energy, which moves energy up the spinal cord right into the brain. By creating an electrical current that runs within the spinal cord from the base of

the spine into the brain we create a strong N-S polarity, and the body becomes a magnet. Through our twice daily practice of drawing electromagnetic energy up the spine to circulate it around the crown of the head as we do, we use the CSF as a vehicle for awakening an immensely powerful energy.

The practice of KKP activates the *sympathetic nervous system* (fight or flight arousal) to move potential energy stored in the lower three centers up into the brain.

Through repeated repetitions of the KKP we create a steady, electrical field, which increases the flow of pulsing CSF into the brain stem. When the pressurized energy reaches the brain stem, the thalamic gate opens and the energy is permitted to enter the pineal gland, activating it in a new way. The pineal gland, referred to, in esoteric spiritual literature, as the *Third Eye of the Seat of the Soul*, is if nothing else, a fascinating crystalline, neuro-endocrine producer.

It is particularly interesting to note, that while this pranayama turns on the sympathetic response, stress hormones are not released because there is no external event, real or perceived to deal with. We turn the sympathetic nervous system on, by directly engaging consciously with the breath on so many levels, from within. In fact, the unique practice of KKP will merge the sympathetic nervous system with the parasympathetic nervous system, as the energy enters the brain. The sympathetic nervous system takes the lead to move energy consciously within the closed circuit, but, as there is no perceived danger, the parasympathetic steps in, to return the autonomic system to a quiet normal state.

This heightened, inner calm state is reflected in gamma brain waves. Gamma waves produce the highest amount of energy of any brain waves, so the mind is on heightened alert, but since there is no perceived stress or external danger, the mind goes into a state of heightened inner awareness. This is a unique state for the body and mind, to have such heightened awareness and utter calmness, that even if you are witnessing/experiencing

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ing a totally new, shocking, or otherworldly experience or realization, it can be accepted as true, without fear or disbelief. You are simply the Witness to it. Your inner world lights up. Your inner world, the unknown, becomes observable.

The more pressurized electrical energy that runs in this etheric current, the more inner light you produce, and the more insight or experiences you receive. I have experienced in that space the most beautiful geometric shapes, fractals made of light that are alive with the most fascinating colors imaginable and latent messages. I have experienced the most intense energy spirally within my core, my hands on fire, while remaining like the calm eye of a tornado. I have experienced all forms of creative energy in that space, rich with insight and inspiration. It is a safe space of wonder and awe.

Dr. Joe Dispenza explains how yogic breathing affects the pineal gland, in his interesting book *Becoming Supernatural*:

"the pineal consists of small calcite crystals (calcium, carbon, oxygen) and it is now being studied as a new form of bio-mineralization. Because of their structure they act as an antenna to receive information from electrical fields that are visible and not visible. And when the stacked crystals are mechanically compressed (by bandhas and pranayama), they generate an electrical charge. The electromagnetic field emanating from the pineal gland causes the crystals in it to stretch. The electromagnetic field increases to its maximum limit. Once the limit is reached, they contract and the electromagnetic field reverses moving inward the pineal gland crystals. When the electromagnetic field reaches the pineal crystals, further mechanical compressions again produce the outward expanding electromagnetic field. This cycle of expanding and reversing the field perpetuates a pulsating electromagnetic field." (*Becoming Supernatural*, p. 264)

Dr. Dispenza and other researchers over the past decade suggest that this pulsating electromagnetic field, produced consciously by yogic techniques make shifts within the pineal gland

crystals that allow them to receive differing frequencies of electromagnetic signals, even frequencies beyond the senses, and convert them into information and images within the brain. Once fully activated, the pineal gland has the potential to release some very powerful elixirs, one of which anesthetizes the analytical mind and thinking brain. This is a space in which one can experience the fullness of now.

So, to recap: The KKP pranayama accelerates the movement of the cerebrospinal fluid up the spinal cord into the brain. We use the *siddhasana* or *siddhayoni*, the *bandhas*, *kechhari mudra*, intention and will, through concentration, and with the use of mantra, we slow and extend the breath through *ujjayi*, with a particular ratio between inhalation and exhalation. In KKP, we also visualize inwardly the movement of energy in a particular closed circuit up and around the central axis of our body and head. We are in fact sending an electrical current within the cerebrospinal fluid in the spinal cord. The subtleties of the KKP ensure that we safely accelerate and direct cerebrospinal fluid upward in the spinal cord so that it enters the brain and completes that circuit. Completing that circuit creates an induction field of electromagnetic energy, so the molecules continue to move in a circular motion. The more charged molecules we accelerate the larger and more powerful is the induction field. We create so many charged molecules in the central nervous system that the body becomes like a magnet.

Then there are our meditations.

The meditations, **Kriya Yoga Dhyanas** work in tandem with the asana and pranayama and are designed to make you aware at various levels of consciousness: the subconscious, physical consciousness, the intellect, and even super-consciousness. They train us to be aware in life and train the mind for organized and dynamic activity. They begin immediately to cleanse the subconscious mind of habitual thinking and continue to develop in a way to eliminate the tendency

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to succumb to conditioned behaviors. Most of us become conditioned quite early in life, and by our 30s are programmed to become so strongly formed and fixed in our beliefs and responses that we can react quite automatically and unconsciously, with very little awareness of what is happening, even in front of our eyes. We often just end up repeating a subconscious body-mind program. Kriya Yoga meditations ask us to become aware of our own individual conditioning.

Kriya meditations stimulate and draw insight from higher levels of mind. These help you to become aware of your conditioning and the benefit of eliminating certain habits. All the Kriya meditations lead us into very calm, receptive, and creative brain wave states of alpha and theta states, sometimes gamma, where imagination and creativity flourish and where we are open to inspiration, insight and change.

All the meditation techniques will support the development of aspiration and will, to not only understand, but to work diligently and with integrity to purify the mind of these programs. It takes a lot of willpower and consistency to rid oneself of conditioned programs. It takes awareness and desire to change. If you are aware and really want, strongly enough, to rid yourself of any habit, it will fade away on its own. But how do you get to that point? You must be able to see and aspire for the benefits of giving up the habit. The Kriya visualization techniques can bring insight from higher levels of mind allowing you to experience those benefits. In addition, working in tandem with meditations, the asana, pranayama, and mantras, help to remove the effects of this conditioning from the physical nervous system, the glandular systems, and the energy centers.

The Power of Imagination

Imagination is an instrument that can be disciplined through Kriya Yoga, to help us overcome what is blocking the goals in life. The imaginative mind is strengthened by visualization. Imagination strengthened by visualization can rid us of our old ways and prepare mind and body to attain new ways of being.

Human beings are very creative. As we repetitively think, so we become. We can create out of nothing the things we imagine. We have great imagination and powerful projection. Imagination grants us the ability to project ourselves outside of ourselves and draw to us what we desire for our life. If we add *belief* in ourselves, and *expectancy* that what we desire is *attainable* and we train ourselves to *visualize* our goals, with such detail that we can see, feel, hear, touch and taste them, we can create positive, significant change in our lives.

Imaginations which are built up realistically and consistently with detail and aspiration to support ourselves and others, often manifest. When we add vital life energy to the process, imagination becomes a living force. Most of our imaginations are not very steady and don't have vital life behind them. Too often, we lose interest in one thing and move onto something else. Kriya dhyana meditations teach us to form imaginings that are broadminded, to seek goals that are compassionate, which support not only our own well-being, but that of others too.

Babaji's Kriya Yoga meditations help us to develop the Witness state. As the witness, we can better observe things as they are, not as we expect them to be. From the state of the witness, we are able to better design a future, and draw things which are realizable, to us. We need discipline, to direct and reorient our imaginings toward the right goals in life. The Witness helps us to do this.

Ultimately the goal of the Kriya dhyana's is to learn to be silent, to be the silent witness and live in continuous awareness, so the mind begins to see in a new way.

Start today seeing in a new way.

Learn to withdraw some of your attention, some of the *shakti energy* that normally is moving outward through the senses. Focus your gaze gently on the external world with your senses drawn inward just a little, without tuning out or daydreaming. Find yourself in a state of alert-

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ness; intensely aware, yet free from the pull of distractions, attachments, aversions, and opinions. Begin to use your inner eye, as if you are seeing from the space between the brows. And regardless of what is happening, try to keep part of your consciousness seated there.

Kriya Yoga is practical.

Kriya Yoga techniques are practical ones. They help us live in relative calm, while living in a very stressful world. While the mind and vital body will still respond to the unrest, distress, suffering of this world; it will also respond to its beauty with wonder and awe. The ups and downs in your life will just be ups and downs and won't touch the most important part of you, that part will remain in a state of observation.

When there is stress, restore harmony in the physical body with a few daily asanas and your daily KKP pranayama. A few healing breaths or mantra are quick fixes for over-emotionality. Daily meditation is a cleansing shower for the being, and will encourage you with loving pushes, forward into any challenge. So, while you have your preferences of the practices, and choose one or more to perfect, don't neglect the others. If you are to continue to stimulate and maintain a strong flow of creative, dynamic energy and hold onto your attainments, continue to practice them all. Once you secure some trust in the practices, you will see benefit. However, the beautiful, mysterious transformation is a lifetime of work.

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Yoga for Anxiety

By M. G. Satchidananda

Do you suffer from anxiety? Do you worry? Would you like to stop? Continue reading if you do through your practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. You do not have to suffer or to worry to be happy! What is anxiety? Anxiety or worry is primarily mental agitation which repeatedly imagines negative consequences resulting from some situation. It is accompanied by both feelings or emotions such as fear or aversion moving through the vital body and as physical sensations, such as tightening of muscles and shortening of the breath. It is also usually habitual, that is a conditioned behavior, the result of repeatedly indulging it. It originates often in some incident which was painful, and whose memory subsequently triggers anxiety when one anticipates similar incidents. In some persons who suffer from chronic anxiety, "habitual" includes a bio-chemical loop which begins with thoughts, which then activate glandular secretions, which in turn produce nervous system and emotional reactions. When anxiety becomes chronic, controlled by one's biochemistry, modern medicine prescribes medication.

Anxiety takes many forms and manifests to varying degrees. Here are some examples of situations in which it may arise: running out of time

to meet a deadline; being late for an appointment; meeting new people in social gatherings; unexpected expenses; news reports of disasters; coming into contact with filth or when handling toxic substances; excessive noise; driving an automobile in heavy traffic; uncertainty resulting from adverse health symptoms or diagnostic reports from your physician. Anxiety can continue unnecessarily even after stressful situations activate the sympathetic nervous system, whose evolutionary purpose is "fight or flight" as distinct from the parasympathetic nervous system, which maintains the "relaxation response" or balanced state in daily life.

Why Yoga's wholistic approach to life is both the most effective prevention and remedy for anxiety.

Prevention is always better than cure, but prevention is often missing, due to ignorance and lack of self-discipline. Ignorance of one's true identity, the Witness, Seer, or Self, leaves one identifying with anxious thoughts and emotions. Ignorance of how to develop good mental and

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emotional self-care, leaves most persons on their own, indulging repetitive thoughts, addictive distracting behavior or self-medicating with alcohol or drugs. A lack of self-discipline with regards to living a balanced life creates the conditions in which anxiety develops.

Yoga is essentially a means of creating a “balanced life.” All its practices aim to make us “calmly active and actively calm.” It includes practices which promote calmness in all five bodies or dimensions of life: physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual. While each of these can be identified separately, they all inter penetrate and influence one another instantaneously. Consequently, applying Yogic practices in any of them influences all the others.

Here are some of the practices taught in Babaji's Kriya Yoga which will facilitate calmness, the antidote to anxiety:

Meditation. Worry is imagining what you don't want. During the first initiation in Babaji's Kriya Yoga one learns to avoid it by learning a series of meditation “Dhyana” kriyas or techniques, which included how to “let go” of disturbing thoughts, to concentrate, and to visualize in detail what one is seeking to manifest in one's life. One also learns to develop one's highest source of inner guidance. The theme of the second initiation is “How to make your life your Yoga?” This includes several meditation practices which will enable one to avoid anxiety. These include “Nityananda Kriya,” in which one develops the perspective of the “Witness.” The Witness observes the emotions, sensations, and thoughts continuously, initially for limited periods, and with practice, all the time. The Witness replaces the perspective “I am the doer” with all its ego induced stress. One learns to “let go and let God.” One also learns how to recognize within oneself and to master the nine obstacles to continuous awareness which include “disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, failure to reach firm ground, and instability.” One also learns how to practice methods of self-enquiry: “Who is it that is feeling anxious?” and “Do I want to let this go?”

Learning and practicing such methods are superior to guided meditations because they can be applied immediately in daily life when confronted by events or situations which might induce anxiety.

Doing the opposite. The foundation of classical Yoga and Tantra are the social restraints, known as the yamas, and the niyamas, the observances. Anxiety and other types of suffering including anger and desire occur in the context of human relationships. Human nature has negative tendencies. To counter these, the Siddhas, including Patanjali and Tirumular prescribed the social restraints, including: non-harming, truthfulness, chastity, non-stealing and greedlessness. See the ebook “Opposite Doing: The Five Yogic Keys to Good Relationships”, to understand and to learn how to practice these.

The niyamas, or observances are purity, contentment, intense practice, self-study, and surrender. There regular practice replaces addictive thinking and anxiety, and replaces these with calmness, self-awareness, self-discipline and surrender of ego perspective to that of the Witness-Self.

Auto-suggestion. Patanjali tells us in Yoga Sutra II.33, “When bound by negative thoughts, their opposite (i.e. positive ones) should be cultivated.” This is *pratipaksha bhavanam*. During the second initiation one learns a powerful method to do this, the practice of autosuggestion. An autosuggestion is a positive statement expressed in the first person, present tense, for a change in one's habits, behavior or tendency. It is repeated regularly in a relaxed state, for example, just before going to sleep, or at the end of a session of yoga postures or meditation. To counter “anxiety,” it might be a sentence such as “When the unexpected occurs, I enjoy remaining a calm witness.” Or “I do not sweat the small stuff.” Or “I meet every challenge with courage and confidence.” Notice that what one seeks to avoid or change, in this case, “anxiety” is not mentioned.

Breathing. Every psychological state has a corresponding rate of breathing. Anxiety is as-

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Anxiety *continued*

sociated with breathing which is relatively short and shallow. Taking a few deep breaths relieves anxiety immediately. Calmness is associated with slow deep breathing. Practicing pranayama breathing techniques as taught during the 1st and 2nd initiations replaces anxiety's habitual short and shallow breathing pattern with regular slow deep breathing. Breathing is programmed by repetition. So if you want to be calm in all situations, develop a regular practice of deep pranayama breathing in at least two sessions per day. Practice it after Yoga asana practice and before the practice of meditation for best results.

Yoga Asanas. An asana or yoga posture is defined by Patanjali as a position which produces "relaxation and stability" in Yoga Sutra II.46. He goes on to write in the next verse: "From the relaxation of tension endless unity (samadhi) is attained. "Samadhi" is literally "not what you think", or mental silence, the ultimate opposite of anxiety. The 18 asanas taught in public classes and Babaji's Kriya first initiation are unique in that (a) one must relax after each posture, usually supine on the back, and (b) in every one of them, energy is directed from the lower psycho-energetic centers (chakras) to the highest one at the crown of the head. The fundamental principle in Tantra and Kundalini Yoga is that "energy follows consciousness and consciousness follows energy." Therefore, as more energy is directed and sublimated to the highest center, the mind becomes still and the psychological states associated with the lower chakras (fear, lust, desire) become progressively weaker.

Here are examples of some of these 18 postures:

- 1. Salutation pose.** Kneeling with the crown of the head on the floor, and the palms together resting on the floor above the head, balancing on the knees, the head and the forehead, one concentrates at crown of the head and repeats the mantra "Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum" and then rests there in silence. Right from this first practice, with aspiration to simply "Be Still" in this position, one enters into a state of intimate

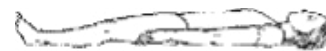
communion with That from which everything emanates and into which everything dissolves. Anxiety dissolves automatically in the silence.



- 2. Serpent pose,** third phase of "complete surrender". Lying in a prone position, arms outstretched above the head, with the palms together, one contemplates. "surrender of the ego's perspective of "I am the doer" to the perspective of "I am," the Witness, the Self or Seer. Anxiety evaporates in the aspiration for surrender for all preferences and possible outcomes.



- 3. Complete peace relaxation pose:** at the end of a session and before going to sleep.



Mantras

The second initiation includes initiation into mantras, sacred sound vehicles of higher consciousness for each of the chakras and for one's chosen aspiration. Their repetition is very soothing for the mind because concentration on the mantra redirects mental energy away from anxious thoughts, which then become progressively weaker. Like cats, if you don't feed them, they go away! Penetrating the cloud of thoughts with mantras brings one into a heightened state of awareness and peace.

Yoga Nidra

During the 2nd initiation you learn how to relax profoundly and to enter the fourth state of consciousness, turya, by practicing Yoga nidra.

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Observing Silence

Choose a day when you do not have to work or engage in mental activities. Turn off your cellphone, computer, and television. During the 2nd initiation you learned the how to observe a day of silence with the best results. This included formally dedicating it, forming a clear intention to not break it for any reason, practicing the Witness. Before starting form a clear intention to dedicate the day of silence to someone who is suffering or who may need your support.

Day of Fasting

While eating is a means of relaxing as it stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and provides emotional compensation to feeling of anxiety and anger, when it becomes the primary means for managing emotions it is addictive and may lead to health problems due to overeating. A day of fasting provides an opportunity to practice “letting go” anxiety without turning food. The digestive system gets a rest and becomes stronger as a result.

Bhakti Yoga

Devotional or worship activities, whether done alone or in groups, enable the expression of positive emotions including love, enthusiasm, courage, and joy. These can not only provide short term relief from anxiety, as well as help one to connect to the psychological states associated with the higher chakras. Love, creativity, intuition and awareness of the Presence of the Divine may then direct the mind, replacing emotions including anxiety. Devotional activities in “bhakti yoga” include singing, chanting, puja, rituals, pilgrimage, and prayer.

Karma Yoga

Karma Yoga is selfless service without attachment to the results. Any honest work or volunteer activity becomes karma yoga when it done with awareness and detachment. Helping others has the effect of forgetting anxiety about one's own problems. Love replaces fear. Life's pur-

pose, to love, is revealed. One learns to “let go” of the egoistic perspective that “I am the doer,” and identifies more and more with the Witnessing consciousness. When combined with “bhakti yoga” one feels that one is merely an instrument, guided and supported by the Divine.

Self-study (*svadhyaya*)

Kriya Yoga is defined by Patanjali as “intense practice, self-study, and surrender,” in Yoga Sutras II.1. Self-study includes recording of meditations, keeping a spiritual diary, and at the end of the day reflecting upon incidents that have occurred and how one could have acted or spoken better. It includes noticing and letting go of negative habits and tendencies as well as resistance to surrender. Self-study also includes the reading and contemplation of the wisdom literature of Yoga, including the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Yoga Sutras*, the *Thirumandiram*, and the poems of the Yoga Siddhas. These reflect our higher self, our potential. Aspiration for the Divine, the True, the Good, the Beautiful, unconditional love enables one to find the guidance and support to reject all that resists and to surrender to a higher nature. This includes the courage to meet life's challenges, without anxiety.



Make Your Life Your Yoga

By M. G. Satchidananda

I received a long email yesterday from a long-time student who had just returned from his first visit to India and Sri Lanka, which lasted three months. It included a three-week pilgrimage to various places associated with the Siddhas with a dozen other initiates. It was organized and lead by an Acharya of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. Aside from this he travelled to many other temples and ashrams with one other person. After describing how he done sadhana in so many sacred places, he wrote: 'Returning to our society, so empty, materialistic, and superficial is very challenging, however, I know my role in this context and I also feel the strength, the aspiration to carry out my internal work.'



This last statement reminded me of my own cultural shock 50 years ago, after I returned from India for the first time. Life in India was deeply spiritual, close to nature, simple, sweet, and ancient. Returning to America was like going to another planet. While India has over the past few decades embraced Western values and technology, especially in the cities, it still maintains islands of spiritual culture which can still inspire and support the practice of Yoga. It is for this rea-

son that I and our Acharyas continue to lead pilgrimages to such sacred places where Yoga originates. These pilgrimages inspire an alignment of our practice of Yoga with the values of a spiritual culture.

Culture and values

The word "culture" is derived from the latin word "culte" which means "to worship," or what is most highly valued. Western materialistic culture is dominated by the worship of material things. The shopping malls are its temples! Consumption of material things is the means of finding happiness. The measurement of value is dominated by money. Laws give preeminence to property. Competition, individualism, multi-tasking, maximizing pleasure and comfort are also attributes of a materialistic and hedonistic culture.

In a spiritual culture, the values are the opposite. Yogic sadhana, or spiritual practice, is the priority in the use of one's time and energy. One worships That which is sublime, eternal, and infinite. One cultivates love and compassion, simplicity, high thinking, inner awareness, purification of human nature's negative tendencies. One develops patience, mindfulness, community, collaboration, and humility.

In the culture and teachings of the Siddhas, known as Yoga Siddhantham, the spiritual and the material dimensions are both valued and integrated. It is not "either or" but "both". "They are not two." As Tirumular wrote: "At first, I despised the physical body, but then I realized that it was the temple of the Divine and began taking infinite care of it."

Intention

I am eternally grateful to my teacher, Yogi Ramaiah, for sharing with me for 18 years so intimately the culture of the Yoga Siddhas, and for challenging me to exercise my willpower to embrace it as my own. One of the ways he did this was by using vows, which are firm expressions of intention. Aside from the Kriya Yoga Pledge

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to practice Kriya Yoga regularly, made during a ceremony at the beginning of the first initiation, I was encouraged to begin days of silence by repeating a vow of dedication to the silence. When I was accepted as a resident of his ashrams, I made another vow to practice Babaji's Kriya Yoga on the average of eight hours a day, or 56 hours per week, and to send to him a report every month with details of what I had done in the previous month. Aside from 8 hours of sadhana, I was required to work at any honest job for at least 40 hours a week, but could use the balance of my time, 56 hours for rest, and daily routine. I continued to do this for 18 years. I also vowed to fulfill the assignments I would be given. These involved moving to and even starting Kriya Yoga centers in eight different places around the world, where I found new jobs, lived, did yogic sadhana and taught weekly classes in Kriya Hatha Yoga. Keeping a record of how I used my time helped me to avoid wasting it, to use it wisely, and "to make my life my Yoga." Recording my meditations helped me to identify negative tendencies, which resisted my aspiration to remove them. During the first two years of this intensive practice, I spent a lot of time "letting go" of the memories from the years before I discovered Yoga.

Patanjali defines "Kriya Yoga" as *tapas* (austerities; intense practice), *svadhyaya* (self-study) and *ishvaradhaniva* (surrender). *Tapas* begins with forming *sankalpas*, intentions. The word *tapas* literally means "straightening by fire," so it is a metaphor of the heat that is generated in the form of resistance during the effort to purify oneself of negative habits. Desires and fears can be very strong. I am grateful that I was given the techniques and the ashram environment to let them go skillfully. Success in letting go of the first ones gave me the confidence and courage to confront bigger ones. The austerities which I adopted were ones prescribed by Yogi Ramaiah, in part out of his admiration for Mahatma Gandhi. These included an Indian vegetarian diet, avoidance of alcohol and drugs, a social code, celibacy, sleeping on the floor, wearing only two white khadi cotton cloths except when at work, not cut-

ting the hair or beard, not wearing leather, and above all practicing the five-fold path of Babaji's Kriya Yoga intensively, as mentioned above.

These austerities were designed to make me feel right at home during the five years I lived in the ashrams in India and Sri Lanka founded by Yogi Ramaiah. They enabled me to observe and "study" in light of the wisdom teaching of the Siddhas, my ego's desire and fears, to "let go" or "surrender" them to That which is eternal and infinite in a widening consciousness.

How to Integrate modern material culture and the spiritual culture of Yoga Siddhantam?

The theme of the second initiation is "how to integrate the practice with your life." It is in a residential setting in nature, and includes many techniques which can be done anytime, anywhere, including during daily activities, work, when raising children, even during sleep. It also includes an introduction to the wisdom teachings of the Siddhas, specifically designed for "make your life your Yoga." These include the identification and overcoming of the obstacles to continuous awareness, managing difficult emotions, transforming work into karma yoga, and cultivating love, aspiration, and devotion.

One of the most effective ways of continuing this integration is to study our published translations of the writings of the Siddhas, or the commentaries we have published in several books including *The Wisdom of Jesus and the Yoga Siddhas*, *Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga Tradition*, *The Voice of Babaji*, the *Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas*, *Kriya Yoga Insights Along the Path*, and the many article from the quarterly 28 years of the Kriya Yoga Journal accessible on our website. By applying these teachings, one avoids the suffering of modern materialistic culture, and one finds joy in everyday life. These teachings can inspire and inform the initiates life purpose and attitudes towards work, family, possessions, and social relationships.

As anyone who has attended any of our initia-

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tions knows, there is nothing to join, and no one is required to change their belief system, nor to adopt the Gandhian dress code, social code, dietary and austere ashram lifestyle I embraced for 18 years. While those “in your face” lifestyle requirements helped me to avoid the distractions of modern materialistic entertainment driven culture, and to feel “right at home” while on several yearlong assignments in India, I considered them to be an obstacle for others after I left Yogi Ramaiah’s organization and began initiating others. Yogi Ramaiah was interested in working only with a few students who could practice Kriya Yoga intensively in his ashrams. So, when I began offering initiation into Babaji’s Kriya Yoga in 1989 I removed much of Yogi Ramaiah’s cultural packaging so that people in all cultures could easily see themselves practicing and benefiting from the practices.

While the first initiation includes recommendations regarding diet, avoidance of intoxicants to get the maximum benefit from continued practice, initiates are encouraged to be like scientists who test the practices, record, and share their experiences with other initiates in satsang meetings. I continue to help students of Kriya Yoga to embrace Yoga Siddhantham, the wisdom teachings, cultural values, and perspective of the Yoga Siddhas, particularly through our publications, satsang meetings, retreats, and pilgrimages.

Love is both the vehicle and the destination.

Anbu Siva, or “Love is God,” is one of the great sayings of the Yoga Siddhas. Many saints have said the reverse, but only the Siddhas have put it in such a way. No where in their writings will you find praise of gods or goddesses. To realize and to manifest love is the purpose of life according to the Siddhas. All desires are sublimated into pure love and this in turn brings deep satisfaction and unconditional joy known as *Ananda*. In the Abrahamic religions including Christianity, Judaism and Islam, God is “the Holy other,” But in the Indian tradition, God is conceived as substantially present in everything, and the world is a manifestation of God. God is referred to a *Paramat-*

ma. *Parama* means higher and *atma* means Self. The realization of God and realization of the Self mean one and the same thing.

The Siddha is an ego-less personality. Ego serves as a covering or veil upon the Self and is therefore the main obstacle to the realization of the Self. As poet and saint, Kabir said: “When I was there God was not, now God is and I am not.” Ego is the principle of separation and limitation. I separate myself from the rest of the world, and I take the whole world as “other” to me. I cannot expand myself to others. It is only when the ego-shell is broken that I come out and embrace others as my own self. In ego I selfishly wish and do my own good and have no concern for others. There is a reverse relationship between ego and love, The more I love, the more my ego melts and the more ego melts, the more the love flows in my heart. Love is the sign or criterion for judging the genuineness of a saint or Siddha. (*Sivavakkiyam*, pg. xxiii. See references)

As I wrote in a previous article, “The Nine forms of Bhakti Yoga,” in Journal volume 24, number 1 published in March 2017 (See “Articles page of our website): “For many persons, Bhakti Yoga, the path of love and devotion is the easiest, most effective way to practice Yoga. It is also a progressive path which leads to the ultimate goals of Yoga, complete surrender, and the universal vision of love. Everyone is looking for love. But most people are looking for someone to love them. Consequently, they make enormous efforts to attract the interest of others, for example, by changing their appearance, talking about themselves, seeking fame, wealth, or positions of power. If you want to be alone, be interested. If you want to find love, be interested. Love is giving. Give your interest, time, presence, and kindness. Be interested in the Lord and the means which saints have extolled for God realization.”

“No relationship, with one exception, will ever completely satisfy or be lasting, and therefore, investing love in them is bound to be threatened by the various manifestations of egoism, including jealousy, attachment, anger, expectation, pride,

Continued on Page 13

Make Your Life *continued*

fear, and apathy as well as by karmic consequences and maya, the power of the mind to delude. The one exception is your relationship with the Lord, which is an eternal one.”

“Bhakti yoga is the cultivation of a relationship with the Lord. Who is the Lord? You may conceive of the Lord with any personal form you admire, for example that of Jesus, Krishna, Shiva, Buddha, Babaji, a saint, or as the impersonal Supreme Being as absolute Being, Conscious and Bliss, Brahman, Supreme Grace Light.”

Self-realization versus the ego bound “rational consciousness.”

Ultimate Reality, whatever name one gives to it, is an immanent and transcendent Being. It remains within all the living and non-living and directs them. Normally, it is never realized though it is everywhere, including within each of us.

“I never knew the One that was within me,
After I knew the One that was within me
Who is capable of seeing the One that was within me?
Remaining constantly within me, I knew it.”
-Sivavakkiyam verse 6

Aldous Huxley saw this clearly when he wrote: “The urge to transcend self-conscious selfhood is, a principal appetite of the soul. When, for whatever reason, men and women fail to transcend themselves by means of worship, good works, and spiritual exercises, they are apt to resort to religion's chemical surrogates, “including, opium, hashish, marijuana, and cocaine. Huxley did not mention workaholism and sex as two others widely used addictive substitutes for the realization of the soul's innate bliss. (Feuerstein, see references)

The practice of Yoga brings about Self-realization, initially when the mind becomes still. Subsequently, as kundalini rises, and consciousness expands and the egoistic perspective with all of its negative manifestations is gradually replaced by the Witness perspective, mental movements are perceived as emanating and dissolving within

a universal field of awareness which encompasses the entire world. One realizes Yoga, unity in diversity.

References: Truth Speaks (Sivavakkiyam) https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#sivavakkiyam_book

The Deeper Dimensions of Yoga, by Dr. Georg Feuerstein, page ,92.



News and Notes



Quebec Ashram initiation seminars with M. G. Satchidananda. (in English) 1st initiation: September 1-3, 2023; 2nd initiation: June 23-24, and October 13-15, 2023; 3rd initiation: and July 21-30, 2023. In French: 1st initiation September 8-10, 2nd initiation: June 16-18; 3rd initiation: June 30- July 9, 2023.

Kriya Hatha Yoga Teacher Training: August 3 to 18, 2023. Learn how to make your practice of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga deeply spiritual! Develop the confidence and competence to share it share it with others. Details here: https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/events/hytt_quebec_2022.pdf

Pilgrimage to Badrinath, India with MG Satchidananda, September 14 to October 2, 2023 <https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/Pilgrimages-himalayas.htm>

The 100th Anniversary of the birth of Yogi S.A.A. Ramaiah is May 9, 2023 I invite each of our readers to contemplate his life and how it has contributed to your own life by reading the biographical essay which I wrote in 2005, eighteen months before his *mahasamadhi* on *Gurupurnima*, July 12, 2006: <https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/articles/art25-yogi-ssa-ramaiah.htm>

Receive our new Babaji message cards! They inspire and remind you of Kriya Babaji and the wisdom of our tradition. We will send them to you via **Whatsapp** 2-3 x per week in 6 languages as per

your choice. Simultaneously, we will post them in English on Instagram ([instagram.com/babajiskriyayoga](https://www.instagram.com/babajiskriyayoga))

For more information [Click here](#) to Download PDF.

Online satsang meetings, Yoga classes, questions and answers. Many of our Acharyas are offering their support to initiates and non-initiates through online streaming Hatha Yoga classes, as well as satsang meetings through cyberspace communications like Zoom. However, other Kriya Yoga techniques which are taught during initiation seminars cannot be shared during these. Their purpose is to encourage participants to meditate, and secondarily to give some inspiration. Questions from initiates about the Kriya Yoga techniques will be answered only *in a personalized one-to-one setting, where confidentiality is ensured, either by email or a phone call or in person.*

Use Zoom to join online Kriya Hatha Yoga classes, meditation and satsang meetings. Watch recordings of these from 2020 to 2022 on patreon.com/babajiskriyayoga

International satsang for initiates: Every first Sunday of the month . 13:30 GMT+1 (15.00 Central European Time; 9:30 Montreal time) 14.30 Central European Time, 8.30 Montreal Time

Daily Satsang – Babaji's Kriya Yoga Sri Lanka: Every day (Monday to Saturday) 11:30 GMT (5 p.m.

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New and Notes *continued*

India Standard Time). https://kriyababaji.it/babajiskriyayoga_online_satsang/

In Sao Paulo, Brazil: for initiates: Satsang every day, 6:30 p.m. (São Paulo Time Zone). Hatha Yoga class every Friday, at 8:00 a.m. for everyone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5184926117?pwd=UnFVWmdSZC9PK0JoN0xPTGMxd3pSQTO9>

ID: 518 492 6117 Password: babaji

Initiations on the weekend of May 12-14, 2023;

Acharya Kriyanandamayi gave initiation to 37 new persons and 18 repeaters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Acharya Gurudasan gave initiation to 35 new persons Lonalva, Maharashtra, India. They are in the center of these photos.



At Flora des Aguas, Cunha, Brazil: Monday to Friday: 6:30 am to 7:30 am: Kriya Hatha Yoga and classical Yoga asanas: 7:30 am to 8:10 am: Pranayama, meditation, reading and Vedic mantras. Contact: fabifsamorim@hotmail.com. In Portuguese.

In India: Sunday Satsang. 12.00 GMT+1 (14.00 CET) duration: 60 to 90 minutes. <https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/events/english-Intl-satsang-infotext-sunday.pdf>

Visit our e-commerce site www.babajiskriyayoga.net for purchasing with your VISA, American Express or Mastercard all of the books and other products sold by Babaji's Kriya Yoga Publications, or for donations to the Order of Acharyas. Your credit card information is encrypted and kept secure. Check it out!

Subscribe to the correspondence course, The Grace of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. We invite you to join us in this adventure of Self-exploration and discovery, drawn from the books dictated by Babaji in 1952 and 1953. Receive by mail, each month, a lesson of 18-24 pages developing a specific theme, with practical exercises. For details go here:

<https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/grace-course.htm>

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