

B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Synchrony in Satsang and Seva

By Durga Ahlund

What is synchrony? Synchrony is when two or more people act in unison with each other. When we are doing the same thing at the same time with another person, there is synchrony. Gathering a group of people together, in person, while doing asana, chanting, practicing some ritual, or even through listening with interest to the same teaching or story, will create the psychological state of synchrony, which invokes enthusiasm and a creative cooperative environment. Synchrony sends tangible signals that we are open to each other. It creates similarity and closeness. This allows for trust within the group to develop and grow. Synchronized movement

acts as an invitation to be together, to work together as a group without a sense of competition.

Synchrony is what occurs in satsang, "sharing of truth with fellow students of Yoga." We get a sense of our similarity and closeness. We begin to feel our inter-connectedness. We develop the trust necessary to share our stories, doubts, and our truth, honestly. Satsang has no agenda.

We do not gather for satsang, in order to convince anyone that our particular experience or truth should be theirs. We are not trying to prove or deny anything. The power of satsang comes from the transmission of energy that results when people connect



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on a deep level with an open mind and heart. Satsang is a means of sharing a powerful leap of energy and wisdom that arises once a true satsang, is formed. Satsang opens the heart to not only speaking one's truth, but also to hearing and recognizing what is true.

It seems mystical or magical, but satsang is supported by the science of synchrony, which is a sophisticated human ability based on a few funda-

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mental mechanisms. A group synergy can be activated when factual knowledge, skilled expertise, physical or mental effort are distributed across multiple individuals.

To repeat, on the most basic level, synchrony sends tangible signals to others that we are open to cooperate, as well as capable of cooperation. Synchronized movement acts as an invitation to work together. In addition to this signaling cooperation, synchrony appears to initiate a cascade of changes in the way we view ourselves and others! The recognition that we are moving in the same way at the same time as other people heightens our awareness of being part of a group, leading us to focus less on ourselves as individuals. And because these other people are making motions similar to our own, we slowly learn to interpret and predict their actions more easily.

Synchrony can alter the nature of our perception, making our visual system more sensitive to the occurrence of movement. I have noticed this with my years of dancing, ballet, modern, flamenco, dance squads, aerobic dance classes, and Yoga. As a result of regularly practicing movement in unison, mirroring others, we form more accurate memories of people we have synchronized with including the way they look, the moves they make and the words that they say. We can learn from them more readily because we can communicate with them with ease. When we pursue shared goals with others, we are more effective.

On an emotional level, synchrony has the effect of making others, even strangers, become close, feel like friends, a bit like family. We feel more warmly toward those with whom we have experienced synchrony. We are more willing to help these people out. And, at some point we begin to experience a blurring of the boundaries between ourselves and others in our "pod"! We act for the good of each other.

Religious organizations, the military, nations, other organizations have used synchronous movement to bond disparate individuals into a unified whole for centuries. Exercising, marching, parades, hand-over-heart reciting of a pledge, kneeling and bowing, working, and singing and chanting in unison to a song that has emotional significance, have all been used to create solidarity. Look at the emotive power of singing bhajans with others, or a hymn like *Amazing Grace* or even the national anthem in a crowd of strangers at an athletic event, with your hand over your heart. The key lies in creating a certain kind of group experience in which people both *act* and *feel* together and are in close physical proximity.

Synchrony within a spiritual satsang creates the feeling that while we have individually widened, and become more empowered, our individual self has softened, has shrunk. It is as if all the resources of the group are now at our disposal, so, the press of the individual is diminished. Uplifting the group energy becomes organically intentional.

Swept into the Flow

Studies of athletes and dancers have found that just moving in unison increases endurance and reduces the

perception of physical pain. I have found this absolutely to be true. Synchronization can sweep us up into what one researcher labeled "a social eddy." We feel like we are in the flow, or in-rhythm with others, and being pushed or swept along, energized by something that is moving in, and through us all. In our hatha yoga, we can experience being carried along by a gentle social stream or whirlpool. Once we are in the flow, the postures begin to feel smooth, energizing, and effortless.

We are swept into a flow just by moving through the postures because we know them and trust them and because we are with others we know and trust. We are in the same space, coordinating our physical movements and breath, and chanting in unison, and meditating together. The benefit of doing focused physical activity in unison with others, goes well beyond fitness and flexibility. A substantial body of research shows that behavioral synchrony, i.e., coordinating our actions, our physical movement with others primes groups for cognitive synchrony. Cognitive synchrony means that we feel more connected and cooperative and begin thinking more efficiently and effectively. That is why we feel so alert and happy, full of energy and relaxed at the end of our practice, even a practice that last for hours! We are not exhausted by our exercise of Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga, nor are we frustrated or bored.

The 18-postures series provides us a wonderful practice to prove the power and benefits of cognitive synchrony. By doing the series of postures in unison with others, coordinating the movements that make up each asana, continuing to do all the asana stage by stage with focused coordinated breathing and by modeling mental gaze (*drishti*) and muscular locks (*bandhas*), and when done with awareness of what is happening in the body, we can provide the synchrony that is the *biotechnology of group formation and satsang*. By beginning with *Kriya Asana Vanekom*, chanting the mantra in Sun Salutation and singing *song of sunworship* in chorus, we create a collective ritual that sets up the rest of the practice. The asana practice develops and solidifies us as a cohesive group. It is a kind of kinesthetic or "*muscular bonding*." This, in turn, leads to a mental and emotional bond, which elevates the practice. This we can provide for our practice.

The potential of shared attention, shared motivation and shared silence

There is something known in psychology circles, as *shared attention*. The phenomenon of shared attention occurs when we focus on the same object or information at the same time as others. The awareness that we are focusing on a particular understanding, stimulus, or sensation, along with other people leads our brains to endow that knowledge, stimulus or sensation with particular significance, labeling it as important. When we, in our hatha yoga class, focus on our own bodily sensations, we tend to allocate more mental bandwidth to certain sensations in the body and process it more deeply. Rather than ig-

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Synchrony *continued*

nore or dismiss them, as we might, when practicing alone, shared attention brings awareness to what is happening in the body, what is happening in the asana. This process can be quite subtle. For instance, when the class utilizes a *drishti* or gaze, (directing our mind's eye to a point in the body) we organically create moments of *shared or joint attention*. We illuminate the object, elevating the experience through focus, awareness, stillness, and silence. Repeated moments of joint attention are associated with a more successful practice. Research shows that we learn and remember things better when we attend to them with others and that the ability to coordinate such movements of joint attention happens with practice. I know from my practice and from instructing joint attention, that we are more likely to energetically benefit from our practice when there are repeated moments of shared movement in combination with shared attention.

Synchrony is increased, if the participants of an integrated yoga practice, also develop *joint motivation or intention* for the practice. In Babaji's Kriya Yoga, our intention, is deep relaxation. But our definition goes way beyond the normal conception of relaxation, our objective is immobility and stillness. To reach the state of immobility one must first get rid of all restlessness, in body and mind. For the experience of deep relaxation in asana, is not due to a cessation of energy from inertia, but instead, it is due to an increase of energy, an inpouring and circulation of force, within a still, immobile, and receptive body.

Shared attention with shared intention can silence thoughts, harmonize the breath and increase dynamic energy to the extent that it encourages surrender within a deep seat of our being, in those moments of stillness. It is as if any individual thoughts of "I can't do this," dissolve. Our inner subtle energies melt mental and physical stress away. Working in such a cooperative peaceful atmosphere increases enjoyment in the practice, relaxing the body to such an extent that tension and tightness dissolve, and even long-held blocked energy is released. The energy of the group rises to support the practice of all participants. Every single person, who is in sync with the whole, can readily avail themselves to that group energy, and perfect their asana to the best of their ability. The awareness that arises through synchrony and mental silence creates the perfect atmosphere for this higher energy to flow unabated. Shared energy and silence create magic in a Yoga class.

Attention and motivation are enhanced when shared within a group.

If an intention is expressed ahead of time for the group, and the group is seeking the same experience, engagement and persistence appears to increase for everyone. I have certainly seen flexibility and strength increase with *joint attention* and *joint motivation*. And if the expressed motivation is to do the postures for relaxation, relaxation will be experienced. If the motivation is to gain energy, endurance and dynamism, that will be the result. If the expressed motivation is to 'let go' and heal, releases will be experienced. Kriya Yoga teachings and techniques uti-

lize the potential of shared attention, shared motivation, thinking together, feeling together, in person, at the same time to help us experience the benefits of being part of a collective "we."

Collective Effort: Finding the collective "we"

Though we imagine ourselves as separate beings, our mind and bodies have many ways of bridging that gap through attention and motivation. The nature of attention and motivation are altered in meaningful ways when we enter them collectively instead of alone. Experiencing ourselves as a part of a collective "we," rather than separate individual changes the way we direct our focus and the way we allocate our energies so that effort becomes more enjoyable and performance increases. The individual accomplishes more because our willingness to persevere is enhanced when our efforts are made within a group, in which we identify or care about.

Synchrony is beneficial to progress in Babaji's Kriya Yoga. Most of us come to Kriya Yoga thinking any progress toward self-realization is a direct result of individual achievement, of what "I" do. We think that only the individual can be engaged, persist, or succeed in Yoga, or any endeavor. Most of us are quite individualistic, and not so attracted to belonging to a group or to group think. However, our willingness to persevere can be enhanced when our efforts are made on behalf of a group we care about. Collective effort increases motivation. I have found the group (collective effort) to be instrumental in enhancing engagement and persistence and success. We can reap the benefits of shared attention, shared motivation, thinking together, feeling together, working together, in person, at the same time. This is the benefit of satsang.

While being a member of a group is a potential source of intrinsic motivation, one must feel a genuine sense of belonging to that group. One's personal identity becomes firmly tied to that group activity and to its success. One must get satisfaction from their contribution to a collective effort. "Seva" (volunteering service) is considered an important practice in Babaji's Kriya Yoga.

When group work effort becomes enjoyable in and of itself, the group energy grows stronger. Experiencing ourselves as part of a collective "we" rather than as a singular 'I', changes the way we direct our focus and the way we allocate our energies. I have found over the years that when we find collective effort more enjoyable, more individual progress is made. And that does feel magical.

The ideal of Babaji's Kriya Yoga is to develop a robust sense of "we." Kriya Yoga seeks to help the individuals practicing it, to reap the rich benefits of shared attention, shared awareness, shared motivation, and shared aspiration. We gather, we meet in person, we learn the teachings and techniques together, we effort together, all for the sake of the individuals in Babaji's Kriya Yoga, not to maintain an organization. When individuals discover and connect with, what I might call, their *tribe*, experiencing enjoyment of the tribe, learning the same thing with oth-

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Sankalpa continued

ers of that tribe, at the same time, hearing the same words, at the same time, feeling the same thing, at the same time, we benefit the most. We train and practice together asana, pranayama, meditation, devotional songs and chants. We have 144 techniques and such rich teachings, so that we will think together, collaborate more freely, and perform at a higher level than we would individually. There is a group dynamic at play. We do group work to uplift each other and thereby uplift ourselves.

Most often students learn the techniques, perhaps even temporarily experience the joy of shared attention and shared motivation, but then go their own way.

Babaji's Kriya Yoga is founded on the understanding of our human nature, as social beings. Yoga is as much psychology, as it is spirituality. The teachings are a celebration of the pure presence of others. Babaji's Kriya Yoga teachings and techniques were developed to require disciples to be physically, mentally, and emotionally challenged and through that work, to overcome any false sense of limitation, known as maya in Yoga. Students are asked to do work together as a group so that an interconnection develops. If an *uplifting interconnection* develops, a process of purification can begin, as each of us become mirrors for one another.

Synchrony, satsang and seva have the power to attract to us and develop within us, a nature that is more loving, compassionate, and selfless. While this is not always an easy path, continuing it builds trust. Positive personal transformation will provide motivation for the individual to continue and awareness of one's potential for self-realization and transformation. The stronger the connection,

the more complete will be the transformation. If the connections are lost, the practice loses its collective power. We as individuals lose the energy of the group. The individual is then on his or her own to keep their attention and motivation strong enough to make steady progress.

There is the rare individual who is born spiritually ripe, born with a ripeness that is individually earned and willed, who experiences Oneness spontaneously and who immediately sees the sacredness in all things. For the spiritually ripe person spiritual interest, engagement, persistence, aspiration, and ultimate progress is willed. For this person, group energy is simply a sweet recognition, not a requirement. However, for most of us, experiencing oneself as a part of a collective "we", rather than separate individual is a requirement. It is that experience of "we-ness", which changes the way that individuals direct their focus and allocate energy, so that effort becomes intrinsically enjoyable, performance increases and the individual accomplishes more from the perspective of their true spiritual self. The collective "we" is necessary for us to understand that we are in a sacred relationship with everyone, with all of Nature. The willingness to persevere along the path is enhanced when our efforts are made in synchrony with a tribe with which we identify, or care about. Even a small number of people can become a satsang circle to create an ongoing practice whose synchrony will bring about this important shift in consciousness.

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<https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/articles/art10-satsang.htm>

Sankalpa: The Power of Intention,

By M. G. Satchidananda

*Om Shakti Om Shakti Om Shakti Om
Iccha Shakti, Jnana Shakti, Kriya Shakti Om.*

I am eternally grateful to Yogi Ramaiah for helping me to appreciate and apply the power of intention, Sankalpa shakti during the eighteen years I served in his ashrams around the world.

As a young *brahmacharya* in the early 1970's my teacher often challenged me with requests that I make specific vows. These included vows of silence one day per week, vows of fasting one day per week, practice of a specific technique every day for 48 days, weekly recitation of the Kriya Yoga Pledge before beginning silence, a vow of celibacy, and vegetarianism, repetition of mantras every day for a minimum number of times, practice of yogic sadhana eight hours per day, following a particular daily schedule of practice, and more general vows of dedication to the overall practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. He also challenged me to practice Yoga for 24 hours without stopping, referring to this as "*tapas*". These things I did regularly during the 18 years I spent

under his tutelage. I have written about these austerities and experiences in "How I became a disciple." Why did I do such things, you may ask?

Even in my first satsang meetings with him in a one room apartment in Washington, D.C. when I was still a student, one of the chants he would lead us in was what is written under the title of this article. "Iccha shakti" is willpower, "Jnanashakti" is the power of vision or wisdom, and "Kriya shakti," is the power of projection or action with awareness. By aspiring for and surrendering to them, the Divine can remove the limitations of human nature and transform one into a perfected being or Siddha.

Those who follow a path of Tantra, including our own Yoga Siddhantha, know that without invoking within oneself with love and aspiration these three powers, one remains a prisoner of the three fetters or stains of avidya (ignorance of one's true identity, ahamkara, (egoism), karma, the consequences of past actions, maya, (the de-

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Sankalpa continued

lusion of being limited (in time, power, knowledge, and by desires and one's past). Therefore, these three powers of the Divine Shakti are invoked and revered within oneself through sacred vows, known as sankalpas. These express one's intention to transform apparent limitations in human nature, and in so doing reveal and manifest one's higher Divine nature, known as siddhi or perfection.

The Kriya Yoga Pledge

The very first vow or sankalpa that was proposed to me as a condition of initiation into Babaji's Kriya is known as the "Kriya Yoga Pledge," dictated by Babaji himself to V.T. Neelakatan in The Voice of Babaji:

"I accept Satguru Kriya Babaji as my ideal and will contemplate on these and dedicate myself in similar fashion. I will be a balm to the sick, their healer and servitor. I will quench with rains of food and drink the anguish of hunger and thirst. In the famine of age's end, I will be their drink and food.

I will be an unfailing store for the poor and serve them with manifold things for their need.

My own being and pleasures I surrender absolutely and entirely to Kriya Babaji indefinitely such that all creatures (on earth) may gain their end.

(Explanation): the stillness lies in surrender of all things and the spirit is inclined to the stillness. If I must surrender all it is best to give it for fellow creatures.

I will be the protector of the unprotected, a guide to wayfarers, a ship, a dyke and a bridge for those who seek the farther shore and a lamp for those who need a lamp and a bed for those who need a bed."

In conformity with the sacred tradition of vows, each person in my initiation in New York City, in June of 1970 stood up and recited Pledge this individually while standing in front of an oil lamp containing five flames. This set the stage for the entire initiation seminar.

As initiates today know, Acharyas in our Order only require a commitment to this Kriya Yoga Pledge when one comes for the third initiation. However, even the first initiation is preceded by the completion of the same enrollment form and questionnaire in which one is asked to explain "why do you want to be initiated?" and which requires one to sign a written commitment to practice the kriyas taught during it, and to keep these confidential. Then in an introductory lecture one is invited to reflect on the question "Why are you here?" The initiation itself begins with a ceremony in which one is invited to formulate mentally one's intention and even to pray for support in realizing it.

Why is intention so potential?

What is your intention? Why learn and practice Kriya Yoga? If you have come for Kriya Yoga initiation or are aspiring for it, you may have written in reply to this question on the enrollment form: "Self-Realization," "liberation from my limitations", "to eliminate my con-

ditioning," "to free myself from suffering", "to live in joy and Divine realization." These are quotations from recent enrollment forms I have recently received.

Such answers imply that one has become a seeker what is beyond desire, pleasure, materialistic consumption or emotional thrills. It is even beyond form, space and time. While the words vary, they are all pointing to that which is sublime, or spiritual.

By making the effort to first consider an answer to this question, and then replying, one is affirming a purpose, a direction, and an intention. However, a vow is only a potential, not yet realized, but perhaps only glimpsed in moments of spiritual transcendence. One must still find the means, and then apply one's will regularly repeatedly for it to manifest.

Tapas is the means by which intentions are fulfilled.

Tapas have three necessary elements: intention or vows, secondly, effort or willpower, and third, endurance. The first element of tapas is that it includes the intention or a vow to apply oneself to a particular discipline for an extended period, or regularly. Or it may be to deny yourself some indulgence, attachment, or aversion. Attachment is clinging to pleasure and aversion is clinging to suffering. It could involve anything: a physical comfort or pleasure, a particular food, casual sex, television, or if sitting in meditation, making an unnecessary movement. It involves standing back from any pleasure or pain, or any thought or feeling of "I am this feeling, sensation or thought" and letting it go. This is known as "vairagya" or "detachment."

This detachment requires effort and willpower, and consistent repetition for an extended period.

How long? That is to be determined by the vow or intention. You might begin by simply observing silence or fast for one day a week or abstain from a particular food, beverage or pleasurable activity for one month. An act of tapas should include sitting in meditation or chanting without sleep continuously for a pre-determined number of minutes, hours or days.

There are endless opportunities for self-challenge, for living at the edge of what you can do. See the end of this article to learn how to create your own sankalpas.

Tapas and Willpower

The second element of tapas is the use of effort or willpower. It is the antidote for your karmic habits or samskaras. Proper use of willpower necessitates denial of indulgence. It does not mean that you must impose severities or hardships upon yourself. Truly, tapas is upward movement, an ascent into sacrifice to the Divine Will. Proper use of effort or will requires that you awaken the powers of your soul, your finer emotions of love and devotion, self-surrender and self-consecration, along with humility and patience. Such a "spirit of sacrifice" is necessary so that tapas remain as sadhana and

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Sankalpa continued

does not become a punishment.

"Will is the power of man, will is the soul force. Will can do anything and through will force, the mind and the senses can be curbed. If desires are destroyed willpower develops. Determination, patience, interest, attention, perseverance, tenacity, persistence and meditation on the Self all facilitate the acquisition of willpower."

– Kriya Babaji, "The Voice of Babaji"

Diligence and Endurance

Endurance is the third element of tapas. As with an athlete, who develops his physical strength against resistance and "heat", the tapasvin develops his willpower gradually, by repeatedly and regularly exercising it, despite the resistance of habits.

You can begin your tapas by postponing the satisfaction of a desire or aversion for a relatively short period of time. The postponement gradually becomes longer until finally you let go of it altogether and experience a complete and enduring renunciation of the desire. The accomplished tapasvin eventually reaches a state of equanimity, wherein he or she may simply be in unconditional joy, whether an object of desire or aversion is present or not. So, intention, willpower, and endurance are the key elements of your tapas, but the result is equanimity in the face of the dualities of life.

In this pleasure seeking and consumerist lifestyle, such voluntary abstention and denial may strike you as irrational and inconsistent with what is known today as "the good life." It may be difficult to believe that control over your impulses of attachment and aversion will reward you with an inner happiness and joy that far surpasses the fleeting happiness that your pleasure-seeking life gives you.

The mind constantly dwells upon desires and fears, but when you exercise a little dispassion towards these, they vanish like clouds in the sky. By cultivating tapas, you develop great energy and willpower, which enables you to master your life, and overcome obstacles. You, literally develop the light of consciousness within. You become radiant like the sun, not only in the subtle bodies, but ultimately even in the physical; you develop more light in your face and more light shines from your eyes. You become a source of light, warmth and love for everyone who comes in contact with you.

Impatience

Today, very few persons who even attempt to engage in authentic Yoga, have the patience to sustain the effort required. Everyone is pressed for time, multi-tasking, seeking instant gratification and distraction from deep seated neuroses, and demanding services and delivery of products as fast as possible. Consequently, after feeble efforts most people give up regular practice, or merely use it to relax, control stress, or remain flexible. If your intention is limited to the latter, that's fine, but don't call it Yoga. Call it stress control, stretching, or weight loss.

The Yoga Siddha, Sattamuni, whose guru, Boganathar, was also Babaji's guru warns us that impatience is the greatest enemy for the practitioner of Siddha Yoga:

"Listen! Do not wander, aimless, worried;

When shall I realize Oneness?

Take food and water without fail

Once a day, steadily; blow on the breath, (pranayama)

Piercing through the criss-cross! (spiraling through ida and pingala nadis)

Watch with care, concentrate, meditate. (at each of the chakras)

You search for nought but *mula-siddhi* (perfect sublimation of kundalini at the crown)

Where Siva and Sakti are integrated as one." - Pariparuanam -12, (*The Yoga of the 18 Siddha: an Anthology*, page 225)

Patanjali also tells us that detachment is his main method in Yoga Sutra I.12:

"By constant practice and with detachment arises the cessation of identifying with the fluctuations of consciousness."

But in the next two verses he warns us that this method must be continuous and regular for a long time:

"In this context, the effort to abide in (the cessation of identification with the fluctuations of consciousness) is a constant practice. However, this practice only becomes firmly established when properly and consistently attended to over a long period of time."

Suggested Practices:

To create a sankalpa apply the method of creating autosuggestions taught during the second initiation. Create a statement in one or two sentences, which express the positive change your behavior, in the present tense, first person, using verbs which avoid any doubt. So, for example, "I enjoy practicing the 18 postures every morning." Or "I do not eat anything until I have practiced Kriya Kundalini Pranayama and the Dhyana kriyas as prescribed and required during the first initiation." Or "I eat only tasty, nutritious vegetarian food." Or "I work in the spirit of karma yoga." Or "when the unexpected happens, I enjoy remaining a calm witness." Or "I am loved and guided by the Guru." Refine it, memorize it, and repeat it mentally when you are in a relaxed state every day for at least 21 days, before going to sleep, before completing a session of Yoga Nidra, and to complete the 18th posture, when you are in physically and mentally relaxed and receptive to suggestion. Your sankalpa will replace the programming now driving your various kinds of resistance and bad habits.

To apply one's intention to work on yourself, to remove bad habits, attachments or aversions, begin by becoming aware of them by "self-study," what Patanjali calls "svadhyaya." You can do this by recording your

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Sankalpa *continued*

meditations. I recommend that you make a list of the things to which you feel you are attached, for example, certain foods, some form of entertainment, gossiping, sleeping more than necessary, certain people. Determine why you consider yourself attached and if this attachment is healthy for you or not.

Make a vow, sankalpa expressing your intention to avoid indulging in one or more of these attachments for the next month. Select those you feel are unhealthy for you.

I also recommend that you make a list of what you don't like to do, for example, sitting in meditation for more than a certain amount of time, particular postures, certain foods that would be good to add to your diet, but are unappealing, fasting, reserving a day for silence,

housework, exercise, a particular job you are asked to do at work, or certain people with whom you have to work. Consider what it is specifically about each of these that you dislike. Can you let that aversion go?

Make a vow, a sankalpa, expressing your intention to involve yourself in one or more of these things to which you are adverse, cheerfully or at least as an equal-minded witness, regularly, during the next month.

Start with those which are relatively easy. By succeeding in these, your willpower will become stronger, and you will develop the confidence to take on greater challenges, greater sources of resistance. As a result you will identify more and more with the Eternal Self, effulgent awareness, unlimited in time and space.

Review of the Bhagavad Gita: Georg Feuerstein's Seminar video recording

By M.G. Satchidananda

I am pleased to share with our readers a review of a rare 6.5 hour video recording on June 30, 2000 at the Quebec ashram of "The Bhagavad Gita", by the Dr. Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D. (Sanskrit, Cambridge University) who was the West's greatest scholar of the Yoga tradition in the past hundred years, and the author of more than thirty books on Yoga. We have recently uploaded this recording to the Gumroad video streaming service. See details here: https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore-2.htm#georg_gita_streaming

It has been very moving for me to watch the entire seminar again 22 years later, as he was a close friend and mentor, who co-founded the Yoga Siddha Research Project. He participated in the first initiation in Babaji's Kriya Yoga earlier that year with me at Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington. He also wrote the Foreword to my book Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas.

Georg's presentation was deeply profound yet delivered conversationally. He had no notes. Occasionally he referred to a paperback copy of the same translation we recommend in our Kriya Hatha Yoga Teacher Training, by Dr. S. Radhakrishna, a great scholar, and former President of India.

The setting of the Gita is a battlefield, at Kurushetra, at the beginning of a civil war between two clans, the Pandavas who are led by Arjuna and the Kauravas who are led by the blind king, Dhritarashtra. Through eighteen chapters, Arjuna poses a series of questions, born of doubt beginning with his doubts about why he should slay his relatives and former teachers. Georg traces the origins of the Gita to archaic solar Yoga, the Yoga of the Vedas, and explains, in detail, its "Samkhya Yoga," which is pre-Classical. He expresses the opinion that "Samkhya Yoga" provides a better theological model than Patanjali's classical Yoga, which is mostly concerned with the means, or sadhana required to realize samadhi, Self-realization. As an historian he also discusses historical evidence of the battle, and the probable century when the Gita was written.



But like many commentators have written, the Gita can also be interpreted as taking place in the battlefield of one's life, whenever there is a crisis or profound existential crisis. Georg tells us that we are all "Arjuna," and we all have a "Krishna," as a teacher, who patiently responds to our doubts and encourages in our crises and challenges.

The first chapter of the Gita is entitled, "The Hesitation and Despondency of Arjuna." In a series of comments, Georg summarizes how Krishna convinces Arjuna "not to collapse because life is not pretty, but to replace his depression and disgust with a "realistic" understanding of the nature of karma and the principles of Purusha (consciousness) and Prakrit (nature). Nature includes everything in our human nature, including our sensuality, emotions, mind and intellect. He likens the "battlefield" to the conflict each of us experiences in all of our interactions with our human nature and the external world. Krishna prescribes karma yoga, with detachment and discernment. "Am I contacting or going out in any of my relationships?" Am I contracting in fear,

Continued on Page 8



anger, jealousy, envy or greed?" Or am I coming from love? If you are contracted, "let go." No effort is ever wasted" Krishna tells Arjuna. He prescribes the path of "karma yoga."

He cites Samkhya's important contribution as distinguishing the mind from consciousness. Unlike modern psychology, which refers to the mind as a nebulous thing without definition except by how it expresses itself in various behaviors, or a function of the brain, Samkhya tells us that the mind, "manas," as one of the 24 principles of Nature, is a material product of awareness. That without consciousness the mind does not exist, for example, in a corpse. Even a person who has Alzheimer's disease, and cannot remember his name, still has awareness. He goes on to say how the dualism of Samkhya helps us to understand our actual condition, or point of departure, moment to moment, in realizing non-duality, wherein consciousness and nature are realized as one. He explains how Samkhya is the basis of Patanjali's Classical Yoga and Vedanta, the Upanishads, because it provides a conceptual model which enables one to comprehend our perceptual error, the delusion of separateness, born of ignorance. It helps us to realize that element of Purusha, the Witness, is always present. No one system can cover the entire map of reality, he says.

Georg comments on how Krishna removes Arjuna's doubts about the karmic consequences of killing. There is karma if you kill with emotions, from the limited egoistic mindset, because emotions leave imprints in the subconscious, forming or reinforcing subliminal activators, or *samskaras* (habits) and *vasanas* (memories). Krishna tells Arjuna that he has to step beyond the conventional mindset and to slay those in the opposing army, including family members and teachers, to preserve the social order, which they are violating. Because you are trained as a warrior, it is your duty to protect others from being killed and maintain the social order. If you were a learned Brahmin, you write a book or articles about the need to do this. Each of us has to find our particular mission in life, what we are meant to do, our "*svadharma*," but before one is capable of determining this, one must first find one's "*svabhava*," or "inner being." One must go deep within to find it. It is not our "passion," which is emotional. Emotions have no intelligence, and they cause confusion and interpersonal conflict. From *svadharma* comes right action.

Krishna goes on to encourage Arjuna by telling him that the habits and tendencies of his karma in previous lives will continue to manifest in this one, and that the present crisis in his life was set in motion long ago not only by his own actions but by those of millions of others. "

Georg expresses the opinion that our generation's experience of pulling down our teachers from the pedestals where we had put them was a "very intelligent" service given to us by Nature, and which helped Westerners in particular to develop a realistic view of the spiritu-

al path. He opined that "new forms of discipleship and teachership will develop in the West because the psychology of Westerners includes a stress on critical acumen, dialectic relationships, allowing a disciple to make critical comments to a teacher, and to receive a positive response. It is the mark of a good teacher, one who is always ready to grow. Nothing can stimulate our respect and encourage us more than to see a teacher who is practicing intensely. In Eastern, Asian societies, the disciple teacher relationship is uncomplicated, because the teacher is idealized, and the student loses themselves in the relationship with the teacher.

In Chapter 2, Krishna tells Arjuna how to fight, by continuously maintaining awareness of the Self, Purusha, not the body. "We become what we contemplate" as written in the Upanishads. To become That, let go of the mindset of what you think you are. Kashmir Saivism like all Yoga practices, help us to correct our perceptual error, with its admonishment to notice the silent space between your thoughts often throughout the day. Georg asks: "At this level, where energy and conscious are one, anything is possible." How many times have strands from previous incarnations affected this one?" "How can we purify them?" In reply he says: All that we can do is to free enough space in our own mind to see That." "We vibrate at a higher level whenever we do find the silent space between our thoughts."

In Chapter 3, Georg informs us that "karma yoga" is "transcendence of activity," (*nishkarma karma*). Ordinarily we just react through our personal unconscious patterns, our subliminal activators, habits and memories. Karma yoga is getting in touch with these and suspending them. "You must stand back from them in a still space and witness them." "A karma yogi cares profoundly for others, and so suspends selfish qualities, and acts only appropriately." Whether it is appropriate depends upon the context and our intelligence. "I could be kind or harsh." "A karma yogi maintains the perspective of the witness and acts with kindness, compassion, what benefits others, with patience and generosity." Social order depends upon the observation of Yoga's five social restraints, or *yamas*, including non-harming and truthful. "Without these, nothing in Yoga will stand firm. If we are grounded morally, we can flourish." He expresses the opinion that a Yogi's commitment to these, and to continuing to practice Yogic sadhana for the benefit of others is the equivalent of Buddhism's vow of "Bodhisattva," without a label.

The wisdom expressed in this recording is especially relevant to current personal and collective challenges, which is a source of despair for so many of us!

Acharya Muktananda, a new member of the Order of Acharyas

We are happy to introduce our readers to a new member of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas, Matthew Exley. who was inducted into the Order in Italy on Saturday, August 20, 2022, during a ceremony in Perth Australia, which celebrated his fulfilment of the membership requirements and his public commitment to serving the public by sharing the teachings of Babaji and His Kriya Yoga. He was given the name Muktananda. This is what he says about himself:

"From a young age the world around, me didn't really make sense. Watching the way my family and peers lived and described what life was about. Something inside just didn't feel this was right for me.

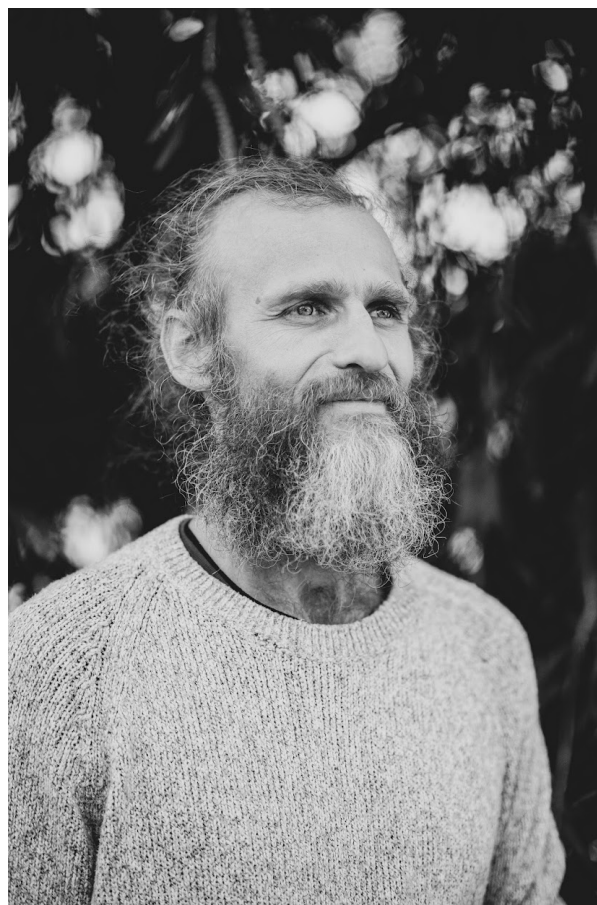
This began to change after meeting my best friend at high school. His parents introduced me to various concepts of spirituality and gave me my first yoga book at the age of thirteen. Life started to have another layer of meaning, which has sent me on a continuing journey these past 35 years.

Incorporating the founding of three yoga studios, on-going learning, training, and teaching of various lineages of Yoga all over the world. From my beginnings in Iyengar Yoga, to Ashtanga Yoga and Hatha Yoga, many things were learnt, and each tradition gave me another piece of the puzzle.

Contracting meningitis in 2012 and being bed ridden for six months, with many health complications and emotional forces at play, I was in recovery for the next 18 months, intensely searching deeper healing.

Babaji's Kriya Yoga arrived in my life. Healing unfolded on many layers. Once introduced to the daily Sadhana practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga it repaired the nervous system, uplifted the body and mind and opened a doorway inside of me that was previously locked. An emptiness inside that something was missing had been uplifted through the practice.

Four initiations seminars followed, a Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga Teachers training, the process of becoming an



Acharya incorporated through trips to the Ashrams in Canada and India.

It is all with much gratitude to Babaji, Satchidananda and the Acharyas of Babaji's Kriya Yoga and all that take part in enabling this opportunity of the completeness of Babaji's Kriya yoga to be shared and be a part of this undertaking and community."

Order of Acharya's: Annual report and plans for 2023

DO HELP US BRING BABAJI'S KRIYA YOGA
TO PERSONS LIKE YOU ALL AROUND THE
WORLD

This is a good time to make a donation to "Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas", which will help us to continue to bring Babaji's Kriya Yoga to persons who otherwise would not be able to receive it.

In the past 12 months, since September 2021 the members of the Order of Acharyas did the following:

- Brought more than 90 initiation seminars to more than 700 participants living in 13 countries including Brazil, India, Japan, Estonia, Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the USA and Canada.

- Sponsored and helped organize weekly online Satsangs via Zoom in India, North America, Brazil, Germany, Sri Lanka, Italy and France, and daily sadhana meetings via Zoom in India.
- Maintained an ashram and publishing office in Bangalore, India. It published and distributed most of our books and tapes throughout India.
- Maintained an ashram in Badrinath, India. Financed the construction of a new ashram in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Kept the staff of our 2 ashrams in India and our webmaster employed during the pandemic with their full salaries.

Continued on Page 10



Order of Acharya *continued*

- Published the books *Babaji and the 18 Siddhas* and *Voice of Babaji* in Kannada; the book, *Footsteps of Ramalingam*, in French.
- Published the Chinese language video Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga, and a digital edition of the book Kriya Hatha Yoga.
- Sponsored free public classes weekly in Babaji's Kriya Yoga, and kirtan events at the Quebec ashram.
- Created a library to preserve audio and video recordings of online satsangs and celebrations in 2020-2022, regularly updated and donation based. Available on patreon.com/babajiskriyayoga
- Completed the training of five new Acharyas: Niranjana in France, Nandi in Canada, Narada in Brazil, Chandra Devi in Italy, and Mitra in Australia.
- Conduct free bi-weekly public asana and meditation classes at our ashrams in Quebec, Bangalore and Sri Lanka.
- Finance the construction of a new ashram in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to be completed by November 2022.
- Publish the book *Babaji and the 18 Siddhas* in Malayalam, and volume 3 of the *Voice of Babaji* in Hindi.
- Complete the training of a new Acharyas in Germany.

In the year 2022 - 2023 the Order plans to do the following:

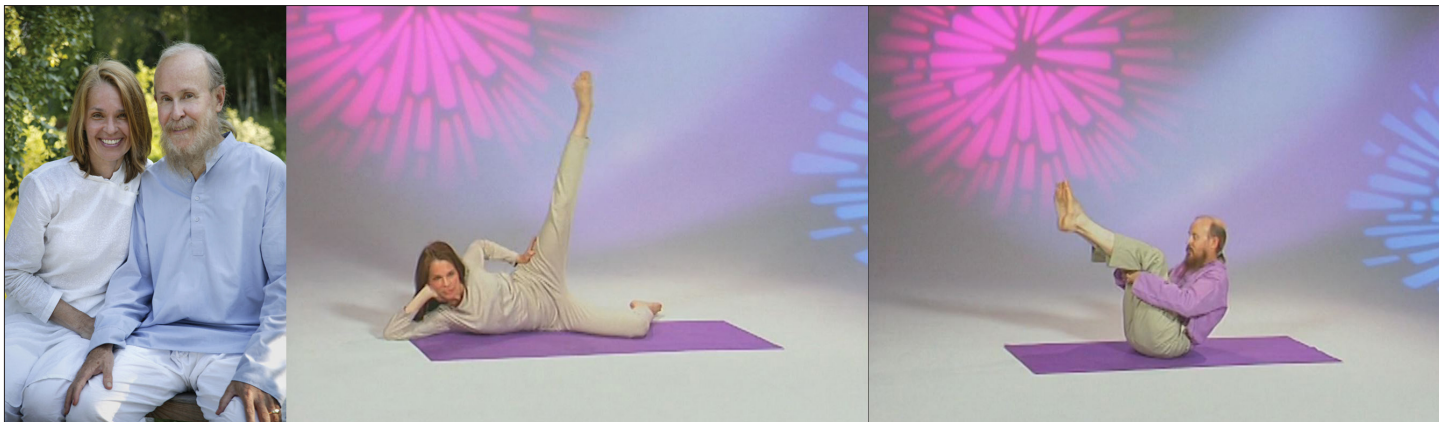
- Bring initiation seminars to most of the above-named countries.

The 35 volunteer Acharyas of the Order and many other volunteer organizers need your support to fulfill this program for the year 2022-2023. Your contribution is tax deductible in Canada and the USA. **Send it by December 31, 2022, if possible, and receive a receipt for your 2022 Income tax return. Use your credit card!**

Our work is financed entirely by your contributions. There are many persons all over the world waiting to receive initiation. We will send acharyas as we receive the funds needed to pay for travel expenses.



News and Notes



Rhode Island initiation with M.G. Satchidananda: November 11-13, 2022

Quebec Ashram initiation seminars with M. G. Satchidananda.

1st initiation: September 17-18, 2022, May 19-21, 2023; 2nd initiation: October 14-16, 2022, June 23-24, 2023; 3rd initiation: and July 21-30, 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 with others. Details here: <https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/pdfs/events/hytt-quebec-2022.pdf>

New Indian language publications. We are happy to announce the publication of the following titles in local India languages: In Tamil, a new translation: The Voice of Babaji: Trilogy on Kriya Yoga. In Kannada: The Voice of Babaji: Trilogy on Kriya Yoga, Babaji and the 18 Siddha Kriya Yoga Tradition, and later this year Kriya Yoga Insights Along the Path. In Hindi, later this year, the third volume of The Voice of Babaji: Trilogy on Kriya Yoga. Residents of India may order these and many other publications on our Indian ecommerce website: <https://babajiskriyayoga-store.in/>

New Chinese language publications: We are happy to announce the publication of Chinese language editions of the books Kriya Yoga Insights Along the Path and Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga: 18 postures, as well as the 2-hour streaming video Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga: 18 postures for relaxation and rejuvenation. To order, contact: Anjani at togaoyan@hotmail.com

New! MP3 recording "Devotional Songs and Chants from the Kriya Yoga tradition with musical accompaniment."

This musical project was born out of the desire of a few initiates close to Satchidananda to set to music a cappella recordings of Babaji chants that were originally recorded by Satchidananda in 1993. So it is done, and well done,

with a re-edition of the voice, an inspired harmonization and a refined instrumentation of quality executed with the greatest care

To listen to samples of each song or to download in exchange for a donation of any amount click here:

https://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore-2.htm#devot_chants_w_accompaniment_audio



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 2021 on patreon.com/babajiskriyayoga

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News and Notes *continued*

International satsang for initiates: Every first **Sunday of the month** . 13:30 GMT +1 (15.00 Central European Time; 9:30 Montreal time) duration: 60 to 120 minutes. Guided group sadhana on other Sundays. **Daily Satsang – Babaji's Kriya Yoga Sri Lanka:** Every day (Monday to Saturday) 11:30 GMT (5 p.m. India Standard Time. For details: 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=UnFVWmdSZC9PK0JoN0xPTGMxd3pSQT09>
ID: 518 492 6117 Password: babaji

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-suday.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: http://www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm#grace_course

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