



B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Editorial

Yoga as medicine

By M. G. Satchidananda

I attended the Third Symposium on Yoga Therapy and Research (SYTAR) in Los Angeles March 5-8, 2009 along with 700 other Yoga therapists and teachers. I was delighted to learn of the results of many scientific studies, performed under rigorous standards. These have demonstrated that Yoga is effective in healing numerous disorders, and that it is being recognized as an adjunct to modern medicine. The results of the Yoga Journal's

market survey, published in section 2 of this issue of the Kriya Yoga Journal, indicate that it is not only scientists who are recognizing Yoga's effectiveness, but the American public is as well.

I would like to therefore dedicate this article to summarizing some of the more than 40 research studies which were presented at the SYTAR, and to what recent medical research has found regarding the beneficial effects of a regular prac-

tice of Yoga.

1. *The Effectiveness of Yoga for Reducing Stress and Enhancing Wellbeing in the Workplace.* A randomized controlled trial was conducted at Bangor University, in North Wales, U.K. involving 48 staff members, 24 in the yoga group, and 24 in the wait list control group. The yoga group practice yoga for 60 minutes at lunchtime, 3 days per week for 6 weeks. The results of the study demonstrated significant improvements in feeling clear-minded, composed, elated, energized, self-confident particularly during period of stress, and greater life purpose.

2. *Effect of Iyengar Yoga on Medical and Pharmacy Utilization in Persons with Chronic Low Back Pain (CLBP).* Persons with CLBP who participated in a 6 month long yoga program had significantly fewer medical visits and total medical/pharmacy costs both during the study and in the 6 month followup period.

3. *Effect of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life in Unipolar and Bipolar Depression.* In a 16 week

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randomized controlled trial involving 21 persons suffering from major and bipolar depression, participants were divided into two groups: eight weeks of SKY followed by 8 weeks of psychoeducation, or eight weeks of psychoeducation followed by eight weeks of SKY. The results indicate that yoga is beneficial in alleviating mild to moderate depressive symptoms in bipolar and unipolar depression.

4. *Yoga for Pain and Anxiety in Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Patients.* Twenty patients, aged 11 to 26 years with cancer attended 28 yoga sessions in one on one yoga sessions. The results of the study demonstrate that yoga may be an effective method for reducing pain and anxiety in cancer patients.

5. *Mindfulness as a Mechanism of Change: Healing from Trauma and Post-traumatic Stress.* Traumatic events, such as motor vehicle accidents, combat, interpersonal violence, and natural disasters, can have long term negative effects on individual functioning. It can lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) A study of how mindfulness mediates between trauma and PTSD found that the non-judgmental, present moment stance of mindfulness may assist traumatized individuals in coping with intrusive re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal characteristics of PTSD.

6. *Effect of Therapeutic Yoga on Balance and the Ability to Transfer from the Floor in an Independent Older Adult Population.* Fifty participants ranging in age from 55 to 83, participated in a 13 week therapeutic Hatha Yoga program, which included a 90 minute weekly class and

a 30 minute home practice 5 days per week following a video designed for the study. The study showed statistically significant improvement in balance and transfer ability. The protocol used for the study could be used effectively in programs for independent older adults living in the community and in retirement and assisted living facilities, resulting in greater independence and quality of life.

7. *Effects of Daily 15-minute Yoga Protocol on Academic and Psychosocial Measures in Inner City Classrooms.* One in ten US schools are considered by researchers to be dropout factories. Each high-school dropout over his/her lifetime costs the nation \$260,000 on average. A 15 minute yoga protocol was developed, including postures, breathing and meditation, and administered in 15 classrooms at El Cerrito High School in California over 18 weeks in the fall of 2008. Preliminary analysis of the results indicate favorable changes in both stress and self control. Measurements of academic performance will also be evaluated.

People who have tried therapeutic yoga have reported that it is effective for a wide range of conditions. In 1983-84, the London based Yoga Biomedical Trust, run by Robin Munro, PhD, surveyed twenty-seven hundred people, most between the ages of thirty-one and sixty, who used yoga therapeutically. To be included, participants had to have practiced yoga for at least two hours a week for a year or longer.

It does all this without the numerous scary side effects mentioned in television commercials for the latest pharmaceutical wonders. And it works simultaneously on many conditions. No drug can make a similar claim. Given that the health care system in North America is broken, that there is an epidemic of drug addiction, alcoholism, stress related illnesses, depression, and growing problems of school dropouts and a aging population, all of us can find ways to help our family, friends and communities by sharing our knowledge and love of Yoga with others. I urge all of our readers to do so, and so be part of the solution to the world's health crisis.

My teacher, Yogi Ramaiah, one of the pioneers of Yoga Therapy used to quote the Siddha Boganathar, who spoke the following over a thousand years ago: "There will come a time when people will take pills for everything. Then they will discover the scientific art of Yoga and throw away their pills." I believe that time is now fast approaching. One of the main presenters at the SYTAR last month, Dr. Richard Usatine, M.D., an award-winning physician, a professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Texas, who was voted by his peers since 2000 to be included in the "The Best Doctors in America" give a Prescription for Yoga classes to all of his patients.

I asked Yogi Ramaiah around the year 1975 the question "When would Yoga Therapy become accepted in

Conditions improved by yoga, self reported

Medical Condition	# of people reporting	% helped by yoga
Alcoholism	26	100
Anxiety	838	94
Arthritis and Rheumatism	589	90
Asthma or Bronchitis	226	88
Back Disorders	1,142	98
Cancer	29	90
Diabetes	10	80
Duodenal Ulcers	40	90
Heart Disease	50	94
Hemorrhoids	391	88
High Blood Pressure	150	84
Insomnia	542	82
Menopausal Disorders	247	83
Menstrual problems	317	68
Migraine	464	80
Neurological/muscular disease	112	96
Obesity	240	74
Premenstrual Syndrome	848	77
Smoking	219	74

Source: The Yoga Biomedical Trust, London

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Studies show yoga helps these conditions:

Alcoholism	Mental Retardation
Anxiety	Migraine and Tension Headaches
Ashtma	Multiple Sclerosis
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity	Neuroses (.e.g. Phobias)
Cancer	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Osteoarthritis
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	Osteoporosis
Congestive Heart Failure	Pain (Chronic)
Depression	Pancreatitis
Diabetes	Pleural Effusion (fluid in lung)
Drug Withdrawal	Post Heart Attack Rehabilitation
Eating Disorders	Post operative Recovery
Epilepsy	Post Polio Syndrome
Fibromyalgia	Pregnancy - normal or complicated
Heart Disease	Rheumatoid Arthritis
High Blood Pressure	Rhinitis (inflammation of the nose)
HIV/AIDS	Schizophrenia
Infertility	Scoliosis
Insomnia	Sinusitis
Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Tuberculosis
Menopausal Symptoms	Urinary Stress Incontinence

Source: Timonthy McCall, M.D., *Yoga as Medicine*, Bantam Books, 2007

America?" He replied that it would take at least another 30 years. The International Association of Yoga Therapists membership has tripled its membership to nearly 2500 during the last three years.

I would like to encourage all of our readers to seriously consider using their Yoga practice for their own self healing, and to contributing to this field. The IAYT is in need of donations to fund research. If you want to join this field, it would be best to first become certified as a Yoga instructor by a school such as our own, "Babaji's Kriya Yoga" which is registered with Yoga Alliance, the national registry of Yoga schools and certified teachers in the United States. We will be offering this training beginning August 4-14, 2009 in Frankfurt, Germany, and in Quebec in July 2010. But all of you can begin now by sharing your love and knowledge for Yoga with your loved ones and those in your community and workplace. We need everyone to be healthy, strong and conscious in the coming years.

Specific studies can be accessed from the Digital Resources Library of the International Association of Yoga Therapy (www.iayt.org). □

Why does Yoga Heal?

Here are some of the ways in which Yoga facilitates better health, through postures, meditation and pranayama, both as prevention and treatment:

1. Increases flexibility
2. Strengthens muscles
3. Improves balance
4. Improves immune function
5. Improves posture
6. Improves Lung function
7. Leads to slower and deeper breathing
8. Discourages mouth breathing
9. Increases oxygenation of tissues
10. Improves joint health
11. Nourishes intervertebral disks
12. Improves return of venous blood
13. Increases circulation of lymph
14. Improves function of the feet
15. Improves proprioception
16. Increases control of bodily functions
17. Strengthens Bones
18. Conditions the cardiovascular system
19. Promotes weight loss
20. Relaxes the nervous system
21. Improves function of the nervous system
22. Improves Brain Function
23. Activates the left prefrontal cortex
24. Changes neurotransmitter levels
25. Lowers levels of Cortisol, a stress hormone
26. Lowers Blood sugar
27. Lowers blood pressure
28. Improves Cholesterol/Tryglyceride levels
29. Thins the blood
30. Improves Bowel function
31. Releases Unconscious muscular gripping
32. Uses Imagery to effect change in the body
33. Relieves Pain
34. Lowers Need for Medication
35. Fosters Healing Relationships
36. Improves Psychological Health
37. Leads to Healthier habits
38. Fosters Spiritual growth
39. Elicits the Placebo Effect
40. Encourages involvement in your healing



Silence is golden

By M. G. Satchidananda

In these stressful times, the mind can become one's worst enemy, bombarded as it is by thousands of sensory impressions, ruminating on "what if's?" and running through the mind's repetitive patterns. The epidemic of modern diseases are largely due to stress, modern medical research tells us. And one of the greatest sources of stress is excessive levels of noise. We experience much greater frequency and levels of noise than our ancestors ever did. Notice the common sources of noise in your life: traffic from automobiles, electric appliances, neighbors, airplanes, and if that is not enough, we go get more in the form of cellulaire phones, television, radio, iPods, and musical sound systems. All of these leave our nervous system overworked, weakened, and dispersed. Is it any wonder that the young are suffering from modern diseases such as Attention Deficit Disorder, hyperactivity, and are failing in school at

unprecedented levels? Is it any wonder that everyone feels that they lack time, often suffer anxiety, and that over a quarter of adult Americans have a lot of difficulty in even falling asleep? Is it any wonder that there has been an explosion in the consumption of mood altering prescription drugs in America during the past 10 years? That the drugs of choice are alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit narcotics, with all of their negative side effects? We have developed a culture which is based upon noise and nervous stimuli, and as a result the average modern person cannot find peace.

One of the best ways to stop being absorbed in the mind's games and to manage the effects of all this sensory stress, is to learn how to observe silence for extended periods. In a later section of this article, you

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"Yoga in America" survey results

The latest "Yoga in America" study, just released by *Yoga Journal* (yogajournal.com) indicates that 6.9% of U.S. adults, or 15.8 million people, practice yoga. (In the previous study, five years earlier, that number was 16.5 million). Of current non-practitioners, nearly 8%, or 18.3 million Americans, say they are very or extremely interested in yoga, triple the number from the 2004 study. And 4.1% of non-practitioners, or about 9.4 million people, say they will definitely try yoga within the next year.

Data for this survey were collected by the Harris Interactive Service Bureau on behalf of Yoga Journal. The poll surveyed 5,050 respondents, a statistically representative sample of the total U.S. population. Yoga Journal commissioned RRC Associates, a research firm in Boulder, Colo., to perform the data analysis.

The 2008 study also indicated that almost half (49.4%) of current practitioners started practicing yoga to improve their overall health. In the 2003 study, that number was 5.6%. And they are continuing to practice for the same reason. According to the 2008 study, 52% are motivated to practice yoga to improve their overall health. In 2003, that number was 5.2%.

"Yoga is no longer simply a singular pursuit but a lifestyle choice and an established part of our health and cultural landscape," says Bill Harper, publisher of Yoga Journal. "People come to yoga and stick with it because they want to live healthier lives."

One significant trend to emerge from the study is the use of yoga as medical therapy. According to the study, 6.1%, or nearly 14 million Americans, say that a doctor or therapist has recommended yoga to them. In addition, nearly half (45%) of all adults agree that yoga would be a beneficial if they were undergoing treat-

ment for a medical condition.

"Yoga as medicine represents the next great yoga wave," says Kaitlin Quistgaard, editor in chief of Yoga Journal. "In the next few years, we will be seeing a lot more yoga in health care settings and more yoga recommended by the medical community as new research shows that yoga is a valuable therapeutic tool for many health conditions."

The 2008 study also collected data on age, gender and other demographic factors. Of the yoga practitioners surveyed:

- 72.2% are women; 27.8% are men.
- 40.6% are 18 to 34 years old; 41% are 35 to 54; and 18.4% are over 55.
- 28.4% have practiced yoga for one year or less; 21.4% have practiced for one to two years; 25.6% have practiced two to five years; and 24.6% have practiced more than five years.
- 71.4% are college educated; 27% have postgraduate degrees.
- 44% of yogis have household incomes of \$75,000 or more; 24% have more than \$100,000.

"While the yoga population has stabilized, spending among practitioners has nearly doubled," says Patricia Fox, senior vice president and group manager of Active Interest Media's Healthy Living Group. "Yoga practitioners are a devoted consumer group supporting a thriving and vibrant market." The study shows that Americans spend \$5.7 billion a year on yoga classes and products, including equipment, clothing, vacations and media (DVDs, videos, books and magazines). This figure represents an increase of 87 percent compared to the previous study in 2004—almost double of what was previously spent. □



Silence is golden *continued*

will learn how to create your own silence retreat. But if you have never done so, or you are skeptical of your capacity to observe silence for a day or more, it may be best to first go on a silence retreat which is organized by others. You do not have to go far, but you do have to unplug yourself from your habitual distractions. So, you may find it best to leave your home environment for a few days, at least until you learn how to make a silence retreat work for you at home. Retreat centers and ashrams often organize formal silence retreats to facilitate the process of developing silence. They provide an inspiring environment, ideally in nature, where your essential needs, including meal preparation and physical quiet is provided for you. Retreat centers and ashrams may also support you with a program of group practice of yoga, meditation, inspirational talks, and instruction in the subtleties of developing silence.

The observance of silence is what distinguishes spirituality from religion more than anything else. It is unique to spiritual traditions. It is not found in personal growth seminars, health classes, nor intellectual endeavours or even educational institutions. As such it may be something which is completely new to you. While you certainly have experienced periods of silence, you may have never committed yourself to remaining silent for 24 hours or more. It may not even have occurred to you why would someone do so!

The spirit has no form. Just about everything we identify with does have form: our physical bodies, our perceptions via the 5 senses, our thoughts. The spirit is that part of us which is referred to as the "ananda maya kosha" literally, the "bliss sheath" or spiritual body in Yoga. It is the most subtle part of our being, and permeates the other four bodies: physical, vital, mental and intellectual. Because it has no form, it is not limited by time nor space. It is everywhere. Because it is subtle, and vibrates at a higher level of frequency than our physical, emotional, mental and intellectual dimensions or bodies, the mind must become subtle, energized and silent to apprehend it. For this reason, the observance of silence by mystical or spiritual traditions is the privileged vehicle to accessing the spiritual dimension. This is evident even in the word for mystic, which is derived from the Greek word muein, which means "one who is silent."

Silence is our origin, and it is our destination. Before we are born, and at the end of our lives. We experience it on a daily basis, before we awaken, and as we go to sleep at night. So it is not so strange. Who does not cherish that moment when they put their head on the pillow in bed to retire for the night?. Who does not appreciate a good night's sleep? The deepest, most restful, the most valuable part of a night's sleep occurs when the mind ceases to dream, and there is only silence.

The value of observing silence

Most of us discharge so much energy by unnecessary talking. Like a battery which has been over-

worked, by the end of the week, we are so tired. But instead of recharging our battery by observing a day of silence, we may spend our weekend with more talking. And since the use of cellular phones has become so widespread during the past ten years, this tendency to talk too much is only getting worse. Just listen to people talking on their cellphones while walking around, driving, standing in line. Ninety-five percent of what they are saying is unnecessary. They are just verbalizing whatever is coming through their minds. And notice how you feel after spending a couple of hours talking continuously with friends or family.

On the other hand, notice how much more significant are the words of those who speak only a little, after reflection. Their words carry much more energy and often more wisdom, and they usually get the attention of others if only because of their rarity.

By regularly observing a day of silence, continuously for 24 hours at least, for example on a weekend, or by converting a "holiday" into a "holy" day, one can experience the benefits of silence, including more energy, stronger nerves, greater mental focus, dissipation of anxiety, better sleep, a growing sense of the spiritual dimension of life, and a more purposeful life. On the physical level, one can expect to develop better health, as the silence promotes the conditions necessary for recuperation and stress management.

The regular practice of silence enables one to develop patience, and to resist emotional movements such as anger, lust and greed. When others are angry, one remembers to hold one's tongue, to reflect before speaking, and then calmly and only what is helpful. By cultivating silence intentionally one learns to witness the mind's fantasies as other than one's own. This develops detachment and allows the time and space to stop repetitive cycles.

On the mental and spiritual levels, the mind will become calm, as one begins to identify with what is behind it: the silent witness consciousness. "I am silent," it feels. Calmness is only the first step. Calmness is not the absence of thoughts, but being present with the thoughts. Gradually, verbal silence brings periods of mental silence, where thoughts become few, and one abides in a state of choiceless awareness. Bliss ensues, as the spiritual body comes to the foreground. The practice of silence also creates the ideal conditions for cultivating insights and inspiration. If one has a problem to solve, or an important decision to make, it is best done on a day of silence, wherein the habitual preoccupations cannot distract. When combined with fasting, the insights are even more powerful, as the circulation which is diverted to the organs of digestion is free to support the brain in an optimal manner. By activating the parasympathetic nervous system, the observance of silence promotes the relaxation response, and when one is relaxed, new, creative insights are pro-

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Silence is golden *continued*

duced by our higher faculties, the intuition. When one observes silence, one can even merge one's consciousness with the object of interest and experience it from the inside out, so to speak, dissolving the usual subject-object barrier and access new information intuitively.

Tapas: Voluntary self challenge for personal transformation

The observance of silence is one of the most important means of cultivating "tapas" or intensive yogic practice. In this way, one develops tremendous willpower. Whenever one exerts the will, it grows in strength, and one begins to act more purposefully. As a result, one can transform any bad habit or undesirable personality trait, by exerting one's will consciously and purposefully. Tapas means voluntary self challenge for personal transformation. It begins with the expression of one's intention, for example through a vow or a promise to oneself. Such a vow must avoid any sense of doubt, so for example, if one wants to observe 24 hours of silence, do not say to yourself at the beginning: "I want to observe silence for 24 hours" or "I hope I can observe silence for 24 hours" but "I am observing silence continuously for 24 hours." Or, "through my intentional observance of silence, I maintain balanced self awareness continuously." Such an affirmation works as an autosuggestion and the subconscious mind then has an unequivocal instruction. The subconscious mind is actually very stupid, because it believes whatever you tell it. If you tell it that you doubt that you can observe silence it will believe you, and will at every opportunity you have to speak, encourage you to doubt your willingness to continue the silence. If you start your practice of silence with a well formed intention it serves to purify the subconscious, as you learn to let go of whatever comes up in your awareness. If done without intention, however, the results will be mixed, as one may become absorbed in habitual thoughts, and merely suffer as a result.

The second element of tapas is the exertion of will power. If you lack willpower, start with short periods, for example, silence for 6 hours, then 12 hours, then 24 hours. During the day of silence if you need to communicate, write notes. Turn on the telephone's answering machine. If you are expecting an important call, you may in advance set up a code with the caller, in which you can signal "Yes" with one tap on the receiver, and signal "No" with two taps. But try to arrange your schedule to avoid any unnecessary calls, work or other obligations.

The third element of tapas is endurance. This means that you remember your vow, and continue to exert your willpower, even when you are tempted to break the silence. There may be some internal resistance, which generates even some heat, emotional or physical. The word "tap" means "heat" in Sanskrit, and so "tapas" means "straightening with fire." In other words, transforming one's habits brings up some resistance

from our human nature, but by persisting, by letting go of the discomfort, we can prevail. The resulting gain in willpower can then be applied effectively to any objective you set for yourself.

Creating your own silence retreat

Once you have participated in one or more formal silence retreats in an ashram or retreat center, you may be able and willing to organize your own. It would be best to have it outside of your own home, to avoid the habitual distractions. It would be best to have it in nature, which can provide substantial healing effects. It would be best to have it in an environment which is clean, in order and simple. Whether you do it at home or elsewhere however, it is best to do the following:

1. Inform your loved ones why you are doing it. For example, tell them, it is to rest and recharge your "batteries." After experiencing you on silence for a few hours, you may be surprised to find that they find you more agreeable on silence, and even encourage you in the future to "go on silence" or to join you on silence.

2. Keep a small note pad with you if you must communicate.

3. Turn off your phone.

4. Start with a prayer or silence affirmation in which you express your intention to observe silence for the period you desire.

5. Prepare a schedule and follow it. The schedule may include periods for the practice of yoga asana, breathing, meditation, mantras, meditative walking, and limited periods for reading. Too much of reading can be fatiguing and can fill the mind with unnecessary thoughts, so the subject matter should be supportive to the practice. Consider reading your favorite sacred texts. You may have periods of alternating between meditating and walking, for example. The length of the periods should not be so long that you become drowsy or full of inertia. If you practice the yoga postures in between sessions of meditation you will overcome drowsiness and inertia.

6. Eat lightly, and if possible, fast if you are used to fasting. Organize the meals in advance so they are easy to prepare. Too much food will make you drowsy.

7. Record your meditations in a journal immediately afterwards. By doing so, you will facilitate the letting go of what the subconscious ventilates. Depending upon the type of meditation you are doing, by recording them, you may also capture some important insights, or even solutions to problems in your life.

8. Rather than seeking to empty the mind, fill it with observation, the repetition of a mantra, awareness, and meditation. Like a vessel which is not completely full, the mind makes noise when it is not filled, splashing its contents. Be engaged, and so avoid indolence and boredom. You will feel an inner light filling you. You will become conscious of a higher energetic frequency

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Silence is golden *continued*

or vibration within and a sense of expansion.. This is the light of higher consciousness. With it comes unconditional joy.

9. Start with short periods, for example an hour, or 6, then 12, and then observe silence for 24 hours. Twenty-four hours will give you much more benefit. Find opportunities in your schedule to observe it for longer periods, at least once or twice a year for 48 or 72 hours, even more, during vacations. Those who are deeply interested in meditation or developing spiritually, will find that observing silence for longer periods, such as a month or even a year, to be deeply rewarding on many levels.

Some suggested practices to deepen the silence

Here are some practices which will help one to cultivate silence effectively.

1. Pranayama or controlled breathing. Every psychological state has a corresponding rate of breathing, so if one wants to develop a calm mind, it is important to learn how to breathe properly. This includes learning to use all of the muscles involved in a complete breath. Many persons get into poor breathing habits associated with stressful states. To easily observe the breath, and correct poor breathing habits, lie down on your back, and place your hands on either side of your upper abdomen just below the rib cage. Here you can easily feel the rise and fall of the diaphragm, the principle muscle involved in breathing. As you begin to inhale notice how it first causes the abdomen to rise, and then the lower ribcage, and finally towards the end of the inhalation how the upper chest and shoulders lift slightly. During the exhalation, notice how the shoulders and upper chest first relax, followed by the rest of the chest, then how the abdomen sinks. Follow this flow and movement for several minutes.

Then sit up, with the spine erect, either on the edge of a chair or on a firm cushion with your legs folded comfortably underneath you, and practice the following exercise known as Matreika pranayama, rhythmic controlled breathing. With the mouth closed, take a slow deep breath going through the three stages described above: expand the abdomen, expand the chest, lift the shoulders; then exhale in the reverse order. Count mentally and make the exhalation end at a count equal to the inhalation. Close the glottis slightly, as you do when whispering, and make a slight hissing sound through it. Repeat 15 times. When finished, sit quietly, and assimilate the energy from the breath, allowing the mind to sink into calmness.

2. Breath awareness. Sitting comfortably, become aware of your breath. Make no effort to control it. At the end of the inhalation, do not hold it, but immediately allow it to flow into an exhalation. At the end of the exhalation, do not hold it, but allow it to flow into the next inhalation. Continue for 15 minutes. The breath is a vehicle for turning the consciousness inwards, away from the noise of the senses, and

beyond the chatter of the mind.

3. Breath awareness combined with an affirmation. As you follow the breath, mentally repeat "Ham" during the inhalation and "Sa" during the exhalation and remember their meaning: "Ham" means "I am" in Sanskrit, and "Sa" means "That." Together they mean "I am that." When other thoughts intervene, do not push them away, and do not encourage them. Simply let them go, and return to following the breath and remembering the words "Ham Sa." Make no effort to control the breath. Gradually, the breath will become slower, and as it does, the mind will become quieter, and as the mind becomes quieter, the breath will become even slower. Eventually both the breath and the mind may become still. Continue this meditation for at least 15 minutes.

4. Repetition of a mantra: the practice of mantras is closely related to the cultivation of mental silence. The word "mantra" is derived from the Sanskrit word for mind, which is manas. So is the Sanskrit word for the observance of silence: mauna. According to the ancient sages of India, before creation took any form, billions of years ago, the first manifestation in Nature was sound. In the Bible it is also said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." So, when concentrating on this primordial sound, referred to as Aum, one is only a very short step away from the Divine Source, however you wish to call it, from which sound originates. An by following a sound back to its origin, one can discover the Divine. A mantra is therefore a sound vehicle of consciousness designed to bring you to a state of communion with the Divine Source. The word mantra means literally, "that which protects the mind." It protects the mind from its habits, which manifest as desires, fears, old patterns of liking and disliking, as well as the incessant mental chatter. By repeating a mantra one is able to soothe the mind from all of these burning movements, and bring it into a state of restful, focused, calm, attention.

There are many mantras to choose from. Some examples are Aum, Amen, Peace, Shanti, Shalom, Satnam, Spirit, Hum, Om Nama Shivaya, and Hare Krishna. In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, there is the Hesachya prayer of the heath: "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me" made famous by the 19th century classic: Way of the Pilgrim by an anonymous Russian monk.

When observing silence, it is best to repeat the mantra silently, with no movements of the lips or tongue, reflecting upon its meaning. In the first stage, concentrate on the mantra as thought. In the second stage of practice, concentrate on it and feel it as vibration. In the third stage, aspire to follow the mantra to the source from where it arises within. After doing it for a number of years regularly, one begins to listen to the mantra arising spontaneously.

5. Walking meditatively. Whether one is observing

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News and Notes

Silence Retreat and Gathering in Quebec July 1 to 11, a Silence Retreat will be conducted for initiates at the Quebec ashram, with some instruction in deepening one's practice by M G Satchidananda and Durga Ahlund. Offered at a minimum suggested donation, it is designed to support those who want to deepen their practice, and to help generate world peace. On July 11, the Eleventh Annual Gathering of initiates will be conducted there from 9 am to 8 pm to

enable participants to have a review of the techniques, chant around a mantra yagna fire, and boost their enthusiasm for practicing Kriya Yoga with inspirational talks and fellowship with other Kriya Yoga Sadhaks. The Gathering is sponsored by the Order.

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in the coming months at the Quebec Ashram, April 24-26, June 19-21, and September 18-20, 2009. Also in

Zurich, Switzerland May 8-10, and Frankfurt, Germany May 22-24, in Redlands, California June 26-28, Japan October 16-18, and near Dole, France November 6-8, and Brazil December 11-13, 2009. Also by Nityananda in Buenos Aires, Argentina in May 2009, and by Rudra Shivananda in California and Vancouver in the spring, and Malaysia in November 2009.

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Silence is golden *continued*

silence or not, one can transform the act of walking into a meditation.

A. Keep your eyes fixed on the ground about 3 feet in front of you.

B. Establish a rate of breathing wherein the exhalation is twice as long as the inhalation by counting, 1, 2, 3. Do not strain. By doing so, the parasympathetic nervous system becomes activated, and a state of calm, relaxation develops.

C. Cultivate the perspective of a witness towards all thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, or as an alternative, contemplate a particular problem or question you would like to resolve, and allow inspiration to flow into the quiet, focused mind you have established by doing the above.

Overcoming resistance and integrating the observance of silence into daily life

Your mind may argue "But I live in the world." But it is important to remember that you will live much more effectively in the world if the basis of your life is a mind which is not agitated. If you can begin and end each week with a day of silence, you will renew your energy, your health, and your peace of mind, and your relationships.

You may argue, "but I have no time!" You have time between the breaths. Notice how a moment of silence feels. For example when you are entering the room of someone who is sleeping soundly, when you look up into a starry night, when driving your car through a hospital zone, when you enter into the forest.

It is important for everyone to realize that within the mind there are many levels, and that the level of silence one experiences therein is relative to the frequency or degree of energy which one has accumulated at each level. You can experiment with this in daily life. When you intentionally observe silence, your energy is automatically redirected to a higher frequency. Conversely, when you are not observing silence, your energy goes down into the lower frequencies of the five

senses, emotions and mental chatter. Consequently, when you observe silence intentionally you become more creative because you now have access to a higher level intelligence. Healing of the body also accelerates. You need less sleep. Your desire for food goes down. Emotions subside. Like the experience of fasting wherein you initially miss eating, you may at first miss not talking or ruminating mentally, but then you will not want to stop, as your energy flows into higher frequencies.

In the presence of someone who is angry, try being silent. If, for example, before reacting emotionally to someone who may have irritated you, you take a few deep breaths, or repeat a mantra, or shift to a witness perspective, within a short period you no longer feel the need to react in anger. This occurs because your level of consciousness follows where you put your energy. If you redirect your energy in the above ways, the mind becomes silent in its lower, emotional frequencies. As a result, you also begin to hear the promptings of the higher dimensions of your mind, the voice of wisdom, inspiration, love and compassion. You step out of the "me" against "him" or "her" perspective and realize that there is only one of "us." Non-verbal communication becomes heightened. Your adversary feels your calmness, and becomes calmer, and hears his or her own inner, higher mind's guidance. If you cultivate the higher frequencies of your mind on a regular basis through the practice of silence, yoga, meditation, controlled breathing, breath awareness, meditative walking, mantras, and witnessing, your highest intelligence finds its voice within you. Not only do your relationships become transformed, but your entire life becomes a miracle of creation, and in the words of Yogananda, one of "every new joy." It is for this reason that the saying "silence is golden" has been found to be true in so many cultures. Indeed, there is no greater wealth than that which comes as a result of the regular, intentional, observance of silence. □



Third level initiations will be offered in, Quebec July 17-26, near Madrid, Spain: May 1-8, Frankfurt, Germany: May 22-31, 2009. Attain the goal of Self-realization with powerful kriyas to awaken the chakras and to go into the breathless state of samadhi.

280-Hour Teacher Trainings in Kriya Hatha Yoga will be offered by Durga and Satchidananda near Frankfurt, Germany, August 4-14. For schedule, course outline and more information contact Durga. durga@babajiskriyayoga.net.

A Second Year of Lesson - The Grace of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Course of Lesson: Enroll for the second year of this course. The first year and second years of the course, is now available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and now Japanese!. See info@babajiskriyayoga.net or contact info@babajiskriyayoga.net or 1-888-252-9642. Spanish speakers contact Nityananda at nityananda@babajiskriyayoga.net to receive a brochure or to enroll. This is a special course of self-study that will not only broaden your understanding of Yoga, but your understanding of yourself, as it opens you to insight, inspiration and new understandings of your personal karmic destiny. Enroll today in The Grace Course at www.babajiskriyayoga.net.

Reconstruction of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Ashram in Colombo, Sri Lanka January 31 to February 2, M G Satchidananda conducted a 2nd level retreat at the newly reconstructed ashram on the beach near Colombo, Sri Lanka, which had been destroyed by the tsunami in December 2004. The reconstruction was financed by Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas. A large meeting hall, a small shrine to Babaji, residential facilities, and public lavatories and been added. These facilities, completed in January, permitted 45 persons to attend this residential retreat. Since 2004, four first

level initiation seminars, and two second level initiations have been conducted by Acharyas M. G. Satchidananda and Satyananda. Over 150 persons are now initiated there. Regular classes in the 18 postures are being conducted by 3 graduates of our Teacher training program in the ashram and at 4 different places around Colombo. The Order is now planning to publish Sinhala editions of our publications, in addition to those in English and Tamil now being distributed.

Badrinath Ashram Construction Progress Report We are happy to report that we met most of our objectives regarding the construction of an ashram at Badrinath in the Himalayas in 2008. We purchased a 5,000 square foot parcel of land, and had it registered. We raised all of the money which we expect we will need for the construction. We completed the detailed architectural plans. We obtained the building permit from the local authority. We purchased and stockpiled large quantities of building materials on site. We leveled the land, and began construction of the foundation of the building with the assistance of a reliable contractor.

We did have some setbacks however. We were able to purchase only half of the 10,000 square feet of land we originally planned on, because the owner's brothers refused to sell. We had to modify our plans, eliminating much of the open courtyard space, but retaining the same, number of apartments, halls and other facilities. Construction was halted in August because of a temporary ban on all construction in Badrinath, pending completion of a masterplan for the town. As we are just outside the town, this will not affect us in future, however. Construction will resume around May 1. As there are only 3.5 months each year when it is not snowing or raining, it will not be completed before the fall of 2010 or even 2011. Anyone wanting to contribute to the furnishing of the ashram, dona-

tions are welcome.

Yoga Siddha Research Project The draft of the new edition of the Tirumandiram, with English translation and commentary, has been completed by Dr. Ganapathy and his team of scholars with editors M. Govindan Satchidananda, Durga Ahlund and Krishna Brod. It is now with the graphic artist. When published in 2009 it will include about 4,500 pages, arranged in ten volumes, including the index. It will be published on one or more DVDs and as an electronic book to make it easily accessible to everyone. In 2009 the project will evaluate, annotate and category 900+ Tamil Siddha manuscripts recently transcribed and typed in modern Tamil.

Maha Kumba Mela in Haridwar, India January to March 2010 We are organizing three individual groups of 30 persons to attend the Maha Kumba Mela in Haridwar, January 25 to February 10, February 6-23, and February 19 to March 8, 2010. This is gathering of more than 200,000 saints, renunciants and ascetics who come down from the Himalayas, and from ashrams and monasteries in North India every twelve years, and millions of devotees who come for their blessings.

We have reserved a 4-star hotel for this purpose and a campground with 2,000 square feet, and large tent, where Durga and M Govindan will lead a program of training in Yoga in the mornings and evenings, and visits to the sadhus camps, bathing in the Ganges, and visits to ashrams and points of interest in this holy city in the afternoons. M. Govindan organized a pilgrimage to this same Mela 24 years ago in 1986 for Yogi Ramaiah and 40 of his students. It was one of the most important experiences of his life in India. It is the only time and place where one can meet so many great souls. There are only a few places remaining in the above groups, so make your reservation soon. Cost:

Continued on Page 10



News and Notes *continued*

US\$2200 or Cn\$2400 or 1500 euros, plus airfare.

Yoga in schools in India At a recent conference on Diabetes in Chennai, India, the Central Government of India's Health Minister pledged to do his utmost to see that Yoga is practiced by every day by every child and young person attending school in India. He went onto say that the scientific research has proved conclusively that the practice of Yoga is very beneficial to health, and in particular, to students in performing well in their studies. Several states in India, including Madhya Pradesh, the second largest, already require daily Yoga classes for all students.

Fundraising results With the financial crisis affecting just about

everyone, we can now report that the results of our annual fundraising campaign for Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas, which began at the beginning of October, are far below those of previous years. We therefore request everyone to consider making a tax deductible contribution within the coming months. You may do this by cheque or by credit card at www.babajiskriyayoga.net. See further details at the website.

We request all of our subscribers in the new Euro currency zone, where possible, to send to us an annual subscription payment of 12 Euros in a cheque payable to "Marshall Govindan." Send it to Jean Pierre Hesse, 60, route d'Aix les Bains, Rumilly, 74150, France (email: rudran@tiscali.fr). At the

same time, please inform our subscriptions office in Canada by sending an email to info@babajiskriyayoga.net or by writing to Babaji's Kriya Yoga, 196 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 90, Eastman, Quebec, Canada J0E 1P0.

Most back issue articles of the Kriya Yoga Journal are now being added to our website: www.babajiskriyayoga.net Go check them out.

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 will be encrypted and kept secure. Check it out!

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