



B a b a j i ' s

Kriya Yoga Journal

Editorial

Breaking through conditioning

By Durga Ahlund

We are traveling through life directed by the ties we have to our family, community, politics and spiritual beliefs. We are rooted in tradition or passionate beliefs or positions on what is right and wrong. A powerful psychological structure is at play in our world, which is always shaping our thoughts and actions. We have to choose and make a conscious choice not to end up being no more than a series of conditioned actions and reactions to the world.

Saint Thirumular writes we must "die to the world. " He says that death and liberation is possible when we are not affected by the appearances of the world. But I find myself asking, "why do I need to be unaffected by the appearances of the world? " I don't choose to die to the world. I want to live joyously in the every moment. I love the rich tapestry of the world.

Babaji tells us to live courageously for the world and to do what we can to die to "time. " This, I can

better understand as a need to breakthrough conditioning. Things come, they go, what is past is past. Die to each moment and let today be enough.

The freshness and joy of today is so often obscured by thoughts arising from memories of past pleasures, aversions, frustrations and pain and if not, then by tomorrow's hopes and fears. We rarely experience moments purely, as if watching a sunrise or sunset. Every moment has a beginning and an end. And Creative change happens in those moments we are truly present to them. Only that which ends can be created anew. The end of the day, the end of the year, the end of a cycle, the end of an argument or relationship or attitude, the end of a career, the end of stagnation, the end of a life. Stagnation is what happens when a bad situation doesn't end. Stagnation happens even when a good situation doesn't end. Remember, the movie, Ground Hogs Day? Stagnation can come to an end in a single moment. And every moment must end, so why not let go of it and not carry it over into the next, into the future, into

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mind, the heart, the New Year.

The Siddhas say, to live with a pure mind experience the present and “die” to the past. We can do this by giving up the memories that influence the present, and by discontinuing hopes and mental habits that disturb life energy. Struggle, aggression, defensiveness along with desires and daydreams become habitual and stimulate either excitement or inertia. Stress is created in the mind and heart and subsequently balance is lost in the body. Stress makes it more difficult to maintain life processes as it creates more demand on life energy. Of course, as yogis we know we can both reduce stress and increase our capacity to absorb more the prana, by practicing the yoga postures and mantras regularly. But there is a law of supply and demand within each of us. Any demand for more life energy than we are able to supply creates disorder and disharmony, which can bring about disease, disintegration and death. Yoga practices of asana, pranayama, and mantra in and of themselves will not purify the heart and mind, if we are not letting go of disturbing mental habits. They can just strengthen them.

It is said that even after our physical body dies, pain and suffering, hatred and fear from the vital body lives on in a kind of collective consciousness of the world. The Yoga Visistha suggests that there is something of a collective “Heart of the Macrocosmic Being”, in which we all abide and when a large enough group of people engage in evil actions, the resulting unhappiness falls on all of us, as disorder, disease, disintegration and death. It says the ojas, the highest vital life energy of the Macrocosmic Being becomes disturbed. Disturbances in the ojas causes a loss of equilibrium in Supreme Consciousness, so Prakriti (Force of Nature) becomes agitated and its vibrations cause natural calamities to occur.

As we begin this New Year we can begin to dissolve past conditioning and practice renunciation by giving up mental chatter, memories, passions, agitations and daydreams.

We can choose to become spontaneously loving, kind and compassionate with everyone, and with our self to bring order, harmony and abundant life energy to our physical body and life. There is a beautiful and useful prayer by J. Krishnamurti:

“Om Shanti Shanti Shanti! Death to the problems of pain, disease and mental confusion. Death to problems caused by others or our physical environment. Death to problems of an unknown origin, or as an accident of nature.”

We really have to participate in life; we are in the world

We are not renunciants living in a monastery. Yet like monks, we must practice inwardness and silence. As Kriya yogis we practice pranayama, meditate and repeat mantra japa daily to connect with the best part of ourselves, the sweet, silent space with no sense of emotion, irritation or passion. And we are in a sense learning to die to time. But, we can also continue the practice throughout the day, not through inattention to the minutes of the day, but by 1) becoming aware in the moment and 2) by ignoring the past and future.

It is only possible for one to live in the beauty of the moment, if one has an understanding of the whole workings of the mind, in relation to the present. Being aware is being absorbed in moments and feelings, without

losing oneself to them. It is like achieving a panoramic view of each moment — knowing that you are absorbed in the moment, while aware of your thoughts, feelings and emotions and at the same time, aware of what is going on around you. This is Nityananda Kriya.

We must “choose” to regularly observe the contents of the conscious mind and all the reactions we have to difficulty and challenge. Only by uncovering the memories in the subconscious mind stuff, which still continue to haunt us and at times determines the way we think or react, can we hope to progress.

As Kriya Yogis, we are taught to record daily everything that runs through the space of our mind, without judgment, selection or rejection

Even uninvited things will continue to pursue us until we consciously let go of the past and develop enough dispassion to counter the pull, our desires have on us. Recording, allows us to be aware of all the crazy stuff that passes through our mind. Usually giving thoughts that little bit of detached attention is enough. Then, through sadhana, the day ends and the mind is cleansed in a shower of calm and peace.

We can establish equanimity, which allows and wills whatever thought, feeling or emotion that arises, to simply pass on through. Self mastery is the ability to be able to end something, in the moment, or in the next. This ability to not hold onto things is immensely empowering and allows for constant renewal.

By coming to an understanding with the total workings of the mind and by giving up the past, we can come face to face with our self. This opens us to experience the easy flow of insight and intuition.

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It is really so simple that we can easily miss it. For the self is there in each moment, concentrating itself on seeking its infinity. The self affects a quality of the mind that is not dependent on thought or memory, but which is instead pure perception and rich wide-angled awareness. The pure essence of awareness is the only thing that remains consistent, which does not wilt or change its mind or become less than; it is the only thing that does not end or perish. It is so simple. Awareness has been there all the time.

The Upanishads says:

“Understand that Consciousness is Yourself”

Consciousness is living, loving awareness, which moves us into the unknown. It is beyond thought and emotion. It is vast and connected with all other beings. It cannot come from individual memory; it is the living, breathing energy in the present moment. It is what gives everything value, the beauty and fragrance of a rose, birth, death; it gives us the time to discover it.

It is thought alone that allows what is past to continue. Thought is the response of memory or an association of a subject to an object. Reject thought of the past and end continuity. Make note of everything that you think is who you are, all the pieces and parts of your particular mind/body/personality. It is relatively easy to identify the attitudes you have that are self defeating, which are keeping you stuck. And it is also possible, gradually, one by one to begin to negate them. There are two useful techniques that help initiate change. They are not secret or complicated but they work for me.

Meditation I – *Neti Neti*

Meditation (not this, not this). I am not any of this attributed to me.

We experience ourselves as a world of personalities and forms, which we want to see or have been accustomed to seeing. In Yoga, we say our true identity is beyond distinction of name, race, country, gender, occupation, memory and personality. This first meditation is a method of self-inquiry that helps us recognize, that who we truly are is Energy and Essence, an energy that remains the same, in the midst of all changes.

Begin to think of everything you consider yourself to be and all that you feel can be related to who “you” are, and negate them, one by one, by saying “*neti-neti*” (or say, “not this, not this”). For example consider your gender and then negate it. I am a woman/man. *Neti, neti*, that is not who “I am”. I am a yogi. *Neti neti*, I am something beyond this identification. Look for what is beyond each identity by saying “*neti neti*”, while letting the particular identity drop.

Take the person who you see in the mirror and

select each and every aspect of your physical appearance and the qualities of your personality one-by-one, and negate them. Consider personal relationships, ethnicity, political and spiritual beliefs, affiliations and alliances you identify with, and always, one by one, negate them with *neti neti*. Do not use these words mechanically, but really let go of each identification and relationship. You are not disrespecting any of these parts of your life, or any of your relationships. You are shedding layers of skin and sinew to discover what is at the center of your being.

You are moving toward the unique being, which you are with each *neti neti*. Honestly, contemplate your dreams, desires and ambitions. If possible conjure up all to which you cling, as an image. Continue for as long as it takes.

Then open to the awareness that you are That, which gives rise to all these temporary identities. Recall, remember and experience that same something that has not changed with all the changes and experiences in your life. Remember that essence, which has remained the same from childhood and into adulthood—That, which remained the same throughout all the ups and downs of your life? Recognize and welcome that Energy and Essence,

which abides within, as you. Letting go in this way is exhilarating. It creates the space to disengage in any lingering habitual behavior pattern. The practice can stimulate a breakthrough into newness and wholeness.

Meditation II – Tending the Fire

Once you have discovered the spiritual space within your self, withdraw regularly and go there. Allow a part of your consciousness to rest there imagining yourself sitting at and tending to a lighted bonfire. You are watching without expectation what the rest of your consciousness is being affected by. In this practice do not attempt to take control. You are only concerned with resting inward and tending to the fire.

At some point in the meditation, imagine the fire creating a single force of energy. See that force rising up from the fire, taking you along with it in every direction that you go. Pull your navel center in tight and with some vital energy behind it, “will” this force to be with you always, to go with you always, to protect you, to lead you towards your greater good.

This force will begin to help you build trust and surrender. The current may appear as intuition, a higher consciousness and may begin to flow and you may begin to spontaneously respond to it. New perspectives or new insights may arise, or new directions may begin to open with new opportunities in the New Year.

All we really have to do is to die to each moment and let today be enough. □



The Kumba Mela and its ascetics, or . . .

Why pilgrimage is not a tourist trip (Part 1)

By M. G. Satchidananda

In north India, one of the most popular destinations for pilgrimages are the Kumba Melas, gatherings of thousands of religious and spiritual ascetics and millions of devotees, which occur every twelve years and rotate among four locations: Allahabad (Prayag) at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna and mythical Saraswati river, Haridwar along the Ganga river, Ujjain along the Kshipra river and Nashik along the Godavari river.

The Ardh Kumbh Mela is celebrated every six years at Haridwar and Allahabad, while the Purna (complete) Kumbh always takes place at Allahabad every twelve years. Over 45 days beginning in January 2007, more than 70 million Hindu pilgrims took part in the Ardh Kumbh Mela at Allahabad, and on January 15, the most auspicious day of the festival of Makar Sankranti, more than 5 million participated. The earliest historical accounts indicate that these Kumba Melas have been organized since the thirteenth century A.D.

The *Maha Kumbh Mela* ('Great' Kumbh Mela) which comes after twelve 'Purna Kumbh Melas,' which is after every 144 years is also held at Allahabad. The 2001, Maha Kumbh Mela was attended by around 60 million people, making it the largest gathering anywhere in the world. This author organized a 48 day pilgrimage to the 144 year Maha Kumba Mela at Haridwar in 1986 for his teacher and over 40 students, and from this experience developed a passion for bringing Westerners on pilgrimage to India almost every year since then. Twelve years ago, he tried unsuccessfully to organize a pilgrimage to it again, but the logistics were too difficult. With Babaji's grace, he has succeeded in organizing one to the 2010 Haridwar Kumba Mela, with a camp and comfortable suitable accommodations for a large group of Kriya Yoga initiates.

According to the ancient mythology of India, the planets align every twelve years creating a unique divine energy at one of these four sacred locations. Millions come together for holy bathing rituals in these sacred places and to receive blessings from the saints and sages who rarely leave their Himalayan caves or monasteries, yet attend this event. Being in their physical presence, receiving their blessings, is known as darshan. Such darshan provides a kind of mirror, in which one sees one's true self, in the light of the saint's consciousness. From the mythical Kumbha (water pot) great amrit kalash, or nectar of divine wisdom is said to pour forth on all pilgrims at this time and place. To imbibe this amrit requires a bit of "churning" of the mind's samskaras, or habits. The act of ritual bathing in the sanctified waters helps to cleanse the mind of such habits, including the greatest one: the delusion of egoism, the habit of identifying with the body, the emo-

tions and the movements of the mind. As a result, one realizes a state of ineffable peace and joy, established in the perspective of the soul, pure consciousness. The Kumbh Mela will can therefore affect dramatic changes in the karmic tendencies of pilgrims. It is a life-changing event!

Ascetics and aspiration

One of the most remarkable things about the Kumba Melas is the presence of thousands of ascetics. One could even characterize them as life long pilgrims, as many of them spend most of their lives wandering to various sacred places, after making vows of poverty, obedience and chastity. And one of the most difficult things for Westerners to understand or appreciate is asceticism, because Western culture today assumes that happiness is directly proportional to how much one possesses. This is the opposite of an important ideal of asceticism: "letting go" of, or renouncing worldly possession. Letting go is both physical and mental. Theoretically, a western yogi can "let go" of his or her attachment to possessions, status, relationships, and even many non yogic things like meat eating, alcohol, and attitudes such as competition and pride, or emotions such as anger, lust and fear. But generally the real test of "letting go" of such things occurs only when it is done physically. That has been my experience. I lived as an ascetic for 18 years, from the age of 21 to 40, when I left my teacher's ashram, and decided to live more in the world. I have also seen that one gets used to a certain level of comfort, certain relationships, work, possessions, and then one gradually forms attachments to them, out of habit.

Asceticism is a means for purification Lahiri Mahasaya wrote: "Asceticism is to remain pure amidst impurities." It is referred to in India as tapas, a voluntary challenge assumed freely, with intention, will and perseverance, for the purpose of self transformation. Most of us identify ourselves with our actions, our thoughts, and our emotions, both good and bad. When one begins to realize that Who I truly am is none of these, and as a result firmly resolves to establish oneself in the realization of one's true Identity, as pure consciousness, then tapas or asceticism becomes the scalpel by which begins to purify oneself of egoism: the habit of identifying with what one is not. Tapas becomes the scalpel by which one removes the tumours of egoism's greatest manifestations: attachment and aversion, liking and disliking. If you want to know if the ego is motivating any of your actions or choices, ask yourself, do I have a preference? Does it matter if I get this or that? Only the

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The Kumba Mela *continued*

ego has preferences. It is all the same to your soul, because its' well being is an assured constant. Because egoism is so deeply rooted however, ascetics, or tapas will undergo deliberate privations in order to subdue the habits through which ego seeks to express itself, including lust, anger, pride and fear.

During the Kumba Mela, many ascetics will be seen performing difficult forms of tapas: sitting in meditation surrounded by four burning pyres of wood or dung, with the fifth flame, the sun itself beating down on them from dawn to dusk; others may be standing, fulfilling a vow, which might last for ten years or more, never lying down even to sleep; many will observe life long silence; others may be lying on a bed of nails; others may be carrying heavy weights on their arms. Among the most famous are the naga babas who from the time of their initiation cease to wear any clothing. They spend most of their time in Himalayan caves or on pilgrimage between a series of sacred temples high in the Himalayas including Amarnath in Kashmir in the West, Gangotri the source of the Ganges River, Kedarnath, Badrinath and Pashupathinath in Nepal.

The ascetic is aspiring for liberation (moksha) from the limitations of ego bound consciousness and physical reincarnation. The words "ascetic " and "ascent " both derive from a common root, which indicates "to rise up. " Aspiration is the opposite of desire. Desire is an expression of the ego, which believes that unless its desire is satisfied, it cannot find well being. When the desire is satisfied, the discomfort of desire is removed, but only briefly, until the next desire arises. Recognizing that desires are endless, and that therefore, one cannot escape their consequent suffering, the wise seek to remove the cause of suffering by removing its cause, desire itself. Unlike ordinary folk, who simply seek to fill desires and avoid their opposite, aversions, by endlessly seeking distraction in pleasures and avoiding pain, the ascetic seeks to rise above the ego's game of liking and disliking and to train the mind to remain fixed upon the unconditional and ineffable bliss of satchidananda: absolute being, consciousness and bliss.

The Origins of Ascetism in India

There are dozens of major orders known as akhadas of ascetics, and many other minor ones. Indian sadhus, outside of Jainism, fall into two large categories : Bairagis, who are devoted to one of the incarnations of Vishnu, including Rama, Krishna, Dattatreya, and Samnyasis who are devoted to Siva. Strictly speaking, a Samnyasi is a person who has renounced the world at the last stage of his worldly life after having fulfilled his duties proper to the earlier life. Anyone who renounced his interests in worldly affairs and led a celibate life without ever having entered the life of a householder was known generally as a Brahmacari. But in the course of time this distinction was lost and the word Samnyasi has come to be applied to all ascetics who renounced the world.

Samnyasis are generally classified as (1) Dasanamis; (2) Dandis; (3) Paramahamsas; (4) Brahmarcaris. But this classification is based on a confusion of ideas. There is really one school of Samnyasis, which has ten orders, and it is known as Dasanamis.

Dandi means one who has a staff (danda). Dandis are samnyasis who observe a particular rule, or discipline, or who have arrived at a particular stage of ascetic development in controlling their body, speech and mind. They may belong to anyone of the ten orders of Dasanamis. In actual practice it is only the Brahmin ascetics belonging to one of the four orders of the Dasanami, namely, Asrama, Bharati, Sarasvati, and Tirtha, that may be so designated and required to carry a staff to symbolize their status. There are ancient references to it.

Paramahamsas are not a separate class of Samnyasis. Ascetics whether Saiva or Vaishnava, followers of Siva or the incarnations of Vishnu, who have undergone a probation of at least twelve years, can become Paramahamsas. Generally, they belong however, to one of the ten orders of Dasanamis, and they are progressive, considering themselves to be above some of the rules and observances and behave as such. For example, they act as preachers and teachers. They are willing to sit and dine with the Naga or naked subsection of the Dasanamis, who are generally populated by Sudras (lowest socio-economic class). Paramahamsas often wander about in the company of their students and disciples. It is the highest status of ascetics. Such ascetics are believed to have reached such a stage of self-knowledge and control of their senses that nothing can disturb them at all. They are so pure that nothing can contaminate them. They are indifferent to doctrinal differences between Saiva and Vaishnava traditions. They are usually great scholars well versed in Sanskrit learning.

Paramahamsa is the only category of ascetics which has been in use continuously since the period of the early Jabala Upanishad. Other categories mentioned in the epic Mahabharata have been conspicuous by their absence since the time of Sankara who organized the ten orders of the Dasanamis in the 9th Century A.D.

Hamsa stands for purity and stability. Parama means supreme. The term Paramahamsa indicates an ascetic who has not only attained a level of purity whereby they can distinguish the spiritual essence of the individual soul from its material trappings, but through supreme discrimination has realized identity of the soul with the supreme soul.

One of the first Paramahamsas listed in the Jabala Upanishad is Dattatreya, and "da " is equated with "hamsa. " The usual saying among ascetics is that renunciation began with Dattatreya, (Dattase Samnyasa cala) and along with Sankara, Dattatreya is the most highly revered of ascetics, to the extent that he is mentioned in the Puranas as an incarnation of Vishnu. In

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The Kumba Mela *continued*

the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata he appears as Vishnu's sixth incarnation.

Brahmacari means the period of studenthood, the first of the four stages of life (known as *asramas*). It is therefore not an end in itself, but a preparation for the following stages: that of a householder (*grahasta*), wherein one pursues and enjoys wealth and pleasure; the third stage: a retired person (*vanaprastha*) or qualified ascetism of social significance, wherein a husband and wife may dedicate themselves to spiritual practices and austerities (*tapasa*) tutelage to students who seek their guidance, spiritual study and social service; and the final stage of renunciation (*samnyasi*) wherein one becomes a wandering, homeless mendicant wholly dedicated to the practice of austerities. These four stages have been considered by Hindus to be the required course to reach *moksha* or liberation since the time of the early Upanishads until a very late date. The Bhagavad Gita lays down the philosophical basis for the householder's life: doing one's duties, dispassionately, with devotion to God. Such a person is referred to as a *niskamakarmayogi*, one who performs actions selflessly, without thought of personal consequences. In actual living, though not theoretically, it has supplanted the older type represented by the four stages. For this reason, Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, in the company of his wife Sita, forms one of the most popular deities in Hinduism.

In the Jabala Upanishad, where the four *asramas* are discussed for the first time, it is clearly indicated that one may take to the life of a mendicant the day one feels detachment towards the world, no matter in which stage of life one is, and that this is equally ideal to that of the four stages. Such a person was later identified as a *naisthika brahmacarin*, signifying one who

remains a student and celibate for the rest of his or her life. When the ideal type of disinterested householder supplanted that of the four stages of life, the life-long celibate ascetic type continued to be recognized as an ideal alternative. Indian culture, non-Buddhist and non-Jain, may be said to be the only culture which has acclaimed two ideal types, either as alternatives or as complementaries, from very early in its history to today. Both Buddhism and Jainism proclaim ascetism to be the true and only path to salvation. Buddha's main contribution to ascetism is the organization of monastic order, known as the *Sangha*. It was not until the Ninth Century A.D. that Hindu ascetics were organized in monastic centers by Sankara. He established four monastic centers in four corners of India, and ten orders of Saiva ascetics, the *Dasnamis*. These ten orders have each a distinct name whose significance and origin are shrouded in mystery. Every ascetic, thence forward, had not only his ascetic name, but had further a sort of a surname in the form of the name of one's order. But long before their founders, Buddha and Mahavira, there were Indians who proclaimed that ascetism to be the true and only path to salvation. At last three or four of them were Upanishadic personalities and so dated prior to 900 B.C. One of them, Sanatkumara, figures in one of the two oldest Upanishads. The other, far more well known, is his disciple: Narada. They, like the later Dattatreya, Sankara, and the recent Sri Ramakrishna (19th century) were lifelong celibates or *brahmacarins*.

The ascetic ideal type began by renouncing the world and withdrawing from among fellow-brethren. It has evolved into an ideal type with two main objectives: self-realization and spiritualization of the community being the older, and selfless social service the newer. It is a social experiment of great significance. As long as the urge to the ascetic life continues in a fair number of persons, all of society's members will continue to be reminded of transcendental values.



The last Kumba Mela, Allahabad 2007.

Our own tradition of Babaji's Kriya Yoga expresses the monistic theism of Tirumular and the 18 Siddhas. Members of our tradition are mostly householders, as were the Siddhas, but may for some part of their life, adopt a renunciant lifestyle. The practice of Babaji's Kriya Yoga, with its yogic sadhana, dietary and social injunctions is a form of ascetism, as explained in the second section of this paper. Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas is a lay order of ascetics dedicated to the practice and teaching of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. □



The Tirumandiram: a monumental publication

By Durga Ahlund

A new English language translation of the Tirumandiram will be released at a gala celebration in Chennai, India on January 17, 2010. The Chief Guests will be Sri P. Chidambaram, the Honorable Union Home Minister, and the heads of the Saiva monasteries at Dharmapuram, Tiruvavaduthurai, and Tiruppanandal, and the Tamil Nadu State Minister for Hindu and Religious Endowments, K. Periyakaruppan. This monumental work has been produced by a team of eminent scholars and yogis under the direction of Dr. T.N. Ganapathy and sponsorship of Marshall Govindan, President of Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas and Dr. N. Mahalingam, a noted philanthropist. It is one of the most important works related to Yoga, Tantra, Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and spirituality ever written. It was written more than 1,500 years ago by the Siddha Tirumular. It is being published in ten hard cover volumes, over 3,200 pages. It contains over 3,000 verses in Tamil, and for each there is the original Tamil script, its transliteration, translation and commentary. There is also a select bibliography, glossary, and an index. In addition the work contains introductory chapters from the two sides of the debate within Saiva Siddhanta, Tirumular's monistic theism versus Meykandar's pluralistic realism. It is being offered at a special low price of only USD 100 plus \$50 for shipping. For more information go to www.babajiskriyayoga.net/english/bookstore.htm.

The Tirumandiram is itself a pathway to God realization and to realizing the potential of our human nature. Because our human nature has not changed, Tirumular's words are as relevant for us today as they were two thousand years ago. It is a first person account of a human being who has merged with the Divine. Tirumular exemplifies man's greatest potential.

As humans we have the imagination and the power to devise ways to perfect ourselves. Tirumular speaks of the alchemy that is possible to us and explains through a myriad of ways how we can transform ourselves into perfect beings, by surrendering to the Divine. He tells us, through surrender to the Divine one can live a life open to the grace and thus, see what we are supposed to do on any given day or year or within any particular relationship. We must however deny the importance of the ego. We can do this only with a profound understanding that the ego is only a tool of the Self. The Tirumandiram emphasizes this absolute requirement for realization.

The Tirumandiram says, "examine the ego, but realize the 'I'. Eliminate human suffering by understanding that the 'I' chooses, determines, undertakes

responsibility. The merit and demerit, praise and blame in your life is due to something far beyond your individual ego, mind, intellect or personality." There is joy in Unity once the egoism is shed. Then there is no other than the Self.

Thirumular gives us numerous Kundalini Yoga techniques that have the power to reveal the light of our transcendental self. But, he tells us the most important element cannot be given or taught. Trust and surrender come from within. And only trust and surrender grant us the ability to believe without reservation, the inspiration and insight coming from the transcendental Self. Only this, will keep the ego out of our challenges and endeavors.

Life is a process through which we will endure, confront and assimilate lessons. It is a slow, systematic process of spiritual maturity. And while the ego is striving for all it can attain in this world, something within us has to make sure that we are not missing what we need to mature spiritually.

Who we truly are, and what we came to do, more often than not has to do with our relationship to our Self. Even when this is the case, we are more concerned with our relationships with others than with our own self. We care more how others see us and treat us. We rarely consider how we see and treat our own Self.

The world demonstrates a much higher regard for those who are outgoing, extroverted and charismatic than those who are introverted and have a quiet presence. Passion is highly praised whereas equanimity is more often seen as coldness or apathy. Our heroes are generally those who act and revolt in the world, not those who demonstrate direct perception of it.

Our heroes, all the Saints and Siddhas, like Tirumular value 'Direct Perception,' which is without analysis, reasoning, without all the things the intellect creates in order to postpone perception? They say, if we develop, trust and surrender first, then we will be graced and guided into the state of direct perception. Through trust and surrender we will find our unique place and role in the world.

Tirumular describes 'direct perception' through faith and surrender all throughout the 3000 verses of the Tirumandiram, Kriya Babaji describes the key to direct perception, in The Voice of Babaji: a wall exists so that we can pass through it; it is an unending circular wall with many indiscernible gates that fling themselves once we surrender to God's mercy and Guru's grace.

Nothing is greater on the spiritual path than trust in and surrender to God's mercy and grace. Only that will bring us face to face with the self. □



News and Notes

Pilgrimage to the Himalayas: September 18 to October 5, 2010. A pilgrimage to Badrinath, Mana, Joshimutt, Rudraprayag and Rishikesh will be lead by M. Govindan and Durga this fall. All are welcome. For details visit our website.

Second level initiations will be given by M.G. Satchidananda in Bangalore January 22-24, Zurich May 14-16, Quebec June 18-20, Estonia August 13-15, October 15-17, and Dole, France November 5-7. Also by Nityananda in Catabria, Spain 1/31- 2/1, Huelva, Spain and Argentina in the spring, and by Satyananda in Germany August 13-15, in Singapore October 15-17 and Daylesford, Australia in October 22-24.

Third level initiations will be offered near Dole, France May 17-24, in Quebec July 23, August 1, 2010, and Estonia August August 15-22, and near Frankfort Germany May 22-29, 2011, by M Govindan. 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 in Quebec July 1-11, 2010, and again in Frankfort, Germany August 5-15, 2011. Upon completion you will have completed the requirements to be registered by Yoga Alliance, the registry of Yoga Teachers in North America.. For schedule, course outline and more information contact Durga. durga@babajiskriyayoga.net. Visit Durga's blog. www.seekingthe-self.com.

New CD: "Om Kriya Babaji Stuti Manjari" We are pleased to announce the release of a new collection of songs sung by Bhavani Ramamoorthy, whose beautiful voice and arrangements lifts the words of many previously known and unknown Kriya Yoga mantras

to sublime levels of inspiration. The arrangements are in the traditional Karnatic form, with powerful intonations and rhythms. Some of the mantras are unique and were given us by Babaji in the book, "Voice of Babaji". Bhavani is supported by the voices of other Kriya Yoga initiates in Chennai, where it was professionally recorded and co-produced by Kriya Yoga Publications. Order your copy for US\$12.95, CA\$15.70 (inc gst) or CA\$16.87 in Quebec (inc gst & pst), \$4.00- shipping. US\$8.00-overseas airmail.

New Publications We are pleased to announce the publication of two new books: **Babaji's Kriya Yoga: Deepening Your Practice**, by Durga Ahlund and Marshall Govindan. This book provides detailed instructions, diagrams and photographs in the practice of a particular set of 18 Yoga asanas or postures, known as "Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga. " The essays and instructions herein enable the practitioner to go beyond the development and health of the physical body, and to transform the practice of yoga asana into a spiritual practice, inducing a higher state of consciousness. Unlike earlier publications related to Hatha Yoga, this volume will show you how to transform your Hatha Yoga practice into a means for Self-Realization. It introduces students to the Five-fold Path of Babaji's Kriya Yoga. This book is dedicated to Yoga students new to Kriya Yoga and also to Initiated students looking to deepen their own practice. 150 pages. 8.5 x 11 inches format, color diagrams. Price \$17.95.

Kailash: Return to the Source and Back, by Swami Vedananda Saraswati, edited by Durga Ahlund, is a rare spiritual adventure story of one dedicated renunciant's pilgrimage on foot to Tibet's Mount Kailash. It records the remarkable meetings with a 700 year old Siddha, extraordinary ascetics, and the spiritual experiences and challenges that he faced on his journey.

The author is a disciple of Shirdi Sai Baba. Numerous photographs. 130 pages. Price \$15.95.

Maha Kumba Mela in Haridwar, India From January 25- March 8, Satchidananda and Durga will lead three separate groups of 34 persons each to this extraordinary event. A fourth group is now forming, from March 6 to 23, 2010, led by Acharya Satyananda. We will have our own camp at the Mela. Contact Ashram for more information.

Personal Retreats at the Quebec Ashram We are now staffed to support any initiate who would like to have a personal retreat at the Quebec ashram this winter. David and Nicole Lavoie will be your hosts. Santosh will guide you in your practice of the 18 postures and meditation. A suggested donation of C\$55 per day is requested.

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!

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

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