



Rise and Shine!

The Art of Kri+Ya Living

A Newsletter of the Hariharananda Mission West

Vol. I, No. 1 (December 2005)



Namaste

Welcome to our little newsletter of love

Beloved souls!

Om namo narayanaya. We now have a new means of staying in touch and sharing the joy of living a God-conscious life. Each issue will present tips of practical spirituality, explanations about the Kriya Yoga techniques, a little wisdom tale, exploration of sacred words and concepts, inspiration from the great sages and saints of the world's religions, questions and answers, something for children, additional resources... and more in the future. Happy reading!

- Swami Sarveshwarananda

Other scriptures make a veiled or metaphorical reference to this practice, as in the *Bible*:

*He [John the Baptist] said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make **straight** the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias'.*

- John 1:23

or again:

*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made **straight**, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.*

- Luke 3:5

Tips on Kriya Yoga Practice

Kriya Yoga can only be learned through direct initiation from an empowered Yogacharya—monastic or lay person, and can never be revealed to anyone else, in order to maintain the purity of this timeless transmission. However its benefits and practical applications can be shared freely. In each issue, Swamiji will provide practical commentaries on this precious technique...

Why do we keep the spine straight?

The spine and cranium is the dynamic pole of our existence, the microcosmic representation of the Cosmic Pillar, *axis mundi*. We all started our terrestrial journey as an embryo comprised solely of a brain, a spine, and a heart. Gradually, all our other limbs, tissues and organs grew out of this cerebro-spinal axis. Similarly, various myths and religions describe symbolically how the universe grew out of a sacred tree (as the World Tree of the Celts), an infinite column (as the Column of Fire of the Yogis), a cosmic egg (as the Hiranyagarbha of the Hindus), a sacred cube (as the Ka'ba of the Muslims), a holy mountain (as Mount Kailash for the native Bon religion, the Hindus, the Jains, and the Buddhists), a sacrificial pole (as the Cross of the Christians), a caduceus (as the Staff of Mercury of Hermeticism), etc. This Cosmic Axis does not refer to a geographical location, but to a cosmological

process, a "manifest though hidden" ground which supports the entire creation, as one of Vedic hymns describes it.

The yogic texts explain further that inside the spine resides the subtle nerve, *sushumna nadi*, which, when opened, leads to God-realization. This secret mystical passage, extending from the bottom to the top of the spine, must be kept in proper alignment for the life force, *prana*, to move from the bottom chakra, *muladhara*, to the fontanel and merge in God. The main aim of spiritual practice is therefore to remain **aligned** with God's will, by keeping **our spine and our ways straight**.

Various scriptures refer to this essential principle directly, as in the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:13):

Let him be with body, head, and neck held firmly straight and still, and with the attention between the two eyebrows, not looking about.

As our Gurudev Baba Hariharananda explained in his metaphorical interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna initially refused to fight the spiritual battle (chapter 1)—he threw away his bow and arrows, and sat prostrated in his chariot. At the end of the Lord's discourse (chapter 18), Arjuna straightened his spine and took up his bow to fight the opponent under the instructions of Krishna, the soul. This is Kriya Yoga. Baba adds, "If a devotee does not sit with his spine, neck, and head straight and does not practice Kriya Yoga according to the guidance of the master, he cannot overcome his biological force. When he does, then he can cross the *vishnu granthi* (the vital knot of the heart center) and slowly rise up into the pituitary and ultimately the fontanel."

The constant practice of keeping the spine straight and maintaining the attention on the top of the head will quickly yield great physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Let us be **straight and straightforward** always!

N.B. The physical benefits of always striving to walk, sit, work, and rest with the spine straight will be addressed in a future issue. ❀

The Blessings of Meditating with Others

by Paramahansa Yogananda

Group meditation is a castle that protects the new spiritual aspirants as well as the veteran meditators. Meditating together increases the degree of Self-realization of each member of the group by the law of invisible vibratory exchange of group magnetism.

I well remember Sri Yukteswar's advice when I went to him for training. He said: "Meditate with good companions. They will help you to churn the butter of Self-realization from the milk of your mind. Milk mixes with the waters of worldly delusion and cannot float above them. Butter readily floats on those treacherous waters."

How true the Guru's warning was! All those who stayed away from the group that I started, even though they had advanced spiritually in Kriya Yoga, later succumbed to worldly influences and to the promptings of their subconscious material tendencies of past incarnations.

Those who stayed with the group progressed steadily in God-realization, because we helped one another in moments of weakness and indifference. An overcast of spiritual lassitude sometimes covers the light of the soul, like a quick spread of clouds over a clear sky. We have to banish the clouds by the sunshine of good company.

Why shouldn't you strengthen your own vibrations through fellowship with people seeking Self-realization, and by group meditation with them? This practice will fortify your own spiritual convictions; you will find that many seemingly insuperable barriers in your life will crumble and dissolve in the waters of meditation. Your devotion and love for God will commingle with the devotion and love of others. Divine bliss will radiate from you, helping all persons you meet.

If your spiritual practice is at a standstill, or is ebbing, the practice of meditation on God or on any of the

Great Ones, in the company of other devotees, will uplift you from your precarious state. The proximity of others' spiritual vibrations has the power of raising your own. Meditating with other devotees thus helps you to quicken your own evolution. They inspire you on your climb up the ladder of Self-realization; and you, by your example, can also be helpful to them. ❁

This Month in the World

3: 3rd Anniversary of Baba Hariharananda's Mahasamadhi (Conscious demise of the last realized master of Kriya Yoga)
4, 11, 18: Advent Sundays (Christian preparation for the Nativity of Jesus).

6: St. Nicholas Day (Christian remembrance of the saint whose life inspired the Santa Claus myth).

8: Bodhi Day (Buddhist celebration of Buddha's enlightenment).

8: Immaculate Conception (Catholic Christian celebration of Mother Mary).

12: Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day (Catholic Christian Latino celebration of Mother Mary).

16-24: Las Posadas (Christian re-enactment of the search for a place for Jesus to be born).

21: Yule (Christian celebration of the light of life in Jesus--originally a pagan celebration of the rebirth of the Sun).

25: Christmas (Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus).

26: Death of Prophet Zarathushtra (founder of the Zoroastrian religion).

26: St. Stephen's Day (Christian remembrance of the first martyr).

26-Jan. 2: Hanukkah (Jewish Festival of Lights).

28: Holy Innocents (Christian remembrance of innocent children who have perished through violence.)

30: Feast of the Holy Family (Catholic Christian celebration of the family of Jesus).

31: Watch Night (Christian preparation for the New Year).

Speak Gently

A poem attributed by some authorities to one G.W. Langford, and by other authorities to a David Bates. Either way, a tender note to treasure...

*Speak gently! It is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently; let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here!
Speak gently! Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently Friendship's accents flow;
Affection's voice is kind.
Speak gently to the little child!
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild;
It may not long remain.*

*Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear;
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care!*

*Speak gently to the aged one,
Grieve not the care-worn heart;
Whose sands of life are nearly run,
Let such in peace depart!*

*Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word!*

*Speak gently to the erring; know
They may have toiled in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so;
Oh, win them back again!*

*Speak gently! He who gave his life
To bend man's stubborn will,
When elements were in fierce strife,
Said to them, "Peace, be still."*

*Speak gently! 'tis a little thing
Dropped in the heart's deep well;
The good, the joy, that it may bring,
Eternity shall tell.*



Tie a very tight knot with me and I will take you through this worldly ocean towards everlasting peace, joy, happiness, and bliss.
- Baba Hariharananda

Ask Swamiji

What is the origin of Sanskrit?

Sanskrit came as a divine revelation to the realized seers, *rishis*, of ancient times. As these holy seers meditated, certain sacred verses, *mantras*, started to form in their mind in a new language. Along with these mantras the *rishis* acquired the intuitive understanding of this divine language, and went on to teach it to their disciples. Sanskrit (a word which means "perfected") is therefore known in India as *deva nagari* or *deva basha*, "the language of the gods." A similar process occurred in Arabia when the Holy Qu'ran was revealed simultaneously with the modern Arabic language to the prophet Mohammed.

As in all ancient languages, Sanskrit gradually underwent significant changes. The original Vedic Sanskrit is still used today for the study of the Vedas and for performing religious rituals, while a simplified version, known as Prakrit, gradually evolved as a means of everyday communication.

Sanskrit never became a dead language like Latin or ancient Greek, although it came dangerously close to it—today only a handful of villages in India still speak Sanskrit as their common language. However there is now a worldwide renewed interest in Sanskrit, as it holds the key to divine knowledge.

One cannot study the metaphorical meaning of the Indian scriptures without having some understanding of Sanskrit, because every word or compounds of words is built on root-words or syllables containing a specific meaning. Without knowing how to break down

words into their basic constituents parts, their deeper meaning may never be known.

See for example the analysis of the word "mantra" below. ❁

Word Anatomy: Mantra

"Mantra: mystical energy encased in a sound structure."
- Swami Sivananda, *Bhakti Yoga*

The word *mantra* is made of two roots: *man*, 'to think' (as in the word *manas*, 'mind') and *tra*, 'to protect' or 'to free'.

The ancient Sanskrit glossary Amarkosha defines a *mantra* as *mananat trayete iti mantrah*: "By the constant thinking of mantra, one is protected and released from the round of births and deaths."



New Releases

DVD *Little Stars: A Spiritual Workout for the Whole Child*

An introduction to the spiritual life and sacred arts for children, featuring original music and a group of 30 young ballet dancers. Written, directed and produced by Swami Sarveshwarananda. *One DVD, 35 minutes. English with Spanish and Portuguese subtitles. Price: \$14.*

Available for online order at

www.harisharananda.org/english/publications/publishing_index.html

Holy Humor: The Living Master

Rulers of medieval Japan often consulted spiritual masters on political affairs or philosophical problems. But few emperors understood the true import of the masters' teachings.

An emperor once asked Gudo, the Zen master, "What happens to a man of enlightenment after death?"

"Phew, I don't know what happens" Gudo replied.

"Well, you're supposed to be a master!"

"Yes, but not a dead one!"

Commentary

True masters do not engage in past analysis or future speculations. Their only striving is to keep their mind in the eternal *now*. There is nothing to achieve by *doing*, but everything to gain by *being*.

As the great south Indian sage Ramana Maharshi said, "We talk of attaining the Self, or of reaching God, in time. But there is nothing to attain. We are already Self-existent. Nor will there ever be a time when we shall be nearer to God than now. We are ever-blissful, Self-existent, the infinite now. Our Consciousness is unbroken, continuous and eternal. It is all *maya*, self-hypnotism, to imagine that now we are otherwise. De-hypnotize yourself! It is ego which deludes itself that there are two selves, one which we are conscious of now (the person) and the other, the higher, the divine, of which we shall one day become conscious. This is false. There is only one Self and it is fully conscious now and for ever: there is neither past, present nor future for It, since It is out of time." ❁

Sources



The Hariharananda Mission West Website

All about Kriya Yoga and the lineage of masters, Swamiji's programs, books and video and audio products, pilgrimages, and more at www.hariharananda.org



The Storytelling Monk Website

Find more wisdom tales, divine humor, sacred chants, inspiration from the life of great saints and sages, photo galleries, and more at www.storytellingmonk.org



The Ark of Love Website

Learn how a grass-root network of karma yogis serve the poor and abandoned children of Latin America and the Indian Himalayas at www.arcadelamor.org

Other Spiritual Links

Yoganiketan

This Abode of Yoga (*Yoganiketan*) is a treasure trove of rare books by the Kriya Yoga masters—such as Paramahansa Yogananda, Swami Satyananda, Swami Shriyukteshwar, Lahiri Mahasayas, and many more—translated from Bengali into English (and some into Spanish too), all available for free download.

Visit it at www.yoganiketan.net

Autobiography of a Yogi

The first edition published in 1946 of the spiritual classic by Paramahansa Yogananda is available for free download at www.crystalclarity.com/yogananda

Help us Help our Little Ones!

*We make a living by what we get,
we make a life by what we give.*
- Winston Churchill

We are deeply grateful to the many caring individuals who help support the spiritual and humanitarian work of Hariharananda Mission West. Donations are used to assist our charitable welfare efforts in many parts of the world and to promote the dissemination of Kriya Yoga and Paramahansa Hariharananda's teachings.

Donations can be made using the following methods:

WIRE FUNDS THROUGH PAYPAL

The easiest way to wire funds using your credit card, a bank transfer, or your own PayPal account. Simply go to www.paypal.com, click on "Send Money", enter donate@hariharananda.org in the "Recipient's Email" box, and fill out the rest of the form. You will receive a confirmation of your successful donation by email.

SEND A CHECK, TRAVELLER'S CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

Please make it out to "Hariharananda Mission West", and send it by regular mail to: Hariharananda Mission West, P.O. Box 611791, North Miami, FL 33261-1791, U.S.A.

WIRE FUNDS THROUGH BANK TRANSFER

Account Name: Hariharananda Mission West
Bank name: Washington Mutual Bank, FA
Bank account No. 1854792447
Router No. 267084131
Address: Aventura Financial Center 1752, 19495 Biscayne Blvd., Aventura, FL 33180, U.S.A.

Poverty is the ultimate form of violence.
- Mahatma Gandhi

Please help us spread a message of peace and joy in the world.
Thank you very much. God bless your noble heart always.