



Rise and Shine!

The art of KRI+YA living
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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...

The Use of the Blessed Flower

At the time of Kriya Yoga initiation, the Yogacharya gives a special blessed flower to each new student. This initiation flower has great protective powers against visible (material) and invisible (psychic) dangers, and we usually advise people to take this flower—in its little wooden box—with them if they have to leave their home for more than two weeks. This blessed flower can also be used to heal people either from a distance, or by direct touch. This healing works on any level—for physical, mental, material or spiritual difficulties.

For distant healing, we should first meditate in front of our altar to clear our mind of any personal expectations, doubts or anxieties. Contrary to what many people believe, prayer and spiritual healing is not about telling God what to do! True healing is about being in a pure state of receptivity to His will, and offering to cooperate with it with total surrender and greatest love. For this, the mind must first be calmed and purified through the process of meditation. At the end of our meditation, we take the flower out of the box (but still in the handkerchief), hold it in the right hand, and feel the subtle vibration in the flower and in our right hand. At the same time, we think of the person who needs the healing in the top of our head and visualize them surrounded by the brilliant

radiant white light of God. We can do this several days in a row if the person is in a severe crisis.

If we know someone who is critically ill or dying in the hospital or in their house, we can go and visit them with our initiation flower. After meditating, we can place the flower (still in the handkerchief) on the person's fontanel after asking their permission to do so, and hold it there for a few minutes.

We can also lend them our flower and place it under their pillow during the night or tell them to hold it during the day. This will be tremendously helpful to them, as it will remove their fear and anxiety and allow them to take their next step, whether it is to recover their health or to go back to God, in great peace.

There is no greater service to God and humanity than to help them in moments of great crisis and especially at the time of transition towards the subtle realms. ❀



Only after the Last Tree
has been cut down,
Only after the Last River
has been poisoned,
Only after the Last Fish
has been caught,
Only then will you find that
Money Cannot Be Eaten.
- Cree Indian prophecy



A New Year Message

by Paramahansa Yogananda
from *Inner Culture* magazine,
January 1938

Our old tutor of last year has just passed away [Swami Shriyukteshwar Giri, 1855-1936]. Let us remember the joyous instructions and blissful experiences of the past year, and let us repeat them with greater intensity in the coming New Year. Let us forget the sorrows of the past and make up our minds not to bring them back in the coming New Year. With new determination and unflinching will, let us make up our mind to renew our life, our better habits, and our successes in the temple of the New Year.

Remember, no matter what our trials have been, or how discouraged we are, if we will make a continued effort to be better, we will find that, being made in the image of God, we are endowed with unlimited power that is much stronger than our worst trials. Let us make up our minds that we will win, focusing all our concentration on the ceaseless efforts to succeed, and we will surely be victorious. Remember that our past difficulties did not come to crush us but to strengthen our determination to use our limitless divine powers to succeed. God wants us to conquer the difficult tests of life and come back to His home of wisdom. Let us return in this New Year. ❀



Yoga and Meditation for Kids

by Swami Sarveshwarananda

The End of Innocence

Environment is stronger than willpower.

- Paramahansa Yogananda

Contrary to popular belief, stress is not just an adult thing. Children in Western societies today live an extremely stressful life—far more than ever before. Besides the traditional anxieties associated with finding their identity and being accepted by their peers, children face today a formidable barrage of new demands and confusing stimulations.

There are mounting school and academic pressures—young children being forced to take exams as early as age six or seven, being submitted to absurd loads of homework, and more and more frequently becoming victims of bullying and school violence. The situation at home is often not too rosy, with stressed-out parents and broken families ever on the rise. Playtime itself has become a major source of stress—violent video games, voyeuristic television shows, mindlessly competitive sports, and compulsive internet surfing or text messaging. Thanks to unscrupulous advertising and an immoral movie industry, the temptations to experiment with unhealthy and potentially life-long addictive behaviors are around every street and internet corner. Children's role models and authority figures are often not particularly inspiring either—foul-mouthed singers, drug-addicted sports figures, megalomaniac movie stars, self-absorbed fashionistas, rapacious businessmen, corrupt politicians, lying officials...

In a culture of ever-growing sophisticated seductiveness and manipulation, the images and noise of confusion are coming down fast and furious on these young unprotected minds. It is wise to remember in this respect that *the brain is the only organ in the body without a purging valve*: every sensory input is stored there permanently, and the brain can never be emptied—unlike our bowels,

bladders, kidneys, lungs, etc.

Yet we, adults, blame the children for being hyper-active, destructive, disrespectful, or depressed... whereas our daily business has become the quiet murdering of innocence. No generation has ever been so ruthlessly betrayed, abandoned, and demonized to boot!

If you Love your Children, Equip them Wisely

My people perish for lack of knowledge.

- Holy Bible, Hosea 4:6

If we truly love our children, we must equip them with the tools and resources to grow up safely and sanely in a hyper-stimulating society, particularly during adolescence. Modern education's obsession with teaching primarily money-making skills—namely science, business, and maths—is certainly not the place to look for developing strong, healthy, confident, balanced, and compassionate individuals. Religions are becoming more and more radicalized and are more concerned about proving that they are the "one true religion" rather than teaching the daily practice of moving in the presence of God. Science and technology have vastly increased our comfort and longevity, but also sped up our pace of living so much that we are increasingly turning to pills and mindless distractions to simply unwind a little. So where can a child turn to for finding peace and sanity in this world?

As all great spiritual masters have said, the answers are to be found *within*. This is why yoga and meditation are such an important practice to teach growing children, at any stage of their development.

What is the difference between yoga and meditation? None, really. Authentic yoga or meditation is a scientific technique to take our ordinary, fragmented consciousness and elevate it, step by step, into a perfect instrument of reflection of the Divine. For the sake of convention, we usually think of *yoga* as a set of physical and physiological tools to purify the body and nervous system, in order to prepare the mind for *meditation*.

The Benefits of Yoga and Meditation

Change yourself and you will change thousands.

- Paramahansa Yogananda

Yoga and meditation gives even very young children power over their thinking and their emotions, and by enhancing their self-understanding and self-acceptance, it helps them develop into intelligent and well-adapted youngsters who know how to resolve conflicts and problems peacefully, creatively, and compassionately.

In addition, innumerable scientific studies have proven that the regular practice of yoga and meditation bring at any age physical, mental, and spiritual benefits.

Physical and physiological benefits include lower blood pressure, slower heart rate, improved circulation, decreased oxygen consumption, increased amplitude and regularity of the brain's alpha (relaxed state) rhythms, change in the serotonin-melatonin balance in the brain (our neurological "on-off switch"), relaxed muscles, prevention of stress-related diseases (coronary problems, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, etc.)... among many others.

Emotional and mental benefits include a better ability to balance emotions; increased self-acceptance, self-esteem and confidence; improved quality of sleep; decrease of fear and anxieties; improved concentration and memory; sustained calmness and ability to deal with stress; abundant joy and gratefulness; improved awareness, creativity, and problem-solving faculties... to name but a few.

Spiritual benefits include understanding of one's real Self and the illusory nature of material-based reality; a growing connection with the Divine; taking responsibility for our own actions and evaluating consequences intelligently; a sense of direction and power; a greater comprehension of errors in ourselves and others, fostering tolerance and compassion; a better perception of the goodness in others; a growing desire to serve others; and, most importantly, a fundamental shift from the destructive "Me vs. Them" pattern to the more enlightened "Us together" model.

A Meditation Parable

As always, a metaphorical story explains subtle concepts much better than long discourses, so here is a little story for you and your children—the Prisoner and the Beetle.

Once upon a time, a disgraced courtier was imprisoned in the top cell of a tall tower. Weeks passed in desolation and despair, with no chance of royal pardon or escape in sight. One moonlit night, the prisoner heard a soft voice coming from the base of the tower. He peered through his window and saw an astonishing scene. His faithful wife was standing at the foot of the tower, engaged in the act of smearing honey on the antennae of a beetle. She then proceeded to fasten a silken thread to its body, and pointed the insect upward toward the tower window. Goaded by the sweet smell of honey, the beetle kept moving forward, crawling all the way up to the top window... and into the hands of the prisoner. Very carefully, he removed the silken thread and started to pull on it. After a while, he found that a length of sewing cotton was attached to the thread, and to that a heavy string, which itself was attached to a strong rope... by which he escaped and was reunited with his ingenious wife.

This Indian teaching tale unveils the subtlety of the meditation process. At first, meditation seems to bring in its train barely noticeable changes—as insignificant as a silken thread drawn slowly up a seemingly endless wall by a pitiful little creature. But through persistence and the sweet encouragement of the soul-honey, the silken thread later introduce us to more tangible results. And as the sewing cotton turns into string, then into cord, and finally into a strong rope, meditation gradually becomes the means of rediscovering our true freedom.

In the next issue, we will examine the general principles of meditation for children. ❀

In the body there is a flower—the soul, that never dies, that never dries and is ever luminous, ever fragrant, ever new, ever fresh.

- Baba Hariharananda

The Pilgrim's Process

At the moment of Creation, God created us as an image of His perfection. But just as a tea cup cannot contain the ocean, we could not hold this unlimited consciousness, and we shattered in multiple pieces, each fragment holding a seed of this Perfection. This is what the Christians fathers called being born with a "God-shaped hole", the Kabbalist Jews described as being a "broken vessel", or the Hopi Indians termed being "a piece of the great mirror fallen from the sky".

As soon as we incarnate and become conscious, we are driven to search the source of this Perfection, to make us whole again. This is what the Christians call *metanoia* (conversion from the false to the true), the Kabbalist Jews *tikkun olam* (mending the broken), the Muslims the *true jihad* (holy war against the *nafs*, the ego), the Hindus piercing the veil of *maya* (cosmic delusion), etc.

Our search takes on the form of a pilgrimage, in which we journey both inwardly and outwardly simultaneously. The outer journey takes us to places of holy power, *shakti*, which reconnect us with a long-lost sense of divine mystery and power. But this is only the minor pilgrimage. The major pilgrimage takes place within, as we move from lower states of consciousness to the highest fulfilment and bliss.

A pilgrimage connects the macrocosm with the microcosm. As the 11th century Sufi saint al-Ansari of Herat said in his *Invocations*,

"Know that the prophet built an external Kaaba

Of clay and water,

And an inner Kaaba in life and heart.

The outer Kaaba was built by Abraham, the holy;

The inner is sanctified by the glory of God Himself."

The Mahabharata Pilgrimage (September 2-22, 2006)

Swamiji now offers yearly storytelling spiritual pilgrimages in India, Europe, and the Americas to promote a better appreciation and understanding of various religious practices in the light of Kriya Yoga, and to offer an opportunity to deepen one's spiritual practice. A different theme pertaining to a particular religion is chosen each year.

In September 2006 we will retrace the steps of the Mahabharata heroes by visiting the holy mountains, caves, rivers and groves in the Himalayas where the action of this great Indian scripture took place, while absorbing through storytelling and meditation the deep metaphorical meaning of this epic battle. You can learn more about this pilgrimage on our website at

www.hariharananda.org/english/pilgrimages/pilgrimage_index.html

Swamiji's four-CD album *The Battle of Life: Metaphorical Interpretation of the Mahabharata in the light of Kriya Yoga* is available at

www.hariharananda.org/english/publications/audio/audio_index.html

News

Web

Baba Hariharananda has a new enhanced web page. Do come and visit it at www.hariharananda.org/english/who_we_are/baba/baba_index.html

India

Our schools and centers for poor children are progressing wonderfully, but we are facing many difficulties in our Haridwar open-air school in the jungle, working in a dangerous environment. Our top priority is therefore to purchase (or at least rent long-term) a small plot of land and construct a little building to house our classroom and office, so that our work can continue undisturbed.

South America

Thanks to the monthly contributions of a generous donor, the Arca do Amor of São Paulo can now hire two permanent staff members and rent its own facility in order to expand its outreach to adolescents at social risk. And the volunteers of the Arca do Amor in both Bogota and Lima are changing the lives of many little abandoned ones through positive influences and enormous love. God bless them all for their noble work.

Online Resources



The Hariharananda Mission West

All about Kriya Yoga and the lineage of masters, Swamiji's programs, publications, pilgrimages, spiritual training, and more...

www.hariharananda.org



The Storytelling Monk

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

www.storytellingmonk.org



The Ark of Love

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

www.arcadelamor.org

Recommended Links

Kiddie Records Weekly

A compilation of a large collection of old storytelling records for children from the 50's. For free download in MP3 audio format.

www.kiddierecords.com

Hermitary

If you find life too complex, take a refreshing dip in this pool of resources and reflections on hermits, solitude, silence, and simplicity.

www.hermitary.com

Stories of the Journey Home

Spiritual storytelling for both children and adults in audio format. Many are available for free download.

www.luminaia.com/stories/main.htm

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 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

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.

