



Sanatana Mitra

NOVEMBER 2009



RUDRASHIVANANDA.COM

Upcoming Events

Dec. 11 - 2nd Level Chakra Healing
Union City, CA

Dec. 20 - Kriya Initiation
Toronto, Canada

Jan. 16-17 - 2nd Level Kriya Init.
Union City, CA

Mindfulness

The mind in yoga is called manas and is our first level for experiencing the world through the senses. Manas is the sensory computer operating on the inputs from sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The ancients considered the mind to be a defining attribute for human beings – the first human is called Manu and humankind is called manava or the descendents of Manu.

In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna has said that the mind can be one's best friend or one's worst enemy. If one has no control over one's own mind, then there can be no worst enemy who will defeat every positive effort. However, if one has control over one's mind, then it becomes a powerful ally to achieve one's goals. Therefore, control of the mind is essential to one's well-being as well as to the achievement of spiritual goals.

People suffer from stress and tension caused by worry and anxiety which in turn are caused by an overactive and uncontrolled mind. People suffer from unhappiness due to fears and desires which are caused by an uncontrolled mind. If a person can control his mind, then he will be free from suffering.

There are many methods of controlling the mind – in fact all meditation

Continued on Page 3

Higher Consciousness for Peace

Spiritual seekers have certain definable goals generally in the order of liberation, freedom from suffering or Self-Realization – all of which would require a dramatic shift into higher strata of super-conscious states. How long the path will take is highly variable depending on the strength of practice, the power of the path, the karmic obstacles, and grace of the spiritual guide.

It is important to understand that the spiritual path is not one where you either win or lose and that there is a continuum of achievement. In fact I would say that it may be more important for world peace if the general population raised their consciousness by an order of magnitude than if only a few people achieved Self-Realization. Of course, if a few enlightened people became guides for the others, then the process

would be quickened tremendously.

The goal then becomes the uplifting of human consciousness. In the larger sense, this goal is the mission of great beings such as Babaji and his helpers. This may also be part of the drama to be played out in 2012 and for many more years to come.

From a practical point of view, even a little of the beginner's practice such as those of popular yoga postures can have a profound effect in the behavior of the practitioners. Awareness of one's body and mind helps us to understand better our reaction patterns and break-up childhood and cultural habit patterns – this leads to a greater openness and tolerance for the perspectives of others.

Meditation practice can help to control and overcome many emotional

Continued on Page 2

The Role of Yoga Philosophy

It is possible for a practitioner to take up a yogic discipline without any regard to the philosophical underpinnings of the particular path. What reason can be there for the seeker to learn more and investigate the philosophies that the yogic sages have taught?

The yogic path is long and arduous and many seekers embark on it full of enthusiasm generated by certain spiritual experiences and/or effects of a charismatic teacher. They expect that things will merrily hum along and that they will make progress by following instructions. However, before too long,

they come to the realization that progress is not consistent and they start having doubts as their subconscious compulsions re-assert themselves as well. In fact, the spiritual practice itself can awaken all sorts of samskaras or karmic compulsions, some even directly related to the path, the teachings or the teacher! Doubts can also be expanded by discussions with other students or seekers on different paths and many a seeker has fallen by the way-side due to insufficient preparation in yogic philosophy.

It is important to have a basic under-

Continued on Page 2

Higher Consciousness for Peace

(Continued from Page 1)

compulsions leading to healthier attitudes. Toxic emotions such as anger, fear and lust can be as easily transmitted as the common cold and lead to much greater damage, unless one is inoculated by mental control. So much of the world's ills have been due to uncontrolled emotions – genocides and wars could have been stopped if enough people refused to be caught up in them.

Proper breathing practice and control of life-force brings about better overall health and breaks all types of conditionings. The lack of energy leads to fatigue which in turn predisposes one to accept old thoughts and patterns – an unquestioning and lazy attitude – apathy that allows all types of negativity to continue. An abundance of life-force is

necessary for happiness.

Higher consciousness is all about greater awareness of one's thoughts, words and actions and the willingness to control them according to universal ethics and values.

If more people gave due consideration to their thoughts, there would be less pollution of the thought waves throughout the world – it is difficult for us to remain calm and positive when we are swimming in an ocean of negative thought waves. If more people started generating positive thoughts of love and compassion, this will counteract the thoughts of anger and hatred. If we can train more and more people to be calm and happy under adverse conditions – that is raising their conscious-

ness, then there will be less confrontation and more peace – it takes two sides to make a fight.

There are plenty of opportunities for those spiritual seekers on the path who have achieved a measure of self-control and emotional steadiness to help those around them to overcome intolerance, emotional turmoil, and mental laziness. It is not necessary to wait until one is Self-realized before participating in the uplifting of world consciousness. This does not mean that one should pronounce oneself a teacher or even Master before one's time but one can certainly put one's effort to good use without assuming lofty titles. This is the work for higher consciousness that will have a far-reaching effect in future generations.

The Role of Yoga Philosophy

(Continued from Page 1)

standing of the philosophy or metaphysics that underlie your path because this will help you to:

1. Navigate the path better – the philosophy provides an overview of the goal and objectives with interim signposts or experiences that can validate the path
2. Settle doubts about the efficacy of the path and to be able to explain it to yourself and others – this can help the practitioner to maintain faith in the path itself
3. Differentiate your chosen path from others both in terms of objectives and the theory underlying the practices

I do not advocate the study of yogic philosophy apart from a yogic practice as that would just lead to mental gymnastics without any basis for life-changing experience.

It is also to be noted that those practitioners who are on the Bhakti or de-

votional path do not normally feel the need for studying their philosophical foundation. Indeed, most bhakti Masters or teachers exhort their students to stay away from any intellectual discourse all together and give themselves up to the bhava or emotional experiences that come from their devotional chanting as the mind interferes with the possibility of ecstatic trance. One must follow the guidance of one's teachers and I would not advocate that they should abandon their rules. However, if one should become beset with doubts, then it may be time to do some research rather than abandon one's practice all together.

For most yogic practitioners, the study of yogic philosophy will be very beneficial to maintaining their yoga sadhana.

Babaji University Update

It is with great pleasure that we announce that we have secured the help of the eminent Sanskritist and philosopher, Professor Stephen Phillips as our curriculum advisor as well as visiting professor of yogic studies.

He is professor of philosophy and Asian studies at the University of Texas at Austin and has been visiting professor at the University of Hawaii and Jadavpur University in Kolkata. Professor Phillips is the author of six books including Epistemology of Perception and Yoga, Karma and Rebirth, as well as numerous academic papers and first-time translations of classical Sanskrit philosophical texts.

Mindfulness

(Continued from Page 1)

techniques are either focused on mind control or require a degree of control over mind.

Since the mind is distracted by external phenomena, the first stage would be to withdraw from external stimuli – which is why most meditation is done with the eyes closed and with mental attention drawn inward, focused on either a mental image, the breath or a part of the body.

The next stage to mind control is to develop concentration – this is where most of the effort is directed, as the mind tends to wander and is not focused on one point. Many years of effort may be needed in order to train the mind to

be one-pointed. It is a tiring and difficult practice, but once achieved will open up a whole new world of experiencing that was previously denied due to all the noise of dispersion.

The third stage is achieved when concentration becomes effortless – this occurs when the mind and the object of meditation comes closer together and when there is an interchange of between object and subject and the subject partakes of some part of the object and gains insight into it. This is properly called the stage of meditation.

When the meditation deepens further, the mind and the object become so absorbed that they become one – this is the unity consciousness.

Through these stages, the mind becomes controlled. However, along the way, many distractions occur. Even

when the mind is withdrawn from the external world in stage one, the mind becomes distracted by sub-conscious thoughts and memories and tend to pull the subject from the object, which is the reason for the difficulty in achieving a high degree of concentration. Perseverance is necessary.

Mindfulness is a state of awareness that is possible when one has achieved a high degree of concentration – it is practiced with the eyes open and the person interacting with the world. It would be very frustrating to try to practice this without first developing control of the mind. It is mindfulness which destroys all ego-centric behavior and lead to a harmonious and divine life free from sub-conscious compulsions.

Life Force Balancing Technique

There are five main pranas, or five aspects of the life-force energy in the body, and so there are five parts to this balancing technique - each part is repeated a number of times, and then one proceeds to the next part in the sequence. Then the sequence is reversed and each part is practiced for the same number of repetitions.

Although the pranayama is given as a sequence incorporating all the techniques, each can be performed by itself, if you feel the need to balance a particular vayu, or aspect of prana.

1. Prana Vayu

Inhale deeply, drawing energy from above and around the head, into the third-eye center, visualizing a ball of light concentrated there. Exhale through the third eye, spreading the life-force throughout the head, and the eyes, ears, nostrils, and the mouth. Life-force is brought in all around the head through the senses, purifying them. Repeat seven times.

Benefits: Revitalizes the brain and

helps against disorders of the nervous system. It is useful as treatment for sinus problems, head colds, and headaches.

2. Udana Vayu

Inhale deeply through the mouth and draw the life-force into the throat center. Exhale, chanting OM aloud, feeling the vibration expanding outward and upward. Repeat seven times.

Benefits: Increases vitality and improves self-expression. Helpful in treatment of sore throat.

3. Vyana Vayu

Inhale deeply through the heart center, while extending your arms to the sides and opening up the chest. The life-force energy is spiraling outwards. At the end of the inhalation, visualize the life-force expanding throughout the body and limbs. Exhale back into the heart center, visualizing all the life-force returning to the heart center, spiraling inwards. Repeat seven times.

Continued on Page 4

Don't Blame Divine Will

Recently I received an email from a spiritual seeker who had been initiated into Kriya Yoga. She wrote that after practicing for about two weeks she developed a nasty flu that made it impossible for her to do her sadhana for the last 6 weeks. Although she is now recovered, she feels that she will abandon her practice because it must be divine will that she stop Kriya - that the flu was a sign!

Although most people have not developed sufficiently to intuit Divine Will when necessary, these same people will not hesitate to ascribe to the inscrutable workings of this divine will any odd happenings that might support their own subconscious desires or fears. This mysterious divine will is used to support any decision to start or stop certain activities without regard to common sense or spiritual insight.

The ego is ever on the alert for opportunities to defeat any threatening

Continued on Page 4

Life Force Balancing Technique

(Continued from Page 3)

Benefits: Helpful in treating diseases of circulatory problems, especially lung and heart diseases.

4. Samana Vayu

Feel the navel center, and visualize the universal life-force flowing in there. Inhale deeply, bringing the universal life-force into the navel center, spiraling inwards. Feel the life-force as concentrated fire at the navel at the end of the inhalation. Exhale, spiraling

outward nourishing all the cells, organs and systems of the body. Repeat seven times.

Benefits: Helpful in treating digestive system disorders and diseases of the liver and gall-bladder.

5. Apana Vayu

This is best done in a standing posture. Feel the perineum and visualize the connection with the center of the earth. Inhale deeply, drawing the life-

force energy down to the root center at the perineum. Exhale from the perineum, down through the legs and feet, into the earth. Repeat seven times.

Benefits: Helpful in treating disorders of the reproduction and the excretory systems. Also useful for healing menstrual problems and sexual dysfunctions.

After practicing the sequence from steps 1 to 5, then reverse and practice from 5 to 1.

Don't Blame Divine Will

(Continued from Page 3)

activities such as spiritual practice – it is necessary to persevere in the face of such fears.

There are many reasons why seemingly negative events occur in one's life – most often it is in some way the workings of the law of karma – there is a cause relationship between what is happening now to something that one has done in the past. If Divine Will has anything to do with it, it would be at the level of the setting up of this universal law of karma and not at the specific level causing an event to occur. The spiritual seeker should understand that it is her own karma that is being worked out during the flu season and there is not really a sign to stop her spiritual practice.

However, this is not to say that the spiritual practice had nothing to do

with the karmic flu surfacing. It is true that one's practice can accelerate the working out of karmic issues – this is necessarily so since the karmic burden one has undertaken to work out in this specific life-time cannot be removed without any outward effect. The karma one is working out in this life-time is called prarabdha karma and will be accelerated by spiritual practice. It is possible to lighten the effects through the practice but not to entirely eliminate them. One must realize that the practice is eliminating that larger portion of karma that is called sanchita karma or the unripened /stored karma that would take effect in some other life-time.

If one stops one's practice because of karmic effects in this life-time, one will be doomed to suffer the karmic effects in future life-times. However, if one

perseveres in this life-time, then there is the possibility to remove future suffering completely or at least to some degree.

It is also important to keep in mind if one were to embark on an enterprise to help others such as a clinic for the poor of a particular place, there may be many obstacles that can come due to the karmic blocks from the population to be helped. This is not an indication to give up because one expects that if the divine wishes it to happen, it will come smoothly!

We do not know the will of the Divine, but we can be guided to do the right thing at the right time. However, even if we are acting according to the Divine Will, there may be many obstacles that need to be overcome – we still need to persevere and make our best effort and leave the result of success or failure up to the Divine.
