

KRIYA YOGA

*The hallmark of a Yogi is to withdraw into oneself –
like a caterpillar that encloses itself in a cocoon
to later emerge as a perfected butterfly. Yoga is an accepted gateway to
transcendental knowledge. It helps one intuit that, there is some law of nature
operating behind the scenes that prompts the mind to withdraw into itself
in order to attain perfection.*

~ Sri Swamiji

Sri Swamiji recently said, during the 2007 April Trinidad visit, about the amount of letters received from devotees telling of health and / or family problems. Sri Swamiji responded “Practice pranayama”. Then Sri Swamiji listed 3 practices for Datta devotees as sadhana: Kriya Yoga, Satsanga (bhajans), and Jai Hanuman.

How auspicious it is to practice pranayama at the feet of Hanumanta in Trinidad ashrama! Symbolically Hanuman represents the breath. He is the son of Pavana, the wind-god, (vayu). This is the very essence of prana. Whenever we want to increase vitality, we pray to Hanuman. Pranayama is the direct means to increase prana. This increased subtle energy calms the mind allowing meditation to spontaneously arise.

Sri Swamiji said,

*“all should deepen their understanding in the inner meaning of
Ramayama. The inner meaning is most important. Rama represents
Atman; Sita represents Buddhi; and Hanuman is prana”.*

Increasing prana, cleanses the mirror of the mind. The Buddhi shines knowledge forth. The Atman is realized.

Sri Swamiji has established Sri Hanuman in the form of Karya Siddhi at various temples. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Dattatreya Yoga Center has the renowned 85-foot Karya Siddhi Hanuman. Karya Siddhi means ‘fulfillment of work’.

To fulfill work or dharma, right action is essential. Kriya literally means “action.” Ideally, ‘work is worship’.

Kriya is derived from the root verb Kri. Kri means “to do,” that is, action. Karma is also derived from the same root, Kri. Therefore, karma literally means action or work.

From viewpoint of karma yoga, any action, ‘kri’, is done by ‘ya’, the Self. Thus, Kriya Yoga is the path of surrender. Feeling that all actions are performed through the body and mind by Isvara/Isvari. Witnessing the dance between Kri (nature or prakriti) and Ya (soul, or Purusha). Through abhyasa (spiritual

practices), including vegetarian diet, asana, pranayama and mudra, the mind becomes sattvic. In a calm mind, meditation emerges. Through practice and Satguru's Grace, meditation culminates in Samadhi, spiritual illumination.

The *Kathopanishad* says:

**adhyatma yogadhigamena devam
matvam dhiro harsasokau jahati**

“The intelligent man, having known the Effulgent One by means of Adhyatma Yoga (meditation on the inner self), abandons both joy and sorrow.”

Kriya Yoga has been practiced by saints, seers, and sages from ancient time. It is said that great yogis practiced and taught Kriya Yoga including the Rishis in the Upanishads, Sage Vasistha in the Yoga Vasistha, Sri Rama in the Ramayama, Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, Maharshi Patanjali in the Yogasutra.

Sri Swamiji has propagated Kriya Yoga for the benefit of all. Sri Swamiji is a Master of this ancient yoga science. Sri Dattatreya originally brought Kriya Yoga to Earth. Kriya Yoga has been transmitted through the centuries from guru to disciple, then recorded in the sacred texts. Adi Shankara in the Viveka Chudamani wrote three things are very rare in the world: to get a human birth, to have desire for liberation, and to get the company of a great soul and realized master. It is a blessing unsurpassed to learn Kriya Yoga as taught by our Beloved Datta Guru.

We can say every yoga can come under the umbrella of Kriya Yoga. Every action is kriya. One should aim to live in constant awareness in all actions. Kriya Yoga is a lifestyle. Every action we perform we will be accountable for. As for every action, there is a reaction. As there is an inhale for every exhale. In all yoga paths one must take right action. The higher manifestation of kriya is that action that aligns one more to their Divine nature. All yoga strives for this.

Just as there is night and day; there is pleasure and pain. Yet, the yogi transcends the pair of opposites. But for the afflicted mind, one needs a way out of this maya. Regular yoga sadhana gives peace to the mind.

“One must learn some spiritual techniques rather than chase Swamiji. Learn art of Kriya Yoga, meditation, listen to Swamiji's music, read Swamiji's books and DVDs. To improve your spiritual experience you must develop such practices. Some devotees do not think of Sadguru until old age. Such people fail to grasp the true essence of guru principle. The body gets weak with advancing age. The back hurts, the eyes fail and the hearing weakens. And the mind is corrupted with all the worldly worries. So how can they concentrate and pray. Don't waste time and begin now”.

~ Sri Swamiji

Kriya Yoga is often said to be the combined practices of hatha yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, karma yoga, mantra yoga, raja yoga...

Yoga is a state of being; yet, the word yoga also refers to the associated practices. To achieve yoga awareness, one must live a yoga lifestyle.

*"Kriya Yoga is both a science of meditation
and an art of living".*

~ Sri Swamiji

Over 2500 years ago, Maharishi Patanjali wrote "the Yoga Sûtras". This text on Raja Yoga is considered an authority in the field of yoga. It comprises 4 chapters. In Chapter 2, it includes the practices that result in right action.

In Verse 1, Kriya Yoga is defined:

Tapa swadhyaya iswara pranidhanani kriyâ yogah

*Self-discipline, self-study and devotion are yoga in the form
of action.*

Tapas comes from the Sanskrit word "tap" which means "to burn". Tapas is translated usually to mean austerity or self-discipline. Svadyaya is self-study. That is self-enquiry into the nature of the mind. Isvara pranidanah is the surrender all fruits of actions to the Divine.

As pointed out by *Vedanta* (the ultimate knowledge), the path to attain the goal of life is perfected by Yoga. The Yoga aphorisms of Maharshi Patanjali describe this exhaustively in a systematic way. The entire course of action - from its beginning as material action to its end as spiritual absorption - is Kriya Yoga.

The technique of Kriya Yoga is not new. Everyone unconsciously makes use of it in his or her day-to-day activities. Kriya Yoga descended from the Lord of Creation. According to the Markandeya Purana, the eternal Guru Dattatreya taught this mystic Kriya Yoga to Subramanyaswamy (also called Kartikeya). Vamadeva, Jadabharata, Sukadeva, Parasurama, Prahlada, Alarka and Kartaviryarjuna all became great Yogis. Through Kriya Yoga, they were established in the highest state.

The master of mind is like a king. The king can move freely throughout his kingdom with ordinary men, but an ordinary man cannot enter the king's palace. Similarly, the one-pointed mind of a great Yogi can travel through all planes.

The purpose of Kriya Yoga is to minimize afflictions of body and mind and improve single-pointed concentration. The afflictions are arrested in their seed form.

Kriya Yoga, as Maharshi Patanjali advocates, is the surest and most efficient means of Self Realization”.

~ Sri Swamiji

In Kriya Yoga the relationship between breath and mind is understood. The ancient yogis discovered the link between consciousness and energy, purusha and prakriti. Mind influences breath and vice-versa.

Through pranayama the mind becomes calm, peaceful. Mental clarity and all positive qualities flow forth. Breath control results in self-control. Understanding that consciousness can be expanded through breath mastery, is one of India's great contribution to the treasury of knowledge."

Kriya Yoga is the direct means to awaken the buddhi, spiritual intellect; thus, to experience viveka, discriminative knowledge of the Self. Through following this inner intuitive guidance, all actions reflect the Divine. Kriya Yoga is then realized as 'action' that propels one to a Divine Nature.

Knowing the greatness of Kriya Yoga, then why don't more practice? Most will give the reason of being too busy. Sri Swamiji says:

“Everybody is busy. Even an ant is busy. Go and see in a rail station. You see masses of people in motion. The whole universe is in motion, in action. So, we are very busy. But you find time to grow your egos, to abuse God, to make fun of others...

Just sit and think for a while. Think why are you born. Try to find the answer to that. Don't misuse your birth. Don't be enthusiastic about the support you get from Guru or God. It is limited and directly depends on your efforts and willingness to correct yourself. In the short time you spend with me, learn something which will help you in life. Don't leave this prayer hall with just Puja Prasad or Homa Prasad. Go with something more valuable. Imbibe the teachings of Swamiji in your life. Translate it in to real life. Use that great wealth judiciously and distribute to others”.

Sri Swamiji has given pranayama techniques that are simple to learn yet highly effective. Following the tradition of Kriya Yoga, the pranayama aid in purification of the nadis (pathways of prana). Physical and mental health is restored. Daily practice is the foundation and the key to success in yoga. For beginners, Sri

Swamiji says each practice session should be around 45 minutes. You can begin with 15-20 minutes then gradually increase the time length.

*"All that exists in the three heavens rests in the control of Prana.
As a mother her children, oh Prana, protect us and give us splendor
and wisdom."*

~ *Prashna Upanishad II.13*

I recall an amazing example Sri Swamiji once gave of controlling prana. A devotee asked how does Sri Swamiji perform the miracle of materializations. Sri Swamiji picked a rose that I had just given from it's stem. Then pulled back the petals showing us a Ganapati murti materializing. The murti grew as Sri Swamiji handed the rose to the devotee. Sri Swamiji said, *"To do this, one must control prana. Sun Moon breath can do this"*.

In the Kriya Yoga course, the classic pranayama Surya Chandra Nadi Bhedana pranayama is taught.

This breathing practice is one of the pranayama classics. According to hatÜha yoga, there are two major pranas, or life forces, called prana and apana. Prana allows the energy to flow in to nourish the body, and apana allows the energy to flow out to eliminate wastes. One brings in, and the other takes out. Therefore, these two pranas must be balanced, polarized in their functions, to insure a healthy body and mind. Exhaling activates apana, and inhaling activates prana. Sun Moon Breath also encourages this balance; left nostril breathing activates prana, and right nostril breathing activates apana.

Surya Candra is also known as nadi-shodhana, "purification of the nadis." Through regular practice of the Sun Moon Breath, the nadis are cleansed. The air flow becomes slow, smooth, and silent. This strengthens the thousands of nadis and allows for greater prana flow. Of these, the central nadis are most important for the flow of kundalini (spiritual energy).

The location of the central pathways is equivalent to the spinal canal. These major nadis are called susumna, vajra-, and citra-nadis; they represent the trinity. Fiery red in color, susumna is tamasika in comparison to the other two nadis. Vajra-nadi is rajasika, yellow and bright as the sun. Citra-nadi is sattvika and the color of the moon. The cakras are strung on this nadi. Located inside the trinity nadis, is brahma-nadi, the one supreme nadi that is beyond the gunas' triple energy. It is without attributes and colorless, yet it represents all divine qualities and light. From ajna cakra to sahasrara cakra, it is through this nadi that kundalini flows into brahma-randhra, the meeting place of shakti (energy) and shiva (pure consciousness).

On both sides of susumna are two other nadis called ida (mental energy) and pingala (vital energy). Ida begins on the left side of susumna and pingala on the right side. Ida and pingala spiral around susumna between each cakra until reaching the base of the skull. Ida travels to the right side of the head, and pingala travels to the left side. These two nadis cross again in the center of agna cakra then ida passes through the left nostril. Ida represents the moon: intuition, cooling, feminine energy. Pingala passes through the right nostril. Pingala represents the sun: rational, heating, masculine energy. When these two nadis become balanced, kundalini begins the transformational journey to the sahasrara cakra activating the energy centers and awakening higher consciousness. In referencing the sadhana for Datta Yoga, Sri Swamiji once said, *“Swamiji has five limbs: asana, pranayama, meditation, music, and pujas. It isn’t enough just to listen to the music. You need all five limbs”*.

We are blessed with the Kriya yoga sadhana as taught by Sri Swamiji .We have everything needed to proceed on the inner journey. Like a bird has two wings to fly, a disciple must have the two wings of self-effort and Grace to experience Spiritual Illumination.

“Yoga is the oldest and most precious heritage of the Indian culture. It is universally accepted as a system of philosophical thought, practical discipline and a means to Self Realization. Therefore, Yoga is the perpetual source of intuitive knowledge, culminating in the direct experience of the Self (unity) amidst seeming plurality”.

~ Sri Swamiji