

Yoga Swami Svatmarama. Hatha yoga pradipika

Yoga Swami Svatmarama

HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA

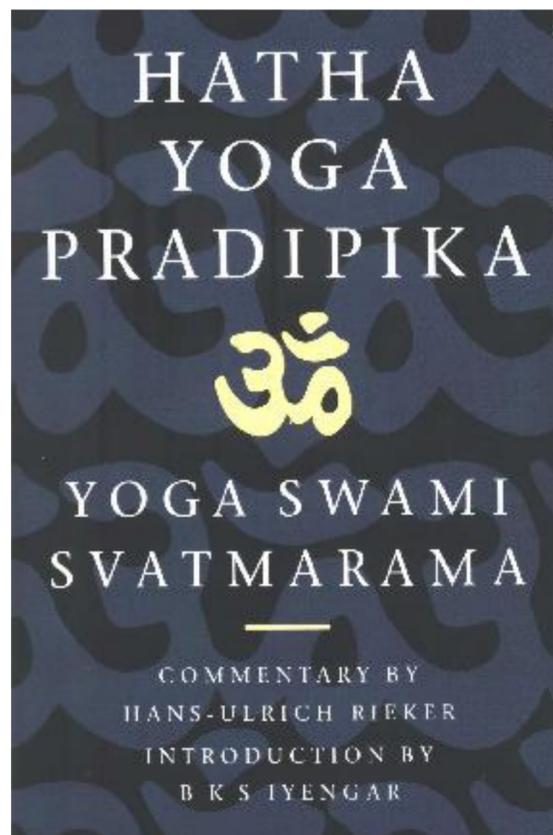
Foreword by B K S Iyengar

Commentary by Hans Ulrich Rieker Translated by Elsy Becherer

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FOREWORD by B K S Iyengar

The *Hatha yoga pradipika* of Svamarama is one of the most important yoga texts, and Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary have long been

Hatha yoga, or hatha vidya (the science of hatha yoga) is commonly misunderstood and misrepresented as being simply a physical culture, divorced from

We are caught up in emotions like lust (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), infatuation (*moha*), pride (*ynadha*) and malice (*matsarya*). Hatha yoga

Mind

Man is known as *manava* (human), as he is descended from Manu, the father of mankind who is said to be the son of Brahma, the Creator of the world.

Manas means mind, intellect, thought, design, purpose and will. It is the internal organiser of the senses of perception and the organs of action,

Self. Man is graced with this special sense so that he can enjoy the pleasures of the world, or seek emancipation and freedom (moksa) from worldly concerns.

Knowledge

Knowledge means acquaintance with facts, truth or principles by study or investigation. The mind, which is endowed with the faculty of discrimination,

Knowledge (*jnana*) is of two types: *laukilfa jnana*, which concerns matters of the world, and *vaidika jnana*, the knowledge of the Self (relating to the

Aims of Life

The sages of old discovered the means for the betterment of life and called them aims or *purusharthas*. They are duty (*dharma*), the acquisition of wealth,

Dharma, artha and kama are important in matters of worldly life. Dharma and moksa should be followed judiciously if they are to lead to Self-realisation.

Patanjali, at the end of the *Yoga Sutras*, concludes that the practice of yoga frees a yogi from the aims of life and the qualities of nature (*gunas*).

Health and Harmony

To acquire knowledge--whether mundane or spiritual--bodily health, mental poise, clarity and maturity of intelligence are essential.

Health begets happiness and inspires one to further one's knowledge of the world and of the Self. Health means perfect harmony in our respiratory, digestive,

Afflictions

Human beings are subject to afflictions of three types: physical, mental and spiritual (*adhyatmika*, *adhidaivika* and *adhibhautika*). Afflictions arise from

Hatha Yoga or Hatha Vidya

Hatha means to stick fast, to be devoted and to hold closely or firmly. Yoga means to unite, to associate, to yoke and to join. It also means zeal, energy,

The Goddess Parvati, the wife of Lord Siva, approached her Lord-- the seed of all knowledge--for guidance to ease the suffering of humanity. Lord Siva

On receiving yogic knowledge from Siva, Parvati imparted it to Brahma, who taught it to his children born of his own will, the sages such as Narada,

Svaramarama who, it is thought, lived between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. The Pradipika has thus been referred to as a nebrively recent addition

At the very beginning of his treatise, in verses 4-9, Svaramarama invokes the names of many of these sages who came before him and who practised and

If Patanjali, in the *Yoga Sutras*, codified the eight limbs of yoga (*astanga yoga*), Svaramarama did the same for hatha yoga. If the former is a scholar,

Because Svātmarama's treatise incorporated ideas from the *Yoga Sūtras*, the *Yoga Upanisads*, the *Purānas*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and other scriptures, do

It should be realised that the *Hatha yoga prādīpikā* is a major treatise with practical guidelines. It takes the practitioner from the culture of the

The first *Sloka* (verse) of the book reads: "Reverence to Siva, the Lord of Yoga, who taught Parvati hatha wisdom as the first step to the pinnacle

Hatha means willpower, resoluteness and perseverance; and *Hatha yoga* is the path that develops these qualities and leads one, towards emancipation.

with prakṛti, consciousness with the soul, the sun with the moon, and prāna with apāna.

The Hatha Yoga Prādīpikā

The Prādīpikā is divided into four parts. The first explains *yamas* (restraints on behaviour), *niyamas* (observances), *asanas* (posture) and food. The

In all, the text contains 390 verses (*ślokas*). Out of these, about forty deal with asanas, approximately one hundred and ten with prānyama, one hu

Asanas

The text begins with asanas as the first step in hatha yoga. For this reason it has been referred to as six-limbed yoga (*sadāṅga yoga*) as opposed to

He does speak of non-violence, truthfulness, non-covetousness, continence, forbearance, fortitude, compassion, straightforwardness, moderation in f

It is said that there are many asanas as there are living species: 840,000. That means the muscles and joints can flex, extend and rotate in seven

Yogis were in constant contact with nature and they were searching for natural remedies to combat afflictions. In their search, they discovered hu

Asanas are not just physical exercises: they have biochemical, psycho-physiological and psycho-spiritual effects. The cells of the body have their o

The commentary *Jyotsna*¹ of Sri Brahmananda clearly and beautifully sums up the effect of asanas. He says: "the body is full of inertia (*tamasic*), t

Patanjali, too, states that perfection in asanas brings concord between body, mind and soul. When asanas are performed with the interpenetration of

¹ The *Hatha yoga prādīpikā* of Svātmaraṭma (with the commentary *Jyotsna* of Brahma-nanda) Adyar library and Research Centre, The Theosophical Society

Prānyama

Part Two is devoted mainly to prānyama and its techniques. Prānyama means *prāna vṛtti nirodha* or restraint of the breath, which is by nature unstr

Prānyama flushes away the toxins and rectifies disturbances of the humours, wind (*vata*), bile (*pitta*) and phlegm (*kapha*).

All the yoga texts, including Patanjali's, are emphatic in their view that one must gain perfection in asanas before practising prānyama. This poi

Asanas, important though they are for the health and balance of the body, have a deeper purpose: to diffuse the consciousness uniformly throughout t

Prāna

Prāna is an auto-energising force. The inbreath fans and fuses the two opposing elements of nature--fire and water--so that a new, bioelectrical en

Prānyama stores prāna in the seven energy chambers, or *chakras*, of the spine, so it can be discharged as and when necessary to deal with the upheav

Patanjali states that "mastery in prānyama removes the veil that covers the lamp of intelligence and heralds the dawn of wisdom."

Svatmarama explains various types of pranayamas and their effects, but cautions that just as a trainer of lions, tigers or elephants studies their

Bandhas and Mudras

Bandhas and mudras are dealt with in Part Three. Bandha means lock and mudra means seal. The human system has many apertures or outlets. By locking

Mudras and bandhas act as safety valves in the human system. Asanas act in a similar way. All three help to suspend the fluctuations of the mind, i

Samadhi

Samadhi, the subject of Part Four, is the subjective science of liberation, the experience of unalloyed bliss. Before discussing Samadhi, we need t

Consciousness is a sprout from the Self, like a seedling from a seed. As a branch of a tree is covered by bark, so the consciousness is enveloped b

has been steadied, flows rhythmically in and out in a single channel. Svاتمarama, after watchful study of the mind and breath, says that whether th

Just as water mixed with milk appears as milk, energy (prana) united with consciousness becomes consciousness. So hatha yoga texts emphasise the re

Svatmarama says that through samadhi, the mind dissolves in the consciousness; the consciousness in cosmic intelligence; cosmic intelligence in nat

The moment the consciousness, the ego, the intelligence and the mind are quietened, the Self, which is the king of these, surfaces and reflects on

Caution

Hatha yoga practices bring certain powers (such as clairvoyance and clairaudience) called *siddhis*, about which Svاتمarama cautions the aspirant, If

Svatmarama says that practice has to be done without thinking of its fruits, but with steadfast attention, living a chaste life and moderation of f

Hans-Ulrich Rieker presents Indian thoughts in Western terms so that people can understand them with less difficulty. I am glad to note that he ask

Hans-Ulrich Rieker's explanation of the mystical terms *nada*, *bindu* and *kala* is praiseworthy. Nada means vibration or sound, bindu is a dot or a see

Hans-Ulrich Rieker is to be commended for the accuracy of his representation of the original text as well as the helpfulness and clarity of his com

B K S lyengar December 1991

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

in Indian philosophy it is generally understood that hatha yoga is one distinct path to liberation and raja yoga another. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* show

The slokas of this ancient classical text are presented in an extremely terse and often highly symbolic language, which makes them practically un-

This is a faithful translation of the original German text, *das klassische Yoga-Lehrbuch Indiens*. It is complete with all the valuable and elucidat

Questions will no doubt arise about the presentation of the slokas in a retranslation of the Sanskrit from the German into English. This objection

I wish to thank David and Debby, whose enthusiasm and valuable suggestions constantly sustained my efforts.

E.B.

INTRODUCTION

Is it really worth while for the average reader to read a scholarly classic, a book that has been pulled off a dusty shelf and translated into a mo

Our endeavor here is not so much to enrich science as to enrich ourselves; and he who enriches his self, his inner Self, does he not also enrich th

Here science has made a mysterious text available to us: the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, by Yoga Swami Svatmarama. And we shall try together to find hidd

In order to achieve this, it is necessary that we pretend to know as little about ourselves as a newborn babe. Of course, modern science has provid

really did have no problems. Unfortunately, we do have them, both with our surroundings and with ourselves. When one of these problems becomes seri

It is encouraging that this natural attitude is not as presumptuous as it may seem. We really do not have to adopt the wisdom of others; we have ou

But since evidently nothing is more attractive than to confound the words of great masters and present them according to one's own taste, whole lib

Well, we might ask, were these people completely blind? Let us look at the dictionaries and compare. Philologically, both are right--the old transl

Now let us imagine what would happen--and it happens constantly--in such languages as Chinese or Sanskrit, where one word may have twenty different

How does it stand with our text? The man who wrote it was an authority, a yogi of the highest achievements, as can be surmised by his name; the wor

Neumann: Is the present translation authentic? This translation of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and my commentary on it were not done at a desk, but were,

But we should not be tempted to know better, to judge, or to assume that it is nonsense. Nothing is more damaging than prejudice. It is a thousand

However, he who wants to read this book with profit, yet without starting to practice after the first few pages, should constantly try to bear in m

Some will now say that I seem to think that I am the first one ever to speak about yoga, while they have known for some time how to evaluate the di

I imagine that I know a little about yoga, but when I stand before a master in India I become very quiet and humble. Forgetting that I know a littl

Here a new problem arises: the quest for a guru, which has now almost become a fad. And simultaneously another question, essential for Western stud

But we should talk about real gurus. Every human being yearns for the fulfillment of his most secret desires. Some, in order to be happy, seek noth

In reality things are a bit different, however. Our main problem at first is not to find the guru to lead the ignorant student on a spiritual aprom

To prepare ourselves for a guru means self-discipline. In this sense, every sentence, even from the simplest book, has power to teach, if it happen

Those who expect an open door that they can enter without knocking may learn a great deal, but they will never reach the decisive knowledge. Only h

It is not for the sake of mystery mongering that the highest teachings are as secret now as they have ever been. Were they to be given out indiscriminately,

What does the guru really do? One readily imagines the student sitting day and night at the feet of the guru, being showered with secret teachings.

What actually does happen? Let us take a seeker who does not yet quite know what in the deepest sense is at stake, nor has he any idea how to shape his life.

Were it now as we would like to imagine, then by chance he would fall into the hands of a yoga teacher. Though chance has no place in yoga, it *is* likely to happen.

Usually, however, it happens that the student "accidentally" hears that somewhere there is a great saint. His teacher confirms this rumor. The student is disappointed.

It is the fault of the teacher. He wants to leave. His teacher has no objection, so he goes. The saint does not deign even to look at him. Impressed by the saint's indifference,

What has happened here? Why does it seem so strange? First of all, let us discard the notion that the master did not heed the importunate student. The student is the one who is at fault.

And the sentence? It contains--mostly in the form of a categorical imperative---the decisive wisdom which is to be the student's absolute leitmotiv.

When we look at some of these sentences we are likely to be a little shocked by their apparent meaninglessness" "simplicity and exclaim: "What? Such a simple sentence?"

In an easy and simple sentence we can test the effectiveness of such an approach. For one week ask yourself after everything you have done: "Was this the right thing to do?"

The guru knows intuitively what we most urgently need. But then he does not tell us directly. He lets us find out for ourselves, for only then are we likely to be receptive.

the most devoted student rebellious. No matter how profound may be the teachings of a Buddha, a Christ, a Lao-tzu, a Mohammed, only what we discover for ourselves is of value.

My guru in kundalini yoga is also a man of great learning in the shastras. One day I asked him for the meaning of certain symbols which seemed to me to be of great importance.

When the time came, immediately after initiation I again asked the same question. "Meditate as I have told you before. Then you will experience." I was told to meditate on the symbols.

When the first guru has fulfilled his psychological aim and his "magic formula" has achieved its effect, the next guru, the yoga master (who is usually a man of great learning), begins to teach.

But here too it is not quite so simple. Not everything has equal value for everybody who hears. For example, a person wants to learn how to drive, another person wants to learn how to play chess.

As we will see from our text, what the West understands as yoga is simply a technique to keep the motor in good condition. This is eminently important for the modern man.

So let us begin to read *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by Yoga Swami Svamarama. Put aside all your Western knowledge and your prejudice, and do what yoga masters have done for centuries.

PART ONE

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

THE PREREQUISITES

(1) *Reverence to Siva the Lord of Yoga, who taught [his wife] Parvati hatha wisdom as the first step to the pinnacle of raja yoga.*

It is a good practice to evoke a divine power before beginning serious work. We may call it Siva (the Benevolent) or God or Ganesa (*gana* == legions).

(2) Having thus solemnly saluted his master. Yogi Svamarama now presents hatha vidya [vidya = wisdom] solely and exclusively for the attainment of

Now it can begin--and it begins with an admonition. The classical commentary, at times so tediously wordy, here has an important message: "solely f

The upper delimitation needs a little more elucidation. As we will soon and often hear, the real goal of a yogi is to become a siddha. A siddha, a

If in India, even with great masters, one so seldom has a chance to witness the miracles that these siddhas have the powers to perform, it is simpl

One does not necessarily have to believe such things. You may put this down to the fabulous imagination of the East, and say so. The yogi does not

The deeper purpose of the siddhis is something else. Through the developing forces the student recognizes what stage of evolution he has reached. C

"Siddhis," my guru told me, "are not the aim of our work. We want to become siddhas in order to enjoy the realization and perfection of a siddha, n

(3) For those who wander in the darkness of conflicting creeds [and philosophies], unable to reach to the heights of raja yoga [self-knowledge and

Raja yoga, the royal yoga¹ is a goal that many strive to reach without even being aware of it, without having the slightest inkling of yoga. What e

For the student of Indian wisdom this reference to Faust presents an especially interesting parallel. Goethe speaks here of creative power and of s

(4-9) Goraksha and Matsyendra were masters of hatha vidya, and by their grace Yogi Svamarama learned it. Siva, Matsyendra, Shabara, Anandabhairav

A daring statement: after the enumeration of 33 masters of hatha vidya who have illuminated the ages, to claim that they are still roaming through

We have already spoken of the siddhis, and here it is specifically stated that these masters were siddhas. They reached what so many covet, "eterna

1. The translation of the term "raja yoga" as "royal yoga" is exoteric. Esoterically it is "the yoga of radiating light," for "raja" can also mean

yogi has no birth certificate, and it seems strange that one can state that he is exactly 250 years old, while his younger colleagues do not know w

For us time is inseparable from the clock, but no one has ever succeeded in really defining time. It is impossible--because time does not exist out

(10) [Therefore] hatha yoga is a refuge for all those who are scorched by the three fires. To those who practice yoga, hatha yoga is like the torto

These three fires are well known to us; they are the fire of self-created suffering; the fire of suffering through higher powers; and the fire of s

Nobody can eliminate from this world the influences that create such sufferings. What we can and should do is to prepare the physical-mental-spirit

Sufferings are unfulfilled desires. The realization of these desires depends not only on ourselves, but is subject primarily to external influences

For this I am dependent on my own power as against the opposing forces. And we always desire something, even if it is the desire for the happiness

Now we are on the track of our idea: to be desirelessly happy means to want nothing, to have no needs, to be happy with oneself and the given condi

This is by no means a state of apathy, devoid of the dynamics of natural activities. On the contrary, our endeavors will no longer be whipped by pa

As to the symbolism of the tortoise, this is a meaningful legend which we will encounter later and which will accompany us throughout the whole bo

(11) A yogi who is desirous of developing siddhis should keep the hatha yoga strictly secret, for only then will he have success. All his efforts w

Physical exercises are nothing shameful, and they are fun; but practiced on a highway they become insanity. "When you pray, go into a room by yours

(12) *The student of hatha yoga should practice in a solitary place, in a temple or a hermitage, an arrow shot away from rocks, water, and fire. The*

Here we have the first great problem, larger perhaps than that of the siddhis: to find a quiet spot, undisturbed and safe. Predatory animals, earth

However, it is not entirely impossible to create a hermitage under modern conditions. Perhaps there is a quiet attic, away from the attractions of

(13) *The hermitage should have a small door and no windows. It should be level with the ground and have no holes in the wall. [It should be] neithe*

Do not despair! I have seen many hermitages that conformed in only a few points to the ideal. Some had holes in the walls and most of them were lack

(14) *Seated in such a place, the yogi should free his mind from all distracting thoughts and practice yoga as instructed by his guru.*

Our keenest weapon, and often our only salvation, is our thought power. If your thought is open, so is the chance of success; if it is slow and lim

Must men be like this? Evidently, if they wish to succeed. But what is success? Nothing against success--which, after all, is the foundation of a "

There is a different way. One of the most remarkable men of our time, and by no means a pious man, swears by yoga. Every morning Pandit Nehru, the

Harmony: the key word, the all-important. There is no objection to the search for success as long as the harmony of life is not disturbed. No need

How does harmony come about? The very question proves that this fundamental law of life is becoming more and more a myth as we are turned more and

(15) *The yoga forces are dissipated by too much eating, heavy physical labor, too much talk, the observances of [ascetic] vows, [promiscuous] compa*

Here we have the disharmonies of everyday life, and not even the great ones. Not distrust, not rudeness, not lack of consideration, not anger and d

The yogi never quite fills his stomach; the executive always does. The yogi is healthy; the executive has ailments. Harmony versus disharmony.

(16) *Success depends on a cheerful disposition, perseverance, courage, self-knowledge, unshakable faith in the word of the guru, and the avoidance*

Again the magic word of our time: success. And with it even a formula. Nothing about overtime, or night work, and "you must . . ." Not even a word

A cheerful disposition is incompatible with executive ulcers. Perseverance! That sounds promising. But the keynote is harmony, and the perseverance

But don't forget that yoga has not yet begun. We are slating here only the minimal prerequisites without which any attempt at practice would be sen

Yoga practice, regardless of the system we follow, has a psychological depth effect. One exercise goes in this direction, another in that. Often th

Western science too is aware of the inseparable interrelation between body, soul, and mind. A bit of iodine, adrenaline, or cortisone will change o

If a certain practice hits something unhealthy (an asana can touch on an organic illness, a deep meditation on some mental suffering), then the res

One thing is certain: these preliminary chapters are the most important part of the book. He who disregards them should certainly consider yoga dan

(17a) *Not to cause suffering to any living being; to speak the truth; not to take what belongs to others; to practice continence; to develop compas*

Thus equipped one can venture to take the first step into the wonderland of one's own self. You do not have to take all the rules literally, but yo

in Japan there are physicians who kick the patient in the back, twist his neck, or simply give him a heavy slap on the shoulder, and the patient feels

These are not medicine men at work. Here we have full-fledged physicians who master an art--that nobody in the West can understand? These times have

Thus too it is with acupuncture. We now have theses on the subject, as well as practicing Western physicians. The third example (Ceylon) too will not

We want to study the following chapters on asanas and their psycho-physical background with this in mind.

"Why so many words?" some will ask. "Asanas are physical exercises." And in a sense he is right.

"Nonsense," another will say, "all these senseless contortions." And in a sense he too is right.

A third will consider asanas a practice that nobody can quite understand. Right too.

A fourth one stands thoughtfully in a corner. "I will learn to understand the inner connections. I have studied medicine and will soon find out what

Each of the first three critics acknowledged a certain positive aspect of the practice. The first speaks of gymnastics and expects no more than the

Nor should he who speaks of meaningless contortions be condemned. Perhaps he is right. For who is capable of explaining the internal relationships?

The fourth is the dangerous one, for he swears by his intellectual knowledge alone. He has studied, he is perfect, he cannot err. (And imagine him

Nobody will claim that our knowledge acquired through the centuries is wrong. No, it is completely right, but utterly incomplete because it is so

"Well," he will say if he is judicious, "I admit this, but we must have a certain frame of reference. It is quite clear that chakras are nerve centers

This phrase has discredited yoga with the intellectuals. But let us look at our lives. Is life always logical? Where is the logic of the scientist

When we seem to detect an analogy between a certain concept in yoga and a Western scientific term we must at once deny ourselves all further invest

Although we know very little about the central nervous system and the glands, we do know enough to gauge their effects. But what we can learn about

It is characteristic that the tantric Buddhism of Tibet teaches that the yogi has to create the chakras at the relevant places in his body. They are

But we have not yet come to these strange things. First now to the "gymnastics" of hatha yoga. Even here we should deny ourselves any profound spec

In any event, whether or not certain pranayamas (breathing exercises) regulate the oxygen content of our blood is none of our concern. What is impo

Therefore, Western science, despite its undisputed merits, will be neglected in the following chapters, in favor of that ancient science which is t

2. "At the borderline of logic science stops, but not nature, which blossoms there where no theory has as yet penetrated" (C. G. Jung, *The Psychology*

only in relation to yoga, but also in relation to the presuppositions of yoga.

The art of healing, like all else truly Indian, is based on the Vedas, the oldest book of humanity. Everything that concerns medical theory in the

Although it is not possible to summarize this gigantic work, which is still in practical use in India today, much less give a survey of the wealth

The teaching states that there are three dominant forces in man. and accordingly three main sources of illness: vata, pitta, and kapha. The usual t

The three terms encompass all physiological functions of the human body, and their imbalance causes not only illness but also susceptibility to con

Vata

It is true that this word means "wind" literally. But more important is the root *va*, movement. To quote the *Charaka Samhita*: "Vata is the source of

Some of the illnesses due to the influence of vata are: rheumatism, dislocations, lameness, cramps, stitfness of limbs, peristaltic irregularities,

Pitta

This can be translated as "gall," but here it implies rather that which is also expressed by the word gall: temperament. But this again only in a l

Kapha

This word is composed of two roots: *ka*== "water," and *pha*, which refers to the process of biological evolution. And since we know that the body is

"Kapha is the nectar [soma]. It is the fertile water for the play of life; it is living fluid, the protoplasm that sustains all life processes; it

"No pain without vata (the stream of life), no inflammation without pitta (the fire of life), no swellings without kapha (the fluid of life)" This

Naturally the ancient Indian art of healing is not exhausted by these three main terms. On the contrary, this is only the beginning. For us, howeve

We must not forget that these three "doshas" have a material-bodily, as well as an ethereal and an abstract-spiritual aspect. Thus when later on we

For the Indian there is one straight path through the universe and situated on this path are all the cities of the world: medicine, philosophy, mat

So let us start by looking at yoga with a new physiological understanding. Not so much to relearn, but to understand that there is wisdom in things

CHAPTER 3

THE ASANAS

(17b) *Asanas are spoken of first, being the first stage of hatha yoga. So one should practice the asanas, which give [the yogi] strength, keep him*

Our concern is not yet with raja yoga and its mysteries. Let us first concentrate on strength, health, and lithencss of body. Much of this will be

(18) *I shall now proceed to impart some of the asanas that were adopted by such wise men as Vasishtha, and practiced by yogis like Matsyendra.*

(19) *Sitting straight on level ground, squeeze both feet between calves and thighs [of the opposite legs]. This is svastikasana. [See*

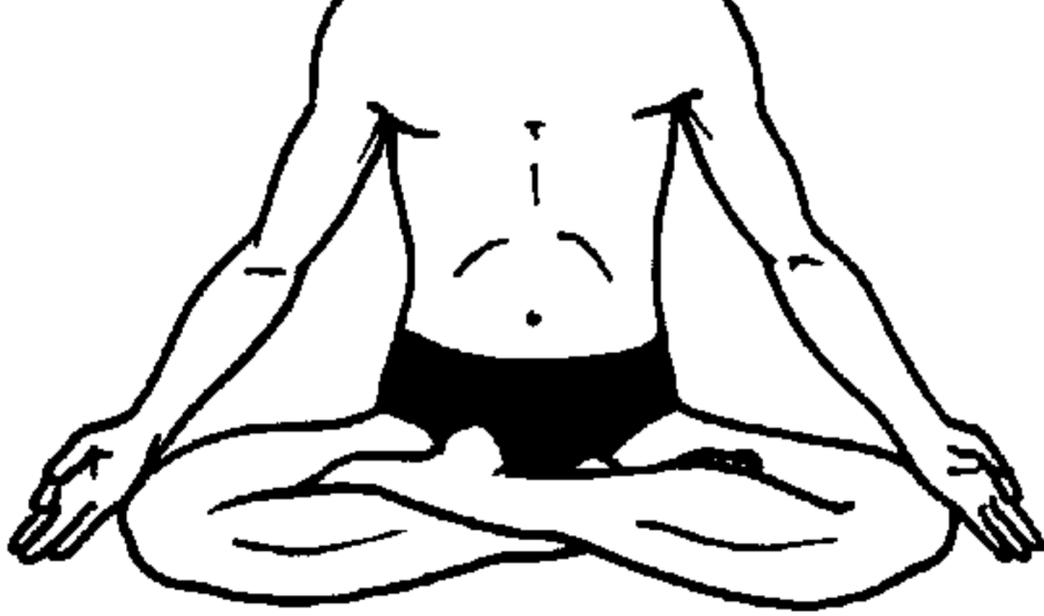


FIGURE 1

[Figure 1.](#)]

(20) Place the right foot next to the left buttock and the left foot next to the right buttock. This is gomukhasana, and looks like the mouth of a

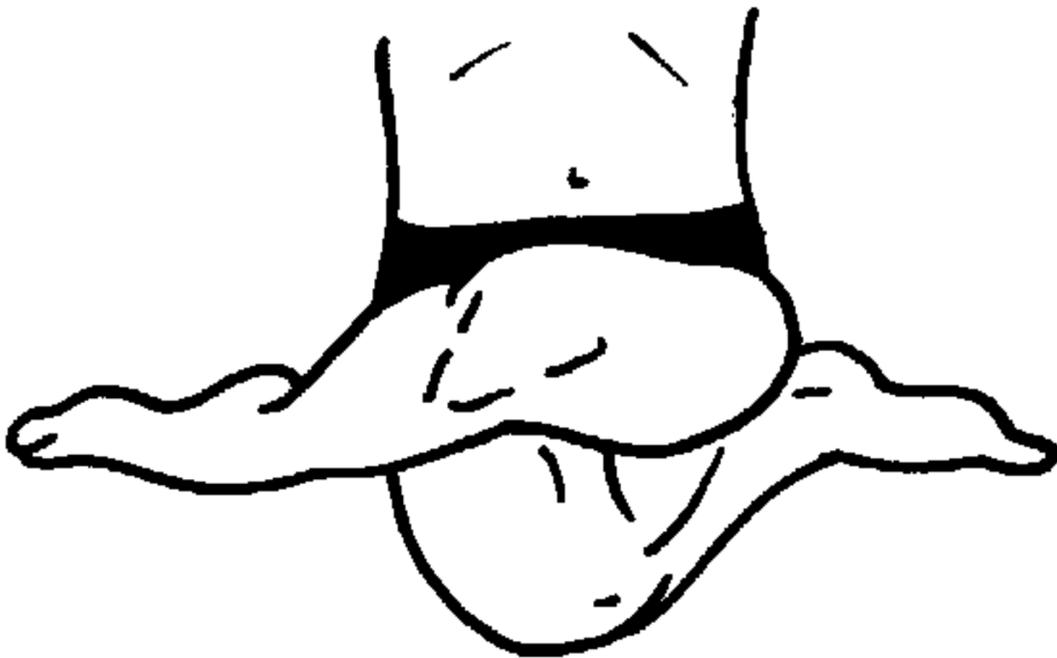


FIGURE 2

[Figure 2.](#)]

(21) Place one foot upon the other thigh and the other foot below the opposite thigh. This is virasana. [See

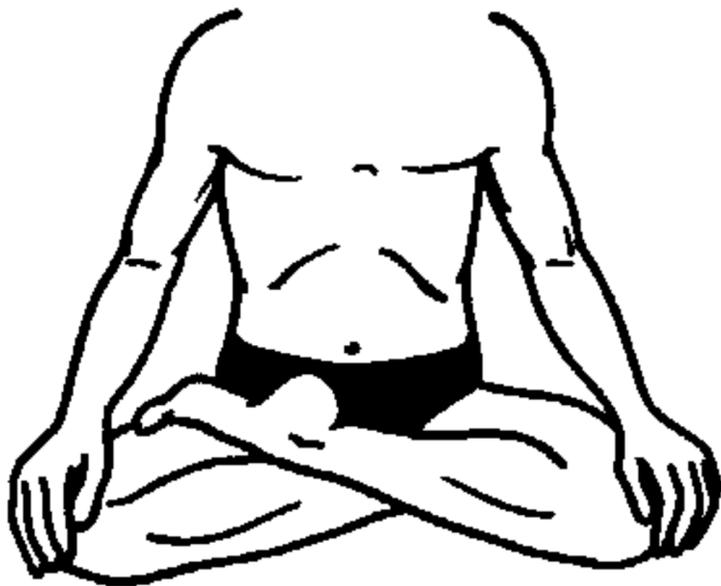


FIGURE 3

[Figure 3.](#)]

In the last three phrases we simply have variations of sitting crosslegged as has been customary in India for thousands of years. These asanas in t

(22) Press the anus firmly with crossed feet and sit thus. But do it with care. This is kurmasana.

Here we might look for a deeper meaning, since the posture does not really bear any characteristics of gymnastics. We cannot yet understand the sig

(23) Assuming the lotus posture, insert the hands between the thighs and calves. Put the hands firmly on the ground and raise the body up. This is

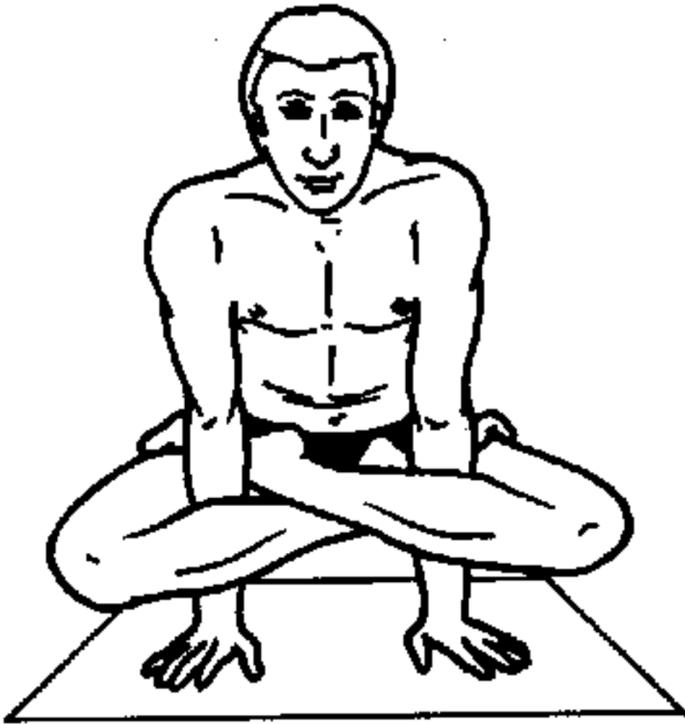


FIGURE 4

[Figure 4.](#)]

The lotus posture has not yet been mentioned: the feet are placed crosswise on the opposite thighs, as close to the body as possible. Push the hands

Here we have what clearly seems a gymnastic exercise. Yet what is involved is something quite different. Much later we will learn that to "raise the

(24) Assuming the [above-mentioned] kukkutasana posture, put both arms around your neck and remain raised like a tortoise [with the back touching t

Here the gymnastic character is evident; in fact it seems so exaggeratedly acrobatic that we wonder whether this is less than gymnastics--or more?

So far we have encountered the tortoise three times. First in No. 10: "To those who practice yoga, hatha yoga is like the tortoise that carries the

"Make peace with the demons," he urged them, "and churn with their help the nectar of immortality. The divine alone is as powerless as the earthly

So together the sworn enemies took the mountain Mandara, the backbone of the universe, wound around it the serpent Vasuki in three and one-half tur

But soon the mountain became too heavy for the diligent ones, and slowly it sank lower and lower. Then Vishnu transformed himself into a tortoise,

Practically every word in this legend is the expression of a deep symbolism, much of which will be clarified in the course of our study and practic

Upon this "axis of the [human] universe" we exert pressure in kurmasana, so that the combined forces of the divine (subconscious) and the earthly (

(25) Grasp both toes with the hands [left with left, right with right], keep one leg straight and draw the other to the ear as you would the string

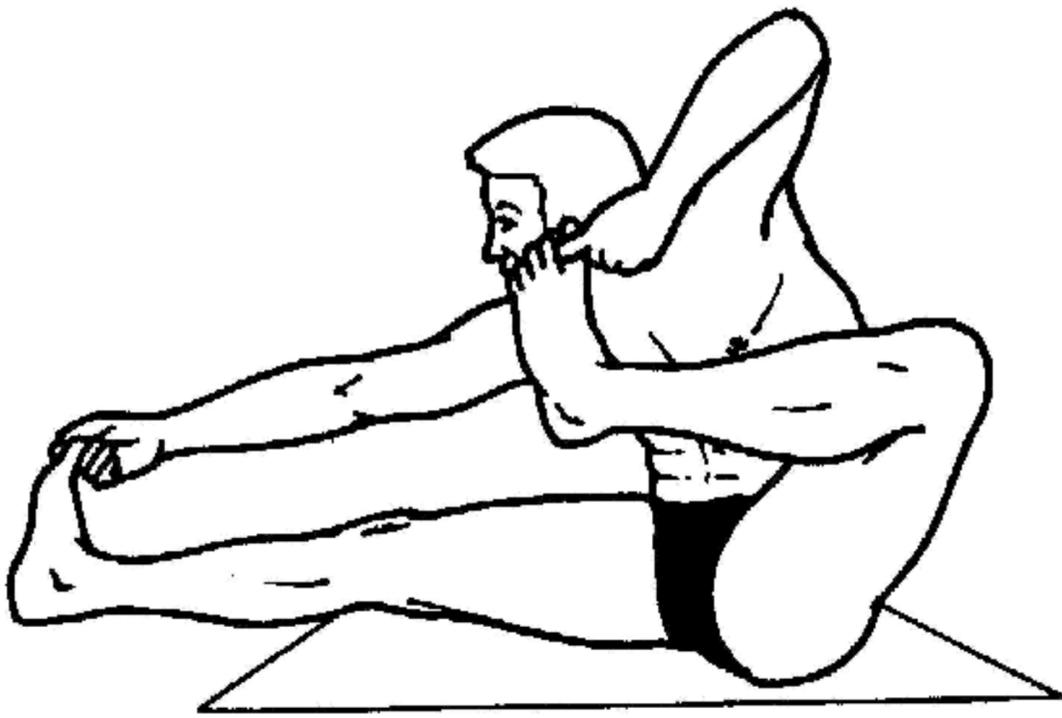


FIGURE 5

[Figure 5.](#))

The spinal cord has two ends: the earth (below) and heaven (above), as is fitting for a "holy mountain in the center of the world." And--as it should

We could compare ourselves with a tree that has its roots in the earth and the crown with its fruit in the sky. Just as we have to satisfy the needs

(26) Place your right foot on the outside of the left hip joint and the left foot outside the right knee [which is flat on the floor]. Grasp the left

[See

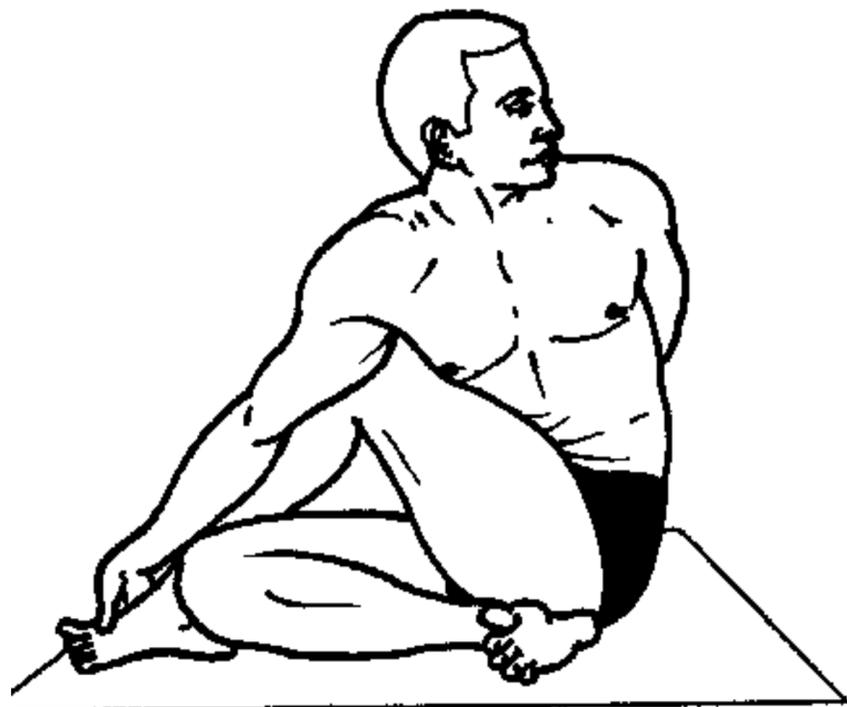


FIGURE 6

[Figure 6.](#)]

In the more current variations of this asana the right foot is not grasped by the left hand; instead, the hand is placed on the back as far over as

(27) This matsyendrasana increases the appetite by fanning the gastric fire [pitta], and destroys physical ailments. Kundalini is awakened and the

For the first time the text mentions kundalini, a latent force of highest potential, said to lie in three and one-half coils, like the snake in the

The whole body trembles. A door seems to have been pushed open through which a flood of light flows from some unknown world, a light of incomparable

This flash of light is not really the kundalini, however. It is merely a sign of its awakening. The kundalini itself does not shoot up, but will later

Whether the kundalini can really be awakened through this particular asana alone is questionable. But the asana will surely be helpful in the process

As mentioned above, the "mountain in the center of the world" has the earth at its foot and the sky at its peak. Between earth and sky are the sun

In the center of the triangle formed by the navel and the two nipples is the "sun" [solar plexus]; at the upper end of the spinal column, at the me

Through this asana the "moon" sphere is "massaged," which is all the more important as it is presumably here that we find the source of the fluid c

(28) *Stretch out both legs and, taxing hold of the toes, lay your head upon the knees. This is paccimasana [pashimottanasana].*

(29) *This most excellent of all asanas causes the breath to flow through the sushumna, fans the fire of appetite [pitta], makes the loins supple [v*

The most essential phrase of this sloka needs elucidation. Sushumna is the name for the hair-thin channel that traverses the spinal column lengthwi

more than oxygen and nitrogen, even more than any chemist could analyze. Breath is the carrier of an especially efficacious life force, of a stream

Enough about prana for now. (There will be a great deal more about it in later chapters.) Here again in this asana we **see** what seems to be a purely

(30) *Press your hands firmly upon the ground and balance your body by pressing the elbows against your loins. Raise your legs straight in the air t*

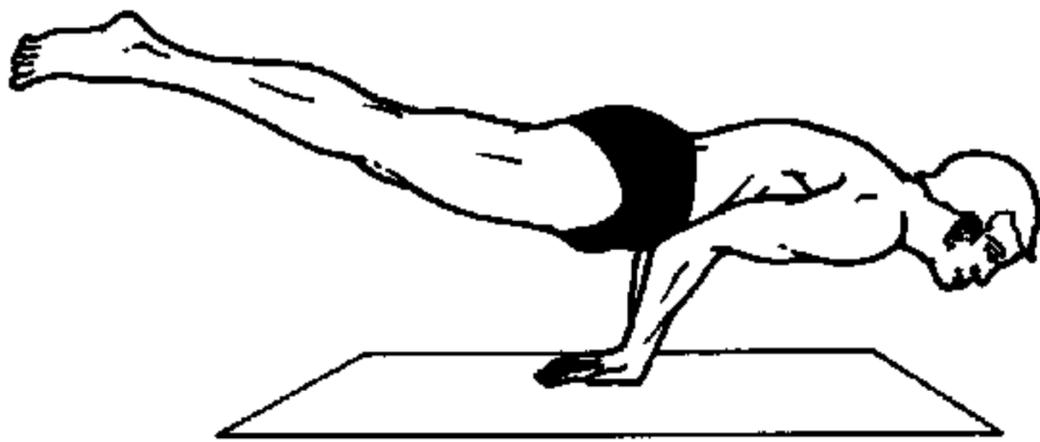


FIGURE 7

[Figure 7.](#)]

(31) *This asana heals various diseases of the spleen and dropsy, and removes all illnesses caused by excess of vata, pitta, or kapha. It digests an*

The asana looks like our well-known gymnastic exercise on the parallel bars. And gymnastics it is. At this point of training the plan is to perfect

As the gods and the demons were diligently churning the ocean of milk and the ocean gradually began to change, the demons sampled the liquid and dc

At this stage of development the student does not understand the deeper meaning of the story, and does not yet know that it is a romantic allegory

Here again the question arises how this single asana can have such far-reaching consequences that it renders the poison harmless. In order to judge

We shall discuss this question to give the Western student a deeper insight, although it does not really belong here.

As mentioned before, the whole Indian mythology has a direct relation to yoga. When the universe (macrocosm) is mentioned, it is also a reference t

Thus the churning of the ocean is, generally speaking, a process in yoga. This milk ocean symbolizes the brain. In the course of yoga training ther

of incomplete evolution lies the greatest danger, i.e., premature action resulting from erroneous, ill-informed judgment. The student assumes he pos

In mayurasana the pressure of both elbows seals off the "prana channels" of the two nadis and thus forces an increased blood supply into those part

It seems clear that the blood suffusion of the brain must have an influence on our consciousness, but blood itself is less important than the strea

(32) *Lying full length on the back like a corpse is called sava-sana. With this asana tiredness caused by other asanas is eliminated; it also prom*

Why? Is there a difference of opinion? No, there are good reasons. This asana can serve several purposes, and each name indicates a different emphasis.

(38) *The siddhas say: Just as among the yamas the most important is to do no harm to anyone, and that among the niyamas moderation, so is siddhasana.*

We should not take this as a qualitative characteristic. Rather one should say: just as nonviolence is the leitmotiv of all other principles, and moderation is the leitmotiv of all other practices.

(39) *Of the 84 asanas one should always practice siddhasana [above all], it purifies the 72,000 nadis.*

Nadis are those paths through which the body receives its supply of prana. We should not think of these as nerve strands, and whether or not there are 72,000 of them is not the point.

They begin in the nostril of their respective sides, wind once around the ajna chakra like thread around a spindle, and end all the way down where the feet are.

(40) *The yogi who meditates on the atman and eats moderately achieves the yoga siddhis after he has practiced siddhasana for 12 years.*

Atman meditation is reflection upon our own mysterious self; its the way to self-knowledge. God (Brahman) and atman have from time immemorial been one.

(41) *If siddhasana is perfected and the breath is carefully restrained in kevala kumbhaka, what need for all the other asanas?*

Again a new term, kumbhaka. This is a simple matter: kum-bhaka is the moment between inhalation and exhalation, or vice versa, when the breath is restrained.

Anyone can observe the development of prana: after a few deep and fast inhalations and exhalations concentrate on the fingertips. What you feel there is prana.

The varieties of kumbhaka, of which kevala kumbhaka is only one, will be discussed later on.

(42) *When siddhasana is accomplished, we can enjoy the ecstasy of the meditative state (unmani avastha), the moon and the three bandhas follow with it.*

This sloka is not for the student but for the teacher. The three bandhas are still unknown, the unmani avastha state is a fond hope, and how the moon follows is not clear.

(43) *There is no asana like siddhasana, no kumbhaka like kevala, no mudra like khecari, and no laya equals nada [anahat nada].*

A sloka that the teacher at this point can only underline, while the student hopefully awaits the day when he can convince himself of its efficacy.

(44) *Place the right heel upon the base of the left thigh and the left upon the right thigh. Cross the arms behind the back and grasp the toes, the*



FIGURE 10

[Figure 10.](#)

First of all, it appears that we have here without a doubt a gymnastic exercise of enormous value, but one that demands a high degree of skill. The

To this are added deeper results which are immediately manifest when we meditate in this posture. First of all there is completely new awareness of

* "The secret teaching is that there should be a space of four inches between the chin and the breast" Sri Nivasa lyangar. *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

reshaped: it becomes straight, whereas usually it is slightly S-shaped; the "kundalini path" is relieved of its curves and thus becomes more readily

Important in this connection is the next asana with the same name, which contains all the benefits that are referred to as secondary in the above

(45-47) *Place your feet firmly on the opposite thighs and place your hands firmly in the middle, one upon the other [in your lap], fasten your eyes*

This is the first step to raja yoga. In the previous padmasana we created the essential physical conditions. The spinal column was straightened and

This section introduces a part of the anatomy that has not yet been mentioned, as indeed it is not often mentioned: the sphincter muscle of the anus

If we can "tic" these two streams together, one continuous flow reaches from the nostrils to the end of the spinal cord, thus constituting a single

Here the condition has been created that will be utilized practically in the next step.

(48) *Having assumed the padmasana posture, with the hands one upon the other, and the chin firmly pressed upon the chest, meditate on Brahma, frequ*

(49) *When the yogi remains in padmasana and thus retains the breath drawn in through the nadi gates [nostrils] he reaches liberation. There is no c*

If everything has been understood thus far, one has an inkling of what is at stake. Only one point is not quite as clear as it may sound: that the

He is liberated who sees this world for what it really is, a figment of our own imagination. The nonliberated believed that he is a part of this ta

The liberated one knows and sees all problems within himself. It is not that he has persuaded himself of this by philosophical

logic. No, he experiences in meditation the forces and the content of his own personality and can objectively oppose them to sense impressions. Onc

(50) *Place your ankles in the region of the sex organs [between anus and scrotum]: the right ankle to the right and the left to the left side.*

This means kneel with knees slightly apart, feet crossed. (Compare

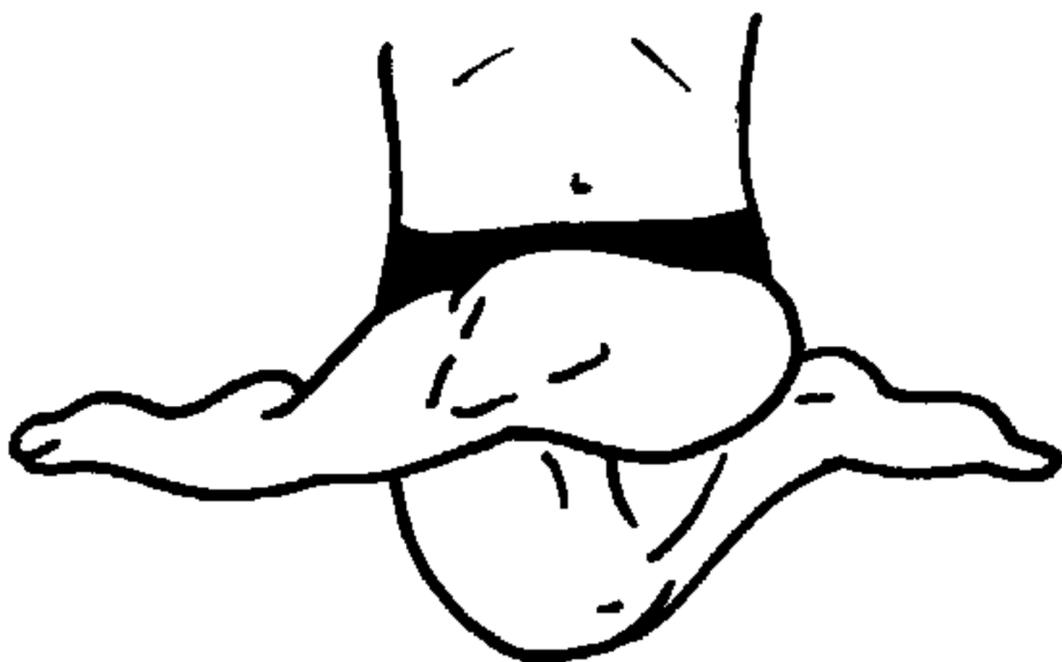


FIGURE 2

[Fig. 2.](#))

(51) *Place the palms upon the knees with fingers spread out and eyes upon the tip of the nose [and breathe] with open mouth and concentrated mind,*

(52) *This is simhasana, held in great esteem by the highest yogis, This asana facilitates the three bandhas.*

If the student does not know something about the bandhas this asana has little meaning. Bandha comes from "to bind." That there is something to bind.

If we try this asana we realize that the chest expands when we inhale and the abdomen recedes. This is the first step to the bandhas.

(53-55) Place the angles under the buttocks, right below right, left below left, on either side of the perineum. Press the soles of the feet together.



FIGURE 11

[Figure 11.](#)]

Nothing much is gained for raja yoga through this asana. **It does** control unwanted desires.

(56) Then he should cleanse the nadis by practicing pranayama, as well as mudras and kumbhakas of various kinds.

These will be learned at the next level. 63

CHAPTER 4

THE WAY OF LIFE OF A YOGI

A few useful hints before we attempt the higher goals of the second part. They may not be as dramatic as the slowly clarifying background of asanas.

(57a) Then follows the concentration on the inner sound [nada].

This sloka belongs to the highest form of raja yoga (to be discussed in Part Four), and is rather premature here; it may be an interpolation by an

(57b) The brahmacharin who, observing moderate diet, renouncing the fruits of his actions, practices [hatha] yoga will become a siddha in the span

A brahmacharin is a yogi who observes complete celibacy. Here the question of celibacy becomes acute. How compulsory is it for a yogi? At this point

potency. Celibacy without transformation of the preserved potencies only forces them to find their own outlet, mostly where it is least desired, at

"Yoga," says my guru, "is economy of forces, not repression of nature." This statement may seem very comforting to some students, but "economy" nee

The "deed in thought" is often underestimated. One imagines control of action is the chief accomplishment, and forgets that frequently lack of oppo

Another interesting problem arises from the phrase, "renouncing the fruits of his actions." This is pure karma yoga.

A deed is of value only when it is done for its own sake. This is a platitude which has the remarkable distinction of containing one of the deepest

The careful observer will note that the spiritual background of the abstinence of the brahmacharin and the renunciation of the karma yogi have the

(58) Moderate diet means pleasant, sweet food, leaving free one fourth of the stomach. The act of eating is dedicated to Siva.

The classical commentary says: "He [the yogi] should fill two parts of his stomach with food, and the third part with water, leaving the fourth free

(59-61) The following are considered as not being salutary: sour, pungent, and hot food; mustard, alcohol, fish, meat, curds, butter-milk, chicle*

garlic. It is also advisable to avoid: reheated food, an excess of salt or acid, foods that are hard to digest or are woody. Goraksha teaches that

*This does not refer to the commercially cultured milk we call "buttermilk." --Train.

These strict disciplines are imposed on the student, but do not necessarily apply to the master.

"Proximity to fire": the temperature of a yogi changes considerably during specific practices, especially in the meditative state. The term "burnin

(62) The following items can be used without hesitation: wheat products [bread, etc.] rice, milk, fats, rock candy, honey, dried ginger, cucumbers,

(63) The yogi should eat nourishing, sweet foods mixed with milk. They should benefit the senses and stimulate the functions.

(64) Anyone who actively practices yoga, be he young, old, or even very old, sickly or weak, can become a siddha.

(65) Anyone who practices can acquire siddhis, but not he who is lazy. Yoga siddhis are not obtained by merely reading textbooks.

(66) Nor are they reached by wearing yoga garments or by conversation about yoga, but only through tireless practice. This is the secret of success

(67) The various asanas, kumbhakas, and mudras of hatha yoga should be practiced as long as raja yoga has not been attained.

And when will that have been attained? When human existence no longer holds any problems.

PART TWO

THE RIVER OF LIFE

CHAPTER 5

THE PURIFICATION OF THE NADIS

after the broad outline of the evolution of the whole organism through asanas given in Part One, we come to the vata element in all its aspects. On

(1) When the yogi has perfected his asanas he should practice pranayama according to the instructions of his master. With controlled senses he should

At a higher level of instruction things begin to change in many ways. The guru is not as lenient as in the beginning. He gives higher initiation and

(2) When the breath "wanders" [i.e., is irregular] the mind also is unsteady. But when the breath is calmed, the mind too will be still, and the yogi

Have you ever noticed how the breath becomes irregular on certain occasions? Certainly, if you try to catch a bus you breathe irregularly afterward

Take for example two other occasions: in the theater, and at an important interview. How was your breathing in the first instance and how in the second

Certainly we may know this or that about our thoughts--for instance, what we have been thinking of--but do we know why we thought just about this and

Still the question of the relationship of mind with breath remains unresolved. Here we could marshal many formulas which have physiological foundations

simply mention them here. Later slokas will lead us closer to a solution, at least as close as it is necessary for a yogi at the second stage of training

(3) Man lives only as long as he has breath in his body. If he lacks breath [prana] he dies. Therefore we should practice prana-yama.

We know, of course, that breath is life; we even know the chemical process that proves it. But how is it that we cannot keep a dying man alive by a

(4) When the nadis are impure, breath cannot penetrate into the sushumna. Then the yogi achieves nothing, nor can he reach the state of deep concentration.

We know that 72,000 nadis in our body are the conveyors of the life current, and that we live our everyday lives by this current. The higher life of

(5) Only when all the nadis which are still impure are purified can the yogi practice pranayama successfully.

(6) Therefore one should practice pranayama with the mind in sattvic condition until the sushumna is free from impurities.

There are two methods of purification of the nadis. Here we describe the psychological method which is far more pleasant than the other, although t

One should practice "with the mind in a sattvic state." We shall try to understand this without burdening the mind with the intricacies of the guna

Sattva is the positive propensity for purity. Good deeds, kind words, noble thoughts, a pleasing personality, interest in lofty pursuits are the di

We can readily imagine how this can happen: we perceive something; it is carried on the life stream to the brain, as a live reflex. So far we can c

These seemingly trivial impurities are still coarse enough to block the psychic pathway of the nadis. This statement would be absurd if the nadis w

If we now become aware that every breath we take is in a sense pranayama, we can readily realize how frequently we damage our delicate psyche with

(7) Assuming the padmasana posture, the yogi shall guide the prana through the left nostril [chandra == moon] to the ida nadi, and, after having re

(8) Then he should inhale through the right nostril, do kum-bhaka according to the rule, and exhale through the left nostril.

(9) Inhalation is [always] through the same nostril as the previous exhalation. After the breath has been retained to the utmost possible limit [un

(10) Take in prana through the ida nadi and exhale it through the pingala. Then take in [new prana] through pingala and release it through ida, after

This is the technique of pranayama. Just as all the multitude of asanas aim at the spinal column, so the essence of prana is centered in kumbhaka,

Just as the plunging waters in a power plant are only the means of releasing the energy through which the brushes of the stationary turbins are act

The current necessary to sustain our life is automatically regulated through the varying strength of our inhalation and exhalation. Sighing and yaw

We should, therefore, not be surprised at the yogis' contention that the heart is not the most important organ of man. It is the power centers, the

(II) Four times a day we should practice kumbhaka: early morning, midday, evening, and midnight, until we can do 80 rounds [at a time].

A commentary speaks of three phases; at the beginning the breath should be held for 30 seconds, at the second stage for 60 seconds, and at the third

(12) At the first stage perspiration breaks out, at the second stage the body trembles, and at the third stage prana reaches the center of the head

This may sound rather violent, but do not forget that the main characteristic of yoga is not violence but perseverance, not compulsion but patience

The half-trained yogi pays attention primarily to the body when doing the asanas, i.e., to the various positions of the limbs that he wants to plac

In order to show you that asanas are more than consciously created gymnastic exercises, let me describe a mysterious manifestation that is usually

The yogi sits in deep meditation. Breath is suspended, the body is cold and stiff. Only the topmost center of his skull is feverishly hot.

Then he starts moving his limbs. An inner mechanism seems to be at work. Slowly, steadily, with unencumbered ease his arms intertwine, the legs go

The yogi does not perform these asanas in waking consciousness. "It" performs the asanas in him, while his waking state has yielded completely to a

In this state the yogi is capable of superhuman physical achievements. Thus we find in Tibet the lunggompas, yogis who in a meditative state cover

In this state there is no trembling, no perspiring. This is one of the higher forms of yoga; we are still working on a considerably lower level. The

compulsion to persist) rests in itself, in the "asana as such." This is the essential difference.

So when here on the first level perspiration breaks out, this 's a sign of compulsion only if consciousness occupies itself with this fact. If the

(13) Massage the perspiring body. This imparts lightness and strength to the whole constitution.

(14) At the beginning of practice the yogi should nourish himself with milk and ghee [clarified butter]. When he is advanced such restrictions are

(15) Just as lions, elephants, and tigers are tamed [little by little, with patience and energy], so the prana should be kept under control. Otherw

(16) By the practice of pranayama we deliver ourselves from all diseases. By faulty practice the yogi invites all kinds of ailments.

(17) Then breath takes a wrong course and practice results in coughs, asthma, headaches, eye and ear pain, as well as other sicknesses.

The classical example of wrong practice is told of Ramakrishna, the famous nineteenth-century saint. In his youth his practice invariably ended in

(18) Slowly one should inhale and exhale, and proceed gradually also with kumbhaka. Thus one will attain the siddhis.

(19) When the nadis are purified, certain signs quite naturally manifest: the body becomes light and bright.

(20) As soon as the nadis are purified the yogi is able to retain the breath longer, the gastric fire is activated, nada [the inner sound] becomes

Perfect health alone is reason enough to concern ourselves with nadi purification. About the gastric fire and the nada sound we will learn more later.

How is it that the power to hold the breath for a considerable length of time should depend on the purity of the nadis rather than on the capacity

Breath gets short when the air held in the lungs has lost its prana. If the nadis are impure (as is common), then the flow of prana is impeded and

A yogi who can subsist on one breath for days--as has been demonstrated--causes the river of prana to circulate in the body and does not allow the

(21) He who is of weak constitution and phlegmatic, subject to kapha disorders, should first practice shatkarma. Those not suffering [constitutional

The nadis of all students, even the healthiest, need purifying. The man of perfect health, the sportsman, the master of asanas whose physical training

(22) Shatkarma is dhauti, vasti, neti, trataka, nauli, and kapa-labhati.

(23) These six practices, which cleanse the body, should be carefully kept secret because they induce numerous wonderful results and are therefore

Why this secretiveness? What are these "wonderful results"?

Imagine a man who uses a low-tension electrical gadget, which is attached by a transformer to high-power current. The current he uses is barely not

Exactly so is it here. The unclean nadis act as a transformer to the life stream so that nothing untoward can happen. When the nadis are clean the

(24-25) Take a strip of clean cloth, four fingers broad and 15 spans long and slowly swallow it as instructed by the guru. Then pull it back out. This

(26-28) Sit in a tub of water so as to be submerged up to the navel, in crouching position, heels pressed against the buttocks.

Introduce a thin bamboo pipe into the anus, contract the anus muscle [to draw in the water] and move the water around inside. This is vasli and cur

So much ado about a simple remedy. If this simple remedy is a golden treasure in the West, how much greater must its value be in the tropics. It is

practiced it.

All this of course without pranayama. When that is added the whole picture changes and greatest caution is indicated.

(29-30) Pull a thread, 12 inches in length, through one of the nostrils and let its end emerge through the mouth. This is neti. It cleanses the skull

It certainly is not an agreeable feeling to push a wet cord through the nostrils and let it come out in the back of the throat, picking it up with

(31-32) Gaze without blinking [with concentrated mind] on a small object, until tears come into your eyes. This is called trataka by the gurus. Tra

Here one senses an ulterior motive. The practice must be kept secret, just because it trains the eyes? This can hardly be the real reason. There are

Hypnosis, self-hypnosis, visions, trance states, ecstasies, hallucinations--these are things that have always seemed very attractive. Everyone would

(33-34) With head bent forward slowly rotate the innards [intestines and stomach], like a whirlpool in a river, toward the right and toward the left

This practice belongs not only to shatkarma but also to regular hatha yoga, although it cannot be called an asana since asana means "position, scat

(35) Inhale and exhale like the bellows of a blacksmith. This is kapalabhati and removes all ailments due to kapha.

(36) One frees oneself from obesity and phlegm by these six practices, and is successful if one adds pranayama after them.

Yet it is more advisable to follow the mental method of nadi purification, because progress and purification then go hand in hand. Besides:

(37) Some teachers say that all impurities can be removed through pranayama alone, with nothing else.

And those teachers who say it must know what they are talking about. Shatkarma is a gross physical method, while pranayama purification, completely

The following practice does not belong to shatkarma. True, it has the characteristics of shatkarma, but something else is involved.

(38) Closing the sphincter muscle at the anus, draw up apana toward the throat and regurgitate what is in the stomach, in this way the nadi chakras

If we remember the counter current to prana, apana in the abdomen, we know that this current cannot move beyond the

diaphragm. It is impossible to bring it to the throat. But one can--and should, in this case--cause the apana current to press against the udana cu

As previously mentioned we are not really dealing with a purification process here, since dhauti has already done its work. Rather, we stimulate th

But just as today's yogis do not advocate this type of practice so we too will leave it alone, as this sutra clearly seems to be a much later inter

After these more or less agreeable purification practices we return to pranayama.

(39) Brahma and the other gods who devoted themselves to the practice of pranayama delivered themselves [by it] from fear of death. This is why we

(40) When the breath is controlled, the mind firm and unshakable, the eyes fastened between the eyebrows; why then should we fear death?

Even a man who--like the yogi--has to fear no punishment at the last judgment approaches his last moments with at least some apprehension, for the

For the master of pranayama, things are different. He controls the powers that represent life. He dies consciously. In life as in death he adapts h

To render this Unconscious conscious is the goal of the yoga master, for this is the only way to become equal to the gods. So let us too pay attent

(41) As soon as the nadis have been purified through systematic pranayama, breath easily finds its way to the sushumna entrance.

(42) When breath flows through the sushumna, mind becomes steady. This steadiness of the mind is called unmani avastha.

(43) To attain this the sage practices a variety of kumbhakas whereby he acquires siddhis.

chapter 6 KUMBHAKA

when we now speak of the various forms of kumbhaka you should not try to understand it all at once in the first few sentences. Everything that foll

(44) There are eight kumbhakas: suryabhedana, ufjayi, sit[^]ari, sitali, bhastrika, bhramari, murccha and plavini.

(45) At the end of inhalation [puraka] one should do jalan-dhara band ha; and at the end of kumbhaka and the beginning of exhalation [recaka] uddiy

How does this work out in practice? The yogi sits cross-legged on the floor, hands on knees, and inhales deeply. Then he holds his breath, with chi

As soon as his breath is short he raises the head and exhales as deeply as possible. When he has reached the limit he again holds his breath, strai

(46) When at the same time the throat is contracted and mula-bandha practiced [i.e., the sphincter of the anus is contracted], breath flows through

Anyone who tries this practice and thinks he has succeeded in guiding the breath through the sushumna had better remember the purity of the nadis;

(47) By contracting the anus [to force apana] upward and forcing prana down from the throat, the yogi becomes a youth of 16 years and is forever fr

Or, stating it more modestly: he who succeeds in uniting the two main currents in the body will thereby eliminate the causes of premature old age.

granthi), creating an aggregate that gives youthful strength to the aging yogi. This is the first step in raja yoga.

Once again, the main part of pranayama is kumbhaka, and this can be performed in various ways.

(48) Sitting down comfortably in a good asana, the yogi should inhale through the right nostril.

(49) [Then] he should do kumbhaka until he feels that the whole body from head to toes is suffused by prana; then he should slowly exhale through t

(50) This suryabheda kumbhaka should be practiced again and again for it cleanses the brain [forebrain and sinuses], destroys intestinal worms and

This is the first and the most commonly practiced of the eight varieties of kumbhaka. We should also note that before we begin this practice we exh

(51-52) With closed mouth inhale deeply until the breath fills all the space between the throat and the heart (i-e., to the tips of the lungs). This

*"This is to be done alternately with both nostrils, drawing in through the one and expelling through the other." Pancham Sinh, *Hatha Yoga Pradipik*

The noise mentioned is a special characteristic of this kumbhaka. It occurs in a perfectly natural way. We know that with straight body we should e

This kumbhaka seems to deal with the body onesidedly, for while we inhale through both nostrils at the same time, we exhale through the left only.

What is the special benefit of this kumbhaka, apart from its therapeutic influence on kapha? The heart rhythm does not function by itself. It is th

(53-55) With tongue protruding a little between the lips, draw in the breath through the mouth with a hissing sound [after kumbhaka]: exhale throug

Obviously an enticing practice, and not even a dangerous one if one does not overdo it, as is so often the case with enticements.

We should, however, not be disappointed if we do not activate a love charm, but simply fan the pitta (the "fire of life") to heightened activity. W

(56-57) With tongue protruding still further, inhale. Then follows kumbhaka and exhalation through the nose. This kum-bhalka, called sitali, remove

Here again the therapeutic purpose concerns pitta, but the practice has also another purpose. He who succeeds in inhaling and exhaling deeply with

We remember that the countercurrent to prana is apana in the abdomen. The alert reader will long have wondered: If we must do so much breathing to

(58-60) Place the feet on the [opposite] thighs. This is padma-sana and removes all diseases. Having assumed this posture, exhale with closed mouth

(61-62) Again inhale and exhale as indicated, again and again, as a blacksmith works his bellows, in this way the prana is kept ill constant circu

There are two variations of the same pranayama, one slow, the other fast. It becomes most effective when both kinds are combined in one sitting. Wit

In this practice of pranayama the body becomes saturated with prana--in fact, it becomes so "overloaded" that even the inexperienced student can fe

(63-64) When the breath flows through the body, close the nose with thumb, ring finger [and little finger --Trans.]. Having then performed kumbhaka

Through this bhastrika kumbhaka alone it is not possible for the breath to penetrate the whole body. However, when we combine the protruding-tongue

(65) Thus kundalini rises quickly, the nadis are purified, it is pleasant, and of all kumbhakas the most beneficial, in this manner phlegm at the

The procedure is as follows: In sitali kumbhaka the body is filled with apana. In bhastrika kumbhaka the necessary amount

of prana is created, and then for the first time, the two currents are brought to face each other. Through jalandhara bandha, uddiyana bandha, and m

(66) Bhastrika kumbhaka should be practiced especially, for it forces the breath to pierce the three knots that are in the sushumna.

Although the "three knots" (Brahma granthi, Vishnu granthi, and Rudra granthi) are extremely significant, we shall give here only a short theoretical

The three stations of human evolution ("focusing, unfolding, and change" [Rousselle], or the "via purgativa, via illuminativa, via unitiva" of the

We have now learned the essentials. The propitious exterior conditions have been established, the necessary asanas carefully practiced; and through

1. By alternate inhalation and exhalation, left and right (surya bheda kumbhaka), prana was created.

2. Then the muscles of the throat and the anus sphincter were trained (bandhas).

3. The heart was then prepared for the heavy work ahead (ujjayi kumbhaka).

4. The volume of the lungs was increased (sitkari kumbhaka).

5. We learned the art of guiding the breath into the abdominal cavity (sitali kumbhaka).

6. There then followed the first serious attempt to test what had been learned (bhastrika kumbhaka).

At this point we have accomplished a great deal, but we are still far from the goal. Once the yogi has experienced what he has learned on this level

A few special pranayamas follow which should not be confused with the others.

(67) In/tale rapidly, producing the sound of a male bee. Then exhale with the sound of a female bee. This is followed by kumbhaka. The great yogis,

A strange kumbhaka for which there are many reasons, the most profound of which we will learn in Part Four. Whether or not we imitate a bee success

the eyes, then that feeling of happiness occurs, a feeling as though one had just witnessed an extraordinary natural phenomenon whereby one was all

Thus the pendulum swings from breath to breath, from creation to dissolution and from there back to creation again. Whether all this can happen with

In principle we have here the essence of a whole yoga system. He who has grasped the deeper sense of this kumbhaka and its related phenomena has sa

(68) At the end of inhalation do jalandhara bandha and then slowly exhale. This is murccha kumbhaka. It causes a kind of stupor of the mind and is

This kumbhaka too has its peculiarities, which even the text itself recognizes.

We recall the jalandhara bandha (Part Two, 45), which-- please note this--comes usually at the end of exhalation. Here it is reversed, and we recog

The strange trance state (to be discussed later) is, of course, not an unconscious state in the ordinary sense; rather it is extremely heightened c

(69) Having filled the lungs completely with air, the yogi floats upon the water like a lotus leaf. This is plavini kumbhaka.

Nothing else is mentioned. Nothing about health or long life, only a rather extravagant-sounding promise. For we all know, regardless of how deeply

Since this kumbhaka, though useful, is not in any way decisive, we shall only comment briefly: his body having been emptied completely through the

So much for the eight varieties of pranayama. A few general remarks will close this subject.

(70) There are three kinds of pranayamas: Recaka pranayama (exhalation), puraka pranayama (inhalation) and kumbhaka pranayama (retention). Kumbhaka

The types of prana are summarized:

1. Prana that results from kumbhaka after exhalation.
2. Prana that originates from kumbhaka after inhalation.
3. Prana that is developed a. through holding the breath at any time and any place,

without force or exertion (sahita)

b. by holding the breath when the blood is overoxygenized (kevala).

(71) As long as one has not yet [fully] mastered kevala kumbhaka, which means holding the breath without inhalation or exhalation, one should practice

(72-71) When kevala kumbhaka without inhalation and exhalation has been mastered, there is nothing in the [inner] world that is unattainable for the

(74-75) Thus he [gradually] attains the stage of raja yoga. Through this kumbhaka, kundalini is aroused and then the sushumna is free from all obstructions

(76) At the end of kumbhaka he should withdraw his mind from all objects. By doing this regularly he reaches raja yoga.

(77) The signs of perfection in hatha yoga are: a lithe body, harmonious speech, perception of the inner sound (nada), clear eyes, health, control of the

And thus equipped the yogi can confidently embark upon the third stage of his training, where new, greater and more decisive things are awaiting him.

PART THREE

ACTIVE YOGA

CHAPTER 7

THE MUDRAS

(1) Just as Ananta the lord of the serpents [the "infinite one" with seven heads] supports the whole universe with its mountains and woods, even so

The leitmotiv is majestically clear here. We are entering into the inner sanctum of the secret temple. Now the preparatory work is completed; things

(2-3) When the kundalini is sleeping it will be aroused by the grace of the guru. Then all the chakras and knots are pierced

and prana flows through the royal road of sushumna. The mind is released from its work and the yogi conquers death.

One thing is certain: kundalini is more than just a symbolic term for one of our known forces or faculties. It is a potential of which normally we

The chakras are occasionally perceptible in everyday life. In times of danger there is usually a convulsive contraction of the muladhara chakra; in

(4) *Sushumna, the great void: brahmarandra, the royal road, the burning ground; shambhavi, the middle way--all is one.*

How easily one gets confused by big words. Certainly, this spiritual background is unfathomably profound. There are whole philosophical libraries of

has not *experienced* the unity of all these differentiations in meditation. This alone is the way of wisdom, not philosophical breeding.

(5) *The yogi should carefully practice the various mudras, in order to arouse the great goddess, kundalini, who in her sleep closes the mouth of the*

Mudra: the decisive theme of this chapter. A mudra awakens kundalini; it is set in motion through the practices we have learned in the first two parts of

This arrangement testifies to great wisdom. What good would it do to activate this force without first having learned how to utilize it? He who wants to

(6-9) *Mahamudra, mahabandha, mahavedha, khecari: uddiyana bandha, mula bandha, and jalandhara bandha: viparitaka rani vajroli, and shakticalana;*

(10-14) *Press the anus with the left heel and extend the right leg; grasp the toes with your hand. Then practice jalandhara bandha and draw the breath*

Even the first practice in this new stage brings with it powerful experiences about which the text says nothing. So let us look at this practice a

Once more we come upon jalandhara bandha. We have encountered it twice before (see Part II, 45 and 68). But we must not make comparisons, because t

Here we must also mention the prerequisites for the above practice.

It is quite clear that the asanas of the first training period are taken for granted. Pranayama too is taken for granted, and is no longer mentioned

The daily nadi purification must precede everything, in order to give the nadis the final polish, and then begins pranayama as described in Part Two

Now something important happens, as the text reveals: "The two nadis die off." In other words, the higher the prana rises in the sushumna, the less

Can he really do that, exhale while physically in the state of death? We recall the second exercise with jalandhara bandha (Part Two, 68) where thi

(15) *First he should practice with the left [foot drawn up], then with the right, until both sides are equally exercised.*

(16) *Now there is nothing that he should [prefer to] eat or avoid eating. All things regardless of their taste or even without taste are digested.*

(17) *He who practices mahamudra overcomes consumption, leprosy, hemorrhoids, diseases of the spleen, digestive disturbances, etc.*

This sloka is for the ignorant and curious.

(18) *This is the description of mahamudra which confers siddhis. It should be kept secret and not given to just anyone.*

And this sloka is for the initiated who knows.

But there is still a great deal more to observe and to do in order to reach the ideal state described, where the kundalini, carried by the prana-ap

(19-24) *Press the left ankle against the anus and place the right foot upon the left thigh. After inhalation, when the chin is pressed firmly again*

This practice, as a rule, precedes the previous one. It is, so to speak, the overture to the whole. However, a third factor still has to be mention

(25-30) *Just as beauty and loveliness are of no avail to a woman without a husband, so also mahamudra and mahabandha are useless without the third,*

The real purpose of this last practice is of a purely technical nature. For there is no natural connection between the three main nadis which run p

Now the preceding practice [mahabandha] can be carried out successfully, followed by the first one mentioned above [mahamudra]. Thus the three prac

(31) *These are performed in eight different ways. Daily, every three hours. This creates good and eliminates evil. He who masters it has to practice*

Both text and commentary are silent about the eight different ways of practice, for therein lies a secret teaching. The kundalini, as we know, rise

1. Muladhara chakra: the element of *earth*

2. Svadhishthana chakra: the element of *water*

3. Manipura chakra: the element of *fire*

4. Anahata chakra: the element of *air*

5. Vishuddha chakra: the element of *ether*

6. Ajna chakra: the element of *consciousness*

7. Sahasrara chakra; the *divine* element.

These elements have nothing to do with what is known to us as the density of matter. Rather they are planes of vibrations as required for the creati

Now prana is, as we know, a life current, and a current consists of vibrations. The kundalini was aroused by the prana current, as soon as this rea

3. Why are eight varieties of practice mentioned here when there are only seven? With this logical question we touch upon an area that will cause a

To be more specific: these are not methods of practice in the sense of the hatha yoga practices discussed so far. They are yantra meditations and man

To each chakra are attributed a visual and verbal symbol, which are transmitted orally to the student by his guru only after an initiation ceremony.

The beginner naturally needs more time for each individual practice than the master does. So if he goes through these eight practices one by one ev

This closes the description of the first decisive stages of raja yoga: the successful attempt to activate the kundalini. As stated, it is a stage t

CHAPTER 8

THE NECTAR

(32-37) *When the tongue is bent back into the gullet and the eyes are fastened upon the point between the eyebrows, this is khecari mudra. When the*

Here again some fundamental questions arise. The indignant objection of the reader, although at this point it represents a suspect prejudice, is qu

materially purposeful manner, is lacking in the key points of yoga. It is non-sense for the scientific explorer and deep-sense for the experiencer.

The "three paths" are closed: the nasal passage, the pharynx, and the trachea. This is the *vas bene clausum* of the alchemists.

There are three ways to close the gates: with the natural muscles of the organs concerned; with the fingers; and from the inside, as taught here. T

(38) *The yogi who remains but half a minute in this position [with upturned tongue and imperturbable calm] is free from illness, old age and death.*

Try to imagine the feelings of a person in this situation. The tongue is far back in the throat; there is no breath. There is, however, a growing fear.

(39) For him who masters this khecari mudra there will be no more [physical helplessness in bodily conditioned situations such as] illness, death,

He is no longer subject to the overpowering law of nature, whose most painful aspect is the fact that all spiritual processes are sacrificed to this

(40) He is free from [the laws of] karma and time has no power over him.

Fear in the state of helplessness is chiefly the panic-stricken thought: "What is going to happen?" It is uncertainty about the future, and thus in

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conditioned effect. A state--a situation unconditioned by time (which we cannot comprehend, because thinking is a process, not a state)--is cause a

(41) The mudra is called khecari by the siddhas because the mind as well as the tongue remains in "ether" for the duration of the practice.⁴

Ether, a vibration plane in the universe, is finer than all that is composed of atoms and molecules, and thus is an intermediary between the world

(42^43) Once he has closed the throat in khecari mudra he cannot be aroused by the most passionate embrace, and even if he were in the state of an

The example of the most compelling temptation is presented here to prove that through khecari mudra the state of complete and

4. The commentary breaks down the word *khecari* into the root *kha* == the empty sphere of the sky, and the root *car* = to move. The real origin of *Khe*

5. These two slokas have been rather freely translated. The reason is given in Part Three, 84.

absolute absorption in meditation is possible. We know that one of the preparations of the yogis who allow themselves to be buried for days or weeks

But it is not only prana that is isolated. What else? Is it really possible that the upturned tongue can produce such mysterious results?

(44) He who with upcurled tongue and concentrated mind drinks the nectar conquers death in 15 days--provided he masters yoga.

We recall the legend of the churning of the ocean of milk where from this ocean, with the aid of the world mountain, the nectar of life was to be produced

But what is the ocean of milk, and what is the nectar? That is the theme of this chapter. We hear at the beginning that the kapha current of the li

The cosmology of the "Puranas," the ancient Indian garland of legends (and a treasure trove of the secret teachings, if one knows how to read it) tells

between the Isles of Shaka and Pushkara (*Bhagavata Purana* V, 20). Shaka is the mythological name for ajna chakra, between the eyebrows, and Pushkara

This shows that kapha, the nectar, is not just any kind of secretion, for the primary functional and structural elements cannot be delineated so simply

No one can tell what this fluid is, if indeed it is a fluid. Is it a glandular secretion? Possibly. Most likely, yes. But this should not tempt us

(45) The yogi who daily saturates his body with the nectar that flows from the "moon" is not harmed by poisons even when bitten by the snake *Tasksh*

You may think as you like about khecari mudra, you may consider the matter of the "nectar" naive or ridiculous; the fact remains that there are countless

(46) Just as fire burns as long as there is wood, as the lamp burns as long as the oil and the wick last, so also the life germ [*jivan*] remains in

The source of the nectar is the "moon" in the area of the brain stem. The "cooling beams of the moon," a term known in the mythologies of all countries.

(47-49) Daily he may "eat the flesh of the cow" and "drink wine," still he will remain a son of noble family. The word "cow" [go] means tongue. When

•"In the above two stanzas is given an excellent instance of the way the Hindu occult writers veil their real meaning under apparently absurd symbols.

In order to fan the fire of "burning asceticism" the nectar has to be diverted from its usual course into the fire of life. But the stream is not cold.

(50-51) When it remains pressed in the throat passage, the tongue is able to receive the nectar "beams of the moon," which are [simultaneously] said to be

Here we have the answer to the question: "Where does the nectar flow once it is deviated from its natural course, the fire of life (solar plexus)?"

In vishuddha chakra (so the scriptures tell us) the birth of the word takes place. Cognition here becomes word.

The fruit from the Tree of Knowledge gets stuck in Adam's throat, and paradise is lost. The poison that the gods churn from the ocean of milk is swayed

The fruit of the process of evolution is always twofold: nectar for the perfect one, poison for the all-too-human one. The nectar is at the highest level.

(52) Inside of the upper part of Mount Merit--that is the sushumna--there, in the opening, nectar is secreted. He who has a pure sattva mind, not clouded

(53) The sushumna, especially its [upper] opening, is the place of confluence of the five rivers and bestows divine knowledge. In the void of the ether

Just as breath (the vata element) has five currents (the five vayus), so also has the nectar of the kapha element, and so there are five fires that

(54) There is only one germ of evolution, and that is Om; there is only one mudra: khecari; only one duty: to become independent from everything; and

CHAPTER 9

THE BANDHAS

before going any further let us recall one sentence: "Maha-mudra, mahabandha) mahavedha, khecari; uddiyana bandha, mula bandha, and jalandhara bandha."

Mahamudra: The joining of prana and apana. Mahabandha: Preventing prana and apana from reverting their course.

Mahavedha: Connecting the three nadis by beating the buttocks on the floor. Khecari mudra: Bending back the tongue.

The following three bandhas are not unknown to us, but they are discussed below from a new point of view.

(55-62) Uddiyana bandha [literally "to fly up," "to arise"] is so called by the yogis because thereby the prana flies up through the sushumna. Through

death. --He who constantly practices uddiyana bandha as taught by his guru, and as it occurs in a natural way, becomes young though he may be old.

We have encountered this bandha twice before: first in the purification process of shatkarma. There it preceded the churning of the intestines (Parivartana).

The inner process of this practice is as follows: In the two nadis) prana and apana have been united into one continuous flow, and neither a separate

There still remains one important question: to what end should the "sun" yield its strongest fire?

We know that the sun sits in the area of the fire chakra (manipura) below the heart chakra (anahata), within which dwells jivan, the germ of life.

(61-64) Press the scrotum with the heel, contract the anus, and force apana upward. This is mula bandha. Through contraction of the muladhara the nectar

Through the pressure of the heel and the taut anus muscle the upward tendency is furthered and the current kept flowing. Here again, a practice that

(65) *Through the union of prana and apana, secretions are considerably reduced. Through mula bandha a yogi, though old, becomes young.*

Indeed, for the fire that tempers the life germ is fanned into new vigor by this practice.

(66-69) *When apana rises upward and reaches the fire orbit, the flame becomes large and bright, fanned by apana. When apana and the fire join with*

Should any nectar now flow into the fire, all efforts would have been in vain, for the organism would at once revert to "normal." Therefore we have

(70-73) *Contract the throat and press the chin against the breast. This is jalandhara bandha and destroys old age and death. It is called jalandhara*

We have also encountered before, this jalandhara bandha at a time when it did not have much significance; we are meeting it now for the fourth time

The nadis have died off, so it says. Indeed, the prana-apanam current now flows through the sushumna. The body appears to be dead, while deep inside

(74-76) *Practice uddiyana bandha by contracting the anus muscle; tighten the nadis ida and pingla [through jalandhara bandha] and cause the prana to*

The yogi now has the much-debated ability to put himself into a deathlike state, and to remain buried for days or weeks (to prove that he is not ch

(77-79) *Every particle of nectar that flows from the ambrosial "moon" is [normally] swallowed up by the "sun." Thus the body grows old. [But] there*

On the surface, the practice itself seems comparatively simple, as we will see. The difficulties lie once again within us. But let the text lead us

(80-82) *In him who practices daily the gastric fire increases. Therefore the yogi should always have an ample supply of food on hand. If he restrict*

Through a headstand, values are reversed. And what is so difficult about learning this?

First of all, we must know one thing: Among the asanas, the physical exercises treated in the first book, there is one that our text does not mention

As mentioned above, there is no great difficulty in this practice. And it is not the headstand that is referred to in the text as not being teachable

But it does happen as soon as one has become accustomed to this position, as soon as the organism functions exactly as in the normal position. We know

This practice, by the way, is nowadays seldom encountered. Is it perhaps due to the fact that there are not any more gurus who have these suggestive

(83) *When someone, though leading a worldly life without observing the laws of yama and niyama, practices vajroli mudra he will become a vessel for*

The following slokas, 84-103, describe the vajroli, sahajoli and amaroli mudras. These are practices that aim at reversing the flow of the semen vi

In leaving out these passages, we merely bypass the description of a few obscure and repugnant practices that are followed by only those yogis who l

Any technique that enables a yogi to sublimate his virility within his organism merits approval. Whatever he does outside his organism cannot be ca

CHAPTER 10

THE SHAKTI

everything so far has really been only preparation. Everything essential has been accomplished, except the most essential: the raising of kundalini

But what of it? He is still only an insignificant apprentice of raja yoga. We have already seen that it is not the bodily functions and their contr

This final chapter of the third stage of training is concerned with the last, though the most magnificent of all physical phenomena: the guiding of

(104) *I now describe shakti calana kriya [literally: the action that loosens the inner power of nature]. Kutitangi, kundalini, bhujangi, shkti, ish*

Shakti is the name for all dynamic forces of nature. The release of the shakti in man corresponds in its effect directly to the release of the late

Where else can we find the needed forces for the highest goal, if not from within our own selves? Since there is a path to liberation, there also m

(105-110) *As one opens the door with a key, so the yogi should open the gate to liberation [moksha] with the kundalini. The great goddess [kundalin*

(111) *You should awaken the sleeping serpent by grasping its tad. The shakti, when aroused, moves upward.*

Once more remember the churning of the ocean of milk. The demons seized the head of the snake, the gods took hold of the tail, and thus the work wa

Here we have the same process. The physically manifested powers, prana and apana, pull on the head; that is where the current flows into the sushum

(112) *After inhaling through the right nostril perform kum-bhaka according to the rules. Then manipulate the shakfi for an hour and a half, both at*

But didn't we learn before that we should practice eight hours a day? And now suddenly only at dawn and dusk ! Here we have an example of bow easil

We have to understand that last sentence symbolically. The shakti should be manipulated for an hour and a half from two sides (head and tail), from

sphere of vibrations, from supersonic sound down to the lowest plane of vibrations. These are the means by which the kunda-lini should be manipul

(113) *The kanda [upon which the kundatini rests with its tail] lies above the anus and extends four inches. It is described as of round shape, and*

In order to awaken the kundalini, the yogi has to know the plane of light (or color) vibrations as well as the plane of sound vibrations that corre

Three components, when united, lead to success in guiding the kundalini upward: the spiritual, mental, and physical powers, as represented in the p

(114-116) *Seated in the vajrasana posture [see*

[Figure 12](#)), firmly hold the feet near the angles and beat against the kanda. In the posture of vajrasana the yogi should induce the kundalini to mo

The earlier reference to light and sound actually belongs in Part Four, which is why the text referred to it only indirectly. Here in the last few

(117-122) *When one moves the kundalini fearlessly for about an hour and a half, she is drawn upward a little through the sushumna. In this way she*

The alert reader will have noticed that in these and the previous slokas only the motion of the kundalini is mentioned, and that she "rises slightl

We also note in the last sentence that when the kundalini is put into motion we should do bhastrika kumbhaka. How is this possible when everything

(123-125) *What other ways are there to prevent the pollution of the 72,000 nadis? --The sushumna is straightened through asanas, pranayama and the*

The first sentence could be translated into modern language as follows; above all, do not allow the nadis to become impure, because then all else i

(126-129) *Without raja yoga there is no "earth": without raja yoga no "night"; useless are all mudras without raja yoga. All pranayamas should be c*

The "earth" is the activated muladhara chakra, "night" is the state in which the "light" shines bright, that light which we will presently discuss.

fruit which she tenders to the seeker, the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Thus the yogi becomes Ishvara (God) in human form: *Eritis sicut deus,*

Over and over again the concentrated mind is mentioned, the mind that must remain within itself. We have learned the art of the mudra. Now let's tr

(130) He who carefully follows the words of the guru, and attentively practices the mudras will obtain the siddhis, as well as the art of deceiving

And with this let us climb to the last and highest step of yoga.

PART FOUR PASSIVE YOGA

CHAPTER II

SAMADHI

Imagine that on the first morning after Easter vacation, a professor enters his classroom and announces: "Ladies and gentlemen, forget everything t

Everyone freezes. All those years of worrying, the wakeful nights, the expensive books, the pain of memorizing--everything useless, senseless? The

The professor smiles. "You are now going from the seminar room out into real life. There you won't be asked whether you have carefully analyzed Pla

(1) Veneration to Siva, the guru who is in the form of nada, bindu and kala. He who is thus devoted reaches the maya-free state.

We have to pay careful attention here, for this devotional sentence harbors some vital information: Shiva who is in the form of nada, bindu and kal

It is not difficult to understand this, provided one is willing to study the intricate symbolism of Indian tantra. However, that is not the purpose

Let us imagine the strange case of a man who wants to recreate the universe. First he must decide what he requires. His answer to this is "quite si

Let us classify. The highest range of vibration is that of cosmic rays, which we term "light" for short; the middle range is "heat," and the lowest

and they both are subject to the same great law, this Siva is created out of the lower range of vibrations, "sound" (nada) and the highest, "light"

But just as the universe is not a dynamo, neither is man a machine, for he understands "sound" as a concept, as a name, and "light" as image, as fo

He comprehends. In other words, he not only exists but he knows himself. Everything in him is a process sustained by a force, a process that is in

Thus, as stated, man comprehends himself. And what he comprehends is not only the technical process of vibrations, but also the finer aspect of bin

The middle range of vibrations (heat) is, as we already know, the metabolism. But this "fire" is not sheerly biological; it too has its finer aspect

Now when the yogi wishes to produce his highest and lowest vibration fields to give new character to his personality (which consists of these two r

Instead, he has to learn to work on the "centers" of energy, the chakras. And his whole education is pointed in this direction. What part do these

Take your own name and pronounce it slowly, clearly, and audibly. A multiple reaction takes place:

1. The pronounced word evoked by the throat chakra rings out, But if you have carefully registered this sound with the physical ear, you have
2. Now pay attention not to the sound, but to the sense. Not the succession of letters but the name is our chief interest. This involves the h
3. Now don't pay attention at all; try to occupy your mind elsewhere, and let yourself be spoken to by your own name. Expect nothing, just be a

The corresponding manifestations of these three levels of reception are also threefold: physical perception through concentration (dharana), mental

1. Noting with the senses (tone with ears or image with eyes).
2. Reception through feeling (What is the *meaning* of this or that symbol?)
3. Nothing; the reception "speaks for itself" because everything conceptual is eliminated.

Nothing much can be said about No. 1. It means perception and nothing more, in the way an animal perceives: pure sensory perception. This is the ar

Processes on the second plane are considered more complicated, for here we have to presume an immanent spiritual primordial entity, which resembles

Before the student begins his meditation on the symbols suggested by his guru he has to root them and their inner meaning within himself, for it is

Before beginning to work with these symbols meditatively he must take his *main* (rosary) and pronounce every syllable of the given sound symbol (*man*

Mantra becomes the key word, yantra the guidepost to the inner worlds whose source he must find. These inner spheres are fundamentally, primordiall

(2-7) I now will speak of samadhi, which conquers death and which leads to bliss and union with Brahman. --Raja yoga, samadhi, unmani, manomani, in

from the union of the jivatman and the paramatman. When mind thus is calm we are in samadhi.

The last two slokas contain three pairs of juxtaposed terms: mind and atman; mind and prana (breath); jivatman and paramatman. To understand the me

Mind and atman: "A. thought [mind] has just come to me [atman]," says the student. "To whom?" asks the guru. "To whom came what, and where did it c

Mind and breath'. "Here is a process," the student thinks during pranayama, "and I am detached, watching the process." This reflection is the contr

Jivatman and paramatman: Jivatman is the individual self, paramatman the absolute, the divine Self. The universe consists of energy and matter, not

(8-9) He who recognizes the true meaning of raja yoga can by the grace of the guru achieve realization, liberation, inner steadfastness and the sid

The "grace of the guru" is his readiness to hand the student the key to success: the yantras, the mantras, and their application.

More important at this stage is the "indifference to worldly things." The professional theater critic is not supposed to be detached from the world

Yet it would be an error to understand this uncritical attitude as blind acceptance of every deception. The critical intellect can absorb only the

But with this he immediately closes the door to a real understanding of spiritual principles or religion.

Lack of thought is not advocated as a principle; the capacity to break the fetters of the intellect at the crucial moment is what really counts. Si

(10) When the kundalini has been raised through the practice of osanas, kumbhakas and mudras, then emptiness [sunya] absorbs prana.

Emptiness (from any discriminating intellect) and the process of the prana current become one; thus all inner forces are concentrated on the one pro

(11) The yogi who has raised the kundalini and has freed himself from all clinging karma will reach samadhi naturally.

(12) When prana flows through the sushumna and the mind is dissolved in emptiness [sunya] then the perfect yogi destroys all karma.

Thus Samadhi is the karma-free state. One could also say: the state of consciousness established in oneness neutralizes the effects of fate.

Indian religion assumes that the fate of man is the natural result of his deeds. "As you think and act, so you create your fate," is the saying. The

This karma (result of action) exists only as long as man is dependent on the relative values of this world. If his consciousness is established in

(13) Salutation to Thee, oh Immortal One. Even time, into whose jaws falls the movable and immovable universe, has been conquered by Thee.

Samadhi is the most prodigious, the most far-reaching achievement of a yogi. For, being free from time, as he is in this state, he is also beyond time

Of course he is not liberated with his first successful practice, for in this samadhi the karmic seeds that lie dormant within him are not destroyed

relationship; in manipura chakra the karma resulting from ambitions for power.

Samadhi, of course, is not the only way to liberation, but it is the most radical and within the framework of this particular yoga the most essential

CHAPTER 12

MIND AND BREATH

mind and prana, so it is said, are one, and thus mind and breath are interdependent. Where there is breath there is thought; without breath the act

These rather unusual assertions must be investigated further, for they are the core of raja yoga. It is not by accident that the German word *Atem* (breath)

We are aware of some of our thought processes, among others those that bring the self into reality: this is "self-consciousness." Everything that I

of experience, and that I therefore already have that karma-producing element (the previously-experienced object) "within" me. And my relation to that

To the Indian mind it means that we are under an illusion so long as we consider the self as a constant unit that which exists in itself and does not

The illusion about human personality is fundamental. Where do we get our concept of human personality? As long as we do not get to the root of this

We watch our conversation partner, recognizing "in him" his personality. We consciously look above all at the eyes, presuming that these organs, de

The human personality *is* not "in-itself," it only *becomes*, within us. If we look mechanically at the surface we see nothing but the surface. Our inner

So let us look with nonmechanical eyes behind the surface, then we see the image of the object within ourselves inwardly. "Seeing" is only a small

This, our personality-shaping inner world in its sum total, is atman. Yet the thousand little stones that make up a mosaic are, in their multitude,

These countless elements of consciousness are united into the living total personality through prana, which has its source in breath. Thus the spirit

(14) When the mind is still, united with the atman, and prana flows through the sushumna then [even the extraordinary] amaroli, vayoli and sahojoli

In other words, there is no limit to the extent of accomplishments.

(15) How can one reach perfection of knowledge [jnana] when the breath is still living [in consciousness] and the mind [as a manifesting force sepa

(16) Once he knows the secret, how to find the way to the sushumna and how to induce the air to enter it, he should settle down in a suitable place

We already know why this is necessary. The chakras, these activity centers of karma, have been penetrated, and since the yogi's karma has thus been

(17) Sun and moon cause day and night. The sushumna [however] swallows time. This is a secret.

Here is an odd fact: if you observe the flow of breath for a whole day you will observe that you breathe more intensely at times through the right

One can (and frequently does) even out the imbalance by intensified one-sided pranayama. But the yogi has another method which, though applied exte

Normally the prana flow automatically changes in a regular rhythm, usually every two hours.

The reference here to the sun and the moon is not, as previously implied, to the source of nectar and its opposite pole in the area of the diaphrag

If prana is to enter sushumna then there must be neither "day" nor "night"; breath must flow precisely evenly through both nostrils. This in turn p

(18-23) There are 72,000 nadis in this cage [body]. Sushumna is the central nadi which contains the shabhavi shakti. This has the property of besto

The deepest sense of this yoga will be understood only by one who is convinced that from physical process to psychological experience and religious

topical one as long as the human race exists. The last word on it can never be expected, for each culture, even each phase of individual life prese

(24) Mind and prana are related to each other like milk and water. If the one dries up the other one also dries up. In whatever chakra the prana is

The fact that men's cultural levels differ so greatly is not simply a problem of society; nor does it depend on ambition, or even on intelligence.

Genius is the product of the highest development potential of that chakra by which it lives. As long as our mind is not nourished by that same chakra

The chakra determines whatever level of development we are on, and this level determines the measure of our consciousness.

(25-27) The one is dependent on the other. They [mind and prana] act in unison. Suspension of one causes suspension of the other. Without intervent

Alchemy and magic--or only kindred symbols? Mercury is the symbolic square of the earth, the mulandhara chakra. The alchemical process represents t

(28) When mind is held fast, prana is also held fast, as is the bindu in which the sattva element of the body is established.

In the first sloka of Part Four we translated the word *bindu* as "sense," (that is, the principle of intelligence). However, the word is so ambiguous

Period (dot). It does not stand like a tombstone at the end of a Sanskrit sentence, but is the sign for vocal vivification. The dot above the conso

The zero. Just as the dot is both a "nothing" and the symbol for sense, so is zero. By itself it is a symbol of no-thing. Added to a figure it incre

The seed. Only when it falls upon fertile ground can it sprout. Like the dot, like the zero. And here the latent value is especially clear.

The void. Here again it is the meaning that makes emptiness purposeful.

Thirty spokes unite around the nave. The void between them makes them useful as a wheel. We shape a pot from clay.

Its usefulness depends upon the void that clay surrounds. The house is made of walls, windows and doors. The void between the walls makes it a habi

Now it should be clear why *bindu* means "sense." The *sattva* principle in which the "sense" is founded is fulfilled purity in the saint, who is all s

(29-30) Dissolution [laya] depends on nada. Laya produces prana. Prana is the lord of the mind [mano]; mind is the lord of the senses [indriyas]. W

We enter a church and feel the *sattva* element that governs the lofty sacred room. Something like a shiver of enchantment pene-

trates us. It is *bindu* that (for a moment) transfigures us. We know that it has to do with the divine, to which this place is dedicated. We know it

So much for our everyday experience. For the yogi approaching samadhi, the process is reversed: he has recognized the meaningful germ, bindu, within

Therefore, like the ancient master mystics, he turns inward and finds liberation in detachment from the releasing element. For liberation means "no

CHAPTER 13

THE DISSOLUTION

on a cold winter night a wandering monk sought shelter in a desolate mountain temple. A cold wind was whistling through the paper walls and the fro

"You are burning the sacred image of our Lord! Can't you see? It is the Buddha you are burning!"

The monk smiled. "Do you believe we can burn our Lord? Don't you know that the spirit of enlightenment is indestructible? Wait until this mortal wo

The guardian shook his fists. "It will be too late. You will find nothing in the ashes." "Nothing?" exclaimed the stranger. "Tell me, did you hold

The strange monk was Nanzen, one of the great patriarchs of Zen.

Everyone can test his relationship to the essence of a concept. Is it the thing itself that represents the value, or is it something

subtler, something intangible? What is saintly in the saint? What is beautiful in the beautiful? It is our subjective thinking that creates values,

The activity of the mind always projects beyond our momentary situation, overlooks the essential, the Being, and focuses on Becoming. But it is onl

Will, however, is the great protagonist of passive contemplation. The more active elements the yogi can discard--breathing, thinking, desiring, act

Not-doing in doing. Practice this And know the unknowable.

Lao-tzu, *Tao Te Ching* 63

(31-33) The yogi who does not inhale or exhale and whose senses have become passive, whose mind does not register anything [no longer experiences s

Avidya (ignorance) controls the senses. In other words, the attraction of the satisfying, purposeful, agreeable-seeming, influ-ences the senses and

To hear this fact and read about it will not cause any inner change; only when you yourself *recognize* it can you master the senses. Intellectual co

This is the principle of the power of cognition: not to develop a new opinion, but to dissolve all dynamic active elements in Brahman. To contempla

A man rising before sunrise searches for a lantern and cannot be persuaded by his friend that he does not need it. When he steps out of the house t

All opinions that do not result from direct experience are formed under the influence of relative experience. Experience is fate, experience is kar

(34) Laya, laya, people say. But what if laya? --Laya if the state of forgetting [the subjectively colored images of] the objects of the senses, wh

But this cannot be accomplished by an act of will, for it is the acts of will themselves that block the way to evolution. There is only one way: to

Only the suddenly rising sun which illumines the whole path ahead of us can show us not only the windings of the road that we read on the map, but

CHAPTER 14

(35) The Vedas, the Shastras and the Puranas are like prostitutes [attainable to all]. The shambhavi mudra, however, is like a chaste woman, careful

Wisdom was never secret in the Orient Secret are only the paths to wisdom.

The intellectually created world of concepts has been dissolved. Now let's return to the man who created a new world by the two levels of vibration

(36) Shambhavi mudra consists in fixing the mind inwardly [on any one of the chakras], and fixing the eyes without blinking on an external object.

What does the yogi do at this stage of training? How does he practice?

He rises at 4:00 a.m., the hour of Brahma, cleans his breathing organs and sits down on his tiger skin.⁶ After the introductory practices (such as

We will not analyze the sound in the ear here (see Chapter 15), but will concern ourselves merely with the question of what happens to this sound.

The mantra consists of various sound elements, each of which has a different function to fulfill. The introduction usually consists of the pranava

At the same time, if the yogi is not fully in possession of the yantra inwardly, he fastens his gaze upon the form symbol, the yantra, and imagines

6. Only yogis who lead a strictly celibate life use tiger skin. The others use antelope skin. The reason for this is the difference in the power of

scat of the deity. The deity reposes in the chakra, the yantra is the expression of the divinity and of the chakra, the mantra synchronizes with the

Add to this the proscribed color scale of the emanation of divine light and there is little room left for distracting thoughts. Many Indian and Tib

(37) It is rightfully called shambhavi mudra, when mind and prana are absorbed by the object, when the eyes become rigid in the contemplation of the

Everything is Siva: everything is kala (light-waves, form, yantra, manifestation of the divine image in all its forms), nada (sound waves, sound)

Before getting to the central point of this chapter we have to answer a question. The culminating point of Part Three was khecari mudra (the upcurled

(38) Shambhavi mudra and khecari mudra, although they differ in the position of the eyes and the point of concentration, are one in that they bring

The position of the eyes corresponds to the direction of concentration. In khecari mudra the point lies between the eyebrows from where the nectar

In the region of heat animal life manifests, while there is little influence of the logos (bindu). However, in the region of kala (the upper zone of

Let us consider the form symbol in all its varied aspects: The cross in Christianity, the half-moon in Islam, the star in Judaism. The yantra has a

This light, although it has its subtler aspect, should not be considered mystical. It is first of all something that appears quite naturally. The l

ance in themselves. Radiance only unfolds in the heart of the devotee through his devotion, and even differs-according to the intensity of the devo

The "inner light" does not imply an immanent meaning for the image symbol, but has a purely emotional value. It is not the meaning that is essential

(39-40) Direct your [inner] gaze upon "light" by slightly raising the eyebrows. Then perform shambhavi mudra as you have learned it. This induces s

One hazard which is more or less inherent in all religions is that they promise more to the devotee than he will be able to experience, unless he p

Mantra as divine name and yantra as divine form leave no room for fantasy. And thus these active forces of realization, to which even the physical

(41) With half-closed eyes focused on the tip of the nose, the mind steadily fastened [on its object], and the active prana current of the ida and

"In the form of radiating light." does this mean that the divine image here becomes the physically perceptible "radiating light"? Yes, indeed. Expe

It is not the object perceived through the senses that radiates, nor is it radiance from the heavenly spheres. A new organ of perception, so to spe

7. Philo fudaeus: ". . . and the divine light precipitated itself like a flood upon the soul, and it is blinded by its radiance." Plotinui: "The vi

recognizing its psycho-physical nature inevitably falls into the error of taking the luminous image as something self-existing. He believes that Go

At present everything connected with this subtle organ and the "light" is, as far as science is concerned, a matter of faith, just as the theory of

(42) Do not worship the lingam, neither by day nor by night. Only when day and night have been transcended should the lingam be worshipped--unceasi

This important sloka throws a significant light upon the whole of Hindu religiosity.

The lingam, the much disputed phallic symbol of the Sivaites, stands for this subtler aspect of all things, for the divine light; the primeval ling

"Neither by day nor by night." We remember that ida and pingala stand for sun and moon, thus for day and night. Day and night are overcome as soon

Day and night are also the signs of time, which is conquered in samadhi. Everything that occurs in time belongs to worldly consciousness, to the im

A worship that venerates the lingam as a concept is not the kind of devotion that is required for deep results, deep experience. The Indian does no

(43-50) When prana flows naturally through the two nadis then there is no obstacle to khecari mudra. This is beyond doubt. --When the prana current

But what has happened to yantra arid mantra? Why are we going back to Part Three?

Once the yogi has reached the fourth stage, he is all too apt to forget the technical requirements, which can lead him into the greatest difficulti

If no mention is made here of the shambhavi mudra, of mantras and yantras, we must not forget that these are inner events, while khecari mudra is a

(51) When the outer breath ceases, the inner breath [prana production] also ceases. Prana current and mind current become passive when they reach t

Human spirit is impelled only as long as it has a goal before its eyes. Once the goal is reached, the spirit remains there for a certain time. This

When the mind of the yogi returns to its own Self after its everyday sense-related activities it is relaxed, for with the subsiding breath during p

The prana he needs is in the sushumna and is kept active there by the blazing flame of life. All life is concentrated there.

(52) When one thus practices control of breath day and night, the prana becomes more passive in the course of time and mind is naturally compelled

For as soon as the prana becomes passive it unfolds its highest effectiveness in the sushumna; and as soon as mind is passive the real nature of th

(53) When the body is thus bathed in the nectar stream of the moon it becomes strong and hardy.

In other words, when the fire is burning fiercely enough there is no danger to life and limb.

(54) Place the mind in the shakti, [the manifesting power of nature, kundalini] and the shakti [as "lighf''] in the mind through meditation; then m

To listen "with ear in heart" is the most crucial factor in the whole process of meditation. This is the true insight, the prerequisite of all East

(55-56) The I [atman] alt in [empty] space, and empty the I (of conceptualbeing). When thus everything is empty [withoutlime and space] then the

A pertinent simile! An empty pot at the bottom of the ocean. Water inside and out. Is the pot empty or full? Empty yet full; full yet empty. He who

(57-58) He should not think of external things; all personal thoughts he should give up also: abandon all subjective and objective thoughts. --The

(59) Mind concentrated on the atman becomes one with it like camphor with the flame, like salt with the water of the ocean.

Then there is no I of which thought is aware, for I and thought have been absorbed into each other, because thinking is no longer attached to the o

(60) Mind and object of contemplation have been absorbed in each other so that there is no longer any duality.

The great symbol of this union is the union in love of man and woman. Therefore the Upanisbads say: "The atman is as great as man and woman in clos

(61-64) The animate and the inanimate universe is a creation of the mind. in samadhi there is only oneness. When all sense perceptions are suspende

CHAPTER 15

NADA, THE INNER SOUND

the concept of prayer is well known. Here, however, we are not concerned with prayer but with mantra, though a certain relationship does exist betw

For example: every Christian prayer closes with an "Amen." "Amen" is in itself completely neutral until it is preceded by a prayer. In that case, "

has a disturbing influence and is immediately conspicuous. Thus we go to church festively dressed so as to attract the full measure of sattvic vibr

Just as the inward light is kindled by the image symbol, so also through the sound symbol the inner sound is awakened, the nada, the most subtle as

(65) I now shall describe the practice of nada, as has been proclaimed by Gorakshanath, and as it is accepted even by those who are unable to reali

It is "the dissolution of image and concept" (laya) in a spontaneous experience which has from time immemorial been considered the highest spiritua

(66) Lord Siva has shown innumerable paths to laya, but it seems to me that the practice of nada is the best of them all.

The reason for this is perhaps the fact that it seems easier to deal with the sound symbol than with the image, and that the inner sound is easier

(67) He seats himself in siddhasana and assumes shambhavi mudra, listening to the inner sound that rings in his right ear,

And why not in the left ear? *Dakshina* means "right" but also "good, propitious, capable." So it really says here "in the true ear," and this is the

(68) Close ears, nose, mouth, and eyes, then you will distinctly hear a clear sound in the sushumna, which has been purified by pranayama.

The reader will perhaps feel impelled to make an experiment and to listen inwardly. Futile effort! He will hear nothing like this "sound." Why?

Would the yogi be compelled to go through three stages of hard practice if he only needs to close up his ears in order to perceive the inner sound?

(69) All yoga practices contain four stages: introduction [aram-bha]. transition [ghata], attainment [paricaya], and perfection [nishpatti].

This is valid for yoga in general, for the individual systems as shown by the division of our text, as well as for each specific practice; in fact

(70-71) In the first stage [arambhavastha], when the heart chakra [brahma granthi] is pierced, we hear tingling sounds ti^e jewels in the space of t

The sound which in the region of the throat was still sound, has now penetrated to the heart and there meets prana. A feeling rises like a deep hap

(72) In the second stage prana and nada become one, and [this one] enter[s] the middle [heart] chakra. The asanas become effective now and divine w

Union is accomplished and the chalice with its golden pearl-- that pearl which will later expand into a whole new world-- extends upward toward hig

We remember that the inner sound of the mantra is to emanate from one of the chakras. The sound then takes on the vibration frequency of the respec

In order not to underestimate the value of this practice, we must remember an earlier practice that related to the physical aspect of sound, the au

At that time we knew no more than what we heard. Now, this impressive sound, created with the aid of the personal mantra, is not projected into spa

(73) When the vishnu granthi in the throat is pierced [by the vibrations] it is a sign that divine bliss [brahma ananda] will follow. In the sound

This is the subtler aspect of the rumbling and roaring that we came to know in the bhramari kumbhaka, the effect of which is here even more impress

(74) On the third stage a sound like that of a mardala [a different kind of drum] is perceived, in the space between the eyebrows. With this the vi

This too we have encountered in its gross physical form in the bhramari kumbhaka, but since now the sound is not produced by the vocal cords it is

"Arise!" the angel calls out to Mohammed in the desert, and the sound symbol of the warning angel's voice is the sound of bells, and thus prayer, c

(75) Having overcome the blissful slate of the mind he experiences the happiness that arises from cognition of the atman. Then he is delivered of a

Greater than happiness is equanimity. Happiness is the goal of man, equanimity is the divine goal. Immutable are the gods

alone. Humanity swings like a pendulum between desire for happiness and enjoyment of happiness. He who voluntarily renounces his happiness and neve

(76) After the vibration has pierced the last k(not [the agna chakra], the forehead's center [of consciousness], it rises to the divine place. With

Let us stop analyzing. Our experience does not suffice to understand the meaning of the sound of the flute of Krishna, or the vina of the divine me

(77-83) When the mind becomes unified, this is raja yoga. The yogi, now master of creation and destruction, becomes one with God. --Whether or not

The state of dissolution [laya] arising from the [inner sound] nada creates this spontaneous experience. --[All] yogis who have reached the state o

The power of the internal sound, its meaning as an audible designation of our personality, is a thousand times stronger than the logical combinatio

Now the mantra is that name which is the common property of both the jivatman and the paramatman (the self and the Self).

At first it is separateness that impinges upon our ears. There is still an I and a Thou, the one who perceives and the one who is perceived: the dy

At the beginning of an acquaintance a name only tells us *who* the person is. Later on it stands for the sum total of *what* the person is, what we hav

(84-85) During the initial stage of practice various strong sounds are audible, but as progress is made they become more and more refined. --At fin

In Bhramari kumbhaka the yogi's ears may ring. In shambhavi mudra his physical ears are deaf, but the ear in the heart hears the fortissimo of inne

The multiple colors blind the eyes The multiple sounds deafen the ear

Therefore the sage cultivates his person And does not crave to see.

Too Te Ching. 12

(87-89) Even as the loud sounds [still] ring out, one should concentrate on the subtle sound [in the heart]. --One may well let the attention swing

Do not become impatient! If you are again and again captivated by the roaring sound in the physical car then the watchword is practice and wait. Ma

(90) Just as the bee who drinks the flower's honey is not concerned with its scent, so also the mind, when absorbed in sound, does not care about t

The scent attracts the bee who forgets it while sucking the honey. The senses attract consciousness which, in nada, the experience beyond the sense

(91-92) The sharp iron prong of nada can effectively curb the [elephant] mind when it wants to gambol in the pleasure garden of the sense-objects.

(93) He who wishes to reach the mastery of yoga should renounce all his [restless] thoughts and practice with carefully concentrated mind the disso

In a concert, in the cathedral or in the poet's word, the "sound" is always there where an immortal spirit has dipped into the deepest sources of l

(94) The inner sound [the bindu] is like a trap to capture the gazelle [the mind]; like a hunter, it kills the animal [conceptual thought].

Every word of every language has this inner sound. We hear it readily in the words of our own language which are to us more than sheer letter forma

until one fine day the inner sound of the new words manifests itself. Conceptual thought then becomes superfluous. As long as one has to think abou

(95-96) The inner sound is like a bolt on the stable door that keeps the horse [conceptual thinking] from roaming about, Therefore the yogi should

Brahman is Om (Aurn), and this is kala, nada, and bindu; Siva is the aspect of Brahman as destroyer. He who destroys concepts and liberates the Abs

(97) When the mind [free of concepts] comes to know, it does not run toward the ringing sound [in the physical ear] like a [curious] serpent.

This is the famous characteristic of the wise man: lack of curiosity, because he experiences greater things within himself. Only he who is not self

(98-99) The fire that burns a piece of wood dies out when the wood has been consumed. So also the mind when it remains concentrated on nadam (and o

The Upanishad says: "Prana is the bow, atman the arrow, Brahman the target. He who carefully aims at the target becomes one with it." Atman and Bra

(100-102) The absolute consciousness [caitanya] cognizes the nada-sound in the heart while the antakharana [mind] becomes one with caitanya. When t

As we have now ascertained, there is no real difference between the "inner light" (kala) as described in the previous chapter and the inner sound (

*This is the only case where Ricker's translation deviates from the literal translation of the text, which reads: "The mind is like a serpent; forg

bindu, the sense. All three powers (kala, nada and bindu) in absolute form are Siva; in their active power they are shakti. Siva and Shakti are one

Our imaginary human creator now has everything that he needs: energy and matter in all their aspects. The gross material aspect as sound and light;

(103) All hatha yoga practices serve only for the attainment of raja yoga. He who is accomplished in raja yoga overcomes death.

To "overcome death" does not mean to become immortal, for what is the body? It means power over all that which escapes consciousness at the time of

(104-114) Mind is the seed, pranayama the soil, dispassion [vairagya] the water. Out of these three grows the tree that fulfills all wishes. --Thro

EPILOGUE

when I review what I could gather from the few hidden saints I met in India my impression is twofold. The state of enlightenment, the state that pr

The reader who now concludes (quite understandably) that despite his desire for the power of a siddha, the practise of yoga is not for Western man,

There are today in India thousands of yogis and hundreds of masters. There are perhaps a few dozen who have realized the highest level of raja yoga

Should we not at least make a beginning and take a few steps toward mastery? For the danger of developing too little yoga and becoming a victim of

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING

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