

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON KRIYA YOGA, Babaji's Kriya Yoga's Five-fold Path

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Abstract

Babaji's Kriya yoga is the scientific process of attaining God's union and self-realization. It has been grouped under five categories. It is also called as five-fold path of kriya yoga. It was revealed by Great Master Kriya Babaji. They are Kriya Hatha Yoga, Kriya Kundalini Pranayama, Kriya Dharana yoga, Kriya Mantra yoga and Kriya Bhakti Yoga. The practice of Kriya Yoga is done under the supervision of a Guru. Kriya Yoga offers initiations that both empowers the breath and gives techniques to concentrate the mind to ensure one hundred percent participation in that pursuit. A disciplined, integrated daily practice of asana, pranayama, mantra, meditation and devotion will create the power, necessary to raise our energy and consciousness to such a degree that we begin to see from a new perspective.

Key words: Kriya Hatha Yoga, Kriya Kundalini Pranayama, Kriya Dharana yoga, Kriya Mantra yoga and Kriya Bhakti Yoga

Introduction

Yoga is a Sanskrit word which means "to join". It is the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. Kriya Babaji was a great Indian Siddha and taught us the powerful kriya yoga. He taught the kriya babaji to Lahiri Mahasaya. Babaji's Kriya Yoga is a five-fold path which includes Kriya Hatha Yoga for the physical body, Kriya Kundalini Pranayama for the vital body, the seat of the emotions, Kriya Dharana yoga (meditation) for the mental body, the rational mind, and the seat of the senses, Kriya Mantra yoga for the higher mind of the intellectual body, and Kriya Bhakti Yoga for the spiritual body, the body of bliss. These purify the individual consciousness at all five levels of existence, an integrated foundation for enduring peace, love and equanimity. So, when all these five limbs are practiced together it affects one own's body, mind and makes blissful.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to find out the various path to kriya yoga and to understand the process and evolution of it.

Methodology

This study merely focusses on descriptive research. This research methodology is essential to find the answers to our primary and secondary questions. The three main purposes of a research are to describe, to explain and to validate findings. The main objective of descriptive study is to describe a particular phenomenon focusing on what is happening rather than why it is happening.

Babaji's Kriya Hatha Yoga

Babaji's Kriya Yoga teaches a foundation of 18 asana variations. The 18 asanas are the salutation pose, salutation to the sun, Sarvangasana, Matsyasana, Uttanasana, Dhanurasana, Vibareetakarani, Ardha Matysana, Halasana, Bhujangasana, Yoga Mudrasana, Pathi Chakrasana, Paschimotasana, salabasana, Vajroli Mudrasana, Supta Vajrasana, Trikonasana and Shavasana. When practising these asanas, a person can be transformed into a divine body and used as an aid to self-realisation. The practice of Babaji's Hatha Yoga, 18 asanas with surya namaskar series and makes the subtle body and to prepare it for deep states of meditation. This series of asanas when practiced daily with the kriyas (repetitive micro-movements) deeply and thoroughly massage and cleanse energy pathways and strengthen organs and systems throughout the physical

body, in addition to stimulating the awakening of the kundalini shakti, by generating an internal heat. The intensity of a daily practice greatly benefits us both physically and spiritually. For indeed, it is the daily repetition, practicing patiently with ever increasing perseverance, which generates this internal heat. The physical movements of the asana alone strengthen the body and the developing awareness can bring success in day-to-day activities. The daily practice of Kriya (action with awareness) Hatha Yoga, which combines awareness with physical control, activates the process of realizing who one truly is who we are is pure consciousness residing in a body. Our life is interspersed with movements from all our planes of existence, our thoughts, emotions, tensions, sense perceptions and our memories. By practicing the Hatha yoga our body is relaxed. It purifies the physical body, mind and the subtle energies. It develops the detachment from external forces. It awakens the divine power from the inner being. Awakens the Kundalini Shakthi. It purifies us on all five levels of existence. To purify and calm the mind is to purify a certain function of consciousness, but it has to be supported by work on the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels. These asanas as a science can teach us to have awareness of the physical body as a whole without separating it into mind, body, and sensations.

Kriya Kundalini pranayama

Pranayama is the yogic technique to bring the breathing in regularity, rhythmic and balanced. Lot of techniques are involved in pranayama. Generally, pranayama is defined as breath control. The word pranayama is composed of two roots – Prana and Ayama. Prana means “vital energy” or “life force”. It is the force, which exists in all things, whether animate or inanimate. Although closely related to the air we breathe, it is subtler than air or oxygen. Therefore, pranayama should not be considered as mere breathing exercise aimed at introducing extra oxygen into the lungs. Pranayama utilizes breathing influence the flow of prana in the nadis or energy channels of the pranayama kosha or energy body.

The word Ayama means “extension or expansion”. Thus, the word pranayama means “extension or expansion of the dimension of prana”. The techniques of pranayama provide the method whereby the life force can be activated and regulated in order to go beyond one’s normal boundaries or limitations and attain a higher state of vibrative energy.

Breath is the engine of life. It is the golden link that strengthens our consciousness and simultaneously binds our mind to the body. It imbues us with life and animation through three dynamic threads of energy known as *gunas*: *raja*, *tama*, and *sattva*. Cutting through the *gunas* or *Maya*, the field of cosmic universal energies, the breath is our “Lifeline to the Divine”, the ineffable source of all creation. Breath is the primordial umbilical cord that feeds and nourishes the *jivatman* inhabiting *panchakosha*, the five sheaths of the human being. These sheaths or garments range from subtle form to dense physicality, and correspond to respective *lokas*, spheres or planes of existence. *Brahman*, *Satchidananda*, *Siva*, *Christ*, etc., the Source of Life, is said among Yoga traditions to be Luminous, Infinite and Unchanging. And within It, our subtle-most body originates, *anandamayakosha*, the Heart of *Purusha*. Yogananda’s guru, Sri Yukteswar, in his profound work *The Holy Science*, explains,

“This *Purusha*, the Son of God, is screened by five coverings called the *koshas* or sheaths. The first of these five is Heart, *Chitta*, the Atom, composed of four ideas (word, time, space, atom), which feels or enjoys, and thus being the seat of bliss, *ananda*, is called *Anandamaya Kosha*.”

From this Light-body of bliss, and its Life in God; Life-force, also known as *Prana* is inhaled through the *koshas*, drawn outward ; unto the *vijnanamayakosha*, the luminous mind of *buddhi* or wisdom; unto *manomayakosha*, the mind directed unto *maya*, the creation ; unto the *pranamayakosha*, the etheric vital body that directly sustains ; the *annamayakosha*, the food body, the physical *kosha*. In this realization, the living experience of breath is commonly drawing energy from within, from inner to outer, from subtle to dense.

The mind can turn within upon the breath, and use it as the principal Chariot of awakening and Self-realization. It is the engine of *Kriya Yoga*, the dynamic force of “intense practice”, “Self-study” and *Ishvara-pranidhana*, union with God. Through breath mastery, both the personal and impersonal aspects of Godhead are realized.

“Prana is the soul of the universe, assuming all forms; he is the light that animates and illumines all: even as it is written “*The wise know him who assumes all forms, who is radiant,*

who is all knowing, who is the one light that gives light to all. He rises as the sun of a thousand rays, and abides in infinite places."

Kriya kundalini pranayama as a powerful practice of **Saucha**, even at the cellular level.

Santosha, contentment is largely made possible by the wellbeing of the body, as physical suffering is a primary deterrent to contentment. Therefore, *pranayama* as the chief mental and physical support of health and vitality, facilitates *santosha* which may be viewed as equanimity and peace, even within all given circumstances of life. Mentally, contentment is a further development and stable integration of *saucha*; and these two fundamental *niyamas*, are essential kindling and fuel to the fire of Life.

Tapas, intense practice, conveys the heart of *Kriya Yoga*. Any soul blessed to find it is graced by God. Whereas modern *yoga* practice has trended towards physical exercise, historically *yoga* practice has been contemplative in nature, and physical postures were based in stillness. In other words, "sitting". In this context, *tapas* largely refers to the discipline of sitting still; which is why *Yoga* texts such as the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* present details of numerous meditation postures. *Kriya Yoga* traditions share this history of sitting practice, and have empowered the aspirant with breathing methods that are a perfect complement to meditation.

Kriya Mantra Yoga

We know the power of words. Whether we are speaking or thinking about them, the words affect not only others but also ourselves. So, we should choose our words wisely. Repeating the same words or thoughts, it remains in our mind and psyche. Repeating the same words or thoughts over and over affect on deeper and deeper levels. For good or bad, it will carry the message deeper within our subconscious and even into the cells of our physical body.

The mantras used in *Kriya yoga* protect the mind from imperfections of ordinary thinking, by moving attention away from any agitation. Thirumular says that, "OM" mantra saves the one who reflects". By repeating the mantra, it is absorbed that negativity in our thoughts, desires, aversions and emotions are removed. Even strong emotions like hatred can be neutralized by chanting right mantra.

By combining potent mantra with the rhythm of the breath we can gain access to the subconscious as well as conscious and remove even deeply held patterns of hate, fear, anger and sorrow. If we regularly practice Mantra yoga our mind becomes relaxed.

Guru Mantra

Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum
(The guru mantra of Babaji's Kriya Yoga)

Om is pranava, the primordial sound of the Universe that runs through the prana. **Kriya** is "action with awareness," which is both the vehicle and the destination of practitioners of *Kriya Yoga*, by making all of our actions the object of awareness. **Babaji** is the Guru of the *Kriya Yoga* tradition, who synthesized its ancient teachings and who has disseminated them in modern times.

Nama is Salutations or "I call to you"
Aum the primordial sound resonating within

This guru mantra, *Om Kriya Babaji Nama Aum*, has the power to connect our pulse to the pulse of Babaji, tuning us into the Grace of the legendary Himalayan *Siddha*, Kriya Babaji Nagaraj. Through the mantra he reveals himself to his Devotees. Through its repetition the inner guru, or supreme intelligence abiding in the crown chakra becomes accessible. The mantra is shakti, conscious energy. It has power, as the Guru transmits his shakti through the mantra and the shakti enters the disciple through the mantra. The root of the mantra is the guru's word, and indeed, the mantra is a form of the guru himself.

The silent mental repetition of subtle sounds to awaken the intuition, the intellect and the chakras; the mantra becomes a substitute for the "I" - centered mental chatter and facilitates the accumulation of great amounts of energy. The mantra also cleanses habitual subconscious tendencies.

Bija mantras arouse out of "Adharas". The sounds like "Om, Na, Mah, Si, V, Ya" arouse from them. "Om or Am" arises from Mulamandhara. "Na or Vam" from Svadhisthana. "Mah or Ram" from manipura. "Si or Yam" from Anahata. "Va or Ham" from Visudhi. "Ya or Om" from Ajna. Different mantras reflect various state of consciousness. These mantras are powerful seeds of purified energy that arouse out of sound radiating power. They are subtle, luminous sounds inaccessible to the external senses. By regularly chanting the mantra silently, a person develops an inner calmness and strength to maintain *kriya* discipline. The vibration, which is created from these sounds, mingles with prana to purify the mind and intellect. Mantras connect to the pulsations of the universe to the root of the mind. The mind is expanded, opening itself to the illumination of the sound itself. At this deeper level we cultivate divine qualities such as love,

compassion, truthfulness, kindness, insightfulness, beauty discipline and endurance. The mantra's vibration reaches the soul of a prepared initiate and stimulates the awakening of those qualities within it.

The mantra of Kriya yoga has the potential to take the mind into pure "I" awareness. The mind becomes fixed on the vibration of the mantra and begins to vibrate within it. The individual soul and the pulsation of the Supreme Soul ultimately vibrates in harmony. As long as there is mantra and the one repeating the mantra, duality remains.

Kriya Dharana Yoga

Kriya Dharana Yoga is the scientific art of mastering the mind and co-creating our life. They are unique. They develop in a positive and progressive way such that in each step of meditation they develop another level of consciousness. The dharana technique affect different level of consciousness. The different levels of consciousness are conscious, subconscious, unconscious, intellect and even super conscious. The main process of Dharana is to encourage us to become consciously aware of our mental conditioning, desires, aversions, cravings and then to continuously abandon them. Kriya meditation helps us to develop our inner sensing and open up our intuition. They explore the witnessing mind.

Witness consciousness is developed during meditation and we can experience it and become aware that we are observing our thoughts. We start watching our actions, thinking, feeling, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. The witness is eventually done in our daily lives.

The regular practice of Kriya Dharana Yoga helps to realize truth in meditation to penetrate to waking consciousness and become effective there. It is used to purify the subconscious mind, meditation helps to replace our habitual false thinking and acting with constructive movements and actions. The meditations focus on dynamic methods to strengthens the power of mind. They stimulate a steady flow of intuition, inspiration and movement to movement awareness applicable to life's challenge and mission.

This Kriya Dharana Yoga creates a discipline to regularly develop and utilize imagination in a creative manner. A human being is creative. He can become what he thinks. Imagination can project oneself, outside of realized things. These Dhyanas develop and direct that great power of imagination to affect change in our life.

Kriya Dharana Yoga explains that imagination is an instrument that must be disciplined. Imaginations that are built up realistically and consistently with detail and help to have a tendency to come about. When we add a life energy to the process it becomes a living force. Most of our imaginations are not steady and do not have life energy. Kriya Dharana Yoga provides the discipline required to direct and reorient imagination towards the goals of life.

The aim of the Kriya Dharana Yoga is to reach unity and alignment with the Supreme and its Will, becoming a co-creator in our life. It is not possible when the ego- motivated preferences are there. A variety of meditation techniques helps us to remove the ego-desires. These meditations lead us to an awareness of one true Self and help us to discover our dharma and the part we came to play.

Kriya Dharana Yoga takes us into the deepest states of mental peace, where there is awareness. This is the state of Samadhi, where the meditator and the meditation merge. In this state , we receive inspiration (Prajna) from creative consciousness , which then direct our life energy(prana) in all our activities, works, relationships.

Kriya Bhakti Yoga

The goal of Kriya Yoga is liberation of ego identification, sense-desire and attachment. It is our sense-desire and attachment that leads us on the path of pain and suffering. The Lord as love is required , in order to root out lust, anger, pride ,desire and envy. Kriya Bhakti Yoga helps us to invoke the "grace" of love into each Kriya practice, even in asana, Pranayama and mantra. Bhakti is an activity that feeds an internal fire, which fuels aspiration for the Lord as love as it purifies the ego.

A spiritual practice without true love and devotion leads to be in egoistic nature. In Bhakti yoga it is the love and devotion that develops the steadiness and firmness that is required to control the senses, through which the egoism is demolished. Kriya yoga demands that one become aware of the desires and aversions of the ego and learn to control them. But without this last step of expressing divine love and compassion, the true Self and nature, which is egoless love and compassion, can never be realized.

Devotional activities include chanting, personal worship or group rituals, but any gesture done with love, in contemplation of the Divine, even demanding God's attention is a means of devotion. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, all that is given freely and selflessly without seeking anything in return is devotion. Devotion kept quietly in the heart, yet demonstrated in a life of service, is a powerful means of purification. The activities are not in and of themselves important. Karma Yoga, or selfless service, is the form of Bhakti Yoga most highly respected by Babaji and the Siddhas. What is critical to progress in Babaji's Bhakti Yoga is the experience of uniting with and serving the Truth within and without.

Mantra repetition, meditation and compassionate service, along with worship and devotion, are forms of Kriya Bhakti Yoga. Even our asana and pranayama practice can become a form of ritual worship and all of these can have transformational power for one who has love, purity, humility and a one-pointed mind. Kriya Yoga yields transformative power as it helps us discover love in our own heart and stabilize it in our asana, pranayama, mantra, meditation, worship and service.

Devotion is intrinsic to the soul. Then a ray of the soul reaches the surface out of external being we glimpse that devotion. It is experienced as causeless joy or love, and we become aware of the vast divinity around us. Bhakti is a means of uncovering and developing nature of the soul. It is another way to freedom from conditioning and ultimately to transformation. Transformation comes naturally to anyone who is open to the immense power in devotion.

Devotion will open us to the descent of grace. Years of purification are required to develop the intense devotion necessary to fully purify and sanctify our thoughts. However true devotion can draw the grace required to consecrate all our thoughts, in a movement through devotion the mind can become so absorbed in the pure emotion of love that it is drawn into Bhava Sammadhi, which can be described inadequately as complete identification with love itself. Filled with pure sensation of Love, the body is forgotten along with the world. The mind is wholly absorbed in the Beloved. One begins to meditate on the Lord with eyes closed to the world, and to see the Lord with eyes open in the world, foregoing years of Yogic practices. This leads to equanimity, equality, compassion, self-giving and to a spirit of worship in all one sees, things and experiences. Such is a power of a devotional heart.

Bhakti yoga is surely a soul stirring means of understanding Spiritual truths. We need to possess nothing. We need to be a witness to everything. We are beads strung on the thread that is the Lord himself and that thread never breaks and we are never scattered. We see that the Divine holds in His hands all that we are and all that we think we possess and all that we do.

Conclusion

The awakening soul has influenced you to take up the spiritual path. Spiritual Progress requires some agreement between the mind and the ego. Therefore, whole being must be initiated into a path to establish the governance of the soul towards transformation. Kriya Yoga offers initiations that both empowers the breath and gives techniques to concentrate the mind to ensure one hundred percent participation in that pursuit. A disciplined, integrated daily practice of asana, pranayama, mantra, meditation and devotion will create the internal power necessary to raise our energy and consciousness to such a degree that we begin to see from a new perspective.

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