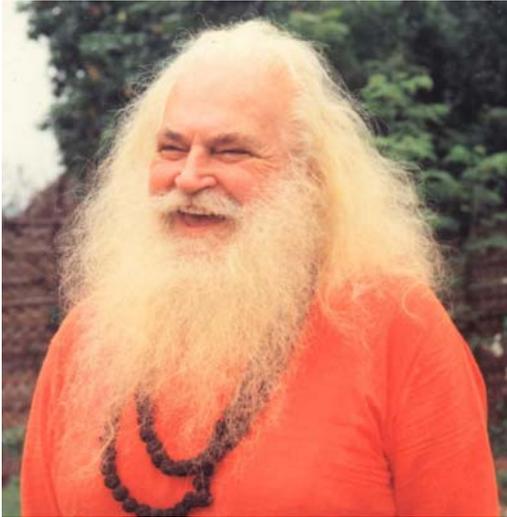


SOME CORE CONCEPTS OF GITANANDA YOGA



In a modern world where Yoga has been equated to mere physical postures with a little breath manipulation and so called mediation, Swamiji's contribution to the development of Yoga in the past century and his codification of the ancient teachings in a modern scientific manner is unparalleled. Swamiji's teachings like him are huge and seemly never ending in their depth. I am presenting some of the core concepts that I feel are a unique feature of this tradition that is now known as Gitananda Yoga or Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga tradition.

1. YOGA IS A WAY OF LIFE

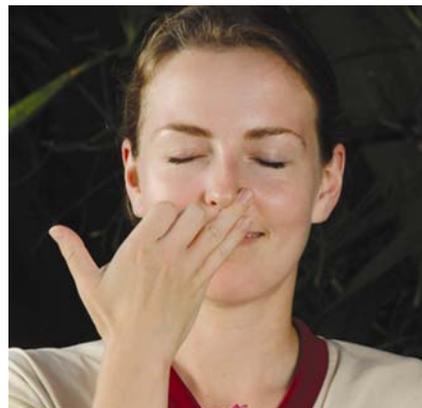
Yoga is not something you do but a way of life to be lived 60/60/24/7/365/x. This requires a lot of introspection, consciousness, awareness, dedication and determination. Easy to say, tough to do but Swamiji showed us how and it is unto us to follow him.

2. CREATE GURUS NOT FOLLOWERS

Swamiji never wanted to have a huge number of students or a huge million strong organisation. He was more interested in bringing out the potential inherent in each one of his students even if they later hated him for it! Each and every one of Swamiji's students is the best they could have been in this lifetime. Each is an individual and Swamiji brought out the best in each one. No stereotyping or mass mould production at all. Swamiji made them so aware of their Divine nature that many times they forgot him!!

3. BREATH IS LIFE

No other system comes close to Swamiji in terms of the vast repertoire and depth of his Pranayama teachings. Starting with the Vibhagha Pranayama and then step by step building up to more than 120 intricate Pranayamas is done in a manner that Prana, that vital cosmic catalyst fills every cell with life and light.



4. NO OPTION YOGA

Swamiji termed Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga as the No Option Yoga and placed great importance on a deep understanding of the Yamas and

Niyamas which are the firm foundation upon which the real Yoga life can be built. "You wouldn't build a colossal building without a foundation but you want to do it with Yoga?" he would ask numerous easy going aspirants who wanted some 'quick fix' Yoga.

5. STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Every aspect of Swamiji teachings follows a step by step structured approach that is easy to follow and methodical. Emphasis is placed on learning and re-learning the proceeding steps and then proceeding further. No shortcut please was his refrain for it is always better to be slow and steady than fast and sorry. The emphasis is on growing into the practice rather than forcing oneself into it and that is why the use of props and other contraptions that make Yoga so costly today have never been part of this tradition.

6. LOVE FOR INDIAN CULTURE

The major problem facing Yoga in the West is the fact that Yoga has been cleaved away from Indian Culture (Sanathana Dharma). Without an understanding of the Indian (Hindu) culture and the way of life where Yoga originated, it is very difficult to find answers to many of the questions that confront the sincere seeker. Swamiji tried to inculcate in all students a deep love and understanding of the culture from which Yoga has sprung. Amma has continued this with her unique contribution to the cultural renaissance in Pondicherry as well as all over the world.



7. BOUNTIFUL PRACTICES

Scores and scores of practices and techniques are part of this tradition that has numerous Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga and Jnana Yoga practices for the sincere aspirant. Polarity practices and the Mantra Laya deserve special mention as also the Laya Yoga Kriyas. The intricate and in-depth understanding of Chakras, Nadis and Bindus etc from the Dakshina Marga Tantra tradition of Yogamaharishi Swami Kakananda Brighu is not found elsewhere in any system.

8. YANTRA, IN TUNE WITH NATURE

In this Paramparai there are three important sciences, namely Mantra, Yantra and Tantra. Yantra is the mystical science of number, name and form and is a method by which one can live to learn "in tune" with the cycles of the universe rather than be "off tune" with those very cycles. According to the Yantric concept as taught by Swamiji each number has a special quality to it and is not merely a measure of quantity as is usually

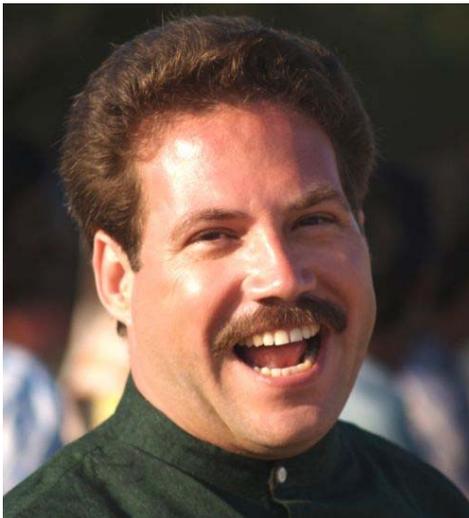
presumed. Every aspect of life goes through a phase of Nines. This phase may be nine years, nine months, nine weeks or even nine days. This concept can be further extended both ways to go up to nine milliseconds on one hand and nine lifetimes on the other.

9. MUDRAS, DIVINE COMMUNICATION

One of the main features of the Gitananda tradition is the detailed exposition and understanding of Mudra, the ancient Yogic art and science of gesturing and sealing vital Pranic energies. These advanced techniques designed to improve neuromuscular coordination, culture human emotions and still the restless mind are a means of non-verbal communication that is subtle and refined. They enable us to communicate intrapersonally with our inner self, interpersonally with others and transpersonally with the Divine. The Oli Mudra teachings as well as the usage of Hastha Mudras with the breath in Vibhagha and Pranava Pranayamas are unique to this tradition.



Swamiji was in tune with the Akashic record and there is no other way one can explain the phenomenal and limitless knowledge and wisdom that sprouted forth through his eloquent roar of truth. May we always be worthy of these great teachings and may his blessings always be with us as we traverse the evolutionary path he envisioned for us.



Yogacharya, Yoga Vibhushan

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