

Babaji's Kriya Yoga

Texts to read

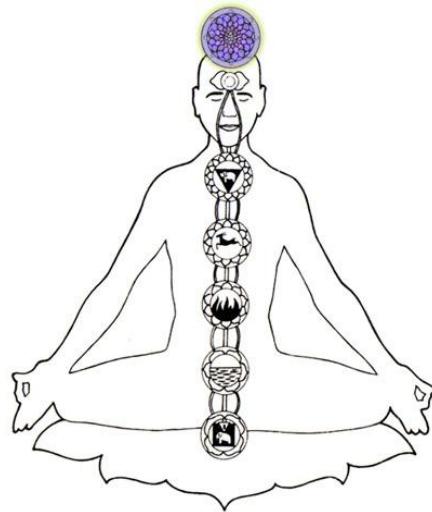


Building the perfect temple of bliss

by Nityananda

One of the most impressive temples in Tamil Nadu, in South India, is the Brihadeeswarar Temple, in Tanjore. The main tower, 216 feet high, is crowned with a black stone of 81 tons and is considered the crown jewel of Tamil architecture, as the mystery remains how the stone was raised to this seemingly impossible height. All that is recounted is that the Siddha Karuvurar instructed King Rajaraja Chola in the construction of the temple. Rajaraja Chola was so pleased with the results that he ordered a shrine to Karuvurar to be built on the Temple grounds.

This temple is a good metaphor of our work in Babaji's Kriya Yoga. Our constant practice allows us to experience higher levels of bliss, as we come closer and closer to the Self. This culminates in the experience of "samadhi," the yogic trance where one is totally merged with pure consciousness, the Self or Truth, without confusion. The state of samadhi is characterized by mental silence, where we live our true nature: "Then, the Seer abides in his own true form" (*Yoga Sutras I. 3*). The state of samadhi is associated with the opening of the seventh chakra, the crown chakra. But if we want to keep the state of samadhi – the same as the big stone on the top of the tower of Brihadeeswarar temple – it is necessary to establish a firm foundation, a solid base to support it. We attain that through a firm and unwavering disciplined practice of Yoga.



Five sheaths, five disciplines

According to Yoga, our essence, the Self or the Divine, is covered by five sheaths ("koshas"), like layers of an onion, which correspond with several planes of manifestation. Each one of them is more subtle than the previous one. The first three layers are part of our daily experience:

- Physical sheath – our physical body.
- Vital sheath – the seat of our emotions and vitality.
- Mental sheath – the seat of the sense perceptions and the thoughts related to them.
- Intellectual sheath – the seat of abstract thought and discernment.
- Bliss or causal sheath – the seat of unconditional love and bliss.

The Divine, the Self, is hidden inside these sheaths, hidden inside us ("For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you," Luke 17.21). How can we define this Divine? As Being-Consciousness-Bliss, without end and without limit.

The problems arising in our human condition is because the consciousness of the Self is enmeshed and identified with the five sheaths, just like sea-water held inside a bottle, tossed in the sea, is identified with the bottle containing it.

The ego is the habitual identification with the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and causal sheaths, with their particular traits and tendencies, different in each person. The ego is a contraction of the universal consciousness around phenomenal objects, including thoughts, emotions and those experienced through the five senses. The more we emphasize the "I," the more we reaffirm this contraction. The result of this is suffering, constantly experiencing the physical, emotional and mental ups and downs of life. The ego, fixated on impermanent phenomena, never finds the permanent peace and bliss it seeks. Yoga is the process of liberating this ego-bound state of consciousness, identified with the sheaths, in order to realize Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss, *sat chit ananda*.

The five sheaths can be viewed as the walls of a prison, which limits the realization of our true Self. So these sheaths must be detached from, ignored or transcended if one is to move beyond them and merge with the Self. This is the approach of the Classical Yoga.

From the point of view of the tantric Siddhas of the South of India (the “18 Siddhas Tradition”), the five sheaths can become instruments for the manifestation of the Divine, our higher Self, in the creation.

The yogic practices of the Siddhas purify and perfect the sheaths, liberating the consciousness from their bonds, including ignorance, egoism, illusion and karma. Then the Self that we are can act without impediments through them, manifesting more and more its own perfection.

Babaji's Kriya Yoga has five limbs, five types of practices to perfect and integrate the five sheaths:

- **Kriya Hatha Yoga** – postures (asanas) and muscular locks (bandahs) for the physical sheath.
- **Kriya Kundalini Pranayama** – breathing techniques (pranayama) for the vital sheath.
- **Kriya Dhyana Yoga** – meditations for the mental sheath.
- **Kriya Mantra Yoga** – subtle sounds (mantras) for the intellectual sheath.
- **Kriya Bhakti Yoga** – devotional activities and service for the causal sheath.

“Kriya” means “action with awareness.” The goal of Kriya Yoga is to bring “awareness,” into all our actions, all of the planes of existence.

The word “Siddha” comes from the Tamil “citta.” Citta is consciousness in its state of identification with the sheaths. A Siddha is a master of citta, a master of consciousness who has definitely removed the identification with the five sheaths, and has perfected them so they can manifest the Truth of the Self: *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect”* (Matthew 5.48).

A guided practice

The satguru is the hand that leads the aspirant out of the tangled forest of his own ego. He can guide insofar as he is beyond the forest of the egos, established in the Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Without him, the aspirant is trapped time and time again by the recurrent tendencies of his own sheaths.

The satguru prescribes a sadhana or spiritual discipline. One receives the grace of the satguru as long as one follows this prescribed spiritual discipline.

In all of the lineages of Kriya Yoga there is only one satguru, Babaji; the student learns to develop a direct and personal relationship with him, without intermediaries, through the seventh meditation technique, taught in the first initiation. However, the student can use this same technique to contact any

spiritual master... and Babaji won't be jealous. We can deduce from this that Kriya Yoga is not a cult of personality around the person of Babaji; anyone can practice it, no matter their belief, philosophy, or condition. It is not required to believe in anything to practice it; the student is just encouraged to practice the different techniques and to experience by himself the results.