

The Concept of Kriyayoga

Dr. Saroj Kumar Sahu

I. INTRODUCTION

Kriyayoga is an ancient empirical science of spirituality. It is the synthesis and essence of all yogic techniques. It is an easy, simple, sure and scientific spiritual practice. It is the highway of all religions. The Sanskrit root of *Kriya* is *kri*, to do, to act, react and think and *ya* means the indwelling Self. *Kriyayoga* is union with the Infinite through a certain action. To realize the indwelling Self in every action, deed, thought and reaction is *kriyayoga*. It is simply based on the regulation of the breath.

It is the most ancient system of *yoga* which is mentioned in *Rigveda Bhasya*, *Mundaka Upanishad*, *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, *Amrita Bindu Upanishad*, *Yogachudamani Upanishad*, *Yogasutra of Patanjali*, *Adyatma Ramayana*, *Yoga Vasistha*, *Srimad Bhagabatam*, *Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, *Mahabharata*, *Brahmasutra*, *Shiva Purana* and *Agni Purana*. It is also the most ancient and scientific technique of meditation. There are various references to *kriyayoga* and its techniques are narrated in *Vedic*, *Tantric*, *Puranic* and historical books.

Kriyayoga is an advanced technique which is geared for the awakening of the *chakras* (psychic centres) and the creative energy in the form of inherent *kundalini* which lies dormant in every individual. *Kriyayoga* is meant to understand and awaken the faculties of psyche, the deeper mind which is beyond the range of human perception at present, the so called sixth sense (intuition). Here we act from centres within our personality which control the *pranas*, the evolution of consciousness and the manifest and expression of the external mind. The whole practice of *kriyayoga* is based on the evolution of energy and matter.

Kriyayoga is not a practice of concentration. It is a practice in which we are mobilizing the untapped forces in our body. The word *kriya* means mobilization. *Kriyayoga* has a very little to do with concentration. In *kriyayoga* brain waves work on beta and theta patterns. The awakening of Sushumna is the major factor related to *kriyayoga*. It should be considered as a method of awakening, not as a method leading to auto-hypnosis.

II. DEFINITION

Maharshi Patanjali has given the clear definitions of *kriyayoga* in his treatise *Patanjali Yogasutra*.

***Tapah svadhyaya isvarapranidhanani
kriyayogah ||***

Austerity or penance (*tapas*), study of scriptures and chanting of *mantras* (*svadhyaya*) and devotion to the Supreme Lord (*Isvara pranidhana*) are *kriyayoga*. (*Patanjali Yogasutra II/1*).

***Sauca santosa tapah svadhyaya
isvarapranidhanani niyama ||***

Cleanliness (*sauca*), contentment (*santosa*), austerity or penance (*tapas*), study and recitation of sacred scriptures (*svadhyaya*), and devotion (*pranidhana*) to the Supreme Lord (*Isvara*) are the five *niyamas* or observances. (*Patanjali Yogasutra II/32*).

SAYINGS OF MASTERS OF KRIYAYOGA

Lahiri Mahasaya

Naturally becoming established in the true nature of God and offering all the activities to God is *Kriyayoga*.

Swami Sriyuktswar Giri

Kriyayoga is an instrument through which human evolution can be quickened. The ancient yogis discovered that the secret of cosmic consciousness is intimately linked with breath mastery.

Paramahansa Yogananda

Kriyayoga is union (*yoga*) with the Infinite through a certain action or rite. "A *yogi* who faithfully follows its technique is gradually freed from *karma* or the universal chain of causation.

He expressed *kriyayoga* as a psycho-physiological method by which human blood is decarbonized and recharged with oxygen. The atoms of this extra oxygen are transmuted in to life currents to rejuvenate the brain and spinal centres. By stopping the accumulation of venous blood, the *yogi* is able to lessen or prevent the decay of tissues.

Paramahansa Hariharananda

Kriyayoga is the quickest means to success. The specialty of the *kriyayoga* technique is that it effects simultaneous development of body, mind and soul in the shortest possible time.

Breath-control is Self-control, Breath-mastery is Self-mastery, and Breathlessness is Deathlessness.

III. IMPORTANCE

The *Mundaka Upanishad* says among the ones, who have realized God, the *Kriyavan* (practitioner of *kriyayoga*) is the best.

When *kriyayoga* is the practice, *Bhagavad Gita* is its theory. The Lord Krishna says-

***Tapasvivo'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo'pi
mato'dhiko |***

***Karmibhyascadhiko yogi tasmad yogi
bhavarjuna ||***

The *yogi* is superior to the ascetics and even superior to men of knowledge of scriptures; he is also superior to men of action; therefore, be a *yogi*, O Arjuna. (*Bhagavad Gita 6/46*).

IV. PURPOSE OF *KRIYAYOGA*

Purpose of *kriyayoga* is to create a higher quality of awareness.

V. PRIOR PRACTICES OF *KRIYAYOGA*

Before we learn to practice *Kriyayoga*, it is important that we first develop the ability to visualize and to concentrate and that we know about location of the *chakras* along with the body. In order to practice *kriyayoga*, it is necessary to have perfection and mastery over the practices of *pratyahara* and *dharana* which will help prepare the mind and awareness for the experiences we might have at the time of *kriyayoga*. Prior to the practice of *Kriyayoga*, there has to be mastery over *Hathayoga* and *Shatkarma*. One must be able to practice the techniques of *Rajayoga* before practicing *Kriyayoga* practices. Unless and until we understand the process of *Hathayoga* and *Rajayoga* it is not advisable to go deeply into the *Kriyayoga* practices.

VI. *KRIYAYOGA* PRACTICES

Kriyayoga practices are divided into three groups – *pratyahara* practices, *dharana* practices and *dhyana* practices.

Kriya practices are done by *Vipareetakarani*, *Siddhasana/Siddhayoni asana*, *Uttanapadasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Padmasana*, *Ujjayi pranayama*, *Moolabandha*, *Uddiyana bandha*, *Jalandhara bandha*, *Shambhavi mudra*, *Shanmukhi mudra*, *Vajroli/Sahajoli mudra*, *Khechari mudra*, *Unmani mudra*, *Nasikagra dristi* and *Ajapa japa*.

There are certain practices of *kriyayoga* which involve external consciousness and internal awareness. The front of the body represents external consciousness something which we can perceive. The back of the body symbolically represents the inner state of consciousness which we cannot perceive but which we know there. Physically we cannot see our back; we can see the trunk, stomach, the whole front of the body and so it is with visualization. When we try to observe something mentally, it is seen in the space between the eye brows i.e. in the front part of the body. In order to experience both states there are certain practices where the awareness travels up (*arohan*) the front of the body and down through the spine (*avarohan*), then again up in the front of the body and down through the spine creating figure eight. This is mental training for becoming aware of the external and internal experiences at the same time. The mind should be conditioned to observe both the state of extroversion and introversion.

VII. BENEFITS

HEALTH BENEFITS

It magnetizes each and every cells of the body. It rejuvenates and regenerates millions of cells. The pure oxygen inhaled and utilized during this process purifies the inner mechanism of the body, activates the systems. The practitioner neutralizes both the inhaling and outgoing breaths and thus releases the life force from the heart and brings it under its control. By neutralizing decay and growth, he/she learns life control. It develops strength and youth of the body. It keeps our body sound and beautiful and lustrous and we will live long with sound health. It increases the memory, patience and brilliance of mind. It purifies the body, mind, intellect and life. It helps to develop

healthy brains, keen minds and prompt understanding. It is a vitalizing process. It clears and stimulates the brain and gives strength.

The ancient yogis wrote: “*Kriyayoga* cures and prevents many unknown and fatal diseases, increases the digestive and assimilating power which confers a beautiful, lustrous and slim body until death. It prevents premature old age and death, giving a long and healthy life. By practice of *kriyayoga* the entire human system is magnetized and energized in a very short time. All the internal organs like liver, pancreas, spleen, glands like thyroid, pituitary and pineal are activated. They secrete hormones and enzymes properly to keep the body healthy. There will be sufficient blood circulation in the brain and spine for balanced supply of oxygen to every remote part of the body. All the systems of the body become active and efficient.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Kriyayoga makes one simple, pure, perfect, humble and constantly alert. One gets promptness, ready wit, fitness to cope with any situation or circumstance and positive thinking. One will not get easily tired and the memory will increase. One’s own power of understanding will increase, so also the power to take decision in a critical situation.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

By practice of *kriyayoga*, one will be free from all negative qualities of human life. Friendship and love will flourish. One’s appearance will be loving, pleasant, convincing and divine. One will have a sweet and balanced talk. One will get immense mental, intellectual and spiritual energy. *Kriyayoga* brings change in the

entire human personality, making one free from falsehood and all negatives and constantly absorbed in truth and divinity. Often in *kriyayoga*, we counter psychic experiences which alter our perception of the body and which change our behavior, affect our emotions and make us more sensitive.

MIND CONTROL

It controls the mind directly through the life force (*prana*). Breath influences mind and vice-versa. *Kriyayoga* is based on a scientific breathing that pacifies the mind, slows the breathing process and makes the breath flow inside the nostrils instead of outside.

By the practice of *kriyayoga* the mind becomes calm and quiet in a short time. The man becomes free from anxiety, stress and strain of life. Many psychosomatic diseases can be avoided. It enables us to experience the movement sensations; sound vibration and light flash of divine inside our bodies and helps elevate the mind into supra-mental consciousness. It quickly controls our five sense organs. The breath control mentioned in *kriyayoga* restores lost equilibrium.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

*Samadhi-bhavanartha klesa tanu-
karanarthascha ||*

In *Yogasutra of Patanjali* two benefits of *kriyayoga* are described – 1) it facilitates Samadhi (vrittilessness of *chitta*), 2) it minimizes or eliminates the *kleshas* (miseries). ((*Patanjali Yogasutra II/2*).

Kriyayoga simultaneously develops body, mind, intellect and soul. It is a very effective

shortcut technique to God-realization. It is the quickest means of spiritual success. It enlarges and transcends the consciousness. By practice of *kriyayoga* techniques we will get constant alertness of the inner self. It magnetizes the spine and changes the life force in to divine force. It gives immediate result, direct perception of truth. It brings peace and harmony in each individual that helps him to live in empathy with others in the society. It brings peaceful coexistence between man and nature. It enables constant soul-awareness, in every breath, thought and moment. It quickens spiritual evolution and takes one to the door of spiritual realization in a short time. *Kriyayoga* meditation enables one to feel that God and His creation are one. One who practices it gets constant happiness, peace, bliss and joy. By practicing *kriyayoga*, one can experience the *Anandamaya Kosa*.

VIII. CONCLUSION

By practice of *kriyayoga*, the body and mind remain disease free, enabling one to live a complete life span of hundred years, as declared in the *Isha Upanishad*.

Jjiviset satam samah | (2)

Through the life of moderation and regular practice of *kriyayoga* one can enjoy the beauty of human life.

Dr. Saroj Kumar Sahu, BAMS, PGDDHM, MDHCYS, PHD (YOGA), AYUSH Medical Officer (NHM) & Guest Assistant Professor (Yoga), Khajuriakata, Balimi, Dist-Dhenkanal – 759020.