



The Old Must Die

EXERCISES IN JNANA YOGA BY

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About the book

During my years of unacceptance and questioning, I've tried different paths in the Ancient School of Yoga. All of them are individually very important, and at the same time, interconnected, since they always take you to the same place.

The path of the intellect, of negation, develops in the Yogi the capacity to DISCERN between the real and the unreal. The important and the unimportant. To choose consciously what works for oneself and what it doesn't, is the best gift a person can have.

What is real?

Copyright

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Preface

Jnana Yoga is the path of knowing oneself through self-inquiring and questioning. However, it is done without holding to any pre-conceived idea, conclusion, or tangible concept.

It is pure observation. It can be an eternal trap for people attached to their diplomas and sharp intellects.

Its main focus is Existence itself.

Jnana Yoga questions the nature of mind, man, the creation and the Creator, if there is any, and the relationship between them, if there is any, to be realized by the yogi in his own life experience, through the practice of Yoga.

The Path of Knowledge, when given proper attention, can make you a wise person, but it does not necessarily mean the Path of Wisdom.

What is wisdom?

Wisdom is silent and humble compassion, and knowledge without realization make us proud of knowing and imposing on others.

This is ignorance.

When searching for Spiritual knowledge, remember that the simplest way is always the most important, since Jnana Yoga also deals with religious thinking, religious life and actual religion, which is leading a life faithful to one's own principles and integrity, without harming or forcing it on others.

The following texts were written in India in 2004, during the period with my teacher Swami Swabodhananda in the Himalayas. They are only intellectual exercises that can help opening our minds to a different way of understanding things.

What is written here is not new. There are no answers here.

Only the reader can decide what to do with it.

To keep or discard it.

However, it is my sincere desire that it helps you to make the right questions to yourself.

Hare Om.

Bira

Have we ever met?

Self-contemplation and observation, in action and inaction, is the path of Jnana Yoga.

Every day you are becoming more aware of yourself, observing your tendencies and psychological patterns throughout the practice of being alive.

The Jnana Yogi is observing the external world as it unfolds, and the way it functions whatever good or bad it is, and finding his place on it.

Welcome to the timeless quest.

A certain degree of commitment is necessary to succeed in this path, to give space to our mind to relax, to be open and to receive. This is done physically through the practice of the asanas of Hatha Yoga.

The more we harmonize our bodies, thoughts, emotions and actions, the more we unfold from our unconscious, and so we know who we are and grow through humility in experience, and what we are becomes a conscious and unavoidable choice.

Be who you are.

In fact, all we want is to feel good. However, there are many conscious and unconscious blocks stopping us from feeling light and joyful all the time, even for an experienced yogi.

This is why we should question our mind every time a certain quality of thought arises. This is self-awareness. Although you question it not with the intention to change it, but to understand it's nature and how it works.

We question our impulses moved by thought, by emotion, by reaction, and doubt the things around us to a certain extend, to help

open our minds to a much deeper level of feeling.

Did I said feeling?

Feeling with our minds, is it possible?

To give our mind the space to expand and comprehend, to be clear, sharp and free from prejudices, we need to understand it in action, at the live moment the action is happening.

We learn to do this through observation.

We can only observe.

There is no use for trying to change or control our mind by force. You will just get tired and nothing is going to change. We have to observe our interactions with other people and listen to our own internal dialog.

This is also meditation.

Now, the practice can be a very big challenge for the ego. How we behave with others is the mirror of our level of understanding.

To break the old patterns that have no energy anymore, sincere observation and humility are necessary. How many times do you really transmitted fully what you wanted to share with your partner, family, or people closer to you?

If in any occasion, things didn't turn the way you expected, why it didn't happen?

What was the problem?

We all live in completely different worlds trying to interact and expand with each other. To talk or have a contact with someone is not necessarily to met that person.

To met another person is not simply a shaking of hands and a quick

eye contact. To talk to somebody, to have a discussion, an argument, to impose our views, is not the same as having a dialog, and it doesn't mean to have a communication.

Don't you agree?

It is very rare the occasion when we have a real exchange of experience and mutual learning with another person. We are most of the time only adjusting our beliefs already engaged by someone else; it can be our parents, our teachers, our stars, our politicians.

You see? When sharing and mutual learning occurs we never forget, because it changes our life. Taking and giving, talking and listening, communicating and learning together is an unforgettable experience.

This is possible only when we are open, in a state of not-knowing, which is in fact, humility. This word will be repeated many times. Humility, which is not the same as mediocrity or lack of self-value.

Have you ever learned with someone else's experiences, which is not the same as simply accepting ideas without your own experience and realization? Or simply adjusting what you already knew according to some new ideas sounding good to you?

The more you go inside, question and discern, the more you will see that we all behave the same. We all want to remain protected. We distort our experience to remain safe, and this can be realized through the yoga practice.

However, to clear the path and be fully in the moment, we must be a little unsafe. This experience, when absorbed and integrated into our system through strong emotion, or suffering, will give us the quality of compassion.

Compassion is the awakening of the heart, and the beginning of intelligence. It is a direct experience of UNITY.

Many factors are impeding us to communicate freely, to open our minds and awaken our heart. A world of conditioning, fears, values, ideas, superstitions, prejudices, preferences, and pre-determined notions about everything, stands between the speaker and the listener, the observer and the object observed.

When we hear something, many things can happen.

Very few times we notice that what we actually listen is not what was said, but the translation of what we want to hear. What we hear and believe is our own interpretation, or judgment, comparison, or distortion of what had been spoken.

What we hear we compare with what we know, and so we decide.

Do you agree, or disagree?

We never listen to new information. All we do is reconfirming, adapting, shaping the old and refusing the new that doesn't fit in. If the new goes against the values we already have, we refuse it even before finishing to listen.

If the new goes in favor of what we know, well, it is not new. It is only reconfirming the old conditioning.

But why?

Why is so difficult to hear the new?

Because once we do it with all our ears, bodies, heart, with our soul, with our mind free of comparisons, in humility, and see the reality of a new information, our lives are immediately transformed.

If we really hear and see the implications of our conditioning, of our attachment, our greed and selfishness, we drop them at once and change our lives.

We are reborn.

We are able to create a complete revolution in our lives in just no time. However, we never listen, we never see, we never feel, because we are attached to our false sense of security to the very end of our being and don't even notice it.

Ok. Maybe we do notice, but we pretend and go on, and this is not a reason to feel guilty either. It is just the way things are presented to us, and blessed you are the day you stop pretending.

This is the path of self-knowledge.

Those are the chains we are willing to break today.

It is very difficult to change oneself without being restless for quite a while. One day, pretending will be so boring that we must be brave and kick the jar.

So, before we can dive deeper into the path of freedom and give space to the call of our Soul over our mind, some old structures must be destroyed, and this happens in real life, in real time.

It can happen in your job, your relation, your security. Everything can collapse. This can be the beginning of awakening.

However, more important than being brave is to be open-minded, and it doesn't mean that a brave and open-minded person cannot be very stupid.

Being brave is not the same as being stupid or unaware of the consequences of our actions. To be brave is to be detached, to let go, what is the same as being intelligent, and to be open-minded is intelligence.

It is impossible to be truly open-minded without taking the first step, which is really, to admit the obvious. We know very little about everything. We don't know and never will know what is truth with our human mind, because it is human.

We will never know what is right or wrong, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, because these things does not exist in the way we perceive them, and we know this is true when we go deeper.

As long as our mind dwells in materiality or superficiality, judging and comparing things, there will be duality and no stability in self-awareness.

This fact takes us to another delicate question.

It shows one of the many reasons why there is so much turmoil in the world. From the moment we see that we don't know and never will know a thing, we are supposed to become humble, and so we begin to understand.

Naturally, a humble person who loves life, loves expanding and wants to learn, and knows by observation and experience that everyone and everything can teach us, is a quiet person, has very little opinions, and listen.

What is your opinion on this? How many of us are intelligent enough to be authentically humble? How many of us can be free of the ego that knows?

There is a little voice inside us telling that we already know many things, and we must tell others how to do it when we see things going "wrong".

This voice must be destroyed.

It hurts.

We will never learn anything fresh and go beyond the new and the old, right and wrong, good and bad, as long as we think we know. We will just remain getting stressed by everything that is wrong around us and nothing is going to change.

Would you like to know the truth?

The truth is that nobody gives a damn to what you think is right.

We create suffering as long as we think we know how things should be. Once we get tired of suffering for judging everything and let others do whatever they want, and take care of our own life and just surrender to what IS, what is the same as not-knowing, we are free.

Freedom.

When we do not try to hold on anything, because everything can hurt our ego, the most difficult challenges will pass in one or two breaths.

For sure they will. When the ego that knows gets crushed by forces beyond our control, there is pain, and after the end of the world, we stand up.

Be very thankful. This will create immense lightness. It will give us space to fully listen to other people, to understand, to commune, and we can give our message with very few words.

Perhaps, there will be no message at all.

About the Author

I began practicing Hatha Yoga and studying Hindu Philosophy in the year 2000 in Rishikesh, India, by the guidance of Swami Mukthanada, and Kriya Yoga Meditation by the guidance of Swami Swabodhananda in the Himalayas.

I took the vow of Brahmacharia or celibacy for four years and was initiated in Jnana and Bakti Yoga in the line of Swami Yogananda from Self-Realization Fellowship, and spent eight months doing Sadhana in Rishikesh.

In 2002 I came back to India to study Hatha Yoga with Swami Rudra at Rishikesh Yoga Centre, and also with Yogi Saras, and spent three years visiting places of Pilgrimage including Badrinath and Kedarnath.

I did many austerities or Tapasya, fasting and eating once a day for two years. I spent thirty days meditating in a dark room, and kept my Hatha Yoga practices at Yoga Niketan and Parmath Niketan Asham in Rishikesh.

In Varanasi I was initiated by Pundit Vagish Shastri in Kundalini Yoga, and went to Calcutta to receive initiation at Sri Ramakrishna Mission, from the president late Swami Ranganathananda.

From 2005 to 2008, I was in Ibiza giving Yoga and Meditation classes, doing gardening and painting. From 2008 to 2012 I was in the Amazon Rain Forest in Brazil living in an Ayahuasca community and doing voluntary work.

I went through the entire paths of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma Yoga, and began travelling from country to country since Oct 2014, taking the Light of Yoga with me.

The Ancient School of Yoga® is a workshop focused on awakening the Spirit through the practice of Asanas. It has already been presented in Spain, Scotland, England, Ireland, India, Germany, Greece, Holland, Belgium and Russia.

For more info visit www.birayoga.com

May the Light of Yoga dominate the entire Earth.

Ubiratan Gonzaga.