

What is  
KRIYA  
★  
YOGA

**GUIDELINES** for receiving initiation into  
the sacred science of Self-Realization



Ananda

*Dedicated to the Universal Upward Path*

*“Untying the cord of breath which binds  
the soul to the body, Kriya serves to prolong life  
and enlarge the consciousness to infinity.*

*The yoga method overcomes the tug of war  
between the mind and the matter-bound senses,  
and frees the devotee to reinherit  
his eternal kingdom.”*

*~ Paramhansa Yogananda ~*



### **KRIYA YOGA IS A SPECIFIC MEDITATION TECHNIQUE**

which accelerates human evolution and which leads to God-realization. It was revived in the modern age by the immortal guru, Babaji, and was brought from India to the Western world at the beginning of the twentieth century by Paramhansa Yogananda. In order to be able to practice *Kriya* properly, careful preparation is necessary. This preparation process, and initiation into the *Kriya* practices, is available through Ananda centers throughout the world, including the European center near Assisi, Italy.

This booklet is a guide for those who wish to know more about *Kriya Yoga* and what is required in order to receive it. We invite you to contact us directly if you wish further information or if you desire to discuss your personal situation: [kriya@ananda.it](mailto:kriya@ananda.it) or (+39) 0742 813620.

## Chapter One

### WHAT IS KRIYA YOGA?

*Kriya Yoga* is an advanced technique for spiritual evolution that comes down from higher ages of spiritual enlightenment. Part of the ancient science of Raja Yoga, it is referred to by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras, and by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. While the actual *Kriya* technique can be revealed only to initiates, its purpose and basic nature have been described by both Yogananda and Kriyananda in their respective autobiographies, in chapters dedicated to this subject.

“The *Kriya Yogi* mentally directs his life energy to revolve, upward and downward, around the six spinal centers (medullary, cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal plexuses) which correspond to the twelve astral signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man. One-half minute of revolution of energy around the sensitive spinal cord of man effects subtle progress in his evolution; that half-minute of *Kriya* equals one year of natural spiritual unfoldment.” ~Paramhansa Yogananda

“*Kriya Yoga* directs energy lengthwise around the spine, gradually neutralizing the eddies of chitta. At the same time it strengthens the nerves in the spine and brain to receive cosmic currents of energy and consciousness. Yogananda stated that *Kriya* is the supreme yoga science.” ~Swami Kriyananda

The knowledge of *Kriya* became obscured during the dark age of materialism, known in India as Kali Yuga. It was revived by the immortal Indian master, Babaji, when, in 1861, he taught it to Shyama Charan Lahiri of Benares, who then developed the *Kriya* principles into a specific series of meditation and pranayama practices. Lahiri Mahasaya taught this science to thousands of disciples, most of them family people who, like he, maintained their worldly responsibilities while at the same time practicing *Kriya*.

In one of the most important passages from *Autobiography of a Yogi* concerning *Kriya* in the modern age, Babaji says to Lahiri Mahasaya:

“A deep purpose underlay the fact that you did not meet me this time until you were already a married man, with modest business responsibilities. You must

put aside your thoughts of joining our secret band in the Himalayas; your life lies in the crowded marts, serving as an example of the ideal yogi-householder.

‘The cries of many bewildered worldly men and women have not fallen unheard on the ears of the Great Ones,’ he went on. ‘You have been chosen to bring spiritual solace through *Kriya Yoga* to numerous earnest seekers. The millions who are encumbered by family ties and heavy worldly duties will take new heart from you, a householder like themselves. You must guide them to see that the highest yogic attainments are not barred to the family man. Even in the world, the yogi who faithfully discharges his responsibilities, without personal motive or attachment, treads the sure path of enlightenment... A sweet new breath of divine hope will penetrate the arid hearts of worldly men. From your balanced life, they will understand that liberation is dependent on inner, rather than outer, renunciations...

‘I gazed beseechingly at Babaji. ‘I pray that you permit me to communicate *Kriya* to all seekers, even though at first they cannot vow themselves to complete inner renunciation. The tortured men and women of the world, pursued by the threefold suffering, need special encouragement. They may never attempt the road to freedom if *Kriya* initiation be withheld from them.’

‘Be it so. The divine wish has been expressed through you.’ With these simple words, the merciful guru banished the rigorous safeguards that for ages had hidden *Kriya* from the world. ‘Give *Kriya* freely to all who humbly ask for help.’”

### **KRIYA YOGA COMES TO THE WESTERN WORLD**

The *Kriya* technique has been transmitted through the same sacred initiation ceremony that was performed by Babaji for Lahiri Mahasaya, and passed down through the disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya and onward through their disciples to succeeding generations.

Paramhansa Yogananda is a direct spiritual descendant of Babaji and Lahiri Mahasaya. His guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, was one of Lahiri Mahasaya’s most advanced disciples. In 1920 Yogananda was instructed by his gurus to bring the practices of *Kriya* and the knowledge of the eternal, universal truths (known in India as Sanaatan Dharma) to the Western world. From then until his passing in 1952, he lived in the United States, where he initiated tens of thousands of sincere seekers in *Kriya*, inspiring them to dedicate their lives to the pursuit of God-realization.

Whereas in India the guidelines for living a spiritual, “yogic” life are well known, in the West Yogananda had to educate people about such things as proper diet, right attitudes,

balanced living which harmonizes body, mind and soul; developing willpower and self-discipline; and how to transcend physical and emotional attachments. These “how-to-live” teachings have become an essential part of the path of *Kriya Yoga* and are a necessary requisite to learning the technique of *Kriya Yoga*, in the same way that the yamas and niyamas of Patanjali are necessary steps towards the higher levels of Raja Yoga.

Yogananda’s teachings thus put the technique of *Kriya Yoga* into the wider context of a yogic lifestyle. Educational centers and communities based on this lifestyle have been developed in the United States, Europe and India by Yogananda’s direct disciple, Swami Kriyananda.

### **KRIYA YOGA THROUGH ANANDA**

Spiritual masters usually empower some of their close disciples to carry on their tradition, even during their own lifetime. Interestingly, we find that, “*Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.*” — JOHN 4:2

Paramhansa Yogananda also authorized a number of his close disciples to give the initiation on his behalf. Some of these disciples were part of his monastic order, while others were householders, in the *Kriya* tradition of Lahiri Mahasaya.

When Swami Kriyananda had been with Yogananda for less than one year, the Master placed him in charge of the monks and authorized him to give *Kriya* initiation. During the remaining years of Yoganandaji’s life, Kriyananda often gave the initiation. After Yoganandaji’s passing, Kriyananda was sent around the world to speak about Self-realization and give initiation into *Kriya*.

After founding Ananda in 1968, Kriyananda continued to train devotees in the teachings of Self-realization, helping them to prepare for and receive *Kriya*, each student according to his own capacities and pace. In recent years Kriyananda has authorized some members of the Ananda Sangha to give *Kriya* initiation in Yogananda’s name. There are currently fourteen “*Kriyacharyas*” who give initiations throughout the world.

**SHOPPING AT THE SPIRITUAL SUPERMARKET**

*In today's Information Age*, there is much which can be learned about a wide variety of spiritual paths. The curious will easily find more than enough to satisfy their curiosity. The step beyond curiosity is "investigation," and the most fruitful form of investigation is through personal experience. If one wants to know, for example, about ayurvedic massage, he goes to an Ayurvedic center and has one. The Eiffel Tower is known by seeing it; a mango by tasting it.

If you would like to know *Kriya Yoga*, you will want to experience the techniques of Self-realization and evaluate for yourself their effects on your consciousness and your daily life. Here are some suggestions for how you can become familiar with these teachings and with the Masters of *Kriya Yoga*.

**STUDY THE TEACHINGS OF SELF-REALIZATION**

*Kriya Yoga* belongs to a body of teachings which in India is called Sanaatan Dharma, and which Yogananda called "Self-realization." In his book *The Hindu Way of Awakening*, Swami Kriyananda describes,

"Sanaatan Dharma, rightly understood, is rooted in the foundations of the universe. As a teaching, it excludes no practice that is designed to ennoble and uplift the mind, to awaken selfless love in the heart, to inspire longing for the truth, to loosen the bonds of egotism and selfishness, and to deepen our awareness of what is as opposed to what merely appears to be.

"Put more simply still, the goal of Sanaatan Dharma is twofold: the upliftment of human consciousness, on the one hand, and the expansion of our self-identity through love, on the other, that we embrace all life and all reality as our own. Any practice that inspires people in this direction, even if it doesn't define the goal so specifically, belongs rightfully within the domain of Sanaatan Dharma."

**THE FOLLOWING BOOKS GIVE YOU BOTH  
AN IDEA AND A FEELING FOR  
THIS APPROACH TO ENLIGHTENMENT:**

**Autobiography of a Yogi** (1946 original edition)  
*Paramhansa Yogananda*

**The Essence of Self-realization**  
*Paramhansa Yogananda, edited by Swami Kriyananda*

**Awaken to Superconsciousness**  
*Swami Kriyananda*

**The Art and Science of Raja Yoga**  
*Swami Kriyananda*

**Man's Eternal Quest  
The Divine Romance  
Journey to Self-realization**

*Paramhansa Yogananda*

*Books about Yogananda:*

**The New Path**  
*Swami Kriyananda*

**Conversations with Yogananda**  
*Swami Kriyananda*

**God Alone**  
*by and about Sister Gyanamata*

**Paramhansa Yogananda: A Biography With Personal Reflections & Reminiscences**  
*Swami Kriyananda*

*Audio/Video Presentations:*

There are many classes and conferences given by Swami Kriyananda and other Ananda teachers on the subjects of *Kriya Yoga* and the life and teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda. You can see these offerings at [www.anandaedizioni.it](http://www.anandaedizioni.it) > Corsi e Pratiche > English Products.

**LEARN AND PRACTICE THE BASIC TECHNIQUES  
ON THE PATH OF *KRIYA YOGA***

These two basic techniques which Yogananda taught can be learned and practiced by anyone, of any faith, on any path. These techniques bring spiritual and practical benefits to everyone, and are even recommended by some doctors as an aid to improving a wide variety of physical and mental/emotional conditions.

- **THE TECHNIQUE OF CONCENTRATION** chosen by Yogananda is an ancient and well-known practice used widely throughout India. It uses the observation of the breath in conjunction with a mantra to quiet mind and focus it at a single point. As a youth, Yogananda would practice this technique for up to eight hours a day. Experience and expertise in this technique are necessary for the successful practice of the more advanced technique of *Kriya*, which requires a high degree of concentration.
- **THE ENERGIZATION EXERCISES** were developed by Yogananda initially as a means by which the boys at his Ranchi school in India could focus their youthful energies and develop their will power. Yogananda called this practice the “Tissue-Will System of Body and Mind Perfection.” It consists of thirty-nine exercises which are to be practiced twice each day, in a specific order. Their practice takes about twelve minutes, and furnishes the body tissues, muscles and organs with fresh, vital energy (*prana*), while at the same developing will power and concentration.

While the physical benefits of these exercises are important for “keeping the body temple fit for God-realization,” their primary benefit is that their practice strengthens the will power, which is the cornerstone of the science of Raja Yoga, and an essential tool for the proper practice of *Kriya*.

“Will power is what makes you divine. When you give up using that will, you become a mortal man...If you continuously use your will power, no matter what reverses come, it will produce success and health and power to help people, and above all, it will produce communion with God.” ~*Paramhansa Yogananda*

- **LEARN IN PERSON OR THROUGH STUDY GUIDE MATERIALS.** You can learn these practices at Ananda Assisi and at many of the Ananda meditation groups in Europe. If you are able to learn them in person, you will benefit from the interaction with the teacher and the other students. After taking the techniques courses, you can further and deepen your study through the written, audio and video materials.

The basic courses offered through Ananda which will help you get started on the path of *Kriya Yoga* are:

- The Art of Meditation: Basic Practices
  - Recharge Yourself! Energization Exercises *by Paramhansa Yogananda*
  - The Path of *Kriya Yoga*
  - Chakras: Pathway to Liberation
- **YOU CAN ALSO LEARN THESE TECHNIQUES AT HOME, THROUGH THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:**
- Guided Energization Exercises, DVD of Swami Kriyananda
  - Meditation Techniques of Paramhansa Yogananda (Eight Lessons, with Swami Kriyananda) DVD/CD/mp3/booklet
  - Sadhana. Guided Daily Routine, with Swami Kriyananda, DVD + booklet
  - Meditation for Starters, *by Swami Kriyananda*
  - Chakras for Starters, *by Savitri Simpson*

## **SATSANG AND SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT**

When young Mukunda (Yogananda's boyhood name) felt in need of spiritual inspiration and support, he would go to his father's room and meditate with him. (His father was a direct disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya and a devoted *Kriya* practitioner.) Or he would go around the corner to visit "the levitating saint," or some of his spiritual friends, whom he invited to join him in his attic "cave" for periods of meditation together. *Satsang*, which means being in the company of people who share your ideals, is declared by all the masters to be the foremost aid for spiritual progress. As Yogananda often said, "Environment is stronger than will power."

It is of enormous benefit to meditate with others, especially those who are dedicated to the path you have chosen. Regular visits to Ananda communities bring you in contact with people who have been following the path for many years, and give you a strong spiritual recharge.

Participating in a meditation group close to your home is another important way to magnetize your own practices. Look on our website to see if there is an Ananda group near you.

## **VIRTUAL SATSANG**

In India, people go to great lengths to visit the saints or holy images in a temple, in order to have their darshan, which means to be in inner contact with the transforming vibrations of the person or holy place. Those who are able to renounce their worldly activities will often stay at the feet of a sage or in the vicinity of a temple, because of the magnetic effect that such closeness has on their spiritual practices. There is no doubt that daily "satsang" is one of the surest ways to make rapid spiritual progress.

We are fortunate in this technological age to be able to bring the presence of spiritually-advanced people right into our homes, through audio and visual recordings of their public presentations, as well as through their writings and music. *Ananda Edizioni Sangha* has video recordings of Yogananda, and both video and audio recordings of many of Swami Kriyananda's talks, some of them in series of short talks (15-20 minutes) which can be watched on dvd and through the computer or listened to in cd and mp3 formats. Thus one can conveniently benefit from daily satsang. (A catalogue of these satsangs and other study materials is available at Ananda and online at [www.anandaedizioni.it](http://www.anandaedizioni.it).)

## **DISCIPLESHIP INITIATION**

After you have had some experience with the teachings and techniques of the path of *Kriya*, and if you feel a deep inward connection with the masters of *Kriya Yoga*, you will want to explore the guru-disciple relationship, which is explained in the next chapter. Discipleship initiation ceremonies are available at Ananda Assisi and through some of the meditation groups on request.

## **ESTABLISH A REGULAR MEDITATION ROUTINE AT HOME**

Your discipleship initiation heralds the next phase of your spiritual journey, during which you will prepare yourself more specifically for *Kriya* Initiation. A careful preparation is very important, as Yogananda says,

"*Kriya Yoga* is not given until the devotee has practiced other highly advanced techniques first, preparing his mind for the greater blessing of that highest technique. Experience has shown me the necessity of this general rule. It is very good to have devotion. Devotion plus determined effort in the right direction, cannot fail to take you to the goal you are seeking."

Before receiving the more advanced techniques, you will want to establish a regular daily practice, dedicating two periods each day to the energization exercises and the Hong Sau concentration technique. When you are relatively solid in your daily routine, you can continue with the *Kriya* Preparation courses.

### ***KRIYA* PREPARATION, LEVEL ONE**

During this phase of your preparation, you will learn to practice the basic techniques more deeply and more effectively. You will lengthen your meditation sessions to at least forty-five minutes, including the AUM Technique of Meditation, which is taught during this training. Emphasis is given to deepening your inner contact with the *Kriya* masters, and careful attention is given to practices of *pranayama*, which help you develop the breathing capacity necessary for the proper practice of *Kriya*. Courses are available at Ananda throughout the year, and also at some of the meditation groups. Written, audio and video materials are being created for the purposes of review and further study, and also for those who are not able to attend these programs. See the Ananda website at [www.ananda.it](http://www.ananda.it) and look for the dates of the preparation programs. Or write to [kriya@ananda.it](mailto:kriya@ananda.it) for further information.

### ***KRIYA* PREPARATION, LEVEL TWO**

After about three months of daily practice of the basic techniques plus those given at the first level of *Kriya* preparation, you can proceed to your final preparation, during which you will learn techniques taught by Lahiri Mahasaya which increase awareness of and stimulate the energy body (the astral body). Courses are available at Ananda throughout the year, and also at some of the meditation groups. Written, audio and video materials are being created for the purposes of review and further study, and also for those who are not able to attend these programs.

After about three months of daily practice of the Level Two techniques, in addition to the Energization, Hong Sau and AUM techniques, you can request to receive initiation into the first *Kriya* practice. See the Ananda website at [www.ananda.it](http://www.ananda.it) and look for the dates of the preparation programs and initiations. Or write to [kriya@ananda.it](mailto:kriya@ananda.it) for further information.

### **INITIATION RETREAT**

*Kriya* Initiation is given at Ananda Assisi several times each year, and in other locations in Europe. At Assisi the initiation is preceded by a five-day retreat which is highly recommended for first-time initiates, so that you can be in the best-possible spiritual condition on the day of your initiation. Study materials are given to initiates during the *Kriya* Review session, which is the following morning.

### ***KRIYA* PRACTICE SUPPORT**

After the *Kriya* initiation ceremonies, detailed oral and written practice instruction is given. Audio recordings of the initiation and of the technique review sessions are also available, in addition to recordings of many inspiring classes and retreats given for *Kriya* practitioners (*Kriyabans*). *Kriyabans* are encouraged to have their practice checked often, which can be done with one of the trained *Kriya* teachers or assistants either at Ananda or at some of the meditation groups, and also by telephone. *Kriya* retreats are scheduled at Ananda Assisi and increasingly at other locations throughout Europe.

### Chapter Three

## COMMITMENT—THE IMPORTANCE OF “DISCIPLESHIP”

*While a widespread search might be necessary* for some seekers in the beginning, a single-pointed determination is needed if the seeker is to reach the goal of Self-realization. Some spiritual seekers are soon led to their masters and path, while others require a much longer time to sort things out. Each seeker has his own past, his own karma, and the seeds of spiritual yearning sprout in their own time.

In India they say, “When the disciple is ready, the master appears.” The Christian Bible says, “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”  
—JOHN 1:12

Great masters have a magnetism which attracts many people, only some of whom are able to receive the fullness of the master’s teachings and grace. The “followers” of a master are pleased to be with him and feel uplifted by his presence and words. To them the master gives a message of encouragement and inspiration. The “disciples” of a master are those who are willing to follow not only the master’s physical presence, but, more importantly, his metaphysical advice. They accept his “discipline” and undertake the rigorous work required to reach perfection. As Jesus said,

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.”  
—LUKE 6: 46-48

There is a story told about an emperor of China whose minister brought back reports about an enormous monastery in the northlands where thousands of monks were living. They had created a place of peace and incomparable beauty. The emperor decided to visit, and when he met the abbot he commented, “What a beautiful place you have created here. How many disciples are there?” The abbot responded, “Residents there are in the thousands. Disciples, perhaps one or two.”

It is the commitment and receptivity of a disciple which attracts the Guru's grace, and which is necessary in order to receive initiation into the higher practices on the path of *Kriya Yoga*.

To help you deepen your understanding of this concept, there are courses, writings and talks on the subject of Discipleship. A weekend program is offered at Ananda Assisi, and you are also welcome to come at any time to talk with one of the teachers. Or you may call and request to speak with one of the teachers. Teachers are also available at some of the Ananda Meditation Groups who can help you in this way. Write us if you wish to find one near you.

**FOR HOME STUDY WE RECOMMEND  
THE FOLLOWING WRITINGS AND TALKS:**

**Autobiography of a Yogi**, *original edition, by Paramhansa Yogananda*

**Discipleship: The Divine Love Story** *by Swami Kriyananda*

**The New Path** *by Swami Kriyananda*

**The Essence of Self-realization** (especially chapters 14 and 15) *by Swami Kriyananda*

**God Alone**, *by and about Sister Gyanamata*

**Man's Eternal Quest / The Divine Romance / Journey to Self-realization**,  
*by Paramhansa Yogananda*

**Talks on Discipleship**, CD/DVD *by Swami Kriyananda*

A catalog of books and talks is available at [www.anandaedizioni.it](http://www.anandaedizioni.it).

**THE DISCIPLESHIP CEREMONY**

If you wish to be accepted as a disciple of the line of *Kriya* Masters, an initiation ceremony can be arranged at Ananda Assisi or at some of the Ananda Meditation Groups. The vows which the disciple takes during this ceremony are to be found in the booklet on Discipleship. If you are absolutely unable to come to one of Ananda's centers for this initiation, an "initiation at a distance" can be arranged for you in your home.

*Chapter Four*

**YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

**WHY HAS *KRIYA* NOT BEEN PUBLISHED  
IN BOOK FORM, SO THAT ALL MIGHT LEARN IT?**

Swami Kriyananda responds to this important question in his book, *The Essence of the Bhagavad Gita*, Explained by Paramhansa Yogananda:

"A reasonable question, certainly. The masters themselves, however, have said it should not be published precisely because it is a teaching that transcends reason itself. Right understanding of it depends on the unfolding intuition.

"*Kriya Yoga*, in order to be wholly effective, must be received not only intellectually (in written or spoken form), but vibrationally, in the form of initiation. A magnet is created either by electrical realignment of the molecules, or by close proximity to another magnet. Attunement with a God-awakened guru influences the *samskaras* (comparable to the material molecules) to flow upward to the brain.

"We are dealing here with a reality subtler, and much more difficult to master, than mere metallic molecules. Without an experienced guide, even mountain climbing can be fatal -- though death, in this case, only ends a single incarnation. Spiritual mistakes can be costlier in terms of long-range suffering.

"Guidance from the guru is not only helpful: It is essential. This does not mean that *Kriya Yoga* is dangerous. Far from it. But to take up *Kriya Yoga* signifies entering seriously onto the path to God. It is not a game, and should certainly be treated as a lifetime commitment... Any yoga initiation, and especially into the ancient science of *Kriya Yoga*, should be looked upon as a very sacred step in one's life."

**IS THERE MORE THAN  
ONE KIND OF *KRIYA*?**

*Kriya* is a deceptively simple term which refers to a wide variety of practices. The Sanskrit word literally means "action". The same Sanskrit root verb "kri" (to act) is also found in the word "karma". Whereas karma is generally understood as "actions which stem from egoic desire", *Kriya* is understood to mean "actions which purify".

In the science of Hatha Yoga there are many “kriyas,” practices that have the purpose of purifying the body and nervous system—for example cleansing of the nose, the stomach, the intestines, the nerve channels, etc.

In the science of Raja Yoga, the term *Kriya* refers to practices which purify the ego (thus preventing future karma), and which also neutralize the “seeds” or traces of past karma from the consciousness. When Babaji revived the ancient techniques for God-realization that had been part of Raja Yoga in the higher ages, he called these practices by the name *Kriya Yoga*. This science includes a significant number of techniques, which his disciple Lahiri Mahasaya focalized into a progression of preparatory exercises and initiations, which is known as “the *Kriya Yoga* of Lahiri Mahasaya of Benares.” Because of this great contribution, Lahiri Mahasaya is known as the father of *Kriya Yoga* in modern times, and as a Yogavatar.

Lahiri Mahasaya initiated thousands of students into these practices, and to some of them he gave the authority to initiate others. Many of these initiates have in turn initiated others, and various lines of *Kriya Yoga* have developed through succeeding generations. Thus from the tree of the *Kriya* of Lahiri Mahasaya many lines have grown, with their various branches. All of the *Kriya* lines which come from Lahiri Mahasaya teach essentially the same techniques, with minor variations.

The *Kriya Yoga* which has come to the Western world through Paramhansa Yogananda, and which is being taught today throughout the world by his direct disciple, Swami Kriyananda, is one of the branches, which comes through Lahiri Mahasaya’s advanced disciple, Swami Sri Yukteswar.

Being a generic term that refers to many practices of Raja and Hatha Yoga, the word “*Kriya*” is used today by many teachers to refer to practices which are similar but distinct from those taught by Lahiri Mahasaya. Searching on the internet one will find tens of thousands of references.

### **WHICH IS THE BEST KRIYA?**

When this question was posed to an advanced *Kriya* yogini in India, she replied, “The one which your guru gives you.”

It is not the technique in itself which automatically leads to liberation, although its proper practice brings beneficial results to those who use it. Its proper practice, however, is possible only through the blessings of the Guru, who uses the technique as an instrument of liberation for his disciples. As Yogananda used to say, “*Kriya* plus devotion works like mathematics.”

“The law of *Kriya Yoga* is eternal. It is true like mathematics; like the simple rules of addition and subtraction, the law of *Kriya* can never be destroyed. Burn to ash-

es all the books on mathematics, the logically-minded will always rediscover such truths; destroy all the sacred books on yoga, its fundamental laws will come out whenever there appears a true yogi who comprises within himself pure devotion and consequently pure knowledge.” ~*Autobiography of a Yogi, Original Edition, 1946*

Because of the necessity of the Guru’s blessings, the *Kriya* which stems from Babaji is given as an “initiation,” a ceremony during which the power and the blessings of the Guru are transferred to the disciple, enabling him to properly practice the technique.

### **WHICH GURU IS BEST?**

The one who is yours; the one to whom you belong.

Amongst Self-realized masters, there is no competition. Each of them has been given by God certain souls to guide. Thus it is neither the Guru who chooses his disciples, nor the disciple who chooses his Guru. This is the true “marriage made in heaven”; two souls whom God has joined together until death (of the ego of the disciple) parts them, and the disciple merges back into the cosmic ocean of consciousness.

In his final message to his disciples, Jesus said,

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” — JOHN, Chapter 17

### **HOW CAN I KNOW WHICH GURU HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR ME?**

The Guru will make himself known to his disciples, at that moment in their lives when they are ready to perceive and receive him. In one way or another they “go calling” on their disciples. The ways are as many and varied as the disciples. It could be by seeing the Master in person, or through reading his written words. About his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Yogananda said that he had infused his vibrations into every word. Or through the spiritual practices which the master teaches. It might be through the magnetism of the fellowship of their disciples, or those of them who carry their vibrations and message to others. It could be through their spiritual work, which attracts those who are in tune with the master. Contact can be made also in dreams, or visions, by hearing his voice, or seeing a photograph of him. The important thing for an aspiring disciple is to put himself in tune with the vibrations of a master, using all means available to him, and then feel inwardly for a response from his soul. The response can manifest as deep love, or joy, or the simple knowing that you have found your home.

### **CAN I PRACTICE *KRIYA* IF JESUS IS MY GURU?**

According to Yoganandaji, Jesus himself taught his close disciples a technique very similar to *Kriya*, one suitable for that age. And it was Jesus who personally requested Babaji to send someone to the West to bring to his disciples the practices through which they could commune inwardly with his Christ Consciousness. This is why Yogananda has included Jesus Christ as one of the line of *Kriya* Masters.

### **DO I NEED TO RENOUNCE MY RELIGION AND CHURCH IN ORDER TO RECEIVE *KRIYA* INITIATION?**

Lahiri Mahasaya initiated Hindus, Christians, Muslim and atheists alike into *Kriya Yoga*, saying that no one need give up his religion in order to follow this path.

“A significant feature of Lahiri Mahasaya’s life was his gift of *Kriya* initiation to those of every faith. Not Hindus only, but Moslems and Christians were among his foremost disciples. Monists and dualists, those of all faiths or of no established faith, were impartially received and instructed by the universal guru. (He) encouraged his various students to adhere to the good traditional discipline of their own faith. Stressing the all-inclusive nature of *Kriya* as a practical technique of liberation, Lahiri Mahasaya then gave his chelas liberty to express their lives in conformance with environment and upbringing.”

*~Autobiography of a Yogi, Original Edition, 1946*

### **DO I NEED TO BECOME A DISCIPLE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE *KRIYA* INITIATION?**

*Kriya* is given as an initiation, in a ceremonial setting, to emphasize its significance as a sacrament, or a sacred moment during which the transforming power of the Guru is transferred to the disciple, enabling him to fully understand and deeply practice the liberating technique. Such an advanced technique is not offered to those who wish to follow the teachings in their own way, but to those who are willing and prepared to practice them as the Guru instructs. With these attitudes of willingness, openness and humility on the disciple’s part, the Guru is able to give more than to one who is merely curious about the teachings.

*Swami Kriyananda explains:*

“Spiritual progress without the help of a true, or Sat, guru, cannot but be slow, haphazard, uncertain, and sometimes dangerous. The ancient tradition in India, where spirituality has been studied for thousands of years—not as a religion, but as a practical science (“practical” in the sense of results actually accomplished)—has always insisted that a true guru is the sine qua non for success on the spiritual

path. Many spiritually ignorant people, even in India, insist that with literacy as widespread as it is now, and with books so easily available, spiritual teachings are accessible to virtually everyone and a guru is no longer needed. Truly, widespread literacy has had one unfortunate effect: the dissemination, not only of knowledge, but of ignorance!

“True understanding comes not by intellectual reasoning, but by intuition. Inner, intuitive attunement with the consciousness of the guru is what most surely and directly brings spiritual awakening.” *~The Essence of the Bhagavad Gita*

### **I ALREADY HAVE A GURU, BUT HE DOESN’T TEACH *KRIYA YOGA*. CAN I GET IT THROUGH ANANDA?**

When we accept a Guru’s presence in our lives, it means that we have the faith that he will give us precisely what we need. Once you have found your Guru, practice faithfully what he has given you. Part of being a “disciple” is accepting the Guru’s “discipline,” and using the instruments he gives with ever-increasing devotion, depth and constancy.

### **I LOVE YOGANANDA BUT FEEL MORE ATTRACTED TO ONE OF THE PRECEDING MASTERS. SHOULD I PURSUE THE *KRIYA* PATH THROUGH ANANDA?**

Reading the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, one feels attraction for all of the *Kriya* masters because of the devotion which Yogananda has for each of them. He did not write about himself, but about them. As their direct spiritual descendant, Yogananda is a channel for their blessings and for the *Kriya* science which they teach. If you feel love and respect for Yogananda and also for one of his predecessors, and feel inspired by the way in which *Kriya Yoga* is presented by Ananda as a vital practice for daily life, you are welcome and encouraged to pursue your *Kriya* path here. All of the *Kriya* masters will bless your practice through their direct channels.

### **I HAVE RECEIVED *KRIYA* INITIATION FROM ANOTHER TEACHER. CAN I COME TO YOUR INITIATIONS AND RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM YOUR TEACHERS?**

Each of the *Kriya* lines has their own particular way of structuring the various practices. You should refer to the line in which you have been initiated and ask the person who initiated you, or their followers, for the advice you seek.

If, on the other hand, you feel that you were not actually aware of the commitments of receiving an initiation, and that you would like to prepare yourself and receive *Kriya* through Ananda, you are invited to speak personally with one of our *Kriya* teachers.

**IF I TAKE *KRIYA* INITIATION, WHAT PRECISELY  
AM I COMMITTING MYSELF TO?**

You are affirming your discipleship to God and the line of *Kriya Yoga* avatars, and committing yourself to practicing the *Kriya* techniques faithfully as they are taught to you, and regularly, at least twice each day. You also promise to never reveal the *Kriya* techniques to anyone unless given the authorization to do so.

**IS THERE SOME WAY OF TRYING OUT  
THE *KRIYA YOGA* PATH BEFORE I MAKE  
A DISCIPLESHIP COMMITMENT?**

Yogananda has given preparatory practices which can be used by everyone in their daily lives: the Energization Exercises and the Hong Sau Technique of Concentration. Practicing these techniques and at the same time studying the writings of Yogananda and Kriyananda, and coming whenever possible to one of the Ananda teaching centers to participate in courses on the path of *Kriya*, will be greatly beneficial. As you use the principles and do the practices, you will begin to have your own relationship with the Gurus and your own experience of the benefits which the techniques bring to your consciousness, to your inner state of wellbeing, and to your daily life.

To help you to know whether the *Kriya* path and masters are right for you, you can “pretend” that they are and follow them as a disciple would: by including them in all aspects of your life. You can become “engaged” to Yogananda by inviting him into your heart, your home, your family, your place of work, involving him intimately in all of your activities, plans and decisions. After a period of engagement, you will know whether this path is for you. At that point, you can make a more formal commitment through discipleship initiation.

**HOW LONG MUST I WAIT BEFORE  
I CAN RECEIVE *KRIYA* INITIATION?**

It is not a matter of letting time pass, but rather of engaging yourself in the daily practice of the basic techniques on the path of *Kriya Yoga*. Once you have established a solid daily routine, you can take the *Kriya* Preparation courses, during which you learn additional practices. The average minimum time that is usually required, from the point where you are practicing daily, is approximately six months. Since most people require about six months to reach the point of becoming a disciple and establishing a regular routine, it is possible to receive initiation within about one year’s time. It is necessary to dedicate at least forty-five minutes twice a day to your practices in order to qualify for initiation.

**WHY IS SO MUCH PREPARATION NECESSARY?  
CAN’T I JUST LEARN THE TECHNIQUE NOW?**

*Kriya* is an advanced meditation technique, which requires a high degree of concentration and a strong central nervous system which is able to carry the increased amount of energy flow which the practice awakens. People who have not developed these capabilities will either not be able to feel the movement of energy of *Kriya*, or, in some cases, be unable to control the increased flow of energy. Yogananda himself established this guideline:

“*Kriya Yoga* is not given until the devotee has practiced other highly advanced techniques first, preparing his mind for the greater blessing of that highest technique. Experience has shown me the necessity of this general rule.”

**DO I HAVE TO COME TO ANANDA ASSISI  
IN ORDER TO BE INITIATED?**

*Kriya* initiations are given at Ananda Assisi four times each year by *Kriyacharyas* (teachers of *Kriya*) who have been authorized by Swami Kriyananda. These teachers give initiations in other locations as well.

**ONCE I RECEIVE *KRIYA*, CAN I RETURN  
FOR THE INITIATION CEREMONY WHEN MY FRIENDS  
ARE RECEIVING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME?**

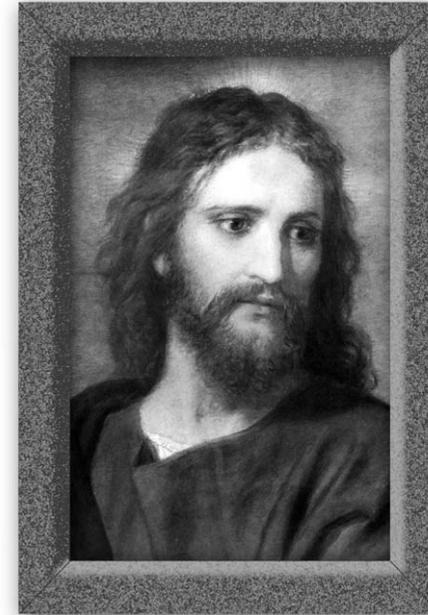
If you can, come to every initiation ceremony, especially those during the first year. The blessings received during *Kriya* ceremonies help us enormously in our spiritual progress. And at each initiation we are able to understand the practices more deeply. During Yogananda’s lifetime, his disciples attended all of the initiations.

**HOW MANY LEVELS OF *KRIYA* ARE THERE?**

On our path of *Kriya Yoga* there are four levels of initiation. When you have been meditating regularly with the basic *Kriya* technique for at least two years, and feel ready to increase your meditation time, you can request permission to receive initiation into the second *Kriya* practice. After at least one year of daily practice of both the first and second techniques, and a commitment to longer meditation periods, you may request permission to receive initiation into the third and fourth practices, which are taught at the same time. Ananda offers courses to help you prepare for each of these levels.

## Chapter Five

### THE *KRIYA* MASTERS

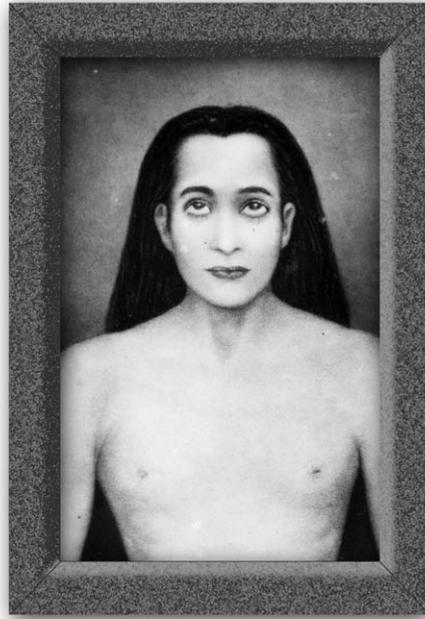


#### **JESUS CHRIST**

“I picture Him in my mind as He really was—Oriental Christ. Many painters have tried to give Him blue eyes and light hair, but He was a pure Oriental...by birth and blood and training. The Wise Men of the East, or East India, came to confer about Him when He was born, knowing Him to be one of the greatest message-bearers of Truth.

“(The) great Message of Jesus Christ is living and thriving in both East and West. The West has been perfecting the physical man, and the East has been developing the spiritual man. Both East and West are one-sided. And is it not strange to note that, perhaps due to God’s secret Plan—since the East needs material development, it has been invaded by Western material civilization! And since the West needs spiritual balance, it has been silently but surely invaded by Hindu philosophy!”

~ Paramhansa Yogananda, *Oriental Christ* ~

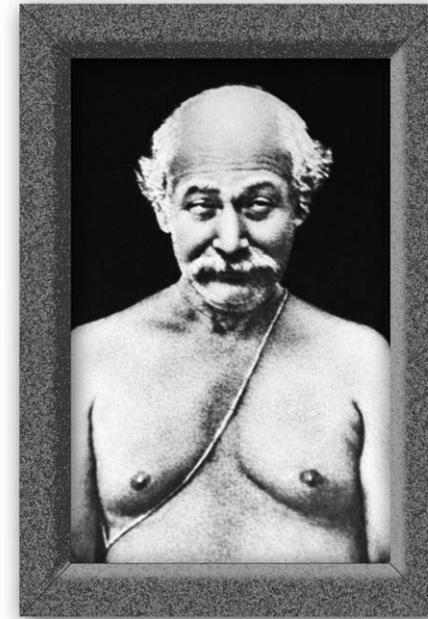


**BABAJI**

“The northern Himalayan crags near Badrinarayan are still blessed by the living presence of Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya. The secluded master has retained his physical form for centuries, perhaps for millennia... Babaji’s mission in India has been to assist prophets in carrying out their special dispensations. He thus qualifies for the scriptural classification of Mahavatar (Great Avatar)...

“The Mahavatar is in constant communion with Christ; together they send out vibrations of redemption, and have planned the spiritual technique of salvation for this age. The work of these two fully-illuminated masters—one with the body, and one without it—is to inspire the nations to forsake suicidal wars, race hatreds, religious sectarianism, and the boomerang-evils of materialism. Babaji is well aware of the trend of modern times, especially of the influence and complexities of Western civilization, and realizes the necessity of spreading the self-liberations of yoga equally in the West and in the East.”

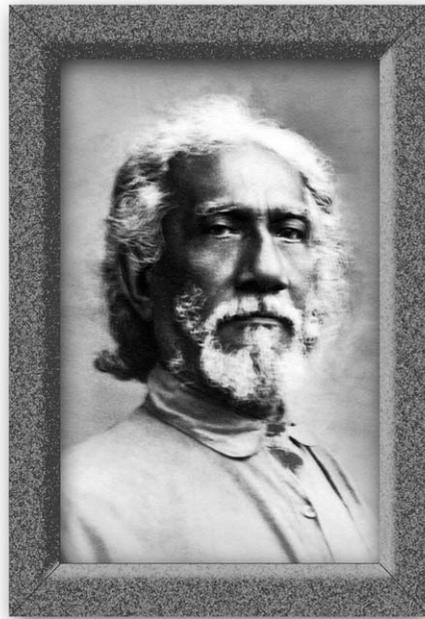
~ Paramhansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi, Original Edition, 1946* ~



**LAHIRI MAHASAYA**

“Lahiri Mahasaya, my Master’s Master, was an ideal prophet and a Christ-like man, although married and performing the duties of ordinary life. We can picture saints in the forests; but when we find them in the jungles of civilization, we can hold hopes of spiritual salvation for the worldly man. It was Lahiri Mahasaya who revived the Yoga system in India, and he was the harbinger of Yoga in Bengal. He was a prophet of the world, but was not of this world. He had miraculous powers. His life-teachings of Yoga, namely, to be calmly active and actively calm, are suitable for the use of the spiritually aspiring business man as well as for those in every station of life who are seeking greater spiritual realization.”

~ Paramhansa Yogananda, *East-West magazine, 1928* ~



### **SRI YUKTESWAR**

“Thou light of my life—thou camest to spread wisdom’s glow over the path of my soul. Centuries of darkness dissolved before the shafts of thy luminous help. As a naughty baby, I cried for my Mother Divine, and She came to me as my Guru—Swami Sri Yukteswar. At that meeting, O my Guru, a spark flew from thee, and the faggots of my God-cravings, gathered through incarnations, smoldered and blazed into bliss. All my questions have been answered through thy flaming, golden touch. Eternal, ever-present satisfaction has come to me through thy glory...”

“Our souls met after years of waiting. They trembled with an omnipresent thrill. We met here, because we had met before.

“Together we will fly to His shores, and then we will smash our planes of finitude forever and vanish into our infinite life.

“I bow to thee as the spoken voice of silent God. I bow to thee as the divine door leading to the temple of salvation...”

~ Paramhansa Yogananda, *Whispers From Eternity*, 1949 ~



### **PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA**

Mukunda Lal Ghosh, later known to the world as Paramhansa Yogananda, was the son of a senior executive in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway; as such, he faced the prospect of wealth and high worldly position when he grew up. But it was not this world that attracted him. From earliest childhood he had longed for God as intensely as others long for human love, or for worldly recognition.

“Soon after graduation from high school, Mukunda met his guru, the great Swami Sri Yukteswar of Serampore, Bengal. At the feet of this great master he attained, in the amazingly short space of six months, the high state of samadhi, or unconditioned oneness with God. His guru kept him in the ashram another nine and a half years, while he trained him for his mission of yoga dissemination in the West. ‘The West,’ Sri Yukteswar explained, ‘is high in material attainments, but lacking in spiritual understanding. It is God’s will that you play a role in teaching mankind the value of balancing the material with an inner, spiritual life.’”

~ Swami Kriyananda, *The Path* ~

## Chapter Six

### WHAT KRIYABANS SAY

“The life of an advanced *Kriya Yogi* is influenced, not by effects of past actions, but solely by directions from the soul...The superior method of soul living frees the yogi who, shorn of his ego-prison, tastes the deep air of omnipresence.”

~ Paramhansa Yogananda

“The single most important event of my life was taking my first *Kriya Yoga* Initiation at Ananda in the summer of 1975. I have regularly and faithfully practiced *Kriya* since that time and I can say, without reservation, that all the promises that our Gurus make regarding *Kriya Yoga* and what it can do for your spiritual progress are very, very true — they are actually even more so than they say!” . ~ S.S.

“I was searching all my life for a spiritual path. I tried different meditation techniques. I visited many different churches. The first time I came to Ananda, I took a yoga workshop, and I could see the inner joy of those who worked there. *They have what I'm looking for*, I thought. I went on to take *Kriya*. Many of my friends have noticed a change in me. I am still going deeper in my meditations. I truly have found the joy within!” ~ V.P.

“You can't imagine how my life has changed since I decided to practice *Kriya Yoga*. Most of the time I feel joyful—joyful eyes, smiling face, energy flowing through my body, a strong outlook on life, a faith in something outside of myself, something much greater.” ~ F.B.

“The blessings of our Gurus have stayed with me. This *Kriya* weekend was so special. Seventeen years ago I read *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and knew that was my way. But life sometimes is not easy and I walked away. This weekend I felt blessed and chosen to receive this sacred teaching.” ~ K.B.

“*Kriya* has been helping me by making me see things in the right perspective. I feel like my feelings are more balanced, my ideas more clearly organized, my devotion has increased and my attachments decreased. I no longer feel the need to eat as often as before, and my words have a stronger effect on other people and events.” ~ O.P.

“I use *Kriya* to focus deeply, even on one thought, concept, or dilemma. In this practice I find *Kriya* wonderful for problem-solving, as it creates a center of peace and calmness in a very busy, disorganized, and demanding world.” ~ K.W.

“*Kriya*, and this path have given my life purpose and direction. No matter what “storm” is swirling around the boat of life, there's always a clear light and a calm harbor! Thank you Master, Swami Kriyanandaji, and all the true, dedicated, joyful souls of Ananda. I can't imagine any better way of life.” ~ J.B.

“It was not until I was initiated into *Kriya* that things really changed for me. I have my ups and downs, but as I practice *Kriya*, it brings me back to what's important—seeking and actually feeling the presence of the Divine in my life. *Kriya* always brings me back on the path to God. For me, *Kriya Yoga* has been the difference between having a deep, meaningful spiritual life and still being out there reading books, seeking, dabbling and not finding anything fulfilling. *Kriya* works. It brings me joy, peace and a connection with God that I never thought possible in my life.” ~ R.R.

“I've been a *Kriyaban* for over 30 years and Ananda *Kriya Sangha* has been of great help to me. Many of us live far from other *Kriyabans*, and to have inspiration and practical advice on a regular basis can keep our practice energized. Each time my energy flags, it seems like that's the time I receive an email from the *Kriya Sangha*, reminding me that I'm not the only one practicing. There always seems to be some new twist on the practice to help me get back on track and enthusiastic again. What a blessing to have these techniques, and to have the help and support to practice regularly!” ~ S.D.

“Thank you again for the *Kriya* Preparation week. Those days were the most wonderful experience of my life.” ~ M.

“I can't put into words what a powerful weekend it was. The pertinence of the *Kriya* preparation program, the careful instruction, timing, and sequence of the classes, the energy of the other members of our *Kriya* preparation group made for a very special weekend and a deep *Kriya* initiation.” ~ G.K.

“Nothing can stop me now that I know *Kriya*. It feels like I have the missing link in my spiritual search.” ~ P.B.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

*We invite you to visit:*

The site **www.ananda.it** to know us better  
and to see the calendar of our courses



The site **www.anandaedizioni.it**  
to see and order our books and educational material  
(section > Corsi e Pratiche) and the site  
**www.crystalclarity.com**



The site **www.innerlife.it** to see and  
order yoga and meditation products



The site **www.anandaeuropa.org** to join  
your spiritual family online

### **Ananda Associazione**

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In contrast to the slow,  
uncertain “bullock cart”  
theological path to God,  
Kriya may justly be called  
the “airplane” route.

**PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA**



*For more information, visit our website*

**www.ananda.it**

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