



# GITANANDA YOGA

## NEWSLETTER

# DOWN UNDER

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia Inc  
Australian Registered Body Number 105 451 527; Incorporation Number: A37776  
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## NAMASTE!



*Welcome to another vibrant Newsletter of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia Inc.*

We have some great news to share! After lengthy negotiations by the Committee, OAMPS has accredited our Association for Yoga insurance cover.

This is a great opportunity for our members to enjoy Yoga / Therapy insurance at a highly competitive rate. The introductory premiums are set at: \$197 per annum for \$1M cover, \$224 per annum for \$2M cover and \$264 per annum for \$5M cover. Some Yoga teachers are paying three to four times this rate.

Our Association being accredited with OAMPS will also strengthen our position as a fully recognized lineage based authentic tradition within Australia. We must all bear in mind that obtaining insurance independently is more costly while obtaining insurance via other Yoga organizations strengthens their position within Australia while weakening our credentials. Since many of these organizations are home grown without lineage or traditional connections to India this seems a pity to diminish our unique Gitananda Yoga techniques.

Insurance application forms have been posted to all accredited members and members' numbers have been allocated. Members will also note that the date on the application forms is the 2nd April 2008. This is our Association's "common due expiry date" which is the same deadline as when our Association annual fees are due in April every calendar year. If you have an existing OAMPS insurance policy, copy the front page of the existing policy and send together with Gitananda

proposal. You will only pay pro-rata for calendar year to 2nd April 2008.

If you have any further queries regarding Yoga insurance with OAMPS please contact Murali on (02)9805 0062.

On to different topics now. The theme for this edition is Raja Yoga in the Gitananda Tradition. Our Master, Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Maharaj, also called Raja Yoga or the Royal or Kingly Yoga, Integral Yoga. Punya Swamiji was adamant that Raja Yoga requires the practice of all eight branches or limbs as enunciated in Maharishi Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

There are some key dates both in the Hindu and Ashram calendar this quarter. We are reminded that no matter how physically distant or isolated we are from the Ashram, India and other Saddhaks it is possible to connect on a psycho-spiritual level through observations of these key dates through Puja, meditation and reflection/contemplation.

The dates of our 2008 Gitananda Yoga Meet Down-Under are posted on our website. There is a good chance that Gitanjali may be able to offer her beach house for another year yet.

The Committee is seeking expression of interests for a scheduled visit to Australia in 2009 by Dr Ananda Bhavanani, son and successor to Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Maharaj. The timing would be approximately in the first 3 weeks of April 2009 as part of our Annual Get Together. Please register your interest with Murali: [Muralidharan33@yahoo.com.au](mailto:Muralidharan33@yahoo.com.au)

*Yours in Yoga  
The Editor*





## RAJA YOGA IN THE GITANANDA YOGA TRADITION

### ☺ THE RAJA YOGA OF SWAMIJI

Dr. Swami Yogamaharishi Gitananda Giri launched a revolution in the Western World in regard to Yoga technology. He did this in the 1950's while I was studying with him in Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

This was particularly in the area of what is often, correctly or incorrectly, termed Raja yoga.

As a young man his techniques provided me with a great deal of respite, comfort and anxiety reduction and seemed utterly magical – especially in the unique enchanting way that only Swamiji could present.

I have clearly written in the Introduction to my "A Chakra & Kundalini Workbook" (Llewellyn Publications, U.S.A. 1994):

"There is always one special Guru, and that is the one to whom you give your heart. When I was seventeen years of age I met Dr. Rishi Swami Gitananda of Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, South India, and that meeting began a discipleship of many years. Words could not and can not ever express my gratitude to him and I don't know what would have become of me had I not met him at that time and benefited so greatly from his teaching and wise guidance. Such techniques as Chakra Dharana, Polarization, and Solar Plexus Charging came from him for me to release in writing."

The wonderful Solar-Lunar technique of Polarization was completely unknown in the Western World prior to 1962 when I published and dedicated my first book to him "Psychosomatic Yoga" – and yet it came from him in the mid 1950's.

Aside from his disciples this wonderful practice was absent from the Yoga repertoire

The practice became disseminated and often bastardized, with the ground breaking publication by Prentice-Hall publishers in 1970 of "Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain" (by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder) which quoted me and released a version of the technique.

Swamiji taught a particular form of Relaxation Therapy that involved a series of rhythmic movements

accompanied by concentration long before Feldenkraise was ever heard of and I studied this in his classes for several years – the art has been lost and I am not sure I even can recall and resuscitate anything but the most elemental movements.

Swamiji's powers of Raja Yoga are exemplified by the rare ability to exhibit total attention within seconds. On one occasion he organized a lecture, and rented a 16 millimetre film projector for a documentary to follow his presentation. One of the student's knew how to operate the projector and we were dependent upon him to load and operate the Bell and Howell apparatus.

Unfortunately, at the last minute, the projectionist failed to appear and Swamiji and I looked with horror at the instrument – neither of us had seen one before let alone understood how to thread a film through it and operate the mechanisms. Swamiji opened the side door and studied the clockwork inside for a minute and proceeded to successfully load the film and within minutes it was operational.

Swamiji liked to relax in a bath before a lecture and on one occasion he borrowed a biography of Jung an hour before his scheduled appearance on the speaker's platform, relaxed in a bath for half an hour and speed read the 300 pages about Jung's life – and gave the lecture confidently knowing just about everything that could be known about Jung's life and theories complete with total recall of dates and places.

He had a real photographic memory coupled with the ability to absorb the contents of a book at the rate of about a page every two seconds!

Swamiji was also a magician who taught me to blur the border of reality with enchantment. With a few Mantras he could evoke from student's states of altered consciousness they had no idea dwelt within them, produce long buried memories and profound physical changes in those around him.

Many people do not know that when Swamiji was a young man he held a championship wrestling belt, and when I studied with him he was a superb master of Indian cuisine, painted avidly and sculpted.

I have wonderful photograph of him sitting at his desk in Vancouver. behind him is one of his paintings (a girl standing in front of a door – with no handle – the handle was on the inside for only from the inside may we "open" the internal floodgates!) and upon the desk was a sculpture of Ghandi he had produced within hours and fired.



On careful perusal of the pictures on display in the annex to the main lecture hall at Ananda Ashram you will find the photograph, sadly a little faded, for I brought it to the Ashram the year before his Mahasamadhi.

His was an encyclopaedic mind, what the Europeans call a "polymath", a renaissance man born into the 20th century. Rarely does the cosmos give us such a genius possessed of such insight into the human condition.



**Jai Jai Guruji**  
**Dr. Swami Anandakapila Saraswati**  
Ambassador, Gitananda Yoga Association

### 😊 Disciplines for Emotional Control

"Spirituality" was the title of a recent article in a Sydney newspaper, describing Raja Yoga as a "precise and predictable as a lab experiment", further stating the term "Raja Yoga was first termed by Swami Vivekananda, Raja meaning Royal, because it is precise and systematic".

In the Gitananda Tradition, Raja Yoga starts with Bahiranga Yoga (Outer aspects of morals, ethics, physical and breath control), similar to laying a firm foundation before building a house.

From personal experience, a Guide/Ashram is required to take one through the multitude of practices/ techniques, designed to "ground" the candidate. These practices include Aarthī (Sacred Flame), morning and evening to give uplifting thoughts. Asanas to train the body for stillness. Pranayama to train the breath. Jnana Kriyas (relaxation techniques in the Gitananda Tradition), cleansing and purifying the body and the lower mind.

Now the candidate is prepared for Antaranga Yoga (inner aspects or higher phases of Raja Yoga). These practices/ techniques are less tangible, but nevertheless create their own power/energy, allowing the candidate to turn inward. Why turn inward? So as to harmonize with our essential nature.

Pratyahara is the withdrawal of the senses, (not turning off the senses). Otherwise the higher mind is continually subservient to the lower mind, so Dharana (concentration is not possible).

Recently at Swami Gitananda's 100<sup>th</sup> centenary we were fortunate to practice "Mandala concentration", in which each Chakra has a corresponding shape and colour, gazing at these "Mandala's" or symbols becomes a vehicle for concentration at a higher level.



Similarly, Mandala Pranayama using these symbols, as well as "Bindu" or point concentration, using "Bindu" points within the physical brain.

These "inner practices" are designed to harmonize the functions of the left cerebral hemisphere, with that of the right hemisphere of our brain, a truly evolving experience.

It is interesting to note in Swami Gitananda's "Science of Yantra" book, the number 5 is the number given to the Raja phase of Yoga, Disciplines to gain emotional control.

**Murali Dharan**

### 😊 Kingly Yoga

The literal meaning of the Sanskrit term Raja Yoga is Kingly Yoga or Union. If we take both Sanskrit words in isolation we have Raja – King, Kingly implying rulership / dominion, and Yoga, To Unite / To Yoke implying in the traditional sense an integrative union of body and mind, the inner and outer worlds, of the Atma with the Paratma.

Pujya Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Maharaj stated that Yoga is a 4-fold process of awareness – awareness of the body, awareness of the emotions, awareness of the mind and awareness of awareness itself. And with awareness comes control or gradual rulership.

In the Gitananda Yoga tradition, this rulership or Raja Yoga is achieved by adhering to the map formulated by the Rishis of India and pithily expounded in Maharishi Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Swami Gitananda was adamant that Yoga was a step-by-step alchemical process. Furthermore the eight limbs expounded by Patanjali's Yoga Sutras can be divided into the outer and inner limbs of Yoga practice. The outer limbs should form the foundation and hence support / create the environment in which the inner practices can be experienced and nurtured in the context of a devoted Sadhana. The outer limbs are Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama.

The Yama and Niyama provide the ethical framework for the Sadhak so that the practitioner's inner and outer life are not at odds with one another i.e. not only to formulate an integrative personality but also to avoid amplifying the 'demonic' persona (expressed as selfishness, greed, ego aggrandizement etc...) especially with the unfolding of Siddhis or psychic accomplishments after much arduous Sadhana. As Swami Gitananda quite aptly puts it: 'One cannot break the rules (Yama and Niyama) only break themselves over them'.





## 😊 Raja Yoga -The conflicting Drama (in a good way)

Awareness and rulership of the body is achieved through Asanas at the grosser level and Pranayama at the subtler level. Gitananda Yoga has a plethora of Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas, Mudras and Pranayamas with appropriate Bandhas and Kumbhakas (and some totally unique to this lineage). We are reminded in Verses 46 to 48 Chapter 2 Sadhana Pada Patanjali Yoga Sutras of the purpose of Asanas to render posture steady and effortless to overcome the pairs of opposites and prepare the mind for meditation.

Gitananda Yoga has a series of Pranayamas that are not only cleansing and energizing to the physical and emotional vehicles but that can also dynamically polarize our being and awaken our latent potential.

Once we gain a degree of mastery over the outer limbs we can move more safely and productively on to the inner limbs of Raja Yoga. These are comprised of Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. We can develop control through practice over the first two of the inner limbs Pratyahara and Dharana. However, Dhyana and Samadhi are states of consciousness that happen to us after we have assiduously prepared ourselves with the previous six limbs. Yoga being a step-by-step process means that every practice is a preparation for something else paving the way to greater inner revelations and higher or more rarefied states of consciousness.

The Kriyas and Prakriyas in the Gitananda Yoga are designed to attain to these states.

Most of the techniques in the Gitananda Yoga tradition stem from West Bengal Tantra. Its more advanced forms of Dharana focus on the Chakra system with its Mandalas and Bija Mantras. This is also termed Laya Kriya Yoga and is designed to awaken the manifestation of the Indwelling Self or Atma leading to the state of 'awareness of awareness itself' or Dhyana commonly known as the meditative state. With repeated, deeper and more prolonged states of meditation, the state of Cosmic Consciousness or Samadhi may be attained.

Samadhi, our highest state of spiritual unfolding is the true goal of Yoga as expounded by the Gitananda Yoga Raja Yoga tradition following in the footsteps of the ancient Rishis of India.

*Yogacharya Devidasan Giri*

...and the whole life thing is about it not being a conflict, rather a merging into oneness.....

When I first read the email from Devidasan on the theme of this newsletter, I thought, hmmm... what would be my take on this? So in my usual way, when in doubt I do nothing (as one does), for a while and I am glad that I did, because I found inspiration in the article written by Devidasan, that being, reflection on the outer and inner limbs of Yoga – herein lies the conflict. Not that I found inspiration but that it set me thinking about my conflicts – again.

Conflicts are a good thing – they get our attention and anything that **gets** our attention, wants us to **give** our attention. Much as we may do nothing or resist them, they keep bugging us until we take a look, and it is this looking that leads us to the “rulership of the body and ultimately of more subtle levels” – awareness - and if we look at being aware long enough we will become aware of that very thing, awareness itself. That is a good place to be but the getting there which is often merely catching a glimpse of it, can be at best challenging and at worst painful. Nothing new.....

I am aware that I may be rambling but I am getting to a point. Whilst my teaching involves the major focus of taking care of the physical and emotional body, and so mentally, I (dare I say it?) am aware of the importance of doing that, it was not until I had a bit of a health issue with back and stress problems that I really stopped (gave my full attention), re-evaluated my life, and re-organised it so that I made time to do that properly and regularly (taking care of myself). The inner and outer conflict I had put myself in was stopping me from doing my work as well as I could, and it was a distraction physically and mentally from focusing on my spiritual practices and as such was impinging on my abilities to be aware of what I was actually thinking and what I was actually doing. I became conflicted about what I wanted to do and think, and what was actually happening. I was simply caught up in the busy-ness and stress of life, while trying to control my stress levels mentally – and that was not enough. I'm sure this is nothing new, and that most of us would have experienced something like that at some time. In fact I know it is a major cause of health issues in the western world.

This is when I seriously began practicing Hatha Yoga, for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harmony that I knew it brought to me. It was within this serious and focused practice that I began to







experience deeper awarenesses (which in the day-to-day busy-ness often at best were only glimpsed) about my body/mind connection. How restrictions in certain muscles originated in mental and emotional restrictions. With that came another conflict, because then I had to work through the mental and emotional stuff, however, once done is a joyful thing and brings inner and outer harmony which equals joy, which then allows me to be the best I can be in my work and living generally.

Whilst I have taken a simplistic and grass roots view of the topic and related it to my own simplistic experience, my belief is that it is best to go to the source of an issue (the grass roots) before things escalate and become too complicated, and we waste our time dealing with the complications.

Furthermore, it is important to be aware that perhaps life is meant to be simple and that perhaps remembering our grass roots, through the practise of Raja Yoga can lead to that merging of inner and outer without too much complication.

*Candida Vassallo*



## ASHRAM DIARY DATES

2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Start of the International Training Course at ICYER
15 <sup>th</sup> October to 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Dr Ananda's tour to Europe
21 <sup>st</sup> October	Vijaijaya Dasami
8 <sup>th</sup> November	Diwali celebrations
23 <sup>rd</sup> December	Purnima Puja for Srila Sri Gitananda Swamigal

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

11 <sup>th</sup> October	New Moon
26 <sup>th</sup> October	Full Moon
10 <sup>th</sup> November	New Moon
25 <sup>th</sup> November	Full Moon
10 <sup>th</sup> December	New Moon
24 <sup>th</sup> December	Full Moon



## OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Gandhi Jayanti	Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), India's "Father of the Nation"
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Mahalaya	An auspicious occasion observed seven days before the Durga Puja, and heralds the advent of Durga, the goddess of supreme power.
12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Navaratri begins	Celebration of the Divine Mother in all her diversity. During the first three days the goddess is invoked as a spiritual force called Durga in order to destroy all our impurities, vices and defects. The second three days, the Mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, Lakshmi. The final set of three days is spent in worshipping as the goddess of wisdom, Saraswati.
20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Navaratri ends	
21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Vijaya Dashami / Dusshera	Day of Victory following the nine nights of Navaratri. Victory of the Goddess over the forces of duality. Redemptive self-examination to restore ourself and reconnect with our Divine nature
25 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Lakshmi Puja	
29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Karwa Chauth	Ritual of fasting observed by married Hindu women seeking the longevity, well-being and prosperity of their husbands.
9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Diwali	Also called Deepavali, it is a very significant festival in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism. Known as the "Festival of Lights", it symbolizes the victory of good over evil, and lamps are lit as a sign of celebration and hope for humankind. On a personal level, its significance is to celebrate life and strengthen relationships. Celebrations Include decorating homes with lights, fireworks and gift giving



## OTHER IMPORTANT DATES Continued

10 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Kali Puja	Intense invocation to the fearsome Goddess. The main purpose is to seek the help of the Goddess in destroying evil both in the outside world and within us.
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Bhai Dooj	Sisters ceremonize their love for their brothers by putting an auspicious tilak or a vermilion mark on the forehead of their brothers and perform an aarti of him by showing him the light of the holy flame as a mark of love and protection from evil forces. Sisters are lavished with gifts, goodies and blessings from their brothers.
16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Chhath	A festival dedicated to the Sun God for bestowing the bounties of life and fulfilling wishes.
24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Guru Nanak Jayanti	Birthday celebrations of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak
30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Prathamastami	Older female relatives pray for the prosperity of the eldest child. The festival is followed by rituals and recitations of the Glory of Mahalakshmi.

### VICTORIA

- VIBRATIONAL BREATH THERAPY  
SRI BALA RATNAM  
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### NEW SOUTH WALES

- KAILASH CENTER FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INC.  
SWAMI ANANDAKAPILA SARASWATI  
[www.jonnmumfordconsult.com/](http://www.jonnmumfordconsult.com/)  
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