

**Kriya Yoga** is the name given to the actions that purify and strengthen the body, both physically and psychologically, in preparation for the experience of transmutative life force experienced during meditation and yoga practice. It is called the path of the good son, and referred to by Paramhansa Yogananda, as the Yoga of the householder.

Kriya refers specifically to the last three '*nyamas*' as duties for everyday life, namely '*Tapas*' Austerity, '*Swadhyaya*' Self-Study, '*Ishwara-Pranidhana*' Attentiveness to God. It is the Yoga most suitable for the western practitioner, and was revived by Lahiri Mahasays who lived from 1828-1895, and who was unusual among Indian holy men, in that he had a job and was a family man with children.

Any form of action of kriya, is not a blind re-action to an external situation, but an act of will for the greater good. It can take many forms, from politeness to others, a moderate diet, control of the mind and regular yoga practice. Any form of self discipline awakens us to the established inertia that resist change; strengthens our central will and helps us to grow in self understanding. The householder does not live in isolation as he has others to consider, and will use the distractions of family life to help him grow in self-knowledge.

Patanjali defines Yoga as controlling the activities of the mind; which is quite a difficult thing to do when the senses are pulling us, first in one direction and then the other. To withdraw the mind from movement, and enter the stillness that transcends mental activity, is not to abandon ship, but to place oneself in a position of command. This makes possible the awakening of the wisdom mind and the intuitive response from a vast storehouse of spiritual knowledge, of which our own thoughts are but the stepping stones.

After stilling the mind, feeling is the key to unlocking the intuitive response. A mind that is locked into one thought chasing another is confused by a variety of impulses and feelings that obscure the clarity that lies within. The wisdom mind arises from the inner clarity and the love that transcends all differences. Yoga is the wisdom that arises from the still all comprehending consciousness that lies within. The techniques of yoga are there to bridge the gap between the lower mind and the all comprehending mind of the Divine, sometimes referred to as the mind of the heart.

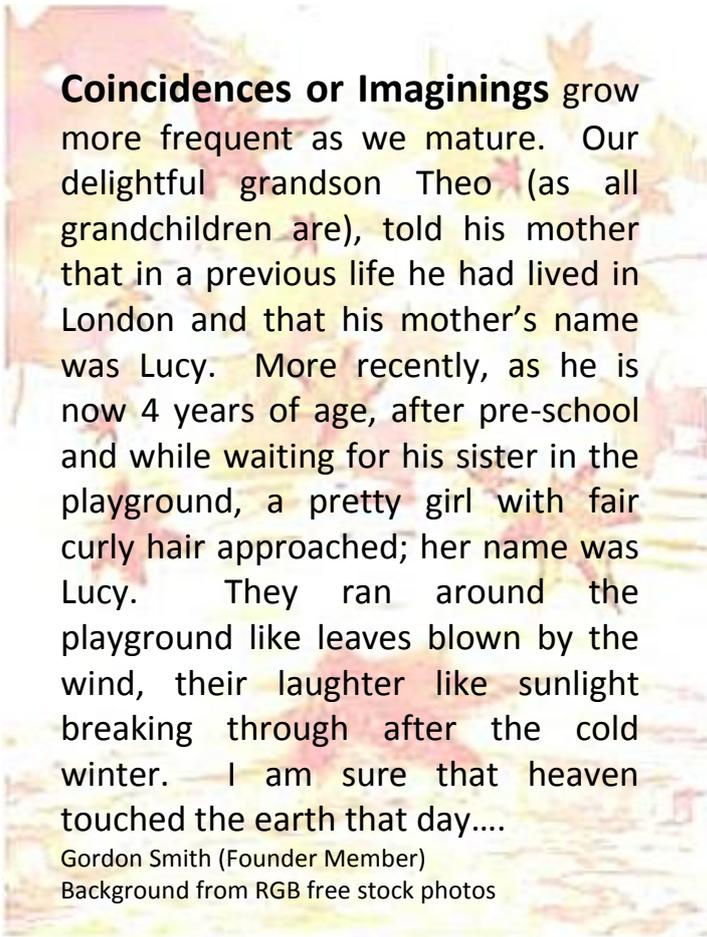
Kriyas are actions that purify at every level from the physical to the spiritual. They are pure uncomplicated acts of will that focus heart and mind on that

which is essential. Whether asana or pranayama the aim is to make the link between the underlying spaces (stillness), from which arises all movement.

Yoga asana reveals its secrets when held against an undifferentiated background of stillness; pranayama as the expression of life force that breathes life into all living things, or becomes still, remaining poised between breaths in moments of self-realisation. It is in moments of stillness that we touch the reality that lies within, and grow in 'Self' understanding. Kriya yoga is not different from Christian yoga as it does not serve self interest, but aspires to a level of action expressed by the words 'Thy Will Be Done'.

The householder, beset by the problems of daily life, through study, prayer and repetition of sacred mantra, refines and purifies his actions. Any form of self-discipline sets the pattern for the future; physical exercise will help to promote health. Actions that are consciously initiated (*kriya*), transform the spiritual body, so that the psyche or soul, not unlike the transformation of the caterpillar to butterfly, awakens the 'Self' (*atman*), to much wider and freer dimensions of reality. So that the body, not unlike the chrysalis, falls away, to reveal a new form and re-birth, appropriate to the next phase of life.

Gordon Smith (Founder Member)



**Coincidences or Imaginings** grow more frequent as we mature. Our delightful grandson Theo (as all grandchildren are), told his mother that in a previous life he had lived in London and that his mother's name was Lucy. More recently, as he is now 4 years of age, after pre-school and while waiting for his sister in the playground, a pretty girl with fair curly hair approached; her name was Lucy. They ran around the playground like leaves blown by the wind, their laughter like sunlight breaking through after the cold winter. — I am sure that heaven touched the earth that day....

Gordon Smith (Founder Member)

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