

HOUSE OF OM



MODULE 1

PRACTICE 120 MINS

In this module you will find your balance with a specifically designed Vinyasa Flow sequence, accompanied by Meditation for Health and Wellbeing, and your usual pranayama routine.



HISTORY 60 MINS

In the history lesson you will learn about the ancient period of yoga, Adiyogi, and Krishna. You will touch on Bhagavad Gita, and what will later become the Margas.

HISTORY, TECHNIQUE, AND BENEFITS OF YOGA NIDRA 60 MINS

Your first Yoga Nidra session of the course also introduces the history, technique, and benefits of Yoga Nidra. Find out what does it do and who came up with this method.



REFLECTION 60 MINS

Every second module you will be writing a reflection. Save it to your own journal as well - you will not only learn much faster, but understand what works for you better.



BONUS

Meaning and Importance of Mantra Chanting

In all spiritual traditions, Mantra Yoga or Meditation is regarded as one of the safest, easiest, and best means of systematically overhauling the patterns of consciousness.

HISTORY

YOGA HISTORY. ANCIENT PERIOD

Yoga has been evolving and expanding throughout history, although we can't study the history of yoga without understanding the contribution of the first yogis who brought it in life, and shared it with thousands of people, and made it possible for every human being.

Adiyogi

According to legend and mythology Adiyogi was the first yogi. Adi means first. Adiyogi is another term for Shiva.

He used to spend this time dancing wildly sitting in deep states of meditation. many people came to him to learn what it was that he was doing, as they recognized that he was in a blissful state all the time. He did not bother to teach them and most people left - as is the case with people who approach a spiritual Master just out of curiosity. 7 people stayed back. He gave them some practices to do, and then continued on his own Journey. After 84 years he observed that they were now good at those practices. and so he decided that they had shown enough discipline and dedication to learn. He began to teach them on Full Moon night - which is revered in India as Guru purnima. On that day he became Adi Guru - the first Guru.

'Gu' means Darkness 'Ru' means Light - so a person who takes you from Darkness to light! And not merely an expert, or a teacher.

Adi Yogi had found 112 or 114 ways to enlightenment, 108 of the body, and 8 beyond, he was a very creative person who was willing to dig deep into the human condition.

Adiyogi's fundamental approach to life is the Longing To Go Beyond one's limited sense of self - physically, mentally, and spiritually. This is something we all experience - that life cannot just be a cycle of "eat - work - sleep". We want to expand and explore more. Adiyogi showed us that this is possible. He gave the signs of exploring, of liberation. the seven people he taught - became the 'SaptaRishis' - seven Great Sages.

They made the science into techniques and taught it to people across the Indian subcontinent. Today we practice yoga and meditation thanks to this Fountain of Knowledge!

Adi Yogi was the first person to say that these limiting notions of what the body and mind can do are why we are limiting what it means to be human. When you break through those limits and go beyond limiting beliefs that is when the journey has begun.

This is why Adi Yogi became something very beautiful that has inspired the Indian culture for millennia. The contribution to human consciousness is to go beyond, to break your limiting sense of self, and to understand that there is much more to life.



Krishna

Krishna is considered to be an avatar of Vishnu. He is considered as the complete expression of a human being. Krishna brings an ideal of living in the world and yet being a spiritual person - which is different from ancient ideas that to be spiritual one had to leave the world.

Krishna is a politician, a king, a musician, a dancer, and a spiritual master. His experience of life is very vast and it continues to inspire every aspect of Indian culture and thought!

Krishna taught in the Bhagavad Gita, that are 3 margas - Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga. based on one's personality, one will have an inclination towards one Marga.

Krishna spoke about Karma Yoga which we have discussed in the video lesson.

In the Gita Krishna shows his transcendental nature to Arjuna - the protagonist of the Indian epic Mahabharata - and Arjuna is amazed, even slightly frightened by the spectacle. It is very beautifully described in the Gita.

Krishna inspires us that even if you don't have faith, you can approach Liberation through intellect. If you don't have intellect, you can approach Liberation through service. In this way each of us can approach our Liberation through our own personal inclination!

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita is a 700 verse Hindu scripture that is the sixth book of the most fabled Mahabharata.



To understand the Gita, it helps to know a little of the background. Historically, the Mahabharata War is said to have occurred in 3201 BC; however, a more plausible date would be 1500 BC.

This is a war between Good and Evil as most of mythology is. Having been cheated out of ruling their Kingdom, the pandavas have to wage a war against their cousins, who have unlawfully taken over the kingdom.

At this point the chief warrior Arjuna is in a dilemma. His chariot is being Guided by Krishna, which is also a metaphor for Krishna guiding Arjuna in general. Arjuna wonders that even if he wins this war, by killing his cousin and his teachers, what does he gain? Arjuna wants to leave the battlefield. Krishna then talks to him - this conversation is the Gita.

Considered as the "spiritual dictionary", the Bhagavad Gita is composed of 18 chapters, the first 6 deal with Bhakti Yoga, the next 6 on Karma Yoga, and the last 6 on Jnana Yoga.

Karma Yoga

'Karmani evadhi karaste, Maa phaleshu kadachana, Maa karma phala hetur bhur, Maa te saango akarmani.'

"You have the right to perform your duties prescribed to you but not to the outcome of it."

"You should never be motivated by the fruits of your actions."

"You should never be attached to the performance of your duties."

Karma Yoga is described by Krishna as three main points:

One is that you have to perform your responsibilities. You should not escape from that. So if you are a mother, you have to perform your responsibilities as a Mother. Likewise as a teacher and so on.

The second point is that you don't focus on the fruits of your labors. You keep doing what you are supposed to do, without worrying about what you will receive. This is very rare as we always do things with expectations in mind. However, if we can let go of these expectations then we can really work in the best way possible.

And one must never be attached to the performance of one's duties

Therefore, Krishna says, it is Arjuna's Dharma as a king to uphold good governance for his subjects. If it means fighting his cousins then he has to do that. By not performing one's duties evil is postponed, but cannot find liberation.

Karma Yoga is defined as efficiency in Action. Often we are disappointed when we don't receive the appreciation we desire for the work that we did and this leads to stress and frustration at work and in relationships.

So if you focus on these two aspects, you can find liberation through the Service you render. Every aspect of your life will become a Service. This is Karma Yoga.

Let us now look at the meaning of KARMA itself.

KARMA is also defined similarly to "As you sow, so shall you reap"

Karma is all that you do, think, and this will have a bearing on your life and what happens to you. If you harm someone, you will be harmed and if you help

someone, you will receive help.

So Karma is that idea that describes Why things happen to us in a particular way. It is one of the most important Philosophical ideas, that is foundational to the Indian thought systems. It spreads across lifetimes, you carry your Karmas with you and that is why you find yourself in certain situations in life.

Krishna talks about the cycle of birth and death; and how to overcome it through liberation called Moksha. He also speaks about Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga in the Gita. Bhakti as devotion unto him and Jnana as enquiry into the nature of existence. The Gita is one of Mankind's greatest philosophical treasures - as yogis we need to study it.

Jñana Yoga

Jñana Yoga, also plays an important role in the Bhagavad Gita text. The path of wisdom. Jñana in sanskrit and in a yogic context means the wisdom derived from direct acquaintance with the Self. Krishna implies that one should be wise about two things, your body-mind and the second is knowing the supreme spirit.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga means the path of devotion, opening your heart and being completely surrendered to the path of unconditional love. Krishna says that if he can offer everything to Him (the form of Universal Love) then he will achieve liberation from suffering.

According to Krishna as the supreme path of yoga because it is so direct and easy. This path can be seen as the path of trust and although trust is easy in theory, to fully trust means that we are taking a big leap out of ourselves into the Universal Mystery.

REFLECTION

What did you think about the lessons of these past modules? How did they impact you? What did you feel was useful, and what was lacking? What do you think you will keep using and in what situations?



BONUS

MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MANTRA CHANTING

In all spiritual traditions, Mantra Yoga or Meditation is regarded as one of the safest, easiest, and best means of systematically overhauling the patterns of consciousness in order to awaken higher experience and to sustain a higher voltage of energy. Mantras have been seen and developed by the –Rishis (Sages), the inner alchemists – is a science-based on the realization of the omnipotent power of the eternal sound.

Therefore the sages are known as mantra “Drashta” – the visionaries of mantras. The regular practice of Mantra helps in psychic and spiritual purification.

Whenever a mantra is intoned or chanted in a specific rhythmic manner, its associated sonic waves expand in a specific pattern and after traversing across the layers of energy-particles in the surrounding space reach and penetrate the corresponding cosmic nuclei of divine powers.

Mantras are impulses or rhythms of the consciousness. Mantra is a sound vibration, used to free the mind from its obsessive nature. The definition of mantra is: “MananaTrayate iti Mantrah” – The definition of the word mantra is 'liberating the mind from its obsessive involvement in tensions, worries, and anxieties'.

Sound belongs to “Space” Element. The whole work of Yoga to develop the ever-expanding space within us or how to enhance our consciousness.

Yoga says the sound is the basic ingredient of Energy. Hence sound is one of the powerful and easiest tools to experience higher energy and consciousness.

Mantras - Sound vibrations permeate every cell of your being and allow your mind to dissolve and repose. Every vibration has a frequency. Sound can easily change the behavior of any living being.

If one plays rock music, the behavior of living beings is different from when one plays classical music. One form of sound vibration i.e. classical music relaxes, another form of sound vibration i.e. rock music stimulates. That is easily evident in the music that some types of music bring peace and some make the listener move and dance.

This image has an empty alt attribute; its file name is bells1.jpg
Mantra is more subtle, for the sound vibrations of mantra work at the Pranic level and Conscious level of a living being. For example, if you use the mantra “Om Namah Shivaya”- from the religious perspective, ‘Om Namah Shivaya’ means 'I Salute Shiva'. From the yogic perspective, Om is the seed mantra (Bija mantra) of Ajna Chakra, the Sixth Centre. ‘Na & Ma’ are sounds of the Fifth Centre, Vishuddhi chakra. ‘Shi & Va’ are sounds of the Second Centre, Swadhisthana Chakra. ‘Ya’ is the sound of the Heart, Anahata Chakra.

These are the sounds or mantras, which correspond to the chakras in the body. In yoga, when you say ‘Om Namah Shivaya’, you are actually affecting and altering the behavior of the Shakti in these Subtle Energy Centers.

In mantra chanting the main focus on listening to the sound of the mantra and feeling its vibration on body mind and heart. It is realigning, rebalancing the body, mind, and heart to enter into a state of higher consciousness.

Mantra helps to release the repressed emotions and conditionings from the unconscious and subconscious mind. Mantra is also an effective means of developing a platform of 'witness awareness' where the practitioner can watch the different thoughts, feelings, and sensations of the body.

Four Stages of Mantra Chanting or Mantra Awareness

This image has an empty alt attribute; its file name is bowls1.jpg

1) Vaikhari

The initial or first stage of Mantra Chanting is known as “Vaikhari”. In this stage a mantra should be chanted aloud. This is especially useful in stabilizing the patterns of consciousness when the mind is disturbed or highly distracted.

2) Upanshu

The next stage is Upanshu, or whispered repetition. In this stage a mantra should be chanted by using lips but without producing any sound.

3) Manasik

The next stage is Manasik (Mental), where the practitioner chant or intone the mantra mentally without even using the lips. The most powerful and subtle form of mantra chanting is on the mental plane. This is the form which is being widely investigated for its physiological and psychological effects in many laboratories around the world today.

4) Shravana

The next stage is Shravana, just listen the inner sound with full awareness and alertness. Complete stop of chanting. Just remaining a witness to all sounds within and listen them carefully without any judgment of good or bad.

Other Forms of Mantra Yoga

Mantra Yoga can be practiced in many ways. One of the best and simplest is the repetition of the mantra using a mala. Here a fixed number of rounds of the mala are undertaken each day as instructed by the guru.

This Sadhana is known as Japa Anushtana, where the aspirant makes a resolve to complete the required number of rounds each day.

Another form of mantra repetition is the synchronization of the mantra with the inflowing and outflowing breath.

NOTES

