

A wooden canoe is positioned on a calm river, surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The scene is peaceful and natural, with the canoe's reflection visible in the water.

Yoga Meditation Mysticism Philosophy Esoteric

Book II in Series

Selected Essays

Lindsay Traynor

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**Selected Essays
Lindsay Traynor**

**The primary focus of this selection is Yoga and its associated
Indian philosophies**

***"By whatever thing you are bound, by that the bond is broken."
-- Hevajra Tantra***

Collated and Edited by the Author

The Empty Boat

(From the Chuang tzu)

who is able to divest himself
of achievement and status
and lose himself completely
in the nameless mass of humanity?

flowing easy like water, he is invisible ...
moving like life itself,
he is nameless and homeless.

simple is his manner
to all appearances he seems a fool;
his steps leave no trace
he has no power
he achieves nothing
he has no reputation.
he judges no-one,
therefore no-one judges him.
such is the perfect man.
his boat is empty.

*[It is the mighty that fall the hardest.
And it's the birds with the brightest plumage
that are hunted for their feathers.]*

'Nothing is ever what we think it is – it simply is what it is!'

All good adages have many layers of meaning and lend themselves to multiple interpretations and the above title is no exception.

The initial interpretation in the vernacular is fairly straightforward – '*whatever we think something to be, it is not!*' Simple enough, n'est-ce pas? But that interpretation begs the question, why? We'll attempt an answer as the story unfolds -- and frankly, I have no idea where it is going at this stage.

Never forget that every interpretation must exclude others (for good or ill) if meaning is to maintain its integrity.

We are faced with the loss of more profound meaning if we subscribe to a single, simple interpretation, so we shall not allow ourselves to adhere to any particular interpretation or cling to any simplistic meaning.

I have never been satisfied with surface appearances or superficial presentations, so let's see if we can discover more layers of meaning in that very Buddhist adage.

Everything falls victim to the irresistible forces of change so we'd better hurry and derive something of substance or our lives may be rendered futile and meaningless, and we wouldn't want that, we're American and we are exceptional -- (a little sarcasm never goes astray).

"Nothing," is a perfect vacuum, (an American cranium) it implies empty space, though space is a relative term defined by time – all depth analysis leads to revelations so please excuse me if I appear to go off on tangents at times.

'Nothing' is precisely that, yet we are not referring to a void; 'nothingness' refers to the absence of limiting factors -- understand that a thought is also a 'thing,' it has a beginning and an end (measurable), whereas the absence of 'things,' nothingness, reveals an immeasurable, limitless, continuous, infinite process.

But what's the 'point' of 'nothingness?' The point is there is no 'point;' we are referring to a qualitative state that exists behind quantitative appearances -- aha or aaahh! Whatever the case may be, but hopefully we may begin to see. I sincerely hope that new meaning begins to emerge for all that possess a functional brain.

"Nothingness" is saturated with quality because it has no measurable quantities; therefore, to discover limitlessness or 'nothingness' is to launch into infinity and how very (qualitatively) sweet that/it is.

If we were to "think," about it, continuity would immediately cease and we would be confronted with a thing/concept/thought or measurable quantity of some type, 'like the oil reserves of Iraq and Libya.'

Un-qualified Being or continuous pure existence IS the absence of defining qualifications/conceptions -- have we got it now?

It should be clear that introducing thought into 'nothingness' limits and veils by superimposition. The continuous (infinite) becomes veiled or hidden by the dis-continuous (finite thing). Therefore, thought or thinking acts to limit/distort/corrupt by superimposition whatever it attempts to 'capture', define or describe.

Now that we are all budding little Buddhas and immune to all the illusory presentations of culture that attempt to pollute and enslave our minds, we should have no trouble returning to clarity and seeing clearly.

Time and Reality

Time, that dynamic arbitrary form of measure upon which all cultures are built simply does not exist. We, and everything that is, exist in an indestructible continuum which is verifiable as a continuous experience. Arguments attempting to validate an arbitrary form of measure (time) in an infinite continuum are absurd, have you ever attempted to introduce the 'past' or 'future' into the voluptuous, explosive present/Now? At best we are only able to veil continuous reality with false notions, fictions and myths, even memory is a process that occurs in the present; is anyone able to experience the past in the past or future in the future? No! All experience/reality is Now, including what we imagine the past or future to be. Put simply nothing exists or has ever existed outside the continuous present -- disbelievers, please try in vain to produce the past or future.

Perhaps it may be helpful to define reality in order to proceed with clarity.

Reality is here defined as a continuous, evolving experience, which is the only demonstrable process/proof of existence -- or defined in the negative, reality is a state devoid of all quantitative superimpositions.

Consciousness is the sole determinant, nothing exists outside consciousness, that is self-evident; indeed, it is the ONE and Only reality, as nothing can be experienced without a conscious 'experient,' and as declared, experience only occurs in the NOW or in the measureless, continuous, conscious present.

Therefore it becomes evident that consciousness and reality are interchangeable terms, consciousness is the infinite continuum or reality.

This piece is being 'written' as it is being read (simultaneously) by the actuating principle of the reader's consciousness; the 'author' is

subsumed by the reader or more accurately, is created by the reader. 'I' have never existed outside or separate from the reader's consciousness. Therefore, I am obliged to warn readers that reading this piece risks unsettling the finite, concept/thought-ridden mind, which is the measuring, veiling faculty.

I should also state that *Time and Reality* are mutually exclusive.

See what You make of it!

Release is Instant

*"By whatever thing you are bound, by that the bond is broken." --
Hevajra Tantra*

The above axiom applies across the entire field of human experience/endeavour, including the sociopolitical.

If you look outside to others for guidance and leadership you remain enslaved. Who is able to free another? Liberate yourself, it's only an attitude away.

Everything you think you are is a lie, yes, everything. The complex train of thoughts, loaded with emotions and desires, that you regard as You has been superimposed onto your essential nature or inherent Being by culture.

Put simply you are not what you 'think' you are -- you existed long before the language of thought and will continue long after language has been abandoned in favour of direct, unfettered aware communication.

All thought is based on language, words, images and abstractions. And what is language but a conglomeration of culture or the repository of cultural experience in your head.

Freedom/liberation cannot be bestowed or achieved by that which enslaves, but language can be turned in on itself until it eventually fails due to its obvious limitations and imprecision -- it is a finite form of expression/representation and your inherent nature is infinite -- why would you identify with a mirage?

Truth is simplicity itself, nothing is simpler than recollecting who you really are. You already possess that which you seek, so why seek?

The act of seeking veils that which you would find -- to quote a Zen

adage, "those who seek do not find" -- Christians unhappily verify that fact

There is nothing gained and nothing lost, you already have everything, yes, everything of worth. Does all-encompassing infinity lack anything, it can't, it is everything (and more).

You cannot be harmed, despoiled or polluted in any way unless you allow it, so why fear or be manipulated by fear? No man-made religion, ideology, God or military weapon is able to prevail against infinity, the essential You, if you are aware.

Realise your Self/Truth and come together as equals; build whatever you choose that would replace the nightmare that others have created for you.

If you tire of your miserable, fearful existence simply sit quietly and let thought go, just let it all go until You emerge from your imposed prison, never to be enslaved again.

Lassitude, Fear and Suffering

‘At the root of all sorrow is Desire’ – no doubt! An ancient Hindu axiom re-iterated by Gautama Buddha. It is an inviolable Truth, too often forgotten at very great expense.

For those engaged in the pursuit of equanimity, there can be no compromise, desire must be abandoned or one’s sanity and peace forfeited to hell, we all know it from bitter experience.

Yet another ancient universal antidote for sorrow exists, Love.

Selfish desire should be transformed, redirected, transmuted and expressed as unconditional Love – a method far easier than ascetic abandonment or harsh discipline – pure, unconditional, all-embracing Love leads to Nirvana.

Take your pick and make your play; you have everything to lose and nothing to gain – how sweet it is.

If the above is not a self-evident, obvious Truth then tribulation is your fate until it is realised.

Sweet peace to All.

The Physiology of Mystical Rapture

We need to be very clear on a principal issue before proceeding and that is, there is no God outside human experience, in other words, All knowledge of God or Divine Ecstasy falls within human experience. We are now ready to explore the human experience of direct communication with 'God' otherwise known as mystical rapture.

Mystics rhapsodise endlessly about the bliss of 'divine' union, especially the mystical poets. Written accounts throughout the world are remarkably similar, it seems that 'divine' union is an experience common to all mankind regardless of cultural, national and geographic barriers.

Now consider the mechanisms involved in this mystical experience; a body-mind complex, emotion and awareness. Also bear in mind that one of the oldest extant yoga manuals (Patanjali, 600 BC) refers to drugs -- which act on the body and mind in turn -- as a means of inducing mystical experience and as we know bodies and minds are not rare or 'other-worldly, divine' commodities.

We needn't delve too deeply into human anatomy, we only need mention the central nervous system, nerve ganglia, spine, brain and hormone-producing endocrine glands as playing the primary roles in these experiences.

Now consider the nature of sexual orgasm, rhythmic nervous excitation leading to a synchronised neural discharge from the brain right through the body to the sacral plexus at the root of the genitals - - most would describe orgasm as a highly pleasurable sensation bordering on the ecstatic.

The exact same energy and internal bio-mechanisms that deliver sexual orgasm to the brain also deliver 'divine' ecstasies in the brain. The difference is that libido is conserved, stored, then redirected

by/in the nerve ganglia and spontaneously moved 'upward' along the spine to the brain rather than take its usual course during sexual discharge. Note that sexual excitation is common to all mammals, there is absolutely nothing other-worldly, mystical or 'divine' about these experiences.

With some mental and physical training, the vital libido/life force is easily harnessed and made to rise up through the ganglia (chakras) into the spine and on to the brain in a series of rhythmic, ecstatic pulses or discharges. Understand, I am not referring to brain or mind-induced sexual orgasms -- this experience exceeds the pleasures of sexual orgasm a thousandfold and is not characterised by any fluid discharge.

The means by which any human is potentially able to commune directly with their 'God' are simple, natural and very straightforward.

The quieting of the mind's endless chatter results in rhythmic 'synchronisation' with the breathing and harmonious subtle neural energy flows in the body -- all perfectly natural processes. Success is usually achieved after approximately nine months of dedicated, persistent and regular practice. There are no mysteries regarding 'God' or this very human experience -- we are 'purpose-built' for these experiences.

I suggest choosing an agreeable (to you) form of meditation for stilling the mind, 'watching' the breath is recommended; I also recommend reducing the diet to a vegetarian diet, which reduces 'pressure' on the need for sexual gratification, simple!

See you all in Paradise, no-one is excluded by nature.

Universal Flux (Kinesis) and the Serpent Power

Probably the most misunderstood by Westerners is the Indian concept of '*Kundalini*' or the Serpent Power, notwithstanding that the modern 'K-Mart' Guru industry attempts to sell this power to foolish Western students for a price, which power cannot be sold. So I would mention at the outset the use by Indian mystics of what is referred to as 'twilight language' in the Tantras, which indicates that these sacred texts are not to be taken literally.

As with all texts dealing with secret traditions, they refer to essential meaning in very oblique ways relying heavily on literary devices such as metaphor, analogy, allusion, metonym etc, to transmit their core message to those able to understand.

'Serpent' energy, which denotes a kinetic bioplasmic force that courses through the body and activates associated nerve ganglia and the brain are represented as 'Kundalini and chakras', which terms are entirely poetic descriptions. I would state quite plainly that if the Kundalini force were inert, or 'dormant', as is often erroneously described, then that condition would indicate physical death as the kinetic bioplasmic energy that circulates constantly through the major energy 'ducts' (nadis are not nerves) in all Living mammalian bodies is Life itself or the animating principle of life.

Furthermore, there is no such thing as non-active energy anywhere in the universe -- kinesis is characteristic of all energy. Indian sages refer to the 'dormant' aspect of the Kundalini energy as denoting ignorance, not a condition or state. Those versed in the history of Indian philosophy would also note that modern Rishis/Sages, Ramana Maharishi for example, refer to Realisation as, Kundalini Shakti.

While certain energy correspondences exist in various yoga traditions, it is the height of ignorance to refer to the Kundalini as dormant -- what is dormant in most Western yoga centres is

intelligence, knowledge, awareness!

In conclusion, I would borrow from the Christian tradition when referring to most modern yoga teachers in the West, as the 'blind leading the blinder'.

Understand what an intelligent Indian monk (Vivekananda) once taught his Western students, "God does not play hide and seek", 'it' is ever present/evident and blazing in your faces.

If you wish to achieve 'enlightenment' nothing could be easier than simply sitting and allowing your essential enlightened nature (Self) to shine through all the accumulated cultural garbage that pollutes your mind. Let it all go and just sit quietly; soon you too will become a Sage. Humans are born with all the necessary requirements for this experience, and there are no mysteries involved in Self-Realisation as it is 'Self' (not ego self) based. You would also save considerable funds, if attempting to purchase 'secret knowledge' from fraudulent 'Gurus,' which funds could be put to better use. Simply put, there are no secrets in this universe.

Demystifying Yoga

After forty years study and practice of yoga and other related disciplines, I can confidently say I know less today than I did when I 'started,' as a matter of fact I know nothing, do not misunderstand, which, nevertheless, is considerably more than most ochre-robed yoga 'experts' who advertise in various new-age bookshops and health food stores.

As a service to fellow aspirants of Truth and practitioners of Peace I dedicate the following paper.

Borderline schizos, loosely hinged mentalities, and those prone to fantasy will find no comfort here. This discourse is devoid of all fantastic and new-age descriptive codswallop.

To the rest, I wish you all eternal peace (your present real condition) and limitless love (the nature of your essential Being).

Yoga is a psycho-physical discipline designed to tone the body, focus the mind and achieve Union. The objective of yoga is to discover what manifests/occurs when a fully focused mind functions in a fully-toned, harmoniously functioning body, that simple! View with suspicion anyone who would elaborate, with colourful, flowery descriptions. I've heard them all and none have any relevance to real yoga, which is a state of Being.

You will be happy to learn that the benefits of yoga are non-discriminatory; moral and amoral persons derive benefits proportional to the degree of expertise achieved; yoga is not religion, it is a science.

I would cite the infamous dictator, Robert Mugabe, (recently deceased) as an example. The 90-year-old despot is as sharp as a whip and is easily able to handle intellectual challenges from the best the West can offer. Mugabe practices yoga every morning and

has done so for years. At 90 he easily 'runs rings' around politicians half his age in face-to-face debates. Such are the non-discriminatory benefits of yoga. The reader will note that yoga has done nothing to improve his moral or ethical conduct, as he neglected the 'Yamas and Niyamas,' essential for moral conduct.

I would also cite an age-old, still extant, tradition of Indian fighters, known as 'Sanyasins/Sadhus' who practised yoga as an essential component to their combat training. Sadhus were not always the chillum-pulling vagabonds we see on the banks of the Ganges today, they were once fighting rebels. And so, clearly, yoga benefits ALL who practise it; western 'sin' is a superimposed dirty word and has no meaning or relevance in yoga – how refreshing.

I would also state that yoga, once achieved, does not incline one to crime or sociopathic pursuits; the experient is apt to become an extremely valuable member of the human race, if so inclined – nonetheless, any 'outcome' is possible including the rejection of human society, it's a matter of choice.

Yoga tones and conditions the nervous system and concentrates the vital energies. These energies are then focused and channelled via mental disciplines in much the same way a magnifying glass focuses rays from the sun – easily. The result is always heightened human abilities and an increased sense of well-being. For sincere seekers, persistent unflinching, correct practice always culminates in total absorption known as Samadhi – a state that allows for knowledge beyond time and space. Yes indeed, yoga offers a doorway to Infinity, notwithstanding it was never closed.

I cannot go into detail regarding various advanced practices, as they require one-to-one instruction; however, understand that the human body was/is purpose-built for the task and given half a chance will harmonise of its own accord.

The safest approach for Western students and others lacking personal supervision is the form known as RAJA yoga and the most

lucid and coherent exponent is Swami Vivekananda; I refer everyone to his excellent text of that name. Of course no recommendation would exclude “The Serpent Power” by Arthur Avalon, however, it could be dangerous, as Laya Yoga is the yoga of Power, and works whether the student is ready/prepared or not, so I would recommend supervision by a real initiate, which persons are rarer than hen’s teeth these days, So safer/better to stick with Vivekananda.

Performing simple asanas ensures adequate body and nerve toning – any text describing basic asanas would suffice, however, I recommend, “Popular Yoga Asanas” by Swami Kuvalayananda and “Yoga Therapy” by Dr. R. K. Garde.

Meditation is the key to all achievement, practise it regularly morning and evening. Extend the sitting period as you gain in proficiency until you are able to meditate constantly during waking and sleep; it is a joy and provides its own reward. No mantras or other aids are necessary, just let go. However, if you require support in the beginning, simply visualise -- to the exclusion of all other thoughts -- a white light at the crown of the head or a pearl between the eyebrows. A little practice fixes the attention; the tendency of the mind to wander is overcome in due course and bliss is achieved.

If you would derive maximum benefit maintain your yoga/meditation routine. The most important aspect is not the objective but habitual practice; you will be more than rewarded for your efforts.

Peace

Jnana Yoga

One of the most valuable contributions that India has made to the world of (practical) philosophy is the discipline of Jnana yoga – Oneness through knowledge. However, in today's world of fads and quick fixes, Jnana yoga has been relegated to relative obscurity and has become an object of scholarly pursuit rather than a practical system. Yet its credentials for effectiveness are impeccable.

It would probably surprise many to learn that Lao tzu, Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ were exponents of this yoga – especially the former whose life was a living embodiment of Jnana yoga. In more recent history, the figures of Ramana Maharishi, Swami Vivekananda and Jiddhu Krishnamurti exemplify the continuity of this 'tradition.'

An immediate distinction (from popular yoga) emerges from the 'Jnana' tradition and that is the impeccable character of its practitioners [a sure proof of the integrity of the system.] I need not relate the many sordid exploits of modern (so-called) gurus/teachers of popular commercial 'yoga.' Jnana yoga has never been (or will be) a marketable product; it remains immune to commodification and lacks appeal for the (pashus) worldly-minded herd. However, it is a priceless 'jewel' for earnest seekers.

Jnana recognises no authority or lineage – yet an unbroken 'tradition' persists. All practitioners of Jnana share the same 'Guru' regardless of time or place. There are no hierarchies or followers in Jnana – all is Self. There is nothing to acquire or learn in Jnana – all is released (unlearned) until only Self remains. There is no attraction, desire or aversion in Jnana – polarities populate the mirages of mind not the poise, clarity and equanimity (monism) of the Jnani. There is no gender or sex in Jnana – with whom do the 'Gods' conjugate? One does not equal two – and One is where yoga (yoke) or God rests. Little wonder why this yoga lacks popular appeal in today's world of sensation seekers, quick-fix faddists and 'lost souls.'

How then are we to approach this most sublime Way? Initially, a fundamental understanding is required and that is – All is One, there's nothing gained and nothing lost, Infinity (God) is complete.

Release/awakening is born/e of understanding engendered by the recollection of what/who we really are. This awakening occurs through remembrance, memory – that simple. Exactly the same memory incorporated in the recollection of, “where did I put those keys?” is utilised to remember our essential nature/Self. Memory is addressed by constant focus in the form of a persistent inquiry.

Ramana expressed a particular approach to this inquiry as a contemplative question, “Who am I?” [Everything/All issues from One source.] Regardless of subject or chosen area of focus (persistent) inquiry into any subject/object necessarily leads to That One Source.

The (process) signifiers of memory, awakening, inquiry, remembrance, recollection, understanding etc, utilised in the above discourse are synonymous – they are all the knowledge dynamic of the ‘Jnani’ in Jnana yoga, which enlightened being is potentially You.

Hatha Yoga

Asana is a divine gesture assumed by the body but performed (or pre-formed) by consciousness; this 'gesture' acknowledges the relationship between the personal and infinite in particular characteristic 'form' or expression. For those who fail to spontaneously understand the above description, the following brief explanation is offered.

Yoga cannot be understood or appreciated by Western modes of thought, particularly those stemming from the perverse Judaeo-Christian ideology of 'subduing the earth' – the full implications of this Biblical statement are horrendous. Inherent in this ideology is the exclusivity born/e of divisionism, which in turn breeds violence, chaos, disharmony and all notions of control. In contrast, the Eastern approach is subtle, yielding, intuitive and generally aware of the harmony or at least the importance of the interrelationship of all things.

The analogy of a seed in which all the potential for a giant tree is contained is often utilised in the East to impart teachings of human potential. If we view this 'seed' from Eastern and Western cultural perspectives, the required sensitivity for yoga practice may be understood.

The vanguard of Western knowledge/'civilisation' is science; this limited discipline, strict to its methodology, would take this seed as a separate or distinct object and measure its physical properties (chemical composition etc) in conformance with empirical analysis. Regardless of the results of any empirical analysis it would fail to locate the causative factor that creates a tree. The simple reason is causation is only partly contained within the seed, other necessary factors are located elsewhere. Life is not particular – it is (One) universal, inclusive, interconnected, interrelated, continuing Whole.

A seed is a specific connecting medium; it 'unites' other elements in

the environment (water, nutrients etc) to become a tree – it also ‘surrenders’ its particular identity (as seed) in the process. If it remained isolated with its seed identity intact, it would forego the opportunity to become a fully developed tree of universal expression. The seed’s beneficial qualities can only be realised as a fully developed tree, which (in turn) supports the environment in the form of oxygen production and support for myriad other aspects (birds, insects etc) of the One Living principle – the whole process is harmonisation. When the seed ‘realises’ its full potential as tree it becomes a fulfilled ‘expression’ of the totality of its Life. This Living principle has constantly eluded scientists due to their inability to understand that All is One.

In a similar sense the complexity that is a human being cannot be understood by analysing the formative cells of a sperm and ovum. The complexity that is a human brain develops from various external stimuli in the immediate environment together with the genetic and nutritional aspects of its formation. The developing Life that becomes a fully functional human is the result of the grandest ‘symphony’ on this plane of existence. However, the vast majority of physically developed humans remain in ‘seed’ state (relative to their full potential.)

Yoga practice, as a means to achieve full realisation, has been developed and fine-tuned over centuries by the Sages and Rishis of India; it is a superb method, notwithstanding its cultural specificity. However, those from other cultural backgrounds are not precluded from deriving benefits. The degree of success achieved would be conditional to the amount of ‘cultural baggage’ willingly abandoned. Any attempts to merge Western values, mindsets or disciplines with Eastern yoga would be as unsuccessful as attempting to mix oil with water.

The benefits of asana are well known, they target the endocrine centres, stimulate the nerve ganglia, tone, invigorate and allow the free flow of the healing vital principle to course through the system. For those perfected in yoga these are secondary benefits, asana

remains a 'form' of physical prayer – all movements and 'gestures' become an expression of universal harmony – practitioners focused in this way cannot fail to achieve Realisation.

Footnote:

Coincidentally, this discourse was written during the Easter period; it took an unintended turn – so be it.

It is hoped that a deeper understanding of the symbolism of Christ's 'death' and 'resurrection' can be elicited from the above analogies.

John 12:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Mark 4:30-32 "And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

Pranayama

Various approaches to the movement of vital force are detailed in Indian yoga texts. For the Southern Siddha tradition pranayama is the harmonising of the vital principle that courses through the psycho-somatic system.

In order to understand the Siddha approach a simple experiment is performed. The student is asked to hold his/her breath indefinitely – which of course results in gasps for air after a relatively short period of time. The student is then asked to identify who (or what) is the ‘master’ of breath, as it is obviously not the individual. Students are periodically interrogated until they provide a satisfactory answer or further instruction is withheld.

This is an excellent sifting process as only those who are truly dedicated follow their breath until they discover that it actually is Spanda (or the universal pulse of creation) that ‘breathes.’

In a clever way the student is tricked into Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi. Pranayama is then appreciated as a process culminating in Jnana.

I pay homage to the Eternal Lord Siva. In him only is Yoga known.

Om Namah Sivaya

Kundalini -- The Sublime Power

As a result of the widespread commercialisation of 'yoga' in the US and the overnight manifestation of numerous 'expert' teachers, an alarming amount of misinformation and misinterpretation of yoga philosophy has occurred. Unlike other fanciful fads, which pose no health hazard to participants, yoga improperly taught could result in serious physical and psychological injury to the student. This is particularly the case if advanced levels of yoga are pursued without proper preparation or expert guidance.

Various bastardisations of advanced yoga are now being 'packaged' and offered to raw beginners. 'Kundalini yoga' the perverse name of Laya Yoga, is one example.

Due to the fascinating appeal of the word "Kundalini" some have decided to invent a yoga by that name; however, no such yoga exists in the Indian tradition. The yoga that deals with the movement of accumulated vital energy is "Laya yoga," details of which I am loath to openly discuss. Authentic teachers of this yoga have been entrusted to safeguard both the tradition and their students. While I have now a fifty-year background in yoga studies and other Eastern disciplines I would not presume to adopt the title of Guru. All sincere students are advised to thoroughly check the credentials of those who profess to be 'experts' prior to undertaking any course or program – some (teachers) openly advertise a grand total of two years (or less) prior experience! [And that with Gurus of questionable repute.] I hope this introduction serves as an alert to those who would surrender their well being and hard-earned funds to avaricious charlatans. I also hope you find the following information on the subject of Kundalini informative and helpful.

Regardless of popular misconceptions pertaining to profound aspects of yoga philosophy the integrity of the yoga tradition prevails, as it has done for thousands of years. The reason is quite simple, profane minds are unable to grasp (and therefore pollute)

that which they cannot see/understand. Unlike the unwary and gullible, who often find themselves in life's 'cul de sacs,' Truth is never lost.

That principle to which the word Kundalini refers is one inviolate aspect of yoga philosophy. Kundalini is not a dormant energy, as many would have you believe it is rather, a constant power dynamic. This dynamic eludes nearly all that attempt to apprehend it, as it is by nature beyond apprehension, yet it forever remains freely accessible.

The 'serpent power' (so-called) coiled up at the base of the spine escapes anatomical observation, as it is not comprised of gross organic material. The description of "coiled" is accurate as it refers to the actual spinal cord, which terminates in three coils at/in the base of the skeletal spinal structure. [The relationship between this force and the nervous system will be discussed later in the article.]

The 'Kundaline' power is a perpetual dynamic upon which the very life of the entity depends. Its state is of the highest level of activity, in frequency and scope. It is the life force of all living things and the formative impulse of the macrocosmic universe. It is the original 'Light' or the first/primal energy of existence from which all else continuously issues. All notions that it lies dormant are the height of absurdity. Furthermore, arrogant Western notions that this force can be controlled or coerced are tantamount to believing that we are able to coerce God, or the 'universal creative impulse,' if theism is not your preferred mode of understanding.

All subjects that pertain to the mystical are necessarily shrouded in allegory, metaphor and symbolism, as their true character cannot be comprehended by mundane thought. A popular misconception of Kundalini is something akin to a Jack-in-the-box that is released after certain unlocking 'techniques' are applied. This is but one fanciful notion of many -- there are far too many erroneous ideas relating to the serpent power to mention here. It would be safe to disregard anything you think you may know about this energy and to refrain

from any conceptual thought regarding it, as it cannot be understood by finite means, inclusive of language or thought. Language can only approach this 'subject' indirectly.

Science has long been baffled by the disparity in human talents, intelligence, skills etc; what is the reason for these disparities when the physiology of the human body is common to all of us? Why is one person in deficit and another a genius when their bodies show no appreciable difference in function? It is obvious there is an activity present to account for these differences but it cannot be measured, hence science is left in the dark or at best left to measure effects not causes.

We often hear we are not using our full potential yet no one offers a sane or adequate explanation of why or how to utilise all our potential. The Rishis of ancient India were among the first in our recorded history to undertake the serious study of human development. Their approach was radically different to empirical scientific methodology; in fact it was the opposite. Their approach was intuitive and introspective; they utilised the most sophisticated apparatus known to man, human consciousness. What better means is there to gain understanding?

Empiricism limits itself to that which can be apprehended by the five senses – consciousness knows no limitations other than those self-imposed by ignorance. The Rishis simply focused all their mental faculties on themselves and viewed, with the heightened awareness that concentrated focus provides, not only the subtle workings of human life but also the greater Life to which everything owes its existence.

Fortunately for future generations (as most human lineages have been corrupted) some of these Sages chose to encode their accumulated knowledge in texts. Fully conscious of the fact that language was incapable of adequately transmitting the reality of their experiences, these Sages encoded their knowledge utilising symbolic images, and various literary devices.

The body of work dealing with Kundalini and the associated Chakras is a typical example. These texts are saturated in symbolic imagery, allegory, metaphor, allusion etc; for those able to decode these texts it becomes clear they relate to the brain, nervous system and the associated vital force that animates these channels and (ganglia) centres. However, as is often the case, superstition in the form of magic and myth corrupted an otherwise broader understanding and allowed gross misinterpretations to occur. The grossest error is mistaking the symbolism for the message or description for the thing itself. As a result the serpent power is regarded as being dormant/asleep and in need of awakening – a not dissimilar situation to “Sleeping Beauty” of the popular children’s fairy tale. I would cite as a precaution to the literal reading of any Scripture, the famous and authoritative Kularnava Tantra. This text is laden with overt sexual content. However, in the introduction, it states clearly to the effect that if copulation and sexual practices culminated in liberation then every farmyard animal would be a liberated Sage – the central text then proceeds to describe how liberation is achieved through ‘copulation’, fools ‘rush in...’

Kundalini never ‘sleeps’ but particular (or separated) minds do – usually for the entire duration of their lives. The distinction between the particular and universal or the finite and infinite is being made here for the reason that Kundalini represents the universal aspect of our life force as opposed to notions of something separate or personal.

The Rishis discovered the universality of all things and how each is an expression of one continuous whole and how everything is ‘maintained’ by one vital principle. Put in the context of the human mind-body, the interface of the finite and infinite, are the central nervous system and the Kundalini process respectively. In other words, the Kundalini is none other than God/Siva (infinity) in all its glory or the Life force par excellence. It is therefore little wonder that this animating force triggers and enlivens the various nerve ganglia and brain as it courses rhythmically through the body – some would

say to the beat (Spanda) of Siva's (symbolic) drum. At no stage is there ever stasis or dormancy (physical death being the exception.)

The distinguishing factor that accounts for the various disparities in human capabilities (and the full utilisation of potential) is the degree to which the universal Life force (Kundalini) is active. The more we harmonise with the pulse of universal Life and resonate to its Creative, peaceful, harmonious rhythm, the more active the Kundalini process becomes.

[Atunement or] At-one-ment is harmonisation not coercion; for yoga practitioners and other devotees of Eastern philosophy, harmonisation is best achieved by following the breath to its source – there is no higher form of pranayama and no safer approach to the increased generation of 'Kundalini' energy.

A final word of warning to the faddists and those who think they can purchase a quick ticket to paradise. Any attempt at forcing or controlling this Life force with practices no longer properly understood would end in personal calamity. Symptoms would vary in accordance to the degree of disharmony created. They would range from total insanity to the most deplorable psychological and physical symptoms – which Western physicians would be at a loss to diagnose but ever ready to administer psychotropic 'medications.' How often have I seen this, be warned.

Peace to All.

Doubt and Maya

Doubt is a horrid thing, is it not? Imagine if the sun doubted, it would extinguish; or on a lesser scale, if a centipede had to think which foot to put before the other, it would make very slow progress, if any at all. What is the effect of doubt on humans? Tragic is an accurate description. Doubt removes us from the knowledge of our essential nature/Self, which results in becoming profoundly lost in this world (Maya).

Fortunately, a remedy is available, the Eastern discipline of Jnana yoga. Knowledge (Jnana) subsumes Maya, it doesn't destroy it as some think, it transmutes it. In Jnana, All is One. Maya in her illusory aspect is a counterfeit representation of reality. The Advaitists (monists) describe it thus: when a rope is mistaken for a snake it is 'real' to the holder of the false perception. This experience is common to all of us at times; a lack of light and a paper bag 'becomes' a dog etc., not until we approach the object, is it seen for what it is. This proves without doubt that the mind is unreliable. Maya is actually a product of mind (and the mind is renegade).

The mind of the Jnani is dissolved in monadic Reality (Self or God) through the constant practice of "viveka" (discrimination). Truth is realised by eliminating false perceptions (rope-snake etc) of the mind. This results in the Goddess Maya losing her illusory power of enslavement. With diligence in the practise of Jnana yoga we arrive at clarity or the reality of Consciousness, which is devoid of false or erroneous comprehensions. Maya is then appreciated for what it is – that transitory aspect of the process of Creation that is finite/measurable; or the superimposition of 'form' onto the formless.

The effect of false perception (Maya) on Joy is devastating. Alcoholism is just one example. We will use a fictional scenario as an illustration:

A wise counsellor was attempting to demonstrate that the drug

(alcohol) was not the 'problem' as the purveyors of the dependence theory would have us believe. To make his point he ingested similar amounts of alcohol with a recidivist alcoholic. When a level of inebriation was reached, he asked the alcoholic how he felt. The alcoholic replied other than feeling slightly guilty he felt wonderful! The counsellor then asked the alcoholic why he (the counsellor) didn't feel "wonderful". The alcoholic gave many erroneous reasons as to why?

The counsellor then explained, if alcohol possessed the inherent quality to make one feel "wonderful" then everyone who ingests it should feel the same effect. The alcoholic had to concede that the effect of alcohol "differs from person to person". The counsellor then asked why... Space limits detailing a rather long and involved therapeutic session [the writer is also aware that some readers have already apprehended the import of the illustration] so for those who haven't, we return to the explanation.

The alcoholic was made aware that the effect derived from alcohol was located somewhere other than the chemical. It was the false perception/notion that the chemical supplied the peculiar effect that created a tragic bondage. It was easily demonstrated that if the feeling of "wonderful" didn't arise from the alcohol, the glass, bottle or outer space etc., its source was within the person – at that point the psychological dependence which the alcoholic maintained was broken and the rehabilitation process began. Decades of previous misery were the direct result of false perception and erroneous thinking; such is the power of Maya in her illusory aspect/mode.

We already possess all the knowledge that ever was or will be within ourselves. Did Archimedes discover his famous theorem in the bath or the water? Similarly, did Einstein discover his theories in the chalk or the blackboard?

The Buddha taught "right knowledge" as a necessary requisite of Liberation. Jnana yoga is the means by which we achieve "right knowledge."

The practitioner of Jnana yoga seeks direct experience of Absolute Knowledge. The experience of Knowledge is the result of intuition, instinct (chemical repositories such as RNA/DNA) and indications from mundane sources such as texts, testimony, preceptor, etc., which act as triggers or catalysts on Consciousness. However, a properly formulated approach/question is required to harness all the mental faculties, as every question 'begs' its own answer. The degree to which an answer is revealed is dependent on the method of formulation and intensity of the question. Jnana yoga is a proven sophisticated method of posing the ultimate question!

Cognitive and intellectual faculties are focused into a single 'beam' of interrogation directed at the object of inquiry – the process to know. The causative factors of erroneous beliefs and false notions are exposed as a result; once causation is known deluded modes of thought are divested of their impetus, power to distort and influence. The veiling/illusory power of Maya is slowly denuded of its repertoire of illusions and falsities and the original store of "right knowledge" becomes accessible or is 'discovered'.

This process of sifting the real from the fallacious (wheat from chaff) is discriminative inquiry or Jnana yoga. The tendency to misapprehension (Maya) is automatically immobilised by discriminative inquiry. The absence of erroneous perceptions and misapprehensions allows an uninterrupted flow of awareness to embrace knowledge at its very source – the origin of all things. With vigilance, diligence and constant application, we are able to apprehend the underlying Reality (Truth) of Infinity itself.

Human Beings are perfectly designed for the above practice. Would Maya lure us into living a life in delusion and dissipating our precious talents on frivolous and vacuous pursuits, or would we utilise *all* our potential and achieve that Glory for which we were brought into Being/existence? You decide.

About the Author

Lindsay Traynor is an Australian poet and mystic though he was born in Eastern Europe to parents raised in Canada and Australia respectively who were both in Eastern Europe after WWII.

He arrived in Australia before schooling age and has lost his mother tongue as a result, as both parents were fluent in English and the mother tongue was hardly heard. Nevertheless, it seems that an early cultural imprint remained as his country/culture of birth is well known for producing an abundance of poets of an unusual kind.

Lindsay is a prolific writer and has produced the equivalent in text of around 50-60 novels over the past sixteen years though mostly in the form of articles on varied topics and poetry, his favourite medium.

The current series has been gathered from his many articles relating to his studies in the East and of Eastern philosophy in general, particularly Yoga philosophy and practice -- *assistant editor*

Books by the author:

Infinite Consciousness
Love and Erotic Poetry
Sun Moon Star Poetry
Nature Poetry
The Poetry of Transformation and Revolution
The Poetry of Life and Growth
Selected Essays I
Selected Essays II
Selected Essays III
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry I
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry II
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry III
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry IV
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry V
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