

## **An interview with T. K. Sribhashyam**

“Earlier this year, Steve Brandon of Harmony Yoga was fortunate enough to interview T.K. Sribhashyam about his writing and teaching. We’re grateful to Sribhashyam for affording us this opportunity to share his knowledge and insights. The interview runs to 16 questions.”

**1/ “Emergence of Yoga” is an exceptional support either for novices, beginner students, advanced students as well as Yoga teachers. Was it a deliberate choice to touch such a large public when you decided to write this book?**

With a large propagation all over the world, Yoga is no more an elite subject; it has become very democratic. Moreover, the population of Yoga teachers is also on the increase, having a thirst to know and learn the origin and development of Yoga. Many of the books on Yoga published during the past years cater to a limited aspect or concept of Yoga so much that the readers, be they students or teachers, consider the information given in these books as the final source of Yoga.

Even if there are many publications on Yoga, which have their own values that are non-negligible, they did not bring to light the emergence of Yoga. It is like looking at our family; like recognizing the family but not bothering to know our genealogy!

I realised that many publications give images of Āsanas and techniques, but omit to give indications to teachers. This may be because when the first books on Yoga were published, the writers did not think that such a detailed study was needed. So, Yoga learning and teaching became a sort of ‘imitation’.

Yoga is mainly based upon the language of Indian medicine, Ayurveda. Consequently, when we talk about the effects, they need to be converted to modern medical language, even if this language is known to us. Both a novice as well as a specialised person would understand better the importance of Yoga if the effects of Āsanas are deciphered into today’s physiological terms and concepts.

It was a deliberate choice to touch a large public. As an homage to my father, I wanted this book to answer as many questions that we usually asked but rarely obtained responses to because Yoga books were more interested in showing the physical aspects almost as though Yoga is a bodily contour.

During my more than fifty years of teaching, both to normal practitioners as well as Yoga teachers and medical professionals, I was surprised and disappointed by the fact that they could not or did not find any valuable information on the effects of Yoga practice. This is one of the main reasons why the effects (fruits, as we call in Indian Medicine) are not indicated in general terms as “good for spleen kidneys..., etc.” but with pathological terms that the medical world understands easily.

Similarly, traditional Yoga practice is sterile without concentration (Dhāraṇa) and holding of breath (Kumbhaka). Even if we have many books on Yoga, little is said about Concentration.

Since, in traditional Yoga teaching, Concentration in Asana is specific to the Asana, I applied my father's teaching to indicate the concentration points advised to each Asana.

These are some of the reasons why I worked on Emergence of Yoga, to make it open to a large public without limiting it to the Yoga's students.

I am aware that I did not elaborate the chapter on Mudras and Prāṇāyāmas, yet they are two of the most important aspects of Yoga with particularities coming from North India (particularly Kashmir Saivism) and South India. Even if my father taught Mudra and Pranayama following the South Indian customs more based on Vishnu, his knowledge of Kashmir Shaivism was so vast and precise that a detailed chapter on these two systems could have been a great boon to the new generation. Do I have sufficient time to work on some of these concepts and offer them before I am called to join God?

## **2/ Is it something that comes from your father and master, T.Krishnamacharya's, teaching?**

My father and only my father transmitted Yoga to me. I am faithful to his teaching. The language of transmission is different, but the spirit and truth of his teaching are not betrayed. I have been careful in preserving his teaching on such a precious science that Yoga is.

## **3/ How did your father/master T.Krishnamacharya transmit his knowledge to you?**

My father and my master transmitted his knowledge through oral tradition. Without entering into details, I would say that we had daily (my brothers and sisters) or weekly theory classes depending on our academic activities. These 'lessons', as he called them, covered not only Yoga, but also Upanishads, Darśana, etc. Many Upanishads, like Yoga Sutra were taught under many cycles. For example, when he completed his lessons on Yoga Sutra (the four chapters), he would restart with more explanations, comparisons, analysis, etc. Similarly, with the works on Hatha Yoga, Darśana, and so on. As such we had a sort of continuous teaching of almost all the subjects, he transmitted to us. The sessions were in Tamil or Kannada, two of our South Indian languages. We could take notes in the language we wished. The duration of lessons varied from just forty-five minutes to two hours. As we were young, he would give short lessons when the topic was difficult. Even if some of the students used to attend his lessons, he was giving us some 'private' sessions without the presence of other students. As far as practical classes were concerned, we had no sessions with other students, unless he was preparing for his lecture-demonstrations. Even if we had printed books, all his sessions were preceded by prayers, learning by heart of the texts (Sutra, Mantra, etc.) that were used during his sessions. Knowing by heart the basic text is part of Hindu oral tradition. Incidentally, it was in his later years (some years before his death) that he allowed his lessons to be audio recorded. He was particular that we listen attentively without depending on external means.

## **4/ Do you think that nowadays it is still the best way to share this knowledge?**

The ancient method of transmitting and teaching not only Yoga but all other subjects have the great advantage of preserving the memory alive in us. There are many advantages in modern methods, like search engines, Facebook, because they provide us immediate answers to any of our questions. However, they have the inconvenience of not being authoritative. They are just a way of putting on line our opinion, not necessarily that of our ancient masters. Moreover, these

modern methods do not provide us any sort of exercise or training to strengthen our memory and recapitulation. We have to make an effort to bring to memory what we learnt in our studentship, whereas today, we simply use our iPad and other means to type a word and obtain an answer from it. We do not even have to provide a logical or analytical thought to the answers. It is like today's screen of the cash registers, which is filled with icons and the saleswomen or salesmen might not know the name of the article sold, and in the end might not even recognise the articles that file past her or him. In the end, they have every chance of losing their memory and the reflex to recapitulate.

In my teaching, I make it an effort to stimulate my students to use their memory to evoke the technical terms (*Āsanas, Prāṇāyāmas, technical words...*) while they listen to me or practice under my guidance. I do not hesitate to repeat the spelling of the words, write on the flip chart, translate, explain, even if all these take some time. These ancient methods of teaching and learning are one of the best ways to reduce the onset of neurological and mental diseases, which are on the increase today.

I advise my students to try to apply these methods in their teaching. I feel elated when I realise that their pupils can use the technical terms, understand what they stand for in our teaching instead of using them as key word to let others know that they know these words.

#### **5/ Is that the reason why you did not publish any book until now?**

No, this is not the reason why I did not write any book on Yoga or on Indian Philosophy. I had to wait for my father's authorisation to be free from a vow I had taken during my days as his student. He wanted me to write a book on Yoga, which would kindle a real interest and practice in the readers. He was very particular that I provide to the readers the Vedic origin of Yoga, even if no one brought to light this aspect. Similarly, he wanted me to bring to light the link between *Āsanas* and *Dhāraṇa* (Concentration)... This might be the main reason I decided to write this book "Emergence of Yoga" in my advanced age.

#### **6/ What do you think is the most important thing that your father and master Krishnamacharya taught you?**

He taught and initiated me into a good number of subjects; some of them are surprising and rare. I am ever grateful to him for some of these unique and unexpected gifts. This interview might not be the right place and situation to talk over them.

#### **7/ What is the most important thing that you would like to share with Yoga students?**

The practical aspects of Indian Philosophical concepts that are open to all cultures and civilisations, even if they look hermetically closed in the modern, intellectual, non-spiritual writings and discourses.

To help Yoga students understand the concept of *Bhakti*, which is one of the fundamental emotions that they could nourish in them without feeling guilty of their religious convictions, refusals, dogma, etc.

Learn and apply tolerance, compassion and love of the spiritual teachings, since the main aim of Yoga is to guide each one of us to the door of Spiritual Entity independent of our colour and

creed. God is one, unique, waiting for everyone, good and the bad, so near to us that It might not be viewed unless we open our mind and heart. At the same time, teach to Yoga students and their students and family members to avoid hatred, contempt, sense of superiority.

Prepare their remaining days for a peaceful and harmonious life for a serene departure, to be one with God or the Creator. This is my cherished wish in teaching Yoga.

I would like to share the simplicity and love with which my father taught Yoga and Indian philosophy to all, keeping away all the science of logic and analysis from student's mind. I am lucky in putting into practice these principles and that many of my students follow them, even if they have difficulties in applying them in their lives.

In a way, as he used to say: to be able to share the knowledge as though it would be for children who have not yet mastered the language. So too, the Yoga practice: teach with love, respect and tenderness.

### **8/ What do you think is the most difficult thing to teach (to pass down) to Western students?**

My answer might surprise the readers and Yoga students, because in their heart of heart, they have a devotional or a spiritual foundation, even if they feel shy to admit, and they do love to strengthen it.

Without going into details, I would say that during my more than fifty years of teaching in Europe, I have come across many sorts of obstacles against my teaching programs on devotion or on the spirituality. God gracious, in the Congresses or seminars that I was invited, I realised that a great majority of students come to my sessions to cultivate and develop their spiritual life. Their efforts helped to transmit faithfully my father's teaching, keeping in my mind the obstacles that I would face with my students here and how to be patient and loving to remove them.

Faithful to my father's advice, I did not work on 'converting' my students to Hinduism or Hindu Gods and respected sincerely the religious background of a Westerner, even if they were shy to express it! In my teaching, just like in my father's sessions, I gave as much information as possible about the Hindu culture, feasts, life of Gods that are linked to our spiritual life. During the practical sessions, it was an occasion to inform my students of the relation between God, Rishis, etc., and the Āsanās since many of them are named after Gods, Rishis, etc.

It is surprising, before I came to the West, I had many Western students during my fifteen years of teaching in Chennai; none of them refused or rejected my explanations during their lessons with me. However, I did not convert them to my religion. We usually had a very sincere and interesting exchange of ideas and values about the different religions – Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, the religion of the Parsees (Zoroastrianism), Islam (Sufism).

### **9/ After so many years of teaching what would be the major advice that you would like to offer Yoga students?**

Unfortunately, except for some exceptions, the export of Yoga into the West (pardon my expression) has been more physical than spiritual or psychological. This is mainly because, many

of the early teachers were specialists in western gymnastics and dance. Being very supple, attached to their body, they were attracted by the variety of physical postures that Yoga repertory offered in different ways all over India. Gradually, this became a trend in the West, a trend which progressively became a sort of curriculum of Yoga teaching and training schools. Sadly, Indian teachers were also attracted by this curriculum. Erstwhile Indians were supple and so found the demand of the Westerners easy to respond to.

However, Westerners are very much used to breathing and deep breathing, more as a physical exercise than as a Yogic practice which calls for mental attention, concentration and serenity during and after a practice. At the same time, Westerners do not like to be physically quiet and serene, and this automatically creates disturbed senses and mind. Besides, our Western culture inculcates fear of death, (fear of silence, solitariness) while Hindu culture educates, from childhood, the presence and immanency of death. Death is not hidden from Hindu children; they do take part in death ceremonies, as part of their ritual.

The new generation of Westerners is more curious in knowing the depth of Yoga. Its life of stress, anxiety, fear of disease, of the unknown, fear of death, etc., awoke in them a thirst to know, learn, and apply the deeper values of Yoga philosophy and psychology not just on the intellectual plane but on his or her life.

Westerners are shy to engage in devotional or spiritual topics and are silent when it comes to God. They are reluctant and often averse to take part in exchanges on these subjects with their friends or even their family members.

These and other tendencies had long time contributed to the loss of real values of Yoga in the West.

Thank God, the younger generation gives, in its own way, a stimulus to develop spirituality and devotion in his or her life and often for their surroundings.

Under such a situation, my advice to the future Yoga practitioners and teachers is to do their best to instill these values that are the origin of Yoga without any sort of indoctrination, and live and show the divine gift that Sri Krishna, Patañjali, Yājñyavalkya, and other Vedic Rishis offer to humanity not exclusively to Hindus.

While maintaining their interest in the physical aspects of Yoga (especially Āsanās), I would also advise them to reverse the trend progressively, give added importance to Prāṇāyāma (not as a physical exercise), Dhāraṇa and Dhyāna, which would definitely help them cultivate peace, serenity, compassion, forgiveness and a peaceful death.

As you all know, our fear of death is so intense that to learn and maintain the phase of a peaceful death is one of the invaluable treasures that we can easily build in our life and preciously safeguard it not only at the end of our life, but transmit it to our family members before our departure.

This reminds me my father's advice on the concept of death:

You may offer all your treasures to your children that would disappear like used clothes, but teaching them to love and accept death is the best heritage that you can offer to them. The day they would leave this mortal world, they recognize this particular heritage and be grateful to you and those who witness such a peaceful departure, that is to say, family, friends, unknown people and would recognise the priceless peace emanating from your body and face. This is one of the main aims of Yoga.

I would say that this would be my major advice to those who teach and practice Yoga. Is it an advice or a duty?

Like my father, I am convinced that Westerners would not discard this unique opportunity.

**10) Your other three books cover Indian Philosophy, including the tradition of your Family, please could you say what motivated you to write these books?**

You should be aware that the philosophical principle of Yoga, not just as a series of physical exercises, is closely linked to Indian philosophical principles and practices. You would not find a traditional philosophical teaching without referring to Yoga (not necessarily Ashtanga Yoga) and you do not find a traditional Yoga text without reference to Indian philosophical concepts. Just as soul and the supreme Soul are inseparable in Indian thoughts, so too Yoga and philosophy. Unfortunately, as the physical aspects of Yoga are somehow brought into the spotlight, the teachings of Indian philosophical principles are kept as window dressing in Yoga class rooms.

Moreover, for many reasons, the learning, understanding and teaching of Indian philosophy have become more and more wordy, that it has become almost as impossible to visualise the values of Indian philosophy as it is difficult to perceive soul and God in us.

Without discrediting western philosophy and its religious thoughts, I would say that Indian philosophy has a unique way of bringing its teaching in the format of images, which touches the mind and the heart of any reader or student, even if he or she is new to Indian cultural background. It is just like any infant creating images in his way from a story that he is listening to from the mouth of his mother or father, without even knowing the main personalities. The infant creates the images in his or her way and lives and enjoys the context.

By continuous listening, these images get encrusted in him or her and later when he or she is made to believe that all these stories narrated do have a sense, he or she will invoke the imprints of his experience of the stories he or she listened to and remembers the ambience of early listening. So too, the secret of Indian philosophical teaching: it offers us its teaching through innumerable stories, examples and analogies, without any dogma or bias. The students find that these teachings have a genuine universal value and try to apply any them in their lives.

The particularity of Indian Philosophy is to develop Peace and Bliss in us. It has kept apart or even rejected all sorts of conflicts, hatred or misunderstandings, because it knows that they are opposed to Peace and Bliss, and introduced the principle of tolerance to a high degree.

For reasons outside our scope, these two invaluable treasures escaped the western philosophy and its religions. There is more room for conflicts, fighting to establish one's ego, loss of the real values of Peace and Bliss, refusal of the divine nature (as the Bhagavad Gita says, loss in the divine riches and gain of human, and demoniac supremacy), and attraction and attachments to material comforts. In spite of being aware that they are not permanent, that they feed constantly our greed, anger, hatred, infatuation, passion and so on, we continue to be anchored in them. However, the western mind did not lose its intrinsic search for Peace and Bliss. In fact, every westerner in his own way, feels that he or she is not at ease with himself or herself and that something is hindering the comfortable feeling in him or her. Sadly, this phenomenon is on the rise.

Living in Europe, teaching Europeans and making an effort to understand their 'mal-être', I felt that a practical book (s) on Indian philosophy would help them reduce the burden of suffering (mental and spiritual) and live with Peace and Bliss, not only individually but socially. I also realised during my teaching that even if the western students are more interested in the intellectual and analytical study of philosophy, they do appreciate philosophy transmitted in the form of a fairy tale, like children, even if in the beginning they show traces of mockery. Indian philosophy has the gift of responding to this challenge from the first instruction until the last – the Liberation (Mokṣa).

There is a particular reason why we (the two authors) included the philosophical tradition of our family in these three books. To start with, my father's ancestors were spiritual masters whom we call Matha Adhipathi (the head of the monastery). This Monastery which is famous in Mysore today under the name of Parakala Matha, was originally in Tirumalai (Andhra Pradesh). According to the legend of this Matha, two kings, one Muslim, Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb and the erstwhile King of Mysore were attracted by the universality of the teaching of these Masters, and they both supported the propagation of their method of teaching (perception of God and consequent Liberation is in every man's hold irrespective of his colour, creed, social situation, etc.) and helped the Monastery to be shifted to Mysore. And both financed the propagation of their method of teaching. While two of our ancestors were Masters of this monastery, our father did not want to become the head of this Monastery, but he continued to follow the same principles and shared all his spiritual and devotional knowledge with everyone, including the westerners and the Muslims. Yet, like his spiritual ancestors, he did not convert his listeners to Hinduism. He simply showed to the world what Hinduism offers us and how to take benefit from it to develop and maintain Peace and Bliss.

Through this book, we, the authors, humbly try to offer the same privilege to every reader of our books and thus render our indebtedness to the spiritual masters who activated this type of transmission.

It is one of my ways of thanking the westerners, the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, etc., who respectfully accepted my teaching – as we say in India: 'a debt of recognition' or a very humble way of thanking all those who listened and applied my teaching.

**11) You mentioned in the Life Sketch of your Father that he mastered Buddhist Yoga in Burma. Would you be able to tell us more about this and what influence this had on your father's teaching?**

My father's teaching of Indian Philosophy (Yoga Sutra, Vedanta, and even Hatha Yoga) had very often comparisons to the Buddhists thoughts – either to make us understand the flaws that existed in the Buddhist logic and analysis or to bring to light some similar views, especially in the psychology of Buddhism, so that we develop conviction in the Buddha's teaching.

Apart from this, he used to receive Buddhist monks who would have long discussions with him on this philosophy. As often it was a private discussion, we did not dare to attend these lessons.

In the late sixties, when I went with my father on a pilgrimage to Allahabad, Varanasi and Gaya, he took me to Bodh Gaya for two consecutive days. It is here that he gave some important points of Buddha's teaching, as also their method of Dhyāna, particularly their very significant mantra:

Buddham Śaranam Gachāmi,

(I go to Buddha for refuge, or I take refuge in Buddha)

Dhammam (Dharmam) Śaranam Gachāmi,

I go to Dharma for refuge, or I take refuge in Dharma

Samgham Śarnam Gachāmi.

I go to Samgham for refuge, or I take refuge in Samgham.

I remember some elderly monks saluting him and expressing their happiness at meeting him. They sat in a corner in the Buddha's temple and had more than an hour's discussion. The meeting was completed by a silent meditation. Later, my father told me that they were his colleagues when he studied Buddhism. He taught me the technique and practice of Pranayama applied by the Buddhists and subtle differences between Hinduism and Buddhism. However, he was not criticising Buddhism in his lectures. My father had great respect for Buddha's teaching.

We should not forget that Buddha is considered as one of the incarnations of Vishnu.

A successful Vedic ritual or even a meditation requires a healthy body and mind so that we can stay during the rituals and in a meditation for a longer period without getting disturbances from the senses and the mind.

**12) It seems that westerners are generally interested in Yoga for its health benefits. In your experience, do you see much interest in their inquiry of the soul?**

The idea of a healthy body attracted people to practice Yoga for their physical health and well-being. Gradually, the main stream of the psychological and spiritual aspects lessened. Fortunately, there is a revival of all the old values that Yoga offered even if we are still reluctant to believe the action of Yoga on our different coverings of our existence: physical, sensorial, mental, intellectual and spiritual.



Yes, despite this concentrated effect on the body, it is possible for westerners to take an interest in the spiritual aspects, since Yoga does not impose any dogmatic devotion or a spiritual practice which gives rise to fear or guilt in them. Its teaching is open to all irrespective of their religious convictions and beliefs. If we observe today's interest in Yoga, you will find that more and more students take to Yoga lessons to cultivate and nourish mental peace and search of the inner peace. What was a shy approach in the west in the seventies is quite an open and much desired subject.

Now, it is for the teachers to provide them with the means to feed their desire to know, search and develop their inner peace, whatever name that would be given. As we say in India, God is one, but has many names. Similarly, the inner peace is one, unique, but it might be called with different names, just as one object can have many names according to the language used.

### **13) How is it possible to transmit the concept of Moksha to students unfamiliar with this?**

For a newcomer to Yoga, the concept of Moksha would look unfamiliar. We have the thirst for liberation – liberation from social, political, or constitutional impositions. We fought to be freed from some of these (social) prisons: Woman's Freedom, the freedom of the Black, freedoms of free style of marriage, of parenthood, etc. Similarly, we would like to be freed from a bondage which is not imposed by the society, the state or even the politics. Because this freedom is inherent in our own life, freedom of rebirth. Naturally, we should have the conviction in the cycle of death and rebirth. Freedom of the Black concerns in all respects those who are black, even if the whites sympathise with them. The whites are in a way 'free' from such an imprisonment, and they are convinced that they are free from becoming Black. Even if the Sanskrit word Moksha means simply liberation, in its inherent value, it is freedom from the cycles of death and of birth, but like Black would not like to come again as a Black, neither as a White; just do not come again.

To transmit the concept of Moksha, the teacher should explain to his best and with conviction to make the students understand the inconvenience of being 'reborn'.

Once again, in my book Emergence of Yoga, I cite Sage Yājñavalkya about the problem of 'not to be reborn'. Sri Krishna, in the teaching in the Bhagavad Gita teaches also of the great suffering from the rebirths. So too, Patañjali in his Yoga Sutra.

I am convinced that when the students understand the intensity of suffering of rebirth (which Patañjali calls Kleśa, afflictions), they will definitely strive to stop coming again. However, this is not simply by intellectual or logical learning, but through the benefits of acquired meditation practiced regularly and constantly. This needs studying, reflection, contemplation on the good and bad of rebirth and supported by regular and serene meditation on a divine principle.

### **14) Practicing Yoga in a group class has become prominent in the West; personal practice at home is less common. Can you say something about this in the light of your father's approach to teaching?**

In Mysore Yoga Shala, my father's lessons were in groups. Very few had individual lessons. At home, he gave some private lessons to students and to his children. Owing to our school timing, even we, his children, had group classes with our sisters and our mother. Some of the members of the royal family, especially the women members, had private sessions.

When he moved to Madras (Chennai), he had mainly individual sessions, as he was invited to heal some important personalities. At home, owing to lack of space, the groups were limited to two or three people of the same family. Later, when, his children started teaching Yoga, we had to give our lessons in the available space. Naturally, we gave individual classes. However, when my father started teaching Yoga in Vivekananda College or in other educational institutions, the sessions were in groups.

I would not say that all the students were practising once a day at home. Yes, some of the western students had to practice daily, as they had come for a short time and for a specific purpose. They had time, servants and helpers to manage the household chores in India, which helped them to allot some time for every day for their practice. It is quite possible that except for a few, their return to homely western life did not provide time and space for daily practice.

Here in the West, the individual practice is almost a fight against solitariness and its inconveniences, which you do not feel in a group session. You feel that a group stimulates your practice. However, I have realised that many participants allot some time for their personal practice at home.

However, in my teaching experience, I find that even if they do not practice every day, they seem to allot two or three days a week to their Yoga practice. They try to do their best.

Often, we compare Yoga to a competitive sport – a sort of group activity where we want to prove to others that we outclass them. When you practice alone, you have to renounce this state of mind, which many might not like. However, this is the fundamental scenario of Yoga practice: To win over the fear of solitariness and renounce pushing our ego on to the front line.

**15) Your father helped many people with his healing knowledge and abilities. How important do you think it is to understand Ayurvedic principles when applying Yoga as a therapy?**

Yes, my father was an Ayurvedic master and; he helped the needy to live a healthy life. He had the knowledge and the clinical competence. He did not learn Ayurveda as a 'book knowledge' juggling with words, but was a clinical medical doctor applying his talents while respecting the patient's privacy, decency and humility.

A serious study of Yogic traditional texts, be it the famous books on Hatha Yoga (Hatha Yoga Pradīpika, Gherunda Samhitā, Shiva Samhitā, etc., the Patañjali Yoga Sutra or the Upanishads concerned with Yoga) would make us realise that the principle and practice of the science of Ayurveda in their traditional scientific way are referred to. Naturally, study of these works or the commentaries make us understand that anyone who studies them has to learn and understand first the scientific background of Ayurveda. Unfortunately, it might not be the case in today's Yoga education, which has become a subject that can be learnt like a tourist visiting a country, sitting in an open-air bus taking photos or videos with an iPad and returning home to pretend his or her knowledge about the country.

Yes, Yogic science offers us the means to apply its principles as a therapy. This therapy is not applying some 'ayurvedic oil', or advising someone to drink tea or do some cleansing...

First, we should learn the healing ways that are particular about Yoga, even if they are not against modern medical science. At the same time, we should accept our inabilities to avail these principles to different contexts as our living conditions might not be suitable to the specifications of the principles that are to be applied.

The knowledge of the physics and chemistry of matter (the primary matter), in the way Indian philosophy brings out, is fundamental in understanding our body and its roles to successfully apply the therapeutic values of Yoga, in the same way as that of the modern biochemistry of our tissues. A simple formula like 'what is cold to touch need not be cold in action' would not mean or would not have the same understanding in Ayurvedic study of matter as it would have in our biochemistry even if, in the depth of our search, we might reach at identical physical and chemical properties. The words change in each science, but the intrinsic values are the same.

The space allotted for this interview would not allow me to bring to detail the interrelation between two systems of the main science.

It is not only important, but essential, to understand the Ayurvedic principles if we want to apply the interrelated therapeutic means of the two systems to the students who are in need. In more than a way, it is like having a basic knowledge of the modern physiology and pathology to understand the curative processes that our modern medicine proposes or prescribes.

Ayurveda and Yoga as a method of therapy... It is the duty of any Yoga teacher referring to Ayurveda to avoid transmitting an erroneous knowledge to the students. And, it would be the greatest homage that you would be offering to my father and Master, and to Yoga and Ayurveda, which are becoming more and more popularized.

Maybe, another window would be opened in this journal with more space for introductory study of the two allied subjects.

**16) In Emergence of Yoga, asana, pranayama and mudra are presented in detail. I see no mention of the three bandhas. Please could you explain why they are not included?**

You are right; my book Emergence of Yoga details Asanas, Pranayamas and Mudras, but very little on Bandha. I know that many yoga practitioners and teachers are attracted by Bandhas. Yet, I abstained from introducing this chapter, mainly because, they do not belong to the traditional teaching of Yajnavalkya. He gives a passing reference to them, not as a 'physical knot', but as a way to control our emotional spring of actions. Writing about them would have led to more confusion and conflict among the readers and made the book 'heavier'. I did not detail Mudras in my book, as I was limited by number of pages, and I had the desire to write a second part on Mudra, Bandha and Dhyana. Moreover, the concepts of Bandha that you talk of are very recent – the period of Hatha Yoga and not that of Veda.

My father did teach us the three (the five) Bandhas; we practiced, but they were not in our programme of teaching, except Jihva Bandha in Shitali, Mula Mandha and Uddiyana Bandha in Mudras. So you see, it is not the method in other schools.

It is not always a muscular 'knot'. It also means the hold of the anarchic activities of our emotions. Bandha, to hold also in a way, holding back the unnecessary activities of the sense perceptions or emotions. So, you have Indriya Bandha, Krodha Bandha, etc.; very rarely used in the usual yoga books that interpret Bandha as a muscular knot and give much importance to it. I do not say that they do not exist, but that is not the main aim of Bandha in the traditional Yoga.

Since all our human emotions reside and emanate from Mula (the region of Mula Kanda), Mula Bandha originally meant withholding unneeded emotional activities (activities that keep us away from God).

Sribhashyam's books are available from Amazon

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