



Our Living Tradition

By Sadhvi Parananda

There is a wonderful and apt saying that I am reminded of several times per week:

You can have 40 years of experience,

OR

you can have 1 year of experience 40 years over.

How many times in our lives do we hear “That’s not how I learned to do it?” Or, “I have been doing it like this for over twenty years.” My first response often is something along the line that for the love of God, I guess we’d better not change *now* because change is *B-A-D*.

How silly we sometimes are. Our systems, in general, greatly resist change. We don’t like change in the equilibrium, the status quo, that we have established, even if we aren’t happy with our present state. Change brings physiological and emotional shifts that make us pay attention – that shake us from the semi-aware state in which we often walk around.

When I first came to the Ashram (a very long time ago) it was because I had a friend living here. Rudi had just passed away and his students still were reeling from the shock. I came to a meditation session, for which I had a 3-minute introduction. Then we sat together in eyes-open class. I had no *idea* what I had just experienced, other than the fact that it was surreal and intense. When I was asked whether I was coming back for the next class my answer was along the lines that no, I was busy – I had a *LIFE*.

And then, two days later my darn little Volkswagen Beetle drove me back. Honestly, I was baffled how that happened. It was not a “conscious” act. There I was. Lucky for me, something much deeper than my ego knew I had to practice – knew I had to do this amazing work.

At that point in time we really didn’t have a “language” to describe our experience. It was amazing, energizing, exciting, profound and life changing. Eastern spirituality was new to the United States, and like hatha yoga practice, little was known or understood about the process.

Of all the teachers I have ever met, Swamiji continues to WOW me. He took the practice that Rudi taught so long ago and he delved into it with devotion and passion. The result today is an amazingly refined, sophisticated powerful expression. I admire him because it was no easy task. Mastery has a price.

The master has failed more times than the novice has even attempted.



The result of that mastery is a sublime refinement of our practice--the evolution of a living tradition. More than 40 years of committed, devoted study and practice is the gift. And one expression of that gift is the ability to articulate the process.

Over the years we have focused on seven, eight or nine chakras. ☺ Most recently, we focus on three regions, not individual chakras. We first focus on the earth region (our perineum, sacral and navel chakras). Next we focus on the mind/intellect region (our solar plexus, heart and throat chakras). Last, we focus on the heavenly region (our soft palate, the chakra between and above our eyes (ajna), and crown chakras).

Try the practice below, letting go of your “usual” way of doing things. See whether some new understanding or experience is possible for you. Even *if* you learned another method and even if you learned a practice from Rudi more than 43 years ago, suspend judgment and let’s see what might happen... If Rudi were alive today (he would be 88 years old) can you imagine that he would not have changed a bit and would be teaching exactly as he did when he was a young man? LORDY! I think not.....*Living practice.*

MEDITATE:

Start with slow full breaths. Be aware of the quiet space at the end of the inhale and again at the end of the exhale (inhale/retain/exhale/suspend).

On the inhale, bring you awareness to your earth region, focusing on the chakra below your navel. Say (silently) “Om Namah” inhaling into the chakra. Say “Shivaya” exhaling, feeling your awareness rising to your heart chakra.

Next bring your awareness to you Mind/Intellect region. Say silently “Om Namah” inhaling into the heart chakra. Say “Shivaya” exhaling, feeling your awareness rising to your ajna chakra.

Next bring your awareness to your Heaven region. Say silently “Om Namah” inhaling into the ajna chakra. Say “Shivaya” exhaling, feeling your awareness rising to your crown and above.

Repeat the cycle, making contact with each of the three regions, aligning them using breath and mantra and feeling the flow in and down and up and above.

Om Namah Shivaya



Namaste,
Sadhvi Parānandā



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