



## SAHAJA YOGA: SELF-REALIZATION THROUGH KUNDALINI AWAKENING

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### ABSTRACT

*Yoga means union of soul, body and the conscious mind through universal consciousness. Sahaja Yoga is a special form of meditation based on the experience of self-realization by Kundalini awakening. In human being Kundalini is a reflection of Adishakti or primordial energy. 3 Nadis and 7 Chakras with the Kundalini in human being form the Kundalini instrument. All happenings and events in the creation at micro level can be best understood by understanding the Kundalini instrument. The seven chakras are responsible for our physical, emotional and mental well-being. Once we get our Self Realisation we feel these centers in the Subtle System within us. As the Kundalini rises and passes through the six centers (which are our energy centers in the spinal cord) and pierces through the fontanel bone area on the top of our head, it nourishes and revitalizes the centers (chakras) so that the person feels relaxed, calm and full of life. At this stage a cool breeze, like very beautiful vibrations, starts flowing through the fingertips which is the first experience of Self-Realisation. Our Kundalini flows through the chakras. It energizes, nurtures and balances them. Each of our chakras, is associated with specific functions and qualities. A catch is a blockage, obstruction or impairment of a chakra which prevents our Kundalini from passing through that blocked chakra to rise to a higher level. As a result, the obstructed chakra does not function efficiently which causes a physical, cognitive or emotional problem in our life. These problems can be healed by kundalini awakening. The stronger our chakras are, the stronger the associated qualities are within us. Meditation is a valuable, and powerful, self-discovery tool for self-realisation. A Sahaja Yoga technique helps to diagnose problems within our own subtle energy system.*

#### KEYWORDS:

*Yoga, Sahaja Yoga, Kundilini, Chakra, Self-realisation*

### INTRODUCTION

Sahaja Yoga is a unique method of meditation based on Self-Realization by Kundalini awakening that can occur within each human being. Through this process an inner transformation takes place by which one becomes moral, united, integrated and balanced. The process of Sahaja Yoga is spontaneous and natural. It is a technique to awaken the Kundalini Shakti which lies in the sleeping state at the base of our spine i.e. sacrum bone. The process of awakening of Kundalini is a spontaneous and joy giving process. An inner transformation takes place during this process and the individual becomes more moral, integrated, harmonious and balanced.

Sahaja Yoga is a unique new spiritual movement founded in 1970 by Nirmala Srivastava (1923-2011), more widely known as Shri Mataji by her followers, who are called

Sahaja yogis. Sahaja Yoga provides the meditation technique to the state of self-realization produced by kundalini awakening. Self-realization through kundalini awakening is a transformation which can be experienced on the central nervous system consequently results in a more moral, united, integrated and balanced personality. Shri Mataji described Sahaja Yoga as the pure, universal and integration of all religions.

#### MEANING OF SAHAJ YOGA

The word 'yoga' means 'union'. This is the union of our mind, body and soul to attain the bliss of almighty God. Yoga is generally done to prepare one for meditation, and meditation is done to realize union of one's self. This experience is referred to as salvation, and is similar to the concept of nirvana in Buddhism. Maharshi Patanjali states that there are eight limbs of yoga leading to Kaivalya. These

are ethical discipline 'Yamas', rules 'Niyamas', physical postures 'Asanas', breath control 'Pranayama', withdrawal from the senses 'Pratyahara', one-pointedness of mind 'Dharana', meditation 'Dhyana', and finally Samadhi which is often described as the realization of the identity of the Self.

"Saha" means 'with', "Ja" means 'born', "Yoga" means union with the all-pervading power of Divine love. Etymologically 'Sahaja' means spontaneous and 'Yoga' means union. Thus Sahaja Yoga is our awareness beyond the limits of our 'ego and conditionings' into the realm of reality. This can be achieved by the process of meditation. The potential to the spiritual awakening and ascent is inborn in every human being. This potential is possible to be actualized through a unique living process of Sahaja Yoga.

A *Dictionary of Buddhism* gives the literal translation of Sahaja as "innate" and defines it as "denoting the natural presence of enlightenment (bodhi) or purity." and Yoga means *union* to a spiritual path or a state of spiritual absorption. According to Sahaja Yoga, the kundalini is born within us and can be awakened spontaneously, without effort. Just as a seed is transformed spontaneously into a great tree, our physical, mental and emotional balancing process is carried out effortlessly by meditation.

Sahaja Yoga is a simple technique of Self-Realisation. Today, we wander here and there in all spheres of life in search of peace, happiness and joy but everything resides within our heart as the SELF the 'Atma' which is the reflection of God. This fact has been disclosed to masses by Sahaja Yoga in achieving Self-Realisation. Sahaja Yoga not only gives Self-Realisation, but also transforms the individual into beautiful personality. It gives the power of inner transformation. Its effects are positive and benefits are immense which start manifesting with regular meditation practices. Through Sahaja Yoga we achieve complete integration of body, mind, intellect and soul and experience thoughtless awareness and attain complete peace and bliss. Our physical, mental and emotional phases are balanced. Sahaja Yogis claim that by practicing Sahaja Yoga, all kinds of diseases including those incurable once which are beyond the reach of medical science, are cured and all problems, of an individual are solved gradually.

## HISTORY OF SAHAJA YOGA

Before starting Sahaja Yoga, its founder Nirmala Srivastava earned a reputation as a faith healer. With a small group of devotees around her, she began spreading her message of Sahaja Yoga in India in the year 1970. As she moved with her husband to London, UK, she continued her work there, and year by year the movement grew and spread throughout Europe, by the mid-80's reaching North America. In 1989, Nirmala made her first trip to Russia and Eastern Europe. Nirmala charged no money, insisting that her lesson was a birthright which should be freely available to all. She said, "There can be no peace in the world until there is peace within".

Sahaj Yoga believes that in addition to our physical body there is a subtle body composed of nadis (channels) and chakras (energy centres). There is no biomedical evidence of chakras. Nirmala Srivastava equates the Sushumna nadi with the parasympathetic nervous system, the Ida nadi with the left and the Pingala nadi with the right sides of the sympathetic nervous system.

## MEDITATION

The word '*meditation*' in English is derived from the Latin word '*meditatio*', from a verb '*meditari*' which means 'to think, devise or to ponder'. Apart from its historical usage, the term meditation was introduced as a spiritual practices, referred to as '*dhyana*' meaning to contemplate or meditate. Thus, meditation is a practice where an individual operates or trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or for the mind to simply acknowledge its content without becoming identified with that content, or as an end in itself. The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity, and forgiveness.

According to Walsh & Shapiro (2006), 'Meditation refers to a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity, and concentration.

There is no universal accepted definition of meditation. The word meditation carries different meanings in different contexts. Meditation has been practiced since Vedic period as a component of spiritual customs and beliefs. Meditation often involves an internal effort to self-regulate the mind in some way. Meditation is often used to clear the mind and ease many health concerns, such as blood pressure, depression, and anxiety.

Meditation is a broad term which encompasses a number of practices. Meditation may involve generating an emotional state for the purpose of analyzing that state—such as anger, hatred, etc. or cultivating a particular mental response to various phenomena, such as compassion. The term "meditation" can refer to the state itself, as well as to practices or techniques employed to cultivate the state. Meditation may also involve repeating a mantra and closing the eyes. Meditation has a calming effect and directs awareness inward until pure awareness is achieved. In brief, there are dozens of specific styles of meditation and many different types of activity commonly known as meditative practices.

The process of meditation, as well as its effects, is a growing subfield of neurological research. Modern scientific techniques and instruments have been used to study how regular meditation affects individuals by measuring brain and bodily changes. According to Brahma Kumaris, meditation means "be in remembrance of Supreme soul"; Thus meditation;

- can be an effective form of stress reduction and has the potential to improve quality of life and decrease healthcare costs.
- involves achieving a state of 'thoughtless awareness' in which the excessive stress producing activity of the mind is neutralised without reducing alertness and effectiveness.
- enables one to focus on the present moment rather than dwell on the unchangeable past or undetermined future.
- is a relaxation techniques reducing secretion of stress hormones and increasing parasympathetic activity.

## KUNDALINI, VIBRATIONS AND SELF REALIZATION

Kundalini means 'coiled energy' and refers to a power which lies in three and half coils in the sacrum bone

which is situated at the lower end of vertebral column. Kundalini is the power of pure desire within us, a motherly and soothing spiritual energy which lies dormant at the base of the spine in the sacrum bone.

The process of awakening the Kundalini is called **Self-Realisation**. We can connect with our spirit and achieve meditation when the motherly, spiritual energy known as Kundalini becomes awakened and active. When this energy is flowing within us, it provides an expression for the Spirit.

The dormant Kundalini energy rises from the sacrum through the spinal column. As a result, the energy centers or chakras become energized or nourished. When this energy passes through the brain we spontaneously achieve meditation.

Self Realisation has always been the ultimate goal of all religions and spiritual schools of the world, but was extremely difficult to attain in the past. It has now become a mass phenomenon achieved effortlessly through Sahaja Yoga.

In the words of Shri Mataji, "Self Realisation is the first encounter with Reality". "We have the Mother within ourselves, in our hearts, and if She is awakened, She is going to look after us. She is going to give all the protection that is needed. And there is nothing to be frightened of anything." Thus, "Kundalini cures you, improves you, and bestows all the blissful things upon you. She takes you away from the worries of the grosser level".

The manifestation of the Kundalini energy is called Vibrations, which is an approximate translation of the Sanskrit term *Chaitanya*. A vibration is the integrated force of our physiological, mental, emotional and spiritual Selves.

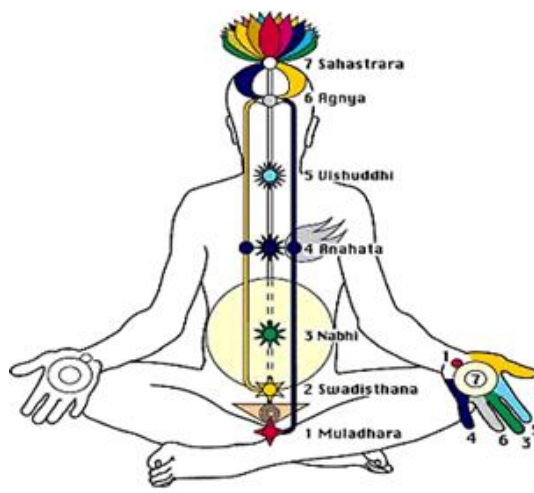
Sahaja Yoga believes that the chakras can be balanced by awakening the kundalini in the sacrum bone. As the kundalini rises through these centres, the qualities of the chakras are said to begin manifesting spontaneously. Most illnesses are said to be a result of damage to the chakras, and kundalini is said to repair them. According to Sahaja Yoga, once the Sahasrara (topmost) chakra is pierced by the

kundalini, a person will feel a cool breeze on top of their head and/or on their hands. Sensations of heat or coolness in the hands, head and/or body are used to diagnose of imbalances in the different chakras and nadis. These sensations referred to as 'vibrations' are interpreted in Sahaja Yoga as indicating Self-Realization or an 'encounter with Reality'.

### THE SUBTLE SYSTEM – CHAKRAS, NADIS AND VOID

The human subtle system comprises of Three Nadis and Seven Chakras (plexuses). The Kundalini Instrument in a human being consists of three Nadis: (Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna Nadis) and seven Chakras: Mooladhara Chakra, Swadisthana Chakra, Nabhi Chakra, Anahat Chakra, Vishuddhi Chakra, Agnya Chakra and Sahasrara Chakra.

- **Left Sympathetic Nervous System** is called the Ida Nadi and is connected to the right side and back of the brain. This channel looks after our emotional life and our past. The sub-conscious mind receives information from this channel. Everything that was in the past since creation resides dormant in the collective subconscious. This collective subconscious has all that is dead in the evolutionary process collected and stored.
- **Right Sympathetic Nervous System** is called the Pingala Nadi, which crosses Ida Nadi at Agnya Chakra level. It is connected with the left side and the front of the brain. On the right hand side there is the supra-conscious mind, which creates our future. Whenever we think about our future it is recorded on the right hand side, and it also has a collective supra-conscious, which has got all that is dead, which happened due to over-ambitious, futuristic personalities, aggressive animals or plants.
- **Parasympathetic Nervous System** is called the Sushumna Nadi, through which the Kundalini passes to pierce through the 'Fontanelle bone area' (Brahmarandhra) to enter into the subtle energy of the all-pervading power. This is how the actualization of Self-Realization takes place.



THE SUBTLE SYSTEM

### Chakra Kundalini Diagram

Inside every human being there is a network of nerves and sensory organs that interprets the outside physical world. At the same time, within us resides a subtle system of channels

(*nadis*) and centers of energy (*chakras*) which look after our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual being. The seven chakras in human being is given below;

- i. Mooladhara Chakra:** It is the first chakra which is situated below the sacrum bone where the Kundalini resides. Its main aspect is the innocence which gives us dignity, balance, and a tremendous sense of direction and purpose in life. It is nothing but simplicity, purity and joy.
- ii. Swadishthan Chakra:** The second chakra is the chakra of creativity, pure attention and pure knowledge. It is the one which connects us to the inner source of inspiration, and enables us to experience the beauty around us. This is the center of pure, steady attention and power of concentration. On the physical level it looks after our liver, kidneys, and the lower abdomen. When we think too much, this center gets drained of energy and diseases like diabetes, blood cancer can occur when this chakra goes completely out of balance.
- iii. Nabhi Chakra:** It is the third chakra which gives us the sense of generosity, complete satisfaction and contentment. This is chakra can relieve us from stress and tensions. On the right side, it looks after our liver which is the organ of our attention and power of concentration. When enlightened by the Kundalini, the Nabhi chakra gives us our spiritual ascent, righteousness and inner sense of morality and complete balance at all levels in our life.
- iv. The Heart Chakra or Anahat Chakra:** The fourth chakra, the chakra of the heart, is the place where resides our Spirit, our true Self, which is eternally pure and unaffected by anything. After Self Realization, our attention becomes for the first time connected to our Spirit and we gradually become aware of it. This chakra looks after our heart and lungs and if affected it can cause asthma or various heart conditions. The heart chakra is the one that gives us the sense of responsibility and pure behaviour towards others. All our worries, doubts and fears are destroyed when the heart chakra is fully enlightened by the Kundalini.
- v. Vishuddhi Chakra:** The fifth chakra is the chakra of diplomacy, of pure relationships with others, and of playful detachment. It removes all our guilt and remorse when it is opened by the Kundalini, and gives us a kind and compassionate voice. The feelings of superiority or inferiority and all jealousies are removed when this chakra is nourished by the Kundalini. Also, the Vishuddhi chakra gives us the connection with the whole, enabling us to feel our oneness and the fact that we are all part and parcel of the whole.
- vi. The Agnya Chakra:** It is the sixth chakra the chakra of forgiveness and compassion. It is the one that dissolves all our ego, conditionings, habits, false ideas of racialism, and all our misidentifications. It is the narrow gate which opens the way for our consciousness to ascend to its final destination, which is the seventh center.
- vii. The Sahasrara Chakra:** It is the seventh center which integrates all the chakras with their respective qualities. It is the last milestone of the evolution of human awareness. This chakra gives us the direct, absolute perception of Reality on our central nervous system.

This is precise what is achieved by Self Realization, through the spontaneous awakening of the Kundalini given by Sahaja Yoga.

**The Void:** Surrounding the second and the third chakra is the Void which stands for the principle of mastery (guru principle) within us. In many spiritual traditions, this area is the “ocean of illusions” that needs to be crossed with the help of a spiritual guide. When the Kundalini is awakened and passes through the Void, this principle of mastery is established within us.

### HOW SAHAJA YOGA IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER TYPES OF YOGA

Sahaja Yoga is different from the other types of Yoga because it begins with Self Realization instead of this being the unobtainable dream of a distant goal. Traditionally, a guru used to have few disciples and look after their growth for a lifetime, guiding their inner cleansing day by day. Few souls were able to achieve Self Realization after many years of passing through various stages such as Yama, Niyama, Breathing Techniques, Postures, etc. Through Sahaja Yoga human consciousness can be achieved by the method of Self Realization which is achieved spontaneously (Sahaja), without any effort. A little light is then lit within us and through Sahaja Yoga meditation we can then grow much faster, without having to go through any penances, while living normal lives amidst our own families and societies.

In other types of Yoga a guru is required but in Sahaja yoga, we become our own gurus, our own guides. After Self Realization, we are able to feel a gentle cool breeze flowing above the head and also from the center of our palms. We are able to clear the blockage using this energy which has been awakened in us. Moreover, we become collectively conscious. The fact that we are all part and parcel of the Whole becomes a tangible reality in our day to day life.

### SPECIAL AND UNIQUE ABOUT SAHAJA YOGA

Sahaja Yoga has a beneficial impact on mental, physical, material, emotional and spiritual aspect of a person's life. A rejuvenated human being finds unknown depths of energy and creativity to better his living conditions and to lead a more meaningful life. The practice of Sahaja Yoga makes a person calm, collected and able to cope more easily and effectively with the strains and stresses of life. It not only prevents but also cures the innumerable diseases which are the outcome of modern day living such as high blood pressure, heart diseases, diabetes, mental disorders, etc. There is increasing medical proof of the curative powers of Sahaja Yoga as per many experiments conducted. Its ability to cure alcoholism, smoking and drug addiction has been established beyond doubt. Sahaja Yoga has also cured several cases of paralysis, epilepsy, cancer and asthma among other diseases.

By bringing about an inner transformation of human beings, the benefits of Sahaja Yoga accrue not only to the individual but also to society, to the nation and ultimately to the entire humanity. The unique things about Sahaja yoga is given below;

1. Sahaja Yoga is not merely philosophical, but it is experience based yoga.
2. Sahaja yoga is a system of Self Realisation by the union with our Divine Self which takes place spontaneously.
3. By Sahaja yoga the process of Kundalini awakening is done in masses in public programs.

4. Sahaja yoga can be practiced by everyone irrespective of one's caste, creed, race, religion and nationality. It is now practiced worldwide.
5. Based on experience Sahaja Yoga, Self Realisation and establishment is attained in by Vibratory Awareness after Self Realisation.
6. In Sahaja yoga there are no rituals, no do's and don'ts but the practitioner of Sahaja Yoga automatically gives up all bad habits and starts leading a blissful life.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF SELF-REALISATION

Self-Realization has always been the ultimate goal of all religions and spiritual schools of the world, but was extremely difficult to attain in the past. It has now become a mass phenomenon achieved effortlessly through Sahaja Yoga.

- The manifestation of the Kundalini energy is called vibrations, which is an approximate translation of the Sanskrit term Chaitanya. "Chaitanya (vibrations) is the integrated force of our physiological, mental, emotional and spiritual Selves."
- The self-realization is nothing but return to one's own true home which is full of harmony, balance, equanimity, peacefulness.
- It is a state of Freedom (liberation) from pain, suffering, fears, dualities and tensions of life. It is a freedom not simply 'to do' but to be free from ego and attachments to baser things.
- Self-Realization frees us from the domination of our minds and our emotions. Enlightenment, Liberation, Moksha is the ultimate goal of self-realisation.
- Self-Realized person possesses body and lives in the world itself. He uses material world legitimately, for comfort and convenience not for ego satisfaction but for self-enrichment and realization.
- Self-Realized person is free from fear of loss and anxiety, from attachments and hatredness and he becomes very joyous and loving personality and fully enjoys the state of connection with the divine.

The knowledge of self-Realization is ancient, but for a long time it was available only to a few souls, being kept secret and transmitted from guru to disciple, since Self Realization was extremely difficult to achieve. Now, through Sahaja Yoga to achieve the self-Realization has become effortless and available to everyone.

### IMPLICATIONS OF SAHAJA YOGA

The following is an official statement from the US government-run National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health: "*Meditation is considered to be safe for healthy people. There have been rare reports that meditation could cause or worsen symptoms in people who have certain psychiatric problems, but this question has not been fully researched. People with physical limitations may not be able to participate in certain meditative practices involving physical movement. Individuals with existing mental or physical health conditions should speak with their health care providers prior to starting a meditative practice and make their meditation instructor aware of their condition.*"

Meditation may also be used to avoid facing ongoing problems or emerging crises in the meditator's life. In such situations, it may instead be helpful to apply mindful acquired in meditation while actively engaging with current problems. The major implications of Sahaja yoga are given below:

- Sahaja Yoga helps to boost immunity by simply kundalini awakening and improving overall health. So everyone must practice Sahaja yoga in order to enhance their immunity power.
- Sahaja yoga helps to root out painful migraines by self-realisation. Migraine could be a combination of mental stressors and physical misalignment that can be cured by self-realisation.
- Sahaja yoga is helpful to improved sleep quality for people with insomnia. This can be attributed to yoga's ability to help people deal with stress.
- Sahaja yoga is an awareness of physical and emotional sensations. By causing breath awareness, regular Sahaja yoga practice strengthens the mind-body connection by kundalini awakening. So clear your left and right nadis.
- Sahaja yoga meditation has been shown to correlate with particular brain and brain wave activity. Some studies have led to suggestions that Sahaja meditation involves 'switching off' irrelevant brain networks for the maintenance of focused internalized attention and inhibition of inappropriate information.
- Sahaja Yoga meditation is very easy and any one can do it along with his profession and family life. People from all walks of life can derive benefits, irrespective of their religion, caste or creed.
- Sahaja Yoga is helpful in improving Health. Physical diseases relating to Heart, diabetes, blood pressure, stomach ailments, and also other mental illnesses due to stress, tension, worries, as also insomnia, depression, fits, and many other psycho somatic diseases can easily be cured by Sahaja yoga.
- Sahaja Yoga is the process of natural cure from various addictions. It improves in improvement in memory. It brings harmony in family life and social relations.
- Sahaja yoga is an entirely scientific technique with no scope for blind faith therefore in Sahaja Yoga there is no need perform for any sort of rituals, penances, fasts, asceticism or physical deprivations so practice it.
- By practicing Sahaja Yoga we become courageous and confident. Peace, contentment and joy are hallmarks of Sahaja Yoga. Self-Realization through Sahaja Yoga is entirely free.

Thus, through regular meditation, we become automatically very dynamic, creative, confident, very humble, loving and compassionate. It is a process which starts to develop by itself when the Kundalini rises and starts to nourish our chakras. Then, we are in the present, but without thoughts, worries, anger which is the reality, and the past is no more and the future does not exist.

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