



LEOBRAND

Letters on
Living Ethics
Introduction to Agni Yoga



1. The truth about yoga

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Image on the cover: “*On the peak*” painting by Nicholas Roerich, 1936.

The truth about yoga

1. Yoga as a Unifying Cultural Asset

If we analyze the spiritual condition of humanity, we note that almost all the world's population is in a fateful, spiritual crisis. Old values and forms prove to be useless and are no longer adequate to show a new and better way forward.

The great civilizational upswing of the 19th and 20th centuries brought at least a greater approximation and connection of the peoples, although unfortunately there is no equivalent cultural improvement. This not only led to an exchange of goods, but also an exchange of spiritual goods and cultural values.

The first Christian missionaries went to the East, but mostly without success, for the wisdom of the East turned out to be greater. The East, however, did not send missionaries to the West, but waited. There people have a lot of time and know the value of higher knowledge.

Since time immemorial, India has walked the path inwards, in contrast, the West has taken the outward path.

India's highest spiritual treasure is the yoga sciences or yoga systems. But as it is always and everywhere in life, the most precious treasures and highest values are hardest to obtain. In contrast, low-priced goods are easily and quickly sold.

Thus it happened that misconceptions about yoga have been formed in the West, because profiteers have appeared in order to praise and sell knowledge and skills which are not useful in the long run, more than that, they lead away from the true purpose of yoga.

In order to attract persons interested in yoga, they promised mainly success, beauty, health, long life and occult powers.

In truth, yoga has a very different purpose and a much higher and more beautiful aim. To demonstrate this, it is necessary to tell the truth about yoga concisely to the Westerner.

2. What is Yoga?

To get to the understanding of the Indian doctrine, one must first analyze the meaning of the word YOGA.

YOGA is identical with the English word »yoke« or with the Latin »jugum« = yoke or obligation. The Latin verb »jugo« = I connect - wed, clearly expresses the true meaning. The meaning is the connection between the individual soul and the universal soul.

Therefore, yoga means the merging of the lower human self or individual spirit (jiva) with the divine and supreme self - the universal spirit.

Yoga encompasses all the methods and systems that lead to this goal and the way in which the union can be accomplished.

Yoga is the widening of human consciousness and the merging into the consciousness of something higher. This is the great problem of human advancement in general.

Yoga consists of doctrines, which are based on observation of human nature as well as the interconnections of existence. By practicing yoga, one gains powers that are still unknown in the West.

Yoga shows natural forces and natural laws that completely influence and regulate human destiny. This idea is also almost entirely foreign to Western thinking.

While the Western researcher directs his aims toward highly questionable material improvements, the Indian focuses on higher problems of existence.

The yogi primarily explores the inner life - the spiritual life - and uses the natural powers, which he controls in such a way that it borders on the miraculous.

Yoga is not just theory, but is rooted in practical experience that everyone can test himself.

Therefore, yoga does not require blind faith, but encourages you to see for yourself and test the truth of what you have discovered.

Yoga is based on exact knowledge of psychic forces and is a practice based on experiment and analysis, as well as Western science.

Yoga enjoys the great advantage that all of its experiences can be practically realized in life through various exercises.

Yoga is in no way in contradiction with nature; it is nothing artificial, nothing abnormal, but rather an efficient method for rapidly attaining a great goal, for which certain exercises, especially spiritual exercises, are necessary. It would usually take centuries or millennia without exercise for the same success that can be achieved through yoga in a few years or decades.

So yoga is the method of accelerated spiritual growth, and a shortcut.

The meaning of yoga is to see through the illusory nature of material existence to reach the bottom of eternal reality. Its purpose is the overcoming of physical existence, which is in truth recognized as maya or illusion, without departing from life.

Yoga shows the way to a general brilliancy, because brilliancy is in fact not a random excellence of a nation or race, but the result of thousands of years of efforts of an individual soul.

The genius is a few steps ahead of the general public, it has already reached a stage that others might gain in ten or a hundred thousand years.

What geniuses have achieved is as easily accessible to the average person. What the great Masters of the Wisdom, such as CHRIST, BUDDHA, and some others who are unknown to the public, are today, is accessible for all geniuses in the foreseeable future or at least in the course of many incarnations, if they follow the path of yoga.

Mastery is nothing more than the sum of life experiences in all scopes of life which, when seen from the beginning of human development, have been collected in hundreds of incarnations, i.e. rebirths, extending over millions of years. Please consider that the age of humanity is estimated to be at least 18 million years old.

The original meaning of the Christian creed is: "I believe in the repeated resurrection in the flesh, and life everlasting." The same is taught by the yoga science.

It is a fundamental concept of yoga teachings that at this stage of his development, man has not yet used all possibilities for a long time, but is right in the flow of evolution (development) and therefore unimagined possibilities are in store, and that is why we are now in a transitional stage that leads up to a higher existence.

There is no end to development. Nature also perpetually creates higher forms, which replace the old ones.

Yoga shows the way to a huge human development and evolution, while the Western world, with few exceptions, desperately denies the meaning of any development at all.

Yoga shows the way to higher forms of existence, from man to superman and from there to the God-man (son of God), in fact in the most rapid way. This path of perfection is not a unilateral activity of consciousness, but the improvement comprises all life experiences, all sciences, all arts, i.e. mastery in every way.

By the kindling of the centers of higher consciousness (Chakras), Yoga leads to higher skills, such as levitation, walking on water, rising into the air, walking on fire, clairvoyance, clairaudience, dematerialization, etc., overall more than 30 significant skills, which are considered miracles in the West but, even in India, are mastered only by a few and are considered self-evident.

But these skills are not the purpose of yoga in itself, but only a side effect of a natural development to the true yogi. They are probably the great dream of many yoga aspirants and especially of the morally and cognitively undeveloped beginner. With these skills, the true yogi only registers his spiritual progress, his state of development and does not show it in public.

People should not be convinced by wonders, but through observation and meditation, by logical reasoning and their own experiences.

It must also be ascertained once and for all that yoga is not magic and not fakirism, neither theory nor speculation, but life and action. In particular, there is nothing artificial in yoga. The yogi works in full harmony with nature. His knowledge is based on precise understanding and intuition.

Yoga requires daily exercises, above all self-observation, self-conquest, transmutation of the lower qualities into higher qualities, concentration of thought and meditation. Only practice and perseverance lead to yoga, yoga leads to knowledge, knowledge leads to love and wisdom, and this leads to bliss and release from all burdens of the earth.

Yoga is no worldview, no dogma, no creed, no church, no denomination, no religion, no sect, but knowledge about previously unknown spiritual processes and mastery of nature and its forces and a path of spiritual development.

a) The Difference Between the Yogi and the Average Person

The difference between a master yogi and the average person is nearly the same as that between an animal and a human. Compared to animals, man has significant spiritual abilities; he can speak and also has creative qualities.

Of course, in some ways we are inferior to animals. Animals are better protected from disease and also superior in physical strength and suppleness. Animals have retained the connection to the subtle world, and thus often feel approaching dangers for hours and days in advance. In truth, they are warned by the leadership of their resonance soul. By overdevelopment of the intellect and suppression of the heart-thinking, but primarily by materialistic thinking, man has lost the connection to his subtle guidance, which children often still have. Yoga connects people with the higher planes.

Brilliance and spiritual refinement gradually lead to the weakening of the physical body. The developed spirit demands a finer shell, i.e. a finer body. We should therefore not believe that true yoga produces people who are bursting with strength and health. Arguably part of the yoga systems shows the way to the mastery of physical strength, the simpler systems through breathing exercises and certain body workouts, the higher systems through strengthening of the Psychic Energy. The yogi would otherwise not be able to exist in this world.

By evocation of special psychic powers, some yogis even have stood up from their deathbeds almost completely recovered. By the way, this is also possible for a non-yogi, if he activates appropriate Psychic Energy simultaneously with the doctor or healer.

b) Yoga and the Teacher

No one becomes a yogi by learning a particular system from a book. A yogi needs life experience; he has his teacher or guru in his own heart. The disciple must obey this voice, because the subtle heart is the best guide.

At a certain stage of development, the disciple (chela) comes into contact with a true teacher or guru, even in the West. In order to avoid bitter life experiences, it is advisable to follow the wise advice of the teacher.

c) Yoga and Body Care

True yoga does not mean standing on one's head, contorting the body, or merely practicing breathing exercises, although among the six major systems of yoga, one system deals exclusively with the care of the body, namely Hatha Yoga.

The care of the body is not the purpose of yoga in itself but only a means to an end, and therefore must not become an end in itself, occupying all one's free time or even one's entire life. In the West, naturally many charlatans have appropriated yoga, especially Hatha Yoga, and even books have appeared that promise material success through yoga.

It should be explicitly stated that real yoga has nothing to do with business and commercial magic, i.e. manipulation by suggestion and hypnosis, but firmly rejects it.

True yoga is just the opposite: a scientific system that frees one from the shackles of the material world and leads from the brief existence of a few years to timeless eternity, thus bringing freedom and liberation from all that binds us to matter and the body. It is a matter of personal reason, whether someone lives aimlessly from day to day or shapes his life purposefully.

3. The Six Primary Yoga Systems

The primary yoga systems are:

1. Hatha Yoga = Path of mastery over the body.
2. Karma Yoga = Path of selfless work in complete renunciation of the fruits thereof.
3. Raja Yoga = Path of the perfect mastery of thought and inner processes.
4. Bhakti Yoga = Path of selfless love, from earthly love up to the highest love of God.
5. Gnana Yoga = Path of knowledge and wisdom.
6. Agni Yoga = Light Yoga or Fire Yoga, complete mastery and liberation through striving for the light. The highest world is the World of Light. The more we perfect ourselves, the more fiery and bright our subtle constitution becomes. Through Agni Yoga, a person becomes a bearer of light.

4. Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga must be considered as spiritually outdated.

Hatha Yoga = connection of sun (Ha) breath and moon (tha) breath. Combination of breathing through the right nostril (sun breath) with breathing through the left nostril (moon breath).

The aim of Hatha Yoga is the perfect mastery of the physical body and all of its functions. It is a hygienic system and at first the most comprehensible to the Westerner.

Hatha Yoga is the training of muscles and breathing control, entirely physical training and not spiritual training. Hatha Yoga thus does not impose any ethical demands, and if such demands from other yoga systems are not included, this opens the door to abuse.

Hatha Yoga, originally perhaps just as pure in its intentions, namely to serve to keep the body fit as an instrument of the mind, was abused by selfish, avaricious elements, because Hatha Yoga imparts health, strength, beauty, suppleness, long life and occult abilities.

The Hatha Yogi must first accustom himself to complete calmness, freedom from external stimuli, and complete mastery of the body.

This is achieved by the so-called asanas.

a) Asanas

These are specific body positions in which one must remain motionless.

In this regard, the Indians have shown a rich imagination. Reportedly there are 8.4 million different body positions, of which 1,600 are actually practiced. 32 of these are considered indispensable.

Without exaggeration, we can say that all of these postures entail difficulties for the untrained Westerner. Yet children and young people can learn them within a few weeks because their limbs are still flexible.

Of these 32 best-known positions, "Padmasana" and "Siddhasana" are known from the Indian and Japanese Buddha statues. Besides, most people in the East are able to sit in this position for days without difficulty, due to the lack of chairs they have become used to it since childhood.

In this position, all concentration and meditation exercises are best performed. Any other position, especially a lying position, is less recommended. Most important is the upright posture of the spine because of the passage of the Kundalini. Therefore, one can, of course, meditate sitting on a chair.

b) Breathing Exercises and Chakras

By combining such exercises with breathing, i.e. by directing the breath to certain subtle centers of the body, called »Chakras«, it is possible to attain the aforementioned super-human abilities. These are not empty assertions, but abilities of which many Europeans have convinced themselves personally in India.

But here we reach the critical point of Hatha Yoga. All these abilities and countless others are usually the result or fruit of a natural spiritual development and can be achieved through appropriate ethical perfection even without breathing exercises.

There have also been saints in the Western churches who possessed such abilities to a high degree. If they are achieved in a natural way by ethical perfection, they are also permanent, which means they are carried over from incarnation to incarnation and are expanded.

In Hatha Yoga, these centers are inflamed by mechanical action, i.e. by the intentional directing of the breath to the Chakras, without simultaneous development of the ethical maturity of the student.

Such abilities require an increased sense of responsibility, which a person who is morally unstable does not have. Therefore, it is necessary to issue a most emphatic warning against mechanical action on the Chakras by breathing exercises.

The abuse of these abilities leads to black magic and sexual magic and creates heavy karma or fate, the resolution of which takes thousands of years.

Without the guidance of a trained teacher, mechanically acquired abilities are lost at death and often lead not only to insanity and schizophrenia, but also to serious lung and heart diseases.

For this reason, fakirs, magicians, and prestidigitators use Hatha Yoga, because they are thereby able to perform feats that no Westerner can perform.

It is very important to distinguish strictly between a yogi and a fakir. If a yogi allows himself to be led astray by selfish motives and performs tricks and produces phenomena, he has left the path of true yoga.

Another thing is to show and teach various »asanas« for physical relaxation or for reasons of hygiene.

c) Pranayama

The breathing exercises are called »Pranayama«, but they are not only a part of Hatha Yoga, but also of Raja Yoga.

They are based on the fact that breathing is the most important life process. Without food it is possible to survive for weeks, but not without breathing. Highly trained Hatha Yogis can also stop their breathing for a long time (some let themselves be buried alive).

In contrast to digestion, breathing has traditionally been considered of little importance in the West. Although it is claimed that one cannot live on air alone, there are yogis for whom air is often the only source of nourishment. There have also been people in the West who lived without solid food (see Therese of Konnersreuth—an unconscious Bhakti Yogi).

The following breathing exercises are recommended:

1. Inhale for 8 heartbeats, hold for 4, exhale for 8.
2. Inhale for 4 heartbeats, hold for 16, exhale for 8.
3. Inhale for 8 heartbeats, do not hold, exhale for 8.

At the beginning, none of these exercises should be performed more than seven times.

d) The Meaning of Prana

Yoga teaches that the world – the manifested cosmos – arose from the union of the two principles, »Akasha« and »Prana«. Akasha = primordial matter, prana = vital energy.

However, it appears that these are but two different states of one and the same essence, one passing into the other. Thus we again approach the concept of the absolute unity of all Being, which forms the core of Indian philosophy.

The term Prana denotes the universal energy and, in a narrower sense, also the life principle within the living organism, for which Europeans have various names such as nerve force, animal magnetism, Od-forces etc.

The aim of Pranayama is to gain mastery over the universal energy in its many manifestations, which is primarily emanated by the solar ether and stored in the needles of coniferous trees. Therefore, walks in forests are highly recommended.

The European is familiar with the food sheath, or »Anakosha«, as the yogi calls it, but not with the »Pranakosha«, the energy sheath.

Within this »Pranakosha« are the so-called »Chakras«, or centers of higher consciousness, also called lotus blossoms.

Within the »Pranakosha« runs the channel »Sushumna«, from the Root Chakra through the center of the spine to the crown of the brain. Around this channel »Sushumna« wind, in opposite directions, two smaller channels, »Ida« and »Pingala«, which terminate in the left and right nostrils respectively. Together they form the image of the Caduceus (Mercury wand).



e) The Seven Primary Chakras

The channel »Sushumna« begins in an ethereal nerve center called »**Mūlādhāra**«, or the four-petaled lotus (»**Root Chakra**« at the tip of the coccyx). On its upward path, »Sushumna« touches six further primary centers, or Chakras (see lesson no. 20).

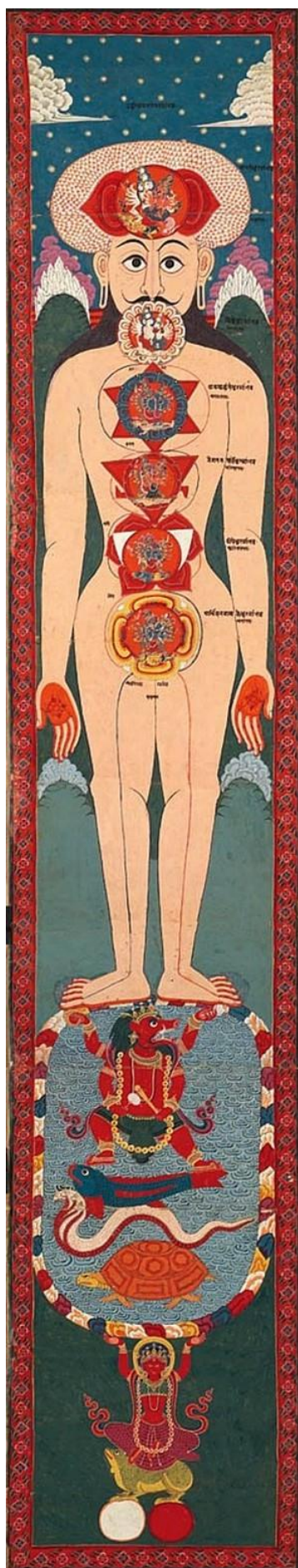
- »**Svādhīsthāna**« in the »**pelvis**«;
- »**Manipūra**« in the pit of the stomach, or »**Solar Plexus**«;
- »**Anāhata**«¹ the so-called »**Chalice**« opposite to the heart on the right side of the chest;
- »**Viśuddha**« in the »**larynx**« or the pharynx;
- »**Ājñā**« (pronounced as "Adzhna"), »**Third Eye**« on the forehead;
- »**Sahasrāra**« the »**Bell**« at the crown of the head.

Within all centers (Chakras) certain higher abilities are embedded. In the West, only one of these centers is officially known: the Solar Plexus. It regulates breathing and is influenced by its changes. Homer even placed the seat of the soul to this region. Boxers, too, know that their most sensitive body part is the pit of the stomach.

According to yoga, Prana is primarily accumulated in the Solar Plexus and held there in reserve, in order to be directed to wherever vital energy is required.

1 Anāhata - अनाहत = indestructible vessel — The CHALICE is often mistakenly equated with the Heart Chakra. The Heart Chakra is not part of the mortal Pranakosha, that is, the subtle or astral body, but of the immortal Fiery Body. Only when the Chalice is kindled by the Heart does the spirit enter the subtle body through this connection (Heavenly Axis). (HEART — see Lesson 21).

¹ Anāhata - अनाहत = *unzerstörbares Gefäß* – Der *KELCH* wird oft fälschlich mit dem Herz-Chakra gleichgestellt. Das Herz-Chakra ist nicht Teil der vergänglichen Pranakosha/des feinstofflichen oder astralen Körpers, sondern des unvergänglichen Feu- rigen Körpers. Erst bei der Entflammung des Kelches durch das Herz dringt Geist über diese Verbindung (Himmliche Achse) in den feinen Körper ein. (HERZ – siehe Lektion 21).



f) Kundalini

In the lowest Chakra, »Muladhara«, rests »Kundalini«, the coiled serpent fire. The gradual rising of this invisible flame of life forms the basis for the development of higher consciousness and marks the beginning of acquiring yoga abilities.

At first, Kundalini must be awakened; only then are all the centers ignited in sequence. Woe to him who begins in reverse order.

Uninitiated practitioners who consciously directed their breath to the »Third Eye« and the »Bell« in order to ignite these centers first reached the brink of insanity when they continued such practices. A flame always burns from the bottom upward, and never in reverse.

Therefore, it must be repeatedly emphasized that the awakening of such psychic forces and abilities must not be forcibly and mechanically performed, and that any such development is only possible under the guidance of a trained yogi. Also, it is not permitted to achieve this through breathing exercises; rather, it should be allowed to occur naturally as the result of gradual development.

Hatha Yoga, as it is currently practiced in India, is entirely impracticable and completely futile in the West. Some beneficial exercises can be performed in the West, but typically there is not enough time to carry them out fully.

Who, for example, can practice various asanas for several hours a day, or spend hours on eating? A Hatha Yogi chews his food until it literally dissolves in saliva. Of course, thus he keeps his teeth and digestive system healthy, without going to a dentist or an internist throughout his life.

Vegetarianism is commonly self-evident in India, and it is also highly recommended for those people in the West who want to begin the Path of Yoga with earnestness and zeal, but the body must not be forced. The demand for a vegetarian diet increases automatically by refinement.

Beginners should also abstain from alcohol, nicotine and all types of drugs. Bromine is also harmful, as it destroys Psychic Energy.

g) The Weaknesses of Hatha Yoga

The weakness of Hatha Yoga lies in the fact that its aim is directed exclusively toward physical interests and has nothing to do with the true development and perfection of the soul. Its difficult and protracted breathing exercises require an enormous expenditure of time and energy, so that they practically fill one's whole life, or at least one's free time, leaving no time for higher duties.

The goods or values that can be gained through Hatha Yoga, such as health, strength, youth, and long life, lose their value in the face of death and therefore offer no lasting benefit.

These values, which are highly esteemed by man, are ultimately also Maya, or illusion, just like gold, jewellery, and all earthly possessions as such.

Even if a man were to live to be a hundred or two hundred years old, merely to enjoy the physical body in its perfection, he would miss the true meaning of life.

The goal of true Yoga consists in leading man to higher things, that is, to a higher spiritual perfection.

h) The Purpose of Yoga Exercises

The purpose of yoga exercises must be the liberation and perfection of the soul as well as the mastery of nature. Health is not an end in itself but a means to an end. We must not be slaves of our bodies. The body, rather, is our tool for the work of perfection, and indeed a very precious tool that has to be carefully maintained.

However, in the care of the body, we should bear in mind that everything physical is transient and subject to destruction. In contrast, the soul is not subject to destruction, but contains the immortal within us, which can always be improved and beautified. This important insight must also be strictly observed by those yoga aspirants who do not wish to rise above Hatha Yoga.

From the standpoint of spiritual development, Hatha Yoga, as it is practiced today, has become fool's gold. It is the great pitfall and obstacle on the path of perfection. Hatha Yoga is a seducer and a lure that can keep the aspirant bound to matter on the path to true yoga, namely through desirable occult abilities, which the morally unstable person will misuse for black magic or for personal gain, thereby creating negative karma.

5. Karma Yoga

Karma is that concept and that law of nature which regulates and rules the formation of all fate. By thinking and acting, or doing nothing, we constantly cause something, and by the law of karma, these causes lead to certain effects. Positive causes lead to positive effects and negative causes to negative effects.

Every person continuously creates karma, not only by activity but also by passivity.

Karma Yoga shows the way to get rid of negative karma. One who has learned self-conquest, self-discipline, love and wisdom will only create positive causes and thus he will receive corresponding effects, which will free him from the necessity of rebirth and by his own strength will release him from every guilt.

Thereby the yogi achieves »Nirvana«, the state of bliss and merging with the higher self. This does not mean idleness, but is the beginning of a conscious creative activity and collaboration in building the universe.

On the one hand, karma is remorseless; on the other hand, it is merciful, for it knows no hell with eternal perdition, but always the possibility of reparation and of ascension.

a) Karma and Diseases

The negative effects of karma do not only find expression in blows of fate, but also in the form of diseases. There are diseases which are caused by a wrong lifestyle of past millennia. They only break out now, and scientific medicine as well as the best Hatha Yogis stand helpless and powerless in the face of them.

To realize that one can carry diseases from previous lives, and even must bear them as karma, is, of course, a novelty in the West.

Karma is simply remorseless, but absolutely fair and does not ask for time, status, or honor. The causes may even date back millennia.

Of course, a Hatha Yogi can also suffer chronic diseases that cannot be cured even with the best breathing exercises before his karma is resolved.

As we have to deal with the problem of karma in a separate lesson, we can move on to Raja Yoga.

6. Raja Yoga (pronounced "Rajah")

(Royal Yoga – see latin rex = king)

The great Indian genius, Bhagavan Rama Krishna, lived in the 19th century. In the West, this wisdom was spread by his disciple Swami Vivekananda. The study of his books is highly recommended.

Raja Yoga consists of eight stages:

1. Yama = non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, abstinence and even non-acceptance of gifts.
2. Niyama = purity, contentment, austerity, study, self-surrender to God.
3. Asana = correct sitting posture (Buddha posture).
4. Pranayama = control of breath.
5. Pratyahara = withdrawal of the senses from the external world.
6. Dharana = concentration.
7. Dhyana = meditation.
8. Samadhi = merging with the highest consciousness, complete abandonment of consciousness into the higher self, with the disappearance of all distinctions between subject and object.

It is the merging with the Absolute, which is the highest level that any true yogi seeks to achieve. It is the state of being one with the universe, and thus possessing a state of knowledge and experience that borders almost on omniscience.

7. Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti is the deepest love for God, a sincere search for God. Bhakti begins in love, proceeds in love and ends in love. If one feels this love within, he loves everything and cannot hate. Bhakti is perfection and can no longer sink to earthly goals.

Love is greater than selfless work (Karma).

Love is greater than wisdom and knowledge (Jnana).

Love for God is fulfillment, path and goal all at the same time.

Bhakti is the easiest way, but it can degrade in its lowest forms, leading to a terrible fanaticism which can degenerate into extreme intolerance, as we have seen it in Hinduism, Islam and also Christianity.

Love can lead to the highest ideals, but in its primitive forms also to intolerance towards fellow human beings, but only as long as the spirit is undeveloped and is unaware of the law of cause and effect.

Ignorance is the greatest calamity for humanity. Only higher knowledge leads out of the maze of life.

Intolerance in Bhakti is therefore only possible in the initial stage. When a Bhakta reaches maturity, he knows no fanaticism and loves his enemies as well as himself. Thus taught Christ, the greatest Bhakti Yogi in history. To reach his level requires the difficult path of self-mastery through the highest love. But the ascent from the Son of Man to the Son of God is possible for all people.

Yet CHRIST and the MASTERS OF THE WISDOM do not stop at the goal which THEY have achieved, but continue steadily onward. The great mystery of evolution consists precisely in that. Heroes and saints set out to follow CHRIST – (Thomas a Kempis – The Imitation of Christ).

Through love and wisdom, they will one day follow in His footsteps.

The study of Bhakti Yoga and of Agni Yoga, which includes Bhakti, leads to an understanding of the true teachings of Christ and His mission.

8. Gnana (Jnana) Yoga

Gnana means rationality, wisdom, philosophy and contemplation of life. Gnana or Jnana is related to the Greek »gnosis« = knowledge.

Whilst the Bhakti Yogi achieves union with the Most High through love, the Gnana Yogi blazes a trail for connection with God through knowledge and absolute rationality. He is the one who constantly advances all outdated conceptions and worldview in a dynamic, progressive manner and systematically unveils the secrets of the macrocosm and microcosm, and not least those of the soul and its constitution.

a) Gnana – Redemption Through Knowledge

Gnana leads to the knowledge of who and what we humans are. Gnana enables you to soar above birth and death, shows the relativity of existence and the impossibility of knowing the Absolute at all.

The whole universe is seen as a manifestation of the Godhead. Man sees »Parabrahman« or the Absolute through the veil of maya or appearance and can only catch a glimpse of a small piece of true existence, which is boundless and inconceivable.

When we see through the illusion of this world, it is no longer reality for us; it continues to exist as a mirage. Man, world and Godhead are one, but only a few can comprehend this truth.

b) Gnana – Overcoming Fear and Anxiety

Beholding the gigantic dimension of the universe and the infinite and incomprehensible existence, fear could arise. Therefore, a Gnanin primarily has to overcome dread and fear of life itself. Dread is a terrible enemy. The gnanin knows that he will not perish, for he is a spark of the divine Self and as such is subject to perpetual change, but in truth indestructible. Relying on the brazen, unchangeable laws (karma, etc.), he, as a thinking being, can responsibly master his own fate.

A gnanin must not believe anything he does not know. He has to constantly tell himself: I am neither the body nor the senses, feelings and thoughts or consciousness, but »Atman«, existence itself and the Self. If we can separate ourselves from everything, all that remains is the true self.

A gnanin meditates in two ways:

He negates everything and dismisses all that he is not.

He abides in what he truly is, Atman, the only self, being and knowledge.

You can deny everything, but not the real you, for it is the observer of the universe.

The Gnanin must always repeat: I am you and you are me. The one who has defeated his desires is in truth free, because there is nothing left for him to desire. Our true nature is bliss. All the pleasures that people know are just a shadow of this bliss.

Gnana Yoga teaches us that we shall abandon the world but not flee, and that we shall stay in life, but have to overcome the world gradually. Everything has to be borne with equanimity, praise and blame, good and evil, heat and cold.

The gnanin does not recoil from suffering and sacrifices, but bears them with courage. So he reaps inner peace and thus true freedom. He does everything for others, renounces the fruits of his work (Karma Yoga), and does not expect reward or gratitude. Thus he becomes one with the universe and owns everything.

The gnanin knows that we exist, and existence means bliss. Bliss is the true form of being.

The gnanin recognizes sin as the struggle of the divine within us. He knows that we have an animal within us — the lower self — and that we must overcome it. Man shall rise above sin, i.e. mistakes, in order to reach divinity and become one with it.

The heart must be pure and therefore we must never presume to criticize the morality of others, nor allow ourselves to be revered as saints in order to convert sinners. Everyone has to start with oneself and should refrain from speaking ill of others. Only the pure in heart shall see God, i.e. comprehend the principle of divinity.

Gnana also means being free of any denomination, but that is not to despise the denominations, but to reach that level of independent thinking which is already above all confessions. A gnanin is neither Hindu nor Buddhist, nor Christian, but altogether. For him there is neither heaven nor hell, neither denomination nor church, but only »Atman«. For whoever rids himself of everything, the only thing that remains is true Being.

The great Master Krishna taught Gnana Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita. But the supreme teacher of Gnana Yoga was Gautama Buddha.

9. Derivative Yoga Systems

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Laya Yoga | deals with all kinds of expansion of consciousness, especially the control of willpower. |
| Shakti Yoga | is a part of laya yoga and includes the merging with the divine power (shakti) through concentration of thought. |
| Mantra Yoga | shows the expert use of mantras. These are words and prayers of secret power. The enunciation of invocations also belongs to this field. |
| Yantra Yoga | is the application of yantras, i.e. geometrical figures of mystical meaning. This includes all secret symbolism. |
| Kriya Yoga | includes Mantra- and Laya Yoga, and deals with the training of thought and meditation. |
| Mudra Yoga | is a variation of Yantra Yoga and is based on mystical signs that are used in Lamaistic initiations. |

In many cases, parts of Raja Yoga, namely dhyana and samadhi, are also referred to as separate systems. Some Hatha Yogis speak of kundalini- and prana-yoga, but these are in no case separate systems.

10. Agni Yoga

Agni (lat. ignis), light or fire yoga, is the latest and most comprehensive yoga system. It came into existence between 1927 and 1938, or rather it was made accessible to a small group of disciples. The founder was MAITREYA MORYA, one of the greatest masters and Mahatmas of the Orient.

Agni Yoga combines everything that is useful from the previous yoga systems, deepens and expands them, considers Western science, but excludes Hatha Yoga because of its dangers.

Agni Yoga is the shortest way to the light, the direct connection back to the highest powers by work, readiness to make sacrifices, love, devotion, loyalty, endeavor, acquirement of knowledge and fulfilment of duty without asking for a reward.

Agni Yoga is a system that is also suited perfectly for the Westerner and can be practiced without difficulty in the midst of life. What other systems achieve laboriously through breathing exercises and meditation, the Agni Yogi gains by opening up Psychic Energy.

a) The Meaning of Psychic Energy

Psychic Energy that emanates from the main center, namely the heart, and which more or less already exists in every person, leads to the mastery of all fiery energies. The universe was built up by fire and is constantly transformed by this primal element, and therefore its mastery to the finest spiritual substances is the duty of the Agni Yogi.

Also for maintaining health in Agni Yoga, the raising and mastery of Psychic Energy take the place of protracted breathing exercises and other body positions. But Psychic Energy does not guarantee robust health, because the body refines more and more and a fine instrument becomes more sensitive. But Psychic Energy even empowers critically ill people to care for the less ill and cheer them up.

All faith healings are unknowingly caused by Psychic Energy. It is not faith that heals people directly, but Psychic Energy, and thus the so-called miracle healings occur. Yet these are far from being the most important healings, but the healing of the spirit is.

b) The Meaning of Spiritual Healing

Due to ignorance and immorality, humanity finds itself in the critical stage of a mental disease and therefore in great danger, which may result in the destruction of the planet. That is why the great teacher M.M said:

„At a time when one sacrifices his soul for the good of the World, the other sits upon the water. While one offers his heart for the salvation of his fellow-men, the other flounders in the manifestations of the Subtle World.“ (FW II §14)

The most important of all duties is to serve humanity. Given the complicated international situation, caused by the grim (spiritual) struggle on earth between light and darkness, the various occult skills and the mastery of the body is absolutely unimportant. However, it is important that everyone keeps their spirit healthy, recognizes the need of the hour, and assists in saving the planet and humanity.

Agni Yoga shows the way out of the stage of spiritual beggary in order to help ourselves. Thus we will be able to bear the mental and emotional burdens of weaker people together.

c) The Most Important Exercise

Agni Yoga requires simple exercises, yet they are all the more effective. The main one is: find out your three worst qualities and strive to burn them through fiery endeavor, or gradually discard them and transmute them into good qualities.

This sounds very simple, but it is more difficult than doing a headstand for an hour every day and practicing the most difficult asanas. However, it is necessary in order to gain control over one's personality.

d) Agni Yoga and the Problems of Everyday Life

Agni Yoga provides information and instructions for all problems of everyday life and brings order to the shaping of fate and human relations.

Agni Yoga fathoms all the other yoga systems, extracts their common essence, and provides much deeper insight into them. So we gain knowledge of the basic principles of the

law of cause and effect (karma), of the law of reincarnation, of the meaning of life, of the meaning of suffering, of marital problems, of education, of the Subtle and Fiery World, and of the Brotherhood of the White Lodge, etc.

Agni Yoga teaches control of thoughts and control of mental activity and shows how to think and act positively in order to attain release from the cycle of rebirth and the way to merge with higher consciousness.

An important insight of Agni Yoga is that only by raising morality and eliminating ignorance can all people and each individual be decisively helped.

e) Agni Yoga = LIVING ETHICS

Agni Yoga includes all the moral demands of Western ethics and is therefore identical with the term LIVING ETHICS.

The path of yoga has been followed not only by the greatest geniuses of the Orient, but also of all the saints and mystics of the West. Yet not only these, even great poets and thinkers walked the same path, often unknowingly.

In the context of yoga, who would not comprehend the highest knowledge of Goethe: „Whoever ever strives and endeavors, him we can redeem!" (Faust part II)

Even better, however, Dante's Divine Comedy shows us the path to the light. From the heavenly Jerusalem, the crest of paradise, Beatrice (symbol of the divine monad) sends a guide—Virgil (the soul)— to the wanderer and pilgrim Dante Alighieri, in order to safely guide him through the perils of the inferno, and finally unite him with divine light and the most beloved.

May all those of good will who strive walk the path to the light (Agni)!



List of references:Works of the blessed MAITREYA MORYA:

Blossoms of Morya's Garden:

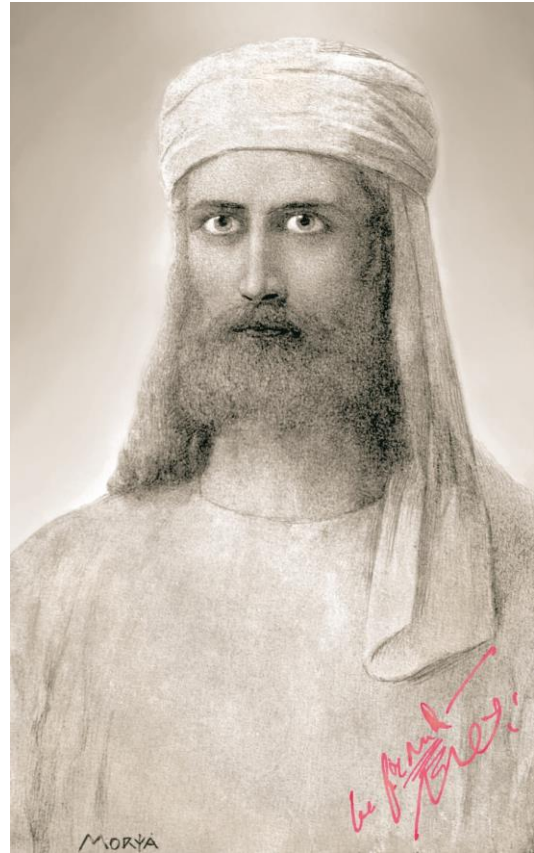
| | | |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| CALL | CALL | §§ 387 |
| ILLUMINATION | ILLU | §§ 358 |

New era:

| | | |
|------------------|-----|--------|
| COMMUNITY | COM | §§ 275 |
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Doctrine of Living Ethics in seven themes:

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| AGNI YOGA | AY | §§ 670 |
| INFINITY (2 parts) | INF | §§ 918 |
| HIERARCHY | HIE | §§ 460 |
| HEART | HEA | §§ 600 |
| FIERY WORLD I | FW I | §§ 666 |
| FIERY WORLD II | FW II | §§ 470 |
| FIERY WORLD III | FW III | §§ 618 |
| AUM | AUM | §§ 600 |
| BROTHERHOOD | BH | §§ 610 |
| SUPERMUNDANE | SMU | §§ 955 |



MORYA – Indian Rajput prince, whose spirit had enraptured to the great spirit of the MAITREYA, become enlightened and overshadowed by this. This ordered portrait drawing of the artist Hermann Schmiechen in 1884 was often copied, however the copies are only similar to the “face of the teacher”, so repainted copies lead to failures in meditations!

Living Ethics shows the way of a rational self-education through applied ethics.

Form Stars of Helpful Thoughts

Many responsible and concerned people are looking for a form of action that promises the greatest possible success without attracting much attention, without membership in an organization, and without political risk, in order to respond to their sense of responsibility toward the world situation. There is a possibility that can be carried out in complete silence, costs no money, and nevertheless enables the active participation of every responsible-minded person, no matter how modest, insignificant, or poor they may be. From now on, send positive and uplifting thoughts into the universe. A good thought protects you and helps your soul to grow into the light; it is also a highly real force with far-reaching effects. Never try to destroy your opponents or other people you dislike in thought, for evil thoughts return like a boomerang to their originator. Only with thoughts of helpfulness, love of one's neighbor, and peace can we improve both our own seemingly helpless situation and that of humanity. Through these powerful and valuable thoughts, humanity and world peace are best served. Let us therefore help through the power of our good thoughts and send the following invocation into the universe several times a day:



„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

*Source of light in the universe,
pour out light into human thinking,
may it become brighter on Earth!*

*Source of love in the universe,
pour out love into all human hearts,
May love blossom on Earth!*

*Source of wisdom in the universe,
pour out knowledge and wisdom,
let wisdom prevail on Earth!*

*Source of peace in the universe,
strengthen peace and justice,
may happiness and joy be on Earth!*

*Source of power in the universe,
seal the door to evil,
so that the plan of the good may be fulfilled!*

„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

(For further information see Lesson no. 6).



LEOBRAND – Leopold Brandstätter (* 20th February 1915 Wallern, † 26th February 1968 Linz), was an Austrian nature philosopher and humanist.

His writings are concerned with ethics, humanities, psychology, philosophy, politics, ideology of the world and architecture.

In the 1950s he translated the Agni yoga doctrine from Russian together with a Baltic-German team, thus paving the way for this philosophy in German-speaking countries.

Leobrand founded a (non public) school for Living Ethics. Decades before the introduction of teaching ethics in public schools he had already written 36 lessons of Living Ethics, as the first interdenominational teaching aid for ethical training. He gave countless lectures and conducted seminars. Recordings of Leobrand's lectures are available. These historical audio documents offer the possibility to understand/think along the philosophical analysis of the great thinker Leobrand and open up new horizons for life's spiritual dimension. Philosophical accuracy and clarity of expression are Leobrand's trademarks.

The new concept of God is particularly noteworthy. For this new and completely independent concept of God, a new term was created: "UNIVERALO". Leobrand's concept is explained on a hierarchical basis, it detaches itself from the abstract and merges with the whole existence. It includes many philosophical and historical concepts as well as advanced knowledge of relatively immortal spiritual fields of force. Leobrand therewith expressed the first and only humanistic definition of God within a new world-view and pulls the rug from under atheism. The new concept of God is as dynamic as nature itself and thus indicative of the forthcoming independent humanities.

Other highlights are his work for a united Europe and for a forthcoming pannational world union. Many of those great-sounding ideas of Leobrand are already self-evident reality.

Works:

1955 - 1961: 36 lessons, **Briefe über Lebendige Ethik** (letters on Living Ethics - in translation)

1957: **Psychische Energie** (Psychic energy - humanities and psychology)

1958: **Heilung durch psychische Energie** (Healing by psychic energy - humanities and health)

1966: **Freude** (Joy - philosophy)

1967: **Der Ausweg** (The way out - politics)

1968: **Neues Europa und Welt ABC** (New Europe and world ABC - politics)

1968: **Das neue universelle Weltbild** (The new universal world view - world view)

1968: **Spiralik** (Spiralik - architecture of the future)

1953 - 1968: reprint, articles in magazines (partly unpublished manuscripts)

1976: **Der auferstandene Gott** (The resurrected god - humanities, compilation of articles)

1962 - 1967: Lectures and seminars on all his works (recordings MC in German language)

Activities:

1949: Establishment of a peace league

1953: Establishment of the (not public) „School for Living Ethics“ and magazine

1960: Publication of the magazine „Spirale und grüne Wacht“ (nature protection and biotechnology)

1961: Publication of the magazine „Weltreichspirale“

1962: Establishment of the association „Welt-Spirale“ - ethical society of progress and renewal of the world, and magazine.

© 1955, Leopold Brandstätter, the first edition was published in German by „Schule für Lebendige Ethik“ Verlag für Lebendige Ethik, Linz, Austria. Translation from German: 2014 Welt-Spirale, Ethische Gesellschaft für Fortschritt und Welterneuerung, Linz Austria. weltspirale@aon.at, www.Welt-Spirale.com, Correction status 2026/05/14 Electronic Edition. Gratuitously distribution of data carriers and printouts of this electronic edition are permitted.

Joy – Peace – Freedom

Serve peace and welfare of the world!

Overview of the „letters on living ethics, Introduction to Agni yoga“ from LEOBRAND:

Basic information ethics

1. The truth about yoga
2. Problems of spiritual renewal
3. The meaning of life
4. Karma and forming of fate
5. Might and meaning of thoughts
6. Self-help through proper thinking
7. Reincarnation – yes or no?
8. The meaning of suffering
9. Absolution or personal responsibility?
10. Dharma and life-task
11. Death and Rebirth
12. Devotions and sacrifice
13. The relationship of the sexes
14. Marital problems
15. Living Ethics and education
16. Living Ethics and everyday life
17. Living Ethics and nutrition
18. Living Ethics and art

Spiritual training

19. Living Ethics – doctrine of life
20. Chakras or centers of higher consciousness
21. The spiritual meaning of the heart
22. The widening of consciousness
23. The subtle constitution of man
24. Monad or spiritual grain
25. The construction of the universe and Cosmoses
26. Subtle world
27. Fiery world
28. Brotherhood
29. The universal understanding of God
30. The Mother of the world
31. Occultism – yes or no?
32. Danger and meanders of occultism
33. Good and evil
34. The coming new world
35. Infinity
36. The path to become a master

Yoga means the merging of the lower human self or individual spirit (jiva) with the divine and supreme self - the universal spirit. Yoga encompasses all the methods and systems that lead to this goal and the way in which this merging can be accomplished. Yoga is the expansion of human consciousness and entry into the consciousness of a higher being. This is the great problem of human evolution in general. Yoga consists of doctrines based on the observation of human nature and the interrelations of existence. By practicing yoga, one acquires forces that are still unknown in the West. Yoga reveals natural forces and natural laws that completely determine and regulate the formation of human destiny. This idea is also almost entirely unfamiliar to the Western world.

„Welt-Spirale“ Ethical society for progress and world renewal

www.welt-spirale.com