



# Life Simplified

Hacks to help you live a simple & easy life

Issue-2



## **Life Simplified**

Hacks to help you live a simple & easy life

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# LIVING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE



# Living the mystery of life

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## **The purpose of words**

The purpose of words is to create silence. Does every word you speak create silence in others, or does it create turbulence in their minds? The purpose of knowledge is to make you feel that there is so much you don't know! If the knowledge makes you feel that you know it all, then it has not fulfilled its goal. The more you know, the more you become aware of the unknown.

## **The purpose of mysteries**

The purpose of knowledge is to create awareness of the being. This creation is enormous, infinite and mysterious. Mysteries exist not to be understood, but to be loved. Love is a mystery, sleep is a mystery, your mind is a mystery, birth and death are mysteries, and all that you see around you is a mystery. Your life is a mystery! Trying to understand a mystery is confusing, but living the mystery fully is enlightenment.

## **An ugly 'I don't know' and a beautiful 'I don't know'**

There is an 'I don't know' that comes out of ignorance. This is an ugly 'I don't know'. Then it passes through knowledge and becomes transformed into a beautiful 'I don't know!' This beautiful 'I don't know!' is a wonder. This is how every question turns into wonder. What is the difference between wonder and a question? A question is associated with sorrow and restlessness whereas wonder is an expression of joy.

What is your life? After all, how many years are you planning to be on this planet? 60, 70, or 100 years? Utterly insignificant compared to the millions of years that have passed and

millions more to come. You are not even a speck in the sands of time. In terms of space, you simply don't exist! This understanding dissolves the ego.

Ego is ignorance of your reality, ignorance of your existence. Now, just to understand this, let's do something. Just open your eyes and see, 'Who am I? What is my life span?' Awareness will begin to dawn in the mind. You will no longer worry about trivialities like, 'this person said this thing to me and that person broke off with me and this happened with that person and I am going to say this and that'. All pettiness will simply drop away with this beautiful 'I don't know!'

## **Unknown brings joy**

Ignorance has its importance. It keeps the joy in the game. In a game, if you know the result before you begin playing, would you play sincerely? If you know you are going to win a game, would you put your 100 percent in the game? If you know that you are going to lose a game, is there any charm left in playing the game? The game is joyful only when the result is unknown. Nature is so kind and loving that neither does it reveal your future nor remind you of your past. But, even with the short memory span it has given you, you try hard to make yourself miserable!

Just be in the simple and innocent state of 'I don't know!' This life is a mystery. It is beautiful. Live it! Living the mystery of life completely is joy. Becoming the mystery is divine. You are a mystery!

**-Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**

# ORIGIN OF ĀYURVEDA



# Origin of Āyurveda

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An integral part of the Atharvaveda, one of the four Vedas, Āyurveda is believed to have been cognized by Lord Brahma himself, even before the creation of the universe. Āyurveda is the science of life that has been an integral part of existence, since time immemorial.

## **Āyurveda - A way of life**

The Sanskrit word Āyurveda is made up of two words: 'Ayu' which means life and 'Veda' which means knowledge. Knowledge of life is Āyurveda. According to the ancient Āyurveda scholar Charaka, life or 'ayu' is the harmonious co-existence of mind, body, senses, and the soul.

## **One size doesn't fit all**

Western medicine is now talking about personalized medicine or precision medicine where medicine is tailored to suit the individual patient based on the predicted disease. Āyurveda realized this, centuries ago, and based its system of prevention and healing on this very concept.

## **Healthy living in Satya Yuga**

During Satya Yuga, the first yuga that existed tens of thousands of years ago, people were living a very harmonious and healthy life. Led by the wise men or rishis, they were performing penance and adhering to the austerities mentioned in the scriptures.

## **Diseases arrive**

However, towards the end of Satya Yuga, people became lazy and drifted away from their healthy life. Laziness gave rise to materialism, which resulted in greed, jealousy,

and competition. These mental afflictions caused the advent of diseases in the body.

## **Āyurveda revealed in meditation**

Since body and mind had become an impediment on the path of achieving the true goals of life, led by Rishi Ātreya, the ancient rishis congregated in the Himalayas to look for a way out. Focusing on how to achieve longevity, the rishis meditated on this thought, while Sage Bharadwāja volunteered to record the experiences of the enlightened sages in meditation. The treatise written by Sage Bharadwāja is considered to be the first of its kind on Āyurveda.

## **The legend**

Lord Dhanwantari is the Lord of Āyurveda. Legend has it that, when the Kshirasāgar (ocean of milk) was churned by Devās (gods) and Asurās (demons), Lord Dhanwantari emerged from it with the knowledge of Āyurveda, for the benefit of living beings.

## **Historical evidence**

We find historical evidence of Āyurveda in the ancient scriptures, the Vedas. In the Rg Veda, over 60 herbal preparations are mentioned that could be used to preserve health and overcome various ailments.

Āyurveda is the most enduring time-tested healing modality available in the world today. It is not just a medical system, it is a science of life, a way of living with the rhythm of Nature.

# THE KING'S CONDITION





# The King's condition

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One day, King Krishnadev Rai was in a good mood. He gave each of his courtiers a bag of fifty gold coins. The courtiers were thrilled. Just then the king said, "You have to spend these gold coins within a week. At the end of the week, you will show me all that you have bought with these gold coins. But there is a condition. Every time you spend some gold coins, you will have to see my face."

## **Courtiers in a dilemma**

All the courtiers were very pleased. They left for the market to go shopping. But whenever they decided to buy something, they remembered the king's condition. How could they see the king's face in the market? And if they did not see the king's face, they could not spend the gold coins. They thought, "If the king himself comes to the market to buy something, we might get to see his face. And then we can spend the gold coins."

But the king never came to the market. The whole week passed by. When the court assembled after a week, the king asked the courtiers, "Well, what did you buy with the gold coins that I gave you?" The royal priest rose from his seat. On behalf of all the courtiers, he said, "Your Majesty, all of us went to the market with great enthusiasm and excitement. We had our bags of gold coins with us. And we wanted to buy many things! But we could not buy anything at all... Only because of the condition laid down by you. How and where could we see your face in the market?" Pointing towards the bags of gold coins that all the

courtiers had brought back, the royal priest said, "Since none of us could see your face in the market, not a single gold coin could be spent."

## **The King asks Tenali Raman**

Hearing this, the king began to laugh. He then asked Tenali Raman, "Did you buy anything?" That day, Tenali Raman had come to the court wearing new clothes and ornaments. He said, "Your majesty, look at this new dhoti... this silk kurta... this beautiful scarf... And this shining ring... I bought all these with the gold coins you gave me."

All the courtiers were pleased to hear this. They thought, "Tenali Raman did not see the king's face. Yet he spent all the gold coins. He has not fulfilled the condition laid down by the king. Tenali Raman will surely be punished today."

## **Tenali Raman's intelligent reply**

The king said, "Tenali Raman! You have not fulfilled the condition laid down by me. You did not see my face in the market. Yet you dared to buy these things!" Tenali Raman said, "Your Majesty, I have spent every single gold coin only after I saw your face." The king was surprised. He said, "How is that possible?"

Tenali Raman said, "Your Majesty, Have you forgotten that every gold coin bears the imprint of your face?" "Oh..." said the king, rather pleased. He smiled gently. All the courtiers were rendered speechless. They hung their heads in shame.

# HORSES FROM VEDIC TIMES



# Horses from Vedic times

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The Rg Veda contains references to Agni on Prithvi (Earth), Vāyu in Antariksha (atmosphere), and Surya in Swarga (heaven). The hymns called the suktās praise Vayu being the vital energy flowing through the human body. It represents our awakening to the full potential of our consciousness. Vayu's blessings are invoked through the Ashwins (horses), the twin physicians associated with prana and apāna.

## **Our sages already knew...**

Vedic verses allude to horses that draw the chariot of the sun, with snakes as their reins. Horses symbolize rays of light and the motion of a snake is curved. Our ancient seers knew that light did not travel in a straight line, but in a curved path! The seers drew the analogy of the body as a chariot, the soul as the owner of the chariot, the mind as the reins of the horses, the five senses (indriyas) as horses, and the world as the arena for the movement of the chariot.

## **Hayagriva – The Horse Avatar**

Lord Hayagriva is an avatar of Lord Vishnu and worshipped as the lord of knowledge and wisdom. He has a human body but the head of a horse, is adorned in brilliant white garments, and seated on a white lotus. Lord Hayagriva is celebrated in the Purānas for rescuing the Vedas from the demons Madhu and Kaitabha and revealing them again to Lord Brahma. He is thus known as Veda Murthy. His blessings are sought at the

beginning of the study of both sacred and secular subjects.

Symbolically, the story of Hayagriva represents the triumph of pure knowledge, guided by the hand of the Divine, over the demonic forces of passion and darkness.

## **Why Tibetans worship Hayagriva**

The Tibetan horse-dealers worship Hayagriva because he could frighten away demons by neighing like a horse. When invoked, he announces his arrival by neighing, the sound that pierces false appearances and disguises.

## **Ashwini mudra**

Classical yoga has the Ashwini mudra pose, so named after the way it is done. The anal contraction practiced during the pose is similar to the one done by a horse with its sphincter after it has evacuated its bowels.

## **What man can learn...**

We should learn alertness from horses. They have short frequent periods of rest and don't sleep too much. Their stomachs are very small. They don't overeat. They eat small, frequent meals. Research has shown that when there are other animals drinking off a water hole, horses don't rush in; rather, they await their turn!

**-Shri Arun Madhavan  
Faculty, The Art of Living**

# THE GREAT MYSTERY



# The Great Mystery

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From the first person who set foot on this planet to the last one who leaves it, many people are engaged in the search of the shape, size, and structure of Divinity, when they have nothing else to do. Divinity seems to be the one important mystery that many of us desire to unravel. But so far, no one has really succeeded in this quest. Even so, the desire to either perceive it, or deny it, often occupies our spare time.

Of course, there are others for whom this quest or query is a full-time occupation, and they use many ways and utilize many people to fulfill both their personal and spiritual needs. Like mushrooms, they sprout all over the place, attracting crowds of devotees and perhaps, also crowds of protestors, through their words and work. Only a very small percentage of this unwieldy crowd includes genuine spiritual leaders. Others only lead us into confusion and chaos.

At almost every turn, we notice the endless debates and discourses that are held to know who created us and why. We do not know for certain the shape, size, or even the gender of that elusive one.

The more we move into an era of reason and modernity, the more this desire becomes prevalent and pronounced. More places are built for rituals rather than spiritual fulfillment. More sound than sense is generated from pulpits and platforms. And, more fear, than the love of God, is dinned into our minds.

We keep running to sacred places and rummage through all the spiritual books, only to end up where we started, more out

of exhaustion, than out of enlightenment. Is there no way out for an ordinary mortal to rise above this quagmire of confusion?

Yes, there is, and the ancient sages of India, have shown us the way!

“You have not come out of the vacuum”, they said. “And hence you have to concede a Creator, but you can never find this Divinity if you keep running aimlessly. One day, you will realize that the Divinity is within you.”

But, it is rather difficult to realize Him within you, since you have to throw out the ego and doubts and take in humility and faith. This ‘do it yourself’ program is often long and painful. The easier and more pleasant route is to simply seek the real Master and surrender to Him. Leave it to Him, for He knows your needs. He is the window to view the vista of the glory of your true Self.

Standing on the ramparts of time, our ancient seers declared, “Divya Guna Sampannah, iti Devaha” meaning, ‘He who is virtue personified, is the Divine.’

The real Master is one who rids you of distress and dismay. Just surrender to him totally. Remember that the Divine has not gone anywhere; only you have gone away from Him, laden with your worries and burdens. Just throw them away and throw yourself at the feet of the Master, who will help you realize your divinity. Do nothing more and nothing less.

**- Acharya Ratnanand, father of  
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**

**LET US  
NOT HATE**



# Let us not hate

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**Extracts from Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's talks on Kena Upanishad**

**Om saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvahai**

**Tejasvinā vadheetamastu māvidviśāvahai  
Om śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ.**

This prayer says, "Let the divine protect us both. Let us be together. Let us develop our ability together. Let us be effulgent, brilliant. Let our brilliance shine through. Let us not hate each other."

## **The story of Buddha**

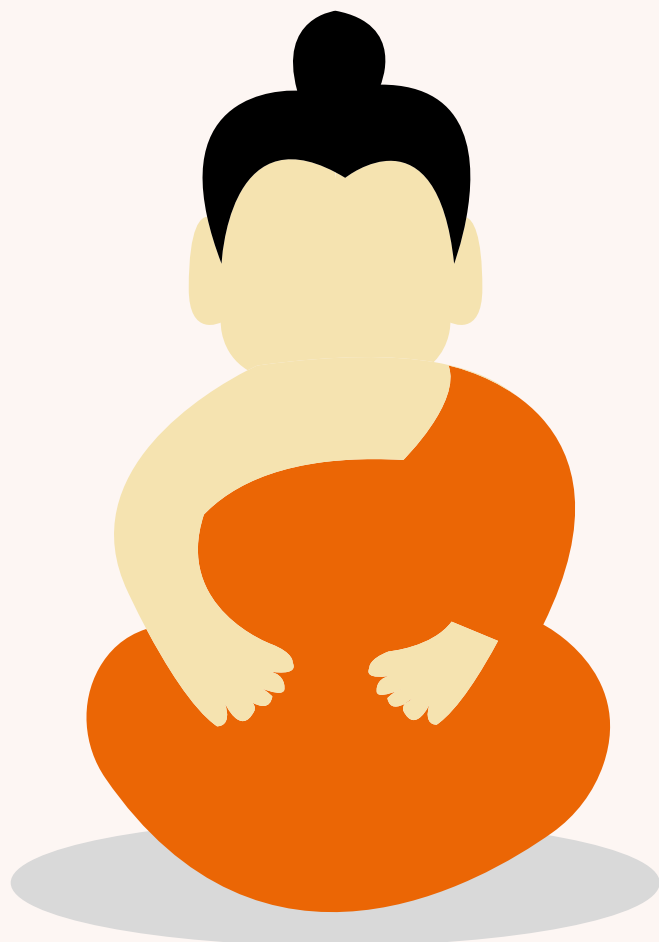
Once, a gentleman came to Lord Buddha's congregation. The first thing Lord Buddha would ask of any new disciple was forgiveness and compassion towards all human beings. This was the first vow they had to take. So, when one would-be disciple came, he said, "Lord Buddha, I know it is your rule that one has to forgive and have compassion for everybody. I can do this for the entire world except two people. Don't ask me to forgive and have compassion for those two people. Otherwise, I am walking out from here."

Buddha simply smiled and said, "I am happy that you can give your life for the whole world and you are very compassionate towards everybody. Let me bargain. I don't want you to love and be compassionate toward the whole world, but can you do it just for these two people, only for one day? You can start

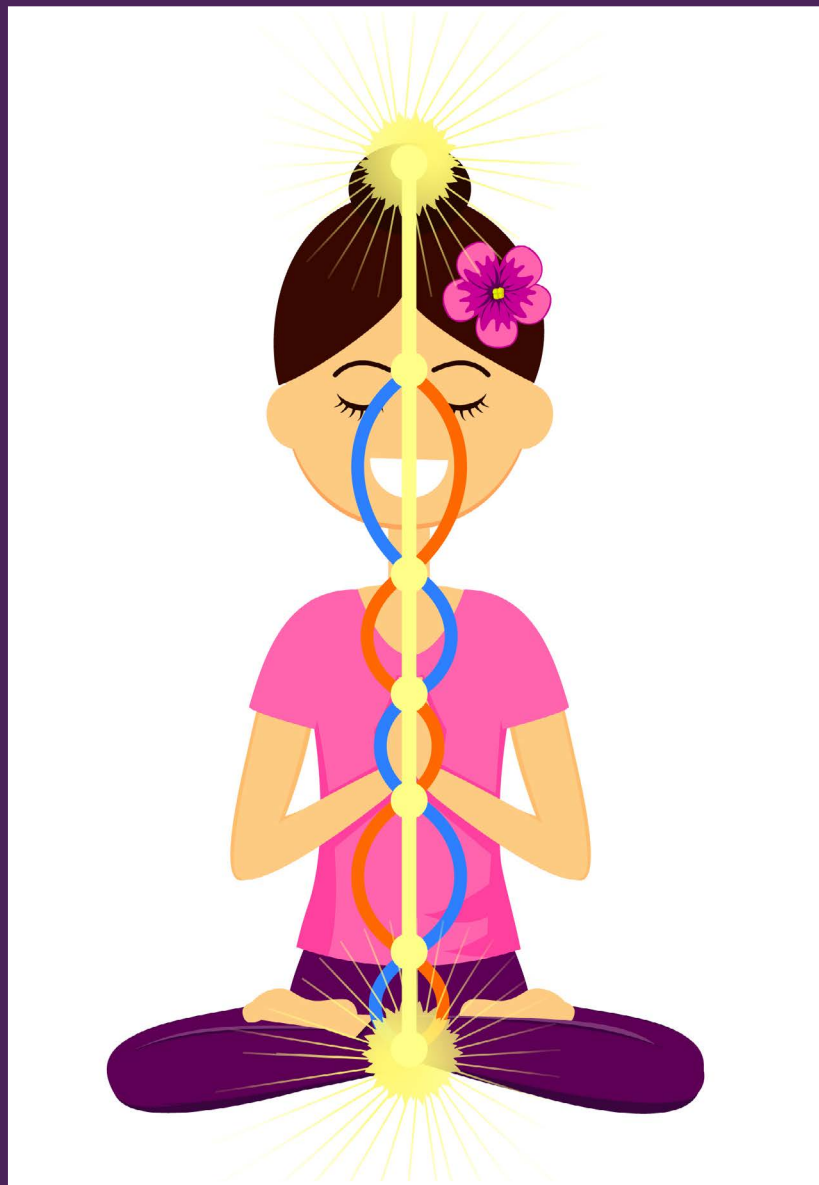
it tomorrow, or at least for today. Can you do that?" It made him start thinking because whoever you hate becomes a big block in your mind.

## **Our self-doubt**

Our biggest doubt is whether we are being loved or not. "Does God love me?" This is self-doubt. That's why Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, "You are so dear to me. That's why I am telling you this. It's secret knowledge that I am giving you." This is what he says first. Gita is an Upanishad. So, here in the Upanishads, the same thing has been said, "Let's not hate. Drop the hatred."



# COMBATING COMMON COLD WITH YOGA





# Combating common cold with Yoga

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The common cold is an ailment that has no medicine, but each home has its own concoction that works. Here are a few yoga asanas and pranayamas that can also help you recover faster.

## **1. Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril breathing technique)**

The Alternate Nostril breathing technique helps open up a blocked nose and facilitates a better flow of oxygen to the lungs. It also helps release stress and relaxes the body. Practice 7–8 rounds of this breathing technique, twice or thrice a day.

## **2. Kapalbhati Pranayama (Skull Shining breathing technique)**

The forceful exhalations during the Skull Shining breathing technique unclog the respiratory tract, helping us to breathe easily. It also energizes the nervous system, improves blood circulation, and uplifts the mind. 2–3 rounds of this breathing technique, twice a day, should help combat the cold with renewed energy.

## **3. Hastapadasana (Standing forward bend)**

The Standing forward bend is a yoga posture that improves the flow of blood to the head and also clears the sinuses. It also invigorates the nervous system and relieves tension in the body.

## **4. Matsyasana (Fish Pose)**

The deep breathing done in this yoga posture provides relief from respiratory disorders and ailments like cold. The Fish Pose also relieves the tension in the neck and shoulders that usually weighs down the body.

## **5. Viparita Karani (Legs up the wall Pose)**

Another highly effective yoga posture to counter respiratory ailments is the Legs up the wall pose. This posture helps overcome headaches and backaches. It also calms the mind and keeps one mentally strong, while enduring the cold.

## **6. Shavasana (Corpse Pose)**

The Corpse Pose is practiced as the last posture in a yoga routine as it leads the body into a state of deep and meditative rest. With the help of this pose, the body is relieved of stress and is rejuvenated.

The onset of any season is an incredible opportunity to enjoy it to the fullest, without being pulled down by something as common as a cold or flu. Regular practice of yoga fortifies the immunity system and enhances its ability to fight foreign viruses better.



# PADABHYANGA, HAPPY FEET



# Padabhyanga, Happy feet

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Beauty in the body arises from a straight, strong back. Healthy nerves from the spine provide quality stimulation to all the organs and allow for graceful movements. And to carry ourselves gracefully, we also need beautiful strong feet to support our steps and ground our energy. A few tips for the spring in your step!

## Tips

- A good foot massage prevents and cures dryness, numbness, roughness, fatigue, and cracked heels.
- A massage with Sesame oil or Brahmi oil promotes deep refreshing sleep.
- Mustard oil protects the growth of Athlete's foot ( a fungal infection that grows between the toes).
- At the end of a day of hectic work, essential oils of lavender and rosemary, added to the base oil, work wonderfully to relax the legs and give you great sleep.
- For calming and cooling: A bath with sandalwood powder or it's essential oil, frees the troubles of the mind. This works well on a hot summer night.
- For invigorating: A handful of juniper berries, rosemary and lavender brewed to boiling point, cooled for 10 min and then used in a hot foot bath, is helpful.
- For deodorizing: A small handful of sage, thyme, lavender, sweet marjoram, bay leaf, and a tablespoon of rock salt, when brewed to boiling point, cooled and used in a hot foot bath, create a strong deodorizing smell.
- For a thick head cold: A hot foot bath of ginger or mustard works very well to warm

the whole body and drains mucous and congestion of the head.

- For burning feet: A poultice of henna leaf powder and vinegar or lemon juice is helpful. ( Henna will leave your feet coloured )
- For sound and restful sleep: Massage your feet with warm sesame oil or ghee.
- For healing the skin: Use a warm foot bath prepared with strongly brewed marigold.
- For tired feet: A hot bath that has rosemary, juniper and lavender essentials give the refreshment needed for the feet that come home tired.
- For hardened heels: Massage feet with sesame oil and then immerse your feet in a hot bath of ginger tea solution and mustard.

## How to make a ginger mustard foot bath

- Grind an inch of ginger to a fine paste
- Add a cup of hot water to make an infusion
- Grind two tablespoons of mustard seeds to a fine powder
- Warm water in a pan and leave it to cool
- Once cooled add the mustard powder
- Add the ginger infusion to this and mix well
- Add this to three litres of hot water in a bucket
- Soak your feet and legs in the bucket for half an hour.
- If you wish to soak for longer, add some hot water to the bucket

# A COUPLE OF RECIPES FOR YOU



# A couple of recipes for you

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## Pumpkin Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 kg pumpkin
- 3 small potatoes
- ½ cup finely chopped cabbage
- 1½ cup green peas
- ½ tsp. cumin seeds (jeera)
- ½ tsp. mustard seeds (rai)
- ½ tsp. fennel seeds (saunf)
- A few curry leaves (kadi patta)
- Freshly chopped coriander leaves (dhania/kothmir)
- 1 small piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 1½ teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon. cream for garnish
- Salt to taste

**Method:** Peel the pumpkin and potatoes and cut them into pieces. Boil and strain, and keep

the water aside for later. Mash the potato and pumpkin. Heat the butter in a pan, and add the curry leaves, fennel seeds, cumin seeds, mustard seeds and ginger. Add green peas and cabbage and fry for a few minutes, adding water to get the desired consistency. Add pumpkin-potato mixture, and salt to taste. Garnish with fresh cream and coriander, and serve hot.

## Moong Dal Kheer (Pudding)

### Ingredients:

- 150 grams moong dal
- 150 grams jaggery
- 500 ml milk
- A handful of raisins and nuts, chopped

**Method:** Roast moong dal slightly. Add milk and boil until the dal is cooked. Let cool. Once cool, add the jaggery and mix well. (If jaggery is added to hot milk, the milk will curdle) Garnish with nuts and raisins. Serve hot or cold.



# SHASTRA VIDYA

The science of warfare



# Shastra Vidya

## The science of warfare

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Shastra Vidya is a part of the vast Vedic tradition, which dates back to nearly ten thousand years. It is the complete science of war from hand-to-hand combat to battlefield strategy. It was exported to the orient along with Buddhism and became the foundation of the Chinese and Japanese martial art traditions.

### **Lord Krishna: Master of Shastra Vidya**

There is no author or acknowledged teacher who originally developed martial art, although there have been many great masters throughout history. The earliest of the great masters was Lord Krishna. It is believed that he had mastered all 16 principles of this vidya. The Mahabharata is full of accounts of Krishna and his abilities on the battlefield. It is here that the first reference to Shastra Vidya is given.

### **Rajputs and Shastra Vidya**

The other personalities from classic Indian history who knew this science include Shri Ram and the Rajputs. The Rajputs had developed an entire culture around their knowledge of Shastra Vidya, which lasted for centuries. But by the time the Muslims invaded India, their once proud martial tradition degenerated into nothing more than rituals and dogma.

### **Passing onto Sikh Gurus**

A very significant event took place during this time. Fifty two of the last remaining princes of Rajasthan were taken as prisoners by the

Muslims. In a desperate attempt to free them, the Sikh Guru Hargobind Singh, a warrior saint of Punjab, was approached for help. He had forged an army of his own and had had many skirmishes with the Muslims. Guru Hargobind Singh was successful in freeing the princes. As a gesture of gratitude, the Rajputs taught him and his fledgling Sikh army the science of Shastra Vidya.

### **Driving away Mughals**

The tenth spiritual master of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh brought the Vidya to its fruition. By joining the spiritual tradition passed on to him through the nine successive Sikh Gurus and the knowledge contained within Shastra Vidya, he created the basics of Sikh Dharma. Before Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs had a single Holy book known as the Adi Granth. To this, he added two other Granths: Sarab Lo Granth and Dhasam Granth. These contained the martial tradition of the Vidya. The marriage of the spiritual and temporal powers was embodied in the elite warriors known as Nihangs. Nihangs eventually drove the Muslims and the Mughals out and permanently closed India's northern border to invasion.

Remnants of Shastra Vidya can be found in northern India as Gatka and in the south as Kalaripayattu. Both are simplified ceremonial versions of Shastra Vidya, used contemporarily in religious celebrations and sporting events.

# QNA





## **Q: What is the importance of Japa?**

**Sri Sri:** When you are in love, you like being with the name of the one whom you love. You take joy in saying, writing, and associating yourself with that name again and again. This happens in japa as well. When you adore and love somebody very much, you repeat their name again and again. You immerse within that name.

## **Q: What is the difference between spirituality and vijñan (science)?**

**Sri Sri:** Spirituality encapsulates both science (vijñan) and knowledge (jñan). Asking 'What is this?' is science. Asking 'Who am I?' is spirituality.

## **Q: Why should one seek in the spiritual path when the seeking has to be given up at the end?**

**Sri Sri:** You get into the bus at the beginning of the journey and get out of the bus when you reach the destination. You don't sit in your car when you reach home, do you?

## **Q: Is brahmacharya or celibacy a must for a spiritual person?**

**Sri Sri:** Brahmacharya or celibacy is something that happens automatically. When a person finds that ecstasy in his own Self, the need for a physical relationship ceases.

## **Q: What is the importance of mantras?**

**Sri Sri:** Our body is made up of billions of atoms. And, sound is nothing but energy. Our

atoms give or absorb energy. Mantras have a deep effect on our consciousness and it energizes us. And mantras are used to make life better and bring more comfort to you

## **Q: What am I here for?**

**Sri Sri:** First find out what you are not here for. You are not here to blame, cry, sleep, boast, fight, be angry, be miserable and worry.

## **Q: Most of us come into this world with the seed in us -'It's not okay'. How do we burn this seed?**

**Sri Sri:** This seed has brought you back again and again into this world. you keep trying to correct events, people and situations. But how much can you correct? It's like rearranging the clouds in the sky. So what to do? Simply recognize that the seed is there. This can happen in deep meditation and introspection.

## **Q: Please explain the importance of substances used in the puja?**

**Sri Sri:** This whole universe is an interaction between atoms. You hold a remote control; press a button and the screen changes. How does this happen? All happens through electromagnetic vibrations. With different frequencies, you hear different music on the radio. Similarly, in this creation, every substance has its own vibration, its own radiation, and its own subtle energy. And, the substances which are used in the puja are such that they give you rich vibrations, and bring peace and tranquility in you.

# THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR LIVING EARTH



# The environment and our living Earth

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The environment is what surrounds us. We have to adjust to our surroundings by understanding all its components and complex changes that occur day to day, and from season to season. Some of the changes are quick but others may take thousands of years. Could there be some clues of how our Mother Earth is going to behave with our mismanagement and overexploitation of resources leading to global warming? Can we exercise our wisdom quickly enough?

It is said that, "We cannot command Nature except by obeying her." That means we have to learn to align with her ways of working and put an immediate halt to all such activity that will maim or pollute her in any way. Despite knowing all of this, man still continues to ruin her forests, pollute her water bodies and mine the bowels of our Mother Earth. We need to make suitable amends in our living and stop depleting the precious natural resources.

Did you know that our Planet Earth is a chip of our big Sun? Its core is very hot, the temperature ranging from 2000 to 6500 degrees centigrade, though its surface is hospitable for the flora and fauna that inhabit it. The deep oceans are also abundant with marine life.

"Biosphere" is the term given to that part of Earth where all living things like plants, animals, fish and human beings exist. The living things depend on one another and require the support of non-living things, too. The biosphere can be regarded as a girdle with either air or water or both, where life exists

even in the form of microbes, from 10,000 feet below in the seas and 7000 feet above the surface in the atmosphere.

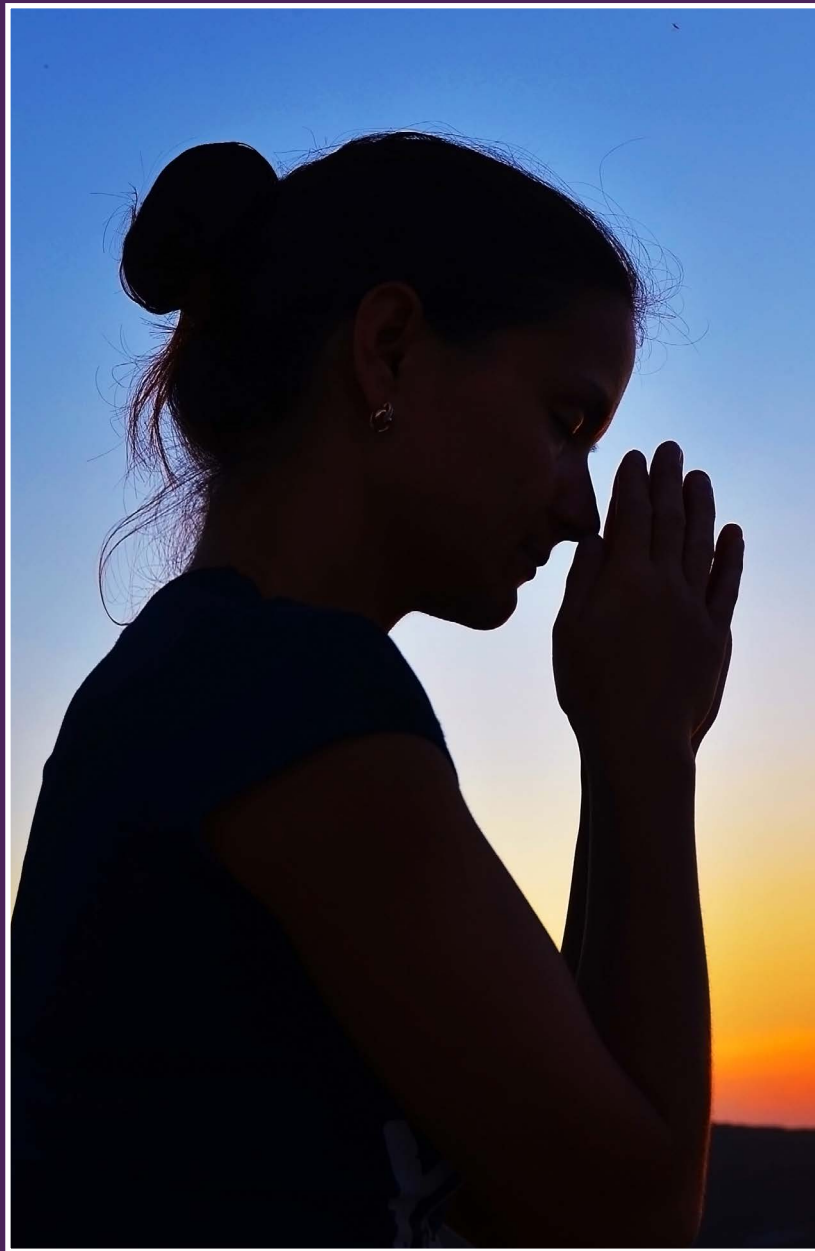
On Earth, the biosphere is made up of several units called eco systems and is the global sum of all the ecosystems. They are the functional systems of a community and the environment surrounding them. For example, there are the forest ecosystems, grassland ecosystems or the marine ecosystems. The Sundarbans is an example of such a biosphere reserve of Tigers.

Though the Earth is 93,000 million miles away from the Sun, we are dependent on the changing environment of the Sun for light and energy, wind and water, growth and development of all living beings. Thus, it is not just Nature that surrounds us but the forces directed by the Sun and the complex interactions arising out of the components of an ecosystem, with known and unknown factors that decide our existence. The diversified plants, animals and microbes existing side by side with non-living things living on land, floating in the atmosphere and deep inside the water-bodies and oceans, thus constitute our environment.

It is an understanding of the miniscule, large, narrow, wide, colored, dull and enormously variegated creation that enables us to understand, learn, respect and perform our bit in this creation. So the journey has just begun!

- Dr. K. Shivashankar

# LONGING AND SEVA



# Longing and Seva

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When you are associated with an object or person, then love develops. And with love, longing develops. When the longing intensifies, then nothing other than love can bring fulfillment. So, that intensity, that longing creates and stirs up tensions and negative emotions.

## **Patience**

Now to come out of this, you need enormous patience and prayer. Restlessness, longing, dismay and desperation are felt between the navel and the throat. When you feel weak, absolutely helpless and powerless, then you are in the second chakra. With real patience, focusing your attention on the second chakra, pray from there and say, "OK, I give up everything." Said with such intensity, the prayer becomes complete. That is the way to overcome the anguish of longing.

## **Prayer**

The other way is by praying from the bottom of your heart. When you are grateful, your prayer comes from the heart, but when you are miserable you cannot pray from the heart.

The Divine belongs to the weak. That's why He is called 'Deenah Bandhu', meaning, the friend of the weak. 'Deena' means one who is weak, meek, powerless and helpless. Thus you need to pray, "I am not able to reduce this tension. I need help." Then you will see immediate changes happening.

## **Longing for the Divine**

The longing for the Divine should be a million times more than the longing for other things

in life. When the longing for the Divine is so many times more, then the misery will also be more. Intense anguish will also be more, but this won't be so bad. Because then, the bliss will also be so many times more. The satisfaction of getting some objects or some little desires is very small. But the Divine love fulfills you and makes you complete.

## **Seva brings merit**

Everything is connected. The whole universe is one single network. So when you are doing some seva, meaning service, you are gaining a lot of merit. If you do something for others, you are gaining merit for yourself. When you do good, the good karma that it brings makes you happy. So if you are not happy now, do seva and gain more merit. Raise the 'bank balance'. Then that brings happiness.

In India, there is a common saying that, if people praise you for something, we say, "Oh, it's nothing, I didn't do anything. It is all the merits of my parents or elders. They must have done something good and so I am enjoying this now."

The person who sows a mango seed, grows the mango, does not have the time to enjoy the fruit. A mango tree takes five to eight years to bear fruit. So who really enjoys the tree? The others. So the seva we do is the merit that we accumulate.

**- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**

# HEALING POWER OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA IN SOUTH AFRICA



# Healing power of Sudarshan Kriya in South Africa

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It was February 2007. A dynamic editor for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Yvonne Kgame had a double stroke, and was also diagnosed with a tumour in her middle ear, pressing against the brain. She had been at home for many months, and was experiencing excruciating headaches, paralysis of the face, partial paralysis of the left leg, unbalanced walking and numbness.

After doing the Happiness Program (now Online Meditation and Breath Workshop), she experienced complete healing. The day after the program, when she stood up, the impact of the double stroke that had crippled her for five months had disappeared.

“My face was radiating beauty and I was feeling and looking better than before. Full of gratitude for my teacher, who served me fully by just being there, I felt totally relaxed and happy. After such a long time, I had an un-slanted, un-stroked and a complete smile on my face. I just cannot believe it. I am healed,” expressed Yvonne, excitedly.

Having started the program with excruciating, unbearable pain caused by the tumor in her

ear, she was able to successfully complete the program with the help of her teacher and her friends. Her left side was weak, tired and very exhausted from the effects of the stroke. However, because of the Sudarshan Kriya, her left ear became stronger and more alive. Also, she could stand and walk. She also thanked her teacher for believing in her, and being with her during her most trying times.

“My teacher exuded so much strength and compassion. He nurtured faith in me and also made me believe in myself”, she reveals. The program brought grace and gratitude in her life, which resulted in a profound transformation.

Very grateful to the soulful and compassionate manner in which her Art of Living teacher facilitated the program, Yvonne has been attending the weekly long kriya sessions for the past one month. Her check up with her doctor revealed no sign of tumor. It has disintegrated since she did the program!



# THE ART OF LIVING PROGRAMS





# The Art of Living Programs

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The Art of Living programs are guided by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's philosophy of peace: "Unless we have a stress-free mind and a violence-free society, we cannot achieve world peace." To help individuals get rid of stress and experience inner peace, The Art of Living offers stress-elimination programs which include breathing techniques, meditation and yoga. They cater to every age group - children, youth,

adults and every section of society - rural communities, governments, corporate housewives, etc. Emphasizing holistic living and personal self-development, the programs facilitate the complete blossoming of an individual's full potential. The cornerstone of all our workshops is the Sudarshan Kriya, a unique and potent breathing practice.

## **Introductory Programs:**

### **The Happiness Program (Age 18+):**

The 3-day program equips participants with practical knowledge and techniques to unlock their deepest potential and bring fullness to life.

### **Sahaj Samadhi Meditation (Age 18+):**

A meditation technique that deeply relaxes the mind and rejuvenates the system.

### **Utkarsh Yoga (Age 8-13):**

Introduce your children to spirituality, nurture human values, inculcate self-discipline, and develop a healthy and well-rounded personality.

### **Medha Yoga (Age 14-18):**

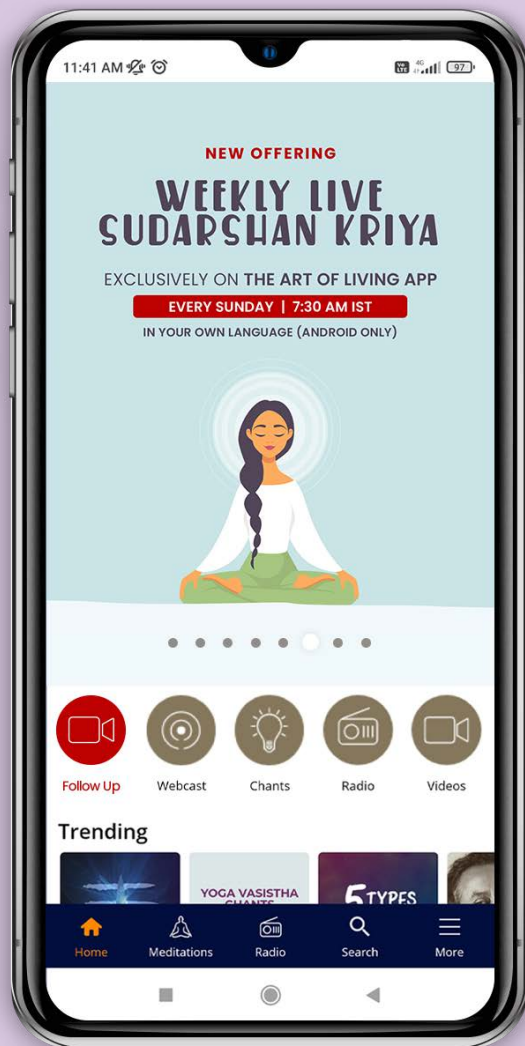
A dynamic and innovative educational program for both high school and college students.

### **Prajñā Yoga (Age 5-18):**

Helps children tap into the inherent intuitive abilities of the mind.

**For more information please visit: [www.artofliving.org](http://www.artofliving.org)**

# Practicing Simple things can change your life

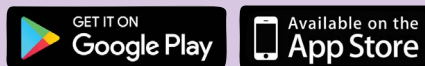


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