

## **Swami Rama and the Himalayan Tradition**

Swami Rama Bharati: The teachings of the Himalayan Tradition are elaborated by Swami Rama of the Himalayas. This is an extract from the book "Living with the Himalayan Masters, Spiritual Experiences of Swami Rama" published by the Himalayan Institute, Honesdale, USA.

### **Our Tradition**

Shankaracharya established an ascetic order 1,200 years ago, though renunciates had already lived in an unbroken lineage from the Vedic period. He organized his orders through five main centres in the North, East, South, West and centre of India. The entire ascetic order of India traces its tradition from one of these centres. Our tradition is "Bharati". Bha means knowledge and rati means lover. Bharati means "he who is the lover of knowledge". From this comes the word Bharata, the land of spiritual knowledge, one of the Sanskrit names for India.

There is one thing unique to our tradition. It links itself to an unbroken lineage of sages even beyond Shankara. Our Himalayan tradition, though a tradition of Shankara, is purely ascetic, and is practiced in the Himalayan caves rather than being related to institutions established in the plains of India. In our tradition, learning of the Upanishads is very important, along with the special advanced spiritual practices taught by the sages. The Mandukya Upanishad is accepted as one of the authoritative scriptures.

The knowledge of Srividya is imparted stage by stage and the advanced student is taught Prayoga Shastra, which explains the practicality and application of the discipline one has to follow for this knowledge. We believe in both the Mother and the Father principles of the universe. That which is called maya or illusion, in our worship becomes the Mother and does not remain as a stumbling block or obstacle on the path of spiritual enlightenment. All of our worship is internal and we do not perform any rituals. There are three stages of initiation given according to our tradition.

Mantra, breath awareness and meditation

Inner worship of Srividya and bindu vedhan (piercing the pearl of wisdom)

Shaktipata and leading the force of kundalini to the thousand petalled lotus called sahasrara chakra.

At this stage, we do not associate ourselves with any particular religion, caste, sex or colour. Such yogis are called masters and are allowed to impart the traditional knowledge. We strictly follow the discipline of the sages.

It is not possible for me to discuss in detail the secret teachings of Prayoga Shastra for it is said, "na datavyam, na datavyam, na datavyam" - Don't impart, Don't impart, Don't impart unless someone is fully prepared and committed and has practiced self-control to a high degree. These attainments can be verified through the experiences of the sages of the past. In our path, Gurudeva is not a god but a bright being who has faithfully and sincerely attained a state of enlightenment. We believe in the grace of the guru as the highest means for enlightenment, but never as the end. The purpose of the guru is to selflessly help his disciples on the way to perfection.

### **Our tradition has the following orientation**

One absolute without a second is our philosophy

Serving humanity through selflessness is an expression of love, which one should follow through mind, action and speech.

The yoga system of Patanjali is a preliminary step accepted by us for the higher practices in our tradition but philosophically we follow Advaita system of one absolute without a second.

Meditation is systematized by stilling the body, having serene breath and controlling the mind. Breath awareness, control of the autonomic nervous system and learning to discipline primitive urges are practiced.

We teach the middle path to students in general, and those who are prepared for the higher steps of learning have the opportunity to learn the advanced practices. This helps people in general in their daily lives to live in the world and yet remain above. Our method for the convenience of western students, is called Superconscious Meditation. I am only a messenger delivering the wisdom of the Himalayan sages of this tradition, and whatsoever spontaneously comes from the centre of intuition, that I teach. I never prepare my lectures or speeches, for I was told by my master not to do so.

We do not believe in conversion, changing cultural habits, or introducing any god in particular. We respect all religions equally, loving all and excluding none. Neither do we oppose any temple, mosque or church nor do we believe in building homes for god while ignoring human beings. Our firm belief is that every human being is a living institution or a temple.

Our members are all over the world and for the sake of communication we also believe in education.

We practice vegetarianism. We teach a nutritional diet that is healthy and good for longevity, but at the same time we are not rigid and do not force students to become vegetarians.

We respect the institution of the family and stress the education of children by introducing a self-training program and not by forcing our beliefs, faiths and way of life on them.

Our trained teachers systematically impart all aspects of yoga relating to body, breath, mind and individual soul. Awareness within and without is the key, and the methods of expansion are carefully introduced to the students.

To serve humanity, we believe in examining, verify and coming to certain conclusions regarding the yoga practices including relaxation and meditation.

Our experiments are documented and published for the benefit of humanity.

We believe in universal brotherhood, loving all and excluding none.

We strictly abstain from politics and from opposing any religion.

Of great importance is the practice of non-violence with mind, action and speech.

The knowledge that is imparted by the sages and masters of the Himalayas guides the aspirant like a light in the darkness. The purpose of this message is to awaken the divine flame that resides in the reservoir of every human being. This flame, when perfectly kindled by spiritual discipline, mounts higher and higher into the vast light of truth. It rises through the vital or nervous mind, passes through our mental sky, and finally enters at the paradise of light, its own supreme home in eternal truth. Then the illumined practitioner sits calm in his celestial sessions with the highest of powers and drinks the wine of infinite beatitude. This child of immortality is a child of universal parents, protected all the time by the Mother Divine. This rapturous child of bliss remains divine - intoxicated in delight. He becomes a sage, a sleepless envoy and ever-wakeful guide for those who tread the path. Such a leader on the path marches in front of human people to comfort, help and enlighten them.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti!

Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati