

YOGATM MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 249/ JANUARY 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2024

NUMEROLOGICAL
INSIGHT

YOGA &
MONEY

ALIGNMENT *in*
IYENGAR
YOGA

VEDIC
MANTRAS
& YOGA

ANTI AGEING
WORKOUT

लक्ष्मीरक्षा
MEDITATION

YOGA BEYOND
THE POSTURAL



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Editor's Letter

Dear Esteemed Readers,

Greetings and blessings!

As we enter the pristine canvas of the new year, may this January issue of Yoga Magazine envelop you in a diverse tapestry of wisdom, spanning the physical to metaphysical and the practical to profound.

To aid conscious decision-making in 2024, be guided by the Akara Numerology system which offers insights into personal life goals, challenges, and energetic balance. Explore the mystical realm of Tarot, using its archetypal symbolism for profound self-reflection and insights into the spiritual journey.

Daniel Simpson invites you to step into the expansive realm of holistic yoga, transcending postural confines to embrace yoga as a complete and transformative way of life. Join us on a self-discovery journey with Ruth through Merkaba meditation, awakening higher states of consciousness through sacred geometry.

The profound truth that the best self-care originates from within. With this recognition, indulge in winter's essence with a nourishing sequence, alleviating burnout and treating January as a serene, restorative journey. And also witness the transformative power of an 8-week meditation journey toward less anxiety, offering immediate relief and enduring neurophysiological changes.

Dive into the transformative power of devotional singing with Shivali, exploring kirtan and mantra chanting to deepen your connection with the divine. Take this further and elevate your practice with Nevita by integrating Vedic mantras, a powerful tool to activate energy chakras and deepen your connection to the cosmic energy.

By reading 'Yoga and Money', explore the often-overlooked intersection of yoga and finance, creating harmony between material abundance and spiritual growth without compromising the essence of yoga. Then be guided by Lena Franklin to shift your perspective on prosperity, exploring how yogic philosophy extends beyond the mat to invite abundance into every aspect of life.



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Amanda Place helps you unlock the secrets of an anti-ageing workout that goes beyond aesthetics, promoting healthy ageing by enhancing strength, mobility, and balance.

Want to bring nature's vitality into your daily life? Learn how to create an Ayurveda-inspired Herbal Garden by connecting with Ayurvedic principles. And discover the transformative odyssey of embracing Veganuary, aligning dietary choices with yogic principles, leading to profound shifts in body and mind.

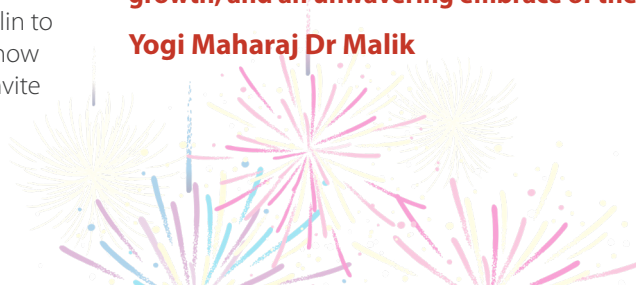
Take a deep dive into the nuanced layers of alignment in Iyengar yoga with Rachel Lovegrove, understanding its transformative potential on and off the mat. And be inspired by the impactful words of wisdom on Zen philosophy and life from R H Blyth.

Do not forget to check out what Bikram Keshari Patra and Banyan Tree Samui have to offer you for your well being through yoga, meditation and dietary awareness.

And lastly, do continue to join us on our journey with Yogi Raj Muni on his quest to awaken his Kundalini.

May 2024 inspire mindful exploration, transformative growth, and an unwavering embrace of the yogic path!

Yogi Maharaj Dr Malik



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Model: **Shivali**

<https://www.shivali.co.uk/>

Photo Credit: **Brodie Weatherill**

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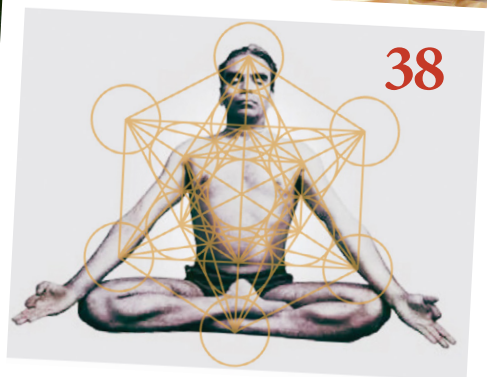
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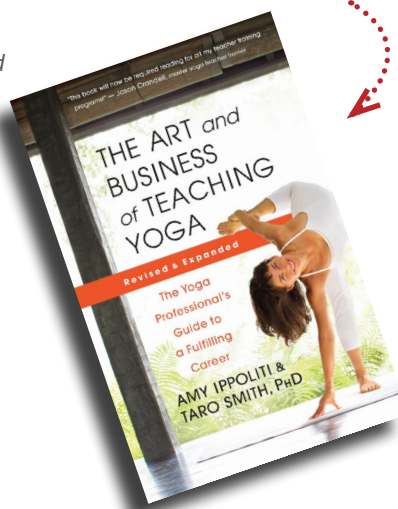
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FAITHFUL SINGING

Words: Shivali

There was no clock in the yoga room. This was probably a good thing. Had there been, I might have been tempted more than once to sneak a glance. Eighteen years of ballet training was not reflecting in my yoga postures, perhaps apart from *Parivrtta hasta padangusthasana*, the 'dancing Shiva' pose. A smidge of arrogance had told me that, as a Hindu, the practice of Yoga was innate in my body as much as my soul, so I should be the best in class. I was not. I stumble out of a bridge pose into *Savasana*, and then

our teacher finally nudges us back into a seated position. Just as I begin to relax I hear my name: 'Shivali, recite us a Mantra'. Despite being a professional performer, I still experience surprising bouts of shyness, and the heat in the room had already wrapped itself like a snake around my vocal cords, but I push all of that aside. Mantras – this is something I know, part of the devotional element of Yoga known as *Bhakti*. Whilst I am a struggling physical Yogi, *Bhakti* dances in my soul. And so, in Sanskrit, I sing...

'Om, purnamadah purnamidam, purnat purnamudachyate purnasya, purnamadaya purnamevavashisyate. Om, Shaantih Shaantih Shaanti'

('Om, That is complete, This is complete, From the completeness comes the completeness. If completeness is taken away from completeness, Only completeness remains. Om, peace, peace, peace.')

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I open my eyes, and for a moment I feel safe, whole, and fittingly, complete. The moment is fleeting, because my monkey-mind is distracted by the familiar self-important insistence of temporary emotions. But in my journey, the purpose of Mantras and devotion is twofold. I use mantras to reduce the number of *vasanas* (impressions) in my mind, the nonsensical buzzing thoughts and feelings that trap me in states of illusory fear or elation, and I use devotion to replace negative thoughts with positive life-affirming beliefs.

Within Hindu Philosophy, the mind is considered a bundle of *vasanas* derived from our likes and dislikes. Over time they form grooves in our mind that lead to patterns of habitual action. Think of any addiction, from the obvious and explicit (chocolate or alcohol) to the subtle, like an addiction to self-hate or pain. The recitation of mantras is a powerful way to reduce the noise created by these impressions. I am conscious of the weakness of my upper body. I could deliver karate kicks like a character in Street Fighter but ask me to use my arms for anything and I whimper in protest. This belief that my upper body will never have the upper-hand (pun intended) has drawn my attention away from it, towards my lower body. Whether or not it was initially true that my upper body was weaker, that is now a habit and belief engrained within me. What we **think** has undeniable power over our behaviour and subsequent actions. So why is it, that we spend so little time exercising our brain and regimenting our thoughts? I know instinctively what working out does to different parts of my body and therefore when I want strong legs or abs, I put the effort into achieving that result. Yet we rarely apply the same discipline to our minds. We instead distract ourselves with unfocussed thoughts, feelings, and opinions, so that we can barely recognise our own truth.



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Hindu philosophy repeats one major principle: become a master of your mind, and once that is achieved, everything is achieved.

Scientific studies on the effects of reciting Mantras reveal an increase in positive vibrations and a gradual elimination of negative thoughts. A Mantra is considered a divine sound, a vibration called *Spanda* in Sanskrit, which is an extension of metaphysics. In truth though, I could provide my reader with an encyclopaedic history on Mantras, their various life-changing benefits and a myriad of studies to further emphasise this point, but their true impact will remain elusive to you unless you choose to try it.

Another favourite principle of Hindu Philosophy is that one must seek their own truth and path to enlightenment. Anything obtained outside self-enquiry is ultimately a distraction.

Scientific studies on the effects of reciting Mantras reveal an increase in positive vibrations and a gradual elimination of negative thoughts.

Teaching may suffice as a guide or a nudge towards a direction, but the truth or validity of such path can only be discovered by the one that walks it. If this sounds too abstract, consider this personal story. I had stopped the practice of chanting mantras some time ago. I was living a fast and furious lifestyle in New York and whilst I did have some elements of *sadhana* (spiritual practice) in my life, they circled around meditation, *jyana* yoga (knowledge-based yoga) and *bhakti*. My *mala* (a string of rosary beads) was forever in my bedside drawer, but I rarely chanted. Then in Christmas 2022 I embarked on a trip to Cambodia, which I treated as a pilgrimage rather than a sight-seeing trip. I had heard that Angkor Wat had a large and sacred Vishnu *murti* (statue) and I resolved to see it.

I had been through a rough couple of years which had wrecked my self-esteem and belief in both myself and others, and this trip was the final step of my healing, a spiritual 'homecoming'. My friend, who was a Yoga student at the time, had ample homework which involved chanting Mantras (pretty much all day long). I was free to do whatever I felt like, but instead of sleeping or listening to music I was inspired to join her. I did not have my *mala* on hand, so my friend gave me a rosary counter (electronic device to count the number of repetitions). As I settled into chanting it gave me incredible peace. My mind was finally resting, and I could feel old attachments, grievances, and pain seep away. The chanting gave me

a focus, it simultaneously sharpened and silenced my mind, removing the cobwebs of the past and the fictitious fears of the future, replacing them with hope and faith. I felt I had the power in me to create a life of love, just as I had always wanted. I cannot fully articulate the effect it has had on me; this is something you have to feel, which can't be experienced through another.





That's just mantras. *Bhajans*, meaning 'devotional songs', are different in nature. Mantras require quiet repetition and concentration, whereas *bhajans* feel like an instant soothing balm on a fevered emotional state. I started singing *bhajans* as a child, a two-and-half-year old jumping on sofas in our flat in Bayswater whilst joyfully shouting religious lyrics. I am surprised I didn't grow up to be a preacher, I was so animated and excited by devotional music. When I reflect on why it had such an impact on me, I think it's because it marries my two favourite things, the 'arts' and 'love'. I have always loved love. The more I live, the more I feel there is little point to life if not to love and experience love. Devotional music is about seeking divine love, because when you have divine love, that love will be prevalent in all your relationships and friendships. Divine love changes how we behave with one another; it requires us to sacrifice, to offer, to refrain from judgement, to persevere and to be patient. *Bhajans* are the musical representation of

that divine love; they are a vocal outpouring that binds people together through the shared experience of song. I have always felt that music is the universal language and religion; it transcends caste, race, and other social and economic barriers. Therefore, when music is rooted in lyrics that are designed to vibrate at a higher level or encourage peace and love, it touches people. Ultimately, I feel that *bhajans* are a way of accessing and restoring faith. When I have felt morose, I have turned to *bhajans*, and they have been a conduit for me to release my emotions.

In my mind Mantras, meditation and *bhakti* yoga are forms of worship. Worship is, I believe, a private relationship between yourself and your God. In Hindu Philosophy, there is a branch known as *Advaita* Philosophy which refers to non-duality, meaning that the God so often envisioned as separate from ourselves is actually our own inner consciousness and power.



Shivali is a Devotional Voice, and internationally renowned performing artist. She is the UK's biggest devotional singer, and the only one to have been signed by major record label Sony Music in 2009. Her latest album, '*The Bhajan Project 2*' is up for Grammy consideration. Shivali is also a Public Spiritual Speaker and is setting the stage to be one of the youngest female Indian Motivational Speakers.

<https://www.shivali.co.uk>

Depending on the time in my life I have fluctuated between a practitioner of *Advaita* philosophy and *Bhakti*, but the goal has always been to understand myself and the connection I have with the external world. I think faith is deeply personal, and it is up to the individual to figure out what practice or path speaks to them.

Last week I performed for Diwali in the sweltering Floridian heat. Afterwards my back was aching, and my mood was temperamental. I crawled into bed in the guest room of my friend's house to nap, but the peace was short-lived as I heard a 3-year-old shout 'Aunty, aunty'. My door creaked open, and a little dimpled face peered in. I beckoned him in, and the little boy swiftly moved the duvet aside to snuggle in next to me. He laughed as I showered him with kisses, and as I held him close, he said 'will you sing me a song?'. In that moment, I had love in my arms, faith in his eyes, and the beauty of the present resting on my lips. And so, I sang.