

The Yoga Vidya of Immortality
The Story of the Adi-Nathas

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The Story of the Adi-Nathas

There are few people of the adult world who cannot recall their youthful dreams of a better and happier future. All through their life, the dreams and hopes go on; and at every stage the vain expectation that mankind must now be ready to set itself to the paramount task of making a better world! It is only this delusion that keeps mankind going on and on through the same never-ending ruts and frustrations; the delusion of a happier, better and more prosperous future. Somehow it never comes, and many today have cause to reflect that things, instead of improving, are getting worse and worse. This in its turn might be even another delusion, but the problem is always there in every age, and we seem to toward that wonderful solution.

Most of this is actually due to another delusion, that man can convert *samsara*, the eternal round of world and rebirth, into a Paradise. The hopes are in every age and in every generation, but they are hopes which can never be fulfilled. At first glance, it might appear that mankind's general delusion and hope is a good thing, and enables him not only to survive through international and national tragedies, but also the humdrum events of his own life. But how can this be so when the defect never finds a solution? Nor is there hope for this attitude in the future. It all becomes a system of wrong outlook and wrong thinking. It is exploited by those in power and enables them to retain it. Man, in fact, suffers not so much from the world itself, but because of his incorrect attitude toward it. It was the Adi-Natha sect which plucked the gems from the eternal mine of wisdom to teach men how to live.

Much, if not most of this material has never been presented as a collection of cult or sect ideas before. However, it is not to be regarded as something new, but only a compact presentation of the original Golden Thread which for thousands of years has made the warp and woof of the tapestry of Indian spiritual life.

History of the Nathas

The history of ancient Indian sadhu texts reveals a succession of several main groups. There were the Sadhs, Yatis, Siddhas, Nathas, Pashupatis, Sant-Mats, Dasnamis and Nagas. Apart from these, many small sadhu sects have existed and played their part in the great stream of Indian life. In early history, it would appear that some sects were

interwoven with others, and some merged or developed into other sects. Some thus became extinct, and others are still with us.

The Nathas are historically fairly ancient, but there still is doubt as to whether they were an actual separate sect in ancient times, or whether the term Natha (Lord or Master) was used only as a courtesy title when addressing sannyasins. The doubt arises because Matsyendranath, or Macchendranath as he was commonly known, is said to have been the founder of the *Natha Sampradaya* (line of succession) of sannyasins. Records show that Nathas were in evidence long before the time of Matsyendranath, whose time might have been between the seventh and ninth century. The Nathas did, historically, present a mixed bag of great realized souls and sadhus, possessing powerful *siddhis* or magical powers. Yet Gorakshanatha, the disciple of Matsyendranath, developed Laya Yoga, the system (now much misrepresented) of raising the *kundalini* or consciousness. Even later, it was a Natha who first taught the physical postures of Hatha Yoga, but it was done in relation to Indian systems of health and medicine. Now it appears probable that Matsyendranath was the reorganizer or revitalizer of the Nathas, and not the founder.

One feature, quite indisputable, is that the Nathas did develop monastic life and crowded ashrams which were so favoured by the Buddhists. It is not its best feature although it persisted until very recent times. It was the corruption of monastic life which sowed the seed and gave rise to the Adi-Nathas.

It was rare in ancient India for a new sect or sub-sect to arise other than spontaneously. Disciples of a guru would often keep his teachings, special features and customs, and slowly develop into a special group. There are still several Natha sub-sects in India, and they were even more numerous in the past. One of them is the Pagala Nath or Mad Nathas, still flourishing in North-east India. Some groups exist, but do not know their own names, or even if they ever had one.

The Adi-Natha sub-sect was another which came into being spontaneously. It arose from nothing more than the determination of an unknown Natha to live in a pattern of his own choosing, and not in the monastic life of his day. His name is unknown, but there is still a tradition giving the names of several Natha gurus who had been leading the sect for different periods of history. The names are not important, and nothing is known or remembered about the Nathas themselves.

The Avadhoot Tradition

The traditional story of the origin of the Adi-Natha sub-sect, passed on from my own Gurudev who was then the last surviving Adi-Natha, is as follows. We are told that the Nath Avadhoot, the title by which he became known, left his Nath ashram in Maharashtra and traveled slowly north, staying some time on the banks of the Narmada River. Eventually, he traveled further into Gujarat, and lived at Karvkan, which is a very small town of considerable antiquity mentioned in many ancient scriptures. It was the town where the famous Pashupati sect of Vairagis was founded. Today it is small but famous because the temple still has a unique image of the Lord Shiva displaying an erect lingam. The image, in the sitting posture, is very similar to the Lord Pashupati on the ancient seal found at Mohenjodaro. It is said that the image was buried during the

time of Muslim occupation and rule, and so escaped from damage or destruction.

The Pashupati sadhus, then mostly naked, had a great influence on the Nath Avadhoot. They might have been one of the most uninhibited sects in India, and are still remembered because of their practice of masturbating and making various erotic gestures in public. This was part of their tradition, but the real significance is now lost. It could be based on Shiva stories told in the Puranas. Since we know nothing about Natha customs at that time, we cannot make comparisons, but the Nath Avadhoot must have realized that there were conventions then in sadhu life which had no real meaning to the absolute freedom they pretended.

From Karvkan he returned to the Narmada River and lived in a small hut as a naked Avadhoot until the day he died. It was here that, among disciples, he expressed what were only his own views. If they passed down a tradition for others, it was because they were acceptable to them, and not because he introduced them as rules. Rather did he stress and remind his own sadhu disciples that when once one has renounced the world, rules and obligations are also rejected. This, although an ancient concept in India, often raises objections from people of little understanding. Men do seem to have floundered deeper into the delusion that as soon as rules and restrictions are not enforced, men will go wild and do terrible things. They entirely forget that one does not renounce the world for fun, though there were cheats in the past as there are today, but generally a man took to the sannyasa life out of the depths of deep sincerity. What need could there be of rules for such a man? If there were backsliders, it was they themselves who suffered, for they not only lose their opportunity to attain real liberation, but will make bad karma which leads to more and more rebirth.

No Rules

In this connection, it is interesting to note that nowhere in the Indian scriptures will you find rules made for sannyasins to follow. The Uddhava Gita deals with sannyasa, but it is a record of the general pattern and advice about getting the right type of guru. The sage Narada, when expounding the Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Way) of Tantrik traditions, also talks about the sannyasa life, but speaks lightly on things a sadhu should avoid, such as reading too much, or looking for disciples. These too are only in the nature of advice from an experienced sage, and in no way presented as rules. Sannyasa is intended as a meditative life to attain the Absolute, and those who neglect this sole requirement must do so to their own loss.

Seeing too clearly the defects of ashram and monastic life, and the diversion from real purpose which followed through living in communities, the Nath Avadhoot said that sadhus should live alone until they had attained the goal. Their place of residence should only be a cave, hut, ruined building, or empty house, and always away from towns and villages. Thus the Adi-Naths have lived down to the present day.

The Adi-Nath sadhus tried to live in harmony with the play of the Absolute, the divine humour so difficult to understand. They knew it was man's correct attitude to life which brought attainment. They did not try to change the world, but saw to it that the world did not change them. They had no social reformers or do-gooders because they understood samsara as being due to a man's own living in the past, and it was only

by changing himself that a man could change his own world.

The word Adi-Natha is Sanskrit, but the colloquial form is Nath. It means first or original Lord, and is therefore a synonym for Shiva, Mahadeva, or Maheshvara, and beyond these mental concepts, the Supreme Absolute Reality as the originator of all things.

The Delusion of Society

It is because of delusion that man thinks of himself and the world as enduring real forms. He thinks of himself as body, and this gives rise to ego concepts out of all proportion to their actual relative value. The modern “civilized” world encourages men to believe this. Education pretends it will give advantages for worldly success. It ignores the real task of education, which is to impart sufficient knowledge to enable one to have the ability and technique to earn a livelihood in adult life. Instead, when modern education has been completed, the student finds he is unable to earn his livelihood unless some other person is prepared to employ him on a wages-for-labor basis. A few, such as artist, craftsmen, and writers, sometimes have the ability to break away from the general pattern, but these are exceptions, and for the majority, employment by others must suffice.

Much of this is due to the conditioning and brainwashing of modern society, in which people lose the ability to think for themselves. It becomes a world where one must CONFORM and accept already accepted ideas, conventions, or patterns. Somehow the delusion of “progress” still persists, but in reality communities are becoming less and less free. Thus the entire world of civilized men, actually artificial men, becomes a regimented prison-house from which few can escape. It is a bondage due to the mental and physical approach to the world by people themselves. There is a solution to all this, and a study of the Adi-Naths may help many to find it.

The Nath Avadhoot, founder of the Adi-Naths, passed on his tradition, but it was changed, modified and developed from guru to guru. At all times, it was the living guru who was regarded as the spokesman. This may have been the reason why the name of the first Nath Avadhoot has become lost and deliberately forgotten: so that the Adi-Naths would not become another cult of some individual guru, as this might cause it to settle into fixed ideas and have “words of authority.” Having passed through many centuries, it is the teachings which must be valued, and not historical personalities.

The Way of Eternal Wisdom

Thus it can now be stated that in the common tradition of all Nath sects, the Adi-Naths are fundamentally Tantrik, and all their gurus have been Tantrik gurus. They chose as their Adi-Guru or original teacher, the Bhagavan Dattatreya, the great naked Tantrik guru of the Upanishads and Puranas. The Adi-Nath tradition owes nothing to and claims nothing from the Vedic-Aryan tradition, and does not recognize caste in relation to accepting disciples for recruitment into its sannyasa order. There are in India other Nath sects which also have Shri Dattatreya as Adi-Guru.

All this stems from a unique way of life, still very much alive, and which existed in India five, six or more thousand years ago. It did not actually have a name, but they referred to their teachings as the Sanatana Dharma or the Eternal Wisdom. They were the first people in known history to teach of the Supreme Reality and the reunion of man and God. They owed nothing to the Vedic-Aryans, for these people did not enter India until about 1500 B.C.E. Later, the pre-Aryan people were designated as Tantrik (independent or free), and their scriptures, the Agamas and Nigamas, were later designated as Tantras. Most of the Purana legends are of Tantrik sources, and not Aryan. The Bhagavad Gita, most popular and well known of Indian scriptures, is Tantrik teachings from cover to cover. The Tantriks taught a method for the individual to practice and hasten his attainment of realization and union with the Absolute. This method they called Yoga. This ancient path and eternal lore is the sole basis of the Adi-Nath cult.

Whenever Yogis or Nath-Yogis meet, they greet each other with the salutation “Adesh-Adesh!” Gorakshanath the Maha Yogi wrote:

*Aatmetu paramaatmeti jiiivatmeti vicaarane
Trayaanaam aikya-samshutir asdes's iti kiirtitah*

In our relative thought we distinguish between Atman, Paramatman, and Jiva.

The Truth is that these three are one and a realization of it is called Adesha.

Thus the yogi in his contact with others expressed only the simple truth in the words, “Adesh-Adesh!” It is a foundation stone on which all spiritual light and attainment must be erected. It is the first truth to attain the First Lord.

Religion

To make this document of value to a wider section of readers, it might be necessary to state and repeat things that are taken for granted in a brief survey of Adi-Nath tradition. One of these is the popular delusion, but more often a deliberate lie, that all religions are one and the same, and all teach the same goal. If such were really so, it would be pointless for different religions to exist as separate religions if they all taught the same thing. In practice, nowhere in the world would we find people willing to be Christian one week, Muslims the next, Buddhists the next, and so on. All too often the sop of imagined unity and sameness is preached by the holy pickpockets and pious cut-purses. Religions may fall into many classifications, but unity is not one of them.

Most religions are established forms of brainwashing, and none are without their organizational systems to rob the rich and take from the poor. They tell you what you must believe, and make you pay to maintain it. There has never been a poor religion in history, or any which folded up for lack of funds. Because a religion teaches the status of being a world religion, it does not imply that it has done so because its teaching are true, but rather that there are more idiots in the world than was at first anticipated. Some religions have spread on the cut-throat method: “join us or else..”

Islam uses this pious technique, and history records how it spread and conquered the other religions wherever it invaded. Only one place in the world is a unique exception. India never became a Muslim nation, although it lived for years under Muslim oppression. Some religions, such as the Black Dharmas — Hebrew, Christian, and Muslim — have lived and flourished in the atmosphere of blood and violence. They claim their teaching will take a man to heaven, so killing people might have been only to help them on their way. These Black Dharmas all assign an inferior place to women. They rely on the sacred word of scriptures from which none may deviate. Where they rule have always been the most miserable and impoverished places of the world.

Within the religions themselves are differences which cannot be reconciled with other religions, and even in the same religion, there are many conflicting different sects. None of them claim their God is the same as the God of others, and they differ much in their concepts of heaven, and in numerous other aspects. All assert that unless you belong or worship or believe in just their own particular pattern, then salvation is impossible. For any individual to change from one of these religions to another has the same relative value as a jackal trying to change into a fox.

The Two Paths

If there are such differences between the Black Dharmas, how much more so is the difference in other religious concepts. This is so even though the Black Dharmas are related religions, for both Christianity and Islam have their roots in the Hebraism of the Old Testament.

Hinduism is rather unique, because it is more a combined way of life containing numerous religious groups. The Hindus are not religious people; the vast majority tend rather to ignore religion, yet this can be said without denying the spiritual substrata of the people as a whole. The Adi-Nath stressed the Tantrik fundamental fact that society was mostly *Privritti Marga* or Way of the World. From this vast stratum of people, only a few spiritually sincere or mature individuals were expected to emerge.

These they called *Mumukshus*, the real seekers for the Eternal Wisdom. This group, most important, but infinitely small, took to the *Nivritti Marga*. *Nivritti* means “turn about” in the sense of turning your back on the world. *Marga* means path or way. But as its ideal and purpose is not negative but positive, the *Nivritti Marga* is used in the sense of being the Supreme Path, the Way of Renunciation, the rejection of one thing in favour of something better and higher.

The Adi-Naths had much to teach, but though many might respect and applaud their ideals and way of life, few were ready to follow their example. It probably always was a small sect as far as sadhus were concerned, though it might have influenced sections of the population out of all proportion to its size. Its line of succession was based on the guru's nomination as to who should succeed him. If he died without making a choice, a successor was selected by vote among the sadhus. This obviated the often disastrous custom of first disciple automatically becoming the new leader. Events have shown that an idiot can succeed on this basis, undo the tradition of centuries, and even break up the sect or cause a split.

Like all other yogis and sannyasi sects of Tantrik tradition, no sannyasin ever took

any vow or made any promise other than to renounce the delusions of the three worlds (earthly, celestial, and heavenly). No sadhu was asked or expected to overcome, or conquer in some way, the sexual emotion which is impossible to control. Some elements of modern India have tried to introduce abstinence into sadhu life based on Christian ideals. Mostly they have only created perverts and crack-pots. Tantra has its own methods of unleashing the cosmic power latent in the sexual energy, and uses it as a means which leads to better understanding and attainment. To do this, conventional modesty, which is the greatest barrier to realization, must be overcome.

To put this in modern language, the Adi-Naths taught people the Eternal Wisdom and Yoga by which the microcosm could be one with the macrocosm. To this, the supreme attainment, all other aims and ambitions were inferior. Shri Dattatreya and many great Tantrik saints of the Upanishads and Puranas became the symbols, as living teachers, of this supreme attainment. They were the fullest expression of all occult science, the living proof of realization and liberation, and the practical examples to show that what one man can do, another might do also.

The process is a ruthless one. It requires the individual to abandon all these things which men most cherish, and to strip, layer by layer, the veils of ignorance, conditioning, and delusions which separate his awareness from the immortal soul. True insight and inspiration, a new awakened sense of magick and wonder is the start of the journey to the Eternal. Without this, it is not possible to escape from the world of relativity (*maya*). All these teachings constitute the restatement of what was the fundamental essence of the Indian paganism of India's ancient past.

This wisdom has its basis not on speculation, wishful thinking, or philosophy, in any shape or form. It is presented as a guide, but does not claim to be infallible. This Truth came from within, and not from without. It was not taught, or dictated, or miraculously inscribed on tablets by gods or angels. It was the Truth revealed, conceived, and realized by the great yogis of India from the distant past, and repeated and confirmed throughout history, even down to the present day. The *sisya* (disciple) may in the early stages of his spiritual life have to accept much of the teaching and guidance from his spiritual guru. However, this acceptance is not a blind faith, but rather a faith based on confidence in those who have traveled the path themselves, and have become competent to light the way for others.

Indian paganism has no precepts, dogmas, or articles of faith which have to be accepted by any person on any social level. Nobody takes vows or makes promises. You can start something one day, and discontinue the next, or go forward to the glorious end. Success is to man's own gain, and failure is only his own loss. The idea that God or the religion is insulted in some way by a man's instability is foreign to paganism.

Although the wisdom of this Yoga-Vidya is regarded as Truth revealed through the awakened consciousness of realized souls, one is still expected to prove it completely for oneself. The lay-disciple, still in household life, is expected to go only so far as his duties, obligation, and delusions permit. There is no plan or intention in this way of life to try to convert anyone, or to induce people to renounce the world and become sannyasins.

Meditation and Samadhi

Those who make their first attempts at meditation soon become aware of the difficulties. These mostly arise because the mind rebels against the peace and tranquility which meditation is intended to produce. In worldly life, the mind is conditioned to jump about from idea to idea, and becomes habituated to activity — which is regarded as a high ideal in normal life. It is probably true to say that mind activity is essential in the lives of people. Most education and conventional patterns of modern society lean in this direction. This must not be confused with the awareness which mediation develops.

Awareness is natural, and comes spontaneously from man's inner being. It is not the same as the active busy fellow who is always "wide awake" because he relies on previous ideas and experiences in order to make decisions. It is little surprising that these conditioned people soon find meditation very boring, and prefer to be lost in the robot activity which comes more easily from habit.

True meditation lead to experience of peace and bliss which can never come from the methods of worldly life. Patience and perseverance are obviously essential. Meditation is not an end in itself, but trains the mind and body to the stage of complete contemplation (*samadhi*), where the mind and soul attain close relationships and understanding.

The Adi-Nathas did not regard samadhi contemplation as the final stage, but demonstrated that samadhi could lead to the stage of *Samarasa* — the perfect assimilation; undifferentiated oneness in which the yogi sees himself as the world, and the world as being in himself. It is the real stage of unity and equipoise in which microcosm becomes one with macrocosm: it is true *Moksha*.

The Siddha-Yoga Gorakshanath defines the Ultimate Truth, the Supreme Reality and its understanding as:

“The Absolute Truth is the nameless, formless, and Subject-Objectless Perfect Unity of Existence and Experience, free from all contradictions and relativity, qualifications, limitations and negations. The Absolute Truth, by virtue of its infinite, eternal, dynamic aspect, eternally and freely manifests Itself in all kinds of names and forms, all orders of phenomenal existences and experiences, all sorts of dualities and negativities, and harmonizes and unifies them in the all comprehending calm and tranquility of Itself.”

Thus Gorakshanath expresses the Absolute as the Universe, the Macrocosm as one with the Microcosm, and the concept of *Samarasa*.

The Aquarian Age

There is an interesting tradition of the Adi-Nath which will have considerable significance to astrologers. We must remember that the ancient observers of Tantra were the first to note and record the backward movement of the zodiac, giving human life an astrological division of approximately two thousand years for each sign of the Zodiac.

Although Hindu astrology is based on a fixed zodiac, the prophecy deals with the actual movement viewed from an imaginary point on the earth, and based on the position of the sun at the start of each solar year. This places us in a period of the entry of the sun into the sign Kumbha.

They submit that the approach and entry of the sun into any sign is marked by a great spiritual revival. The sun's entry into the Kumbha period will be related to the sign itself and all its qualities. Kumbha is known to Western astrologers as Aquarius, and its symbol is a naked guru pouring out the water of life, the nectar of the gods, immortality, and the wisdom by which it is obtained.

So Kumbha, or Aquarius, is not so much the "water bearer" in the sense of a man employed to bring and carry water, but a guru who is bearing the true water of life. The symbolism is also related to all gurus of the Adi-Nath who were naked *mahatmas* who poured out the wisdom of Yoga-Vidya. This may be a period when the Pagan Wisdom of the Adi-Naths finds more popular acceptance in the world than it has hitherto.

The Western astrological world has long anticipated the Aquarian Age, but tended to think of this in terms of unprecedented advances in science and technology. This completely overlooks the fact that science and industry have already made great advances over the last hundred years, but there has not been any comparable advance in the happiness and security of mankind.

Before we applaud the prospect of further scientific progress on any level, we should remember that these things do not mean advance, progress, or common good if they are in the hands of the wrong people. Men have not yet developed sufficiently to safely own a revolver, much less more deadly death-dealing instruments. Thus the Aquarian Age could be greater only in the sense of greater destruction, pollution, murder, massacre and suffering. Fortunately, the Grace of the Absolute may not permit man to continue on his blind path, but rather the true standards of spiritual life and happiness might take its place.

Shakti, Sex, and Sublimation

The Adi-Nath tradition has its way of life for the *sannyasin-nivrutti* — but also has much for *pravritti* — the men and women in worldly life. Though the sadhus don't do any formal worship, it was not only encouraged for ordinary people, but regarded as an essential step in their spiritual progress. Festivals too, they saw as an essential part of normal life where there should be a complete joyous abandon and expression. Men and women have a natural element of madness which is constantly fed by the sexual energy drive, and this must be sublimated. Pagan festivals of erotic joy, dance, song and self-expression were the best means of releasing dormant energy. Wherever these free Pagan festivals do not occur, the suppressed madness only erupts as wars, riots, and violence.

Although the Adi-Nath wisdom taught men to aspire to the highest level as expressed in its teachings, it also presents a practical aspect for the people of the world who are neither interested in or ready for liberation. The dharma, even for laymen who study and respect the higher teachings, must always be relative, for they live in a relative world of relativistic relationships with people, things, and ideas.

For such people, rites and worship can play an important part in their development. Thus people are taught that in rituals there should always be that vital element which helps to release emotional driving forces from the inner depths of man's being. This power, drive, and force is known in India as *Shakti*. It is within mankind and has an intimate relationship with each individuals as well as outside, and constitutes the essential driving force of the universe and all of creation on all levels. In human terms, we perceive this drive as sex which everyone must experience, control, and sublimate.

Control means to harness it toward an intended fulfillment, and not as an attempt to suppress it. Suppression is, in fact, impossible. Attempts to do so only lead to mental and physical derangement and sickness. Such repressions become obstacles to the development of the real natural man and the goal. Rituals must be free from these obstacle, or so designed to help sweep them away.

Adi-Nath from its original Tantrik origins shows us that the moment of sexual sublimation and orgasm is identical to the moment of sublimation of man's union with the Absolute. This attitude does not mean or encourage lustful sexual indulgence, or sex only for its own sake. If the yogi is only carried away by sensual desire, he has thereby failed to achieve the perfect balance and equipoise of the opposites on which ritual should be based. These is, and must always be, a clearly defined borderline between sexual freedom and sexual license.

The Hindu temples of India still display a wonder world of erotic sculptures to illustrate that sex is sacred, and has been given to mankind for a purpose. To try to suppress this sacred heritage can only plunge people and nations into the depths of despair and perverted sickness — just as has occurred in these lands where the Black Dharmas have dominated the lives of the people. Some detailed expressions and explanations of Adi-Nath and Tantrik rites must be dealt with later in subsequent material.

A Lesson for Kali

None of the Adi-Nath gurus ever became popular and none ever tried to make propaganda for themselves or the cult. Instead they passed on down through the ages the solid spiritual tradition which still remains the essence of all higher thought and attainment. They taught Truth, already ancient, but presented to the needs and levels of each successive age. In India, such people can never be without disciples, yet they would never find more than a few who were prepared to go the whole way. As modern society engulfs the spiritual world, the Adi-Nath sadhu has become more and more rare.

From the legendary stories of Shri Dattatreya, the Adi-Naths speak of one which was short and simple, yet had vital lessons, and not only for the sadhus who had renounced. One story relates to the opening of the Kali Yuga or Dark Age of mankind. Kali, who personifies the spirit of this age, went to see Lord Brahma, to take his leave before descending to the earth to inaugurate and rule during the Kali Age. As he walked naked into the presence of Lord Brahma, he was holding his tongue with his left hand, and his penis in this right hand. Brahma looked at him, and asked what was the significance of this unusual posture? Kali related that he did not understand it himself, but when he had gone into the presence of Lord Shiva to take his leave, he had announced that he was going to earth to have domain over all mankind. Shiva only laughed when

he said this, and had informed him that he would have domain over most men, but not over the man who held his tongue and kept hold of his penis. Brahma also had to laugh, and told Kali that what Shiva had meant was that the man who kept a firm hold on his tongue and penis was not as likely to get into trouble as were men who did not do so. Then it was Kali's turn to laugh, and he said, "Don't worry. I will find some way to make them let go." And with many he has, but the Age of Darkness is not dark to all men who have sought and found the light of wisdom, no matter how dimly it burned.

The Kundalini Fraud

Adi-Nath sannyasins are not a naked sect in the sense that they take a vow to be naked or live naked. More generally, especially in recent years they do not appear naked in public places, but they do live naked in the area of their place of residence. Their nakedness is not a *tapas* or austerity, but rather an expression of freedom and the simple, natural life of free people. Indian people respect the nudity of sadhus as an expression of both attainment and spiritual freedom. They do not practice nudity themselves, and few can ever do so. Hindu *shastra* or religious rule stemming from Vedic sources prohibits nudity among people in the household stage of life, and until they reach the age of retirement.

Laya Yoga and Hatha Yoga both originated by the Natha Sampradaya, but were never taught or practiced by the Adi-Naths. The original Natha teachings of Laya Yoga were expounded by Gorakshanath, and were an attempt to raise the levels of consciousness until they reached the level of liberation. There are no records to show that any sadhu in history has ever attained liberation by this method. Nathas themselves say that the teachings were only symbolism.

Nevertheless, the idea of the dormant potential in man, lying low like a coiled serpent and raising itself to higher levels has been misunderstood, and even taught as a snake in the body which can be "raised" by Laya Yoga. The raising of the Kundalini serpent is still a popular vogue, and exploited by cunning "holy men."

The term Kundalini Yoga is a very modern invention, and was never used by any of the Nath writers. The Adi-Naths condemned it because, if it had any value, it could only be practiced under the guidance of an experienced guru. Such people have not existed for hundreds of years, and those who learn their kundalini raising from book — mostly written by foreigners, and always by people who have never been successful themselves — often begin to suffer from insanity and forms of obsession. True methods of liberation are simpler and without any danger, thus rendering Laya Yoga as superfluous to spiritual life.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga was associated with India's herbal medical lore, and the few original exercises were intended to be practical for better health and finer physical balance. Most of them now included in Hatha Yoga are of very recent origin, and some were introduced by an American student. The Adi-Naths do not tell people not to perform or practice

Hatha Yoga. It is harmless on all levels except it completely distracts one from the real spiritual life. Adi-Naths try to make men and women realize that they are not the body but an immortal soul. Hatha Yoga is purely physical — a body yoga — and often leads further away because it encourages people to think of themselves more and more as fine bodies and inflates the ego as well. If the Adi-Naths tend to discourage Hatha Yoga it is because it tends to take one further away from the Absolute instead of nearer. Some of the few practices and postures in the original Hatha Yoga may have therapeutic value, but should be confined to this purpose under experienced medical supervision. Most natural medical practitioners (*Ayurvediars*) have completely by-passed all these practices. Hatha yoga must not be practiced or taught by a sannyasin who claims to have renounced the world for the higher goal.

The Adi-Nath tradition opposed the formation of new sects and cults. Its very formation was spontaneous, because it repudiated certain aspects of the original Natha Sampradaya, and their separateness was inevitable. They never sponsored or advocated organization or societies, but did recognize that some systems of organization were relative necessities among relative people — but warned that these too were obstacle to the real seeker of the Absolute. They did not advocate “good men” but “God men.” They regarded the pious self-righteous man who boasted of his goodness and purity as a loathsome object. The search for real Truth makes men more humble, and sincerity need never advertise itself or wear a mask. Those who propound rules and regulations for others to keep are the enemies of spiritual life.

The Supreme Teaching

Spontaneity, Insight, Naturalness, and Equipoise are the foundations for liberation and realization. They are the four basic elements of matter on a higher plane, and Liberation is the fifth element of Space — *Sunya* — the Absolute. The platform teaching of all Adi-Nath gurus is for mankind to realize their own divinity — that they are not the body, but the immortal soul. This in itself also constitutes the basic fundamentals of the teachings of the Upanishads, the Bhagavata and Uddhava Gitas, and the Puranas.

This is the essence of all groups, sects and societies which claim to have secret or esoteric teachings. When man knows and understands this there is nothing else that needs to be known — he will have done all that needs to be done. It is Truth — the Supreme Wisdom — which abolishes fear, hatred, caste, jealousy, nationalism, ego, ignorance, aversion, revulsion, and clinging to life. It is the essence of knowledge which makes man see the futility of attachment.

The true immortal essence of oneself does not cry or crave for attention to the body, and it needs no adornment. It is beyond all fear and frustration, for nothing in the relative world can harm or impede it. This understanding in its fullest awareness will make a disciple see that even the concepts of realization and liberation are all relative, because the soul is immortal and has always been free.

How then can there be liberation for that which is already liberated? Or union with the Absolute when the soul has never been separated? If this is true and obvious, why then are men and women still in the bondage of relativity, and think relative and material things are real?

The answer is maya, the mystic, magick power of Shakti which manifests, makes and creates the relative, and forms the basic delusion of all mankind. It means that between Truth and mankind hangs the eternal veil of maya delusion.

Rend the veil and Truth, no longer obscured, reveals itself.

INTERNATIONAL NATH ORDER

This edition of Shri Gurudev Mahendranath's THE YOGA VIDYA OF IMMORTALITY is one of many projects planned by the not-for-profit International Nath Order. The International Nath Order itself is based upon the fundamental principles and inspiration set forth in Shri Mahendranath's *Master Pattern of the Nath Order*, TWILIGHT YOGA trilogy, and other writings. The three manuscripts which comprise the TWILIGHT YOGA Trilogy offers the building blocks with which to construct a more fantastic way of life. The International Nath Order strives to realize these aims through practical action and was conceived and constructed to serve the needs of many. Our primary concerns are the dissemination of higher wisdom, the construction and maintenance of places of meeting and worship, plus the activities related to continuing a spiritual transmission or initiation lineage which has its roots in a distant past, but continues to burn brightly even today. The International Nath Order seeks to fan this spiritual flame and make available to many the ideas and basics on which to develop a more expansive spiritual experience and fantastic way of life.

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