

ORIGINAL LIGHT

*the Morning Practice of
Kundalini Yoga*



SNATAM KAUR



sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

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INTRODUCTION

We live by the beat of the heart. When a baby cries, the mother places the baby on her chest, and the baby is comforted by her heartbeat. The mother, in turn, tunes in to this rhythm and determines what the baby needs. A steady rhythm not only comforts us, but also brings us to our own sense of inner knowing and truth. It is through a daily spiritual practice that is consistent, like the heartbeat, that we change the psyche to know—on an elemental, psychic, physical, chemical, and spiritual level—that we are in fact putting the soul first.

One name for any spiritual practice done with dedication is *Sādhanā*. I have practiced *Sādhanā* in one shape or form for most of my life. Now at forty-two years of age, am I an enlightened being? Well, hardly. However, I remember my spiritual teacher, Yogi Bhajan, saying, “If you want to be enlightened, be a light!” And while I can’t read Auras, or read your mind, or know what will happen to me tomorrow, or even why it happened to me yesterday, I do have a light to tap into, every day. This light permeates my life and guides it, without question, with love. This light brings me tremendous joy and peace, and is without a doubt my saving grace. It gives me a way to shift my inner paradigm toward my Dharma: to live in service to all through my life, my work, and my being.

What I offer to you in these pages is my daily practice—the Aquarian *Sādhanā*—a householder’s way to experience that original and most beautiful light every day. It takes about two and a half hours to complete, or about one-tenth of a day. I remember Yogi Bhajan saying that if we give one-tenth of our day to God, God gives Himself or Herself totally to us for the rest of the day. The *Sādhanā* includes a wake-up routine, a recitation, yoga, chanting, prayer, and finally a conscious act of surrendering to the Divine. There is also a component of community included that is crucial; the *Sādhanā* is more potent in the company of others and also supports the growth of spiritual community.

The Aquarian Sādhanā is for people of all walks of life. It is not based on religious beliefs; it is based on a yogic science of life. Where there are Sikh practices offered, we learn through the sacred tradition and the universal essence within these teachings that can nourish and heal us all. In fact, whatever your walk of life may be, I believe that this practice can enhance and support the essence of your self, of who you are and what you believe in.

The Aquarian Sādhanā was given to us by Yogi Bhajan. Born in Pakistan, he became a master of Kundalini Yoga at the age of sixteen. When he was eighteen, Yogi Bhajan and his family made the journey to Delhi after the Partition of India. After raising three children with his wife, Bibiji Inderjit Kaur, and having a successful career in the military, Yogi Bhajan was drawn to the West in 1969 to share his yogic knowledge as a way to dedicate his life to service. With Kundalini Yoga, he steered thousands of young people away from drugs by helping them achieve genuine connection and healthy daily lives.

Today, there are thousands of teachers in almost every country, sharing incredible healing experiences that Yogi Bhajan first seeded in his Kundalini Yoga classes. Although he offered this technology to people



Yogi Bhajan

of all walks of life, Yogi Bhajan was a notably devoted Sikh. Many of the Mantras held within the Sikh tradition are also experienced within this Kundalini Yoga tradition. What I share with you here is specifically what I learned from my teacher Yogi Bhajan (and is referred to as Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan).

He also taught the Sikh lifestyle in such a way that many became Sikhs, and an entire spiritual movement was awakened in the West. Yogi Bhajan's work was recognized by the ruling religious Sikh organization called the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. In recognition and support of his service to Sikhs in the West, they gave him the title of Siri Singh Sahib. It was clear that the Universe wanted him to serve Sikhs and people of all walks of life.

My parents began to study with Yogi Bhajan right around the time I was born in 1972 (he gave me the name Snamat, which means "universal friend to all"). My mother tells me that when I was a baby, in the middle of one of Yogi Bhajan's classes, I began babbling away in a flow of excited yet unintelligible words. My mother, worried that it would disturb the class, began frantically walking with me in the back of the room, trying to quiet me down.

"You'll get your turn to teach soon!" Yogi Bhajan chided me from the stage. Everyone laughed. My mother relaxed and let me be. And so my relationship with my spiritual teacher began in this lifetime.

In 1992, Yogi Bhajan offered the Aquarian Sādhanā to help us householders thrive and remain balanced in a world with ever-increasing information, technology, and sources of stress and pressure. He knew that we would need a sense of connection and love not only within ourselves, but also within our larger communities.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The intention of this book is to give you everything you need to engage in the Aquarian Sādhanā, either alone or with your family, friends, or community. In chapters 1 through 3, we explore the foundations of the practice. The idea here is to give you a working knowledge of Kundalini Yoga to empower you to understand experiences that may arise and inspire you to try out a practice, and perhaps sustain it in the

long run. In chapters 4 through 8, we go into each of the five stages of the practice. In chapter 9, we look at “presence of self,” something I think is possible for anyone to master. In chapter 10, we finally explore how you can do the Aquarian Sādhanā with your family and how doing so can support and nourish communities.

We have made a deliberate choice to include the Jap Jī text in appendix A so that you will have all the resources to do the Sādhanā and also enjoy the benefits of this beautiful writing. Since Jap Jī is a sacred text, I request you keep this book off of the floor as you use it, perhaps on a cushion or stand, in alignment with the traditions that hold Jap Jī in honor. To conclude this book, appendix B offers nine of my favorite Kundalini Yoga sets, appendix C provides the words for all of the chants that are in the Aquarian Sādhanā, and appendix D gives you a daily prayer called Ardās. You will also find two CDs I created with my band called *Light of the Naam with Long Ek Ong Kar* and *Jap Jī Meditation*. The first includes all of the chants for the morning practice; the second is my recitation of Jap Jī for your reference.

One way to use this book and accompanying CDs is to dive deeply into some areas right away and just soak your toes in the shallow end of other areas for a while. I suggest putting the music and recitation on in your home right away to let the positive energy begin flowing. Please take your time with this book and allow for reflection as needed.

As you begin with the stages of the practice and encounter something that would be a lifestyle change for you, I invite you to try it out and see how it feels. It is possible to experience major inner shifts by making just a few modifications to your daily life. Perhaps you could read this book with a partner or friend and try the practice out together so that when the major shifts occur, you can share your experiences with each other.

As I mentioned, there are nine different Kundalini Yoga sets offered here, all with different energies and purposes. I invite you to sit in the center of your being, feel which set draws you in on a particular day, and engage with that one. Our internal wisdom meter is actually quite accurate when we listen to it. I love these sets, and they are an active part of my week. Depending on the day, there is a good chance that I am practicing one of them.

As you read about the chants and come to understand their meanings as they apply both to your life and to your soul space, focus on those you feel most drawn to. Like water, these chants will only flow into spaces where there is an opening.

After you have gained knowledge of the practice, it's up to you to decide how to integrate it into your life. Of course, I recommend doing the whole Aquarian Sādhanā. However, even just a thirty-minute practice is a wonderful place to start. Whatever you start, I recommend you do it every day for at least forty days, as it takes this long for notable transformation to begin. If you are already practicing the Aquarian Sādhanā, perhaps this book will help you to go deeper in your experience, as it has for me in the process of writing it. You may also have no intention of integrating any of these practices into your life. That's okay, too; I also wrote this book with you in mind. We are all just travelers together in the cosmic journey called life. If nothing else, perhaps some spark of joy will come out of the story of my practice and will inspire you along the way.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Throughout this book, a number of words have been transliterated from the original Gurmukhī (a sacred language developed in India in the sixteenth century) into Roman letters. Through the process of working with these words, I came to realize how important it is to try to stay true to the original written text. My goal is to preserve the original pronunciation and make it much easier to understand the root meanings by keeping to the original script.

There are numerous sounds that one could only understand by actually learning the original Gurmukhī language; I have chosen not to illustrate those sounds here with the use of Roman letters. I felt it would have created unnecessary confusion. If you have the opportunity to learn Gurmukhī, I highly recommend it for deepening your meditation experience. This sacred language offers tremendous joy and bliss.

Please use the following charts to help with your pronunciation of Gurmukhī.

Vowels

SYMBOL	CARRIER	TRANSLITERATION	EXAMPLE OF SOUND
none	ਅ	a	like the “a” in <i>about</i>
ੜ	ਆ	ā	like the “a” in <i>father</i>
ੳ	ਇ	i	a sound in between “i” as in <i>bit</i> and “e” as in <i>egg</i>
		e	the transliteration letter “e” may be used for this symbol at times
ੴ	ਈ	ī	like the “ee” in <i>beet</i>
ੲ	ਉ	u	like the “u” in <i>put</i>
ੳ	ਊ	ū	like the “oo” in <i>soon</i>
ੴ	ਏ	ay	like the “ay” in <i>say</i>
ੴ	ਐ	ai	like the “a” in <i>hand</i>
ੳ	ਓ	o	like the “o” in <i>go</i>
ੳ	ਔ	au	this sound would be produced by sounding out the transliteration letter “ā” with your mouth in an O shape

Vowel Combinations

Vowels often appear side by side, noted here with hyphens as in “i-ā,” “ā-ay,” and “o-ī.” Pronounce these vowels sequentially in a smooth manner.

Consonants

The consonant sounds are fairly self-explanatory as seen in this chart, although some of them do not appear in the English language. I explain some of these sounds after the chart. Please use the included Jap Ji recording to follow along with the text as a reference point.

INTRODUCTION

ਸ	s	ਦ	d
ਹ	h	ਧ	dh
ਕ	k	ਨ	n
ਖ	kh	ਪ	p
ਗ	g	ਫ	ph
ਘ	gh	ਬ	b
ਙ	n(g)	ਭ	bh
ਚ	ch	ਮ	m
ਛ	chh	ਯ	y
ਜ	j	ਰ	r
ਝ	jh	ਲ	l
ਵ	ñ	ਵ	v or w
ਟ	<u>t</u>	ੜ	<u>r</u>
ਠ	<u>th</u>	ਸ਼	sh
ਡ	<u>d</u>	ਖ਼	(kh)
ਢ	<u>dh</u>	ਗ਼	(g)
ਣ	<u>n</u>	ਜ਼	z
ਤ	t	ਫ਼	f
ਥ	th		

Retroflex Consonants

You can pronounce retroflex consonants by touching the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth half an inch back, toward the soft palate. These consonants are noted with an underline, for example t, th, d, dh, n, and r.

Rolling the “R”

Roll the “r” as you would in Spanish. The sound resembles the “r” in *city*. For the retroflex “ṛ,” the sound is like the “rd” in the word *hard*.

Subtle Vowel Sounds

In Gurmukhī, if a word ends in a consonant, there is always a subtle sound at the end of the word, a form of rise or lilt. Please refer to the recording to hear this. In the study of Gurmukhī, one can go into much more detail with this, but I have not noted it here. In the case where the word ends with an “h” consonant, there are subtle vowel sounds that are noted as such:

- (u) like the “u” in *put*
- (i) like the “i” in *bit*

THE INSTRUMENT OF YOU

Yogi Bhajan taught that with every wink of an eye, there are a thousand thoughts.¹ Only one of those thoughts becomes articulated into language, and those words become action. Underneath all of those thoughts is a baseline energy, an unstruck sound, a silence named *Anahat*. In this silence we do not have to do or think anything; we can just be. It is a pure state of meditation where we open the doors to merge with God, to *be* God. We enter a flow that is beyond thoughts, ideas, and actions; the flow just is, and we can just be.

What is the vibratory frequency of that inner space? You can find out. And from that discovery, you can create such a beautiful melody that the Universe will bend its ear to listen. But you must work on the instrument, the *you*. If you play a violin made by the Stradivarius family, the most beautiful sound will come out. If you take a rinky-dink Suzuki-student violin and play it, you can only make it sound so good. That Stradivarius has been worked on. The wood is the highest quality possible. The body is shaped just so. The strings are finely made. Everything has been masterfully created so that when it is played, an amazing sound comes forth. Its Anahat, the unstruck sound, is ready to directly touch the heart.

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That is exactly what spiritual practice is. You become a kind of Stradivarius violin so that when the Creator plays you, you make incredible music. The sound that comes out will be divine. Why? Your baseline, inner-core vibration has been given space to exist, and your body and mind are finely tuned to carry that vibration out into the Cosmos.

~ Chapter One ~

THE GIFT OF PRACTICE

ਚਰਨ ਸਰਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਏਕ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਜਾਇ ਚਲ,
charan saran gur ayk painḍā jā-i chal,
If you take but one step towards the Gurū,

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੋਟਿ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਇ ਲੇਤ ਹੈ ॥
satigur koṭ painḍā āgay ho-i layt hai.
He takes a million steps towards you.

BHAI GURDĀS JĪ, *AMRIT KĪRTAN*¹

In the early morning hours, I opened the door to the little cabin I was staying in to walk to the group Sādhanā practice just down the road. It was just me; not a soul stirred. I was living with my sister for the summer in a sacred community nestled in a valley of the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico. I was in my early twenties, and I felt totally safe as the cottonwood trees sang, rustling in the wind. The cool air invited me in, and as I took a deep breath, my eyes were drawn upward to the sparkling stars in the dark blue sky. It was at that moment that I fell in love with my practice. It was God's time to say hello to me, to tell me how much He loved me, and it was my time to say hello to Him, undisturbed by the hustle and bustle of the day. From that