

Book Review

***Introduction to Agni Yoga: The Way to Shambhalla*, by Vicente Beltrán Anglada**, translated and edited by José Becerra, Fundación Vincente Beltrán Anglada, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2017. Paperback, 250 pages. List price US \$10.95. Available at: Amazon.com.

The term *Agni Yoga* has been variously defined as the “Yoga of Fire,” the “Mergence with Divine Fire,” and the “Yoga of Synthesis.” It was first introduced to the West in 1920, by Nicholas and Helena Roerich. Agni Yoga, as given by the Roerichs, has been described as a “living ethic,” a constant “fiery striving” dedicated to self-perfection, the common good and a cognition of the Divine. The Agni Yoga teachings consist of 14 books that are presented as a series of profound, sometimes complicated aphorisms with no structure in the traditional sense. Furthermore, there are no specific techniques and disciplines, which can make these inspired teachings for spiritual awakening difficult for some students to utilize or fully comprehend.

In this book, which was originally written in Spanish in 1981, Vincente Beltrán-Anglada (VBA), takes a more structured approach in his depiction of Agni Yoga. Yet, his approach is “exquisitely simple.” It combines a first ray approach with what might be described as a second ray approach in which the “voice of silence” is the primary factor. As such, Agni Yoga represents “a Science of the Heart,” or what VBA describes as “a practical exposition of the mystical but intensely dynamic life born in the heart when the mind stops reflecting its external circumstances and surrenders to its spiritual purpose.”

The first part of the book considers the occult principles underlying the psychological makeup of a human being and the importance of establishing a center of unalterable peace in the heart that alleviates tension, fear, conflict, separateness, and a lack of true purpose. Emphasis is given throughout the book to the problem of human loneliness and the sense of isolation

that results from separation from the Divine, and from the loneliness that manifests on the path when intellectual considerations, deceptive mental formulations and faith begin to give way to the silent voice of the heart.

Agni Yoga is an advanced, synthetic yoga, one that is indicated for the emerging advanced souls of the race. VBA links this yoga to the discovery of a new dimension in life and to the influx of the Fourth Ray, which no longer demonstrates as conflict in the disciple’s life, but “as the harmony of the silent heart of Divinity expressing through Humanity.” However, it would be a mistake to think that the “Yoga of the Heart” is a form of Bhakti or devotional Yoga, or that it is “a new discipline that is imposed upon the mind to overcome a given state of consciousness.” The latter is the goal of Raja Yoga, the yoga for the current racial consciousness. Neither is its goal self-perfection, since “perfection” implies rest, fixity and immutability, a state of being that is completely contrary to the ceaseless dynamism of Divine creative action. Perfection, as VBA maintains, is “an ascending spiral emerging from the heart, as light, in a never-ending motion.”

Agni Yoga provides no road map, no goal-oriented course of action. And, as mentioned above, it offers no techniques or disciplines; for “Truth,” as VBA states, “cannot be revealed by the force of discipline.” Truth arises from the depth of consciousness realized through the attitude of serene expectancy.

The concept of serene expectancy is, in fact, pivotal to VBA’s conception of Agni Yoga. Such an attitude is predicated on facility with the system of Raja Yoga—the yoga of the mind and will—as well as the creation of the Antahkarana of causal light. Thus, only those who have integrated the three-fold-personality and centered it in the soul are capable of recognizing the “insatiable thirst for spiritual life” which unseals the doors to an inner vision and the life of higher service.

VBA portrays serene mental expectancy as an attitude of profound attentiveness toward life where all events and happenings are “contemplated through the mystical center of the heart,” the center of tranquil reconciliation, which reveals the truth that lies beyond the confines of the concrete mind. The challenge of Agni Yoga, as he explains: “is the apparent absence of activity on our part, used as we are to weigh, measure and calculate everything, building structures at all levels.” He goes on to say that “the apparent absence of activity is ... a dynamic action of the highest transcendence.”

Submission to the fiery ordeal of silence, is the key to Agni Yoga, because it reveals the true nature of the spiritual Soul which expands into the immensity of the Buddhic plane. The deep silence of the heart when balanced with the will is what allows the disciple to strengthen the Antahkarana and extend “it into the light of the Buddhic plane.” It is here, says VBA, that “the practitioner of Agni Yoga is immersed into the great creative void of consciousness where all ephemeral things are dissolved.” Such an experience is an “arid desert,” a “trial by fire” that offers no security and threatens us with annihilation as we lose our self in the ocean of luminous light. Thus, says VBA, practitioners of Agni Yoga, must “live fearlessly without any mental speculation about their fate or any other living thing.” They must trust in their own great nature and not recoil from the blinding light of consciousness with its great rewards. These rewards being the appearance of the intuition and the higher psychic powers, as well as “the infinite activity of eternal motion,” which the author equates with the great possibilities of the human heart, and “life of the great Solar Heart.”

Elsewhere in the book, VBA touches upon Agni Yoga and Pranayama, the Science of the Centers, and Samadhi—the exquisite equilibrium or peace that is realized on the 4th Buddhic Plane—and its relationship to the constellation of Libra, which establishes harmony in the human heart and in the heart of the Solar Logos.

Also discussed are the various connections between Agni Yoga and the number 4: the 4th Human Kingdom; the 4th center or heart center;

the Fourth Ray; the 4th or Buddhic plane, and the mysteries of the 4th Initiation. This initiation—the Renunciation—deals with the mysteries of the Solar Angels, with Words of Power or mantras that confer power over a certain group of Devas. These mantras give the initiate control of forces that actively contribute to development of the Plan, making him or her an “Architect” or builder of primordial substance.

The nature of free will, and the movement, through the path of Agni Yoga to the Spiritual will, are considered along with the great responsibility that power or creative Fire confers on the initiate. A section on the workings of space and time is included in which Agni Yoga is portrayed as the path of liberation from fixed perspectives, karma and one’s ancestral past. Eventually, the initiate overcomes the illusion of time and learns to extend the mind through Space.” As this takes place, the initiate “becomes a container for Solar mysteries and not just the container of knowledge.”

Another effect of this yoga practice is Thaumaturgy (from the Greek “wonder” or “miracle”), which is traditionally defined as the art and science of using magic to create change in the world. In the context of Agni Yoga, “Thaumaturgy is the higher energy of the Buddhic plane expressed as the magnetic and healing energy... through the power of [spiritual] radiation.” Thus, Agni Yoga is a powerful healing art that can be applied on physical, emotional and mental levels.

In his *Introduction to Agni Yoga*, VBA provides a luminous and immensely practical elucidation of the Yoga of Fire—of what it is and how it might be achieved. This profound and deeply inspiring work is a beacon on the Path. It is filled with sublime insights which awaken the reader to the deeper mysteries of the heart and a transformative way of living—insights that could only have been garnered through direct experience. The book is a must read for every student of the Ageless Wisdom. I am grateful to have read it and could not recommend it more highly.

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