



## Alchemy of Yoga History – Bhava Ram

Through the **Alchemy of Yoga** we can create our own medicine, cure our self-created problems and live with the sense of bliss and contentment that all of us are born to experience.

**Alchemy** is a beautiful word and complex term. For some, it calls up images of primeval crackpots and charlatans promising to turn lead into gold. For others, it reminds us of the genius of **Isaac Newton** who, as an alchemist, astronomer, naturalist, and physicist came to be known as one of the greatest scientists and mathematicians of all times while also understanding the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of reality.

Ancient alchemists, like their Yogi counterparts, saw all of creation as composed of **earth, air, fire, water,** and **space**. Through their meditations and explorations of these five elements they created healing and transformative potions that formed the base of much of modern pharmacology. In the process, they unlocked many of the mysteries of the universe and therein contributed to the evolution of humankind.

Alchemy as it relates to the realm of metaphysics is arguably the higher practice of this ancient art. Just as pure gold can be obtained by burning away its impurities and base metals, through Spiritual Alchemy one can move from an imperfect, diseased, ignorant and corrupted state towards wisdom, healing, self-transformation and enlightenment. This is the **Alchemy of Yoga**, and it is at the core of this sacred science.

**Each and every one of us is an alchemist.** Our laboratory is our brain. We concoct our potions and elixirs based upon our thoughts. These chemicals then course through our neurological systems and spread into our organs, muscles, bones and tissues. Depending upon the quality of our thoughts and our level of consciousness, we are either creating black magic that will only cause us pain, or we are creating miracle potions that can help us lead the lives we have always desired.

For instance, a chronically agitated, fearful and angry person creates too much **adrenaline** and **cortisol**, the primary chemicals associated with our instinctive fight-or-flight response. Our fast-paced, stressed-out culture contributes to this alchemy and such a person finds themselves in increasingly toxic life situations. This pattern often leads to lowered immune function, mental or physical ailments, and ultimately serious disease.

The thoughts of a more positive alchemist create **serotonin** and **interleukins**. These chemicals boost the immune function, relax our adrenals, and promote healing. This pattern leads to a happier life in which greater health, greater achievements, and greater experiences seem to go hand-in-hand.

Simply put, as we all have heard, “**You are what you think.**” The hypochondriac becomes sick. The person who thinks negatively creates a reality in which things always seem to go wrong. Those who believe they cannot accomplish something have already seeded their own defeat. On the other hand, the positive person who takes a sugar pill in a blind test of a new medicine may actually experience benefits far beyond what the real drug has to offer. Those who are convinced of their potential are likely to realize it no matter what obstacles arise. *Those who see the world filled with light and love often have this reflected back to them as their reality.*

The groundbreaking work of Japanese **Dr. Masaru Emoto** has illuminated this phenomenon, and the crossover between the physical and metaphysical aspects of alchemy, in a unique and remarkable way. Through special photographic techniques, Dr. Emoto has been able to prove that water, in its frozen crystal form, actually responds to words and thoughts. When he exposed water to words of **love**, **compassion**, and **peace**, even if not spoken aloud, the water formed beautiful and intricate crystals no matter what language was used. When words of hate, anger and evil were used, no crystals formed and the water appeared muddied and toxic. Water responded similarly to peaceful, melodious music as opposed to heavy metal or rap. You can see these photos by looking up Dr. Masaru Emoto on the internet.

If our thoughts and words have the power to impact water, it makes sense that they also influence those around us and impact the patterns we create in our lives. In effect, as we respond to our circumstances, experiences and surroundings, we directly effect how they respond and reflect back to us. We are the alchemists not only of the chemicals coursing through our bodies; **we are the creators of our individual worlds.**

This is why Yoga, and its sister science of Ayurveda, teach us alchemical techniques that reconstruct the molecules of our being. **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses) and **Dharana** (single-pointed concentration) help to bring us to deeper levels of inner awareness and balance. **Mantra** (the repetition of sacred words) actually allows us to access higher universal powers that are healing and transformative. **Dhyana** (meditation) ultimately crystallizes our consciousness and brings us to Self-realization.

As a practice, you can conduct your own scientific experiment on yourself, serving both as scientist and subject. Find a quiet place where you can lie down undisturbed for several minutes (this can be done after Yoga during **Savasana** or as a response to a stressful day). Once you are comfortable, note what your emotional state is as you begin. Try to feel the “taste” inside of your body, the current chemical atmosphere of your being. Bring your awareness to your brain, seeing it as your laboratory and your mind as the alchemist. Then, allow your breath to become deep and full. After a few breaths, begin placing the following words in your brain, repeating each one long enough that the emotion of the word begins to permeate your consciousness.

*Contentment...* Repeat this over and over with the breath remaining deep and full, really feeling it, breathing it in and exhaling it throughout your entire being. Do this for a few minutes, noticing the internal chemistry of your body and the subtle shifts that begin to take place.

Follow the same process with: *Serenity... Peace... Gratitude... Compassion... Love... Ecstasy...*

And so forth, spending a few minutes with each emotion. You do not have to memorize these words or this sequence. **Choose the words that you know deeply in your heart are the most healing and transformative for you**, even letting them arise naturally during the process. When you are done, spend some time noticing any shifts in your inner essence, any different “taste” of being you. Feel the relaxation and pleasure that arises from this practice in every cell of your body and every corner of your mind.

This alchemical process played a great role in my own self-healing. I moved from fear, anger and despondency to openness, compassion and a firm belief in my ability to self-heal. It did not happen overnight, and at times it felt like I was endlessly digging ditches, seeking to pierce the crust of my entrenched emotions and unearth a deeper place in my soul where my true nature was buried. Through faith, devotion, and dedication, the work paid off and I was fortunate enough to heal, both physically and emotionally.

Healing, I came to learn afterwards, did not stop there. It is a daily practice in a world where stressful challenges and negative emotions often prevail. We all have this power, to heal ourselves day in and day out. Through the **Alchemy of Yoga** we can create our own medicine, cure our self-created problems, and live with the sense of bliss and contentment that all hearts deeply desire.