

## **Yoga Life Society All Faiths Reliquary**

The All Faiths Reliquary is a collection of various holy items that is kept within the lamp stand of our main altar. It is carefully designed to radiate vibrations peace, joy, and well-being, and to remind us of the essential oneness of all faith traditions.

### **Contents**

#### **Guru Parampara (YLS lineage)**

**Master Sivanandaji Maharaj:** a small stone from the entrance of his cottage in Rishikesh. It was verified that this stone was in place just outside His door while He was still living there.

**Sri Gurudev Satchidananda Maharaj:** a number of hairs from His head.

**Sri Guruji Jaganath Carrera:** a number of hairs from His head.

#### **The Faiths Represented on the All Faiths Yantra**

**Hinduism:** a gold-plated Gayatri Yantra. The Gayatri Yantra is the physical representation of the Gayatri Mantra, one of the most revered of all mantras in India. It is a prayer to the Light of Lights, a request that It enlighten all beings as well as the individual reciting the mantra. Gayatri is represented as a Goddess.

**Judaism:** holy soil from Jerusalem.

**Shintoism:** a Tomoe, a symbol that represents the ever-circulating forces of the cosmos. It is eternally replenished from the essence of all being and radiates never-ending energy.

**Taoism:** the Taiji or Yin-Yang symbol. Yin and Yang represent the interplay of the two basic cosmic forces: the nurturing and active, masculine and feminine, assertive and receptive, light and dark, etc.

**Buddhism:** Blessed wrist mala beads made by Buddhist monks, from the Drepung Gomang Monastery in South India. Monks who escaped with the Dalai Lama from Tibet founded this monastery.

**Christianity:** holy soil from Jerusalem.

**Islam:** holy soil from Jerusalem.

**Sikhism:** a miniature copy of one of their essential scriptures, Japji. It is a universal song of God composed by Guru Nanak Dev. It appears at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Book of the Sikhs and is recited by Sikhs every morning.

**African Faiths:** a small crystal lion. In African faiths, the lion represents protection, strength of character, and spiritual attainment.

**Native American Faiths:** a small crystal frog. The frog represents life, abundance, and resurrection.

**All Other Known Faiths:** in keeping with the symbol used on the yantra of three stars, our reliquary includes three crystal stars.

**All Other Faiths, Yet Unknown:** The symbol for this is the space left in the reliquary. There is no end to space. There is no end to the ways that the Divine speaks to beings across the centuries and universes.

### **The Basic Elements of Life on our Planet**

**Earth:** an octahedron crystal. Crystals have the ability to hold and transmit energy. An octahedron is the basic form of all objects and beings and is a very powerful antenna that attracts and sends out cosmic energy.

**Sea:** opalescent seashells. Seashells are lunar symbols. The ocean represents the mind, and the shells the treasure of enlightenment.

**Ganges Water:** Ganges water is revered as having the power to purify and wash away the effects of negative karma.

**Air:** a parakeet feather. Birds symbolize the soul, the ascent to heaven, and creativity.

### **The Cosmic Dimension**

Our good thoughts, prayers, and service should not be limited to just this planet. To remind us of this, a small meteorite is also included in the reliquary. It is from the Sikhote-Alin shower of 1947, in eastern Russia. 93% iron, its molecules are octahedron-shaped.

### **Healing**

Included in the Reliquary is a collection of powerful healing herbs. They radiate their healing potentials, bringing health and well-being to all who are in their presence.

**Echinacea:** All the upper chakras are brought into higher states of energy and the etheric body is strengthened. It helps to develop spiritual awareness by releasing old patterns.

**Comfrey:** Opens the crown chakra and brings all the subtle bodies into alignment.

**Licorice:** The second and third chakras and the liver meridian are stimulated. Emotions are balanced.

**Hawthorne:** Energizes the heart chakra. The chakra and nadis in the hands are also stimulated. The Pericardium is energized and the etheric and emotional bodies are cleansed.

**Brahmi:** is the most important rejuvenative herb in Ayurveda. It supports the nervous system, helps maintain happiness, mental health, focus, memory and healthy emotions. It helps awaken the crown chakra and helps with meditation.

**Arjuna:** helps maintain a healthy heart and reduces stress and nervousness.

**Ashoka:** Ashoka means without sorrow. It is used for reducing pain, improving digestion and assimilation, helps with any disease originating in the blood, and helps manage excess bleeding during menstruation.

**Frankincense:** when used as incense, its smoke drives away any negative vibrations. It also has a purifying effect on the mind and nervous system, and helps purify the meridians. It is an aid to meditation, is an anti-inflammatory, prevents degeneration of cartilage, and promotes circulation. Modern research shows that it contains boswellic acid, which, in moderate doses has an anti-cancer effect.

**Rose:** rose has a cooling effect and is excellent for balancing the mind, heart, and emotions.

**Tulsi:** one of the most sacred plants in India. Many worship it daily as a means of raising their consciousness. It is said to be a favorite (even a form) of Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Tulsi promotes a positive state of mind, opens the heart, and increases devotion, faith, and clarity.

### **Holy Ash**

The use of holy ash is common in India where it is often applied to the forehead. It is produced during a sacred ceremony, in which a number of items are burned in a fire while powerful mantras are recited. Sacred woods, clarified butter (ghee), fragrant herbs, and even cow dung are burnt in this fire.

Perhaps the most significant item is the cow dung. Dung, normally an item we wouldn't want to keep near us, becomes completely purified in the fire. Once purified, it is used as a sacred mark on seekers' foreheads. The dung symbolizes our minds. Once purified of spiritual ignorance, the mind becomes a vehicle for the Divine Light and Will.

Holy Ash is an excellent carrier of vibrations. Any mantras, chants, or prayers, said over or near it will be stored there and transmitted to those who are nearby.

Ash is also a symbol of the temporary nature of life. We will all be ash one day or another. This reality helps keep our minds in the golden present and reminds us to make the most out of each moment of life we are given.

### **A Yantra**

Placed at the very top of the reliquary is a silver Yantra. This powerful geometric form is what you see as the center part of the All Faiths Yantra on our altar and on all Integral Yoga altars as well. It depicts the entirety of creation. It is a yantra that radiates

protection and creative power. Universal in nature, it adapts to the individual's faith and can be used for any name and form of the Divine. Many members of the Yoga Life Society and Integral Yoga sangha wear one.

### **The Reliquary Box**

The reliquary box is made from cinnamon wood. A Sanskrit OM is carved on its lid. In ancient times, cinnamon was more valuable than gold and was a gift given to royalty.

Cinnamon prevents nervous tension, is an anti-spasmodic, improves digestion and memory, is known to help cure colds, is an antioxidant, and has antimicrobial properties.

## The Yoga Life Society Altar

The centerpiece of our altar is the yantra, a representation of the entire Cosmos. It was given by Sri Swami Satchidananda, Guru of Rev. Jaganath, and is also the main altarpiece at all Integral Yoga Institutes and Satchidananda Ashrams as well as the Yoga Life Centers. The yantra on our altar contains gold leaf and a cultivated garnet at its center.

### THE MEANING OF THE YANTRA

by Sri Gurudev Satchidananda Maharaj

Sometimes external images are used in meditation or worship to symbolize or express certain Divine ideas and qualities. When *mantras* (an aspect of the Absolute in the form of sound vibration) are meditated upon, certain images are brought out. It is something like liquid crystallizing into solid form. In short, yantras are the crystallized forms of *mantras*.

Each part of the *Yantra* corresponds to a different aspect of the Cosmos. According to yogic thinking, God or the Cosmic Consciousness is originally unmanifest — just by Himself or Herself or Itself. As God begins to manifest, the first expression is as the sound vibration. The Bible explains it by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here "word" means sound.

In Sanskrit they say something similar but take it a step further: "*Nada bindhu, Kalaa,*" — the sound, then the dot, then the art or rays. If God manifests as sound, you can't see anything. What is the smallest expression that you could see? The *bindhu* or dot. It is the smallest possible particle. But, of course, if it is that small we can't see it, so in the *Yantra* it is shown as a large red dot in the very center. The *bindhu* represents the first physical expression, the very core of the Cosmos. It is that dot which then expresses as *Kalaa*. *Kalaa* means the different aspects or literally the different rays or different arts.

The next expressions are the three rings of different hues surrounding the *bindhu*. They represent the three *gunas* or basic qualities of nature: *sattva* (balance), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). In the yogic thinking, everything in this universe manifests uniquely because it results from a unique combination of these three. All differences in the phenomenal world are due to the variations of these three basic qualities.

Then you see the six triangles around the three rings. The triangles are actually a combination of two larger triangles, one pointed down, the other up. As one triangle passes through the other, we get this six-sided figure. The triangle with apex upward represents the positive, or masculine aspect; the inverted triangle is the negative, or feminine, aspect. In Sanskrit this concept is called *Siva-Shakti*. It is a combination of the male and female, equally represented. There is no inferiority or superiority for either aspect; they blend perfectly together. Whichever way you turn the *Yantra*, they remain the same. So it makes a complete whole, and this itself represents the entire *nirguna* (unmanifest) as well as *saguna* (manifest) aspects of the Supreme.

Once the triangles come together, the hexagon could then represent something else also: the six basic *tattvas* or principles — the five senses and the mind as the sixth. The six-sided crystal then manifests outward in further expansions of the primordial energy and matter. Why and how does this happen? Out of love. So all the beautiful lotus petals represent the loving manifestation.

Another way of explaining the petals is that the eight inner petals represent the subtle elements, while the sixteen outer ones indicate their grosser manifestations.

Then you see the three large circles surrounding the lotuses. They indicate how these elements further express as the three worlds: causal, astral, and physical. But even that is not the end. The Divine expression is unlimited. That is why the circles are framed by a square with gaps pointing outward, representing the infinity of creation.

### **The Photos**

The photos of Sri Guruji Reverend Jaganath and Sri Gurudev Swami Satchidananda Maharaj are included on our altar to honor our lineage. Wisdom doesn't come from reading books. In a process much like osmosis, it is transmitted from one human being to another. An unlit candle can only receive the light from a lit one.

### **The Light**

The light is a universal symbol for the Divine or Cosmic Consciousness. Every faith uses light as a symbol for the Absolute. The light on the altar also reminds us that the light is within us, within everyone.

### **The Globe**

The presence of the globe reminds us that the fruits of our efforts are not just for us alone. We are called on to share what we can to help others find peace, joy, love, and light. It also reminds us that our Earth - the entire universe - is in God's hands.