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REHABILITATION

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Born in India and evolved in Japan, an ancient spiritual healing skill comes home

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Can gall-bladder stones disappear without surgery, and umbilical hernias vanish? Can cancer cure itself? These have been some of the amazing experiences of people who have practiced reiki, the Japanese art of self-healing which has its roots in ayurveda. The word Reiki (pronounced "ray-key") is Japanese for universal (rei) life-force energy (ki). It is this energy which is flowing throughout the cosmos and to which each living being is connected from birth. It is known as prana in ayurveda, and it is referred to in the Atharva Veda (one of the four Vedas). It was rediscovered by Dr. Mikao Usui in Japan about 175 years ago as reiki, an unconditional, divine and loving healing energy. (See also page 46.)

Since then, reiki has caught on in many parts of the world, becoming a passing fad for some, a way of life for many. Now it has come full-circle back to India, where the idea of self-healing first originated. The ancient Atharva Veda verse observes, "Skilled, dexterous and empowered by the Divine for

healing is our left hand, for it removes blocks in the free flow of joy. And yet more potent is this divinely empowered right hand, for it contains all medicinal capacities of the universe, its all auspicious healing touch bringing peace, harmony, welfare, opulence, joy and liberation from all toxic conditions of matter--birth, death, old age and disease." In cities like Delhi and Bombay, reiki is the new buzzword, with people from all strata of society turning to it for their physical and mental well-being. Doctors are using it on cancer patients, policemen are leaning on it and disabled children are expanding their abilities because of it. Reiki is also a fashion fad for high society ladies and a coping tool for government servants.

Several reiki Senseis, or initiating teachers, reside in India. Among the most well known are husband-and-wife team Nalin and Renoo Nirula, who co-authored the best-selling Joy of Reiki (220 pages, Full Circle, New Delhi, Rs140). Nalin is qualified in ayurveda, homeopathy, pranic healing, naturopathy and reiki, and is a psychic. Renoo is a psychoanalyst and clairvoyant.

Nalin and Renoo came to reiki by a circuitous route. Nalin had always wanted to be a healer. His grandfather had been the chief civil surgeon in the State of Patiala, and several uncles and aunts were doctors. Yet, with the family in the food business, Nalin was sent to the prestigious Cornell University in New York to learn the hotel business. Back in India, he found himself in the family food trade, until he decided to stop selling food for the body and find food for the soul.

He had always had an affinity for Lord Krishna and now embarked on a rigorous spiritual path with ISKCON, traveling

all over the world. He got his brahmin initiation at the Gaudiya Math in Mayapur, West Bengal. Renoo, whose father had been with the UN, graduated from London College of Art, and had worked as an art therapist with disturbed children. The couple discovered reiki at a seminar they attended with their two children, and life was never the same. Recalls Nalin, "We experienced a lot of emotional negativities clearing away. The burden of pain, sadness, fear, self-blame and guilt just dissolved. An inner happiness, fulfillment and spirit of joy came, although our external lives had not yet changed so radically."

Their 12-year-old son, Arjun, found that reiki energy could be utilitarian. Nalin reveals, "He discovered that the channeled energy of reiki could re-charge drained battery cells! For months after learning reiki, we didn't buy any batteries. We renewed them with reiki--until the novelty wore off."

Spiritual mechanics: What is this power known as reiki which can rekindle the human spirit as well as revive depleted D-cells? The Nirulas, who have initiated about 1,000 people into this self-help system, told Hinduism Today, "Reiki is an experience of the joy that is missing in people's lives due to stress and strain." The reiki flows from what ayurveda calls the pranamayakosha, "sheath of vital energy." It is an electric, lightening energy which is normally free-flowing in people. When it gets disrupted or blocked, diseases manifest. But when this spiritual energy and the material energies are harmonized or realigned, we return to health.

"Just as television waves flow in the atmosphere but require a

suitable receiver tuned to its frequency to reproduce the sound and visual picture, individuals need to be re-tuned to the reiki energy to remain healthy or to regain lost health," explains Nalin. "The reiki master opens the channels--gives you a new connection, as it were--and empowers you to heal your life. Reiki healers are channels of healing. This energy is not our own. We are not the healers, but a conduit or pipeline for the divine energy. There is nothing of me in the healing. I'm not giving anything from my side. It's not mine to give, it is the Divine's."

When disease develops, malfunctions occur first at the energy accumulators and pumps, known as the chakras, which correspond to the endocrine system directing the body's vital functions. The disorder then passes on to the physical body. The healing energy of reiki creates a positive flow of health, because the physical body, the energy body and chakras are all interconnected. Reiki realigns every energy, and people feel happy, satisfied, balanced and at peace. Practitioners, known as channels, must be nonjudgmental and unconditional in their love. They are able to work with stress without allowing it to accumulate, which would cause themselves physical, mental or emotional problems. The energy comes down from the crown chakra to the third-eye and the throat, centering in the heart from where it flows out into the hands onto different parts of the body and to different chakras. One can even heal from a distance.

Says Renoo, "reiki is Japanese, but it has a very old history in India. There is a reference in the Vedas which shows how healing was done by touch and voice, the same as reiki. The special quality of reiki is unconditional love. You could be the

worst criminal, and reiki will not reject you. The blaming tendency disappears, and that's the really healing part. You start loving yourself."

reiki diehards believe that it can cure or improve just about anything from schizophrenia and depression to a failing marriage. It can also help one to give up meat, smoking or drugs. The Nirula's reiki tradition teaches healing at 26 points of the body, and there is a 21-day treatment cycle for chronic conditions. There are also cleansing meditations and affirmations which can be used to heal a person or relationship. Since it offers both emotional and physical healing, it has caught on with many people, from politicians to movie stars like Waheeda Rehman, Sushma Seth and Chandrachoor Singh. Age is also no barrier, with eighty-year-olds sitting alongside eight-year-olds. Says Renoo, "We are healing planet Earth. We are healing the cities and countries. I've been sending healing to all the bomb-blasted areas in Delhi. We work with children in schools and send healing for the environment."

The Nirulas have documented many dramatic cases where lives have been turned around. People with diabetes, cancer and arthritis have improved without surgery or medication. Offers Nalin, "These people ended up healing themselves. The modern medical view is that most disorders are psychosomatic, since all are stress-related." They have trained seven doctors in a South Delhi hospital, where emergency cases that are wheeled into the Cardiac Care Unit are given a few minutes of reiki. Says Renoo, "You can see the differences on the monitor, and the recovery rates are phenomenal."

There are three levels of reiki mastery, but finding a true reiki teacher can be a challenge. According to Nalin there are many fakes floating around, "Some people get up in the morning and declare, 'I am a reiki master,' with no knowledge or initiation. There's even an advertisement in the newspaper where you can get reiki attunement or initiation by correspondence. That's a laugh!"

School principals often send troubled children to Renoo, who encourages them to take responsibility and finds that with reiki , their mindset changes instantly. Reiki calms the intensity of anger these children feel and dispels their feelings of helplessness. Recently a school in Delhi had an opening for ten disabled children to enter integrated classes with normal children. A flood of 500 applications came in, from which the ten most suited were chosen. It was no surprise to Renoo and Nalin that five of the ten applicants were children who had undergone reiki. It seems that we will be hearing a lot more about this life-enhancing healing in the years to come.

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