

The Bhagavad Gita tells a story in which Arjuna, the first Yogi ,devotee, and spiritual warrior of Krishna, seeks the advice and guidance of his Lord, Krishna, the love of the world and highest supreme being.

Arjuna, known among creation to bear his bow as a great weapon of the Lord, cannot bring himself to enter the great battle of his time. Because he sees his family members, uncles, cousins, and brothers on both sides, he laments that winning in any case would be too great a loss.

Krishna advises him in Chapter II of the BV, “Your words are wise, Arjuna, but your sorrow is for nothing. The truly wise mourn neither for the living nor for the dead.”

Speaking to Arjuna of the godhead within, Krishna continues in verse:

“Worn out bodies

Are shed by the dweller

Within the body.

New bodies are donned

By the dweller, like garments...

Innermost elements,

Everywhere, always,

Being of beings,

Changeless, eternal,

Forever and ever.”

In Chapter 16, Krishna tells Arjuna, “A man who is born with tendencies toward the divine is fearless and pure in heart... he harms no one... he has faith in the strength of his higher nature... The birthright of the divine nature leads to liberation... you need not fear Arjuna your birthright is divine.”

I understand this story as an example of our inner struggle to be the fierce spiritual warrior we believe the world requires and the true nature of our being which is ahimsa.

Ahimsa, as I have come to understand it, calls for non-harm first and foremost to the self, then to all others. We are called first to nourish and nurture ourselves in our path. Similarly, to accept that there is a higher immutable self to be trusted for guidance and inner wisdom.

If we are on the path, seeking, we are on the right path.

From an open heart and mind, we derive wisdom and understanding.

As we enter into this practice allow your focus and attention to be on opening the heart and mind in our postures. As we breathe in the divine space of our being, allowing the mind to rest in the body and become energized by the breath, we can root ourselves in the unending nature of our path, a path of Ahimsa, non-harm to the self and others.

Let our movements be gentle, rooted and supportive of the breath as we sequence through a series of asanas to open our hearts, expand the breath and energize the third eye of the mind.

We will go through backbends to open the chest and come up to the Dancers Pose, then ease back down with forward folds and Downward Dog, to end with Sivasana and chanting Om.

In Dancers Pose the chest is open, the reach and gaze are upward and forward, toward the higher self.

Energetically, we are rooting into our grounded foot, reaching upward, arching the spine to experience the full circle connectivity of the body and the chakras, openness of heart, uprightness, and rootedness. Breathing in the posture, allowing the hand and foot to create a balanced tension, pushing and pulling at the same time in resistance to distraction, we align ourselves with the indweller, the “Being of beings, changeless, eternal.”

In the beginning of the sequence, we are coming out of Sivasana into Fish, Bridge, and Wheel before returning to Sivasana; this series offers space to focus on opening the chest, relying on the arms and shoulders to encourage the heart open, focusing on the third eye and crown chakra for a relaxed connection with the highest self.

Additionally, following Dancers Pose, the Peak will be a series of Downward Dogs, Warrior I, Forward Folding, Mountain and Sivasana to ground the higher self within the current form, to experience the presence of our inner yogi in a lasting internal form.

Remaining present and aware of the breath, resting in Sivasana, recall the love of Arjuna for Krishna as pure devotion to the selfless self. Breathe in Krishna’s compassion and confidence that the birthright of the yogi is divine. Allow your practice to nurture and nourish you. Have Faith in the strength of your higher nature. Remain in Sivasana for a few more minutes and when you are ready, come to sitting to chant Om.

Om Om Om

Om

Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

Full sequence for this practice:

Savasana

Fish

Bridge

Wheel

Savasana

(Roll onto stomach)

Cobra

Locust

Bow

(Roll onto back)

Plow

(optional shoulder stand and headstand)

Savasana

Sit up to

Dandasana (stick) (reach up)

Pascimatanasana (forward fold) (hook the index finger around the big toe, pulling the toes back and stretching the heels) (Elbows down and in) (chin and chest resting on legs)

Vakrasana (Sitting supine twist)

Frog

Tree

Side Bending

Dancer's Pose

Downward Dog

Warrior I

Downward Dog

Feet to hands to stand in Forward Fold

Raise up slowly to

Mountain Pose (Tadasana)

Reach your arms up and out in front of you

lift up to stand and balance on your toes

When steady remain on your toes and lower your body to the mat

To lie in Savasana

Conclude the practice in a sitting position

Chanting three resonant Om's and Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Namaste'

Adi Om Tat Sat.