The Yoga of Song
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DEVOTION

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Yogi Hari's music isn't only devotional, It's a testimony to the magic of sound

Yogi hari's master collection of audio CDs features first and foremost his extraordinary singing voice. While polished professional musicians from India might put on a better show of flair, flash and musical variety, the rich quality of Yogi Hari's mesmerizing voice makes his devotional songs important for mystical as well as musical reasons.

Yogi Hari needs no introduction as a successful and proficient teacher of hatha and raja yoga. But lesser known is his mastery of the obscure nada yoga, the yoga of sound. Yogi Hari was a dedicated student of the late Swami NadaBrahmananda of Rishikesh, the greatest exponent of nada yoga in recent times. Swami was a successful singer, percussionist and court musician before taking sannyas at the age of 50 from Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Sivananda encouraged NadaBrahmananda to explore the inner qualities of sound through yoga, which knowledge then added a marked mystical depth to his singing. He was also a profoundly disciplined person, doing four hours of difficult sadhanas daily. He departed this world in 1994 at age 102 while entering the Ganga at Rishikesh for his morning bath.

Nada Brahmananda's influence on Yogi Hari is clear in his fine comprehensive collection on CD of devotional songs put out under his own label, Nada Publications. Each CD costs a reasonable us$14.95 and will truly--as Yogi Hari says--"lift you out of anxiety, restlessness and depression." Every single song without exception creates a sense of peace in the listener. There are ten CDs in the collection. Four are devoted to Siva. Three focus on mantras adapted to simple melodies. Three others feature miscellaneous songs and chants. The instrumental accompaniment is simple but appropriate, with tambura, harmonium, cymbals and tabla, and occasionally including flute and violin. The pieces range in complexity from simple bhajana to formal, sophisticated Sanskrit compositions. The latter are usually sung solo by Yogi, while the bhajana selections, some in English, are rendered in answer-response with an eloquent female voice in accompaniment. The theme of this collection is summarized in the opening song on Ananda. "From joy I came, for joy I live. In blissful joy I melt again."

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