



Upcoming Events

Sept 6, 7 - Kriya Yoga First Level
Corte Madera, CA

Sept 19-28 - Kriya Yoga Third Level
Estonia

Oct. 3-5 - Kriya Yoga Second Level
Union City, CA

Oct. 16 - Free Satsang
Union City, CA

Oct. 31 - Shakti Healing
Singapore

Samadhi-Prajna

Those who are aspiring to achieve super-conscious states of blissful unity called samadhi must first develop samadhi-prajna or discriminative wisdom. This is not the wisdom that arises during or after reaching super-consciousness, but rather that wisdom which is a pre-requisite.

This is important to understand because there are those who believe that one can attain samadhi states without first developing and displaying this wisdom in thought, word and deed. Indeed there are those who even claim to have experienced samadhi and do not display the post-samadhi wisdom that is a mark of those who have achieved a stabilized super-conscious state. We will examine the post-samadhi wisdom in a future article, and confine ourselves to the pre-samadhi wisdom today.

During the course of a sincere spiritual practice, flashes of insight occur. These insights happen when the higher mind, the buddhi is able to bypass the oversight of the ego (ahamkara) and

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Olympics and Self-Realization

Every four years, a large part of the world takes time out of their busy lives to cheer on the athletes that have made it into the Olympic Games. A week ago, I watched the spectacle of the opening ceremony in Beijing, China and it was indeed awe-inspiring. The beauty and scale of the pageant made much ado about harmony and the welcome of friendship – such laudable emotions are indeed inspiring and something to aspire towards.

However, just a few hours later, the representatives who mingled easily together the previous night, were literally and figuratively at each others' throats. They all had the same goal – to win a gold medal at all costs. Most of them have trained hard all their lives and dedicated every waking moment to their dreams of the elusive golden icon.

It makes for gripping entertainment and we all cheer on our favorites, applauding the ones who succeed and shaking our heads at the failed and fallen heroes. This is the way of competition – one winner and many losers.

Unlike an Olympic event in which there is only one gold medal winner, Self-Realization has unlimited number of gold medals!

It is unfortunate that many spiritual seekers and otherwise sincere yogic practitioners behave as if the realization of the true Self and achievement of our highest potential is a competitive race. Students within the same group vie for the attention of their spiritual guide and compete to show off their achievements rather than serve in the spirit of selflessness that is necessary for spiritual attainment. The intensifi-

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Proper Use of Mala for Mantra Practice

One of the oldest and extremely effective spiritual paths is that of Mantra Yoga. The key is the initiation into an appropriate power or meditation sound pattern called a mantra by a teacher capable of transmitting the mantra to someone else.

Whether you have been initiated into a mantra practice or enjoying some mantra from an audio CD or even a book, if you are serious about practicing, you would need to use a mala or a rosary of one hundred and eight beads.

The mala is used for counting the number of repetitions of the specific mantra. A practice generally requires the repetition of 108 counts or a multiple of 108 per session, with an ultimate goal of reaching a certain number such as 108,000 or 144,000 or even 1,080,000.

Since the mala is such an important tool in mantra practice, over the generations a large body of mystique has arisen over its proper use. A lot of the lore may be questionable, but much is quite symbolic as well as practical.

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Olympics and Self-Realization

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cation of the ego is counterproductive to the practice of Yoga.

There is no attainment for those who compete on how well they can hold a physical posture or how long they can hold their breath or how long they can hold their meditation without moving, only pain and suffering. Practice has to be performed for practice sake without attachment or desire in order to reach higher consciousness and any competitiveness with others or even with one-self serves to strengthen the ego.

There are some spiritual guides who encourage competitiveness by their students as a way to spur them on the path. However, this is two-edged sword and eventually the ego of short-term achievements will be a barrier to Self-Realization and we can only hope that the teacher is there to knock down the inflated ego eventually.

Jealousy of fellow spiritual students is another barrier to higher awareness. It is often observed that when one student seems to make tremendous progress, others seek to tear down the one who has apparently moved ahead. This is a symptom of our cultural upbringing which has an underlying presumption that someone making progress in any field does so at the cost of others, that life is a zero-sum game – if someone wins, someone else must lose.

This is not the case on the spiritual path – there can be as many winners as there are spiritual aspirants. We must re-program our basic assumptions and remove the subconscious blocks that have been built up without our understanding so that we can rejoice and applaud the progress of our fellow seekers.

If one person achieves Self-Realization, everyone on earth benefits from that one's efforts. Objectively, the realized person can help others on the path. Subjectively, we all share the same divine essence – we are One in the Divine and so share in some part the achievement, but for the intercession of the individuating ego.

Just as in the Olympics, teams compete against each other and sometimes resort to name calling and badgering to win some minute advantage on the field of battle, so also do so-called Spiritual Organizations denounce each other or claim some superior legitimacy.

The rhetoric endorsed by some organizations confine themselves to coming up with buzzwords that confuse the sincere seekers, with the intention to ensnare them into their fold with promises of quick and effortless redemption, liberation or bliss-full experiences. There is a game of one-upmanship in the marketing and advertising cam-

paigns, just as there is between rival companies or countries or teams. The distinctive character of a spiritual goal is put aside for the sake of expediency and growth – the metric for material success is transferred to the spiritual world.

The truth is the spiritual groups and organizations can only help the sincere practitioner on the path – they are not substitutes for one's daily meditation. Devotion to any organization cannot lead to salvation, only devotion to the Divine.

Seek out those groups and organizations that offer sincere help without requiring mindless obedience to their rules or strictures against belonging to another group. The spectacular failures of religious organizations should be a warning to spiritual groups to eschew such retrogressions. Yoga is not a religion.

There is no competition within the Divine Consciousness, only within our limited minds. Let us free ourselves from such limitations and embrace our true nature of one-ness. Let us free ourselves from competitiveness and jealousies and open ourselves to the infinities, to the unlimited number of gold medals available beyond the Olympia of minor gods and athletes of physical excellence. Let us extend our hands of friendship to all the fellow travelers on the path.

We cannot blame the Divine for our personal suffering
and we cannot lay blame on the Divine for suffering in the world.
We, as human beings, are collectively responsible.

Spiritual evolution is the key to individual peace and to social harmony
A world of love and contentment - a place of divine joy.
Let us take the personal responsibility to evolve
For the sake of all humanity.

From *In Light of Kriya Yoga*

Proper Use of Mala for Mantra Practice

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To understand some of the guidelines, it is necessary keep in mind that it is basic to the mystique of the mala that the beads retain some of the power and energy from the mantra itself. This means that the mala becomes a storage medium for mantric power and energy – this is especially true for one made from the rudraksha beads.

There are some practitioners who actually hide their malas under a bag as they count out the repetitions so as to prevent others from “stealing” their energy. This is somewhat extreme and most practitioners need not worry about such an event occurring.

I would recommend the following cautionary guidelines:

1. Use a bag to hold your mala rather than just putting it into your pockets as it will easily get damaged from frequent taking in and out or even get in-

advertently lost.

2. Do not wear the mala that you are using for mantra practice as your body will then re-absorb the energy. If one wishes to wear a mala, it should be a separate one used only for wearing.

3. Never drop the mala on the floor or let someone else handle it as that will drain the energy.

4. Hold the mala with your second and third /ring fingers and do not touch it with the first finger as it is considered to have egoistic energy.

5. When you finish one round of 108 and wish to continue another round, do not go over the head bead which is not counted – one should flip the mala over and go back the way you had come.

6. If you are practicing more than one mantra, it is better to use a separate mala for the second mantra – best not to mix mantras on one mala.

7. If your mala gets broken and the beads are separated, do not try to mend it, but retire it away in a bag under your altar. A broken mala can no longer hold the energy and also may have a negative effect on your mantric practice.

8. The left hand is not used for mantric practice.

9. If you cannot complete the mala at some session, you can use a pin to clip the location where you stopped, and continue from there when you have time – you do not need to start all over again.

10. Only a rudraksha mala can be used for Shiva mantras or Shakti mantras – do not use crystal or lotus or some other material.

Try to get the best quality mala that you can as a low quality one will easily break during your practice. Smaller beads are used for mantra practice while malas with large beads are only used for wearing.

Samadhi-Prajna

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the sense muddling of the lower mind (manas). Normal knowledge is based on the lower mind which operates with the five sensory inputs as well as the logical operation of inference. Insight occurs with direct knowing and without the five senses or logical inference. Insight is necessary because reality is beyond the five senses or the logical operation of the lower mind.

As one's practice matures and progresses, these flashes of insight become more and more frequent until they become continuous and the seeker is always in tune with the higher mind. As the insight mindfulness stabilizes, it is transformed into the pre-samadhi wisdom. In this state, one is able to discriminate between right and wrong in every moment and is able to make informed choices that obviously have

karmic repercussions.

It is the continuous flow of pre-samadhi wisdom which is characteristic of those who have reached higher states of consciousness on the brink of super-consciousness unity bliss. There is also a bliss in the pre-samadhi wisdom which shadows that of samadhi bliss because of the continuous flow and connection with the higher mind.

The laws of reality are no longer a mystery to those who have attained to the pre-samadhi wisdom. However, they have not yet penetrated into that which underlie the laws of reality – for that, they must wait for the post-samadhi wisdom.

The attainment of pre-samadhi wisdom is a long and arduous process of removing the layers of illusion wrought by the sensory lower mind and the trickster ego. However, one should not confuse this lower attainment with that of the true samadhi state, nor should

one enjoy it to the detriment of the final goal of Self-Realization.

I'm often asked why I don't describe this or other states of consciousness in even more detail and my answer is always that one should only know enough to be helpful to the path and not so much that it becomes a hindrance. The Masters of the past have time and time again observed that human beings have a great capacity for self-delusion and the team of the lower mind and ego can derail sincere students into believing they have experiences which are only mental dreams or visions that are not the real attainment of higher consciousness. It is like an actor playing superman who believes that he is actually superman – hopefully he will not try to jump out of a window. The mind is capable of recreating all sorts of pseudo-experiences that will delude someone to make claims far beyond their actual attainment.

Focus on: Affirmations

(excerpted from the book *Yoga of Purification and Transformation*)

An affirmation is a positive thought or statement that you repeat to yourself and implant in your inner consciousness as a source of inspiration for your present and future actions. Once secured in your subconscious mind, it guides your thoughts and actions in a chosen direction. You can use the power of affirmations to overcome certain undesirable traits and negative and habitual thought patterns in your mind or deal with some weakness in your personality affirmatively. They are powerful aids to the practice of the self-restraints called yama.

Using positive affirmations you can instruct your body and mind to act in a certain way. You can overcome the barriers that stand in between you and your true Self. You can send subtle thought forces into your consciousness and powerfully alter your thinking and behavior. Using positive affirmations, you can heal yourself in astonishing ways. You can stay motivated and focused on your path to spiritual enlightenment. You can truly transform your personality and make yourself more acceptable and at peace with yourself, overcoming many problems in your life, problems that exist because of some inherent deficiency or debility with your attitude, behavior or thinking, as a result of your karmic load.

Positive affirmations may not get you every thing you want in your life, but they can help you establish an environment in which you have greater opportunities to shape your life and alter the course of your actions. They can help you overcome the feelings of frustra-

tion and helplessness and make you feel confident, self reliant and responsible for your actions and thoughts. You can face the challenges of your life more confidently and with the conviction that you're not a mere pawn in the hands of some unknown fate. You can practically do anything that's humanly possible and within the field of your reality. It is possible to use affirmations for goals which are not particularly spiritually oriented, but such changes in life direction are generally band-aids which do not address the fundamental issues, which are generally karmic and spiritual, and therefore it is advisable to put more of your energy to solving these ultimate problems.

The characteristics of successful affirmations:

Following are some of the suggestions on how to make your affirmation work for you and bring success and happiness in your daily life:

- The affirmation should be appropriate to the problem that you want to deal with.
- Use words that focus on the end result desired.
- Repeat the affirmation regularly until it is firmly integrated with your consciousness and become part of your natural response to the intended problem.
- Associate your affirmation consciously and persistently with the problem you want to resolve.
- Balance your negative thought or fear with the positive affirmation
- Write the affirmation down on a paper or some book and keep it within

easy reach.

- Memorize the affirmation for easy repetition.

- Start your day with positive affirmations and remember them before you go to bed. During the day, use them on as many occasions as you can, and definitely when you need them most - when there is a need to reinforce a desired behavior or state of mind or counter a problem or situation you are facing.

- Keep your affirmation simple, using action words that invoke positive imagery and appeal to your mind and sense directly.

- Make your affirmations personal and in first person. Feel the need for them strongly. Experience the sense of responsibility as you think of them.

- Use positive words only. Avoid negative expressions. Say, "I'm achieving this state of mind or reality," instead of "I don't want to be like this or that or I don't want to do this or that."

- Act as if your affirmations are already working and yielding positive results. Express your gratitude to the Divine.

- Add the power of visualization to the force of your affirmations. Visualize how your affirmations can change your life and your personality.

- Use the power of Yoga Nidra to create the environment for the most effective seeding of the affirmation on the receptive consciousness.

There are appropriate affirmations that help in the practice of the self-restraints of yama. It is difficult for most of us to practice ahimsa or nonviolence in thought, word or deed, since we are prone to anger and fear, which requires the antidote of love. The same situation exists for the other four restraints.