



# Sanatana Mitra

MAY 2012



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## Upcoming Events

**June and July - Private Classes only  
in California**

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## The Heart Center

The Anahata Chakra or heart center is the seat of human consciousness. It is the center of transition from the animal consciousness of the three lower chakras to the divine consciousness of the higher three chakras. Most of humanity is still struggling and have their base at the navel center and often fall to the lower passionate animal consciousness of lust and fear. Those operating from the navel center are primarily concerned with controlling others and accumulating wealth and possessions. The Navel center is the seat of power, possessions and position or status.

The heart center is in the subtle life-force or energy body which overlays the physical body. It is located at the back around the area between the shoulder blades along the subtle central spinal energy channel called the sushumna nadi. It is the center that stores, transforms and transmits the life-force energy that keeps the physical heart and the circulatory system in good health.

It is also the seat of that part of the soul called the prana-atma of life-force soul. The mind or manas is based at the heart center. The primary positive emotion is love and the negative emotion is hatred. It is the center where we can

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## The Divine Feminine

We just recently celebrated Mother's Day. In this fast moving and non-traditional day and age, it is necessary to remind everyone of the sacrifice and love that makes possible the birth and nurturing of all human beings.

A mother's love is every baby and child's first experience of the world except in the unfortunate cases of orphans (physical or emotional). It is the mother's love or lack there-of that shapes the lives of all human beings. In the Indian spiritual traditions, there is recognition of this power and influence of the mother in the family being reflected in the divine and cosmic scenario.

Even though the Divine is not subject to gender or division, but encompasses

all aspects of the universe, it is helpful for mortal beings to envision various aspects and attributes of the Divine so that we can form a connection from our limited perception and understanding to the infinite and unbounded power and consciousness that fills, covers and permeates this universe. For many of us, there is a strong resonance with the feminine mother aspect and this has resulted in the popularity of feminine deities in India.

In most cases, the feminine aspect is complementary to the masculine aspect as in the pairing of the triple divinity. Each of the three primary functions of creation, preservation and transformation is represented by the masculine consciousness of Brahma, Vishnu and

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## A Precaution for Meditation

There is a misconception that every system or technique loosely called meditation is equivalent and the same rules apply to them. Most of the time, it is assumed that meditation is always good and can be practiced at any time by anyone with positive results. Such an assumption is incorrect and can lead to unwanted mental effects.

The problem is that meditation is a catch-all word used to describe a variety of spiritual practices and does not really have a strict meaning in English. It can span the simplest concentration exercises to the preliminary mental cleansing methods through to the most

advanced techniques that can only be performed in Samadhi states. The common factor is that meditation techniques affect the mind.

The seeker should not meditate when he is in mental or emotional distress. Remember that most meditations require a calm and concentrated mind to begin. When one is not calm for whatever reason, the first thing is to attain a peaceful state before continuing. This can be achieved with mental and emotional healing techniques which can sometimes be also called meditations – these should be the foundation of all meditation systems and must be

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# The Divine Feminine

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Shiva. Each of these is paired with their feminine counterpart representing the power or energy aspect. Brahma is paired with Saraswati, Vishnu with Lakshmi and Shiva with Parvati. It is necessary to consider the pairing more in the nature of two sides of the same coin than to think of them as married couples which many Hindus have the tendency to.

Although there are popular stories about these couples that seem to relate to them as almost human couples in their actions, these should not be taken literally or even philosophically as they are usually meant to teach basic lessons of life using the divine beings as actors in the drama. In the tradition of the sages, the pairs cannot be separated and one side cannot act with the other, just as power without consciousness leads to mindless destruction and consciousness without power leads to non-action.

The development of the Divine

Feminine takes on a more unique role in the cosmic drama, because Mother Parvati, the Shakti or feminine power of Lord Shiva, has taken on various other forms for specific transformative functions. These forms have their own attributes and have taken on separate existences with their own associated lore and legends. Such Shaktis include Mother Durga who is fierce in defending her children, the horrifying Kaali Ma who roots out all darkness and negativity from the universe and Tripura Sundari who is glorious in her protection of creation. Some of the major feminine forms have been grouped together under the umbrella term of the ten Mahavidyas, a primarily tantra tradition.

In the ultimate development of feminine power, the Shakta tradition holds that the supreme Divine power is feminine and all creation, including the triple aspect of creator, preserver and transformer flows only from the One

Divine Mother. This extreme homage to the mother aspect resonates with some spiritual aspirants, especially a portion of the tantric tradition and is a legitimate path towards higher consciousness.

Whether you are on one side or the other of the spectrum in perceiving the feminine in the Divine, there can be no seeker who can ignore this aspect. One may need to be reminded that on the yogic level, the potential energy called Kundalini that needs to be awakened and raised for Self-Realization is also called the Shakti or the Divine Feminine. Only when the Shakti Kundalini is raised and united with the Shiva Consciousness in third-eye that Self-Realization is possible.

We need to pay our homage to the Divine Mother as well as to our birth mothers. Our human mothers have given us birth to our human body with the potential for realizing our true nature, while it is Divine Mother who can give us a second birth as Self-Realized beings.

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## A Precaution for Meditation

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practiced well before graduating to the higher parts. I've met many seekers who assume that the techniques they have been taught will automatically lead to a calm mind which is usually not the case but they push ahead anyway with the result either that they are too distracted to practice or negative energy infects their meditation.

When the mind is distracted, one waste one's effort – the first priority is to achieve calmness and then concentration. Most meditators have had the experience of distraction and dissatisfaction with their practice. However, less understood is the risk of undermining one's own mind with powerful techniques that embrace the poison

of negativity without transforming it. These two cases can be understood from the analogy of physical posture practice. When one is tired but persists in asana practice, one will not have a good experience – either one gives up due to fatigue or one may even get hurt due to carelessness. It is important to rest and relax with gentle movements until one is ready for the postures.

It is good to remind oneself why we are meditating, just as it is important to keep in mind that posture practice is for flexibility and health and not for performance or competition. The prime purpose of meditation is to control the mind. Until some degree of control is achieved, all attempts to engage in

higher practices of Mantra, Kundalini or Kriya systems are going to be difficult if not impossible. If one's mind is still in turmoil then one should be careful about the delusions that can arise with advanced techniques.

Always assume an attitude of love and compassion. Give up all fear and anger. Calm the mind. Focus the mind. Then one is ready to meditate.

# The Heart Center

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transform our hatred into love. It is the degree to which we have developed our capacity of love that distinguishes a true human being from an animal. It is not enough that we love our children or spouse – that is something even some higher animals can accomplish – we need to extend our love to others to whom we have no family relationship, that is to friends and eventually even to strangers.

Reacting emotionally to events, situations and relationships is the mode of the navel center and is responsible for most of the problems of humanity. If we can move our consciousness to the loving mind of the heart center, we will act and react from the perspective of love and kindness. Development of the heart center is the key to earth peace.

The heart center also rules relationships and we can see how the world is mired in relationship problems because we cannot have a relationship of equality from the navel center. The navel center is of domination and submission. One party or the other will seek to dominate. A relationship can form when one party submits but it is not human nature to submit and there cannot be lasting peace in such a lop-sided relationship despite the literary pretensions of sado-masochistic psychology. If both parties try to exert dominance, then the relationship ends abruptly. A solid foundation for a healthy relationship requires mutual respect and with both parties trying to operate from the heart center.

We can develop our heart center and bring our consciousness to this base

with the help of the appropriate yogic techniques and I teach a workshop for this purpose. However, even without such techniques, it is the power of awareness that can awaken the heart center. It is the awareness of love. It is the awareness of tolerance. It is the awareness of our egotistical and selfish desires. It is the awareness and willingness to look at a situation from someone else's perspective. It is awareness that can break through the barriers of the navel center and move us to the heart center.

The evolution towards higher consciousness begins when we take responsibility for seating ourselves in our loving heart center. It begins when we make the effort to act from the heart center. Peace begins when we operate from the heart center and if even a small portion of humanity activate their heart love, then there will be less and less violence and wars in this world.

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## Commencement Address

We are now at the end of graduation season and I've been reading about all the ceremonies in the schools of higher education and hundreds of colleges around the country. Part of the ceremony involves a commencement speech from someone famous or successful in a particular field who is supposed to give some words of advice to the students on their graduation, hopefully words that can be useful as they start a new chapter in their lives. Since many of you are on the spiritual path and are seekers of Self-Realization, I wondered what would the commencement speech from our True-Self be like to a group of graduates who have achieved Self-Realization.

Below is an excerpt from a much longer speech – only those parts which are applicable to the group rather than to each individually (from the perspective of the body, of course):

My Dear Souls,

Congratulations! It's been a long road. You've lived and experienced thousands of life-times and now you have achieved freedom from the bondage of the illusory ego and the delusory desires of the five senses. You have realized your true nature as the divine and immortal spirit.

Through it all, I've been with you day and night. When you shed rivers of tears or enjoyed the peaks of triumph, I watched over you and comforted you as best I could. You did not often hear my words of comfort or guidance but once in a while, the light would shine through. Then one day, you set your heart and sight on me and have since strived and struggled against the current of life to reach your home. It is by your perseverance and self-effort that you have burnt away all your past karma. It is by your meditations that

you have reached the state where you no longer act selfishly to accrue new karma.

Now, what are you going to do with your freedom? The road to perfection in Being is still ahead, my beloved ones. Some of you will choose to move quickly ahead and to higher planes to perfect yourself. Others may choose to stay on earth and work for the betterment of your brothers and sisters who are still living under the tyranny of the ego and their own desires. Still others may choose the path to return again and again to this plane of existence and perfect yourselves while leading lives of light for the sake of all living beings. Whatever your choice, it will be the will of the Divine. You all have your roles and responsibilities in the divine sphere and some of you will be operating on the cosmic level very soon. It is your will to co-operate with the Divine Will that has set you on your cur-

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# The Moral Imbalance

I often come across seekers on the spiritual path who are struggling with the situation of their lives. Most of them are not aware that they are engaged in the advanced practices that cause the speeding up of karmic issues. The disruptions in their lives are a side-effect of the yogic techniques. Unfortunately, most of them are not prepared for the eruption of these issues and become depressed or give up their practices. A few, even turn negative and let their suppressed subconscious programs take charge. This deplorable situation is due to the Western tendency to take short-cuts and to bypass the foundation practices that have been given by the past Eastern Masters.

In ancient times the sages emphasized the development and practice of ethics above all as the pre-eminent spiritual practice. However, in present times this has become unfashionable and there is much greater emphasis on the Guru's grace or in the effectiveness of techniques. It is understandable because the effect of grace or the techniques are more apparent while that of morality is difficult to ascertain from our worldly perspective.

However, there is great harm in neglecting the development of moral character as part of one's spiritual practice.

Effective spiritual practices which lead to self-realization have to release the past karmas so that they can be either worked out positively or removed by further practice. However, such a release usually gives rise to emotional or mental reactions that can cause new karmic consequences. For example, memories of past traumas can give rise to emotions such as anger or despair and if one cannot detach from such emotions, they will be expressed outwardly against another person, thereby causing new negative karma. In this

example, the spiritual practice, rather than help in progressing towards less karma would increase one's karmic burden instead – a step backward.

When you are firmly grounded in positive virtues such as truthfulness and harmlessness, then you can easily process all the “stuff” that come out from your practice without being negatively effected. Rather than an emotional catharsis which causes more emotional ripples around, you would be able to release the negativity by detachment or transformation.

Transforming a negative emotion such as anger into a positive emotion such as love takes practice and does not happen automatically. That is the reason why we must form ethical habits and the moral injunctions such as those given by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras are a reminder that they are necessary. Living life under these ethical rules helps to generate the behavior patterns that will enable us to deal with the unfolding of our karmic burdens successfully. From a subtle perspective, our nadis and chakras are purified through the practice of the ethical rules so that the chakras can be awakened.

The training in ethical living leads to a moral character that is pure in thought, word and actions. A seeker who has developed this moral purity should not be confused with the religious bigots who claim such a status. A person of pure mind has developed her sattvic or lightening character and interacts with others from a perspective of non-judgemental love. Such a person accepts others as they are and helps all who seek help. Such a person has studied their own psyche and accepts their own totality without letting the negativity take control. Such a person develops a consciousness of contentment and accepts all that life can give.

Such a person is suitable to practice advanced yogic techniques because they cannot be disrupted from their purity and contentment.

Of course, I've sketched an ideal situation but we don't always have the opportunity to attain such ethical, pure and contented consciousness before embarking on advanced spiritual practice. I've found when talking with those who are currently suffering through their karmic issues, that just knowing that it is happening because of their own practice and that it is ultimately good since it will lessen their karmic burden, has in some ways helped them.

There is still time to consider the importance of ethical rules in your spiritual life – it will smooth out a lot of the negative events and help you cope better. We cannot control what is happening around and to us, but we can control how we react to these events.

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## Commencement Address

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rent path and no matter what happens in the future, you will no longer stray from your high states of consciousness which is anchored in Me.

I would like to take a moment to remind you that you still have a body to take care of and roles and responsibilities that are a part of who you were. It is proper to reflect on these and seek to act according to the inertial karma which still enlivens your current body from the higher consciousness that you now embrace. You are a liberated soul that still has a physical body shroud.

This may be the last time that I will be speaking to you in this manner as we are One and this occasion is merely an artifice for you to remember the experience of duality that you have been suffering for so long.

Come, let us embrace our Unity.