



# Sanatana Mitra

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2009



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## Upcoming Events

**Feb. 6-8 - Kriya Yoga 2nd Level**  
Mumbai, India

**Mar. 6-8 - Kriya Yoga 1st Level**  
Singapore

**Mar. 21 - Chakra Self-Healing**  
Union City, CA

**Mar. 28-29 - Kriya Yoga 1st Level**  
Santa Cruz, CA

**Apr. 17-19 - Kriya Yoga 1st Level**  
Ireland

**Apr. 20 - Chakra Self-Healing**  
Ireland

**Apr. 21-22 - Chakra Teacher Training**  
Ireland

**Apr. 24 - Chakra Self-Healing**  
London, United Kingdom

**Apr. 25-26 - Kriya Yoga 1st Level**  
London, United Kingdom

## Ethics and Self-Realization

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.

Is there any harm in neglecting the development of moral character as part of one's spiritual practice?

Effective spiritual practices which

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## Keys to Health and Spiritual Evolution

A reader asks why I put so much emphasis on the chakras in my teachings.

There is probably no other yogic tool as important as that of the energy centers or chakras since they have important roles for both the physical, emotional and mental health of a person as well as being pivotal in attaining to higher conscious states.

There are hundreds of chakras in the energy body but the six major ones along the subtle spine are the most crucial. This is because they are the repositories of our karma. The six chakras are the muladhara at the perineum (connected to the base of the spine), swadhisthana at the sacrum (about 3 inches above the base), manipura at the back corresponding to the navel, anahata or heart center, vishuddhi at the base of the neck and ajna in the middle of the brain. There is of course the 7th chakra called sahasrara chakra or

thousand-petalled lotus at the top of the head but this center is that of perfection and does not have any function.

It is very useful to learn the names of the chakras themselves as they have mantric significance and the repetition of their names causes vibrations at the energy centers.

Each of the chakras is responsible for certain bodily functions – the muladhara is responsible for the physical body as a whole, the swadhisthana for the emotional body, the manipura for the energy body, the anahata for the mental body and the vishuddhi for the causal body.

There is also overlapping of functionalities in that although muladhara has overall control of the physical body, it also has minor functions for emotions, energy, mental states and karmic memory. For instance, this first chakra rules

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## Desire Is The Source Of Our Suffering

The 2nd energy center or swadhisthana chakra is the center for attraction and aversions. We are attracted to certain things and people and have an aversion for others. The specifics are governed by our present and past karmic patterns – our urges and compulsions.

The 2nd center is responsible for the instinct to preserve our species, that is for reproduction. However, nowadays, this urge is no longer needed as much as before, but it is just as strong if not more than ever.

Unlike animals, which just express

their urges in a straightforward manner, "the pinnacle of evolution on earth" has misused his imagination to create an unending number of objects, situations and experiences to try to indirectly satisfy these urges. We have created all sorts of conditions and criteria for food – the look, taste, texture and smell. There arises the myriad desire for status, power and accumulation of possessions and lust for satisfaction of the senses.

Emotional pleasure arises from the

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# Keys to Health and Spiritual Evolution

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the emotions of fear and courage.

It is important to understand that these energy centers are very subtle pranic structures and are maintained directly by the life-force energy. When the life-force energy is depleted, then they cannot function properly and then every aspect of our life that they control will be hurt. On the flip side, when we do, say or even think something negative which resonates with a particular chakra, then it becomes depleted of prana! Of course when we apply ourselves positively, then more prana will go to the chakra concerned.

In the subtle energy body, the chakras are connected together by fine filaments of energy called the nadis. These nadis act like the arteries and nerves in the physical body, and they can be blocked or even damaged so that some parts of the subtle body might not be getting the life-force needed. However, since they are energy filaments, they can be

repaired, redirected and even grown by the power of prana – this aspect is essential for healing purposes.

For the spiritual evolution and development of higher consciousness, the main energy channel called sushumna nadi flows along the spine and through the 6 major chakras that we have been discussing. It is through this central channel that the latent kundalini shakti has to rise up for the bliss of samadhi and the flowering of super-conscious states. Therefore, each chakra has to be sufficiently opened and filled with life-force energy before the kundalini will be attracted up to it. We need to work progressively upward in the normal course of events in order to raise the kundalini but in practical safety terms, it is recommended to try to open the 6th chakra or ajna first, in order to provide the positive pull from above.

If the higher chakras are shut and we open up the lower ones, then there may

be difficulties encountered in the first three chakras which may challenge the practitioner's ability to cope. There are practices which work on all 6 chakras progressively without over-emphasizing on any one at a time and these are the kind of practice that I recommend. Even when one is putting greater emphasis on one particular chakra in order to work out certain problems, it is always a good idea to exercise all the other chakras regularly to some extent. For instance, if you are spending half an hour on the heart chakra, combine it with a five minute each practice on the other five chakras, making up almost an hour.

Working on the chakras is a life-long pursuit but one of the most worthwhile that anyone can embark on. The healing affects can occur very quickly but due to our karmic inertia and habit patterns, the energy centers cannot be so easily opened and developed for spiritual purposes. However, it is a necessity for Self-Realization and so persevere in your efforts.

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## Ethics and Self-Realization

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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 unfold-

ing of our karmic burdens successfully. From a subtle perspective, our nadis and chakras are purified through them so that the chakras can be awakened. Only after years of life training in the

Please do consider the importance of ethical rules in your spiritual life – it will smooth out a lot of the negative events in the practitioner's life.

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## YouTube Videos

Brand new videos featuring Rudra Shivananda are now available for viewing at Youtube.

Access them at this address:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/KriyaNathYogi>

# Desire Is The Source Of Our Suffering

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satisfaction of a desire, and an emotional dependency results from the habitual connection of pleasure with the satisfaction. Unpleasant emotions or displeasure result from the experience of situations or objects, which we would like to avoid, leading to a habitual aversion for those situations or objects. All of us have things we like and those, which we dislike, and it is not always clear how it all came about that we react within the set program.

Desires are like the ten-headed monster of legend – you cut off one head and nine more arise and takes it place – satisfying one desire only gives rise to many more and there does not seem to be an end to them. A desire gains strength over time unless one can detach from it or transform it to another desire.

Emotions are a complex and tangled web that have many interconnected layers and various sources, but desire is one of the primary causes.

Anger arises when a particular desire is unfulfilled, and if this frustration continues, unreasoning violence in thought, word or deed, rears its ugly head. Under the constraints of modern

society, anger is suppressed, leading to stress, a leading cause of ill health such as high-blood pressure or mental illnesses. There are those schools of thought that promote the release of “negative emotions”, supposing that such cathartic exercises would release stress and promote a positive effect. Aside from leaving a person drained for a certain period, and therefore incapable of further emotional outbursts for that period, no long-term benefit seems to occur. The positive experience seems to indicate that it is the channeling of the emotional power, which is valuable, that has long-term effects, and should be pursued.

Jealousy and envy arises when our desires are fulfilled by others. We begin to long for or covet the experiences or possessions of those who seem to “have it all”. Such a reaction arises when we feel an emptiness within ourselves, caused by our inability to connect with our Center, the Divine within us, the True Self. There is no desperate grasping for external validation when one feels the inner completion, the joy of Self-realization.

To get rid of all desires is practically

unfeasible and only theoretical talk of those who do not practice. Instead, one of the best ways to deal with desires is to channel all of them into one great desire. Of course, it would be best if that primary desire is a very positive one, such as the desire for Self-Realization. Just as one does not need a bridge once we get across the river, so also, even this grand desire will disappear once satisfied!

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## Meditation on the Senses of Smell and Taste

The senses of smell and taste are associated with the 1st and 2nd chakras respectively. The control of these senses is necessary for the awakening of these two chakras. Normally, we are under their spell and do not really understand what they are doing unless challenged by strong stimuli such as a perfume or some chilly food.

In the first meditation, connect the appropriate chakra with a sense, for example, the 1st chakra and smell. Take some real smell such as a rose or an essential oil and let the aroma fill you while concentrating on the chakra. Do this for at least 10 minutes.

Next, imagine a specific aroma and try to “smell” it – this will be difficult for many people, but can be developed just as visualization can be developed for the sense of sight.

Practice for at least 10 minutes. Take a particular smell and stick to it for some period of time instead of changing it every meditation session.

In the third meditation, try to vary the aroma in a session – you can try to imagine three to five related smells. Practice for 10 minutes.

For the first 4 weeks, practice to control the sense of smell and then change to the sense of taste for another 4 weeks.

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## Don't Let Fear Rule You

Everyone thinks they know all about fear but few ever think about it, trying to avoid it as much as possible. The fact is that this emotion is so basic that it is almost impossible to become free from it. Fear arises from the instinct of self-preservation which was very important in the early days of humanity. We needed to react to mortal threats with the flight or fight program in those primitive times. However, we are still under the same programming without the same stimuli – there are no saber-tooth tigers hunting us these days. The fear of death is one of the most endur-

ing one that a human possesses.

It is the lesser variations of fear which dominate in modern times – stress and tension. Fear comes and goes – if you see someone point a gun at you, fear may grip your heart but when he puts the gun away, fear is relieved. However, stress is like background music, it is always there. We have little means to release stress because we are not even aware that it is there because we have become used to it. Paradoxically, only when one has attained complete relaxation does one recognize the encroach-

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# Don't Let Fear Rule You

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ment of stress.

We do not require an immediate threat to feel some mode of fear because we have evolved beyond animal consciousness to human consciousness. The blessings of imagination and thinking ahead, which animals do not possess to any degree have the double-edged consequence of causing stress. When a person thinks about the consequence of his action or inaction, such as being late for work or an important meeting, stress is increased. If you imagine yourself losing your job, more stress will spoil your life, but is it an immanent danger that requires such a reaction? We are doing it from habit and cannot stop.

We have been programmed from in-

fancy to react with fear to certain stimuli. It is the punishment and reward system in the family, school, work and society that habituates us to fear the results of failure (however that is defined.) Even when success is achieved in a certain activity, the process has set up so much stress already that we cannot even enjoy the relief.

Tragically, there is even a fear of the unknown. It creates another level of stress that adds to the fear of death. Imagine a stress cake with many layers – the bottom layer is the fear of death and then additional layers are piled on based on our situation.

There is such an emotional perversion that we seek out “harmless” situations that can excite our imagination

with horror and fear. Have we ever wondered why so many people actually go and watch horror movies so that they can get scared? The reason that fear and stress can become so habitual is because there is an adrenaline rush when we get scared – remember the flight or fight instinct that we have from our evolutionary past.

I would recommend that you contemplate the various kinds of fears and how they arise. Meditate on how stress is affecting your life and what it would feel like if you were totally relaxed and unaffected by fears.

Examine your life-style and mark down those activities that are contributing to your stress level. It might be a good idea to change or even omit these activities in the future. Don't think that we can't change things – make the effort now.

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## The Future Is In Our Own Hands

As I watched the inauguration of President Obama a couple of days ago, it occurred to me how much hope and expectation is being invested onto a single individual. Collectively, the whole nation seemed to be wishing that all our troubles will dissipate with the departure of the outgoing president and that a new age is dawning with the change in leadership.

Of course there are many important decisions that only a president can make and they will affect our lives for years to come. Let us leave him to do his work and pray for the best from our leaders.

I'm not advocating that we simply sit back and watch the unfolding drama, thinking that our duty ended with his election. It is time to remember that we are each ultimately responsible, personally and collectively, for what happens in this world and cannot blame nor adulate our political or spiritual leaders beyond a certain point.

We also have a responsibility for what happens around us. How we help or refuse to aid those in need when confronted with the opportunity. How we discharge our obligations to family, friend, society and the world. We are familiar with our duties to our family and friends, although some have sought to hide from them – for example, fathers who don't take responsibilities for their children – which create negative ripples that go beyond the current generation.

Our responsibility for society and the world is less clear – it seems so remote and large and we do not seem to have any direct relationship to them. If there is a relationship, it seems to work the other way, changes in society or the world impact us. What can we do that can effect the larger aspect of our existence? In order to understand this, we must first distinguish between that which happens to us and our reaction to that which happens.

We do not have much control on

external circumstances but have total control over how we deal with them. When we refuse to accept falsehood and the harming of innocent people, we setup the vibration around us that can help to strengthen the resolve of those who are wavering in their ethical stand and willing to compromise their morality. This is just one example.

Remember that the choices you make now will determine who you will be in the future. You can choose to let life dictate who you are or you can choose to overcome your predispositions. Instead of taking the easy road, take the right path to achieve your goals. Let your leaders know in no uncertain terms what is acceptable and what is not. Be a good example for your family and friends by developing a loving attitude – let go of anger in your reactions. Develop a spiritual practice and burn-up your karma which is limiting you from achieving freedom from your emotional behavior patterns.