

Keynote Address

by Yogini Kaliji

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Añjali Mudrā: a greeting with no words. This hand symbol alone expresses...in our hearts we connect as One.

Namaste'

It is simple to say "we or I". Yoga goes further: "who are we, who am I?" The path of self-inquiry begins when we ask who is the real self behind the outer personality. First let us self-reflect on the mental contents of our individual mind. Look at the desires and attachments "seeing" thoughts and emotions as good, not good, or mixed. Yoga practice gives us the focused time to witness the mind, to cleanse the mental sheath, and to allow the more subtle vibrations of knowledge to emerge. The ultimate aim is to realize our true nature, the eternal soul radiating consciousness extolled in eternal, blissful knowledge.

When yoga is compared to the sun, the rays are yoga paths of knowledge. One learns about the sun through the sunrays. The aim of each ray is *manas-śānti*, to bring peace to the mind. Each ray of yoga is important. It is the combined light of all the rays that illuminates the mind.

The moon reflects the mind that goes through apparent change. The moon does not really change, nor does the mind, but rather it is the cycles of thoughts and emotions passing through the mind that change. Yoga is to transcend the thinking mind as the sun transcends the moon. As the moon reflects the sun, the mind reflects the universal mind.

The rays of light represent the aspects of yoga awareness: *haṭha*, *bhakti*, *karma*, *jñāna*, *nāda*, *rāja*. With a pūrṇa yoga abhyāsa, one engages in the complete practice through these various yoga rivers of knowledge.

For health, the discipline of *haṭha yoga* is essential to understand how to maintain body-mind harmony. *Ahimsā diet* is the foundation as the physical body is made from food and sustained by food. *Sattvic* or pure food in the form of a plant-based diet is recommended. It is for animal rights, ecology and human health. Our diet should leave the least carbon footprint as possible. With a conscious healthy diet, the temple is prepared.

The benefits of *haṭha* are far reaching with the pillars of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. The perfection of *āsana* is multi-layered, from flexibility and strength to relaxation that results in a sustained effortless seat. *Prāṇāyāma* is a direct way to tap into the universal energy, like going to a cosmic gas station. As *prāṇa* increases, the mind becomes self-reflective, calm and expansive.

Jñāna yoga questions what is ageless truth and what is man-made. There are many paths to the mountaintop: some with a better view, some impossible to climb, some are climbed with ease, some only can climb so far. *Jñāna* says the source of knowledge is accessible through deep meditation. This is preceded by self-inquiry or reflection, purification of emotions and thoughts, and an unshakable faith and desire to know truth. Seeking knowledge from the wise and from scriptures is of great support. The most direct is silencing the mind to listen inside. The great ocean of knowledge will speak.

In *bhakti yoga* it is the devotion, the heart energy, that inspires us to continue in pursuit of the goal or the Divine. It works directly with *anāhata cakṛa*—feelings of love emerge leading the way to unconditional love. There is no greater feeling.

Karma is predestined either from previous actions or from present thoughts that result in immediate action. *Yoga sādhanā* opens the window to see into the cause and effect as we reap and sow. To see the underlying cause and the subsequent effect empowers one to understand they are ultimately responsible for their karma, for their life. Though we do share society and nature karma, the way we respond is our individual choice.

Karma yoga is consciously choosing right thoughts and acting accordingly. It is planting good karma seeds that also erase adverse karma yet to sprout. Selfless service flows through the *yogī's* actions.

Nāda yoga uses sound vibration to steady the mind, resulting in meditation. *Nāda* reveals that thoughts should reflect wisdom as it is like music to the mind. *Nāda* reminds us to think positively, to refine the mind to hear the inner sound, the universal mind. Through mantra (mystical sound vibrations, higher frequency music), the thinking mind absorbs into sound and is carried away into the realm of absolute knowledge where wisdom is the language.

Rāja yoga is known as the royal path as the power of discrimination is perfected. One can discern between the real and the unreal: Truth and *māyā* (false knowledge). *Rāja yoga* culminates in *samādhi*, expanded consciousness, the transcendental state of being.

We are ageless souls in search to remember who we are. It is a game of hide-and-seek that we perpetually play. When we follow the *pūrṇa abhyāsa* way then once again the cosmic play is revealed. We can choose to continue to be a conscious actor or to merge into the Source of non-duality and later return when the need for a *bodhisattva*, a spiritual leader, emerges for the betterment of society. Like going to sleep at night, we always wake up no matter how long or little we slept. We can merge into non-duality but one day, by our very nature, we return to serve in this eternal play.

May we all continue to share yoga, the great, great, great gift to humanity, so that all may rise, may uplift to be more in resonance with their highest potential. From haṭha to rāja, all can practice pūrṇa yoga. Pūrṇa is like the wheel and the spokes are the various yoga paths. Each classic yoga addresses a particular part of our expression. When we embrace the complete yoga experience our wheel can turn, and we can travel to explore consciousness, realizing “who am I?”...

I AM

Sat (Eternal) • *Cit* (Knowledge Absolute) • *Ananda* (Blissful Joy)

Not Everything Is Visible

Just as one can see the sun rays but can not look directly at the Sun...

Just as one can see the limbs of their body but can not see their face...

Just as one can see creation but can not see that which is behind it...

~

The Self is hidden inside.

It is revealed through meditation.

It is experienced in expanded awareness.

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Seek the unseen.

Go beyond the thinking mind.

Realize your Self.