

Dear Friends & Fellow Yogis,

I thought I would take the time to explain the symbols and the Sanskrit words for my Yoga logo. Once you understand the meanings and put it all together, I think it's kind of cool... and looks neat too! I hope you find it interesting and somewhat educational.

Namaste,

Peter

First some basics:

YOGA

Yoga refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines originating in India. The word is associated with meditative practices in Buddhism and Hinduism.

The Sanskrit word *yoga* has many meanings, and is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning "to yoke" or "to unite". Many people think that when the words yoke, unite or bind when associated with the practice of Yoga is the union of physical body, mind, and spirit when it may also imply the person's union with God, a Supreme Being, Divinity, or whatever you choose to call something that is much greater than us.

Meaning of 



Prana ▪ Purusha ▪ Moksha

Prana: प्राण

Keyword: Ayurveda: ('science of life') is a system of traditional medicine native to India

In Vedantic philosophy, prana it is the notion of a vital, life-sustaining force of living beings and vital energy, comparable to the Chinese notion of Qi or Chi. Prana is a central concept in Ayurveda and Yoga where it is believed to flow through a network of fine subtle channels called nadis.

In Ayurveda, the Prana is further classified into subcategories, referred to as *pranas*. According to Hindu philosophy these are the vital principles of basic energy and subtle faculties of an individual that sustain physiological processes. There are five pranas or *vital currents* in the Hindu system:

1. **Prana:** Responsible for the beating of the heart and breathing. Prana enters the body through the breath and is sent to every cell through the circulatory system. Prana moves upward.
2. **Apana:** Responsible for the elimination of waste products from the body through the lungs and excretory systems. Apana moves downward.
3. **Udana:** Responsible for producing sounds through the vocal apparatus, as in speaking, singing, laughing, and crying. Also it represents the conscious energy required to produce the vocal sounds corresponding to the intent of the being. Hence Samyama on udana gives the higher centers total control over the body.
4. **Samana:** The energy responsible for the digestion of food and cell metabolism (that is, the repair and manufacture of new cells and growth). Samana also includes the heat regulating processes of the body. Auras are projections of this current. By meditational practices one can see auras of light around every being. Yogis who do special practice on samana can produce a blazing aura at will.
5. **Vyana:** The energy that holds prana and apana together that is responsible for the expansion and contraction processes of the body, E.g., the voluntary muscular system and circulation.

Purusha:

Keywords: Prakriti: Causal matter; the fundamental power of God from which the entire cosmos is formed; the root base of all elements; undifferentiated matter; the material cause of the world; also known as *Pradhana*

Sankhya: One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy whose originator was the sage Kapila, Sankhya is the original Vedic philosophy, endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. (Gita 2:39; 3:3,5; 18:13,19. Also, the second chapter of the Gita is entitled: Sankhya Yoga.) The Ramakrishna-Vedanta Wordbook says: "Sankhya postulates two ultimate realities, Purusha and Prakriti. Declaring that the cause of suffering is man's identification of Purusha with Prakriti and their product, Sankhya teaches that liberation and true knowledge are attained in the supreme consciousness, where such identification ceases and Purusha is realized as existing independently in its transcendental nature." Not surprisingly, then, Yoga is based on the Sankhya philosophy.

Pradhana: Prakriti; causal matter.

Guna: Quality, attribute, or characteristic arising from nature (Prakriti) itself; a mode of energy behavior. As a rule, when "guna" is used it is in reference to the three qualities of Prakriti, the three modes of energy behavior that are the basic qualities of nature, and which determine the inherent characteristics of all created things. They are: 1) sattwa—purity, light, harmony; 2) rajas—activity, passion; and 3) tamas—dullness, inertia, and ignorance.

Now that your head is spinning, let's return to Purusha!

If you were to Google™ "Purusha" you would find at least a million (well, maybe not a million) definitions of Purusha. This is due to the many different philosophies that exist. This following is the description I chose to use to help define and describe the philosophies of my Yoga practice and life journey. It is based on Vedic Philosophy and following is an excerpt from Sri Swami Sivananda's writings.

The Purusha

Characteristics of the Purusha

The Purusha or the Self is beyond Prakriti. It is eternally separate from the latter. Purusha is without beginning or end. It is without attributes and without qualities. It is subtle and omnipresent. It is beyond mind, intellect and the senses. It is beyond time, space and causality. It is the eternal seer. It is perfect and immutable. It is pure consciousness (Chidrupa).

The Purusha is not the doer. It is the witness. The Purusha is like a crystal without any colour. It appears to be coloured by the different colours which are placed before it. It is not material. It is not a result of combination. Hence it is immortal. The Purushas or souls are infinite in number, according to the Sankhya. There are many Purushas. If the Purushas were one, all should become free if any one attained release.

The different souls are fundamentally identical in nature. There is no movement for the Purusha. It does not go anywhere when it attains freedom or release.

Souls exist eternally separate from each other and from Prakriti. Each soul retains its individuality. It remains unchanged through all transmigrations. Each soul is a witness of the act of a separate creation, without taking part in the act. It is a looker-on uniting itself with the unintelligent Prakriti, like a lame man mounted on a blind mans shoulders, in order to behold the phenomena of creation, which Prakriti herself is not able to observe.

The Purusha or the Self is the witness (Sakshi), a spectator (Drashta), a by-stander (Madhyastha), solitary (Kaivalya), passive and indifferent (Udasina).

Inference of the Existence of the Purusha

Intelligence cannot belong to the intellect, because the intellect is material and is the effect of Prakriti which is non-intelligent. If intelligence is absent in the cause, it cannot manifest itself in the effect. Therefore, there must be a distinct principle of intelligence and this principle is Purusha or the Self.

The insentient body seems sentient on account of its union with the Self, and the Self appears as the agent. Just as a pot with cold water appears to be cold, with hot water seems to be hot, so intellect and the rest seem to be sentient on account of union with the Purusha. This mutual transfer of properties is like that of fire and iron, or that of the sun and water.

There must be a Supervisor over and above the Pradhana or Prakriti. The Supervisor is Purusha or the Self.

Prakriti and its products are objects of enjoyment. There must exist an enjoyer who must be an intelligent principle. This intelligent enjoyer is Purusha or the Self.

Just as chair and bench are for the use of another, so also this body, senses and mind are for the use of the Self which is immaterial, as it is destitute of attributes and as it is beyond the Gunas. The Purusha is the witness of the Gunas. The Gunas are the objects. Purusha is the witness-subject. Hence, it is not affected by pleasure, pain and delusion which are attributes of the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, respectively. If pain is natural to the Purusha and if the Purusha is not naturally free from the action of the Gunas, no salvation from rebirth is possible.

Purusha and Prakriti - A Contrast

The characteristics of Prakriti and Purusha are contrary in nature. Purusha is consciousness, while Prakriti is non-consciousness. Purusha is inactive (Akarta), while Prakriti is active. Purusha is destitute of the Gunas, while Prakriti is characterised by the three Gunas. Purusha is unchanging, while Prakriti is changing. The knower is Purusha. The known is Prakriti. The knower is the subject or the silent witness. The known is the visible object.

Now that you understand (hmhhh) Purusha, let's move on to *Moksha!*

Moksha: मोक्ष

Keywords: Paramatma(n): The Supreme Self, God

Subtle Body: According to various esoteric, occult, and mystical teachings, living beings are constituted of a series of psycho-spiritual subtle bodies, each corresponding to a subtle plane of existence, in a hierarchy or great chain of being that culminates in the physical form.

It is known in different spiritual traditions; "the resurrection body" and "the glorified body" in Christianity, "the most sacred body" (*wujud al-aqdas*) and "supracelestial body" (*jism asli haqiqi*) in Sufism, "the diamond body" in Taoism and Vajrayana, "the light body" or "rainbow body" in Tibetan Buddhism, "the body of bliss" in Kriya Yoga, and "the immortal body" (*soma athanaton*) in Hermeticism. The various attributes of the subtle body are frequently described in terms of often obscure symbolism: Tantra features

references to the sun and moon as well as various Indian rivers and deities, while Taoist alchemy speaks of cauldrons and cinnabar fields.

Moksha too is often translated in different ways. Here are some.

Moksha: Release; liberation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death.

Although practically all schools consider it a state of unity with God, the nature of such unity is contested.

According to a branch of Hindu philosophy known as Advaita Vedanta, for liberation, the individual soul or Atman is to be realized as one with the divine ground of all being, Brahman – the source of all spiritual and phenomenal existence. That the self is not the body is stressed upon. The "*not this, not that*" (*Neti Neti*) method of teaching is adopted. Moksha is seen as a final release from one's worldly conception of self, the loosening of the shackle of experiential duality and a realization of one's own fundamental nature which is true being, pure consciousness and bliss (satcitananda) an experience which is ineffable and beyond sensation. Advaita holds that Atman (Soul), Brahman (Supreme Being), and Paramatman are all one and the same - the formless, attribute less Nirguna Brahman which is beyond being and non-being, beyond any sense of tangibility and comprehension.

The Symbols:

Keyword: Nadi: A channel in the subtle (astral) body through which subtle prana flows; a physical nerve

HA



"HA" is sun in Sanskrit.

The word "HA" refers to the solar nadi (pingala) in the subtle body and to the masculine.

THA



"THA" is moon in Sanskrit.

The word "THA" refers to the lunar nadi (ida) in the subtle body and to the feminine.

According to the Monier Moneir-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, the word "hatha" means forceful. Thus *Hatha Yoga* can be considered a strong practice done for purification and the path to the union with God.



I was looking for sun and moon clip art but could not find an image of the moon that I liked. But upon further inspection of this image, I saw the moon eclipsing with the sun and thought, how perfect! In nature, the sun and moon are omnipresent and it conveys the marvelous union of the masculine and feminine.

I hope you found this helpful and interesting!

Om Shanti,

Peter