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MUDRAS & HAND SYMBOLISM--THE POWER OF MUDRAS PART 4: MUDRA POWER

Why practice mudras?

Some students on the spiritual path have a faulty understanding concerning mudras. They feel that it is far beneath their dignity and that they no longer require any kriyas or external methods in order to attain enlightenment. They even arrogantly belittle others who incorporate mudras into their spiritual disciplines. Though it may be true that external forms of movement or gestures are not essential, they do offer a great boost of energy and power to maintain and support one's position on the path towards the Light. Individuals who blatantly declare that mudras are not a necessary part of sadhana or spiritual discipline, or who find such practices beneath them for they are presently engaged in "higher methods" are those that have not reached the spiritual goal themselves and have not acquired a universal point of view. They seek to fly before they can run, or run before they have learnt to walk properly; or even stand before able to walk gracefully. They remove the rungs on the ladder on which they are standing. They seek to imitate the state of the enlightened ones without undergoing the necessary disciplines to reach that state themselves. May we state emphatically here that we do agree that mudras may not be required by some. It all depends on their present state of awareness, spiritual development, and psychic purity. Nevertheless, may we remind our readers that even high beings such as spiritual avatars, Buddhas, and celestial Bodhisattvas regularly assume mudras to teach, to invoke energies, and to carry out their spiritual tasks. By stating this we would like to point out that mudras may be practiced by anyone, no matter where he or she may stand on the evolutionary path, and with great mundane and supermundane benefit.

Benefits of Mudra Practice

It would be interesting to note the benefits of mudra practices--the effects that they have on the mind, body, psyche and bio-magnetic fields. Below are just a few worth considering that are directly palpable or perceptible through personal experience :

- Health
- I.Q. improvement
- Empowerment of the Aura
- Expansion of consciousness
- Awakening of the three aspects of kundalini
- Acquisition of siddhis (paranormal powers)
- Transformation & regeneration of the physical body

Health

The power of mudras clears the subtle channels and psychic centers in the etheric body allowing life-force to flow unhampered to the organs and all parts of the body. Regeneration and improved health is the result.

I.Q. Improvement

As the cleansing process takes place in the head, clarity of mind is felt and the mental faculties are considerably enhanced making it possible for the innate soul-intelligence to express itself with greater intensity.

Empowerment of the Aura

The magnetism produced by the mudras cleanses the bio-magnetic field of the body and empowers it with greater vitality also forming a protective shield against negative forces.

Awakening of the three aspects of kundalini

The three aspects of kundalini: prana kundalini, chit kundalini, and para kundalini are awakened and stimulated to greater activity.

Expansion of Consciousness

As a result of the cleansing process and the activation of Shakti in the form of kundalini, one's consciousness is transformed, transcending ordinary awareness.

Acquisition of Siddhis

In concomitant with the transformation of one's consciousness, certain powers and virtues of the soul would unfold and dormant spiritual senses would arise.

Transformation & Regeneration of the Physical Body

The overall effect of the constant practice of mudras is the complete transformation and regeneration of the mind-body principle, a spiritual expansion of the consciousness stylized in the Mystery Schools as the "Second Birth" and symbolised by the newly-born phoenix bird that grew out of the ashes of the old.

The Theory of Mudras and its Practice

Mudras attracts cosmic energy into the microcosm. They arouse the etheric body's latent energy into awakened activity. All of the dormant nerve cells of the brain are vivified and stimulated into action. The functions of the organs of the physical body are optimized. The immunity system is strengthened. The energies that mudras awaken manifests as magnetic and electrical force depending on their form.

Like the physical body, the etheric body has its own "nervous" system, or channels conveying prana and other energies of etheric origin. In yoga teachings, these channels are called, "nadi." In Hindu texts the number of nadis are variably given as 72,000 and 350,000, of which 72 nadis are said to be particularly important. Every mudra clears some of these channels from impurities and psychic toxins. There is not one mudra, however, that have the power to cleanse all of them. For this reason the practitioner of mudras incorporate and employ many mudras in his daily routine.

There are many components of the psycho-energetic system that mudras affect, not just the nadis. With the power of mudras, the chakras, for instance, are freed from obstructions and congestion; the aura is cleansed of negative effluvia, and the subconscious mind is purged of its negative contents.

While practicing certain mudras, especially the types that generate or attract cosmic energies, the hands if clasped together for some time, would break apart and move independently. The practitioner should not be too concerned over this but just go with the flow. The hands break apart for the simple

reason that enough power has been collected and that the cleansing or magnetizing processes are now under way. When the body accumulates more power than it can handle, or when it has assimilated enough energy from the incorporeal worlds, the hands would naturally fall out of formation, vibrate and shake in peculiar ways.

Aside from the invocation of energies, of communion with divine forces, mudras as mentioned before, also have the power to purify the etheric nervous system and the energy-centers to be found in the etheric body. It cleanses all obstructions and congestion that prevents the free flow of pranic and kundalinic forces through the nadis and the chakras. The etheric or "vital" body as it is sometimes called, is the blueprint and the power house of the physical body. When the interface between these two bodies are affected adversely in some way because of the toxins that we generate through negative thoughts and emotions, and the degenerative substances found in the food that we consume, and likewise uncleared karma and trauma, then the physical body would suffer as a consequence. Ill health and a poor immunity system would result. Substances would crystallize in the tissues and the fluid-networks in the body, giving rise to muscular pain, impaired functioning of the organs, and the ossification of blood vessels which technically is the diseased condition referred to as arteriosclerosis. Certain mudras may heal these maladies.



Russian Abbot with a variation of the "Benediction Hand Gesture."

While performing mudras, it is not unusual for the hands, arms, body and head to move on their own accord. The movement patterns that the mudras generate during practice are countless. In fact, just when you thought you have seen them all, a new one appears. Mudra gestures and body motions are kinetic expressions of the elemental forces in the psycho-physical body. The predominating force propels the mudras in a distinctive pattern. Earth energy makes the least movements. When the hands in a mudra pose remain in a single position for long periods is indicative that the earth element is

prevailing. The water element moves the hands in large, wide circles or wavy movements. Fire energy causes the hands to move with great force in straight movements and jerks. The elemental force of air is graceful and flowing. Its movement is a combination of curves and straight lines. Most nondescript motions of the hand belong to the Akasha (etheric) element. In Yogic teachings, this subject of elements belongs to the field of Tattva Vidya (Science of the Elements).

The directions in which the mudras flow likewise reveal the element in power. Upward movements indicate the influence of air; downward, that of earth; to the right or forward, fire; to the left or to the rear, water.

Why do mudras cause the hands and arms to move without any direction or control by the conscious mind? As we clasp our hands in mudra formation we cause energy to build up in the various psychic vortices in our hands, arms, and body. These vortices take on different polarities--positive, negative, and neutral. These emanating centers fluctuate in their polarity and strength in concordance with the currents generated. The resultant magnetic fields of these vortices interact with one another causing the law of attraction and repulsion to take effect. This causes the fascinating motions of the mudras. However, it should be emphasized that even though the conscious mind does not produce the swaying and oscillation of the body appendages, it does have the power to cause the motions to cease. Therefore, there should not be any fear that mudra practices might cause an impairment in the conscious control of one's motor movement.

Time and Place for Mudra Practice

Mudras may be practiced at any convenient time--at odd moments of the day. However, as a discipline, it would be beneficial to practice mudras in the morning and evenings. Practice mudras prior to meditation, for they are conducive to a more relaxed and deep meditative state.

Mudras should be practiced in an isolated place or room, well ventilated, and free from any disturbances and prying eyes. Because of the mystifying movements that the hands make we do not want any outsider to think that we have gone bonkers.

How long should each mudra be held? Generally, each mudra is to be positioned for a period of 5-30 minutes. Let your intuition function here. It will tell you when you are ready to stop or continue with a succeeding mudra if required. Sometimes in a practice session, the mudras themselves will tell you when it has done its work and that you may proceed with the next one. This is indicated by mudra movements launching from its position in front of the body or chest and then returning to it to remain still and quiet.



Mayan god with mudras

What Would Occur During Practice?

Having described briefly the effects of mudras, their theory and practice, it is important that some knowledge regarding the actual occurrences during practice be known as these might cause some unnecessary alarm and consternation. Below we list some points that are likely to occur during mudras practices and should be understood as a natural result of the generation, accumulation and flow of the Shakti principle :

- Warm sweat--this is a good sign. It means that the body is undergoing a cleansing and healing process.
- Swaying and rotation of the body--this shows that the body's attunement with the influx of the invoked energies is taking place.
- Hands moving and resting at various chakra points--this is the result of energy being channeled into specific parts of the body.
- Hands moving and resting at various layers of the biofield--this indicates that certain areas of the aura is being cleansed or being magnetized.
- Hands moving in an up and downward chopping movement--this is one of the signs that the nadis or subtle channels are being opened and unblocked, or that the aura is being cleansed.
- Hands moving in a forward-backward movement--same as above.
- Hands moving left to right--same as above.
- Hands moving in circles or ellipses--same as above.
- Hands moving in arcs or in figure-eights--same as above.
- Hands moving erratically or with other definite patterns--same as above.
- Hands vibrating intensely--same as above.
- Sudden jerks of the hands--same as above.
- A strong sense of energy surrounding the hands and body--this is a sign of a build-up of cosmic forces in the body.
- A sensation of warmth, tingling, and power in various parts of the body--same as above.
- A sense of tingling, and energy flowing throughout the whole body--this means that the nadi channels have been purified to a certain degree and that energy now flows freely without any obstructions in its path.
- Movement of the head--a sign that the energies have moved up to the head to clean the energy pathways.

- Cold sweat--this is an indication of circulatory problems. Cease mudra practices for the time being until the body regains a certain degree of health. Physical gymnastics at this point would help.
- Breaking up of hand formation--this shows that the body has absorbed enough energy for the time being or that it is being overcharged. Whatever happens here just go with the flow.
- Yawning and belching--this denotes that stagnant chi (prana), or energy is being removed.
- Spontaneous pranayama, or control of the life-force flowing with the breath--this shows that the Shakti flowing in the body has taken control over the respiratory processes and as a result, the mind may slowly undergo a transformation and the awareness-principle will be heightened. Should spontaneous pranayama occur, one finds oneself doing kumbhaka (the retention of the breath) effortlessly and naturally.
- Activity of inner perception or the manifestation of psychic visions, sounds, etc.--this signifies that the contents of the subconscious mind is being cleansed of all dross. During this process visions of gods and demons may occur, landscapes may be seen, unusual sounds heard.
- Jerking movements of the body like a frog-leaping as though levitation were to take place.
- Experiencing negative emotional states of anger, hatred, etc.--this is caused by the Shakti force purifying sushumna, or the central channel of the etheric body corresponding to the spine. All of our karmas, traumas, pain, and emotional feelings of our past and present lives are lodged there and when Shakti encounters them she releases and expels their crystallizations and the psyche temporarily re-experiences them. Positive feelings of bliss, joy, and mirth are also lodged in sushumna and these may likewise be experienced.
- If one were standing while doing the mudras, one might suddenly feel an inner force taking over and the movements of the hands, feet and limbs in a dance is a possibility as iconically displayed by Shiva in the Cosmic dance.

It should be noted that all of these sensations and hand-movements are temporary and represent certain phases of pranic or energy influence. The motions may start out strongly at first in early sessions but later evolve to graceful movements or even to stillness. Convulsions and spasms are common manifestations of the activities of energies within the subtle and physical bodies. These are positive signs so let them happen. Yoga kriyas such as bandhas, and the types of mudra processes mentioned in the yogic text Gheranda Samhita may likewise happen naturally. Spontaneous occurrences of these are safe--much safer than doing the yogic exercises through your own conscious volition and forcing their manifestation. If none of the above are observed during practice, a knowledgeable spiritual Guru may empower the disciple at his own discretion so that progress may proceed at a greater pace.

Whatever spontaneous movements or yogic processes occur are necessary and appropriate for you. The Shakti energy that flows through you knows what to do to spiritualize and transform your whole being. Shakti is an evolutionary force and she will lift you up to greater heights if you will let her. When Shakti flows through your being you may find yourself spontaneously practicing all of the yoga systems. For instance, you may find yourself withdrawing your senses and focusing within to your Higher Self, as in Raja Yoga; find yourself emanating an overflowing love for Nature and all life, as in Bhakti Yoga; or even acquiring divine knowledge effortlessly, as in Jnana Yoga. One may even find oneself chanting as in Mantra Yoga.

Do not be startled or afraid of the movements that occur naturally without your conscious volition or direction. You can exert your will at any moment to stop them if you wish; however, by doing so you will be hampering the occult work that is being done to you by the presence of the spiritual force. It would be best to let it run its course. Only in this manner will you reap the full benefit of mudra practices.

There are many stories of spiritual practitioners experiencing spasms and involuntary movements of the body and hands while engaging in meditation. One of the spiritual messengers of God referred to as "the Seal of the Prophets" is an instance :

One day while meditating in a cave at Mt. Hira, Muhammad, the future Prophet of Islam was said to have shivered uncontrollably. This occurred when a voice commanded him to "recite" or "read." Replying to the voice that he was unable to do so, he was instantly seized by a spiritual presence (Shakti) that was previously sensed to be in his vicinity (forcefield).

What was the real nature of the Prophet's experience? Were the convulsions that he experienced symptomatic of an unusual energy flowing throughout his body? What were the spiritual yogic exercises that he was engaged in that brought about such an experience? Did he make use of mudras, or any other esoteric practices? It is said that the Prophet was a "widow's son." In esoteric language this refers to an initiate of the Mystery Schools; the latter was called a "widow" after the goddess Isis lost her husband, Osiris, to the machinations of their brother Set, who is the personification of evil and materialism. Isis was the symbol of the Mysteries. In these mystical schools spiritual disciplines and practices were taught to the initiate. Mudras were undoubtedly one of the many teachings given. After mastering the teachings and attaining a higher level of consciousness, the initiate would emerge out of the womb of Isis and become Horus, the would-be slayer of his evil uncle.

Mudras & Spirituality

It is vital to keep in mind that the sensations, effects, and powers that mudras help unfold are not an end in themselves--they are simply a means to an end. They are tools that may support us to achieve Self-Realization. Evolving to a higher state of awareness or experiencing oneness with All That Is should be our primary aim. Other motives are just baubles that should be given up. Mudras, meditation, or any other religious discipline when exercised for the sake of acquiring the gifts of the spirit is not spiritual work nor is it spirituality. Offering unsolicited advice is not spirituality; predicting people's future is not spirituality; perpetuating a sense of mortality and helplessness in people is not spirituality; causing others to maintain materialistic attitudes is not spirituality. To seek the Giver rather than the gift is spirituality; to give of oneself without thought of self is spirituality; to cease forcing one's desires, or imposing one's will upon others is spirituality. So long as the sense of separation exists, the sense of duality, the illusion that we are separated from everything else, we shall never attain the state of true spirituality where only divine love is the law. The "heresy" of dualism in one's mental conception and spiritual blindness is what prolongs the "sleep of the ages" where one is ignorant, unaware, and unresponsive to the eternal Truth of Oneness.

Spirituality has many expressions, however, none of them have anything to do with acquiring or vainly displaying psychic powers. Initiates are not always psychic or magickally powerful, but they are sensitive to inspiration, to spiritual impulses emanating from celestial spheres and the Spirit within. Those that ambitiously seek psychic powers and abilities for self-centered purposes normally end up shackled in the astral realm where they become the playthings of malicious spirits. It is much wiser to first purify the mind, body, and soul of all negative energies, congestions, sense of limitations, and blockages and developing the love-wisdom-intelligence aspect of the soul before embarking on any psychic development. Without the proper spiritual and moral preparation we would be deluded, deceived and entrapped by wayward psychic forces. Mudras are definitely a help on the Path of Purification, but it should be accompanied by other practices and studies that awakens the heart, and the acquisition of esoteric knowledge and wisdom.

Preparation

Empowering the Hand

There are energy points in the hands and fingers just as there are all over the physical/etheric bodies. Called chakras (lit. "wheels") in Yoga philosophy, these vortexes of energy may be detected and their existence verified in various ways. Perhaps the most simple method is to directly feel them in one's hands. This requires a certain amount of sensitivity though, which may be acquired through an exercise that we will provide below.

Pendulums may also be used for detection. Hold a pendulum (any sort will do) in your right hand and hold it above the palm of the left hand. Watch it slowly move in circles. The swing may be clockwise or counterclockwise depending upon the flow of the energy from the palm whether it is outwards or inwards. The circumference and velocity of the swing indicates the size and activity of the chakra. At various points of the fingertips the pendulum might swing too indicating the presence of a minor chakra.

As related to Mudra-Vidya, or the "Science of Mudras," what sort of unfoldment or empowerment do the hands require? What sort of preparation is necessary for the successful performance of mudras?

First of all it would be helpful to massage the hands often so that they would be flexible enough to assume the positions of the mudras. Most of the mudras are easy to do; some, however, may require isometric exercises of the hands as a preparation. Flex your hands often--bend it, contract/relax it, stretch the fingers, and massage them. This would create a greater flexibility in the hands and would be conducive to a better performance of the mudras and enhance the circulation of blood. Massage of the hands after mudra practices is also suggested to help circulation of the blood and remove stiffness.

Those with short, stubby hands may have some problems doing certain mudras, unlike individuals with long slender fingers that palmistry identify as "philosophical" and "psychic." However, subjects with short fingers normally are not the type that would be interested in yoga, spiritual training, or mudras; logically speaking, as the person reading this series of articles is intent in developing spirituality, they should not encounter any obstacle practicing the mudras or executing the forms.

The next essential step is to empower the hands to increase the sensitivity, activity and size of the hand/finger chakras. This may be done through such exercises as the focused attention upon the palm of the hands and the fingertips. This particular exercise enlarges the hand chakras so that there may be a greater stream of energies flowing bi-directionally according to need. To carry-out this exercise follow these steps :

- 1) Focus upon each fingertip for about a minute each. Feel them tingling and vibrating. Begin with one hand and then move on to the other.
- 2) Now concentrate upon the palm of either hand for about 3 minutes and then move on to the palm of the other hand. Feel as though a flower were blossoming in your palms.



Do this every day for about 40 days during which time the size of the chakras should be permanently extended and greater sensitivity achieved (a magickal item that we carry in our online-store that helps empower one's hands is the Ajian Tapak Bergetar Power, Code: Magick142). In the meantime, it would be permissible to commence mudra practices simultaneously with the hand-empowerment exercise.

Meditation Pose and Inner Tranquility

Generally, most of the mudras may be done while seated in a chair, cross-legged, or standing. Certain mudras may call for specific body-positions. If you are knowledgeable on Hatha yoga and flexible enough, you may assume the various asanas or body positions while practicing mudras such as, "Padmasana," "Siddhasana," and "Vajrasana."

Before commencing mudra-exercises, the practitioner would reap the most benefit by first relaxing the mind and body so that a certain degree of inner tranquility may be attained. Any relaxing method taught in occult schools may be employed; one may use contraction of the muscles, perhaps even coupled with visualization and auto-suggestion--the point is that the physical body and mind should be deeply relaxed so that they may not hamper the energy-flow coursing through the subtle channels.

Mantras, or Words of Power

Mudras may be accompanied by chanting and vibrating certain bija (seed)-mantras (words-of-power) that stimulates/activates the chakras and enlarge the subtle channels, or otherwise affect the psycho-physical body in some metaphysical way. Whenever possible, appropriate mantras would be given in association with the mudras in the following papers of this Mudra series. Chanting may be verbal or mental--directions will be given for this.

Seed-mantras should be vibrated strongly as you chant them so that the power of the mantra would be felt in the various psychic centers. Vibrating the mantras does not imply raising the volume of your voice, it implies chanting the words-of-power in a peculiar way so that the vibes are felt palpably in the microcosm; some seed-mantras requires right intonation.

Breathing Exercises and Visualization

Pranayama, or the art of controlling the life-force through rhythmic or specialized breathing, may be engaged in while simultaneously doing the mudras. Some mudras may specifically call for a certain breathing technique. Generally, though, if instructions are not given, breathing should be allowed to flow naturally without any conscious direction. Visualization may be employed to support specialized breathing. Cosmic energy may be visualized as a brilliant silver, white, or gold force--each of these colors do have their specific properties. You may experiment to feel the sensation and know the effects of each of these forces. As a general rule, always inhale as you visualize energy flowing into you, exhale as you channel energy to a certain object, area, or space.

In the following papers of these series, an extensive amount of mudras of various traditions will be presented for practical application.