

Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the **Mission of Maitreya's** Feast of Tabernacle celebrations.

Let us take a moment, close our eyes and observe the silence. Let us bring God's energy among us and have a wonderful lecture on innercising.

All thanks to God for His Guidance.

This lecture will have five sections:

- 1- Introduction to yoga postures (asanas) as innercise
- 2- Effects of yoga postures on human physiology and a brief comparison between innercising and exercising
- 3- Some suggestions from the Ananda Marga Yoga Manual on proper practice of yoga postures
- 4- The Reminder as innercise
- 5- Conclusion

Asanas in the Teachings:

1-YOGA POSTURES (ASANAS)

<20>As the muscles become stronger by exercise, the ethereal body becomes purified and stronger by yoga postures (asanas). That is why we can call asanas "innercise" in contrast to exercise which affects the external.

<21>These postures affect the glands which control the energy centers in the body (chakras) and bring a balance between the physical body, spirit (ethereal body) and Soul (Self).

<22>It is also recommended to practice asanas, especially in the beginning of the spiritual journey and so strengthen the spirit and become familiar with the body and how it functions.

<23>However, a person should not become obsessed with this kind of practice and use it only for physical fitness. Unless such a person is a professional teacher of asanas, the spiritual effect of this practice should be kept in mind more than the physical. <24>Like any practice or habit, it should not become a person's master.

<25>Eventually a person will become so familiar with the body that he realizes many other things affect it. <26>By avoiding ones which bring negative forces and accumulating more positive forces, the need of doing asanas can be eliminated or brought to a minimum and only used as an occasional tool to tune the body, spirit, and

mind together. <27>It is not only practices that make a man free but knowledge of the Laws of the Lord and His Grace. These practices make a person become more sensitive to understand His Laws and become purer to feel His Grace, <28>so he might eventually find the way (Eternal Divine Path), receive The Holy Ghost, <29>and by trial of The Holy Ghost (His Grace), reach the Goal.

<http://www.maitreya.org/FILES/THOTH/ESSAYS3.HTM/Essays3-12.html#Yoga%20Postures%20%28Asanas%29>

--

So even practicing yoga should be done from knowledge.

--

2-Effect of Yoga Asanas on human physiology, from Ananda Marga Manual:

Asanas affect every aspect of the human physique; they balance the glandular secretions, relax and tone up the muscles and the nervous system, stimulate circulation, stretch stiff ligaments and tendons, limber joints, massage internal organs and calm and concentrate the mind.

The complex symphony of the body is conducted by a system of glands known as the endocrine glands. These glands are often called “ductless” because they pass their secretions directly into the blood or lymph, instead of using secretory ducts. The chemical substances secreted by these glands are called Hormones –chemical messages which act at a distance. Hormones have a profound effect on all the body’s functions, like growth, digestion, energy levels, heat, sexuality, water and fluid retention etc.

Thus the entire human organism is controlled by the hormones; every system, every organ, every tissue, every cell is guided in its functioning by hormones. The proper growth and functioning of the various parts of the body is possible only when there is a Balanced Secretion of all these hormones; any imbalance results in disease.

Asanas balance the hormonal secretions from the various glands. The twisting and bending positions of the a’sanas, held for a specific period of time, place continued and specific pressure on the various glands of the body, thus stimulating them in various ways and regulating secretions.

The subtle pressure of the a’sana posture on the various glands combined with deep relaxation through deep breathing tends to restore the balanced activity of these glands and help control the emotions as well.

Asana literally means “posture comfortably held”. In the very name lies the key to the difference between inner-size and exercise systems. Exercise systems tend to develop muscles by making them work. They stress movement, and often alternate violent movements of expansion and contraction, generally fairly quick succession. These

rapidly repeated exercises increase in difficulty and are often competitive in nature (the excitement stimulates the secretion of adrenalin which “pushes” the body even harder.) Although this strenuous activity may increase the size and strength of the skeletal muscles and promote circulation, it completely ignores the endocrine system which is so essential to our mental composure and physical health. Therefore both innercises and exercises are necessary for a balanced physical vehicle.

When muscles contract, stored sugar breaks down to lactic acid and additional energy is released. Much of the lactic acid and thus produced, however, must be further converted into water and carbon dioxide, by combining with oxygen. In strenuous exercise, the lungs breathe faster and faster in order to get sufficient oxygen to meet these muscular demands. But if the exercise is very strenuous, even rapid and deep breathing is unable to supply the body’s need for oxygen to oxidize and convert this lactic acid into water and carbon dioxide. As a result, an excess of lactic acid accumulates in the muscles and they become fatigues and unable to contract or painfully cramped. And this pushes the body systems to improve themselves in order to endure to such pressures.

On the other hand, in practice of yoga a’sanas properly the oxygen supply can keep pace with the oxygen used, so no excess lactic acid accumulates, and no fatigue results. And usually because of surplus of oxygen and prana intake, body systems find excess energy to spend on rejuvenating themselves. Again innercising and exercising from knowledge is the key.

3-Suggestions for Proper Practice

- Breathing makes the difference:

Inspiration occurs when the expansion of the chest and lungs creates a slight vacuum in the chest cavity, causing air to be drawn in. This expansion of the chest is created mainly by the diaphragm, aided by the pull of the small muscles between the ribs and the muscles of the shoulders.

The diaphragm is a large dome-shaped muscle separating the chest cavity, containing the heart and the lungs, from the abdominal cavity. During inhalation the diaphragm contracts and flattens, pushing down on the abdominal organs. Whether your diaphragm moves properly or not can easily be discovered by watching the movement of your abdomen: when the diaphragm is contracted, the abdomen should protrude. If the abdomen is already tense and contracted, the diaphragm cannot properly descend.

The science of breath control starts with the proper control of the diaphragm and the respiratory muscles of the chest and shoulders. The lungs should be expanded to their maximum, to absorb the greatest amount of life-giving prana from the air.

Feel how you breathe:

Exercise #1:

Sit erect by keeping the spine, neck and head in straight line. Now relax the abdominal muscles. Do not raise your chest and do not bend forward. Take a long breath while allowing the diaphragm to descend without raising the chest and shoulders. Count the number of seconds of your inhalation.

Exercise #2:

Sit erect, keeping your diaphragm still. Do not allow your abdomen to expand, because if the abdomen is expanded during breathing, it means the diaphragm is functioning as in #1. Now expand the chest and take a long deep breath. Here the rib muscles expand the lungs partially, and the diaphragm is in neutral position. Breathing is done absolutely through the actions of the respiratory muscle connected with the ribs. Watch the duration of inhalation, and feel the quantity of air you can take into your lungs while inhaling. See whether this method brings more air into the lungs than exercise #1.

Exercise #3

Sit erect; contract the abdomen and draw it toward the chest cavity. Now take a deep breath by raising the shoulders and collarbones while the abdomen is contracted. Repeat several times and then compare it with #2 breathing, and see which one brings in more air.

Now compare the three types of breathing; feel which brings in the most air with the minimum effort. #3, raising the shoulders and collarbones and contracting the abdomen, is an extremely inefficient process, using a maximum amount of energy to get very little air, especially since the upper lobes of the lungs are the smallest. Many people breathe in this way. It has been found that most diseases of the vocal cords and the respiratory system (especially asthma) occur in people who use this method of breathing.

Yet even diaphragmatic breathing (#1) is not complete breathing exercise. Any one of these methods fills only a portion of the lungs; low breathing fills the lower and middle parts; chest breathing (#2) fills the middle and a portion of the upper regions and the high shoulder breathing (#1) fills the upper portions of the lungs.

Full breathing uses all three simultaneously, starting from the low diaphragmatic breathing and continuing to chest breathing and finally finishing with high breathing. In this way the whole respiratory system comes into play and no portion of the lungs is left unfilled with fresh air.

A healthy ventilation of the lungs is attained when the following prerequisites are achieved:

- 1- An erect position of the vertebral column with the ribcage held in a relaxed upright position, so as to avoid compressions upon the lungs and heart and other organs.
- 2- A deep, slow inhalation; first using the diaphragm as a sucking pump, then expanding the rib cage with the help of the rib and shoulder muscles.
- 3- A slow exhalation using mostly the diaphragm in reverse action as a squeezing pump
- 4- A regular breathing rhythm
- 5- A regular ventilator rest after exhalation.

Asana means “A posture comfortably held”

- Naturally we don't all start to practice asanas perfectly, like the illustrations in asana books. As you practice asanas in class and at home do so realistically in terms of your own body. Approximate the form as best you can and still be comfortable in the pose, and able to hold the pose for the minimum count.

Straining has no place in asanas. Overexertion can cause injury that may keep you out of practice for a long time. The elderly and those unaccustomed to daily exercise should take up asanas in a most gradual manner. Asanas are different from strenuous exercises so even those who are accomplished in sports should begin their practice carefully. One should not do asana after a major operation until completely recovered and no pain is felt. Whenever you feel the slightest pain while performing asanas, stop immediately and relax until recovered. Always rest in Shavasana (Corpse pose) in between postures until you feel your heartbeat and breathing return to normal. At the end of your asana practice, you should feel fresh and invigorated, not exhausted!

Working harmoniously in this way with your own nature, after a short time of sincere, careful and consistent practice, you will soon see for yourself your increased strength, flexibility and energy.

While forcing the body is completely contrary to the nature of asanas, so is laziness and underdoing poses. Between these two extremes is a single point of challenge, at which the posture is comfortably sustained and the physical capacities are inspired to stretch and grow. Through careful practice you will soon be able to determine this point.

A unique aspect of the asana is that it is motionlessly held for a specific period of time. Through this sustained pressure the secretion of the hormones is affected. Do not jump in and out of asanas, hurrying from one to another. It isn't how many you do that matters, it's how thoroughly you do them. Go slowly. Delight in the motions of this marvelous machine of the divine, your human body.

- Before the practice of asanas at least a half bath is recommended. However it is advised to wait at least 30 minutes after practicing yoga asanas to take a bath after the asanas so that your clean natural oils can be absorbed by your skin.

- Throughout the practice of asanas it is best to breathe deeply and gently through the nose because the nose filters, moistens and warms the air reaching the lungs and it also promotes the proper subtle energy flow in the body.
- Another thing to watch out for is to have both nostrils breathing freely. Interwoven along the spinal cord are two subtle nerve canals (ida and pingala). The chakras are located at the intersection of these canals which end in the nose. The nerve passage associated with material desires ends in the right nostril. The other, associated with spiritual longing, ends in the left nostril. When you eat, or become angry for instance, you may notice that your left nostril becomes blocked and your right nostril is breathing freely. During meditation or deep thought on the other hand air flows easily through the left nostril. When the left nostril is open it is easier to realize the cosmic nature of asanas. However, if it is blocked, then the energies of the right side dominate and the mind may concern itself with the purely physical aspect of practice. Let the breathing be free through both nostrils but especially the left nostril before beginning asanas.

For those who are interested there is an essay in THOTH on this topic:

<http://www.maitreya.org/FILES/THOTH/Supplements.htm/Medical%20logo-King%20Arthur.html>

If the left nostril is blocked, here are some methods for clearing it;

- 1- Lie down on the right side of your body, resting your right ear against the inner side of your right upper arm. Remain still until the left nostril opens. (Vice versa for the right nostril.)
- 2- Sit up straight. Pull the left heel toward the body, the left knee resting on the ground. Bring the right knee in toward the chest, with the foot flat on the ground. Lean the right armpit into the right knee. As you breathe, sustain the pressure of the armpit on the knee until the left nostril is open.
- 3- Meditate until the mind becomes more subtle; the left nostril will naturally clear.

- Practice in fresh air away from draft

You should always keep a window open wide enough so that fresh air enters the room – but no draft should come in contact with the body. You should always protect yourself from muscle spasms, stiffness, and other discomforts caused by chill.

Therefore practicing asanas outside or in a completely open place or under direct sunlight is not recommended. The rapidly varying temperatures of the outdoors ma

cause chill, and sunlight dries up the precious natural oils stimulated by the asanas. These oils should rather be conserved and rubbed back into the skin by self massage.

The room where you practice asanas should always be clean of dust, trash, and noxious fumes from smoking, gas stoves, spray deodorants, etc. Do not burn incense while doing asanas. All of this interferes with proper breathing. If at all possible try to practice asanas in the same room, in this way you will build up a vibration of peace and concentration in that place. You may want to decorate the room in a sentient way, perhaps with plants, spiritual art etc.

- Wearing supportive material

In practicing alone, if possible asanas can be performed with a minimum of covering. Lungoti (or a tight-fitting underwear) is essential for men and bra and underpants for women. This avoids accidental muscle strain and tearing of delicate tissues, as well as controlling the lower chakras.

During group classes loose clothing can be worn – nothing tight like belts etc. which would restrict ease of movement. Tights and leotards should not be worn because they absorb those precious hormonal oils secreted by the skin. Rings, bracelets, pins, watches etc. should be removed and pens and any sharp implements should be taken out of pockets.

- On a woolen blanket

If the postures are performed on a cold, bare surface, the practitioner may catch cold. Practicing on a woolen blanket will prevent chill, and wool does not absorb the natural oils as cotton does. In addition, wool insulates the pranic energy of the body, keeping it from flowing into the earth.

You should fold your blanket once or twice so your bones are comfortable against the firmness of the floor. Be sure, however, that when you fold it you do not leave humps or creases in it – a slight hump may be enough to spoil your balance or even change the subtle effect of asana. Keep this blanket clean and preserved for your asana practice.

- Never during menstruation

The tremendous effect of asanas have on the endocrine system can be very upsetting to women during their cycle. Some possible bad effects are irregularity of the cycle and excessive bleeding. However, you may safely do Padmasana or Virasana poses for

meditation, Shavasana (corpse pose) and certain mild warm-ups which do not bend the body at the waist.

In order to prevent menstrual cramps, women should regularly (though not during menstruation) practice Yoga Mudra and Diirgha Pranam. A major cause of cramps is the straining of the transverse muscles of the back due to the heavy accumulation of excess fluid inside the body. These two asanas, practiced regularly, strengthen these back muscles and greatly diminish the discomfort of menstruation.

Asanas should not be started during pregnancy. If one is already regularly practicing asanas, she should stop most asanas in the third month and resume them two months after giving birth. It is always safe to practice meditation and corpse postures.

- The best time for asanas is in the morning before breakfast and in the evening before dinner. After meals, depending on the amount of food consumed, wait 2 to 4 hours for digestion to occur. During digestion of food the blood supply tends to concentrate in the digestive area. Exercising soon after eating will divert blood needed for digestion to muscles and as a result neither the muscles nor the digestive system will receive sufficient blood.

During digestion it is difficult for the practitioner to keep his mind concentrated on his breathing. Especially during asana practice the mind must be one pointed to avoid becoming lost in the demands of the body. Therefore practice light and free with an empty stomach. However, in order not to feel too hungry during the practice one can have a piece of fruit or drink a glass of milk.

At the same time it is not recommended to eat or drink half an hour after practicing. After the practice of asanas the body sets up a new equilibrium, new muscle tone, new flow of blood and energy. Eating too soon after asanas changes the blood flow from the muscles and glands to digestive tract, thus inhibiting the full benefit of the asanas.

These suggestions, as well as warm up exercises and main asanas to practice, can be found in the book "Teaching Asanas, An Ananda Marga Manual for Teachers" by Ananda Marga Publications.

4-The Reminder

We have to keep our lives balanced, the middle path again. Too much of anything is not good.

We are physical, mental, and spiritual beings. So we have to keep our physical bodies strong. The Reminder itself is an exercise. Actually it is mostly an innercise. It is almost like a yoga exercise. When we do it, it keeps our bodies very strong.

Also it affects the mucus (toxins) in our bodies. It pushes the mucus out of our bodies. As we know, mucus is a toxin in the body. That is why mucus is formed because our bodies become toxic. Toxins are the source of most of the diseases that people have, because they eat foods that are toxic, they don't fast, they don't meditate, and they don't keep their bodies in as good shape as they should. So the toxins build up and they acquire disease.

When you do The Reminder, it actually pushes the toxins out of our systems. That's a physical benefit. If you don't exercise, or don't do The Reminder, your body becomes very flabby and fat, and it will gain weight.

Why do you want to carry around a lot of weight? If you want to do that just hang some heavy weights around your neck, it's the same thing. If you are thirty pounds overweight, that means you are carrying thirty extra pounds around all the time. That's a pretty hard thing to do. It makes you tired, doesn't it?

Mentally you also have to be aware and exercise. Reading books, discussing things together, talking about God, etc, brings a mental alertness to you.

We can see that the physical exercise, the mental ability and also spiritual progress are all necessary. They go hand in hand. If you meditate too much, you become imbalanced in the spiritual path. You become too much the other way.

Even in meditation your physical body has to be strong to withstand the energy. That's why the yogis recommend to do yoga with meditation. It brings balance to your body. It tones your body.

The body is like an antenna. The better the antenna and the higher the antenna, the more in tune and the more you receive the waves (the consciousness). The less your body is tuned, the more you are out of shape, the less you receive. That's why the physical body and keeping it in good shape is very important.

By just meditating, after awhile, because your body is not going to be strong, you will receive messages that might not be from God. They might be from your ego. So you become completely imbalanced.

<http://www.maitreya.org/files/Feast/Whatunty.html>

The very basis for doing the **Reminder** is to bring the mind from the worldly energy toward Godly or spiritual energy. The very reason for giving this practice is to bring the attention or energy from worldliness to a spiritual focus.

Mind has a tendency to chatter, to keep us busy and make us think about mundane matters. If we're not directing our energy toward God or toward higher energy, mind becomes dirty, very fast. Like it says in **THOTH**, if we don't take a shower every couple of days, we will be very dirty and uncomfortable. If the body becomes dirty in a few days, mind is even more sensitive than body, so it becomes dirty even faster than the body. So if we try to take a shower at least once a day, we have to clear the mind more than once a day.

So that's why we recommend to do the **Reminder** twice a day or more. Doing the **Reminder**, kirtan, chanting, dancing and meditating -- all these are for purifying the spirit, the mind, and bringing the attention from the world to the Spirit.

Worldly activities make us very confused and we become very attached to the world, to its temptations, to its offerings. If we do not keep our attention refocused back to the Spirit all the time, after awhile we completely lose touch, and the appearance of the world becomes reality to us. We will think that, that is all there is for us. Because that is all there is, our successes makes us ecstatic and our disappointments make us unhappy, confused and resentful.

--

That's why these exercises are given. We realize that it is important to take time off, to direct our energy from the world, and focus our attention on God. As we do that more often, we realize more and more that really the most important part of us is our Spirit, which is one with God, which is one with the universe. And if we want to know the answers, the answers are already there.

Who is the best counsel in the universe? God. And where is He? He's within us. If I want a consultation, I can go within myself and consult with my spirit which is one with the Universal Spirit. Then I won't be confused, because my mind will be expanded and I can see things according to the Universal Mind. I will be free of all these ups and downs in life and unhappiness that comes to humanity.

That's why all these exercises are recommended. Recommended, of course, means, I recommend, yet these exercises have come from God.

What I recommend He commands! They have a spiritual effect when you perform them. They bring a different energy to the person who performs them. It is not the regular energy of the person. They are given with the Spirit so they affect the Spirit, they invoke the Spirit. That's what they call in the East, mantra. Mantra means spiritual energy which has been meditated on and crystallized into the words to invoke people to a higher Spirit.

If you look at the **Reminder** you see that it has seven verses. Each verse affects one level of the consciousness of humanity. When we begin doing the **Reminder** we have been in

the world, we have been in mundanity. We have been in the process of doing things or going somewhere.

We really have to take that energy out of ourselves, to pull ourselves back out of the world and take some time out to do the **Reminder**. That's the first step. After we accomplish that and we have enough willpower, or enough Love of God, or enough desire to do that, the first thing we do is, "We pay our salutations to the Divine Father."

We were in mundanity and we're coming back to God. So in order to come out of mundanity, the first thing to really take us completely out of mundanity and bring us to God is, "We pay our salutations to the Divine Father." This just completely brings our focus to God, the Father.

Divine Logic (Father) is the logic which created the logical universe. Logic is consciousness. Because God is in Pure Consciousness, He is Pure Logic. Father is Pure Logic. So that is why we refer to Him as He who is helping all to reach Pure Consciousness.

"Ignorance is the state of unawareness of the reality behind this universe and enlightenment is the state of Pure Consciousness." So the very beginning of the **Reminder** reminds us of, Who is the Father? He is the Pure Logic, the Divine Logic of the universe. He's the male energy of the universe, that's why we call Him Father. He also is the Being that helped the whole universe come from the unconscious mind, or ignorance, to the path of Pure Consciousness.

Then, "We open our hearts to Your Grace", Mother in Her highest form is the Grace, the Divine Mother. The Mother is the creative force in the universe, the creator of the universe. Without the Mother nothing could have been created. She is the three gunas. She is the three creative forces. Also, if the first verse awakens us from our mundanity, which is the first chakra, the second invokes the second, the energy of fertility, motherhood. So the second chakra is related to fertility, motherhood, procreation, etc. So that is why the second verse relates to motherhood, the Mother.

And we open ourselves to The Grace, which is The Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the only way to salvation. We need the understanding of the Mother with the true realization of how She works in the universe. If we had mostly logic, we wouldn't reach far with the logic alone. We need that Grace to take us from mundanity -- the Mother Love which protects the child and makes him grow up and become a man -- to adulthood, to become a productive and very wonderful member of society or the universe.

It is His guidance in the universe that makes us reach Pure Consciousness. So "We open our hearts to Your Grace," for our salvation and pray for Her Guidance, which guides us to Pure Consciousness. Some people say, If you have a good diet, meditate a lot, are in the solitude and not in the world, go to the mountains, you will realize and reach Pure Consciousness. Yet how many people in those cultures who do those things, reach Pure Consciousness? Very few of them.

If the Grace is with you, with that Grace you can reach Pure Consciousness in the middle of the most mundane environment. That's why it's so important to know what Grace is.

To realize Grace is to realize the path to salvation. That's why eventually they came to this conclusion that the Grace of the guru is really the most important thing for reaching Pure Consciousness, because only with His Grace is it possible to know God. Without His Grace you will be completely confused.

That is exactly what the **Reminder** says, "We open our hearts to Your Grace and pray for Your Guidance in overcoming the power of the tama guna over our Souls." That is the only way, not by diet, not by growing a beard, or shaving your head, or wearing special clothes -- not by appearances. Appearances are OK, like everything else, they have their own place but eventually it's the Grace that brings humanity to Pure Consciousness.

Eventually we come to the third energy center, which is the center of power and control. That is when we have to humble ourselves and bring our heads down and say, "We adore and promise to endeavor to help the whole universe to reach higher consciousness." Now, we've reached the point where we can help or hinder others. That is the power of this center. If you fall in that level, you misuse your power and affect other people's progress, or try to control them.

This is the point where you also can help. I know the Divine Logic, I know the Grace of the Mother which is the way of salvation. Now I can help. I can become a channel for God, you see. All of us are like antennas. We can reach the higher energies and transmit them to other people, in the universe, to earth, etc. Or we can pick up mundanity and broadcast that. The more we are intoned to God, the more we can broadcast Him.

Now "We adore and promise to endeavor to help the WHOLE universe to reach higher consciousness." We expand our minds and go beyond attachments to gain powers, or glory, or material things for ourselves but our goal is to "help the whole universe to reach higher consciousness." We know the Father (Pure Consciousness) and the Mother (the way to salvation). These two are what the universe is made of. So we are no longer attached to a small part of God (universe) but the whole.

That is when we reach the fourth realization center: the Love center where we realize how incredible God is. That will make us humble, and how great are those Souls who have realized Him. That's when we go down to your knees, bow our heads and say, "In reverence we bow our heads in front of all those Great Souls, in the past and those to come..." See, it's kind of humbling ourselves. We realize those Great Souls have to be revered. These Souls who have not only been in the past, are here, and they're going to be here again and again to guide humanity to higher consciousness.

However, being attached to any of them will hinder you, will stop your progress. **The moment you say, "I found it, you lost it."** God is the universe. God is the whole universe and beyond, and you can realize Him again, and again, and again in so many different ways and still there is more to realize about Him. So the moment you say, This is the only way, what you are saying is: I'm going to put God in this bottle and that is what I'm going to realize about Him -- this is what God is. The moment you did that, you lost the joy of knowing Him more, progressing with Him, and realizing Him more.

So that's why, "In reverence we bow our heads" not only to the Great Souls in the past, but the Great Souls who are here and the ones to come. You know them, as these Great

Souls always glorify Father. They don't glorify themselves. They are Glorified not because of themselves but because of the energy they represent on earth, the Spirit that they bring to the earth.

These Great Souls always talk about the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit within themselves, the Spirit which guided them. They don't talk about any physical god, which has shape or name. That's why it's called Father or Mother. Really, they don't have any name. It's said as a symbol because it's impossible to say, This thing which is called God, we call Him Father or God. In Essence He's a Spirit. That's why whatever has a shape or a name, is not God, it's not It. They are still a part of God, yet they are not the Essence. The Essence doesn't have any shape -- It's Formless, Invisible, Nameless and Eternal -- It's FINE.

So after we have humbled ourselves and we have reached this point of complete love and humility for the Great Souls, which are one with God, then we reach the fifth level which is submission and surrendering. That's why, "We surrender ourselves to You, the words revealed to us through Your Prophets and Your **Greatest Sign** which clarifies the confusion between all."

Now it's the realization that, all these Great Souls, and the words revealed through them, are really from God Himself, especially the seven great truths which are presented in **The Greatest Sign** and were released over the last 12,000 years. These words have created a lot of confusion on earth, because we keep each of them separate and say, This is my Prophet, this is my Savior, this is my teacher. That creates confusion and separation and that is where **The Greatest Sign** shines. It says, There's no confusion. All of them have come from God and each of them has a special message for humanity. When you put them together you see the greater picture, the whole truth, and the whole is greater than the parts.

Now Unity has come to humanity and all the religions of the world. That's why, not only do "We surrender only to You, the words revealed to us through Your Prophets," which brings the truth and the message, but also, "Your **Greatest Sign**." We do not surrender to **The Greatest Sign** as a picture or visual aid, but what it represents, the Spirit behind it, "which clarifies the confusion between all."

Even after surrendering we realize that there's a greater part which is the sixth level. In that level we are One with the Spirit. We and God are One. That is when complete submission comes. "We submit only to you which is Formless, Nameless and Invisible..."

Eventually a realization has come. There's no form left -- Formless, Nameless and Invisible. Also, if everyone realized God is Formless, Nameless and Invisible and became one with It, we could completely overcome all these concepts about my Gurus, my teachers, my Savior, my Prophet, my hierarchy, my anything that separates us from one another, and become One right away.

The moment we realize that, the unity is complete between us. We're not going to argue whose teacher is better, or whose hierarchy is higher, or who in the hierarchy is higher and who in the hierarchy is lower, or was Esa (Jesus) the minor disciple or the higher disciple? Who cares? What he said was important, which was the Spirit of the Father through him.

He wasn't overshadowed by anyone. He was overshadowed with the Father Himself. If we realize that, then these arguments no longer exist. Let's just forget about these and get on with the work and create the **Communities of Light** instead of sitting, wasting our time and energy in being confused about all of these trivialities.

That is the only state that unifies humanity. "In any other state, humanity will be divided." And we are, because many are in other states. They have gods in heaven, on earth and under earth. God said, you should not have any god beside Me, the Formless, Invisible, Nameless and Eternal (FINE). That's one of His Ten Commandments.

Now that we are in that state, there's nothing left. We are One with God. It is the highest state we have reached in the body. And "Also, this will prevent us from surrendering to false prophets and teachers." We have a measurement a yardstick now. Is this person talking about the Spirit, Formless, Nameless, Invisible and Eternal? Or is he talking about other things that create more confusion between us, create more separation between us? If he talks about anything else but FINE, then he is a false teacher. That is not from the Spirit. That's from ego. That's from something that, Oh, if my teacher is better than your teacher, then I am better than you. There is no such thing as better. We are all from One Spirit, from One God. We're in different levels of consciousness, but that's the only thing that distinguishes us as higher or lower.

When we reach there, "In reverence we bow our heads in front of all those Great Souls who will teach us how to know You and show us the way to become Pure Consciousness." Again, this is invoking the Grace of the teacher, that brings salvation to humanity. And that is the goal to reach, to reach a state of Oneness with the Spirit and realize that, that's the only thing that unifies and brings unity to humanity.

The question is Why do we say it three times? Isn't one time enough? No it's not. As I said, we're coming from mundanity and trying to do the **Reminder**. The first time we do it, we come to it with excitement -- Oh, let's do the **Reminder**. The spirit of worldliness is still with us. When first we do it, it's just the words, we are still in mundanity. We're not really hearing what we're saying. We're just saying it, and the mind starts wandering here and there. The second time we say it, it goes deeper. And the third time it completely surrounds the person, and the person starts hearing himself or herself, and if he's sincere, he will see the real meaning of the **Reminder** and its effect.

Actually it's very good to say the **Reminder** as slowly as possible, especially if you're doing it alone. Meditate and contemplate every word that you're saying. What do they mean? What do they represent? As you continue saying them more and more, and meditate, the more you say it, the more you understand the meaning of it and the Spirit behind it.

As I said, it carries an energy different than your regular energy. The more you say it, the more this energy becomes anchored into you, and the more of this energy that is anchored into you, the more you like to say it, because you like that energy. That energy is freeing. That energy brings higher consciousness. That energy brings greater realization to you.

So actually, the more you say it, the better. Yet because we have to be in mundanity also, we can't say it 24 hours a day and every minute, unless we say it in the Silence of our hearts. So that's why it's recommended to do it at least twice a day, saying the verses three times. If you can do it three times a day, at least three times, that's much better. If you cannot do it three times, at least do it two times.

I guess, we can explain it over and over, and there is usually much more than is said in any Satsang. I'm sure the topic is going to come up again, and we're going to explain it differently and/or in more detail. In general It is an energy, It's a mantra, It's a **Reminder** that explains the purpose of the **Mission**. It explains **The Greatest Sign**. It explains the goal of life.

It's a reminder, it reminds you again and again of what we stand for and what we have brought to humanity. And because it has come from Spirit, it will eventually affect your spirit. The more you say it, the better.

<http://www.maitreya.org/files/discourse/3timeady.html>