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- While the gunas are not part of the *pranamaya kosha*—they do influence Momentum. At the level of *prakriti* they are part of the *manomaya kosha*, while on the level of *purusha* or *jiva*, they remain part of your *anandamaya kosha*. At this level, they are an innate, essential part of your constitution.
- At the level of your condition (*vikruti*), they are influenced by:
  - diet
  - action
  - thought
- Gunas defined:
  - *tamas* (darkness) is inertia—the shadow of not knowing, ignorance
  - *rajas* (light) is activity—the force that allows you to move, evolve, expand and grow
  - *sattwa* (purity, awareness, freedom) lights the way to the end of the spiritual quest
- The following metaphor conveys the importance of the gunas well, as it relates both to practice and the larger quest to find deeper meaning and purpose in one's life:
  - a golden treasure lies at the bottom of three different lakes of water; this treasure contains the ultimate prize—the value of fully knowing yourself and finding fulfillment in everything you do
  - the first lake is stagnant, it is inundated with moss and algae, you cannot see into its depths because it is so dense with debris



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- the second lake is constantly disturbed, constant motion and ripples dominate, as a result it is muddied and you cannot see below the surface
- the third lake is completely still, calm and clear; you can see directly into its depths and recognize the treasure you've been seeking
- The first of these mythic lakes is *tamas*, dominated by inertia, darkness, and a lack of clarity, the dominant characteristics of not seeing clearly and being propelled forward by your misunderstandings and stagnation.
- The second lake is *rajas*, indicating disturbance, activity for the sake of activity that lacks the wisdom that rises out of balance and ease. This leads to a loss of perspective and being distracted from the higher goals of life. There is confusion which interprets that the means are the same as the ends.
- The still, transparent and revealing lake is *sattwa*. Only through calm and clear seeing can you perceive the highest treasures and make them yours. The treasure in this context is your soul as well as the path you will need to walk on in order to fully know yourself and express that knowingness fully in the world.
  - practice and live with the wisdom of the gunas in your actions, diet and thoughts, and you will be led to the golden treasure
  - if you understand and embody the wisdom of the gunas you can easily navigate through life's choices and achieve true success, freedom and fulfillment



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- The classic view of working with *guna* is a progression from *tamas* to *rajas* to *sattwa* dominance.
  - use the force of *rajas* to break down *tamas*
  - move, breathe and expand awareness in order to reduce resistance, lack of knowing, self-awareness, and clarity
  - having now woken up to the fact that life isn't forever, your body is a gift and you are more than your body—you undergo a recalibration of the purpose of your life; indicating a reduction in *tamas*
  - the next step is to reorient *rajas* toward *sattwa*, in order to seek more refinement and greater clarity, transparency, ease
  - this is critical because *rajas* does not remain *rajas* forever—*rajas* will eventually become *sattwa* or *tamas*
- *Rajas* becoming *tamas* explains why practice, diet and lifestyle choices that may have at one time been beneficial, can eventually become an obstacle to your continued evolution.
- For a practice to be as beneficial as possible, it must continue to evolve, moving you increasingly toward *sattwa*. Here are some suggestions to accomplish that:
  - every year or two, reflect on whether your practice is serving you and be prepared to change it
  - don't be attached to what may have worked well ten, five or even two years ago
  - over time, you will need to become increasingly selective





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- as you evolve, fewer teachers and approaches to practice are going to be truly helpful to you
- The sub-gunas make clear the subtlety of how you continue to evolve yourself and your practice. There are a total of six sub-gunas, two in the field of each of the three main gunas. Listed from the least desirable to the most desirable tamasic *sattwa* and rajasic *sattwa*.
  - Rajasic *tamas* is the aggressive violent and destructive force of ignorance; this leads to a focus on accumulating power, to lord over or subjugate others; this is the darkest and most negative of all the sub-guna categories, destruction through power
  - Sattvic *tamas* is destruction or negativity in a context that “appears” to be spiritual, pure or idealistic, i.e. religious cults that limit freedom, control or manipulate their followers by deluding them
  - Tamasic *rajas* is the inertia of those who are overly active, resistant to exploring the deeper meaning and purpose of life; infatuated with material goals, they lack spiritual vision or perception
  - Sattvic *rajas* is the spirituality of aggressive or materially-oriented people, the thirst for power, a spirituality born from exclusion and intolerance
  - Tamasic *sattwa*, the positive aspect of destruction, is the tendency to let go of negative forces standing in the way of *sattwa*; a quality promoting surrender of that which prevents greater clarity, refinement and freedom; it is also indicative of the ability to stay balanced and ward off both physical and mental disease

## PRANA SHAKTI CH8



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- Rajasic *sattwa*, the positive force of transformation, is the illuminative aspect of *sattwa* that inspires and allows you to expand holistically; it dissolves inertia, lack of clarity, and the inability to achieve higher states, lifting you to seek and realize greater awareness and evolution; it is a healing force that leads to expansiveness, greater refinement and freedom—it is the transformative essence of *sattwa*
- Rajasic *sattwa* builds your sensitivity to *prana* (*prana samvedana*) and to grow toward light, goodness and increasingly higher states of consciousness
- Since most students have a significant amount of *rajas* (and *tamas*) it is important to meet them where they are. For example, skillfully utilize rajasic qualities in your classes, however be mindful to include *sattwa* so the practice moves them toward greater awareness—not just toward *rajas* for the sake of *rajas*.



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- *Mantra*, perhaps the most essential and far-reaching practice in the yoga tradition, is the soul of ParaYoga.
- *Mantra* guides you toward merging the finite to the infinite, the mortal to the immortal, and everyday existence to spiritual awareness.
- *Mantra* allows you to experience a direct relationship with the core of existence—vibration or sound—through which it guides the mind toward direct perception of the world beyond this one, beyond name and form.
- *Mantra* teaches the mind to become increasingly absorbed in that which is most essential. The result is that the mind merges with its source.
- The Upanishads tell us that *mantra*:
  - heals
  - inspires
  - transforms
  - enlightens
- Not all mantras accomplish all four of the above; for example one *mantra* could be primarily healing, while another could be primarily enlightening.
- Transcendental Meditation (TM) as taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi used *mantra* as a means simply to still the mind; *mantra* was used as an object to distract you from your distractions. Once your mind was quiet (you were in transcendence) you were told to let go of the *mantra*.





- In our tradition we allow the *mantra* to unfold while we are in silence; *mantra* and silence coexist:
  - you start by resting in silence; you are not using the *mantra* to still the mind rather, you get still or quiet enough to be able to feel or hear the *mantra*
  - while resting in silence the sound body of consciousness (or *mantra*) unfolds, continuing to reveal itself and further deepening your experience of source
- In our normal use of language we assign meaning to words. We hear a word and we learn what it means. This is how we develop vocabulary and comprehension, communication. The sequence is word and then meaning.
- This is what makes *mantra* unique; it is essentially living “meaning,” or intelligence, revealed to Seers, who first experienced various states of higher consciousness and then heard the “word” associated to them.
  - instead of looking to the word to imbue you with its meaning by repeating it over and over again, you rest in the experience of the meaning (or feeling), allowing the *mantra*, the word or syllables to unfold
  - the mind, now quiet, is no longer in the way, you now rest in the feeling or meaning of the *mantra*, and thus the *mantra* unfolds
- *Mantra* yoga may be the most all-encompassing of all meditation practices. Unlike almost all other forms of meditation, *mantra* is something other than an object-based practice:
  - *mantra* is not an object; it is a subject; it is consciousness



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- *mantra* is not a bridge to consciousness; it is consciousness
- *mantra* is, what *mantra* does
- *mantra* is the vibration that eventually reveals the light from which it has come; everything in our world is said to come from light—vibration arises out of this light
- *mantra* is the sound body of light
- As awareness becomes more refined, increasingly subtle impurities in the various layers of the mind become transparent. You are led to eventually merge into that light that is your source. On the way to this ultimate realization there are various revelations, including:
  - *dhi*—the form of retentive power that reveals the constant guidance of the most refined perceptions of *buddhi*—pure intuition
  - *prathibha*—intellectual revelation, the sense of being a seer and abiding in revealed knowledge
  - *prajna*—pure and perfect spontaneous knowledge of truth in its entirety, enlightenment
- A practical approach to beginning silent *mantra* practice (*japa*) is to start and then reach a depth of experience with a shorter open *mantra* (e.g. *Om*, *So Hum* or *Rama*), and then move on to a longer one.
  - *so hum* is the *mantra* of fundamental life force and elicits wholeness and stillness, coalescing all the scattered pieces of mind to re-establish union between the infinite and the finite, the universal (*hum*) and the individual (*so*)





- *om* is the power of transcendence, the source of all mantras; it is *pranava*, identical to *Ishwara*—that which, presiding over all of existence, is beyond all limitations
- *rama* is the all-encompassing power of luminosity, strength, and positivity, excellent for generating the power to move out of old patterns and negativity, allowing you to shine internally and externally
- *gayatri* (a longer *mantra*) weakens the obstacles that dim your light, illuminating intelligence and the inspirational power of light
- *maha mrityunjaya* (a longer *mantra*) is the healing and fully awakened power of *prana shakti*
- An awakened *mantra* can be given by a teacher who has been given the authority, by a living tradition, to initiate others into the practice. Its power and privilege is highlighted in some of the following points:
  - the teacher who provides it has completed an extended practice of the *mantra*; thus imbuing the *mantra* with their consciousness as *dhi*, *pratibha* and *prajna*; upon receiving it, one is elevated by the transmission of the teacher's experience as conditioned by the *mantra*
  - understand that the potential of receiving a *mantra* from a master based in a lineage has the full force of the numberless sages and yogis that have practiced it for millennia



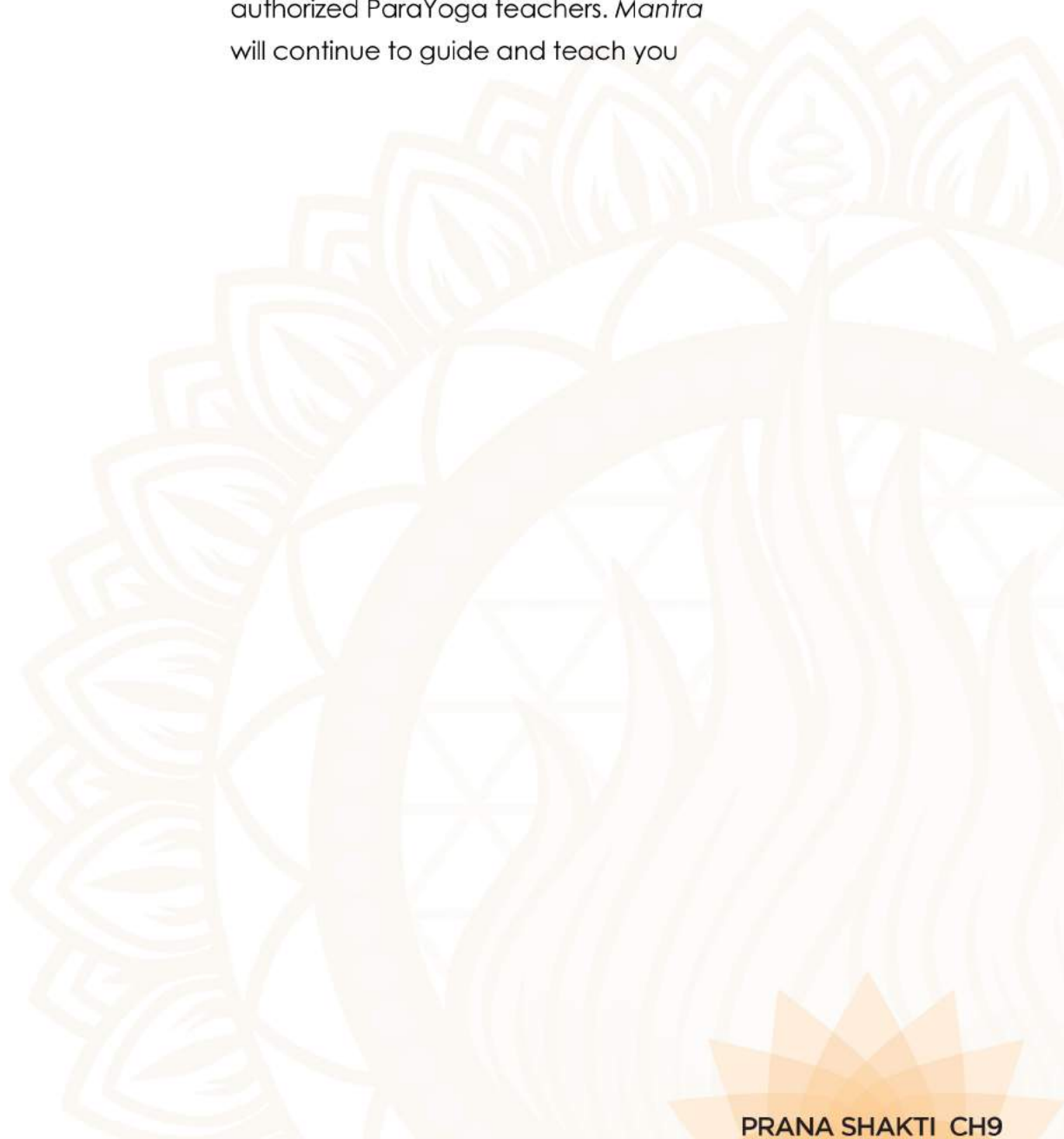
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- In the ParaYoga lineage, there are only four senior students of my teacher, Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, including myself, that have the authority to initiate others into the full spectrum of the tradition's canon of mantras.
  - a number of senior ParaYoga certified teachers have the authority to guide you on which of the five open mantras you should practice
  - should you lack access to them, choose one that resonates with you
- Should you receive an awakened *mantra* from a qualified teacher it will then continue to reveal its power and light provided you:
  - have reverence and respect for your practice/*mantra*, this makes it possible to surrender to the *mantra* completely—*sarva ahuti* (complete surrender)
  - continue with your physical practice and *pranayama*, leading into *prana dharana* for the full force of illumined consciousness (*mantra*) to unfold in your life and in your practice
  - remember: not to say it out loud or repeat it mentally
- Follow the systematic steps that lead into *mantra* practice:
  - bring yourself to a place of stillness and quietude
  - allow the *mantra* to unfold and reveal itself to you as you—you become the *mantra* aware of itself
  - continue with the same *mantra* for a long period of time, at some point you will sense that you have reached a plateau: stay with it



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- most likely, the *mantra* is prepared to take you to another level of revelation if you deepen your surrender to it
- continue to deepen your work with it until you have an opportunity to meet with Yogarupa Rod Stryker or one of his authorized ParaYoga teachers. *Mantra* will continue to guide and teach you



**PRANA SHAKTI CH9**