

THE DANCE OF TRANSFORMATION

(an excerpt from the CD Kali Lila/The Dance of the Divine Mother: Guided Meditations for Inner Transformation.)
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All of life is filled with action. We see this action in the world around us. This action is also felt in the interior efforts of our spiritual pursuits. In our pursuit of a still and peaceful mind, we must prepare ourselves for the inner transformative action that can arise during meditation.

This transformative action is generated in two ways. It is the inner action during meditation resulting from our individual effort. It is also the inner transformative action resulting from letting go and surrendering to our Inner Spirit.

The spiritual path is very much like a spiritual battlefield. As we mature in our ability to meditate, we soon discover that the inner path of the meditator is strewn with pitfalls, barriers and minefields. We are always coming face to face with ourselves. Whether we are battling a tense and stressful body, a restless or numb mind, or a heart filled with constriction and pain, we must overcome these obstacles if we want to experience a still and peaceful mind.

In our meditations we battle the restless thought waves of the mind. We must eliminate the restless thoughts, thoughts filled with knowledge both good and bad, some thoughts painful and even thoughts filled with pleasant things. We must battle the mis-conceptions regarding the true nature of reality, the sleepiness or numbness that obscures our vision of reality, and we must still all of our ever-recurring memories.

In our meditations we battle the afflictions of the mind and heart. We actively work toward removing the veil of ignorance from our awareness. We learn to soften our feeling of self-importance. We learn to let go of our attraction to things and to our repulsion to things. And ultimately, we learn to deal with our fear of death.

The flow of our energies along these familiar (often entrenched) grooves in our mind and heart are called *samskaras*. These *samskaras* are often seen as the source of our restless thought waves and of our afflictions. When our inner meditative efforts rub up against the habitual flow of our consciousness, friction is created. This friction creates heat. It is this inner heat, called *tapas*, which gives us the tool to alter the habitual flow of our inner energies, and to bring about inner change. As the fire of spiritual transformation resulting from our individual effort burns in our heart and mind, the flames continually dance across our awareness, sometimes burning brightly and quickly, and often glowing softly, but continually burning away at the

roots of our restlessness and at the causes of our limited awareness.

Although our own effort is an essential part of this inner battlefield, our surrender to the mysterious transformative power of grace is even more important. In other words, we don't have to enter this battle alone. As we calm the mind and open the heart, we are opening ourselves to the inner energies of transformation, to the *Divine Grace of our Inner Spirit*.

Meditation is the catalyst that opens our selves to the process of inner transformation. When we meditate we can tune into and surrender to our Inner Spirit, to the subtle energies in our spiritual heart and ask for, or pray for, a change in our life. Our Inner Spirit then gives us the sweet power of transformation to grow. Our Inner Spirit, our inner transformative energy, then gives us the power to Dance Toward Stillness. As we make the effort to be still and steady in our meditations, we learn at the same time to surrender to the Dance of the inner rhythm of change. We learn to Dance to the wonderful rhythm of spiritual transformation. We can no longer be the same person.

All of life is an expression of the Divine. In the Hindu tradition, the manifested universe is viewed as an expression of the feminine aspect of the Divine. This manifesting universe, this dance of energy, is considered always to be in motion, to be in a constant state of change. Its action is always creating, preserving and destroying...always transforming. The essence or power of this manifesting feminine universe, which is always in a state of transformative action, is called Shakti. When Shakti is approached as the nourishing Mother of the universe, She becomes known as Kali. It is Kali as the compassionate Mother who propels us forward and inward.

In time, the actions of our individual efforts and the transformative actions resulting from our surrender to the Inner Spirit, allow us to eliminate the roots of our mental restlessness and of our mental and emotional afflictions. We are propelled forward and inward, dancing to the inner rhythms of Mother Kali's grace. She gives us peace of mind and an open heart. Finally, the flames of Kali's inner fires prepare us to receive the sweet essence of Her transformative love.

Tony Murdock has a Master's degree in Hindu Religious History from McMaster University. He has been studying Indian philosophy and practicing meditation for the past 30 years. For the past four years, he has been teaching meditation and Indian Philosophy throughout Ontario and British Columbia. In addition to numerous articles, he has released two CDs entitled Toward Stillness: Guided Meditations for the Beginner and Kali Lila/The Dance of the Divine Mother: Guided Meditations for Inner Transformation. Tony can be contacted at towardstillness@rogers.com.