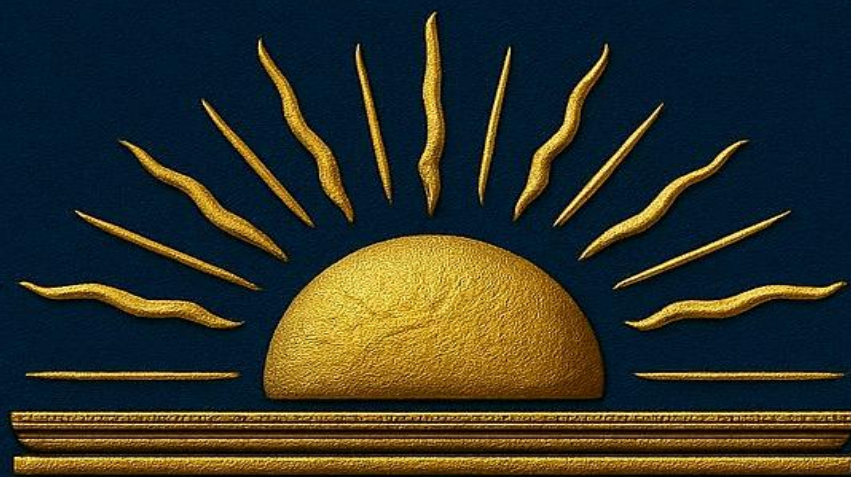


BHAGWAD GEETA 2



The Art of Life

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Introduction

Did it ever occur to you that the life that you are living might be a game being played in a virtual reality, and the one you identify as yourself might be just a character in that game, not truly you?

This can be true that this life might be just a game, but jumping directly to the conclusion without first-hand experience is not really what we should do.

This book is a journey where you will be introduced about the game of life and its reality.

When playing a game, a player must be aware of the powers that their character possesses. In the same way, you will be made aware of the hidden powers that you already have within you that will help you to enrich the experience of the game of life.

A man with extensive amount of money, without appropriate knowledge of correct investments, ends up squandering that money purposelessly.

Similarly these powers, which are already present in you to craft a better experience of life, will go to waste if you do not know where to invest them, how to invest them, where not to invest them. Therefore, appropriate knowledge will be shared about the discovering your true purpose to make the experience of life more fulfilling.

But as the journey of book progresses, it will begin to expose the naked reality of the game. A reader who continues reading even then, might not see the life as they were previously seeing it. There is a one hundred percent chance that reading further will make you lose interest in the game itself, and you may then want to know the reality of the game more than anything else.

Those brave hearts who make it to that part of the journey will be showered with knowledge of different ways, allowing them not only to intellectually understand but also to actually realize the true reality of life.

The realization of truth is reserved for only a few fearless conquerors, those who are able to defy the opposing currents of the game that aim to keep a being stuck in ignorance.

Once that supreme experience is taken, then you will transcend this game, and it will mean nothing to you.

So proceed ahead at your own risk.

The Rhythm of Nature

A flow that the entire cosmos follows – a particular rhythm to which everything is aligned – has been called *Ritam* in the Vedas.

Ritam is the rhythm of reality. Creation, preservation, and destruction happen in the universe in an ordered harmony because of Ritam.

From galaxies and supermassive black holes and giant stars and solar systems and planets in them, to the seasons, rivers, breathing, and atomic and subatomic particles – everything follows a particular rhythm and pattern.

Ritam, the flow, has three aspects: creation, preservation, and destruction.

Second law of thermodynamics states entropy (randomness) of the universe is constantly increasing. This corresponds to the destructive aspect of the flow.

This means that, by nature, everything tends towards disintegration — it falls apart unless preserved and maintained.

Life of sentient being is a struggle against this natural disintegration. A living being lives by going against this chaotic aspect of universe. He lives for keeping the integrity intact and maintained by struggling and standing against this destructive and disintegrating flow of the universe.

Anything not preserved withers away – whether the body, intelligence, character, health, wealth, a relationship, a family, a physical structure, an organization, a society, a nation or a civilization.

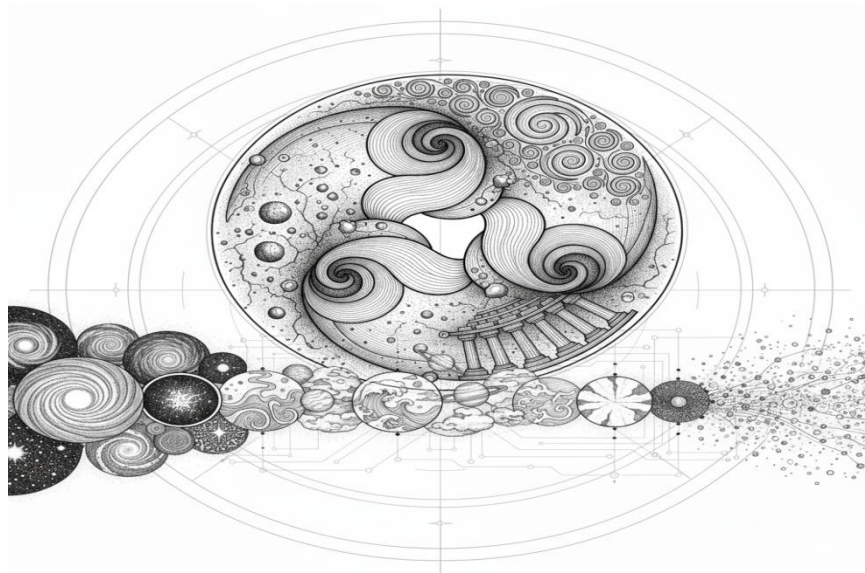
Disintegration occurs every moment, and action must be taken continually to support creation and preservation. If no action is taken, only destruction remains; Therefore, inaction is purely destructive.

Any action inclined towards creation and preservation is righteous. Actions that support integrity over natural disintegration are actions of Dharma.

To preserve dynamically, sometimes the old and outdated must be destroyed to create something new and useful. When destruction is performed with the clear intent to preserve, it may appear destructive but is actually constructive — this is an action of Dharma.

Dharma is the responsibility to act rightly; Adharma is its opposite.

Any action intended to destroy integrity and promote disintegration is non-righteous. Such action aligns with the disintegrative forces of nature and is classified as Adharma.



Every human has a natural responsibility and duty to preserve integrity of the system he lives into. System comprises of his own life, life of his family members and his immediate relatives, living beings of his locality, societal institutions of welfare in his vicinity, nation and entire creation. A person must conduct his daily affairs ensuring well-being and preservation of entire the system. No action shall align in direction of chaos which disturbs the well-being and integrity of the system.

But the naturally increasing entropy that promotes disintegration does not spare humans; it hinders the preservation of integrity. It works through subtle currents of passions — lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, and envy — to promote disintegration.

If a person is not careful, the destructive currents can overtake their mind and carry them towards destruction and Adharma.

Just as a destructive current pervades the universe, creative and preservative currents are also present.

It is just a matter of attuning to the current, which decides which trajectory would a human follow – destructive, preservative or creative.

Attunement to nature's currents happens according to a person's desires, thoughts and actions. As would be the desires, thoughts and actions, similar kind of current would prevail over the mind determining the state of mind; state of mind shapes the reality and destiny of person.

Only if a person catches the rhythm of universal flow, the resulting synchronicity is simply sufficient enough to take care of that person.

The flow itself helps ensure that a person's Dharma is fulfilled.
We shall now learn the art of becoming one with this rhythm of flow.



Words

Human beings are the most restless creatures on this planet. To even begin with the topic of restlessness: a person is constantly speaking, either silently to themselves or aloud to others; they rarely stop this activity.

To perform the action of dharma, a person first needs to learn the speech of dharma.

Speaking the right words internally is absolutely important. Repetition of words creates our beliefs, and our beliefs shape our reality.

Our words are a tool of either creation or destruction. Words that we speak can be a boon of success, fulfilment and growth, or a curse that creates sadness, misery, unfortunate events, unluckiness, worries and regrets in a person's life.

We shall now discuss in detail the power of spoken words.

How are words alone capable of chiselling and creating the destiny of a person?

Thoughts are the words that we speak to ourselves internally. Thoughts are the cause behind the actions; from thoughts alone springs the action that we perform. Thoughts decide the state of mind, and state of mind attracts the circumstances.

Here is the elaboration:

Words that we speak, internally and externally, are constantly programming our mind and setting its vibrational frequency.

The mind works like a magnet and attracts circumstances and people according to its vibrational state.

Our thoughts, words and deeds are constantly tuning the vibrations of our mind, and universal forces, without fail, make us meet with people who are exactly in tune with our vibration.

Hence, the type of monologue that we have with ourselves arises from the pre-existing state of mind. This monologue, in turn, constantly programmes our future state of mind; creating a feedback loop where each influences each other.

The state of mind is a very important factor in life. Everything arises from state of mind: thoughts and feelings arise from state of mind; actions arise from state of mind; circumstances and people are attracted into our life based on our state of mind.

What exactly is the state of mind?

It refers to the vibrational frequency to which the mind is attuned. The state of mind is decided by thoughts and feelings fluxing inside the mind.

It can be controlled by an individual at will, but Nature does not easily give up entire control to anyone. Total control over the mind can only be achieved by those who have become completely unselfish.

Broadly, there are three states or frequencies of mind:

- **Sattvic** (Balanced activity with activation of rajas and rest of tamas.)
- **Rajasic** (selfishness-driven activity)
- **Tamasic** (destructive activity or inert)

Sattvic State of Mind: Love, Peace, Joy, Gratitude, Purity, Balance, Harmony
Rajasic State of Mind: Power, Control, Restlessness, Fear, Anger, Dissatisfaction
Tamasic State of Mind: Inaction, Guilt, Shame, Confusion, Suffering, Victimization, Lust.

Words, information, food, music, company and environment — they all influence the state of mind.

Words, actions, information, food, company and environment can also be Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic in nature.

Their choice will determine the state of mind. Therefore, consciously choose these things in life.

Nature herself plays a vital role in controlling the state of mind.

Nature has the track record of each and every karmic activity of a person.

She knows the thoughts behind the thoughts of a person. No thought or deed is hidden from her; she knows every secret of a person; you can never fool her.

She is also responsible for providing the effects of the causes created by a person. In simple terms, the reaction to a karma (an action) is controlled by Nature. When she wishes to provide a specific reaction to a person's past karma, she accordingly changes that person's state of

mind, which further changes their thoughts, which lead to actions, which then result in circumstances that the person deserves based on past karma.

This determines success or failure.

Nature controls the state of mind of a person to provide the fruits of past actions and also to test them with new challenges.

A person can also control their present state of mind; if they do not control it consciously, then Nature will control it completely based on past karma.

State of mind creates present and future of a person. A person who can control their state of mind can also control their future. They get to decide whether they will have a desirable or an undesirable future.

Easiest way to control state of mind is by controlling our words.

The state of mind is directly controlled by thoughts — the internal talking we have with ourselves — therefore it becomes absolutely essential to be conscious about the choice of words we use, both internally and externally.

The way a person continually talks to himself will determine how his life becomes.

The type of words a person uses about themselves, their life and future will shape them, their life and future.

Words that we speak should always be directed towards our greater good and our desired future.

Use the right words that keep you in a Sattvic state of mind rather than a Rajasic or Tamasic state of mind.

Words should always align in direction to make us limitless. Words should be used to help us in breaking our mental limitations of “I cannot.” Never say “I cannot”; instead, say “I can, but I choose not to.” Never limit yourself with your words.

Oftentimes, emotions of anger, frustration or resentment can make us use words that can harm ourselves or others.

Never say: “My life is bad,” “I am unlucky,” “the world is a bad place,” or “this person, caste, community or institution is bad.” It is because if you already presume them in a negative light with your words, then they will mysteriously behave according to your assumptions. It is best

not to have any assumptions about anything. This lets everything unfold in its originality without our interference.

Our words can be soothing and pleasant; they can act as effective blessings for other people. Therefore, it is highly advised to use words that ensure wellbeing for others.

People, in general, are simply not aware of the power of words. They rarely consciously choose the right words to create the right future; instead they wreak havoc in their lives by speaking negatively about themselves and the world.

<u>Unhealthy Choice of Words</u>	<u>Healthy Choice of Words</u>
"I am so unlucky."	"I am a very lucky person."
"I am weak and ill."	"I am strong and healthy."
"My face is not that beautiful."	"I am absolutely beautiful."
"I don't know what will happen, everything looks so bad, I think we are not going to make it."	"Things seem difficult but everything is going to be okay."
"I don't deserve this, this is only for special people."	"I deserve everything I want, unless anybody is hurt."
"Why is this world so cruel to me?"	"World is a very beautiful place to live"
"I always mess things around up."	"I may make mistakes, but I am improving myself."
"Why is life my so bad and difficult?"	"Though there are hardships but my life in general is beautiful."

On one side, there are words that create beliefs of limitation; on the other side, there are words that create beliefs of limitlessness.

Some parents have this bad habit of using negative words on their children like "You will be a failure", "You are going to have a life of regrets ahead", "Oh my poor child, you are always ill." These words create a vibration in the universe which can catch fructification in future. Therefore, consciously use words which will uplift your children not degrade them.

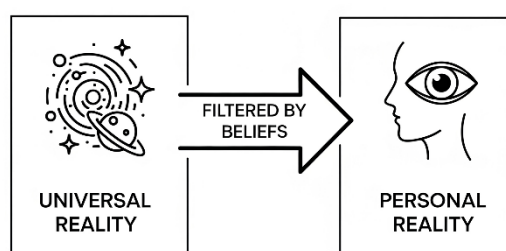
Perspective Change: Our words influence our state of mind, which further influences our reality and future. Whenever required, either speak consciously and positively otherwise, learn to keep quiet both internally and externally.

Belief

The outside universe is a full of potential and possibilities. There is a universal reality and a personal reality. If all biased perspectives are dropped, we can witness the universal reality. But until we have our own perspective to see the world, we are going to see the world as we believe it to be.

The universe shapes itself for us according to our beliefs. The universe and all its components behave and respond to us according to those beliefs. Our beliefs are the filters we put on reality; reality appears to us as per the filter of our beliefs.

TWO REALITIES



Beliefs act as filters — what we look through determines what we see.

Our beliefs have the power to change our personal reality. A human's strength, power, resilience, courage, beauty, respect, wealth, abilities, creativity, opportunities and everything is limited by their beliefs.

Beliefs can limit all those things in our life, and beliefs alone can make them unlimited.

Sum total of a man is nothing but what he believes himself to be.

A man has the power to change his beliefs and hence also the power to change his reality.

Beliefs are the convictions we hold in our minds about workings of ourselves and the external world. Beliefs shape our perception of how we see ourselves and how we see the external world.

Perception is the most important aspect of human life. Beliefs are important because they form our perception. Perception shapes the reality of a human.

Perception of **how we see ourselves** and **how we see the world** are the topic of our discussion:

How we see ourselves:

These include the beliefs we hold about our personal identity.

For example:

If these are the beliefs that I hold about my identity and if this how I choose to see myself, then this is going to be my personal reality.

I am weak.	I am strong.
I am powerless.	I am powerful.
I am frightened easily.	I am courageous.
I am lacking this and that.	I am abundant.
I am unlucky.	I am lucky.
I am unhealthy; no diet or exercise helps me.	I am healthy.
I am an average author.	I am a great author.
I never get opportunities.	I am abundant in opportunities.
I am always dissatisfied with life.	I am content.
I cannot do this.	I can and I will do this.
I am a failure, no matter how hard I try.	I am going to be successful no matter what.

Therefore, it is absolutely crucial to choose every belief in the mind wisely, according our desired future.

How we see the world

If these are the beliefs I hold about the external world and life, these beliefs determine the perception with which I choose to see the external world, and this is how it will respond to me.

For example:

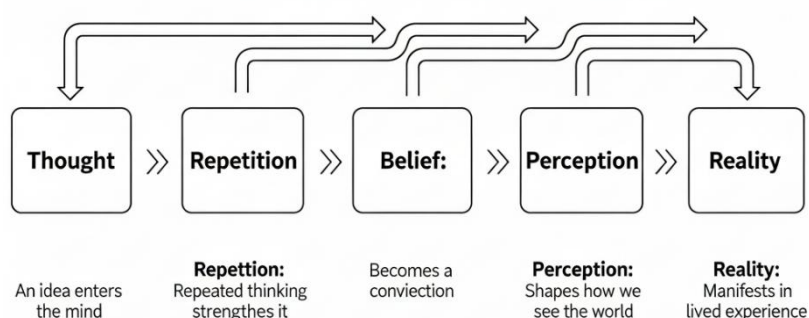
The world is very cruel place to live.	The world is a beautiful place to live
Life is unfair to me.	Life always provides me a fair chance
My life is living hell.	My life is beautiful.
This country is bad.	This country is a good place to live.
There are no opportunities here.	There is abundance of opportunities here for everything.
Things are always hard and uphill for me.	Things are smooth for me.
Government and Judiciary never support us.	Government and Judiciary are working in my favour.
This community, caste, creed and gender is bad.	Every community caste, creed and gender is good, though exceptions exist.

People are always rude to me.	People are nice and kind to me.
All other undesirable perceptions.	All other desirable perceptions.

If these are the beliefs I hold about external world that would imply I choose to see the world with this perception, then, the external world will respond to me accordingly.

If I hold these beliefs about external world, then the reality will take shape according to them. Reality will then behave toward me in accordance with these beliefs.

Beliefs are formed by the repetition of the thoughts and words. Beliefs are thoughts and words which are consolidated over time and turned into convictions. Every thought we have in mind will influence reality.



How to cultivate powerful and non-limiting beliefs:

- 1) **Awareness of your current belief system.**
- 2) **Identification of limiting beliefs.**
- 3) **Replace limiting beliefs with more powerful and non-limiting beliefs through continuous repetition until they become firm convictions.**

Elaboration:

First step: Awareness of thoughts and their nature is the first move toward change. We must become aware of each thought that passes through our conscious mind. At all times, we should

ask whether the thought arises from a limiting belief or a non-limiting belief, and whether it aligns with our desired outcomes or not.

Being aware will help us identify limiting thoughts and beliefs.

Second step: Identify the undesirable thought or belief and admit its presence. Then consciously allow the thought – simply observe it without reacting.

Third Step: In the beginning, the old belief will have 100% of the energy. Next, **introduce** new non-limiting, desirable thoughts and, through concentrated repetitions, turn those thoughts into convictions.

Attention provides energy. Therefore, keep your attention on the new thoughts so they may gain energy.

The mind can repeatedly shift attention back to the old thoughts.

There is a rule for controlling the mind: always tell it **what to do**, and do not tell it **what not to do**. Remember this rule.

Don't tell the mind, "Do not focus on old or undesirable thought." Instead instruct the mind to focus on the newly introduced thought.

There is a subtle difference between the two statements, but it has a profound effect on the functioning of the mind.

When you tell the mind to focus on the new thought, it will provide more attention to it, making the new thought more energetic. In this way the old thought will gradually lose energy to the new thought.

Therefore, never suppress or fight the old thought. Let it run in the background and keep all attention on the new thought. Same energy of the old thought will gradually transform into new thought with the help of attention. In the end, the old thought will lose its energy and new thought will possess it,

Also note, genuinely **feeling** the thought to be a real fact is more effective than mere repetition of a thought.

Imagination

In yogic tradition, a person is made specifically aware that, daily, they experience three states of living; the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state.

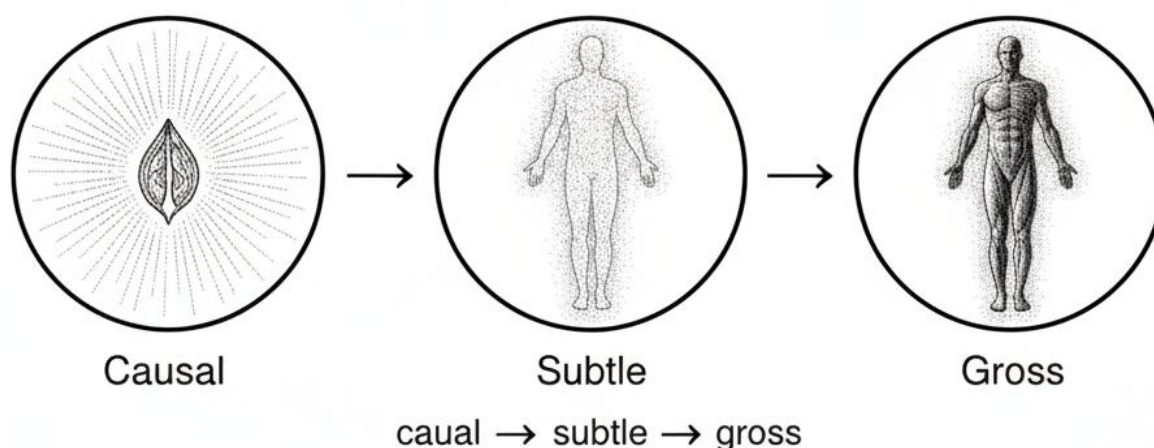
All three states contain different experiences.

In the waking state, we have our physical body and mind in use, and we operate in the gross physical universe.

In the dream state we do not have our physical body in use, but we have our mind and a dream body. We operate in the dream or astral universe ("astral" comes from "light"). It is also called the subtle state.

In deep sleep, we have neither body nor mind in our experience, yet we still take and record the experience. We are still there, though body and mind are dormant. We reside in a causal universe ("causal" comes from "cause"). In this state, everything exists in its cause state or seed form; nothing is manifested, neither subtle nor gross.

The one who is aware of deep sleep is beyond body and mind.



From seed form to subtle blueprint to physical reality.

Now, everything comes out of seed form, i.e., the causal state. Seeds of ideas and thoughts are present in the causal state; these thoughts then take a subtle form made up of light; this subtle form is a blueprint of physical form. We experience this subtle universe in our dreams; then this subtle form manifests itself in gross form in the physical universe with the help of mind.

The mind is the faculty that projects our physical reality and receives the physical reality of others. If there is no mind to observe, everything remains in its quantum state of pure possibilities.

It is an interesting observation that reality is not painted with colours as we perceive it. There are no colours out there in the world independent of observer; our mind paints various colour combinations on objects depending upon which wavelengths of electromagnetic spectrum they reflect.

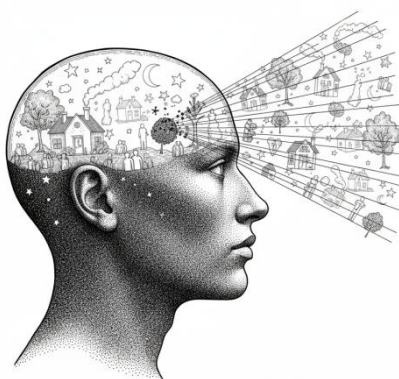
Also, there is no solidity outside. Our mind provides us with the experience of solidity and the sensation of touch. In reality, we never truly touch anything because atoms do not touch one another; the sensation of touch we feel is actually electromagnetic repulsion between atoms.

It is not unfair to say that everything “out there” is the mind’s elaborate imagination. Therefore, the mind is the creator of our reality.

Inside the mind we have beliefs and perception about reality and reality unfolds to us according to these beliefs and perceptions.

These beliefs and perceptions are nothing but imagination; they are not real but they are imagined by us. Therefore, we can change our imagination and change our beliefs, and thereby change our reality.

So, if our beliefs and perceptions are creating reality for us, then why should we not have the desired beliefs and perceptions rather than undesired beliefs and perceptions embedded in our minds about ourselves and the world?



The mind projects and receives our reality.

Beliefs and perceptions we carry in the mind should align what our highest self would possess. Although we are not yet where we want to be, we can think and feel like that future self in the present moment itself – we can imagine ourselves now as that future highest self.

As we begin to think and feel like our highest self, over time we will find that we are moving towards our highest self, faster than ever.

The art of creating beliefs and perceptions from the desired future is known as imagination. Our highest future self should be abundant, strong, and beautiful. We should imagine all our new beliefs from the vantage point of abundance, strength, and beauty.

We should imagine those beliefs as true here and now, so that one truly feels like the person who holds these beliefs.

This is not mere daydreaming but concentrated imagination – where the imagination is so vivid that it is felt in the mind as if it were a real fact.

New seeds of creation can be sown into existence using imagination, and if nurtured well they will bring a desirable harvest.

The Bible puts it beautifully:

"Behold, I shall do a new thing. Now, it shall spring forth; will you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." — Isaiah 43:19

These lines have a very deep meaning embedded in them; those who understand them will almost understand the functioning of life.

This little passage has three lines in it:

First line: the "new thing" refers to planting a new seed in the causal world with imagination.

Second line: when this seed becomes a plant —the seed of thought in the causal world arises as a circumstance in the physical world.

Third line: it depicts the bold, life-changing ability that imagination holds, where it can put paved roads in the wilderness and stream of water in the desert.

"Roads in the wilderness" suggests that imagination can act as a guide in unknown places and help us make the streak of right choices, almost paving the way towards the destination.

"River in the desert" symbolizes abundance amid state of lack; it subtly conveys that imagination is a tool by which we can create bountiful abundance and serenity even amidst the sensory perception of total lack and chaos.

How to imagine

- The first and foremost step is to clearly identify the goal. Take a piece of paper and establish the clarity about your goal. Form a clear-cut vision of your desired future.
- Imagination is used to induce a person into the feeling of their desired future. Feeling it here and now, as you would want to be in the future.
- When we immerse ourselves in the feeling of the desired reality, our mind starts to raise its vibrational level – i.e., our state of mind begins to shift from the past state toward that of the desired future.
- Various tools are used in imagination like visualisation and affirmations. Both help us to imagine and feel the desired future. One is visual imagination; the other is non-visual imagination. Perform visualisation from the first-person perspective.
- With closed eyes, either make a visual scene or use an affirmation to imagine the desired future. Now feel that desired future as if it is true here and now. Feel as if you are truly that person you want to be.
- Now surrender the imagined act to the universe. Do not try to answer questions of "how?" or "when it will happen?" Just trust the process and believe that things will change at the right time. Having trust is very important.
- Do not force your imagination on the external world. Prakṛti (Nature) is the controller of all changes. Prakṛti will make the changes in the universe and in your life, not you. She will not allow you to hurt or force anyone without you first hurting yourself.

Just imagine for yourself the good things and surrender them to the Prakṛti. Remember, you have power over imagination, not over the changes taking place in the world.

Take an example:

If somebody wants to become a successful singer, what should be their desired beliefs about themselves and about the external world?

Desired beliefs of someone wanting to be a successful singer about their own identity:

1. I have a very melodious and soothing voice.
2. I create lovely, beautiful songs.

3. I attract abundant opportunities.
4. I have a very good team of musicians.

Desired beliefs of someone wanting to be a successful singer about their external world:

1. Everybody likes to listen to my songs.
2. People connect with my songs.
3. The music world is kind and supportive toward me.

This is an example of imagining desirable beliefs to become a successful singer. A person can also perform a visual act about the desired future. The key is to feel these beliefs and imagined acts of the future as true in the here and now.

A similar approach can be used to lay the foundations of the desired future in other areas of life.

Imagine abundance, strength, and beauty for yourself in all areas of life.

Remember the rules:

- Prakṛti controls whatever happens in the universe. You do not exist purely in a personal reality but co-exist in a shared reality. Things happen according to her will, not yours.
 - You will only be able to manifest things that are in sync with your karmic blueprint.
 - You pay for everything you manifest. Manifestation draws the power of a person's previous good karma. Good karma is the fuel of manifestation. The more you manifest, the faster you will deplete your repository of good karma. Therefore, consciously select and manifest only good and important things; do not waste your good karma on useless manifestations.
 - Do not imagine anything that would hurt or force another being; otherwise, you will have your future ruined. This is one of the worst kinds of karma to generate.
 - You cannot avoid or evade your past karmic reactions with imagination, but you can lay the foundation for new karma.
 - Do not imagine anything that would harm or coerce another being; otherwise, you may ruin your future. This is one of the worst karmas to generate.
 - You cannot avoid or evade past karmic reactions with imagination, but you can lay the foundation for new karmas.
-

Concentration

Concentration: Controlling attention at will and keeping it fixed on one place for a desired period of time.

An average human being is rarely able to harness the complete power of the mind. People literally use only ten percent of its power (as sometimes suggested in science-fiction movies.)

This may appear to be a bogus concept, but it is somewhat true.

Swami Vivekananda stands as testimony to this fact.

Once in Chicago, Swami Ji showcased his extraordinary concentration ability used to read books.

He would borrow large volumes of books from the library and return them the next day. Intrigued by his borrowing pattern, the librarian confronted him, asking why he borrowed books if he did not intend to read them. To her surprise, Swami revealed that he had read all those books within a day. Annoyed, the librarian challenged him by selecting a random page from a book and asked him to briefly explain the topic on that page.

To her astonishment, Swami flawlessly repeated the lines without even glancing at the book.

Impressed, the librarian asked more questions, and Swami Ji answered them all with precision, leaving her in awe of his extraordinary knowledge.

Raja Ajit Singh of Khetri was the second person to witness Swami's reading ability.

He observed that while reading, *Narendernath* (Swami's original name) would simply turn the pages very quickly from beginning to end; that constituted his method reading – he finished the entire book in that way.

Curious, *Ajit Singh* asked *Narendernath* how that could be possible. *Narendernath* explained that when a child starts reading, they often focus on a single letter of the word; the child's entire attention is on it. Gradually, with practice, the child can easily read a word, two, or three words at a time.

Likewise, if someone increases their power of concentration, they may be able to read an entire page of a book in a single glance.

He also said that to achieve such power, three things are absolutely necessary: continence, practice, and concentration.

Arjuna, one of the greatest archers ever known on earth, practiced archery along with his brothers. Their Guru *Drona* hung a dummy bird on a tree and asked them to take their shots.

On each person's turn, when they pointed the arrow toward the target and got ready to shoot, *Drona* would ask, "What do you see, son?" Some said they saw the bird and many trees; some said only the bird and a tree. When he asked *Arjuna* the same question:

He replied, "Eye – I see only the eye of the bird and nothing more than that, master."

This pinpointed concentration made him the greatest archer.

Countless more examples could be discussed, but the crux remains the same; concentration.

Yogis also use concentration of the mind as the primary tool to attain the state of Samadhi (highest level of consciousness).

As seen, concentration is the primal requisite for becoming great—or even good—at anything, whether in material world or in the non-material world.

Attention and Energy

Our entire system is made up of energy.

Energy follows one rule: it is never created or destroyed, but is transformed from one form to another.

All the activities we perform are a direct transformation of cosmic prāṇa into bodily and mental energy, which then transforms into worldly energy – e.g., mechanical work, creative work and intellectual work etc.

At every moment, this transformation prāṇa is happening, whether we are conscious or unconscious.

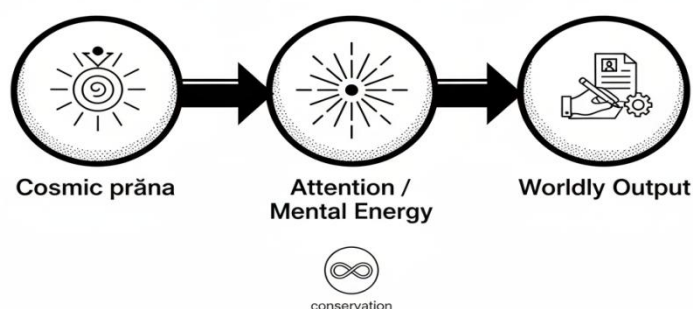
This energy is transformed into the things on which we place **attention**.

Unconsciously, we often waste much of this energy on random restless thoughts or daydreaming.

Even while working, we scatter this energy randomly on useless thoughts or restless activities. Due to this scattering, a task does not receive the appropriate amount of energy to be transformed into brilliance.

Consciously controlling attention is a skill. It is arguably the most important skill that differentiates a successful person from an unsuccessful one.

Despite being the most important skill as all others skills—since other skills are learned and implemented based on this foundation—it is rarely taught in modern schools.



Flow State

Concentration is directly linked to the flow state. The flow state is a state of mind in which one forgets about the passage of time and effortlessly produces remarkable results. A person experiencing flow feels a sense of effortlessness and things seem to flow naturally.

If attention is pinpointed, the mind becomes a magnet and behaves as if it is downloading creativity from the universe itself. A person may perform work in such a way that, when he looks back at it, it amazes even them. Their reaction might be: “Oh – did I do that?”

Learning to Concentrate

Concentration involves learning how to introduce a single object into the mind and let go of other objects and urges that divide attention.

Below are common urges experienced as distractions that destroy concentration:

1) External Distractions: family members, pets, environmental noise, and distractions from modern technological gadgets.

This happens when concentration is very weak. Try to be alone with the work at hand.

2) Internal Distractions:

a) **Unnecessary bodily movements:** fidgeting of the fingers and shaking of the legs and feet destroy concentration.

Stop these behaviours, as they eat up a lot of mental energy.

b) **Cravings:** the desire to get up and eat, to gossip with others, to play music on the phone or to scroll social media.

c) **Thoughts:** daydreaming or planning about a desirable or undesirable future, resenting bad decisions of the past, resenting past circumstances, etc.

These are the habits that have arisen from the restlessness of body and mind. As habits, they were developed knowingly or unknowingly. The best way to eliminate an old habit is to construct a new habit in its place.

Technique

Concentration is a skill and therefore trainable with practice and repetition.

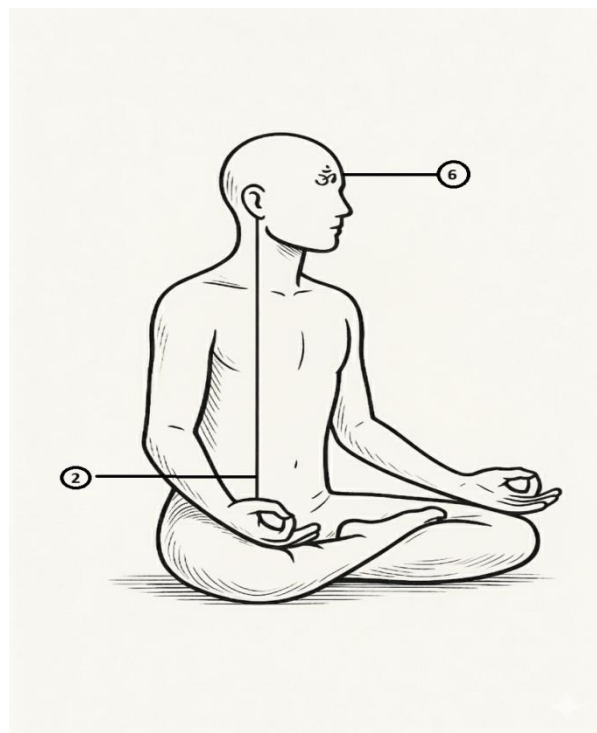
A practical technique to help train this powerful, life changing art of concentration is discussed below.

The technique is based on the principle that nature follows, i.e., Abhyās and Vairāgya (effort and surrender). While learning to concentrate, we also attune ourselves to this natural rhythm.

To concentrate, we must choose an object upon which to direct and hold our attention. We will use the word AUM (pronounced OM) as that object.

Follow these instructions:

- 1) Sit on a comfortable seat or on folded blanket placed on the floor, in a relaxed cross-legged position.
- 2) The spine should be absolute straight, with hands placed near the knees, palms facing upward, and index finger and thumb making a ring. The glutes can be slightly elevated above legs by adding of another layer of cloth or a quilt beneath them to help keep the spine erect.
- 3) Close the eyes. With eyes closed, direct your gaze to the point in the middle of the eyebrows and hold it there. Cease all bodily movement; even the eyeballs should not move.
- 4) Gently give out blessings of peace and love in all four directions toward the entire universe.
- 5) Start by observing the breath. Do not try to control it or change its pace; keep it natural as it was before.
- 6) Now, hold the image of OM at the middle of the eyebrows.
- 7) With every inhalation, chant OM in the mind. At the same time, try to feel that you are not just chanting but inhaling the word OM. With each inhalation, provide energy to the fixated image of OM.
- 8) On each exhalation, relax – no struggle. Let go of effort and intention to force concentration. Allow the energy provided to OM during inhalation to settle.
- 9) Repeat the process of Abhyās and Vairāgya (effort and surrender).
Gradually come out of the practice. Be gentle and smooth with bodily movement avoid abrupt movement.



Remember:

Various thoughts will repeatedly distract you during the practice.

Follow the rule: do not tell the mind to stop this or that; instead tell it what to do.

As soon as you notice yourself distracted, command your mind to focus on the practice. Do not try to control or fight with other thoughts, let them move as they do, shift attention back to the practice and let those **thoughts run in the background**; they will resolve themselves there after making their movement.

Each time you bring your mind back to the practice, your concentration will improve more and more.

The longer you are able to stay with the image of OM without getting distracted, the better you become at the art of concentration.

Start with just a 5-minute session per day, and increase gradually. Add one minute to the session duration every 5-7 days, depending on your level of comfort.

Aim to increase the session length to at least 21 minutes per day, or more, based on personal preference.

Brahmacharya and Will Power

Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya literally means “to live in Brahm”. It is a lifestyle where thoughts, words, actions spring up from the highest level of consciousness which is called Brahm.

Practically, the term represents continence. Continence is sexual purity in thoughts, words, and deeds.

Brahmacharya represents strength, sacrifice, memory, intelligence, equanimity of mind, and creative power. One who masters it masters all of these.

This is the basis of greatness not merely success. There are many people who get successful in fulfilling their petty desires, they are found here and there, they come and go. Then there are those who are remembered for centuries or millennia to come. They are the ones who make what is called a dent in the universe for the better reasons.

Now they are obviously not ordinary people. They are the cream of humanity, who, by their great contributions for the progression of the humanity, inscribe their names into stories and history.

They all were once the ordinary like anyone else. In a constant struggle to improve themselves and getting knocked down by the tests of the time, they come around the ultimate force present in themselves the most potent creative sexual energy, waiting to be unleashed by only those of strong in mind and will. This may not all happen in one lifetime.

As the name suggests, this force helps to create.

A common man cannot even think about sacrificing sex and no wonders he remains a commoner. A person with powerful thought, mind, and creative force—controlled through Brahmacharya—can unleash blitzkrieg productivity in their field.

Some examples often cited are Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Yogananda, Isaac Newton, and Nikola Tesla; they were reportedly celibate for all of their lives. They were naturals, almost effortless, in controlling these urges. This results from previous lifetimes of practice.

This path greatness doesn't sound like the one that you would also want to follow and become as great as them. Very hard, isn't it?

Nevertheless, do not lose hope.

There have also been people who married or maintained relationships yet exercised restraint in intimacy and engaged less frequently in sexual activity. This happens when both partners are attuned to higher state of consciousness.

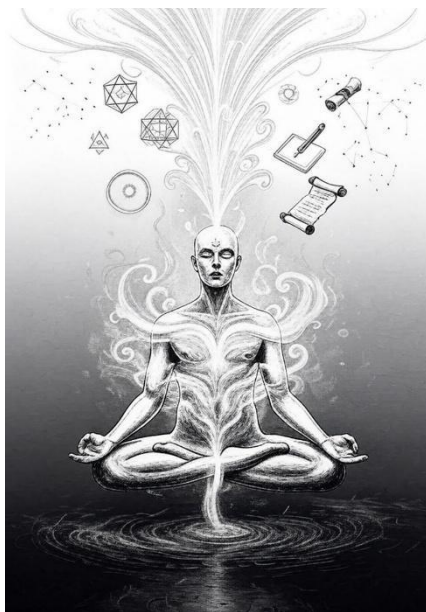
When they preserved this creative energy—powerful enough to create progeny—and directed it upward instead of letting it dissipate, it transforms into the subtle energy called ojas. Ojas then becomes a source of unfailing memory, new creativity, and physical and mental strength

A person can channel this creative energy into any new work they wish to create and excel at. A person should mentally visualize their sexual energy is metamorphosing into creativity, nourishing the brain, and tranquilizing the mind.

They should then visualize this creative energy being directed toward the goal— the new creation—they desire to bring into reality

This energy can keep a person in an uplifted mood where they get joyously engaged in their work. It helps sustain a flow state, where they effortlessly complete astonishing and wonderful projects.

By observing strict Brahmacharya, all learning can be mastered in a very short time. One may develop an unfailing memory for what one hears or learns.



Those involved in physical training and athletics should experiment with Brahmacharya for at least thirty days and observe by themselves the considerable changes in recovery, growth, and performance.

People find it very hard to control this energy. Nature has deliberately made it difficult to use and only allow people to reap its benefits who possess great will power and ability to sacrifice. A common person with weak ambition, poor willpower, and little sense of sacrifice often lets this energy be wasted through mindless activities, leaving only temporary pleasure, increased cravings, and addiction to repeat it again.

Some genuine people wish to abide to Brahmacharya to attain greatness in their fields and lives, but they find existing habits of wasting this energy too strong to overcome.

Follow these steps:

- 1) First, intellectually believe in the importance of Brahmacharya. Understand the benefits you can reap from following the practice. If you find it would be beneficial, then elevate its importance in your life and consider it more valuable than temporary pleasures.
 - 2) Mentally concentrate on word “Brahmacharya”. Fixate it your mind and concentrate upon it. Visualize all opposite thoughts and urges are transfusing into this word, leaving the word more energized.
 - 3) Maintain a good company; do not provide attention to the thoughts of opposite gender; control the senses by sacrificing all lower pleasures.
 - 4) Rajasic and Tamasic food greatly obstruct the practice of Brahmacharya, therefore only consume Sattvic food.
 - 5) Abstain from pride if you get successful in this practice.
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Willpower

Will is the most fundamental human power. It is the will to live that keeps us alive. Will Power sustains the activity of the *pranic* energy (vital energy) in the body. Before natural death, a person often loses the will to live; if one does not lose that will, they may live longer. But Nature is magnanimously powerful than a will of a normal human being. To live longer, you need stronger will power more than anything else.

Human has the ability to train the strength of willpower.

This power is responsible for the completion of a made decision.

Whenever a person utters the phrases “I will do this” or “I will not do this,” they should abide by the decision they have made.

Every time a person says “I will do this” and he transforms that spoken word into action, then they strengthen their willpower even more.

If they fail to complete the action after making such statement, then this deteriorates down the strength of willpower.

This is the power that helps a person convert words into action.

A person who trains their willpower to strength by using it to complete small day to day activities, he will also see himself achieving and completing the big goals of his life that he decides for himself.

Yogis have such strong willpower that if they verbally command something to happen, then even the universe starts aligning itself in the direction where the words uttered by the yogi are turned into events. This is a gift that they receive from the universe for being strong willed for their entire lifetime.

Strong willpower is not necessarily something that everybody has by birth. Just as the biceps can be trained for strength, willpower can be strengthened through practice.

The recipe for strong willpower is simple: once you say “I will do this” or “I will not do this,” abide by that statement no matter what.

I once told myself, "Tomorrow I will do two thousand bodyweight squats." At that time, I was occasionally doing one thousand squats. I had been following through on my decisions for more than a year, so by then my willpower was reasonably trained. The next morning after waking, I felt sluggish and lazy and did not want to perform those squats.

But the statement I made took root in my subconscious thanks to my trained willpower. Now this mere decision penetrated the waves of feelings and catapulted me into the action to complete the difficult task.

Be careful when you make "I will" statements. Always follow through and complete the action after making such a statement. Always be a person of your word.

Ask for strong willpower.

Skill and Habit

Does it really take 10,000 hours to master a skill?

A popular notion claims that mastering a skill requires 10,000 hours of practice. That conclusion likely came from research tracking groups over time and measuring proficiency.

After this research, a widespread belief made its home in the subconscious minds of people that it takes years of practice to master a skill.

Does this belief hold true for those who believe in it?

Certainly yes, as we know how importantly a belief shapes the reality for us and our world, therefore it is not wise to pre construct a belief about learning speed based on other peoples' experience. Instead of copying others' mindsets, decide a belief that serves you — or choose to hold no fixed belief about speed of learning.

People with good beliefs about their learning speed do not absorb things magically; rather belief is the root of action, these beliefs about learning speed puts them on another journey where they sharpen their mental faculties to become good learners.

Now we'll discuss the mindset and mental processes an individual needs to master a skill in the shortest possible time:

In this discussion we'll cover:

- **Consistency:** how to start small and keep going;
- **Intensity:** how to increase effort without burning out;
- **Information & Practice:** how to choose guidance and practice deliberately; •
- **Visualisation & Focus:** simple mental tools and a distraction audit;
- **Abhyas & Vairagya:** psychological balance and closing rituals.

- 1) **Consistency** - I treat consistency like a muscle which gets stronger by repetitions. Consistency is the mother habit of all habits. It is the underlying mental habit based upon which all other habits are constructed.

I advise people to train their “consistency muscle” by doing less energy requiring daily tasks like washing dishes but consistently. Build it like a bicep: start with a low load and gradually increase.

- 2) **Intensity** - When people start to learn a new skill, most of them give up the consistency because of this bad boy “intensity”. They try to increase the intensity of information and effort in the very beginning stage itself. This overloads the untrained mind which leads to burn out and it decides to give up on the consistency. Best way to approach the intensity is by balancing it with enjoyment level. Learning a skill should be an enjoyable and a progressive task; where pain of growth and enjoyment of experience go hand in hand. But people mess this up by increasing the pain intensely in the initial period and losing all the joy of learning.

Therefore, gradually increase the practice time and intensity of learning session – first focus on the consistency and enjoyment only.

It’s the game of horses not of cheetahs.

- 3) **Information** - I have seen many people not learning the skills and art, because of an excuse that they do not have necessary information and guidance to learn it properly.

“As you start to walk, the way appears” – RUMI

Always remember this: even if you do not have the necessary knowledge and guidance still begin with the doing. Every skill is the combination of mixing the basics together to create more presentable sophistication. Therefore, start slowly and master the fundamentals.

- Gradually begin to educate yourself about the skill or the art. Collect resources of practical information like a coach, book or internet.
- Don’t be arrogant. Never assume you’ve learned everything — there is always more to learn. Consider yourself a student of life, not an egotistical master. Learn from others whatever you find is worth learning.

- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Hit-and-trial itself is a very good teacher. Visualisation of goal helps to make hit-and-trial learning method more efficient and effective by propelling it in the right direction.
- Always welcome the constructive criticism. People more knowledgeable than you may point out your mistakes — learn humbly from them. But be aware of jealous critics and don't let them demotivate you.

- 4) **Abhyās and Vairāgya (Effort and Surrender)** - I used to struggle while creating art or practising a skill; I would repeatedly think: "Is this beautiful? Am I learning correctly? How will my final performance be?"

Presence of these thoughts was causing a lot inefficiency in practice. I termed these thoughts as the 'Energy Leakers'. They rob concentration and reduce learning effectiveness, causing sluggish progress.

The solution came in two words from ancient texts: Abhyās (practice/repetition) and Vairāgya (surrender of attachment to results).

This works on principle that if you take care of the cause, effect will take care of itself. It is from the cause that effect arises and cause alone is what a human can control. Therefore, putting even iota of energy toward worrying about the effect is going as pure wastage. Training mind to trustfully surrender results in the hands of universe/divine is the wisest choice a human can make.

Now learn how to improve the effectiveness of Abhyās (Effort):

- 5) **Process Visualisation** - Suppose someone wants to build a strong, attractive body. They will need a gym or training environment to develop strength and hypertrophy.

In the gym they will perform various exercises. For example, how does one master the bench press?

- a) He will visualise himself in mind that he has learnt the proper technique of performing the exercise.
- b) He will visualise himself in mind the achievement of the next best personal record.

- c) He will visualise himself in mind that he has made a set of beautiful muscles on his body.
Now he will surrender out the visualisation in the universe and let it take care of the rest, and return to physical practice.

He will consistently do this until they obtain desired results.

Apply same with squats; apply same with deadlift; similarly apply this with anything.

- 6) **Concentration** - While learning a skill, we basically try to build the efficient motor neural connections in the nervous system. These connections form faster or slower depending on the energy devoted to practice. When 'Energy Leakers' are cast off and distractions are kept away, it creates an environment where brain becomes an absorbing machine and fast learning thrives by taking less time to build efficient connections in nervous system.
- 7) **Striving Mastery**: Do not be just satisfied by mediocrity. Anything you do, strive to excel. Do not settle when you are still in the average zone. Improve again and again, and desire intensely for mastery.
- 8) **Contentment and Gratitude**: Desired outcome follows you when you renounce the desire and become centered in present moment – the desire to become a master of the skill or art shall be surrendered out after feeling and accepting it properly and person should come back in the desireless state of contentment in the present.
Each and every repetition is made with contented mind. Every session should end with mindset that "Today I have grown and progressed more than yesterday; I am continuously becoming better". With that finally end the session with the not just random thoughts but with warm feeling of gratitude.

Perspective to Change: Every skill we dream of mastering can begin with a rhythm that has been mentioned above. The details may differ — guitar, coding, painting, or fitness — but the spirit is the same: a small daily step, a slow rise in intensity, honest reflection, and ending with gratitude.

Disease and Health

Ancient sages of Bharat (India) were highly advanced medical practitioners; this statement is supported by in depth knowledge of medicine recorded in their medical texts.

Many of these books and teachings were lost during the dark ages that affected humanity. Like modern medicine, the ancient medical science of India had full-fledged systems for treating ailments, including oral medicines and surgery. It possessed an extensive knowledge of the workings of the human body and mind.

Even to begin with the introduction to their insights on the mind and body, we find they treated the body not merely as a gross arrangement of organs but as a vibrating entity. We today know, with the help of advancement in science that everything in the physical universe is pure vibrations.

These sages knew such insights thousands of years ago and applied them in practice. Therefore, without a doubt this is not a pseudoscience, which many modernists wouldn't probably agree upon because it will hurt their financial vested interests.

Moreover, in their research on health and disease, they experimented with different groups of people and carefully noted the patterns of frequency at which body was vibrating.

After many hit-and-trial experiments over years, they developed a full-blown diagnostic system. They could tell the type of disease in the body by just checking its vibrational state.

But how did they check the vibrations of the body without modern technological equipment? You may already know the answer – by checking the patterns of heartbeat through the pulse.

They compiled a repository of heartbeat rates and patterns, identified associated symptoms, and correlated pulse patterns with affected organs. Using empirical observation, they developed diagnostic systems based on arterial pulse examination.

Now that they could identify the illness, they required to come up with the cure. Again, they found suitable medicine for the disease from the nature herself by the hit-and-trial method. These were sourced sometimes from either one plant or combination of plants

These sages were also the yogis, who knew how to change the vibrational state of the body by changing the vibrational state of mind.

Thus, they prescribed changing a diseased mental state to a healthy state of mind as part of treatment.

Modern medicine has developed robust systems to respond to emergencies and traumatic injuries. With advances in technology, surgical techniques have improved, and antibiotics and other treatments have saved many lives from fatal infections.

Those are significant advances and achievements.

However, modern medicine has not yet developed permanent cures for many chronic and autoimmune conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), coronary heart disease, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and some cancers. Maybe it is intentional to keep the sale of medicines always higher, otherwise, if a permanent cure is given then demand will drastically shrink and so will the profits. It is unfortunate that some practitioners prioritize profit over patients, which erodes trust.

Practitioners of modern (allopathic) and traditional (ayurvedic) medicine should avoid extreme black-and-white stances and seek common ground by mutual cooperation for wellbeing of humanity. They should understand that it is their ego that is driven by survival instincts which does not let them cooperate.

People should consider both modern and traditional treatments with awareness; blind trust is not advisable. Seek qualified practitioners and informed second opinions when necessary.

Our main topic is the mind. We will discuss the healing power of mind and body, including non-pharmacological approaches that will support healing.

Mind is the master of the body. Body obeys the mind. Mind can dictate the state of body.

We will explore how to use the power of the mind to support healing. We will also discuss practices to train body and mind to reduce susceptibility to illness.

“There are three kinds of illness: Physical, Mental and Spiritual.

Physical sickness is caused due to different forms of toxic conditions, infectious disease and accidents.

Mental sickness is caused by fear, worry, anger, resentment, hate and other emotional inharmonies.

Soul Sickness is caused due to man's ignorance of his true relationship with Divinity.” – Sri Sri Parmahansa Yogananda.

He also said, “Sickness is the result of breaking some mental or physical law, either in this life or in a past incarnation. It is your job to free yourself from the shackles of undesirable hereditary tendencies, including habits of ill health. Like everything else worth attaining, you must work for it.”

It is also observed that many times chronic and autoimmune diseases of body result as reaction of suppressed emotions of anger, hatred, resentment, nervousness and fear. These emotions destroy the balance of inner chemistry of the body.

Chronic physiological stress and inflammation can increase DNA damage, affect DNA repair mechanisms, and contribute to cellular aging and mutation risk

Now let us discuss curative and preventive methods that do not rely on external medicines.

Methods:

- 1) **Fasting:** Food that we consume and digest is not one hundred percent healthy. They contain in them the toxins. Our excretory system tries to clean them, but they still leave behind their traces. These traces of toxins, gradually compound over the time and make our inner environment disastrously unhealthy. Periodic fasting allows the digestive system to rest and may support detoxification and immune function. During illness, short fasts can reduce digestive load and free metabolic energy for healing processes. Fasting only on water for one day after every 15 days can be very beneficial.
- 2) **Absorbing Morning Sunshine:** For at least ten minutes absorb the morning sunshine. Mentally perceive sunshine as the divine grace falling upon your body and mind. Mentally feel that you are getting healthy and fit again. Mentally picture yourself in an absolute perfect state of health and feel the health, energy, vitality and radiance of a healthy person growing inside you. Take your time and build up that feeling. Stay with this feeling and relax yourself into this feeling. Now surrender it to the universe.

If you have a specific area of illness or injury, visualize that part of body getting strong, healed and coming to the perfect state of health.

- 3) **Mindset:** Having a mindset of a healthy person rather than of a sick person. One of the main reason of sickness is sympathy seeking. Unconsciously, people enjoy getting sick just to gain attention of their family and friends. One must become aware of such mindset and abstain from such desires.

Repeat these affirmations faithfully on the daily basis:

- I am healthy.
- I am healing.
- I am full of vitality, energy and divine radiance.
- I am stronger than all the illnesses and none of them can harm me ever.
- I accept no outside or inside illness in any form. I am free of them all.

You can create your own affirmations. When you affirm, make sure that you feel them as real, here and now. Let these thoughts consolidate inside your mental grooves.

As an effect of these affirmations, you might see yourself taking right steps to cure illness and build strong immune system. You may find a suitable doctor or medicine, which was missing before. You may find yourself following habits of a healthy lifestyle of proper exercising and nutrition.

Basically, you will attract health from inside and outside, where change will occur on the inside actions of your cells as well as on the outside actions in your daily habits which will cumulatively enhance your health

These thoughts will uplift your state of mind and thus your state of body. You will perform specific actions based on your thoughts that will put you in a good state of health.

- 4) **Pranayāma:** Yogis teach that prāṇa (the subtle force which energize the entire body) is the essence of all health. They say that essence of the food we eat is prāṇa, essence of air we breathe is prāṇa, essence of sunshine is prāṇa. Properly functioning prāṇa in the body is associated with good health and improper functioning and circulation of prāṇa manifests as the illness.

Name of Pranayāma Kriyas which can remove blockages in the circulation of prāṇa and manifest the good health in the body.

Names of Pranayāma Kriyas (Loosely called Breathing Exercises):

- 1) *Bhastrika* 2) *Kapalbhati* 3) *Anulom Vilom* 4) *Agnisar* 5) *Ujjaiyi* 6) *Sheetali* 7) *Brahmari* 8) *Udgeet*

Perspective to change: Illness comes as a past karmic reaction. Therefore, you cannot completely avoid it but you can always make new karmas for health which are powerful than past karmas. If it is due, you will have to suffer the illness, therefore, suffer willingly and in complete acceptance. Once the karmic reaction gets over the disease shall go. But also keep your efforts of health ongoing.

Keep the perspective that “I commit to actions that promote my health now, while acknowledging that some effects of the past may take time to resolve.”

Anecdotes

Power of Giving:

There lived a king named Janaka in ancient India. He was prosperous and successful in all areas of life. One day a man in his court asked, "Your Highness, you are a successful emperor and an enlightened being. You have a daughter, Sita, who is revered as a supreme goddess, and your son-in-law, Rama, is regarded as a supreme god. How come only you are so blessed and not others?"

King *Janaka* himself went into deep contemplation after hearing these words. He had no answer. The question grew on him and he wondered, "Why me?"

That night he had a dream. In the dream he was told, "If you want to know the answer, tomorrow begin walking west and walk until sunset. When you stop, you will see an ascetic yogi beneath a large banyan tree eating dry leaves; he will answer your question."

The next morning, curious Janaka began walking west. He walked the entire day, tired and restless, hoping the sun would set soon. After some time the sunset, and he saw a large banyan tree in the distance. He went closer and found a yogi eating dry leaves. The yogi exclaimed, "Come, Janaka—I was waiting for you." The yogi said he knew the answer but instructed Janaka to travel further west until the next sunset; there he would find another ascetic eating ashes who would provide the answer.

The next day Janaka began moving west. Again, after walking all day, he found at sunset a yogi eating ashes. Janaka greeted him. The yogi said he already knew the reason for the visit and told Janaka to go to a nearby village; there a newborn in the house of a prosperous farmer would be able to speak and answer his question.

Janaka was relieved that he would not have to walk the entire next day.

The next day he went to the village and found the house. The family was delighted to see the king at their home. Janaka asked to see the child in private. The family happily agreed and left them alone. To Janaka's amazement, the child began to speak. The child said he knew Janaka's question and assured him he would answer without delay.

The child began a story. He said that centuries ago, in this very village, lived a family with four sons and a widowed mother. They were very poor and lived harshly. Once they went three consecutive days without food and everyone was starving. Somehow the mother arranged four pieces of bread and distributed them among her sons.

As they were about to eat, a guest suddenly arrived.

In India, guests are traditionally treated like gods.

The guest asked for food, saying he was tired and hungry from his journey. The mother politely told him that she had just given her sons four chapatis and that she herself had none. She told the guest to ask the sons if any of them were willing to share.

The guest, unaware of their hunger, assumed they might have eaten earlier and that one of them might share food from his portion.

The guest first went to the eldest son, who was about twelve, and asked, "Please give me some of your food." The eldest replied, "If I give you my share, what will I eat—dry leaves?"

The child told Janaka that this eldest son became the first ascetic Janaka had met—one who ate dry leaves.

The guest then went to the second eldest and made the same request. That son replied, "If I give you my share, what will I eat—ashes?"

This was the second ascetic Janaka had met.

The guest then went to the second youngest and asked for food. That child replied, "If I give you my share, won't I die?"

The child told Janaka, "I was that son who said that to the guest. Since then, I have been born and died on the same day many times. Today I know I will die again."

Then the guest went to the youngest son, about three years old. Before the guest could ask, the child held the chapati in both hands and offered it. The guest politely accepted and ate it.

That youngest child later died of starvation that night.

"This child is you, King Janaka. You made the greatest charity without expectation of return. You died while giving your share to the guest, spent centuries in heaven, and have now been reborn as King Janaka—an emperor, an enlightened being, the father of a goddess and father-in-law to a god."

End of story.

The youngest child's capacity for renunciation was greater than that of even the greatest sages. This ability was not merely God-given; rather, the child (Janaka in a previous life) had cultivated it over many lifetimes through a renunciation-driven unselfish lifestyle.

Abundance comes to those, who live abundantly for others. Remember that.

Power of Duty:

A young sannyasin (monk) went to the forest to meditate and practice Yoga. There he performed austere penances and practiced yoga strictly for a long time. After many years of effort, one day he sat under a tree when some dry leaves fell on his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said, "What? How dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" As he spoke, he angrily glanced at them, used his yogic power, and a flash of fire shot from his head. The flash burned the birds to ashes. He felt ecstatic and overjoyed at this development of power — to be able to burn the crow and the crane with a glance.

Later he went to town to beg for bread. Standing at a door, he said, "Mother, give me some food." A voice came from inside the house, "Wait a little, my son." The young man thought, "Wretched woman! How dare you make me wait? You do not yet know my power." While he thought this, the voice spoke again: "Boy, do not think too highly of yourself — there is neither crow nor crane here." He was astonished but still had to wait. At last, the woman came; he fell at her feet and asked, "Mother, how did you know?" She replied, "My boy, I do not know your yoga or practices. I am an ordinary woman. I made you wait because my husband is ill and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. When unmarried I served my parents; now that I am married, I serve my husband. That is the yoga I practice. By doing my duty I have become illumined; thus, I could perceive your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest."

End of story.

This is the power of sincerely executing one's duty without selfish desire.

Duty rigorously requires the denial of lower desires. Seldom does duty feel sweet; it runs smoothly only when lubricated by love; otherwise, it is continuous friction.

First let us do duty which is ours by birth; and when we have done that, let us do the duty which we have chosen according to our desires and circumstance of the life.

The householder marries and carries on his duties as a citizen, and the duty of monk is to devote his energies wholly to religion, to preach and worship of Divinity.

It is the primary duty of both householders and monks to look and act for the well-being of nature which is the source of everything. It their duty to keep nature clean and organic; keeping it free from non-biodegradable synthetic; saving the water and soil.

Outlying the duties of householder

Householder should be devoted to the Divinity and the self-enlightenment should be the goal of their life. Yet they must work constantly, performing all their duties; they must surrender the fruits of their actions to the Divine.

Knowing that mother and father are the visible representatives of Divinity, the householder shall, always and by all means, must serve and care for them. Those who have pleased their mother and father, consider that they have pleased the Divine.

No man should scold his wife and even when he is the greatest difficulties and troubles, he must not show anger to his wife.

A woman must be absolutely devoted to her husband; she must serve him with utmost loyal, sincerity and dedication.

A man must always please his wife with money, clothes, love, faith and words like nectar, and never do anything to disturb her. A man or a woman, who have succeeded in getting love of a chaste partner have succeeded in their religion and they possess all virtues.

Chastity is a primary virtue for both men and women. A devoted and chaste wife who thinks of every other man except her own husband as her child and has attitude of mother towards all men is greater than a yogi, she will grow so great in the power of her purity that there cannot be a single man, who will not breathe an atmosphere of holiness in her presence.

Similarly, every husband must look upon all women, except his own wife, in the light of his own mother or daughter or sister.

Son or daughter should be lovingly brought up and educated. They will not learn good qualities by your preaching but they will catch those things which you will exhibit in your behavior. Children shall be neither too much pampered nor shall be given very strict treatment. Mistakes could be forgiven, if not repeated, otherwise time to time, strict action shall be taken to put habits back into place. Children must be provided sense of honour and dignity which they could lose, if they commit to multiple partners in relationship.

Then the duty of man is towards his brothers and sisters, and towards the children of his brother and sisters, if they are poor, and towards other relatives, his friends and his servants.

Then his duties are towards the people of the same village, and the poor, stray animals and any one that comes to him for help.

To his enemies, the householder must resist and be like a hero. He must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance. He should make a show of resisting

evil for the sake of self-defence. At the same time care should be taken to avoid paying back evil by evil. “Raise the hood and hiss” but don’t “bite”. There is no harm in “hissing” at bad==men, your enemies. Keep them off by showing that you are ready to give tit for tat – that you know how to resist evil.

Tools for Right Living

Dharma: *Dharma* is the responsibility to perform right actions aligned with preserving the integrity of the universal order — the processes of creation and preservation — and opposing the natural tendency toward disintegration.

For humans, *dharma* is not optional but it is an obligation and a responsibility to be fulfilled, otherwise strictly punishable by the nature.

Considering everything in universe as vibrations, *dharma* can be understood as the positive vibrations on the planet; *adharma* as the negative. Human can largely influence these vibrations by their thoughts, desires and actions. *Adharma* is a naturally occurring phenomenon; therefore, negative vibrations increase without effort. There must be an apt balance of positive vibrations and negative vibrations. Otherwise, if balance gets distorted and ratio of negative vibrations predominates, the planet will explode.

To sustain positive vibrations (Dharma), many great beings have even sacrificed their lives in the past.

A normal human being, who is honest in conduct, truthful in words, pure in character, loyal and integral to his responsibilities and his people, does not hurt anyone in thought, word and deed is certainly a *dharma* person. He is contributing towards the net positive vibrations of the planet — not a burden on planet.

Therefore, uphold *dharma* at all costs.

Those who protect dharma, dharma protects them.

Conscience: The inner voice that discriminates between the right path and the wrong path — *dharma* and *adharma* — for a person. It is always present as a guide on one's life journey. It guides not only on moralistic decisions but on all kind of decisions. Beneath the noise of unnecessary thoughts, it is always present. By consistently ignoring it, many people bury it so deeply that they no longer hear it.

Those who listen and follow it find its voice becoming stronger, clearer, and louder. Such people are aided in life decisions and are more likely to follow the right path.

Empathy: The ability to put oneself in another's shoes and perceive things from their perspective. The more empathetic a person is, the less they hurt others and the more they follow Dharma. It is a quality that can be cultivated. Each time you feel annoyed, you judge, argue with others, try to view situations from their perspective and respond accordingly.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you – Mathew 7:12.

What is hurtful to you, do not do to others.

Law of Karma: This is the basic law upon which the universe operates — the law of cause and effect. Behind every effect there is a cause. According to the law people experience consequences according to their intentions and actions.

- A person who earns dishonestly — by theft, bribery, or fraud — brings misery rather than lasting wealth to themselves and their family. They are compensated by bad luck, illness, and disharmony. They also make an invitation for misery and degradation for this life and future lives.
- A person who betrays their partner gets compensated by the betrayals, instability, guilt and shame; they rob themselves of nature's honor and respect.
- To simply state, whatever a person puts out in the universe, they will receive the same thing back.
Love is reciprocated by love, hate by hate, honesty by honesty, support by support, jealousy by jealousy, betrayal by betrayal – if not immediately, then, surely in future.

To live a fulfilling life, peaceful, balanced and harmonious life every human must know about the basic principles of this law.

Positive thinking creates a positive future and you cannot think positively, if your actions are not positive.

Company: There is a saying that a person is the sum total of the five people they spend most time with. One's company influences state of mind, which shapes thoughts, desires, and actions — and thus, destiny.

The company of fools tends to produce more fools; the company of the wise tends to produce the wise. Those who want a fulfilling, prosperous, and Dharma-oriented life must associate with people who live or strive to live in that way.

Desire: You are not chasing anything in this world but your own desire; you are not a slave to anyone in this world but your own desire. Keep only the desires which are genuine not egoistical. Genuine desires are inherently yours own. These are those desires which will incline with your past inclinations and karmic blueprint. You will want to fulfill them even when you are living alone in Himalayas. Therefore, do not entertain the show off and quick pleasure providing desires but the genuinely fulfilling and long-term happiness oriented.

Genuine desires are few but bring necessary experiences our being wants to go through

Egoistic desires are often endless; their thirst is never quenched. They provide only short-term boosts and pleasures to the ego and then leave the person in misery. The secret of life lies in having unselfish desires. When you hold unselfish desires, you work for the growth and betterment of others. In turn, the universe often reciprocates, supporting your own growth.

The process of pursuing unselfish desire is deeply joyful. It is not that you will feel joyful only after the fulfillment of the goal and desire but the entire process is filled with joy and enthusiasm.

A wise person maintains a balance between unselfish desires and their own genuine desires.

Patience: The ability to endure a process until the success is achieved. Do not lose your calm or consistency when facing delays, blockages, or failures. The juice and success of life are extracted from depth and completion of processes. No great work is achieved without facing obstacles first. To reach depth and completion, one needs infinite patience.

Self-Control: Life is meant to be enjoyed, but a primary goal is to struggle, learn, and grow. People often err when they mistake life is meant for over enjoyment. Growth of consciousness is the main goal, which does not happen unless character is also developed alongside.

Character is reflected in a person's behavior regarding wealth and sex, both trigger greed of a person. This greed erodes character and dharma and leaves a person in utter misery.

You cannot enjoy a stable and peaceful life without stable character.

Sacrificing of short term pleasure and accepting the pain of sacrifice might feel hard in the beginning but this is what provides growth, success and genuine fulfillment in the long term.

A person must be able to control mind, senses, and urges and then direct them toward learning, growth, and dharma.

Self-Introspection: Since the goal of life is to struggle, learn, grow, and become the highest version of ourselves, one must regularly strive for growth of body, mind, character, work, and spirituality. Growth does not occur unless flaws are clearly identified. Therefore, every day a person should look within, humbly identify shortcomings, and then strive to make appropriate progress.

Right Knowledge: Having the right knowledge is like a lamp in darkness. The right path is often found through hit-and-trial and right inquiry. To walk on that right path, right knowledge is must be acquired, this makes one's journey more effective and efficient. What might have taken much longer can be accomplished more quickly with the right knowledge. Source of right knowledge are good books, wise people and experiences of the life. Humbly learn from all of them.

Action-oriented: Many people have information, plans, and ideas but fail to take action. This often results from a lack of clarity about specific actions. The mind fears the unknown and resists entering territory without prior experience, demanding clear steps before moving forward.

The secret lies in consistent small actions. The mind may fear large actions but does not fear small ones. Small and micro actions in the direction of your goal, when performed consistently through the method of hit-and-trail bring about the necessary clarity about the right action. These small actions compound over time and become larger accomplishments. Be consistent, disciplined, and faithful; start by taking micro-steps toward your goal.

Pain of growth: Growth means to go towards new while leaving behind old. For mind and body to get accustomed to a new stage they must undergo a change; this change is painful. Not only that, pain also comes from sacrificing the lower desires to sustain the discipline and effort. Therefore, growth is painful process. Sometimes there will be less pain, other times maybe more. Therefore, one must learn to accept the pain of growth with positive perspective.

Faith: Faith in the self — also called self-confidence — means believing, “I am good enough, I can do this, and I will do this.”

Humbleness: “For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” – Mathew 23:12.

Contentment is feeling fulfilled by that what you already have. Mind is habitually trained to focus on the lack— what you do not have — rather than on fulfillment, that what you already have. Where ever the focus is kept, similar becomes our state of mind and similar things are attracted in life. Keep focus on fulfillment, and you will attract more of it; focus on lack and you will attract more lack.

Gratitude follows contentment. Gratitude is appreciation and thankfulness for life. A person in a state of contentment naturally radiates gratitude. A state of gratitude is a state of abundance; a person who is content and grateful in the present moves more effortlessly toward what is desirable.

Unconditional Acceptance

“Accept – then act. Whatever the moment contains, accept it as if you have chosen it. Always work with it, not against it. Make it your friend and ally not your enemy. This will miraculously transform your whole life.” – Eckhart Tolle.

There was once a time when everything was happening in accordance to my wishes. Then suddenly came a time, when nothing was working according to my wishes.

It happened like this; I was doing absolutely fine and I was feeling like as if I would soon make a ride to the seven heavens. In other words, the sun was bright and sky was clear and life felt like a pleasant dream. I was feeling full hit of dopamine for the juice of credit I would take from things working so good and smooth.

Suddenly, out of my expectation, opposite chain of events began to occur, and one by one things started to crumble.

Initially, only one thing fell outside the line of my wishes. But it hit me so hard that I just could not accept it happening. I wanted to fix it. But the thing would not get fixed, no matter how hard I would try.

I dedicated my entire energy to the fixation of the problem but any amount of effort was to no avail.

Problem was modern and self-created. It was the simplest problem of a girl abandoning a boy.

But being a fool I could not accept it because of our dear friend ‘attachment’.

Attachment to anything becomes the cause of constant state of worrying.

This worrying then disrupts the thought patterns, which further degrades the decision-making intellect and also the ability to concentrate the attention on any progressive work.

In simple terms, attachment leaves us in a state of entry level ADHD or mild depression depending upon the hit taken, in simple words that means “you are done, my friend.”

I poured a lot of attention and effort into the problem; that only bred more attachment and fuelled the burning desire further.

Constant attention on any object pours out our life energy on it. When we invest life energy on something that is in out of sync from our karmic blue print of life, then, we drain ourselves from our very essential energy and also register no growth in that area. Though, we do learn our lessons which make us wise, if do not repeat the same mistakes.

My lesson was simple '**The total acceptance of what happened without any complaints or blames** and walk simply according your karmic plan of the life. I resisted and struggled a lot with the loss that had happened; this meant that I was fighting against the karmic plan of my life. This fight was draining my energy and making me mentally weak.

As soon as I accepted the present and figured that everything is a dead past now and nothing could be changed about it, then the fight immediately came to end. Then, I would feel the life energy building itself back to its healthy state in both mind and body. I was now back in the flow, where *karma* plan meant to take me.

Attitude and actions of past decide the flow of present and further attitude and actions of present decide the flow of future.

Being an inquisitive man, I did not end up just learning the lesson but I also went deep into why did I not learn the lesson early onwards?

Deep introspection led me to two problems that had made me resist accepting the circumstance:

- A) **Emotional Attachment:** Attachment is the feeling of owning something or someone. When we say "it's mine" and continually emphasize that possession, the attachment deepens. When someone no longer wants to be with you, your desire to possess them remains unfulfilled — and that unfulfilled desire is the real cause behind the hurt. I found, I actually cared less about the girl and more about my own desire. I realized I was more attached to the desire to feel that "she was mine" than to her as a person. From neutral perspective, this act is utterly selfish to stop others to follow their own life's journey by your self-imposition on them and life teaches us this lesson of finding the happiness in our own self rather than being dependent on other.

Mostly it's your own desire and not the other person that you care about. The moment that desire is fulfilled elsewhere, you may find you have devalued the person. The same happens with death: often we do not mourn the deceased alone, but the security and benefits they provided.

This is utter selfishness. Let the alive and dead follow their journey without you, when their time to go has come.

Become comfortable in losing things that were not meant to stay; accept the loss.

Do not chase what is over, whatever it may be. Instead, focus on the new experiences that life is already offering.

b) Ego Problem: 'How can this have happened; how can this unintelligent creature do this with me?' were literally my thoughts. 'How can I be replaced?' were another set of thoughts because I thought of myself as obviously an irreplaceable person.

I could not withstand the sight of bursting of the bubble of my perceived greatness in front of me.

The ego does not want to appear small, valueless, or rejected, so it resists those circumstances that threaten its self-worth. It will constantly complain and blame to protect its value. Lower the ego; become humble and accept the loss.

Hard lesson learned: unconditional, total acceptance of whatever has happened, without the barriers of emotional attachment and ego.

Accept the incoming of new and outgoing of old; when we do, the universe starts to align in our favour and supports us in our journey ahead.

Accepting things as they are is a painful process. People try to avoid the pain by diverting the mind – with intoxicants, video games, binge eating etc. Only way to deal with the pain is totally accept and endure it, until it goes away by its own.

After unconditional acceptance of the present, examine the flow of life and where it wants to lead. What is it promoting, and what is it removing? Accept and work in that direction while having faith of goodness.

Pure acceptance releases the restlessness of the mind; in it, you can catch the flow of life.

Perspective Change: Only permanent peace that is there is in life is to totally experience and accept the life as it has come without avoiding, resisting or escaping.

Victimhood

When one thing was already proving itself very difficult to be handled and already appearing strong enough to knock me down mentally, there came to drown me even deeper problems from different areas of life. Altogether, these problems came as if a mental blitzkrieg was launched upon me.

Although I was very good at academics but I never really took academics seriously. I dropped out of engineering due to the complete lack of interest in it. At that stage I felt that only mediocre minds can complete such a course because they almost forced you to become a slave of boring lectures of dull teachers, non-progressive and uncreative copy paste assignments and the list would just go on. Also, I never liked rules that the university imposed on a student particularly upon me, though I was in a government university and I have heard that private ones are even worse.

Now, my perspective has changed: though the system is broken but at the same time following the system is rewarding. Not following the system means to carve the way out of blue, which is really difficult thing to do. For many people following the system is a good way.

I sought independence from such routine. Many times, I forced myself to continue but it felt like too much of burden to carry just to get a piece of degree. So, I dropped out.

Thus began a typical middle-class journey, similar to what many young men in the country face. Obviously, my family was upset as their brilliant child was mounting to nowhere. They expected a lot from me. As of then, I really had no strong family back up as my father's business was operating on a perpetual loss due to unfavourable circumstances. We also had ancestral land, but becoming a farmer — at a time when many farmers were committing suicide due to agricultural crises — was not a viable career option. They now wanted me to at least earn a graduate degree but I did not see any value in pursuing such an adventure. However, I had to comply with their wishes, so I enrolled in a course just for the sake of the degree.

At that point, I officially had no academic career. I did not know what to do next. Though family came to my rescue and provided me with career counseling. They insisted that I should prepare for civil services examinations. Left with no options and no clarity of my own, I reluctantly agreed.

They asked me to go to Delhi, where the preparation environment for this examination is more suitable. I was not in the right frame of mind to accept this, but being on the back foot I could not strongly disagree with their demands. I would reluctantly pacify them: "Yes, I am searching online for a good institute; they will start classes next month." I did not intend to make a fool of them but I was perplexed. I could not embark on a journey where my heart would not fully

support me. At this point, my confidence in my abilities and in making independent decisions completely crumbled.

I was unable to take a bold stand and tell them a complete “no,” owing to shattered self-confidence and a total lack of clarity.

At this point a miracle happened, Corona Virus 2019 epidemic. I could not have asked for more. While people blamed different countries for causing the global shutdown, I secretly felt it had come to my rescue.

I was relieved of the pressure to go for the preparations. One thing was solved but the belief (of corona being a good thing) worn off quickly when we had to suffer a huge loss in business and which led to accumulation of mounting debts which required consistent interest payments.

My father, being a laid-back person, ran the business loosely and had even put it on automation without a properly established system or a capable team in place. I previously made frequent visits to the business, but with nothing else to do I joined it full time. Everything there was messy and disorganized.

My father, who considered himself generous, would allow customers — without solid guarantees — to pay part of the amount later if they could not pay the total at purchase. Many of them reneged on their commitments. Rising inflation and government economic policies were also straining the automotive business, and lockdown periods made things worse.

As the time progressed, things became a little better. Overall business performance was less than half of what it had been two years earlier, but it became slightly more stable compared with the lockdown period. Now all earnings went toward covering business expenditures and paying bank interest.

We were now running a negative cash flow, although the business was somewhat more stable than during the lockdown. It even began to drain our personal savings.

Something major had to be done. I tried to convince my father to sell the business; he told me he had been thinking the same.

After some effort, we were fortunate to find a buyer to whom we sold it. With that payment we paid off the debts.

Now we were left with no source of income. My father's brothers — my uncles — were involved in a separate rice-milling business. Seeing the situation, they offered help in form of guidance to set up a new plant if we wanted.

It is an agriculture-dependent industrial business relying on rice paddy produced by farmers as its raw material. Again, governmental policies were not favouring this business either.

Having left with no option of income and also keeping in mind the government's stance against it, we had to choose whether to enter into the business.

My uncles were optimistic; they believed the business situation would improve in the future and that it would be reasonable to enter the market.

We had long-standing relations with the banks, and they agreed to give us a new loan. We took the loan and began construction. That is easier said than done. This business operated for six months of the year; for the other six months it was non-operational. From October to March, paddy procured from farmers by government agencies would be processed in the mills, and the final processed rice would be delivered back to the government from our side.

By now the graduate course got finished and having no further interest in academics, I joined the business full time.

By working in these business fields, I developed core business skills, learned the ground realities of operating policies and market and government work culture, interacted extensively with the labour class, and came to understand their perspectives on work and life.

Additionally, working in industry gave me a basic grasp of real time industrial mechanical work, and an in-depth perspective about working of banks and their loan policies.

I also learned a lot about human behaviour and character — regarding wealth, money, and greed.

I witnessed how almost everybody from banks, government and its employees, business owners and their employees are corrupt to their core with very rare exceptions. For even little bit amount of money anybody is ready to eat another.

Returning to the feud with my family: they (parents, uncles, grandmother, and so on) did not bother me during the six-month operating season, but as soon as it ended, they returned to their old tendencies and pressured me to pursue higher education or civil service preparation. Their expectations would not go away as they were severely feeling missed out when they compared me with peers of my age who were excelling academically and pursuing modern career options.

This time they became very serious. They would constantly target me to follow their advices.

I was suffering from a prior mental setback, and on top of that they came at me with all guns blazing, constantly targeting me.

This went on for a few months; during that time, I contemplated leaving home and running away to the Himalayas to become a full-time yogi. Every time I made a plan, something happened and I had to stop.

This was a time I was going through pure mental agony and suffering.

My family presented three options: a) prepare for the civil service; b) go to a foreign country; c) if not these, at least do an MBA for the sake of reputation.

I obviously liked none of them, but subconsciously I did not want to disappoint them by breaking their expectations that I should do something "good" in life.

By then, having worked in different environments, I knew I should do something I would love. While working, we spend most of our time on process; the result — money — is something we see at the end, and it can become a saturated or devalued object after some time, at least for me. In simple terms, I realized I could not work just for the sake of money. There has to happen the personal growth along with work and work should bring some creative challenges that will provide a sense of accomplishment and which may give some joy of performing the work rather than consisting only mundane day to day management challenges.

By that time the nature of the work I wanted to do was clear to me. I needed to love the process and it must ensure that I learn during the process. It could not be a typical job because I never liked taking orders or providing accountability to others. Money had become less motivating for me, though I still needed it. Therefore, the work should be scalable, not tied to government policies, and not retail-type work that constantly chases customers. But I still had no idea what exactly to do.

Back to the family: they criticized me harshly day in and out but I became stone minded after few months. I stopped caring about their expectations, about them, or any responsibilities towards them. This was a phase when detachment from the world grew in me.

Now, I began to do what I should have done a long ago, breaking the expectations, I had held out of respect for them.

Apparently, I lost some respect due to constant pressure and bondage that they were imposing on me.

I now started to become absolutely **bold** about things I did not want to do.

I was shining forth in confidence and began to scold everyone on face. They told me, “You should be prepared for a fall; your ego is mounting even above Everest.” They would ask me, “What are your achievements in life? Have you done anything worthwhile? You are a failure to begin with. How can you be so bold in front of us? Just listen and do what we say, and then you'll be better off in life.”

Nevertheless, clarity began to dawn on me. I mentally visualized that “I am doing the work that I love to do”.

After sometime the mills were back in the action, and I had some relaxed time free from the constant chatter to craft the way out of the labyrinth.

Learning to take from the story:

Clarity: First establish the clarity of intentions and goals. Do not rush, use your time to form an absolute clarity and let go of the state of confusion. If others suppress while your heart strongly says otherwise, then listen to your heart.

Let go of the desires of other people that you carry in your mind and mistake for your own. This requires self-clarity, boldness, courage and faith in oneself.

Carefully identify your genuine desires that are in sync with your karmic blueprint and with your being.

These desires can be worldly or spiritual. Some desires are one-time achievements, while others will place ongoing responsibilities on you.

For example, winning a gold medal at the Olympics is a one-time achievement desire, whereas creating a business or getting married are responsibility-inducing desires. After establishing clarity of desire, once you enter the process remain faithful and loyal to it. One opportunity will lead to another opportunity and growth will follow. Just be loyal, sincere, dedicated and hardworking.

Performing actions to fulfill your genuine desires that align with the flow of life while following the rules of Dharma is swadharma (the Dharma of the self), which is preferable to pardharma (the Dharma of others).

It is better to die following your swadharma than to live an unfulfilled life following pardharma.

Suffering and Worldly Dispassion

As we know, nature follows the law of duality. Everything in nature is subject to duality — that means everything has two opposite poles. Outside, we find heat and cold, summer and winter, day and night, black and white. Inside, we also have these dualities: pain and pleasure, trust and fear, love and hate, abundance and poverty, confusion and clarity, success and failure, negative and positive thoughts.

These dualities are not stable; they constantly transition into one another according to nature's currents. Pain and Pleasure are interlinked to each other and one cannot exist without another. . Like a pendulum in motion, is constantly swinging from one end to another, similarly these dualities are swinging from one end to another. At one end is pain; at the other is pleasure. If we want to leave pain, we have to leave pleasure too.

All pleasure-seeking activities are highly addictive; they take over our will power and force themselves into our life. But the problem does not end there; these activities soon bring a great deal of pain. Addiction and attachment to these activities are extremely painful to body and mind.

Once enough attachment is established, these activities require a constant refill of the void they leave behind. If the void is not filled, the person experiences a deep, soul-hurting pain.

This desire to repeat same experience again and again is known as *trishna*.

Therefore, these do not only cause physical pain but also propagate psychological misery, worry, trauma, and depression.

Everything that is out of righteous limit will cause pain and disturb peace. Every time you feel like going astray from right path, remind yourself that "I will get both pain and pleasure from it" and then ask "Is this temporary pleasure worth the pain that will definitely follow?".

When I experienced a lot of suffering from the pursuits that I made for satisfaction from material objects, then, I discovered the lessons hidden within the suffering. I came to understand dualities, our attachment to them, their impermanence, and the pain they deliver after pleasure.

Suffering is a purification and lesson-learning process — it exposes life's pending lessons. The human mind which is full of vicious desires, intentions, and habits, does not easily get ready to become pure, clean and straightforward.

In passive state, mind remains attached to the impure thoughts and desires which are *adharmic* in nature but when mind is actively suffering the karmic reaction of its wrongdoings, then in order to avoid any such pain in future, it introspects, in that if it realizes that real cause of suffering is its own actions born of impure thoughts and desires, then, it agrees to rectify the impure thoughts and desires.

Suffering pushes the mind to a state where it allows the necessary permission to the life forces for elimination of the desires those are impure in nature. The mind may not grant full allowance at once, but after repeated phases of suffering – when mind realizes that peace is more important than these desires – it gradually loosens the grip over those tightly held desires.

Genuine suffering provides the profound learning that peace of mind and health of body are primary base and only when these two are best ensured then everything that worlds offer feels enjoyable and pleasurable – otherwise everything is tasteless.

Suffering, when endured with positive perspective and right introspection helps in learning the pending lessons of life. It can transform an *adharmic* person into a *dharmic* one.

Suffering approaches us in life due to our own karmic reactions. Therefore, when it comes, it's inevitable to escape from it. The only thing we humans can control is our response.

There are two obvious ways of responding to anything that comes into our life:

First way of responding: confront the suffering with faith and without fear; accept without complaint, then take necessary, clear action.

Second way of responding: resist, avoid, become fearful, try to escape the suffering; complain and blame others, and then take confused action.

Following the first way means aligning with the intelligence of the universe. When we move with the acceptance of the collective flow of the universe, then we are most likely suited to convert the present situation into beneficial, growth-oriented future situation.

Second way is of going against the collective flow of the universe which induces stagnation, frustration and degradation. Person with this response remains stuck in the karmic cycle which was supposed to pass if accepted readily.

When we respond with acceptance (the first way), then only we begin to look upon the possible causes and solution of the situation rather than just blaming and complaining – “Why does this always happen to me?” Suffering then becomes the process that turns coal into a diamond.

When we introspect, keeping in mind the universal law of cause and effect, the obvious cause of the situation always comes out to be our own karma of past which has now rebounded in our life to rectify and purify our thoughts, intentions and desires.

Always clearly know that nothing but your own actions of past are responsible for the entirety of the situation. Do not complain and blame anyone. Let go of any resentment, hate, anger or desire of revenge for your suffering. Repeatedly forgive others and yourself, and focus on your own correction and further growth.

The phase of suffering makes us go through the pain and unpleasantness that we do not wish to suffer again. In order to not suffer them again, one makes a firm decision and begins the journey of purification process of our mind.

Samskāra – the conditioning of the mind

Samskāra can be translated very nearly by “inherent tendency”. Using the analogy of lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of the wave reappearing, is what is called Samskāra. Every work we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, every experience that we take leaves such an impression on the mind and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously.

What we are every moment, what thoughts we think, what desire we desire, how my mind behave to triggers is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind and this is known as conditioning of mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum total of all the impressions collected, the programming, in my past life.

This is really what is meant by character; each man’s character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if and it becomes bad.

If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working, and their resultant must be evil, and that man will be a bad man; he cannot help it. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions, and they will force him to do evil.

Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will force him to do good, even despite himself.

Those who are spiritual in nature and have knowledge about the concept of liberation may undertake this opportunity of suffering and embark on the journey. Suffering puts them into a state of worldly dispassion and they may genuinely begin to long for liberation.

What is liberation (Moksha or Nirvāṇa)?

This world is full of pain and misery. Even after accomplishing everything, the worry, tension and mental agony do not go away. In some form or another, pain is always standing there, sometimes in extreme intensity, other times maybe mild. We wait and hope for that permanent peace and satisfaction to come home but never do they arrive. Not only that, a person takes birth after birth, struggles through pain and pressures of life only to lose everything at death, then, again begin with same struggle in next life.

Sometimes pain and suffering become so unbearable and cyclical that a person longs from permanent freedom from it; not just freedom for now but forever – that means cessation of cycle of birth and death.

Moksha (nirvāṇa) is permanent freedom from the pain and suffering experienced during cycles of birth and deaths. Moksha eliminates the root of suffering: cycle of repeated births and deaths.

Thus, suffering itself becomes the key to the way of freedom. Only suffering exposes the true reality of this world, which otherwise seems very pleasant.

Suffering provides necessary dispassion from the world, which becomes the key to renunciation of pleasures and desires of this world and then connects the mind to the thought and desire of liberation.

Perspective to change:

- Do not blame anyone for your suffering and misery. Consider your own *adharma* as the cause of suffering.
- There is no injustice in the nature's laws; everything that is delivered is well deserved.
- Life repeats its lessons through similar experiences until they are learned. Be quick to learn. Ask humbly, "Life, I am ready to learn your lessons — teach me."
- Do not make the impermanent world and its dualities as your source of joy. Consciously decide that your only source of joy is ever-abundant Divine.

Flow

Ritam—the Flow—is the coherent motion of the one universal energy (Shakti) that pervades all of creation. It includes the grand movements of universal creation, preservation, and destruction that occur at every moment. It includes the flow of the universal karmic blueprint. It creates all the synchronizations and co-incidents. Your everyday choices, made while experiencing your personal karmic blueprint, are also part of this one flow of energy. It takes care of everything in absolute detail from ant's life to the life of universe.



Life itself is a flow of energy (Shakti). The experience of this flow is what we call the experience of life. We are on a ride of experiences: the flow moves us from one experience to another and is constantly advancing forward. The mind must also flow along; there should be no stagnation or resistance. Otherwise, stagnation leads to all kinds of disease—spiritual, mental, and physical.

Flow is directed by Infinite Intelligence; therefore, it requires minimal human planning and direction. It uses three currents of nature (sattva, rajas, tamas) and make changes in the universe, using everything as its instruments according to the plan designed based on collected input.

Plan of action is designed according to the inputs received from infinite intelligence superimposed by karmic input collected from living beings.

Humans provide input to the flow by: a) through their response to the present (perspective), and b) through their ability to energize or neutralize incoming thoughts, emotions, desires and intentions.

Many major happenings of life are mostly pre-ordained; responding positively or negatively can influence the karmic intensity and interval of duration of those happenings according to response provided.

Humans have limited control over the already ordained present circumstances, but they are full time responsible for their response to the present. This ability to respond makes them responsible for the creating future events of this life and next.

Their response can be either of **acceptance** of, or **resistance** to, the present.

Those who accept and surrender to the flow – create harmony and equanimity with the Infinite; they experience understanding, joy, tranquility and grace.

Those who resist, complain, and avoid the flow, create disharmony and imbalance with the Infinite. They experience confusion, stress, disappointment and depression.

Those who **trust, accept, and surrender**, they are taken into refuge and care by the flow; this makes the flow responsible for well-being of the one who surrendered.

Response to Past, Present, and Future

Present: Learn to accept things as they are, without complaints or resistance. Come to an ease with existence. Present is the best time to be in – neither past nor future. Once mind is aligned with existence, then one should look for possible changes or solution.

Past: Experiences of life come to change our perception towards life. They help us discern what is permanent and what is temporary, what is truly ours and what is not, what we can control and what we cannot, and how to respond accordingly. Once good and bad experiences come and go and change your perception for the better, the objects and people involved may be forgotten and forgiven—including yourself.

Thoughts such as like “I wish I had done this instead of that” shall be replaced by thought “That what has happened was waiting to happen since the beginning of the time”.

Future: Accept uncertainty; you cannot predict the future. What is meant to happen will occur; what is not meant to happen will not.

Ego misguides the intellect and puts it into restless habit of always asking questions of “what if” and “how”. Do not supply answers to these questions. These questions get eliminated by clarity and trust. When we do not have clarity about the future, we can have the trust at those times.

Belief such as “*whatever will happen is inclined towards my highest good*” cultivates a sense of trust in the mind. Ask for the strength to endure and fully experience whatever comes.

To Align with the flow

The universal will of Shakti pervades all macro and microcosmic activity. Synchronicity happens when we align with the flow of the universe rather than insisting that the universe flows our way. Surrender before the universal flow by relinquishing personal will. Our choice to surrender unconditionally places us under the direct grace of the Infinite.

- 1) Build a trusting relationship with life. Have firm faith that your life flow supports you at all times—do not harbor second thoughts about this trust.
- 2) Now, in that trust—surrender.
- 3) Surrender implies:
 - a) Mentally resign desires, intellect and ego unto the Infinite Intelligence, take absolute refuge in it, release your plans, and let it be completely responsible for you for every moment.
 - b) Consciously reject all other supports for reliance in life except the one of Divinity.
 - c) Totally accept every situation wholeheartedly, relinquishing incessant intellectual questioning (why, what if, how). Stop the bargain, drop all conditions.
 - d) Ask and then take inspired action—consciously request the right guidance and capability to act. After acting, surrender the result to the Divine (Abhyās and Vairāgya: effort and surrender).
 - e) Strictly adhere to Dharma.

Surrender involves letting go of egoistic self-confidence and choosing Divine confidence instead. Before full surrender, ego (i.e. you right now) will feel like an absolute failure, convinced it cannot succeed on its own. In that realization you may invite the Divine flow to possess and overtake you, to act through you according to its Infinite intelligence and wisdom.

A surrendered person controls ego and mind by repeatedly fixating on these three principles:

- Let everything happens as the Divine flow wills.
- Let the Divine flow be the doer of everything.
- Everything that has been done is best; whatever will be done is going to be best.

A fully surrendered mind never gives their preference or suggestion to the flow for anything.

Flowing through the Life

Life comes as a series of experiences in which we engage, interact, and respond. Everything in life is in a state of transition—constantly coming and going. One experience follows another. After one has passed, be ready for the next with a fresh, neutral mind.

Half of the experiences come under category of desirable and other half come under undesirable category. Mind wants to accept half of the life and reject half of it. But true test is to accept the fullness of life.

Resistance to the undesirable is a root cause of much misery; acceptance of the undesirable helps dissolve that misery. Most humans fear the undesirable part of the life.

Life is meant to be experienced in its complete glory with desirable and undesirable experiences complementing each other.

Becoming attached to a single past experience and trying to repeat it is an invitation to misery.

Do not crave the repetition of experience; you may get them or you may not.

Do not fear any experience, you might have to face it; cultivate fearlessness and trust.

Keep the mind focused on the “will of the flow”, not on this or that.

As the life unfolds its experiences before you, just pass through those experiences, experiencing everything one hundred percent in its totality, welcoming everything with open arms. Do not say things like “Why have you come?” or “Go away.”

Realize that every experience is a flow of energy—Shakti. It is the same energy manifesting as different thoughts, emotions, desires, and experiences. Treat them all equally, with neutrality and even-mindedness.

All phenomena of life's experiences—pleasure and pain, togetherness and separation, attraction and repulsion, profit and loss, victory and defeat, success and failure, confusion and clarity, health and illness—are, by nature, impermanent.

Accept, endure and experience them with patience and equanimity.

Summary - *Be as you are being kept, without making any noise.*

Perspective to change: Life moves a person from one emotion or situation to another to sharpen and strengthen their character. Life may take some things or people away from you to help you realize your strength and independence.

The flow of life arises from infinite love; this love can be experienced if perspective is right. Therefore, nothing is ultimately lost—even if it may appear to be an irreparable loss.

No matter how much joy or suffering arises, everything is temporary like seasons, everything will pass on their own.

Living life like according the chapter is what living every moment means—this is what flowing with life means.

Attachment and Detachment

Attachment

When you know you must move toward something healthy and new — the right and peaceful choice — but you stay with the old because it is familiar despite its pain and stagnation; that is attachment at play.

Attachment turns the mind foolish; it longs for what it should not — like a drug addict knows it is wrong, harmful to consume the drug but still he chooses. The fooled mind should be guided by intellect and awareness to release attachment to misguided goals and desires.

Attachment arises when we assign hypothetical meaning and importance to things or people to feel secure, and thus stop seeing them as they really are.

The Ego wants to feel secure and to feel that security it creates a web of assumptions and beliefs about things and people as such to perceive them as permanent and true. In actual, everything is impermanent and temporary. But these false beliefs and assumptions create a sense of permanence that provides security to ego.

When reality reveals the truth of impermanence of things and people and we are forced to see the reality, we cannot bear the breakdown of those dearly held beliefs and assumptions; this is what creates suffering — we feel afraid to see the reality and we repeatedly try to hold on to those dearly held false beliefs and assumptions.

Letting those beliefs and assumptions break down and seeing reality as it is—that is detachment.

True detachment is to never create such beliefs and assumptions of permanence of things or people, and to always move forward with the understanding that everything is under the law of constant change — what is present today may not be available tomorrow.

Experience everything to the fullest, but do not seek its permanence.

What was true yesterday may not be true today — such is the nature of this world.

How to be involved without getting attached?

- 1) **Not “Mine”:** Do not call anything as “mine”. Saying “Mine” creates sense of possession which breeds attachment. Do not label mind objects, physical objects or people as yours. Avoid possession of mind objects like my identity, my thoughts, my emotions, my experiences. Similarly avoid possessing physical objects like my money, my car, my business, my work and also stop possessing people like my husband, my wife, my children, my family etc.
Instead of possessing learn the art of being present with everything – being present and being absolutely involved in the process of the world without inducing any ownership.
- 2) **See things as it is:** It means to perceive the reality of world without the filter of beliefs and assumptions. We create beliefs and assumptions to feel secure but this is what keeps us in a false illusion. We must break the sense of security and learn to see the impermanence of world as it is.
For this: order your mind “see the reality as it is”. Ordering your mind (a tool of perception) makes it work in that particular way. Let things unfold; now mind will perceive reality of the world as it is that may not align with your beliefs; you have to courageously accept the bitter reality keeping aside those beliefs.
- 3) **Drop all expectations and hopes from others:** You cannot say anyone will fulfill your expectations and hopes. Drop all expectations and hopes from others; Expectations and hopes create dependency and dependency can make a slave out of a king. Do not be dependent on anyone for anything. There is no security in others.
- 4) **Embrace being alone:** Being alone is the ability to be free and independent from all kind of dependencies. This is the true strength. People have become so used to mentally depending on others and things that they think they could not exist without them. A lot of resistance is given to the idea and state of loneliness. To be alone is to be free of dependencies. One must patiently experiment by themselves and find that to be alone is our most natural state. You can be living in the family but can be alone by not being mentally dependent on anyone for anything. This provides a lot of freedom and strength, once you experience this, you can remain independent and free even while amid the world.

How to detach from unwanted stuff in mind?

Repeated interaction with thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and desires provides energy to them. Every interaction with these objects of mind energizes them further. Now they sit around in mind with lot of potential energy associated with them.

When thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and desires have built up enough energy in mind due to the repeated attention that now when reality has changed, they do not go away – no matter how hard you try.

Attachment arises from the built-up potential energy of thoughts, emotions, and desires. This potential energy can be called as karma.

Every attempt to cancel them or get rid of them provides more attention to them. As a result, attachment increases instead of decreasing.

If you try to detach by fighting, suppressing or avoiding the thoughts, emotions or desires, then, energy will still remain trapped and may intensify — and so will attachment.

This potential energy must be allowed to flow. When it flows, it will arise, remain for a time, it will make you feel in a particular way and then it will go away.

Detachment through conscious experience

First step to detachment is to become aware of the attachment (a) to things which should go but you do not want them to let go (b) to things which you want to let go but they do not go.

Then to accept and admit: “Yes – I am attached to this”.

People roam around carrying in their pain and suffering of experiences they took years ago. They continuously live those same traumas and sufferings inside their mind again and again.

Detachment is to let go. Things do not go away just by telling them to go away. They do not go away until they complete their karmic process and finally lose their energy. Completion of karmic process requires you to consciously experience the thing in its totality.

When karmas of suffering come your way, they arrive as thoughts, emotions and sensations to form an experience.

Therefore, these karmas of suffering coming in form of thoughts, emotions, sensations and desires must be patiently experienced to their fullest.

Be conscious: when hurtful thoughts, feelings, or scenarios arise, patiently experience them. Let them hurt as much as they do. Feel the pain and burning; do not resist or avoid; be brave and allow the process to complete. Once you have fully taken the hurt as it meant to deliver, it will pass.

During hurt old expectations, hopes, assumptions, and beliefs will break — which will be painful. A new reality, which may also be painful, will be revealed. Consciously accept the new and let go of the old while you experience the pain.

If you chase joy from the world then suffering is bound to follow. Both joy and suffering of the world are two faces of same coin. To overcome suffering permanently from the world, you must overcome the joy received from the world.

Similarly, by total conscious experience of pleasure and joy of the world you become detached from them. Consciously experience the pleasure and joy in their totality and you will soon overcome them.

Anything consciously experienced in its totality leaves no traces of attachment and frees you.

If something still troubles you, you have not experienced it fully. It will come back; this time, experience it without hesitation.

Perspective to change: Mentally it is not you that gets hurt but always the ideas, beliefs, expectations and assumptions that you hold very dearly get hurt; so drop those ideas, beliefs, expectations and assumptions.

Understanding the Ego

When Homo sapiens lived as foragers in the forests, they had just two primal desires: **survival and replication**. These became ingrained in their subconscious as the most fundamental goals around which they were supposed to perform their daily activities.

They lived in tribes where men would go together in teams to collect food and distributed it among other members of tribe and mostly, they would marry each other inside the tribe itself or sometimes outside.

Men who were physically and mentally fit – tall, strong, decisive, confident and intelligent would grow in hierarchy of leadership inside the tribe. Capable men who had these qualities had more chances of survival and therefore had more **respect** in the tribe. Greater respect meant higher chances of survival and replication.

Therefore, women preferred respectable men who could ensure the safety and survival of children and family.

Generally, women had a role of caring of children and preserving and maintaining food and houses. Women who were young, healthy, fit, skilled in household chores and had good reputation of character were best suited for higher chances of survival and replication. It is because these healthy women would be able to bear child birth without the risks of death and good reputation of character ensured that they were free of diseases and they would not bring any burden of other men's progenies on the family which would hinder the efficiency of the process of survival. Women tried their best to appear young and healthy by using various means of beautification and abstained from everything that could possibly degrade their reputation of being clean and pure. Therefore, **a fit and respectable** lady had highest chances survival and replication in those days.

Therefore, men preferred healthy and reputed women who could give birth to his to children and provide foster and care for them.

Respect is the common parameter in both genders which decided the chances of replication. Subconsciously, every human mind knows this fact. That is the reason everybody tries to project higher respect and value using show off techniques.

Humans, driven by ego, are constantly trying to increase and project their respect in the society for survival and replication.

For that, they try to attach different tags to themselves.

For example, I am rich, I am powerful, I own this car, I have this achievement, I have done this and that etc.

We always try to attach “I” with something worldly. We subconsciously do this out of insecurity of what if, I don’t attach all these tags and I may not be able to project the status of my respect to the society and I would fail to survive and replicate.

That “I” being consistently insecure and feels like that it cannot exist without attaching itself to the worldly tags is the Ego – the impure Ego.

According to the Yogis, the human system comprises: **body, conscious mind, subconscious mind, intellect, ego, energy, desires and the being.**

Body – It is the physical body that we have in our experience (Sanskrit: Sthūla-śarīra)

Conscious Mind – the screen on which various other parts project themselves in the form of thoughts. (Manas)

Subconscious and Unconscious Mind – A vast storehouse of impressions and tendencies. Impressions or conditioning (Samskāra), desires (Icchā), and mental habits of intellect and ego (Pravṛtti) are stored here. The subconscious also governs many involuntary bodily processes. Objects stored in the subconscious project themselves on the conscious mind in the form of thoughts when triggered by specific events internal or external. (Chitta)

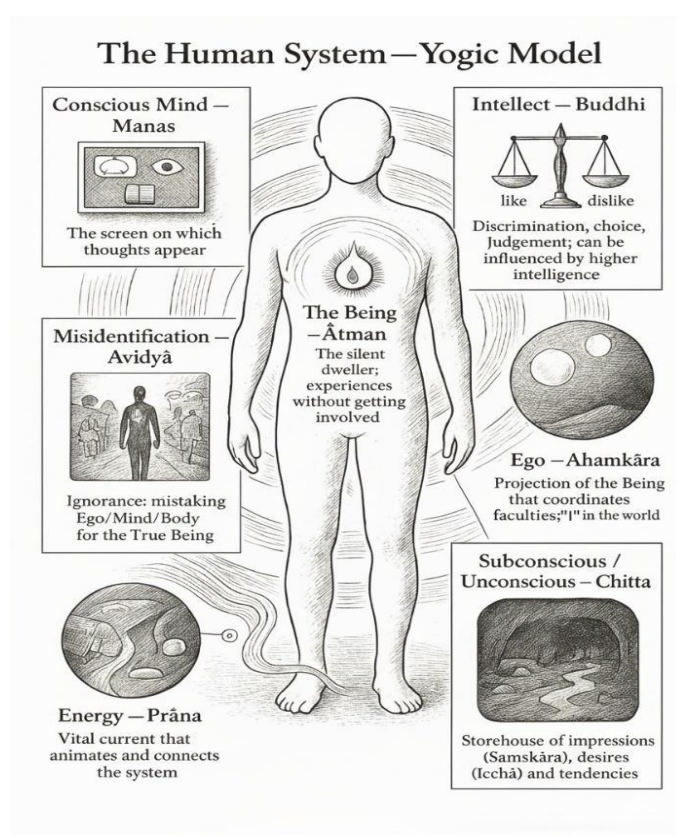
Intellect – This is a discriminative intelligence. It helps in decision or choice making or judgment. It relies on past experience but can also be influenced by higher, spontaneous intelligence. It is the same faculty that helps us to make decision based on like and dislikes, judge good and bad; when its habits go rogue, it becomes overly judgmental about people, objects and circumstances. (Buddhi)

Energy – The thing that keeps everything alive and in motion – the current of human machinery. It connects the body, mind and being. When this energy pervades the human system, then it is regarded as alive and when it leaves, it is declared as dead. Such vital as it is, therefore it also known as vitality (Prāṇa).

The Being that we are – Yogis say the being is not this body, thoughts or various mental faculties. Being lives in them but it is not them. It is that who experiences everything without getting involved in anything. This silent dweller uses the body-mind-intellect-ego complex as instruments to craft the experience of life. Body-mind-intellect-ego complex help it to interact with other beings and the universe. (Ātman)

Ego that we think we are – it coordinates the parts above, directing them to function as a single individual. Without ego, they would not work together in harmony. The ego, or "I," is the projection of the being in the world, like light of moon is projection of sunlight. The being itself never directly interacts with the world, instead it projects itself as ego into the world to interact and take the experience on its behalf.

Sages of India tell this story, when a being that is actually a human, it enters the realms of this world, it begins to misidentify itself as the ego, mind complex and body. Due to this ignorance (avidyā), the being now finds itself stuck in the pursuit of the desires of ego – **survival and replications**.



Look how ego unfolds its game of delusion

Ego can be pure and impure in nature. Pure ego is a wonderful tool, which considers itself an instrument to serve the life, not a master around which the life revolves.

Impure ego is a nasty thing that inflicts misery; it is the root cause of suffering in human's life. If this ego becomes purified, all suffering vanishes.

Impure ego always wants to be a leader and tries to dominate. Ego exerts its dominance and tries to keep the being, in illusion that ego is the only thing that is there and the true Self is non-existent.

For that, it keeps the system busy in the pursuits of desires. When the system rests it may become curious and inquire into reality; when busy with desire it cannot wander off and find out the reality. The reality would make the ego lose its grip of power.

As ego wants to ensure its survival at all times, therefore, it becomes power hungry. For that it does everything from small acts of selfishness to horrendous cruelties. All small fights and big wars happen due to ego.

Power-hungry ego **seeks constant validation and pleasures of pride**. It constantly creates unnecessary challenges and then tries to achieve them in order to reaffirm its worth and value. These unnecessary challenges create the misery in lives of humans.

These challenges make the human perform various ill and vicious actions and therefore trap them even more under the realms of illusion and misery.

Being is fooled by ego, it attaches itself to various tags of identity i.e. 'I am this or I am that'. These tags of identity falsely associate that being with what it is not. This ignorance provides a constant dissatisfaction and an ultimate delusion to the being. Therefore, it does not get to know its real nature.

If somehow the Being who has forgotten its true nature comes to about know it again, then, it attains the fulfillment it longed for, because the Being's nature is ever-fulfilled presence.

To win the game of true identification, the being has to understand the ignorance of illusion that has imposed by grand illusionary nature (māyā) facilitated by ego

Impure Ego constantly chases pleasures of pride. If it stops chasing such pleasure, then it becomes the pure ego.

Let's examine how impure ego enslaves a person through constant pursuit of pleasures of **pride and respect**:

Pleasure of pride that ego constantly seeks:

- 1) **Seeking respect, appreciation and attention:** respect inflates the existence of ego. Flattery, appreciation and attention from others and taking pride in the accomplishments boosts ego like nothing else. Conversely, it will resist disrespect as much as it can. Disrespect hurts the impure ego. Ego loses its value on disrespect, thus tries to avoid it as much as it can.

Carefully observe who receives pleasure or pain from respect and disrespect, is it you or the ego? It is the ego that gets affected by respect or disrespect. Train the mind to silently endure praise or insult with equanimity (treat respect and disrespect from others with equal mind, although self-respect must be preserved at all times).

- 2) **Comparison with others:** Ego loves to compete with others. Ego takes a lot of pride for: knowledge, looks, strength, wealth, status and caste. It constantly judges and compares other people in these areas to establish its superiority.

Drop the pride and comparison. View yourself and others on an equal scale; everybody is on a particular stage of life where you could have been present today.

- 3) **Judgment and Criticism of others:** Ego loves to criticize and judge others. This provides a lot of satisfaction to ego as its judgment and criticism prove that other is wrong and I am right; which increases a lot of pride and respect. When you put attention on

other people's negative qualities, you absorb them back while also giving them your own energy.

Stop absorbing other people's negativity and stop wasting your energy and. Use this energy on yourself for your own benefit

- 4) **Credit Seeking (Who finally did it?):** If anything is accomplished or successfully completed in life then ego wants its glory and credit more than anything else. Intoxicated by the feeling of pride, it boasts its high value and status. It helps ego to survive. If things fail, the ego blames luck or God rather than taking responsibility.

Like moon take its light from the sun, the ego (the "I") takes its power from the Being (Ātman); by itself it is powerless.

From now on, whether in failure or success, surrender credit to the Divine.

- 5) **Trying to prove your power or worth:** Trying to dominate, control or exercise unnecessary power over others is the work of ego. If someone was not working according to your way, then they had failed in something; now trying to prove them your worth and wisdom is also a work of ego.

In such a case, forgive them and help them if they ask. Also, abstain from **Error! Bookmark not defined.** unnecessary display of dominance and control.

- 6) **Hypocrisy:** Showing or pretending to others of having more than what they are, for the sake of earning more respect and status. Common hypocritical behaviors: Pretending to be richer, stronger, more beautiful, more intelligent, better educated, more cultured, or more spiritual than one actually is.

Be authentic and abstain from hypocrisy, fakeness, and pretense.

- 7) **Sympathy Seeking (Ego of a failure):** People who fail often play the blame game—shifting blame to others and circumstances. They complain instead of taking responsibility, because admitting fault diminishes egoistical value.

They play the sympathy card—“You don’t know my situation” or “If you had struggled like I did, you would understand.” They portray themselves as wounded, expecting respect for their suffering.

Strong people try to attract attention through displays of success; weak through blame, tears, and demands for sympathy.

Stop the play of blame game and sympathy seeking. Refusing responsibility and accountability feeds the ego. Take responsibility and work on your inner strength.

- 8) **Security:** The ego attaches the mind to various thoughts, emotions, desires, identities, beliefs, assumptions, objects and people to feel secure. Ego fears the unknown and always wants to ensure its victory and safety. So, it sticks the mind on various things to hold on to them for safety. It keeps on planning and repeating thoughts of “what if, how, when” to secure its survival.
- Best is to cut all ropes of security and attachment and be absolutely fearless while absolutely trusting the flow of life.

- 9) **Challenges:** When survival is easily ensured, then life feels challenge less. But ego feeds off the challenges as they help it to reinstate its worth and value. So, people unconsciously create more challenges in their personal life and relationships.

Everything is going right, ego feels bored. So, it drives the mind to wreck something.

After wrecking, a challenge has been created. Now, mind works to rectify that problem. After success, ego takes juice of pleasure or at least deviates the mind away from peace which can lead to reality.

Go for adventurous and growth-oriented challenges of life but do not create unnecessary challenges in personal life simply to feed the ego. Be conscious – many self-created problems often go out of hand.

- 10) **Hurting others:** Physical harm is obviously egoistic, but emotional hurt we inflict is also an ego-driven pleasure. The ego likes to hurt and judge because that maintains dominance.

Ask, “Who is it that wants to harm or dominate—me or the ego?” This awareness reveals the ego. Notice this habit and refrain from inflicting hurt.

- 11) **Mastery Attitude:** When to feed ego, a person begins to proclaim that he has become the master then right there he stops growing and learning in the life. This attitude makes a person think that he already knows everything and there are no flaws in him which can be corrected. This mindset stunts the growth and creates a way to failure. Always be a student of life; never proclaim yourself a master—this way you will continue to grow and learn.
Daily introspect; be quick to identify and admit your flaws. Acknowledging flaws is the first step toward correcting them.

- 12) **Resistance to life's flow:** Constantly complaining, being angry, frustrated, sorrowed and resisting the flow of life instead of accepting everything gracefully is ego at play. Ego tries to control the life instead of experiencing it. It constantly provides suggestions and opinions how life should unfold itself.

Instead of this, relax and trust the life's flow and accept everything gracefully.

- 13) **Spiritual Ego:** A subtle form that ensnares many seekers. Displaying oneself as egoless or claiming greater spirituality is egoistic. Seeking respect and attention on by fake display of saintly qualities is spiritual ego.

Wilfully afflicting yourself with unfavourable things in order to prove your even mindedness and strength of spirituality is also the work of spiritual ego.

To conclude the pleasures of ego, even anger, attachment, greed, jealousy, judgment, embarrassment and revenge are all manifestations of impure ego.

To have impure ego is to be in a state of darkness and ignorance where it considers itself to be the doer and achiever while the truth is far away from it.

The ego clings to these pleasures tightly and does not easily lose its grip.

Do this:

- 1) **Identify:** notice which pleasure of pride is ego taking— Acknowledge that it is ego who is doing this not you.
- 2) Observe or Perform Naam Jap and allow the ego to continue its activity. Consciously, let it take full pleasure as many times it wants without interruption, suppression or judgment. Slowly it will automatically begin to lose the interest and attachment in the pleasure.

Also:

Affirm **“I am nothing”**, again and again to purify the ego. (Impure Ego fears being nothing because it is afraid of its death; regardless of fear, kill it.)

Like this detach ego from all its pleasures and juices.

In this way, detach the ego from its pleasures. When detached from such attachments, the ego can become 'pure'—a humble instrument.

Once the ego begins to become pure, illusion begins to recede.

A pure ego engages in work without seeking credit; it does not crave security, respect, attention, or needless challenges. It does not compare, judge, or hurt others, and it remains humble.

This purified ego remains the last obstacle to reach the ultimate egoless state and realise your true nature of the Being (Ātman).

Finally, repeat and contemplate that you are neither the body, nor the mind, nor the ego.

Perspective to change: Clearly establish in your mind that you are not the ego. Therefore, there is no need to pursue its pleasures. If it still pursues such pleasures, it will continue to generate karmic effects which then must be suffered by the mind, body and ego.

The Art of Being Even-minded

Being neutral in situations of victory or defeat, profit or loss, respect or disrespect, pleasure or pain, richness or poverty, beauty or ugliness, cold or heat, friendship or enmity, desirable or undesirable, favourable or unfavourable, is even mindedness.

Even-mindedness is state where value or importance of everything is equal for you. To be even-minded is not to become a stone, but it is to treat and accept everything and everyone in equal manner without any attraction, repulsion, pride or fear.

One who bears patiently the incoming dualities of life with neutral perspective, while also having inner calm and equanimity, is certainly a master of life, for him there is no suffering no left. This equanimity and inner calm are attained only by those whose primary focus remains on Changeless Absolute instead of impermanent, ever-changing world.

Activities in the mind

Basic principle of the mind: The mind is in constant flow; nothing stops here if they are not stopped.

Every thought, emotions, desire, attraction, repulsion, attachment, fear, pride (ego) that rise, remain on the screen of mind for some time and eventually go away by itself. Therefore, there is no need of suppression, fight or force inside the mind.

How activities of mind originate, sustained and end:

Based on the desire, ego of a person assigns different level of importance to various objects in the world. Objects which are assigned high importance create attraction in the mind; objects which are assigned low importance create repulsion in the mind.

Further, ego pushes the mind in pursuit of attractive objects to feel pride and this pursuit creates three things in the mind; repulsion, attachment and fear. Once these three make their home in the mind, now a person gets entangled in a loop of desire.

Pride pushes the mind to continue the pursuit. Continuous pursuit creates attachment to the object, which means that the object has now become dear to the mind. Once dearness is established, the mind begins to fear losing it and thus continues the chase endlessly like a loop.

Once a person gets stuck in the loop of attraction, repulsion, pride, attachment and fear, chaos begins in the mind and in life: the mind keeps on reacting helplessly and restlessly to the currents one thought to another thought, one sensation to another and one desire to another.

This chaos is sustained by the ignorance – the unawareness – about the importance that has been assigned to the desired object. Becoming aware about level of importance assigned to something and reducing it to zero, detaches the mind from attraction, repulsion, pride, attachment, fear associated with it.

Ignorance, attraction, repulsion, ego, attachment and fear are the afflictions (“kleshas” as Patnanjali names them) in the mind; they are responsible for constantly arising mental currents (vritti) of thoughts, emotion, sensation and desires.

Therefore, Observe!

Observation:

To calm the mind, it must be freed from the importance associated with outside objects and projects. As the importance vanishes, simultaneously mental currents of attraction, repulsion, attachment, fear and pride for that object will also vanish.

Visible signs of even-mindedness (mind to which nothing is important) are no attraction, no repulsion, no attachment, no fear and no pride is present inside the mind.

If you find currents of attraction, repulsion, attachment, fear or pride inside your mind, then you have assigned over importance to an object. This importance will not let the mind calm down to a state of being even-minded (free of all mental currents).

Now to attain this state, the mind must be freed from the importance given to the objects. Observe attraction, repulsion, pride and fear in the mind; these will point you to that “important object” and “desire to have it” which are making the mind run endlessly in a loop.

But even if you want to give up the importance and desire, mind will not allow you to give it up because attachment has created a sense of dearness, where it does not let go of things even if you want them to go.

So, fact this must be accepted: if you find that the mind has assigned high importance to something and you want it go and but still do not want it to let go, that is attachment.

Do not try to force the detachment or reduction of importance.

Do this:

As you have become aware of attachment, acknowledge its presence and just observe it and its movement without trying to detach. Tell the attachment “I release your energy and you can go now”. During observation, light attachment will dissolve faster and heavy ones will take time. In the case of heavy attachment, it will go up and down and then pass by itself.

Observation is a light which bring dark and hidden things of mind into light. As soon as light falls upon darkness, darkness vanishes. Observation means continuous awareness on a thing and its movement without having any power or control to change it, therefore, you may call it as Powerless Observation. To observe is experience means to feel one hundred percent how they want to make you feel without avoidance or gap. It is to become one with it until it passes away by itself.

(In Powerless Observation you have no power other than to observe and experience the thing as it is, like watching a movie on screen.) Observation will begin to lighten the attachment. But now, you must not feed further energy to the object. Therefore, stop interacting with thoughts, emotions and desires related to it and allow them rise and pass by themselves.

But it is easier said than done. There are two voices in the mind – one of the voices is of already stored impressions, which are constantly appearing on the screen of the mind in form of thoughts, emotions and desires related to object. The other voice is of intellect powered by ego, which constantly interacts with this other voice. This voice of intellect constantly judges the voice of past impressions and then tries to support, or suppress, avoid or modify it based on likes and dislikes.

Fear or pride will propel the voice of intellect to feed more energy to thoughts, emotions and desire through interaction. Thus, this voice provides constant feedback to the other voice of impressions in form of judgment, support, suppression, avoidance or modification; which increases the total numbers of impressions rather than decreasing them.

Now the key is that none of these voices are yours own; therefore, only observe them, there is no need to control them.

If you find voice of intellect interacting with thought, emotions, and desires related to that object, the do not try to control or stop it, people mistakenly think that it their own voice but it

is not your voice – Observe it (i.e. consciously experience the activity as it is, being observer, you have no other power).

If you encounter with fear and pride inside the mind, become aware of them and acknowledge their presence and powerlessly observe.

Everything happening in the mind, whether desirable or undesirable, is trap for you – this trap tries to fool you into thinking that you are a doer of one the activity – but truth is you are doing none of it and none of these belong to you. (Desirable activities do belong to you is important to remember.)

The beauty of observation is that it allows you to sit on the top and spectate the match between players of different teams. One team tries to keep the activity on going and the other wants to stop. But the observer, being none of them, just witnesses the entire thing. As observation cuts the supply of energy to thoughts, emotions and desire of both teams; therefore, both lose energy after sometime and dissolve into calmness. Hence, the winner emerges to be the observer.

If you could watch movie of the mind, where you will see both beautiful and horrendous scenes, without skipping anything, then, you have won the game.

The more you observe, and knowing that you are none of these activities of the mind, you will begin to become aware of the observer. When you see the observer, stick the mind to that changeless observe.

Practice this:

Desirable thought appears – be aware and experience it without trying to detach.

Undesirable thought appears – be aware and experience it without trying to detach.

Emotion arises – be aware and experience their rise and fall, like waves without trying to detach.

Desire comes – be aware and experience while enduring the urge to chase.

Attraction, repulsion, attachment, fear, ego appear – be aware and experience without trying to detach.

Voice of intellect appears – be aware and experience without trying to detach.

Drama Unfolds – remain silent witness and experience it.

Few tips:

- Do not try to detach from anything, just observe while experiencing everything, detachment happens naturally as a side product of observation.

- Have faith in powerless observation, it will always create harmony, peace and balance.

Chanting of Divine Name:

Burning the conditioning of mind through chanting of the Divine Name or mantra, in Hindi called as 'naam or mantra Japa'.

Ignite the fire of silent chanting – begin to chant the Divine Name.

Chanting brings out all the repressed subconscious material (thoughts, emotions, desires) to the surface of mind and releases (or burns) it away.

The mind will be filled with various thoughts, emotions and desires along with attraction, repulsion, ego, attachment and fear. Now chanting is the fire that slowly burns all afflictions and the thought, emotions, desires related to them.

As you begin to chant the Divine name, this practice can feel uneasy and difficult. Only regular practice will make it easy.

Again, there are two voices: voice of intellect and voice of impressions in the mind.

The voice of intellect is habitual of responding to various thoughts, emotions, desire and afflictions of past impression with judgments, support, suppression or modification. Do not try to control any of the voice as none is your own.

Everything will appear, make its move and then vanish.

Constantly focus on the only thing that you can control – Chanting of Divine Name

Now, these activities of the mind, desirable or undesirable, none of these are yours. Consider yourself powerless over them and abstain from controlling them. Only thing you can do is Chant the Divine Name and this name shall take care of everything.

The two voices are out of your control, if you interact with none of them and only with chanting, then no new energy will be supplied to them; they will make movement with whatever energy they already have and vanish. Supplying no new energy will end the energy feedback loop.

Do not fall into any of the mind's trap, it will create different scenarios (desirable or undesirable) for you to respond back by giving importance to mind's activity. Everything (desirable or undesirable) is a trap of mind; it must be considered unimportant. The only response to anything should be the Divine Name.

Assume that the Divine name is a fire which is slowly burning the thoughts, emotions, desires and five afflictions of the mind.

The Divine name is your polite but powerful response to mind's garbage; it does not support or oppose anything but just slowly burns them.

Slowly only one streak of Divine Name will remain. Stick the mind to the changeless Divine Name or Divine Form even if attachment pulls it toward ever changing worldly stuff.

This easily frees the mind from the conditioning.

The chanting of the Divine name acts as a propeller, which propels our consciousness upwards to Divine Consciousness and this automatically begins to free the mind of its objects from lower consciousness.

Best way to chant is to mentally chant the Name without even moving the tongue or lips. A beginner can start aloud, however.

Last tip:

Do not try to detach or burn anything; have faith and focus on Naam Japa, it will take care of everything.

Way of Surrender:

When you find yourself unable to let go of any attraction, repulsion, ego or fear towards any thought, sensation or desire despite of observation or chanting, then acknowledge the failure perform the self-surrender. Admit that you cannot do it by yourself and you have failed. Now, ask for the Divine help and ask it to take it from you and resolve it for you. Just observe or chant as everything is done without making any interruptions.

Few extra tips:

Desire: Unfulfilled desires go from the active state to the dormant state and spring up again when right circumstances trigger them back into activation. Sometimes they do not come for the entire lifetime and only become visible in the further lifetimes. Unless all desires are given up and only one desire that of perfect peace is left, permanent abode of the enlightenment is unattainable.

Never chase a desire. As it comes up, either observe it or chant name in response and endure its energy without chasing it with senses. Do not suppress the desire; let it remain as long as it stays. Initially, not chasing it will give uncomfortable, burning type of sensation in the mind, but as you patiently endure the burning, while chanting or observing, it will begin to reduce its effect and eventually go away completely.

Some desires can also be dissolved by consciously fulfilling them and experiencing them fully.

Even when these desires have gone, still the traces of their energy are left inside the mind; these energy residual can revive these desires.

Fear / Fearlessness

Fear is: This should not happen.

Fearlessness is: “Let the divine flow decide what should happen. If this infinitely intelligent flow, which cares for everyone, wishes this or that to happen, then I am surrendered to its wish.” Whatever troubles you – surrender it to the wish of the Infinite Intelligence and tell it “You decide by yourself what should happen and give me strength and mindset to move along.”

Fearlessness should be considered a very important state to attain. Fear is caused by attachment to something, when your mind sticks to that impermanent thing and does not want to leave it. Forcefully sticking mind to changeless absolute dissolves the attachment and makes you fearless.



Yajana of the Observation and Chanting

Perspective to Change: These practices are a yajna - a purification process. Oblations offered to this yajna are of attraction, repulsion, attachment, ego, fear and ignorance. It includes the burning of subconscious conditioning which has been accumulating from many lifetimes – all beliefs, assumptions, thoughts, emotions, desires and afflictions are deleted to transform the sophisticated and complex mind in to simple mind which makes the life simpler and easier to live.

When all afflictions from the mind go away, then, a person always remains in the present moment.

Present Moment

Thinking creates the experience of time in the human mind.

Whatever and whenever we think is related to either the past or the future. The mind itself is nothing more than a collection of past or future ideas. Notice that whenever we think, we catch ourselves fussing over the past or worrying about the future. The past and the future are both creations of the mind; neither exists in the present.

So, we experience time because of our thoughts. When we lose all thoughts, the mind and time cease to exist for us. Then we feel ourselves as a mere presence—one experiencing things here and now without thought or attachment, like a witness watching a play without personal indulgence or interference.

Therefore, past and future are imaginative scenarios of an untrained, undisciplined, and doubtful mind.

A healthy, normal mind—which is rare—aggregates sensory information and provides a valuable present-time experience. When required, it supports objective (verbal or visual) thinking; otherwise, it remains quiet and allows the pure experience of the present moment to continue.

There are only few people in the entire world those who can live purely in the present moment. Only by living in the present moment, their actions become so spontaneously intelligent and intense that they become immensely powerful and effective in the anything that they undertake.

Others who hover near the present moment but are not fully present can still make significant contributions to society and often achieve success in their fields.

Those who have no connection to the present and live in past or future rarely do anything of real significance for society or themselves. They mostly remain mediocre and live without utilizing their true potential, which could have deepened their life experience.

Therefore, for our betterment, we must know how to be present.

Process to settle in Present:

- 1) **Accept the Present Moment:** Accept yourself and entire existence as it is. Come at ease and harmony with whatever is present.

- 2) **Accept the body:** The body is the base—the ground where you are rooted—so never be hostile or disrespectful toward it. Have reverence, love, respect, and gratitude for the body, as it is one of creation's most beautiful and complex expressions.

The body has to be freed of many repressions. Allow bodily energy to flow; remove the blocks. Almost everyone has blockages. Loosen tightness and tension, as such tension blocks your energy. Flow is not possible with these tensions.

Therefore, learn to be relaxed—absolutely relaxed. Learn to breathe, speak, walk, and sleep in a relaxed manner. Many people breathe shallowly out of fear. Children often breathe shallowly in the chest due to fear. Proper deep breathing—breathing fully from the belly rather than only the chest—allows subtle energy (prana) to circulate, freeing energies that may have been repressed.

- 3) **Reignite the senses:** Senses must be cleansed, purified and rekindled. They have been dulled and need renewal. Senses are like mirror which has become dull because so much dust has gathered upon it. This dust has to be cleansed.

Touch, smell, taste, see and hear as totally as possible. A child is born with beautiful senses – watch a child. When a child looks at something, they are completely absorbed. When they are playing with toys, they are utterly absorbed. When looking at something, they become just the eyes. When hearing, they become just the ears. When eating, they are just on the taste.

When eating, do not just eat. Try to learn the forgotten language of taste again. Touch the bread; feel the texture of it. Feel with open eyes, feel with closed eyes. While chewing, chew it with full acceptance and love.

Go to the trees, touch the trees. Touch rocks. Go to the river and let the water flow through your hands – feel it. Touch people freely, in an appropriate way obviously. Lie down on the ground, feel the earth. When standing under the shower, feel the touch of water falling on you.

Go into nature and listen to its sounds—the voices of birds, leaves, wind, and footsteps. Become fully present and absorbed in them.

Learn to watch. Be relaxed and present; observe the beauty of the world so keenly that you become mesmerized and absorbed, even when looking at flowers.

Habits are one root cause of dullness. Free the senses from habitual patterns. Find new and creative ways of doing and feeling things—you can always invent; there are no limits. Small changes can be tremendously beneficial. For example, if you always eat at a table, sometimes sit on the lawn and eat there; a small change can produce a very different experience.

Find new ways in everything and do not miss opportunities to revive your senses.

- 4) **Cleanse the mind:** First accept the mind. Accept and admit all the thoughts, emotions, and desires present in your mind. Acknowledge levels of fear, lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, jealousy, and envy. Do not shy away from admitting what is in your mind.

The moment we try to catch the present moment in the thought process, by that time it already becomes the past (a few moments ago kind of past).

The mind has to drop the neurotic and obsessive thinking, and has to learn the ways of silence. Whenever it is possible, relax. Whenever it is possible put the mind aside. When mind has been put aside – there you are in the present moment.

How?

Two simple ways a person can be in present moment by being in the state of no mind:

- **Watch Awareness:**

Watch three levels of awareness:

Awareness one: Let the mind run, let the mind be filled with thoughts; you simply watch – detached. There is no need to be worried about it, just watch. Just be the observer and slowly you will see the silent gaps have started coming to you.

Then, awareness two: When you have become aware that gaps have started coming, then become aware of the watcher. Now watch the watcher then new gaps will start coming. The watcher will start disappearing, just like the thoughts. One day, the thinker also starts disappearing. Then real silence arises.

With the third awareness: Both object and subject are gone; you have entered into the beyond.

When these three things are attained: Body is purified of repressions, senses are freed from dullness, mind is liberated from obsessive thinking, then, there is nothing left but the present moment and a vision of reality arises in you that is free from all illusions.

- **Watch Breath:**

Lord Shiva tells Devi Paarvati: *Radiant one, this experience may dawn between two breaths. After breath comes in and just before it turns out – the beneficence.*

When breath comes in and just before it goes out – Be aware between these two points and there is the happening.

When breath comes in, observe: for a single moment – a fraction of second – there is no breathing, before it turns up.

When one breath comes in, there is a certain moment where breathing stops, then the breathe goes out. When breath goes out, again breathing stops before breath comes in. Before the breath is turning in or out, there is a moment when you are not breathing, in that moment happening is possible.

Process may seem simple but here also the progression advances only after the awareness heightens.

First you will become aware of the passage not breath. The movement of breath is subtle and not felt immediately. Therefore, first a person becomes aware of the passage through which the breath passes i.e. the nostril -> the wind pipe -> touching the belly taking it up and when exiting taking it down.

As awareness heightens with regular practice, the mind becomes sensitive enough to notice not just the passage but the movement of the breath itself.

After that, one may perceive the essence of breath—prāṇa or vitality—which is even more subtle. Only after then, can you perceive the gap where the breath stops.

Perspective to change: Present Moment is a state of thoughtlessness. Here, thinker, thinking, thought become one; observer, observing, observed become one; doer, doing, deed become one; past, present, future become one; experience of duality vanishes and consciousness of oneness pervades.

Love

Love cannot be known through mind as it is an experience of heart. Love can be experienced only when you start to give out love instead of asking for it. Love reflects like a light put on mirror – the more you give out, more you will receive.

You cannot really love others until you first love yourself.

Love Yourself

- **Total acceptance:** Be comfortable with who you are in the present. Accept and appreciate your body and your personal strengths. Drop all comparison with others, do not compete with anyone. Do not seek validation or appreciation from anyone. You are enough.
- **Uniqueness:** Become totally comfortable with your own being and with expressing your unique present self. Do not fear judgments of others.
- **Self-Faith:** Have a total faith in yourself and your capabilities by eliminating all doubts. Stand up for yourself if others suppress it. Build up yourself to be strong and powerful. Prioritize who you are and make important decisions according to your personality and preferences not according to society's pressure.
- **Forgiveness:** Forgive yourself repeatedly. Never loathe or hate yourself. Don't be so hard on yourself — first forgive, then change.

Love others

- **Acceptance:** Let others be who they are. If it is not your responsibility, do not try to judge or change them. Everybody has their unique life and everybody is at different stage in their life.
Offer help; if they accept, assist them.
- **Forgiveness:** Mentally forgive those who have harmed you in the past.
As Jesus said while being crucified: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." This is one of the most profound acts of forgiveness in human history, where a person touched the depths of love and compassion.

These mental acts of acceptance and forgiveness must be repeated to train the mind away from its egoistic tendencies and toward a compassionate, inclusive nature.

Take Actions of Love

Do not miss opportunities for love. Even when passing down a street you can be loving; even toward a beggar. If you have nothing to give, you can smile or a mental blessing of growth and prosperity. A smile or blessing costs nothing but opens and enlivens the heart. The more you love, the more likely love will return to you; your heart begins to flower, and a flowering heart attracts many lovers.

Cultivate qualities of love like empathy, compassion, kindness and unselfish help.

These qualities are not learned merely by reading; they develop through daily acts of love.

- Begin by setting a daily goal: perform at least one unselfish act of help for another. Perform this act selflessly and surrender it.

Do it daily. At least one unconditional help, even the smallest gesture is enough.

- These need not be grand acts performed once in a while; they also include small, daily acts of conscious, voluntary kindness toward all beings — humans, animals, plants and nature.
- These acts can be performed by giving out in the form of spiritual knowledge, practical knowledge, physical help, food, financial support, protection from death to the vulnerable and helpless.
- Sometimes people need mental support during hard times; offering genuine help is an act of love. Providing honest guidance to a newcomer is an act of love.

Whatever you give out tends to grow in your life. If you spread love, knowledge, trust, health, wealth, strength, and beauty, these will multiply in your life. If you spread hatred, ignorance, sickness, poverty, or jealousy, those will increase instead.

Initially, old mental habits will provoke desires and expectations of return for the love you give. Gradually detach from these expectations through detachment and renunciation practices.

This is a conscious attempt of changing the old habits and deconditioning the mind from survival instincts of ego which are present as evolutionary impressions gathered over time on a species trying to survive from death. It is a transformation of mindset and lifestyle from living on the survival mode to going on to live on the abundant mode, from having a mental attitude of scarcity and selfishness for others to having a will and a mental attitude of abundance and unselfishness for others.

Introducing true love in romantic relationships

If you love a person, first the periphery of the person disappears, then, form of the person disappears. You come more in contact with the formless, the inner. And if you go deeper, even this formless individual starts disappearing and melting. Then the beyond opens. Then the particular individual was just a door, an opening. And through that lover, you find the divine.

- First lesson is not to ask for love, but to give it.
- If you are not loyal, do not expect other person to be loyal (Law of Karma in action).
- Your level of dedication will be reciprocated back to you.
- The foundation of a true relationship is laid upon the bricks of trust, therefore cultivate infinite trust.
- True love begins where ego, power politics and possessiveness dissolve.

When two right people come together, they are not the ideal humans. Their togetherness should mean collaboratively supported individual growth and an independent oneness.

Independent oneness means: let them be who they are and how they are. Then love them like you are one with them. (Tell your mind to do this.)

Collaboratively supported individual growth and independent oneness ensures that you are helping them to become highest version of themselves according to their own inclinations without being possessive about them.

Let go of control, dominance and ego games. Do not take egoistical pleasure in hurting other.

Help them to grow. As they will grow in their character, they will naturally be more responsible and accountable to you.

Letting them be who they are and still loving them provides their being a freedom and nourishment of a different kind, they in turn love you more and even begin to naturally change for you.

Focus only on giving the love and nourishment to the person and let the love come back as by product.

Remember: love means you are fundamentally in favour of the other person. Like scolding and strictness of parents can be apparently cruel but it is in favour of the children. Similarly, use strict actions, if required, but they shall not be egoistical or hurting but always well intended in the favour of your loved one.

Taking things more deep...

In the beginning, only peripheries meet. But if the relationship grows intimate, become closer, become deeper, gradually, centres start meeting. When centres meet, it is called love.

To meet a person at his centre is to undergo a revolution yourself; because if you want to meet a person at their centre, you will have to allow that person to reach to your centre also. You will have to become absolutely vulnerable and open.

If enough trust has been established in the relationship, concentrate solely on that person and reject other options. Nature may test you but surrender to the Divine and allow the Divine itself make you pass those tests. Mind must be stopped from fluctuating to anyone else and shall be tied to the one person only. This concentration deepens love.

Then a heartfelt, mutual surrender must occur. Surrender means arriving at a level of trust where you lower personal barriers of ego and separation and deeply allow the other to feel your energy and reach your centre. Allow yourself to feel one another's energy — be vulnerable when necessary. This stage must be consciously attained.

This stage is reached through acceptance, forgiveness, trust, and by deeply understanding the other — putting yourself in their shoes. Sometimes it requires sacrificing your own will. This has to be mutually reciprocated.

Only when you love another in this way can you touch the innermost being of that person.

As the level of connection increases, both partners may experience a sense of oneness while retaining individuality and freedom, then the true spiritual love begins to mesmerize them with its fragrance.

When this happens, there will be a deep contentment in you— a visible sign of love.

If two partners love each other ensuring trust and freedom on the personal level and reach the centres of each other, then this transition from two to one or from separation to inclusion is called Yog, the union of two into one.

Remember: Apply this theory only with a right person.

YOGA – The Union

In the beginning, the Brahman, the pure spirit, which is Sat-Chit-Ānanda (Ever Present, Ever Aware, Ever Joyous) – resides in a non-manifested state.

This is a non-vibrational void — a state of nothingness where nothing has yet been manifested.

Brahman may be called Pure Awareness or Pure Consciousness.

Brahman can be compared to imagination – it can transform itself into anything out of nothing – out of blackness, it can become anything.

Brahman, blissed out by its own being, wills to experience itself more. To fulfill this will, the Brahman imagines itself to be a masculine Creative Consciousness and a feminine originating desire.

In its original form Brahman is present as spirit beyond creation (SAT). This creative consciousness is presence of Brahman as spirit within creation (TAT).

This creative consciousness becomes the intelligence and experiencer of creation (Purusha), and this desire becomes the creative force (Shakti) for creation, also called Mūla-Prakṛti or AUM.

Hence comes the AUM TAT SAT – the divine triune.

Creative Consciousness (Purusha) is a still ocean but when he amalgamates with Shakti (the desire), creation begins. First part of creation happens as separation of droplets in this ocean — individualized sparks of creative consciousness (souls). Then, the souls are invited to participate in a game of imagination, a shared dream, and they agree to the venture.

The Shakti is a vibrating force, which reverberates with vibration of AUM. The Shakti uses intelligence of creative consciousness (Purusha) and imagines a stage of the vibrating universe in her own reflection of AUM. Thus, the universe in three forms as causal, astral and physical is manifested. The finer forms of the universe are known as *Para* Prakṛti i.e., causal and astral universe and gross form the universe is known as *Apara* Prakṛti, the physical universe.

To create the universe, the first a field of primordial element is imagined i.e., ākāśa (space); the second is the field of prāṇa (life-energy). Prāṇa is the inherent force that sets everything in motion and from which other forces arise. Thus, we have both fields of substance and force to continue creation.

As ākāśa manifests into subatomic and atomic vibrations which take form of particle for an observer, prāṇa manifests as fundamental forces — gravitational, magnetic, electric, and atomic.

These atomic vibrations originating from fields of ākāśa and prāṇa further transform into vibrations of the classical elements: air, water, earth, and fire (loosely: gas, liquid, solid, and heat/energy).

Henceforth, prakṛti presents a universe of fields and vibrations. It also provides a sensory mind and intellect to perceive these fields and vibrations into physical existence. Mind and intellect provide an integrated of experience of physical universe to the ego, which is also provided by prakṛti to the atman (self).

Therefore, within Aprakṛti there is an eightfold differentiation: earth, water, fire, air, ether (space), sensory mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), and ego (ahamkāra).

Now individualized parts of creative consciousness are asked to imagine and enter into the shared dream stage. They first imagine themselves into lower-awareness life forms — microbes and plants — then gradually progress through animal life — insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals — with humans appearing as last and most evolved form.

Pure Consciousness is the basic substance of all creation; everything is made out of pure consciousness.

As human imagination can transform itself into anything a human wants, similarly pure consciousness can transform itself into anything.

A dreaming person cannot differentiate whether dream is real or not. To the dreamer it is absolutely real: all objects that appear in dream feel real and all sensations are felt as in waking state. Can a waking person differentiate if still they are dreaming or not?

Objects in the dream feel solid to touch, feel real to see and hear; they do not feel different than so-called real objects. What are those objects appearing in dream made up of? Obviously — imagination/consciousness.

Similarly, of what are the objects of the waking state made?
Again — imagination/consciousness.

The irony is that waking person does not realize that they are still dreaming.

Both waking and dream states are imaginings of a powerful mind, backed by infinite intelligence that provides the infinite detailing.

Sages of India say, *“Everything is an appearance in Brahman”*.

Can you relate to them after this?

There is nothing else except the Brahman (Pure Consciousness).

At its peak, Pure Consciousness is absolute awareness but as the consciousness descends down in the creation into objects and life forms, simultaneously the levels of awareness of the life forms and objects also decrease. Let's see how:

Categorization of Prakṛti on the basis of awareness:

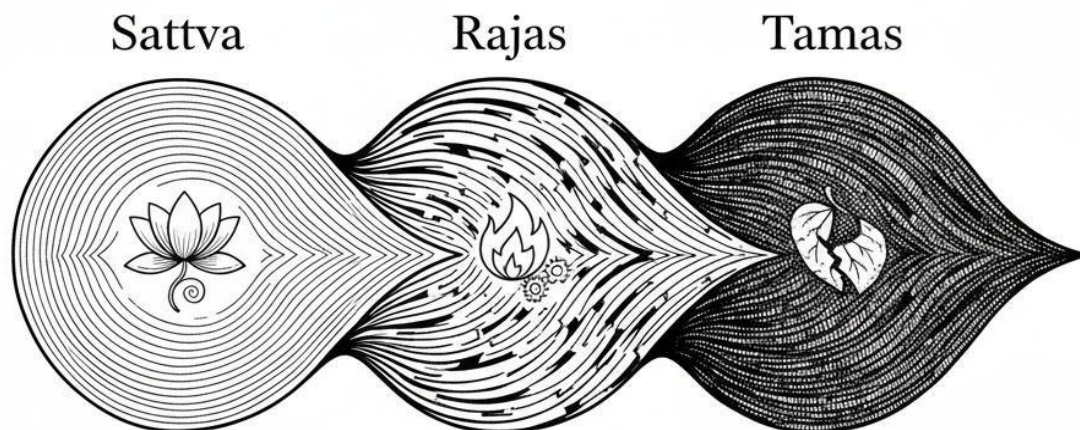
- 1) **Annamaya Kosha** is repository of food or earth. These are the least aware forms of Prakṛti. Examples: stones, wood, metal and non-metals, organic compounds, biological tissue. As the consciousness rises, new forms of consciousness keep on adding into this one. (the physical sheath)
- 2) **Prāṇamaya Kosha** is repository of prāṇa (subtle life energy): These are more aware than the previous. They are combination of Annamaya Kosha and Prāṇamaya Kosha. Example is plant kingdom.
- 3) **Manomaya Kosha** is repository of mind. It is more aware than the preceding layers and integrates the previous three; the animal kingdom corresponds to this layer.
- 4) **Vijñānamaya Kosha** means repository of intellect. It is more aware than the previous layers. Humans primarily correspond to this level and have the capacity to move to the next stage; this layer includes the prior three layers as well.
- 5) **Ānandamaya Kosha** literally means repository of bliss. It is the subtlest, most aware layer. It encompasses the previous four layers. Advanced spiritual beings exemplify this state; there is only a small gap between this level and Pure Consciousness.

A human has all five kosha.

This game of Prakṛti follows laws such as cause and effect (karma), the law of duality, law of impermanence.

Universe vibrates in AUM and is pervaded by three basic vibrating currents (gunas) of Sattva (Preserving, harmonious), Rajas (Active, Restless) and Tamas (obscuring, inert,) corresponding to A, U, M respectively. All objects in the Prakriti have different proportions of these three. Sometimes sattva is predominant, overpowering rajas and tamas; sometimes rajas prevail, not sattva or tamas; and sometimes tamas obscures sattva and rajas.

Rajas is the force that puts an object into motion, sattva preserves that motion and tamas is responsible for stopping that motion.



A, U, M of AUM also correspond to waking state, dream state, deep sleep; the silence following AUM points to the silent dweller — the ātman — which is beyond these states.

These three currents influence and direct the activities of all living beings on the planet.

Once an individualized consciousness (ātman, the Self) enters the game of cause and effect, it cannot exit until causes and effects are neutralized. Moreover, upon entering it often forgets its true nature and delusionally identifies as body, mind, and ego. This ignorance (avidyā) is sustained by illusion (māyā).

Ātman entered to have an experience; once that purpose is fulfilled, it must overcome ignorance and realize its true Self. This realization — enlightenment or self-realization — is the journey from ignorance to knowledge.

Once illumination occurs, Ātman is ready for final emancipation from the cycle of saṃsāra, in which it is bound by law and repeatedly undergoes varied life forms and suffering.

Upon illumination, the consciousness that formerly resided in ego (identifying as mind and body) merges with cosmic consciousness and recognizes its nature as pure awareness.

This merging is the union of two manifestations of the same consciousness — this union is what the word yoga signifies (union).

There are many ways to attain this knowledge of self. Here we will discuss the four principal ways of Yoga:

- 1) Jnana Yoga
- 2) Raj Yoga
- 3) Karma Yoga
- 4) Bhakti Yoga

Perspective to Change: You are stuck in a dream you call life. Life after life the dream continues with slight changes, and you remain trapped in the pleasures and pains of that dream. A human must strive to wake up from the endless cycles of the misery filled dreams.

Easing the process of Realization

Tools that assist to make journey of self-realization effective and efficient:

Positive Beliefs: Have non limiting beliefs about the self-realization. (For example – It is easy to get enlightened; I will surely get enlightened in this lifetime).

Visualisation: Visualise yourself as one who has attained the goal i.e. Nirvikalp Samadhi, Ishavar Sakashatkaar (steadiness in Divine vision) or Moksha.

Surrender: Make the Divine the master of your journey and adopt the attitude of a surrendered student. If Divine arranges a true guru for you, then whole heartedly surrender to the guru and adherently follow their teachings.

Brahmacharya: Celibacy in thought, word and deeds hasten the process of self-realization. If married then absolutely loyal to their spouse in thoughts, words and deeds.

Acceptance: Being able to accept the present moment and flow of universe unconditionally without complaints.

Non-Doer: Consider the doer of everything as Divine and walk in complete acceptance of his will and plan, dropping all your personal planning and preferences for future.

Intense Desire: Intense Desire leads intense effort; these two combined make it easier to the Divine grace.

Qualities of an aspirant of self-realization:

Truthful: in thought, words and deeds.

Honest: in conduct of worldly and spiritual affairs; lives on honestly acquired wealth and food free from all greed.

Pure: in body, mind and character.

Simplicity: Being able to embrace simple life, simple mind, simple food and simple cloths.

Straightforward: Conduct without having double or hidden intentions.

Vegetarian: Lives on a vegetarian diet due its sattvic quality, which promotes balance, calm, and reduces animalistic passions and sloth.

Duty Oriented: Responsible towards their duties; readily fulfills them as a service to Divine.

Mental Solitude: Ability to be absolutely independent physical and emotionally.

Love: Being more kind, compassionate and empathetic tremendously helps one in their spiritual journey.

Even Minded: Practicing even mindedness through up and downs of life.

Humble: Being free of ego and its pleasure of pride hastens the journey.

Unprejudiced: Being impartial and unprejudiced towards everyone including yourself.

Non-Violent: Not harming anyone in thought, words and deeds.

Non-Judgmental: Abstaining from judging, criticizing and finding faults in others.

Forgiveness: Being able to forgive others keeps a seeker free of grudges, anger and resentment.

Self-Control: A seeker control s his mind and senses from performing adharmic activities.

Self-Introspection: A seeker readily and humbly identifies their faults and begins to rectify them.

Jnana Yoga – The way of Discrimination

When a person goes through an existential crisis and questions about life — its purpose, its origin and its end — begin to repeatedly strike the mind, generating curiosity driven by confusion and suffering, a person then seek knowledge about their existence to solve recurring doubts and find purpose, solace and peace. This way, they embark on the journey of knowledge and light from the state of ignorance and darkness.

Take a look at Story of King Janaka

In ancient times a king named Janaka lived in Bharat (India). He was suddenly woken from his sleep by an army general: “Maharaj, wake up! We have been attacked by the enemy; they will approach at any time — we must get going.” Janaka, without delay, issued commands to prepare for war. A well-trained and prepared army marched towards the battlefield. Armies clashed and a ferocious battle took place. Janaka lost the war. Janaka was then captured by the enemy soldiers and taken before the victorious king.

“Janaka, you are a kind and noble man. You have lost your kingdom in the battle; I will spare your life because of your good character, but I banish you from the position of king right now. Go away.”

Janaka, now stripped of his title as king, was thirsty, hungry and wounded, wishing to quench his thirst. After wandering around, he reached a town and knocked on the door of a house. The door opened and a man came out. Janaka asked for some water. The man recognised his former king and told him that he was afraid of the soldiers of the new king and that if they saw him providing water to Janaka, he might invite trouble. Janaka wandered here and there until nightfall, when he finally got some water.

For three days he roamed on an empty stomach and finally reached the border of the kingdom. From there onwards the boundaries of the new kingdom began, and there he saw a queue of beggars awaiting the porridge that was being distributed as charity. Janaka joined the queue. By the time his turn came, the food had been distributed and the containers were empty. But the donors gathered some leftover food and gave it to Janaka. Then suddenly a kite came rushing from the sky and struck Janaka’s plate; the plate fell from his hands and all the food was scattered on the ground, leaving him hungry again. Poor Janaka — a few days ago he had been a king, and now he was worse off than beggars.

Suddenly he woke up and found himself on a beautiful, comfortable mattress. He looked around and checked his clothes — he was still a king; it had been a terrible dream.

Janaka was awestruck. “Which one is real — this or that?” asked Janaka. “Was that the waking or is this the waking? Was that the dream or is this the dream? Which one is real, and which one am I, originally?”

Janaka went to his queen and asked the same question, “Which one is real — this or that?” The queen obviously had no answer. He went to the ministers and sages appointed to the court and asked the same question, but to no avail. He gathered a congregation of priests, yogis and sages from all over the kingdom. Nothing any of them told made logical sense to Janaka.

Janaka was a genuinely curious man, and the situation left him in a real crisis. Janaka had placed all these wise men under arrest. They were provided with facilities and amenities — delicious food and comfortable beds — but they were not allowed to leave the palace until they had resolved the dilemma.

In the kingdom there lived a boy named Ashtavakra. His name means “the one with eight deformities.” Ashtavakra had not seen his father since birth, but as he matured one day he asked his mother, “Where is my father, Mother?” His father was one of the sages who had been captured and held in the palace. His mother told him the whole story. Ashtavakra was not a normal child, but an enlightened being by birth. He told his mother that he would go and free his father. He went to the palace and told the guards that he would resolve the king’s dilemma and be allowed to enter. Being deformed, Ashtavakra was not very good-looking and his gait was awkward. When he entered the courtroom, the entire congregation of ministers, priests and sages was seated. At once, when they looked at Ashtavakra, all of them began to laugh.

Ashtavakra exclaimed, “Behold, everybody — I have come to know that the king has gathered a company of wise men. I don’t see even a single wise man sitting here. How can you be wise if you identify a person by their body and not by the Self (the ātman)? You are ignorant fools.”

He looked at Janaka and asked, “What is your problem, King?” Janaka asked, “Is this real or that?”

For the first time an answer came: “None — both of them are illusory dreams; none is real.” Henceforth, King Janaka became a disciple of Ashtavakra and freed the other men from bondage.

My Story

There are two approaches to the yoga of knowledge:

Method of Inquiry: The first approach includes discriminating what is not you and yours. You reject all false entities until you find your true self.

When a normal person genuinely starts this inquiry — “Which is real me?”, “Which one do I falsely think as me/?”, “Who am I?” — the Mahamaya (mother of illusions) begins to gradually unveil the truth to the seeker. She also provides the necessary increase in awareness and intellect to help the seeker discern truth from untruth. Pray for it.

How did I find and realise that I am not the body, the thoughts, the emotions, the mind, the ego or the intellect?

Body: Once, I was pondering deeply in Non-Dual Vedanta. I would listen to various lectures and read related material online.

Another day I was looking at a picture of mine from a few years earlier. The first thought was, “If I don’t consider my current age, I am internally the same man as in the photo, as if nothing inside has changed.” Looking at the photo again, I experienced that essentially I was the same man and nothing about my essence had changed, though my thoughts and body had apparently changed. It struck me in that moment: “Okay — this is what these non-dualists were saying: the experiencer never changes, never ages and always remains the same.”

Here comes the question: “Who am I if not the body?” I felt I was the same man as in the photo, though my appearance had completely changed. Who is that one who feels the same?

Therefore, I concluded, “Vedantists are right: I am not the body but the experiencer behind the body.” This event of feeling absolutely the same as the younger self in the photo triggered the mind to connect the missing dots, which led to the realisation of a truth.

Now “I am not a body” no longer remained an intellectual thought; it became a small realization.

Thoughts: An uncontrolled voice in the head would constantly speak negative and unwanted things. Despite my hard efforts to speak positively to myself, the negative voice would still linger. I would say to myself, “I am putting all my efforts into speaking positively in my head, but still the negative voice does not shut up.” As this voice in the head was not under my full control, it was different from myself. I inquired, “Then what is this voice?”

An understanding came that this voice is what we call thoughts. These are just strings of energy. They get triggered by various trigger points. There are desired thoughts and there are undesired thoughts; I can introduce new thoughts, let go of old ones and I can control a few thoughts but I am not thoughts or this voice.

Emotions: When emotions like anger, frustration, resentment, happiness or sadness arise, we often say “I am happy,” “I am angry,” “I am sad,” or “I am frustrated.” I would ask, “Who is happy or angry?” An understanding came that these are just emotions, a flow of energy happening inside the mind. They arise and subside in the mind, separate from me. Therefore, my perspective changed: “I am not angry; rather, there is an emotion of anger arising inside the mind.” Similarly, I am not happy; I am not suffering;

Mind: There is an unnecessary flux of thoughts, emotions and desires appearing uncontrollably; trying to control all of them again and again felt like a big and frustrating task. I asked the question, “Why am I thinking these thoughts?” An understanding came: it is past conditioning and stored impressions that are arising in the mind and also becoming the mind; if I was mind then, I should have been in control of thoughts but I do not have any control. Therefore I am not the mind, I am separate from the mind.

Intellect: The voice of the intellect feels like the voice of self as it inclines towards our desires — constantly judging, fighting with other thoughts and unfavourable circumstances; it constantly poses questions of “what if this happens” or “how will it happen?” Deluded by ego, the intellect keeps the mind in a constant state of worrying. “Somebody shut this voice off,” I would say to myself.

Then whenever thoughts of judgement, what-ifs or hows arose, I would ask myself, “Who is putting forward these thoughts?” Slowly the understanding would come that it is the intellect putting these thoughts forward misguided by the insecure ego, and not me myself. Therefore, I am not intellect.

“Then who am I?” I asked, curiously and intensely. An understanding came: where I was pointed toward the observer — the one who is observing everything: the mind, thoughts running within it, and emotions arising in it.

Ego: When I was suffering through life's failures, I concluded that these failures I was encountering were due to the ego. I concluded that being egoistical is to be one's own enemy. Therefore, I did not want to be egoistical anymore. I tried to be more and more aware of the ego and its workings. There I observed in detail the workings of the ego and how we feed it with its various pleasures and juices.

Whenever the ego tried to take pleasure of pride, I would ask, “Who is it that is taking pleasure in respect? Who is hurt by disrespect? Who feels insecure and needs constant assurance? Who is saying ‘I am this’ and ‘I am that’? Who wants to dominate and feel pride?

An understanding came that it is the ego, not me. Therefore, I am not ego.

I used the mantra “Who am I?” and again I was pointed towards the observer — the awareness that can observe everything that is happening.

This is how I realised that different activities of the mind are caused by various semi entities, which are different than me.

Different people realise the truth in different ways, and nature has its own unique way for everybody because each person has a different mindset and what becomes the trigger point for one may not act as the trigger for realisation for another.

What to do to realise truth:

Be it any activity of the mind:

Ask these two questions:

- 1) What is arising? (to Identify the activity in mind)
 - 2) Who is doing it? (to Identify the source of the activity)
- Question each and every activity of the mind and its source.

Do not try to control the activities of the mind.

When you ask “what is it that is arising?” you will be able identify the type of activity. It could be thinking, feeling, desire, attraction, repulsion, pride, attachment, fear or anything.

When you ask “who is doing it”?

This question can also be asked in a more specific manner, like: “Who is thinking desirable thoughts?”, “Who is thinking undesirable thoughts?”, “Who is feeling emotions?”, “Who is desiring?”, “Who is judging or worrying?”, “Who is getting attracted?”, “Who is attached?” or “Who is taking pleasure or pain?” Then you will get to the cause of the activity.

Everything that happens in mind is caused by insecure ego. Insecure ego creates desires to feel fulfilled. Further, it takes pride in fulfilling those desires. These desires ultimately create attachment and fear inside the mind. These desires are responsible for all attraction and repulsion. It is ego that creates all type desirable and undesirable thoughts inside the mind.

After enough inquiry, one will realise that every activity in mind and body is being caused by the ego – It is the root cause of all activities of the mind. It is doing all type of actions like thinking thoughts, feeling emotions or desiring. Be it pain or pleasure, respect or disrespect, desired or undesired, everything is experienced by the ego.

“The ego is doing everything and experiencing everything in the mind not me” must be realized by a person.

After knowing this fact, then ask “who am I?”

By asking the question, “Who am I?” one can immediately come to the state of silence, where only remains in the witnessing awareness, the observer.

I am a witnessing awareness — the observer or witness of everything.

It may happen that initially no response comes, but as the enquiry grows stronger, more intense and heartfelt, a response will begin to come.

The real “I” — the witnessing awareness — projects on its behalf the “I,” the ego, to take experience of the world.

It is like dreaming, where the dream body interacts and takes experiences, while the physically person does not interact but still receives the first-hand experience of everything.

Similarly, the real “I” — the Self — is a witness to everything; the projected “I,” the ego, engages with mind, intellect, body and the world on behalf of the Self.

The projected “I,” the ego, takes all power of action from the “I am,” the Self, like the moon takes light from the sun.

When we keep in mind that it is ego that is thinking, feeling, desiring and experiencing everything on our behalf, this understanding makes the process of observation easier and free of fearful interruptions.

Now, with this understanding change the object of observation from mind to ego.

Previously we would directly focus on observing the mind and its incoming and outgoing thoughts, emotions or desires; now focus on observing the projected “I” — the ego — experiencing the thoughts, emotions, desires and experiences

The perspective will change from “I am observing the mind and its thoughts, emotions and desires” to “I am observing the projected ‘I’ — the ego — thinking desirable or undesirable thoughts, feeling emotions, sensations and having desires.

When you have become aware of the witness; now instead of always witnessing the ego and drama of thoughts, emotions, desires and experiences, repeatedly focus the mind on the witness (the awareness) until mind becomes completely settled on the witness or observer alone; let the drama continue in the background.

When witness alone remains, now witness the witness and go beyond in absolute non-duality.

Manifesting the truth in life – second approach – when the mind comes to believe, due to the authenticity of a source of information, that the real nature of a person is the ātman (the Self), then they already know the intellectual answer to the question “Who am I?”

This method is followed when one meets a trustworthy, genuine source — perhaps a guru or a book — where the seeker intuitively trusts the source’s genuineness. The source will tell the seeker, “You are not the body, not the mind, ego or intellect, but the ātman (the Self).”

After intellectually knowing that he is the atman, he repeats it, contemplates it and finally manifests it every moment through thoughts, words and affairs until he realizes it.

Here a person focuses on his real identity while discriminatively casting off the false identities.

False Identities

The Ego projects its value and worth with use of various tags of identities and this gives it a sense of security. So, it keeps the “I am” tightly attached to these tags and fears losing any of these tags.

He goes on rejecting the false ideas and tags of the self by using mantra of “**neither this nor that**”.

When we attach a specific tag to the “I am”, then it assumes that identity. The “I am,” the Self, the ātman falsely believe it is this tag of identity.

When deep sleep occurs, tags return to their seed form and leave the “I am” alone. When mind and body are in sleep mode, the one who experiences deep sleep is the Self — the “I am.” Upon waking, these seeds and identifications with them are restored again.

For example, false identities are:

I am body.

I am Prajwal.

I am angry.

I am sad.

I am a son.

I am a father.

I am Christian.

I am Hindu.

I am Brahmin.

I am upper class.

I am lower class.

I am white skinned.

I am dark skinned.

I am intelligent.

I am Phd.

I am engineer.

I am entrepreneur.

I am labourer.

I am powerful.

I am wealthy.

I am weak.

I am sinful.

I am spiritual.

I am the doer.

I am “nothing” = **I am**.

This “I am,” when free of all false identifications, is the ātman or the Self.

Now that you have the idea of what the Self is, feel the words “I am” — the pure “I am” without any tags or attachments. If you truly feel it, you will rest in a silent state of pure awareness.

Focusing and meditating upon this pure awareness propels the mind to reside more with the real “I am” — the pure awareness, the witness — rather than lingering in different restless states.

The mind absorbs the qualities and habits of that to which it gives its attention. If the mind is focused on the world, it will absorb worldly qualities of the same type; if the mind is focused on the Self, the ātman, it will naturally absorb qualities of the Self. Therefore, just by focusing the mind on the right object, its habits and way of working change without deliberately trying to make any change.

Prolonged concentration on this original state of awareness brings more of its presence into life. This can be called as **I am meditation**.

As one begins to reside more in the state of awareness, one will naturally begin to witness everything without interfering with it. One will realise they are not body, mind, thoughts, emotions, ego, intellect or tags of identity but a separate witnessing presence.

Residing in the state of awareness one will witness the activities of body, mind, ego, intellect and external circumstances.

Everything will arise, reach its peak and then pass away. One thought to another, one emotion to another, one sensation to another, one desire to another, one attachment to another — one play of ego and intellect to another. Residing in the state of “I am” one naturally does not exercise any control over movements of mind, intellect and ego and just witnesses them as it is.

Slowly everything starts to lose its energy and disappear after fully playing out its energies in environment.

During the process, one must constantly focus on the truth that they are the “I am,” the Self, and at the same time disidentify from and detach from all these identity tags.

While being in the state of awareness, one will realize truth like this:

I am neither this nor that, but **I am**.

I am body. I am mind = I am

I am angry. I am sad. = I am

I am thoughts. I am emotions = I am

I am intellect. I am ego. = I am

I am desired. I am undesired = I am

I am powerful. I am weak. = I am

I am wealthy. I am poor. = I am
I am Hindu. I am any religion = I am
I am handsome. I am ugly. = I am
I am Indian. I am American. = I am
I am doctor. I am engineer. = I am
I am intelligent. I am dumb. = I am
I am upper-class. I am lower-class. = I am
I am sinful. I am saintly. = I am
I am a master. I am a servant. = I am
I am doer. I am Prajwal. = I am
I want. I think. = I am
 Just **I am.**

When a person –

- clearly identifies and remains aware of that who is he and what is he not;
- eats honestly acquired food; remains pure in character; truthful in thoughts, words and deeds;
- does not worry about past or future by taking refuge in Brahman; stops bargaining with life –accepts and comes at easy with whatever is present(contentment);
- purifies the ego out its pleasures of pride; remains even minded towards everything and everyone; rejects desired and undesired in same manner or surrenders all his desires;
- uses forgiveness to eliminate all anger and revenge; considers everyone as Brahman and does not harm anyone in thought, word and deed; considers himself neither the instrument nor the doer
 - finally – a sudden realisation dawns — the final epiphany, the curtain of ego falls, and residing in the state of the true Self becomes effortless.

Perspective to change: You are like space — everything is in you, yet you remain untouched and untainted. So play the game of life as a role in a drama while sticking to the ultimate reality which is changeless screen behind drama. Play it beautifully and sincerely, but know that it is all a drama and everything will come to an end – remain detached.

Raj Yoga

This is the scientific method to train the body–mind complex to attain self-realisation. Self-realisation occurs after the veil of ego is removed. The primary focus of all paths of yoga is to remove the ego. In Jnana Yoga, we remove the ego by understanding the difference between our true selves and the ego. In Karma Yoga, we remove the ego by changing the habits of mind and by stopping feeding its desires for credit and secure result. Here we starve the ego by cutting the supply of energy that kept it alive. In Raj Yoga, we create an equilibrium of body and mind, and we penetrate the layers of ego with the help of concentration of mind.

This method is scientific and therefore there are sequential steps which, when followed correctly by anybody, lead them to self-realisation.

It is always wiser to go on a journey along the direct, paved roads rather than whirling and roaming through jungles. Therefore, before employing concentration to embark on the ride, we first pave the way to make the journey comfortable and easy. Here our way goes through the layers of body and mind. There is a constant flux of currents of energy occurring inside the body and mind. These currents must be settled to an appropriate equilibrium so our journey remains peaceful, joyful, warm and full of sunshine, not filled with grey, bleak winters and tussling winds.

There are eight elaborate steps provided by Maharishi Patanjali in his well-known book, The Yoga Sutra. These eight steps aim first to create the necessary equilibrium of the body, senses and mind, and then to use the means of concentration to attain Divine Samadhi — union with Īśvara, the Divine.

Steps discussed in Patanjali Yoga Sutra are mentioned as following:

- 1) **Yama:** This includes disciplining, purifying and establishing the equanimity of the mind by introducing superior mental habits into the life. These methods of yama make it easier to control the mind. Successful and fruitful meditation is very difficult without first inculcating these habits

Yama includes five habits that are required to be introduced in the mind by deliberate conscious practice in daily living, these are:

- a) **Ahimsa:** The habit of being non-injurious to any being in thought, word or deed. Unless the self or others are found to be in grave danger, the practitioner shall not intentionally even think of hurting other life.

- b) **Satya:** The habit of always being truthful in thought, word and deed. Abide by the truth, even at personal loss. The only condition where untruth can be used is where a self-confirmed innocent could be saved from harm, or for the work of universal righteousness (not self-righteousness) to prevail.
 - c) **Asteya:** The habit of not being dishonest or a thief. Free from intentions and actions of taking what belongs to another. Be absolutely honest in conduct with any other being.
 - d) **Brahmacharya:** The practice of converting sexual force into higher unconditional love, creativity and spiritual energy. This practice does not intend suppression of sexual energy, but rather conversion of it into something higher and more meaningful. Sexual energy is not wasted by draining it away but by turning it upwards into the brain through the spine. Therefore, sex is not allowed even in thought, let alone in action. Always remember that breath, life force (prāṇa), mind and vital fluid (sexual energy) are four interrelated forces. Balanced control of these four bodily forces brings rapid spiritual results without setback or hindrance.
 - e) **Aparigraha:** The practice of living a simple and modest life of contentment. Therefore, it includes not being obsessed with desires for name, fame and material gain — avoiding the mindset of being a hoarder and a chaser of material objects and passions.
- 2) **Niyama:** These include the rules of self-conduct. These again induce the discipline, purification, knowledge and equilibrium in the mind. Daily, conscious practice of these deepens the experience of meditation and shortens the time involved in reaching the final goal of divine union.

The niyamas mentioned by Maharishi Patanjali is:

- a) **Śauca:** This refers to purity of body and mind — basic cleanliness of the body by following proper daily rituals of bathing and cleaning. Moreover, purity of thoughts and intentions is even more important than the body.
- b) **Santosh:** Contentment is acceptance of the present as good enough. When the present is accepted as enough, it automatically stops the mind from lurking into expectations of the future and regrets of the past

- c) **Tapas:** The word tapas literally mean to burn. Tapas here symbolises the fire of discipline and consistency. This fire requires mental and physical energy to burn continually. It is the fire that turns coal into diamond or a person into a lion.
 - d) **Svādhyāya:** Study of preferred scriptures and other books on spirituality written by noble people. This not only clears the mental doubts of the practitioner but also uplifts the vibrations of the mind. Autobiographies of enlightened masters are real gems.
 - e) **Īśvara Pranidhāna:** Surrender to the Divinity. Make the Divine itself the ruler of your being and your spiritual journey. This includes mental submission of yourself and your effort and then accepting the conditions where the Divine keeps you, i.e. the present moment.
- 3) **Āsana:** These are the posture exercises which help strengthen the muscles and joints of the body. Various āsanās target different parts of the body, thus keeping them healthy and strong. The primary focus of a true yogi regarding āsanās should remain limited to viewing them only as necessary exercises for strength and flexibility, and not viewing them as the entirety of yoga. Bodily strength is important to sustain the energy harnessed by constant practice of yoga. It also helps the practitioner to sit for pranayāma and meditation for a longer period.

One of the main goals of practising āsanās is to master a relaxed posture in which the practitioner can sit for a sustained period of time, with the spine absolutely erect, shoulders relaxed and palms facing upward while resting on the knees — either with thumb and index finger joined to make a circle, or with completely open and relaxed palms. There should be zero bodily movement; even the movement of the eyes should cease. Breath flow should be kept natural without any intentional alteration.

Willfully forced long practice sessions can hinder the habit of consistency. Therefore, this is mastered gradually with regular practice while slightly pushing the previous comfort zone forward from time to time.

An absolutely erect spine is required to pave the way, free of blockages and obstructions, for Kundalini Shakti residing at the base of the spinal column. In the state of unawareness, this Shakti (force) flows outwards through mind and senses. It is present at the base of the spine. Yogic practices of concentration and pranic kriyas aim to activate and bring awareness back to this dormant, sleeping energy.

Kundalini Shakti rests in a state of unawareness at the base chakra, i.e. Muladhara Chakra, but its true abode is the highest chakra, i.e. Sahasrāra Chakra, where Śiva, the Lord of Shakti, resides. Once Shakti awakens from the sleep of ignorance, it longs to reunite with her Lord.

To make this sleeping power — the Kundalini Shakti — aware again of its true identity and abode, the direction of pranic energy (life force) flowing from it towards the senses and sexual organs must first be turned back and then channelled into the Īda and Piṅgala. Furthermore, this energy from Īda and Piṅgala gets channelled into the Suṣumnā, putting to rest the positive and negative currents of the body.

With concentrated sādhanā, Kundalini is awakened or activated and starts progressing upwards while passing through various chakras. When it reaches the highest chakra in samādhi, that is the happening of yoga — the union of Śiva and Shakti.

The practitioner is therefore advised to keep the spine straight so that Kundalini Shakti can rise without impediment. Direct interference with Kundalini Shakti without brahmacharya and other practices of yama, niyama can lead to insanity. If Kundalini Shakti awakens pray to it for your safety.

- 4) **Pranayāma:** It means conscious control of the life force. Life force — prāṇa, the body's vital energy — is transmitted from a repository in the brain through the two nerve channels, Īda and Piṅgala, into different plexuses which further transmit it to various organs: the heart, lungs and every cell in the body.

Prāṇa is like electric power in the sensory and motor nerves that enables the mind to receive messages of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell through the sensory nerves, and to transmit activating messages through the motor nerves.

Pranayāma is the direct way to withdraw the life force (prāṇa) from various sense organs by retrieving the current of prāṇa in the sensory and motor nerves back towards the base of the spine into a fine nerve, the Suṣumnā, which begins at the base of the spine and goes to the brain. For a normal person, the Suṣumnā is blocked at the base, but only yogis are able to open it. When currents are withdrawn from the senses and channelled towards the Suṣumnā, the mind no longer responds to the senses and turns inwards.

One should try to visualise Īda, Piṅgala, the Suṣumnā and Kundalini until they become perceptible.

Pranayāma has three parts:

Puraka — inhalation

Kumbhaka — retention

Rechaka — exhalation

The two currents pass through the brain and circulate down the sides of the spine, crossing at the base and returning to the brain. One of these currents, called the “sun” (Piṅgala), starts from the left hemisphere of the brain, crosses at the base of the brain to the right side of the spine, and recrosses at the base of the spine, like one half of a figure eight.

The other current, the “moon” (Īda), reverses this action and completes the figure eight. The lower part is much longer than the upper. These currents flow day and night and make deposits of the great life forces at different points, commonly known as chakras (plexuses), but we are rarely conscious of them. By concentration we can learn to feel them and trace them over parts of the body. These “sun” and “moon” currents are intimately connected with breathing, and by regulating breathing we gain control of the body. Try to feel the currents and try to channel them through the Suṣumnā.

The yogis arrest these currents at the base of the spine and force them through the centre of the spinal column.

These “sun” and “moon” currents are intimately connected with breathing, and by regulating breathing we gain control of the body. Therefore, they can be regulated through breathing.

The pranayāma process follows:

Close the right nostril with the thumb and slowly inhale through the left nostril, repeating the word “Om” four times. Then firmly close both nostrils by placing the forefinger on the left one and hold the breath in, mentally repeating “Om” eight times. Then, removing the thumb from the right nostril, exhale slowly through it, repeating “Om” four times.

As you close the exhalation, draw the abdomen in forcibly to expel all the air from the lungs. Then slowly inhale through the right nostril, keeping the left one closed, repeating “Om” four times. Next close the right nostril with the thumb and hold the breath while

repeating “Om” eight times. Then open the left nostril and slowly exhale, repeating “Om” four times, drawing in the abdomen as before. Repeat this whole operation twice at each sitting, that is, making four pranayāmas — two for each nostril. Before taking your seat, it is well to begin with prayer and surrender.

This needs to be practised for a week, then gradually increase the duration of breathing while keeping the same ratio. That is, if you repeat “Om” six times at inhalation, then do the same at exhalation and twelve times during kumbhaka.

This is a basic pranayāma kriyā. Even to practise this, one should abide by absolute chastity and regularity; otherwise, improper practice of Raj Yoga can lead to insanity.

The best way to practise Raj Yoga is under a true master, who will also teach advanced pranayāma kriyās that make the journey more effective and efficient.

Therefore, the practitioner must be able to halt at will the flow of life force into the five senses and, ultimately, the heart and other vital organs, all of whose functions keep bodily consciousness active. The energy is then redirected to the centres of life in the spine and brain.

As a result of pranayāma, the energy is withdrawn from the five senses and the mind attains the conscious state of pratyāhāra.

- 5) **Pratyāhāra:** It is the interiorised state of mind when it is disconnected from the five senses. It is a condition similar to the initial stage of sleep but conscious — when the mind, which was previously registering input from the senses, now connects to the inner world of thoughts, sensations and visions while being disconnected from the senses. A practitioner also goes through this same experience but consciously. Similar to dreams, the practitioner encounters an astral world (a world of subtle objects like thoughts, light and sound) in the conscious state of pratyāhāra.
- 6) **Dhāraṇā:** It means concentration — holding the mind on a specific thought or object, whatever it may be. In the practice of meditation, the object of one’s concentration is intended to lead the devotee, step by step, to the ultimate realisation of the truth. Patanjali speaks of the Divine as “AUM,” pronounced as “OM”: “Meditate on AUM to actually contact Īśvara (the Divine),” he declares.

There are three primary vibrations in the universe: creative, preservative and destructive. These three commingled produce the sound called AUM.

In meditation upon the AUM, the yogi begins to hear variations of the AUM sound emanating from the cerebrospinal centres. The five lower centres in the cerebrospinal axis control, in a person, the elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. The vibratory activity of each centre produces a characteristic sound.

The practitioner may first hear a hum, like that of a bumblebee, emitted by the earth or coccygeal centre (Muladhara) at the base of the spine. The water or sacral centre (Svādhiṣṭhāna) has a flute-like sound; the fire or lumbar centre (Manipūra), a harp-like sound; the air or dorsal centre (Anāhata), a bell-like sound. The ether or cervical centre (Viśuddha) at the base of the neck emits a sound like rushing waters or the roar of a distant sea. At the medulla, the deeply meditating yogi hears the symphony of all sounds chorusing together — the roar of the cosmic AUM vibration.

Various beautiful visions, sounds and powers are encountered. These all are traps of maya and try to lure the mind. A practitioner shall pray the Divinity to help them safely bypass these traps without getting entangled in them. This can be safely done by surrendering to the Divinity.

- 7) **Dhyāna:** When, by dhāraṇā, the devotee attains perfect fixity and absorption of mind in meditation (dhyāna), then the concentration of the interiorised mind on the microcosmic aspect of the Divinity as an experience in the body enlarges to include the conception of that aspect in its macrocosmic form. For example, when the object of meditation is AUM, then in the state of dhyāna the practitioner experiences AUM in its omnipresent manifestation throughout the cosmos.
- 8) **Samādhi:** In samādhi the devotee no longer meditates upon the microcosmic or macrocosmic manifestation of the Divine, but becomes one with it in the ecstasy of super-consciousness, in the trance state of savikalpa samādhi. Or, in the higher state of cosmic consciousness, oneness with the Divine may be experienced in either the savikalpa (trance) state or nirvikalpa samādhi.

In savikalpa samādhi (sabīja, or with seed), there is the ecstatic perception of the Divine without perception of the universe. The devotee is conscious of the various manifestations of the Divine — sound, light, devotion, bliss, beauty and so on — to the exclusion of awareness of the body and its immediate surroundings. It is first experienced for a short time; with deeper practice one is able to remain divinely entranced for longer periods.

After savikalpa samādhi is attained, the devotee passes, through deeper meditation, to the higher state of nirvikalpa samādhi. In savikalpa samādhi the seed-desires remain; from those desires the mind returns. Nirvikalpa samādhi is attained when the seed-desires have been completely burnt; burnt seeds are incapable of germinating anything.

In nirvikalpa samādhi (nirbīja, or without seed), the being is simultaneously conscious of the Ocean of Spirit and of its waves of manifestation: the body, the mind and the being. Since the nirvikalpa state is not accompanied by bodily fixation, the devotee may engage in the most exacting duties with no loss of Divine-perception. Nirvikalpa samādhi is the highest, the ultimate state — union with the Divine.

Best way to perform this yoga is under guidance of an accomplished guru; if you are not under the guidance of guru, then, never directly try to interfere with Kundalini Shakti; it should awaken as a result of sadhana, not through deliberate force to awaken it. Although one can start the practice of Raj Yoga by themselves under absolute surrender to Divinity while strictly abiding to yama and niyama.

Karma Yoga

Karma Yoga is a process of purification of intention. Heterogeneous intentions are purified into homogenous intentions.

A work done with the intention of service, joy or beauty is Karma Yoga. An action where you are not focused on personal gain and the credit for the work done is an action of Karma Yoga.

Playing a game is an action of joy. A game is playfulness and joy is important than victory or defeat – similar to the games of children; when adults could play basketball without caring for victory or defeat, it could be called as Karma Yoga. Even a serious work done can be done playfully, where you put all your effort not for any result but just to experience the sheer joy of the process.

An artist creating a painting or a song, or a scientist working intensely on research just to add beauty to the universe and free from desire for credit, fame or wealth — these are examples of Karma Yoga. Therefore, even when anyone works on their passion just for the sake of the joyful process or beauty, without the intent of personal gain or credit, it is worship of the Divinity through action.

Anyone — even a householder can perform every action with the intent to unselfishly serve. A salary-earning job or a profitable business can be done with a perspective to serve: serving family, employees, society and nation.

When you work to take care of creation, creation takes care of you.

How to perform Karma Yoga:

Mentally become a servant to the Divinity and its creation.

Have a clear intent and perspective of that your work is a service to others. Unselfish service is done for the betterment and growth of the humanity and creation without thinking “What will I get?”

Surrender all your work, its result and credit of doing to the Divine.

It is only unselfish work that carries such intense power, beauty and impact that it can make everlasting changes in the universe.

Before you start any work, ask yourself “why am I doing this?” Is it to serve the creation or for the personal gain? Identify and change the intention to the service only.

Secret of work

- Work incessantly, but do not get attached to it. This can only be done when one works out from the perspective of serving others, not for personal gain. Let no work be called as “mine”, but only of the Divine.

Both good karmas and bad karmas are forms of bondage because they both tie a being to the karmic cycle. Good karmas are golden chains and bad karmas are iron chains — but both are chains of a jail. This type of work, which is free from the tag of “mine”, is also free of attachment and leaves behind no karmic traces. This frees a person from the chains of karma. Such a person lives not on karmas but on direct Divine grace. They will attain freedom from the jail of the karmic cycle.

- Whatever you do, let the end and the means be joined into one. When you are doing any work, do not think beyond it. Whatever you do, be it the smallest task or the biggest task, do it as if it is the most important task to be performed in the entire universe. Nothing is more important than this. Concentrate and devote all your energy and will to the performance of that task. Even the smallest task, such as brushing one’s teeth, should be performed like this.
- When the means of work are well ensured, the result takes care of itself. Focus all your energy on the proper performance of the action. If you take care of the action alone, results will be taken care of automatically. Free your mind from attachment to success or failure. Command your mind again and again to focus upon the action until it becomes purely absorbed in the action — so absorbed that work done, doing and doer become one — that the doer has forgotten himself.

Qualities of a Karma Yogi:

- He will work with utmost honest, sincere, dedicated and concentrated will.
- He will work for the sake of love, service or joy without involving personal desire and surrendering result and credit of the work to the Divine.
- He will work while being impartial and unprejudiced towards everyone, be it the unknown strangers, family members or even himself. Everyone is equal for him.

A Karma Yogi devoid the ego of two of its main pleasures i.e. Credit Seeking and Security Seeking.

Perspective to Change: Karma Yoga emphasises the importance of having a single and pure intention. There is a concept that when you give out pure love, you also receive it back. When you give love to receive love, then, there are two intentions, one intention is to give out and another is to take back – this intention is not pure; this is called a heterogeneous intention. When you just have one intention to give love out and no intention or expectation to receive, here intention is single and pure; it is called a homogenous intention. Karma Yoga is about having homogenous intentions, i.e. giving without expectation of receiving or action without expectation of result.

Bhakti – The way of love

To be loved is one of the strongest cravings in a human. The love they seek is true love — it not only provides security to the mind but also nourishes body, mind, and soul.

Such love is rare to find in humans because of their egotistical and selfish nature.

A person first tries their best to find this love from other humans, but what they get is failure after failure.

After repeated attempts, when all expectations of human love fail, a person then realises the falseness of human love.

When the craving for love persists and one realises that human love is limited and cannot be true love, the person then turns to the infinite source of true love — The Divine.

When a person decides to develop a loving relationship with the Divine, this is known as true bhakti. If the relationship contains conditionality — seeking worldly goods or happiness in exchange for devotion — that is still bhakti but the lowest form of it.

Splendours of Divine Love:

- 1) **Akshay:** The Love doesn't decay.
- 2) **Sneha:** There is always a warmth of love in your heart.
- 3) **Nitya Nutan:** It is ever new; it never gets boring.
- 4) **Vakrata:** Teasing and spicy kind of relationship between devotee and Divine.
- 5) **Abhaya:** Love of Divine brings fearlessness.
- 6) **Nikat-tam:** Love removes distance, time and curtains between lover and beloved. The presence of divine is always felt within.

The highest aim of bhakti is to please the Divine. The Divine is not fully pleased until you become completely absorbed in love for him through mind and heart. You must please him with the same intensity as one lover pleases another.

You may choose the Divine in form or formless.

Bhakti has these pillars which help to progress a devotee to reach ascended levels of devotion and love:

- 1) **Company of truth (Satsang):** Keep the company of good and holy men and women. Company has a magnetic influence over the mind: the mind absorbs the vibrations, thoughts, and qualities of those around it. Be with those who are on the same path as you. Also attend to the teachings and preaching of accomplished holy men.
- 2) **Relationship (Sambandh):** Create an active relationship with the Divine. Associate 'mine' with him. Give him a living space in your heart, as you would to any close alive person.
- 3) **Love (Prem):** Let your relationship not be fake, pretentious, or mechanical. Have genuine care and compassion for the Divine. Your love will be reflected by what you do for the Lord. Therefore, serve him in the ways you like and perform unselfish work (seva) for his creation whenever possible. When you begin to love the Divine, he also loves you back. With love, bhakti will not feel like a duty or task but a joyful activity.
- 4) **Purity (Shuddhi):** Purity means keeping body and mind clean — with pure thoughts, intentions, character, and food.
- 5) **Surrender (Samarpan):** Have firm faith and trust in the Lord — take refuge in Divinity. Let it be responsible for you at all times. Have total faith that he is taking care of you at each moment and that he alone will take care of your problems. A sign of absolute trust is fearlessness and freedom from worry.
- 6) **Total Reliance (Ananyata):** An absolute reliance only on the Divinity and no one else — seek the support of the Divine and nobody else anymore. No other shoulder to rely upon but his.

Seek nothing and no one but the One and Only.

- 7) **Chanting the Divine Name (Naam Japa):** The name of the Divine and the Divine are one. Do not consider the Divine Name as just a word; consider it alive. Feel the aliveness in the name while you chant.
- 8) **Giving back to the Divine (Nyasa):** Whatever you have is of the Lord and you are the trustee of it for a time. Mentally give everything back to the Lord. Surrender all your possessions, relationships, work, spiritual practice, thoughts, emotions, and desires to the Lord. Every time you have a meal or receive something new, offer it to the Lord first.

Level 1 — Starting with the Chanting of the Divine Name

In bhakti, chanting the Divine Name is crucial. Chanting not only concentrates the mind on the Divine but also cleanses subconscious conditioning, making mind and senses cleaner, purer, and more equanimous.

A serious devotee should practice chanting the living Divine Name with every breath while awake.

Bhakti is not a path of renunciation and exclusion; instead, it is inclusive. You are not asked to renounce anything or anyone but to include everything in the Divine, seeing everything and everyone as him.

In bhakti, any act of love, compassion, or care received from anyone should be considered as coming from the Lord. Those who deliver it are just instruments of the Divine.

Similarly, when you perform any act of love, compassion, or care for anyone, consider that you are loving the Lord through those beings. You can live in family and society, and serve everyone with the perception that you are serving him.

Level 2 — Purification of the Mind

As bhakti begins to intensify:

- 1) Abstain from all kinds of pride.
- 2) Do not call anyone or anything 'mine'; surrender everything to him, including your bhakti.
- 3) Be absolutely honest, truthful, and straightforward in your daily affairs.
- 4) Do not judge or criticize others.
- 5) Be absolutely pure in character; follow brahmacharya if you are not married.

6) Forgive others.

As a result of bhakti, you will become detached from worldly desires and society. Let it happen. Embrace solitude but never shy away from discharging your worldly duties.

As worldly passions recede, Divine passion and devotion will increase.

The mind will be purified from attachment by mild suffering. Consider this suffering beautiful, not ugly. You will be given strength to endure it. Therefore, silently endure without making noise or assigning blame.

Suffering will teach you the required lessons; be quick to learn them. Avoid unnecessary repetition of the same type of suffering by learning quickly. Forgive those who make you suffer, for they are instruments of your purification. Once you learn a life lesson, you will be tested to see whether you have truly ingrained it.

You will be moved through situations and feelings to permit the relinquishment of lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, and jealousy. Permit the Divine flow to eradicate them; say, “Yes, I am ready to relinquish them totally.” Then the flow will take care of it.

Direct your lust toward the feet of the Lord. Traditionally, a man was taught to consider every woman except his wife as a mother, and a woman to consider every man except her husband as a son; they should always look toward the feet of everyone.

Level 3 — Choosing the Divine

- Prioritise him. Have a strong belief: “For me, the Lord is above everything and everyone this world can offer.”
- See the Lord in everyone and everything.
- Surrender all your desires to the Lord and let him decide which to fulfil and when.
- Always accept the present moment as the Lord’s will with even-mindedness, without resisting it.

Your intentions and loyalty will be tested. The Divine will present other options — fame, material wealth, spiritual powers, the love of other humans — to see if you truly desire his love or his gifts. Politely reject everything that takes you away from his love. Like a chaste wife, you must be one hundred percent loyal to him, seeking him alone while serving him through everybody.

The secret is not to try to pass those tests by yourself but to let him make you pass them. Remain surrendered, feeling like a humble and ignorant one at his feet.

Always remember that the only one who is truly yours in this impermanent world is him — and him alone.

Constantly fix the mind on chanting the Divine Name while also seeing or writing it mentally. You can make an imaginary chain of the Divine Name and connect it to the feet of an imagined form of the Lord. If worldly things pull down the mind, know that attachment (moha) is at play and can be overcome if you are aware of it.

Remember that it is not your power of chanting, renunciation, or detachment that will alone bring the final vision — it is grace. Yet these practices help open the Divine to shower grace.

Level 4 — Becoming a Slave to the Divine

A stage will come when both mind and heart become completely concentrated only on the Divine; at this stage a devotee becomes a slave to the Divine — this stage is known as devotion. In devotion, a devotee offers his life to the Divine as a gift, and his thoughts, words, and deeds become purely aligned toward the Divine. It is no longer your life but his.

True love for the Divine begins to arise after this stage.

When yearning and desire are strong, the Divine will begin to respond with his presence. He may begin to play hide-and-seek with you.

Sometimes he will fill you with love and peace; other times he will withdraw his presence of love and peace.

This hide-and-seek increases restlessness and yearning; you will want him and his love all the time.

Level 5 — Reaching the Pinnacle of Devotion, Surrender, and Love

When the yearning for him and his love reaches the pinnacle and the mind is totally fixated on the Divine — freed from attraction, repulsion, pride, attachment, and fear — no other desire remains except for him and his love. Then he reaches you in his full-fledged presence to fulfil your heart's cravings permanently.

All these four yoga frees a person from the game of illusions.

**Hope, you have understood the game and found your true self,
Braveheart.**