



YOGA TATTVA

PART 1

YOGA AND THE INDIVIDUAL

A series of introductory classes on the theory of yoga (*yoga tattva*) by Acarya Abhidevananda Avadhuta
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Dedicated – as always – to my spiritual master, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

BANDHU HE.NIYE CALO
A'LOR OT JHARN'A' DHA'RA'R PA'NE
BANDHU HE NIYE CALO
A'NDHA'RER BYA'THA' A'R SHAYNA' PRA'N'E
BANDHU HE NIYE CALO
GHUMER GHOR BHA'UNGA' NOR GA'NE GA'NE
BANDHU HE NIYE CALO

Import: Paramapurus'a (the Supreme Consciousness, God) is the real friend. Oh Paramapurus'a, direct me unto the fountain of divine effulgence. I was slumbering in Cimmerian darkness – I was an ordinary atom. But now I can no longer tolerate the staticity of darkness. Oh Paramapurus'a, sing before me the song that will show me what is what and which is which.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar
Prabhat Samgiita
Song 1

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Supreme Direction

When sadhana is performed twice a day regularly, the thought of Paramapurusa will surely arise in the mind at the time of death and liberation is certainly attained. Thus every Ananda Margii must do sadhana twice a day. This is the direction of Paramapurusa. Without Yama-Niyama, sadhana is impossible. Hence it is also the direction of Paramapurusa to follow Yama-Niyama. Disregard this direction and one may have to endure the torments of animal existence for millions upon millions of years. So that no one should suffer like that, so that everyone might find eternal peace within the affectionate shelter of Paramapurusa, it is the mandatory duty of every Ananda Margii to endeavor to bring all to the benevolent path of Ananda Marga. Giving guidance to others about the way of righteousness is an inseparable part of sadhana.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Preface: The Disadvantages of Yoga

On 1 September 1984 Acarya Abhidevananda Avadhuta arrived in Lagos, Nigeria. That same night he was visited by a respectable gentleman who was curious to know more about yoga. Enquired the man, “For days now, I’ve been hearing from my friend about the benefits of yoga, and thus far I’ve heard only good things. But you know everything has some advantages and some disadvantages. First of all, I’d like to ask you what are the disadvantages of yoga?”

It was a novel question – one that required deep thought. The answer given by Ac. Abhidevananda may be found at the end of this book, but in order to appreciate the reply the reader should first have the opportunity to receive some basic information about yoga. With that end in mind, and with the hope of hearing further questions of such a high caliber, Ac. Abhidevananda conceived the idea to present a series of introductory classes in Lagos. It is a basic synopsis of these lectures, along with some selected questions and answers, that is presented here.

It is the author’s hope that, by the Lord’s Grace, the pages to come will provide a lasting inspiration to those who are coming across the subject of yoga and its universal import for the first time in this life.

Class 1: The Fulfillment of Human Existence

Let me pose the first question.... What is it that everyone wants?

All of you know that the likes and dislikes of people vary from one person to another. One person likes chocolate ice cream, and another person prefers vanilla, while still another always craves strawberry. At the same time, some persons might not like ice cream altogether. Somebody likes one person, while someone else considers that same person to be a boor. Someone likes to live in the mountains, and somebody else chooses to live near the ocean. What one person likes, somebody else will dislike. Amidst all of this variety, what is the common denominator? What is the one thing that everyone likes?

The answer is *happiness*. Everyone wants to be happy. Although the various objects of enjoyment differ from one person to another, still the inner experience that people pursue is the same. Everyone wants to be happy.

At the same time, we can also say that no one wants to be unhappy. The reason is very simple. Inside of each living being is a built-in mechanism for survival. It is a basic instinctual drive to avoid death, to go on living. Unhappiness makes the mind morose. If one is unhappy for a long time, then one starts to contemplate suicide. So unhappiness is a threat to our very existence. To survive, all living beings seek to avoid unhappiness by taking refuge in some permanent state of happiness.

It should be clear by now that happiness is not a quality contained within any particular external object. When ice cream can cause one person to jump for joy and another person to sit down and cry, then that ice cream cannot be equated with happiness. You cannot just go to a supermarket or to a department store and ask for 10 naira¹ of happiness. Though an external object or event may indeed facilitate happiness, nevertheless the happiness that everyone seeks is not at all outside of us. In the final analysis, it must be admitted that the experience of happiness is a purely internal affair.

Everything in this universe is vibrational. Mind is vibrational, and so are the objects of mind's enjoyment. When the mind comes in contact with a congenial vibration – that is to say, when the mental vibration is given scope to express itself, to expand – then that state of being is called happiness. And the converse condition, when the mental vibration is cramped or restricted, is called unhappiness.

Human beings never want to be unhappy; rather, they want to be ensconced in a permanent state of happiness. It may be added that no human being can easily be satisfied with a small amount of happiness. Having tasted a little bit of happiness, human beings always want more and more. Hence, knowingly or unknowingly, each and every human being is running after the perfect peace of eternal and infinite happiness. In spiritual parlance, ordinary pleasure is called happiness, but the supreme beatitude is called *bliss*.

Here it should be mentioned that in the field of philosophy, there is only one infinite entity. In mathematics we may conceive of an infinite number of infinite entities, but in philosophy infinity must be all-inclusive. So another name for infinite happiness is bliss, and another name for bliss is God. The attainment of bliss automatically implies the attainment of God. When a human being has realized that the goal of life is bliss; and, in consequence, s/he consciously attempts to achieve that state of bliss, then that person is indeed living in a rational and proper way.

¹ The naira is a basic unit of currency in Nigeria, similar to the dollar.

From one angle of vision, everything may be perceived as a machine. Everything has some basic qualities as well as a function that it can serve. A piece of chalk is an instrument that can write; a blackboard is a different kind of instrument on which something can be written. A cow is a machine that maintains itself by eating grass and that has the capacity to produce milk. A mosquito survives by drinking blood. It also transmits malaria. But what about the human being?

According to the ancient scriptures of yoga and according to a long line of sages and saints throughout history, this human form may best be understood as a *divine machine*. With the help of this human structure an individual has the capacity to achieve perfection, to be one with God. But the fulfillment of human existence is not something that occurs without effort. Effortlessly, most people manage only to squander their precious time on this earth, behaving more as animals than as human beings. That which sustains the natural and proper existence of an entity is what is called *dharma*. The dharma of fire is to burn. When fire stops burning, it is no longer fire. The dharma of a torch is to give light. When a torch stops giving light, we say that it is dead.

In general, it is found that the dharma of animals is fourfold: to eat, to sleep, to fear, and to procreate. But human dharma is something altogether different. Having realized the purpose of our life, human beings should consciously try to achieve divinity by engaging themselves in efforts to expand their minds through better intellectuality and meditation, by adjusting the pattern of their life with the Cosmic design through the cultivation of discipline and devotion, and by all-round service.

In the Sanskrit language the dharma of human beings is known as *Bhagavad Dharma* (Divine Nature). Each and every human being has the opportunity and the obligation to become great, and the path to greatness is through *sadhana* (spiritual endeavor), sacrifice and service. This is not a choice that is given to you, but rather it is your clear-cut duty. A human being who fails to follow Bhagavad Dharma has no right to be considered a human being, nor can s/he be treated as simply an animal in human form. The animal is fulfilling its dharma. It lacks the ability to become divine. But when a human being ignores her or his dharma, when s/he behaves as an animal, indeed s/he descends to a state lower than that of an animal. An animal living in a gold cage might starve to death for lack of food, but a human being could exchange the gold for the requirements of life.

Many have said that a human being is just a rational animal, but this appellation cannot be accepted. Of course it is true that human beings have a capacity for rationality that animals lack, but that very rationality automatically elevates human beings to a stature far exceeding that of an animal. Likewise, human beings should not be dismissed as merely a superior form of animal, for it is by virtue of rationality that a human being becomes conscious of the goal of life and also the means by which to achieve that goal. Nobody refers to animals as mobile plants, and likewise human beings should not be dismissed as merely a superior genus of animals. As human beings we must dignify ourselves by transcending all of our physical limitations in order to fulfill our Bhagavad Dharma, our Divine Nature. Human existence is primarily an ideological flow, a psycho-spiritual movement. This point we must never forget.

Question and Answer

QUESTION What happens if we cannot do service?

ANSWER There are many ways to serve others. God will surely open avenues of service for anyone who sincerely wishes to do it.

Class 2: The Purification of Mind

Some time ago, a great saint told me that her foremost realization is that life is just a bundle of misunderstandings. Over the years I've had countless opportunities to test this idea, and always I found that she was 100% correct. So, before proceeding any further in our discussion, I would like first to provide a brief and rough definition of four critical terms: body, mind, soul, and yoga.

Everyone has an idea of what is their physical body, but I want to stress here that whatever may be seen with our crude eyes or seen through a microscope comes under the category of body. As the brain is still a physical structure, a very complex system of nerves, we would have to classify it also as body. All of our motor and sensory organs are body. And indeed, it may be mentioned here that the eyes, ears, nose, and so on are only the gateways of the sensory organs. The controlling point of those organs is first in the brain and ultimately in the mind.

What then is mind? First of all, mind is something metaphysical, that is to say, beyond the physical plane. It is the controller of the body, and it contains our individual identity. It is through mind that a human being becomes aware of God. More will be said about this subject presently.

Soul is that spark of God that is attached to each and every living being. Actually speaking, in yoga another name for God is Supreme Soul, and the difference between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul is purely theoretical, like the difference between the air in an open room and the air on the rest of the planet.

Finally, yoga means *union* – to unite one's individual soul with the Supreme Soul, one's individual consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness. Yoga is a practical science that serves to expand and purify the mind so that one can realize that one's higher identity is indeed God. You know that if the water of a stream is unclean and full of ripples, you cannot see to the bottom of that stream. But if the water is clean and the surface is smooth, then you can easily see what lies on the riverbed. At the base of our life is God – indeed we ourselves are God – but most human beings don't recognize this fundamental truth simply because their minds are unclean and too disturbed. Yoga is the science that purifies the mind so that we may realize our true identity.

Again and again I refer to yoga as a science, and that is because yoga was developed like any other science – through research and analysis, trial and error. What the early *yogis* (those who practice yoga) discovered when they looked inside themselves was that our existence is primarily mental, that is to say, the body is necessary for expression of mind but we are not the body. Furthermore, the mind that we all of us possess is composed of five layers, something like the concentric sheaths of a plantain plant. And when we go beyond these five layers of mind we enter the realm of pure and unformed consciousness, or soul.

The applied science of yoga can be traced back more than seven thousand years. And the earliest scriptures relating to the field of spirituality are said to date back as much as 15,000 years ago, though, of course, those earliest scriptures were handed down orally because humanity did not invent any script before 6,000 years back. Nowadays, when people talk of yoga they generally use the classification system given by a relatively modern philosopher named Patanjali, who lived around 300 B.C., some 300 years before the life of Jesus and 800 years before Mohammed. Patanjali compiled the techniques of yoga into a system having eight limbs, each of them serving a specific function. In samskrita "eight limbs" is *astaunga*, and so the system of yoga about which Patanjali wrote is called *Astaunga Yoga*. Because of its completeness, *Astaunga Yoga* is also sometimes called *Raja Yoga*, the king of yogas.

Table 1: Astaunga Yoga

No.	Element	Description	Direct Effect
1	<i>Asanas</i>	Postures (physical exercises)	<i>Annamaya Kosa</i> (physical body)
2	<i>Yama</i>	Moral abstinences	<i>Kamamaya Kosa</i> (crude mind)
3	<i>Niyama</i>	Moral observances	<i>Kamamaya Kosa</i> (crude mind)
4	<i>Pranayama</i>	Control over vital energy	<i>Manomaya Kosa</i> (subtle mind)
5	<i>Pratyahara</i>	Withdrawal	<i>Atimanas Kosa</i> (supramental causal mind)
6	<i>Dharana</i>	Concentration	<i>Vijinanamaya Kosa</i> (subliminal causal mind)
7	<i>Dhyana</i>	Meditation	<i>Hiranyamaya Kosa</i> (causal mind)
8	<i>Samadhi</i>	Trance of ultimate absorption	<i>Atma</i> (soul)

To purify the body, to balance the glandular system so that no particular gland should be erratic in its secretion of hormonal fluid, *asanas* are prescribed. Asanas are the physical postures that maintain the equilibrium of the body and facilitate mental equipoise. Clearly, when one is unhealthy, then the disease produces a disturbing effect upon the mind. So, not only for our physical wellbeing but also for our mental wellbeing, it is necessary to practice asanas.

Kosa means “sheath”. The body is sometimes called *annamaya kosa*. *Maya* here means “containing” or “composed of” and *anna* means “food”. Our physical body is the product of what we eat, and so it is called *annamaya kosa*.

The first layer of the mind – what in yoga is called the crude mind – is the *kamamaya kosa*. The crude mind relates to control over *kama* or passion. All of the autonomic functions of the body as well as the utilization of the motor and sensory organs are controlled by the *kamamaya kosa*. To purify the *kamamaya kosa*, *yama* and *niyama* are prescribed. *Yama-Niyama* is the yogic code of ethics. As that forms the subject matter of the next two classes, there is no need to say more on this point just now.

The second layer of the mind, the subtle mind, is known as *manomaya kosa*. *Mano* means mind or thinking, and it is in this subtle mind that one experiences pleasure and pain, and performs the functions of thought and recollection. To purify this layer of mind great power of concentration is required, and that concentration is derived from the technique known as *pranayama*, control over the vital energies. In general, *pranayama* relates to control over breathing, and here a word of caution must be given. *Pranayama* should be practiced very carefully and only after receiving the appropriate instruction from a qualified teacher. *Pranayama* has an immediate effect that may temporarily disorient the yoga practitioner if s/he fails to perform it properly or if s/he seeks to practice a more powerful form of *pranayama* than s/he is ready to bear.

The third, fourth, and fifth layers of the mind are collectively known as the astral or causal mind. In the third layer, the *atimanas kosa* (supramental mind), all of the unrequited reactions of a human being are stored. To purify this portion of mind, one must develop the capacity to withdraw the mind from the objects to which it is attached. This process of withdrawal is known as *pratyahara*.

Vijnana means “wisdom”, and in the fourth layer of the mind, the *vijnanamaya kosa*, knowledge of past, present, and future is waiting like a warehouse of precious jewels that is generally too dark to see inside of. To illuminate the *vijnanamaya kosa*, one practices *dharana*, “contemplation”.

The fifth and final layer of the mind, the *hiranmaya kosa* or “golden” sheath is nothing less than the gateway to God. When this *kosa* of the mind becomes active, one enjoys the supremely blissful experience of the divine touch. To purify the *hiranmaya kosa*, one must practice *dhyana*, or “meditation”.

Sooner or later, as a consequence of one’s *dhyana*, or meditation, one enters the sublime state of communion with God. Indeed one eventually realizes one’s own higher identity as God. One feels not only that “I am one with the Father” but that “I am the Father”. All duality ceases. This trance-like state of final beatitude is known as *samadhi*. It is the goal of yoga, the desideratum of human existence.

Question and Answer

QUESTION Where is God?

ANSWER Everywhere. The best analogy I can give is to compare God’s presence to your own presence in relation to the figures in your dream world. When you sleep there are so many characters, but they are all figments of your own imagination. It is only the fact that you are seeing them that substantiates their existence.

QUESTION Can a Christian realize God without meditation?

ANSWER It is possible but a bit more difficult. You can reach the center of the city traveling by foot, but it is faster by bicycle and faster still by motorcycle. In any event, the main requirement is sincerity. If you sincerely desire to realize God, then it matters little how you address God. In the ancient scriptures known as the Vedas, it is said “*Ekam sadvipraha bahuddhah vadanti*” (God is one, but wise people know God by many names).

Suppose your name is Dominique. Your friends will call you Dominique, your wife will call you Dear, your children will call you Daddy, and your employees will call you Boss. But, though you have four names and you respond to all of them, still you are the same one person. So a Muslim calling out to Allah, and a Christian calling out to God – both are addressing the same Supreme Being, and that Supreme Being loves and hears both equally.

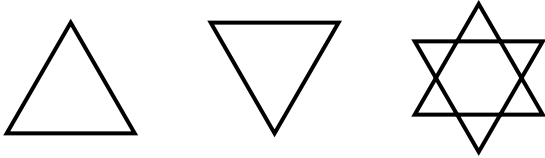
QUESTION Can we really attain union with God?

ANSWER Yes, definitely. It is a difficult task, but we are not alone in this work. God is always with us to help us. If we take one step towards God, He also takes one step towards us. But you know our step is very small. Maybe we can cover only two or three feet at a time. But when God takes a step it is very big. If God likes, God can cover the entire universe with just one step.

Class 3: Yogic Ethics (Part 1)

In the first class, it was explained that all things may be perceived as machines. A symbol is a special kind of machine, in that its main function is to represent another kind of machine. The word “Anthony” is not Anthony – it simply represents Anthony.

Figure 1: Three Symbols



If a symbol is appropriate, then its very invocation will bring to mind that subject which the symbol is intended to represent. Indeed, the symbol itself may perform some of the functions of that which the symbol signifies. Such a symbol is the *upwards-facing equilateral triangle*. It denotes proper action in the world – energy directed outwards in a correct way. The mere sight of an upwards-facing equilateral triangle tends immediately to make a person more alert regarding the surrounding environment. That is why, consciously or unconsciously, human beings generally represent dangerous situations in signs that are shaped like upwards-facing triangles. A car wreck, a curve in the road, a pedestrian crossing, an oil slick, poison – all of these and many more are usually represented within an upwards-facing equilateral triangle.

Had human beings used a *downwards-facing equilateral triangle* to signify caution, the effect would have been disastrous. While the sight of an upwards-facing triangle makes one more alert about the external environment, the downwards-facing triangle has the reverse effect. Upon seeing a downwards-facing equilateral triangle, the mind tends to turn inwards; one becomes more introspective.

In the field of yoga, the concept of morality, or ethics, signifies proper conduct directed both outside and inside. And the ancient symbol for this state of psychic equilibrium is the *six-pointed star*. This symbol is at least seven thousand years old. In yoga, its name is *bhaeravii cakra*.

Figure 2: Pratiika (Emblem of Ananda Marga)



In the particular science of yoga known as Ananda Marga (the Path of Bliss), we find an ancient variation of this six-pointed star. Within the star, there is a rising sun; and, within that rising sun, there is a swastika. The rising sun represents sadhana (spiritual endeavor), and the ultimate consequence of that spiritual effort is the attainment of spiritual victory or perfection, denoted by the swastika. A yogii recognizes that morality is not the goal but only the starting point of spiritual life. Morality is the base, sadhana is the means, and life divine is the goal.

Yesterday I explained that the yogic code of ethics is known as Yama-Niyama. Today I must say that this Yama-Niyama is really the base of all spiritual practices. Yama-Niyama is the machine that creates the balanced condition of mind from which one can start to make spiritual progress. It is the platform from

which one can dive into the ocean of bliss. So Yama-Niyama is very important, but it is not the be-all and end-all of life. Yama-Niyama must be followed up by all of the aspects of Bhagavad Dharma, before one can expect to reach the goal.

In the past, many spiritual masters refused to teach meditation to a spiritual aspirant before they had repeatedly tested her or him to ensure that s/he was well-established in Yama-Niyama. Today both meditation and Yama-Niyama are being taught simultaneously. The reason is that the people of today are more intelligent than the people of the past. Over the centuries human intellect has expanded. To follow Yama-Niyama, all that is required is better intellectuality. So, in some respects it is a bit easier for people to make spiritual progress today than it was thousands of years ago. But, in any event, it is still a fact that without Yama-Niyama no lasting spiritual progress is possible. Whatever mental power or concentration that one may gain through arduous spiritual practices can be lost in a moment due to a lapse in one's moral conduct.

Yama and Niyama each have five components. Today, we will start our discussion of yogic ethics with a consideration of the first three elements of Yama. Tomorrow, we will conclude this topic by taking up the remaining two parts of Yama and the five aspects of Niyama.

The first element of Yama is known as *ahimsa*. Ahimsa is defined as refraining from causing pain or harm to others by thought, word, or action. At the outset, one point must be made clear. That is, that in all aspects of our moral conduct, it is the intention that must predominate over the actual action. If you take the principle of ahimsa in a purely literal sense, then it would become impossible to live. You would not be able to adequately protect yourself from disease-carrying insects, and it would become a moral crime even to filter water because the filtering of water would kill the microorganisms that live therein. On the other hand, if you drink unfiltered water, you might well kill those same microorganisms within your own stomach. So the only solution would be to stop drinking water altogether. Taking medicine kills malignant bacteria. Even just breathing destroys countless microorganisms. Thus, it is clear that one's intention must be the foremost concern.

Life feeds on life. The food we eat must have some vitality of its own if we are to derive vitality from it. But with respect to edibles, two things must be remembered in relation to ahimsa. First, as far as possible, select food items where self-awareness is comparatively little. Second, under any circumstances, before killing any animal having developed or underdeveloped consciousness, consider whether it is possible to live in a healthy body without taking the life of that animal.

By their nature, living beings can be classified in relation to human beings as born friends, born enemies, or neutral. All creatures are to be treated as born friends except when they behave like an aggressor, threatening one's very life by the application of one or another variety of brute force. A tiger is the born enemy of a human being; but when it lives in the jungle and the human beings in a city, there is no reason for the human beings to disturb the life of that tiger. But should that tiger start roaming the streets of a city, then the human beings must protect themselves, even if that means killing the tiger. Human beings are the born friends of human beings, but even a human being must be treated as a born enemy should s/he become an aggressor. In such case, you also kill that human being in order to survive.

This principle applies not only on the individual plane but also on the social plane. Thus, it is not at all necessary for the people of one country to accept passively the imperialist exploitation of their own land by another nation. The exploited people have every right to rise up in revolt against the oppressors, and failure to do so may only be viewed as a lack of moral courage. Of course, you should assess your strength carefully before declaring war on a force that is militarily superior; but if the enemy is bent on

your destruction, it is better to die striking a blow against the oppressor than to be murdered without protest. Here it should be crystal clear that ahimsa can never be equated with the modern-day concept of non-violence.

The second principle of Yama is *satya*. Satya signifies right use of mind and words with the spirit of welfare. Loosely, it may be translated as benevolent truthfulness; but, like Ahimsa, it really has no synonym in the English language.

First, we must distinguish between fact and satya. Sometimes, by speaking the facts one may do harm to others. Suppose an innocent man seeks refuge in your house from a ruffian, and the ruffian asks you to reveal the whereabouts of that man. Should you tell the fact, then the suffering of the innocent man may also be on your conscience. Therefore, you must not reveal his actual whereabouts. Rather, your duty is to misguide that ruffian.

Satya has many benefits. As a result of following satya, one develops greater willpower. That willpower eventually produces a glaze on your mind, by virtue of which others become attracted to you and are convinced by your words.

One who is established in satya can easily become established in the other nine points of Yama-Niyama. On the other hand, without satya, one can never develop the other points properly. This is because the key to morality is the spirit of benevolence, the desire to live according to the principle of social equality rather than the principle of selfish pleasure.

The third element of Yama, *asteya*, means non-theft. Theft can be of four types. There is physical theft and also mental theft; and both physical theft and mental theft can be done directly or indirectly. That is to say, one might take or think to take what belongs to others, and one might cheat or think to cheat others of their due. All four types of theft are to be avoided.

Table 2: Four Types of Theft

	Direct	Indirect
Physical	Taking what belongs to another	Cheating another of her/his due
Mental	Thinking to take what belongs to another	Thinking to cheat another of her/his due

In society, stealing is perhaps the most common crime today. But it must be admitted that not everyone who steals does so purely as a result of moral depravity. Many persons are compelled to steal due to abject poverty. Finding no other recourse to feed themselves or to feed their families, they take up the life of a thief, and gradually they might even become hardened criminals. In this situation, we should understand that not only is the particular individual responsible for this crime but, indeed to some extent, the whole society, especially those in political power, are also responsible. When a woman or a man commits a crime impelled by the vicious grip of want, then even Providence, not to speak of other human beings, can hardly render judgement against that poor soul. If those in power declare that theft is to be punished by death, and yet they have failed to take adequate steps to guarantee each and every citizen a fair and livable income, then they themselves may be deemed guilty of murder. In any event, capital punishment is a ridiculous solution to any social problem. It is as foolish as cutting off your own head just because you have a headache.

To solve the rampant problem of theft, we will have to solve first the problem of socioeconomic injustice. It must be realized that God did not divide the earth, giving one family 1,000 acres and another family

nothing. The distribution of wealth was done entirely by man – men, not so much women. From time to time, when the inequity of the distribution becomes too extreme, then some socially conscious people have risen up in revolt to redistribute the wealth. Though apparently they may be committing theft, actually their actions are not at all a violation of asteya, because their intention is for the welfare of others. The spirit of their deeds is in full accordance with satya.

In conclusion, it may be said that the best way to follow asteya, as in the case of all other principles of Yama and Niyama, is through autosuggestion. From very childhood, everyone should be taught the code of morality. Everyone should remember and remind themselves about what is right and wrong while growing up so that they may be able to maintain always a high standard of thought and character.

Question and Answer

QUESTION If you didn't kill the chicken yourself, can you eat it?

ANSWER Once there was a man who was terribly henpecked by his wife. One day, when he had all he could bear, he went out into the marketplace to hire someone to kill his wife for him. Do you think that by paying a butcher, you can escape the moral responsibility for murder?

Class 4: Yogic Ethics (Part 2)

In the previous class we covered the first three elements of Yama – ahimsa, satya, and asteya. Tonight we will complete our study of Yama and Niyama by taking up the remaining seven points.

The fourth element of Yama is known as *brahmacarya*. Brahma signifies the Infinite Consciousness; and brahmacarya means to remain attached to Brahma, to see each and every entity of this universe as another form of Brahma.

In the past and still today, many cunning or misguided intellectuals have propagated a wrong definition of brahmacarya. According to them, brahmacarya means to maintain celibacy. But the word has nothing to do with celibacy, and indeed most of the greatest spiritual personalities on this planet lived as married people. Witness Shiva and Krsna, for example. Marriage is a natural function. In no way need it be a hindrance to spiritual endeavor. Of course, one must have control over one's sexual life if one is to keep one's thoughts on a high plane; but when a monk takes steps to prevent excess formation of semen, and when a householder expels the excess semen in the sexual act, does it not lead to roughly the same result?

The last portion of Yama is known as *aparigraha*. Aparigraha denotes non-indulgence in the enjoyment of such amenities and comforts of life as are superfluous to the preservation of one's life. In case of enjoyment of any material object, control over subjectivity (that is, the ideation at the time of enjoyment) is called brahmacarya, whereas control over objectivity (that is, the particular item or items enjoyed) is known as aparigraha.

Society can be very helpful if it works in cooperation with individuals by laying down a standard in some spheres of life. But aparigraha cannot be completely dictated by society as it varies from person to person, time to time, and place to place. Thus, complete establishment in aparigraha depends ultimately upon the individual, and aparigraha becomes an endless struggle to reduce one's own objects of enjoyment out of sympathy for the common people.

Aparigraha is the last item of Yama. Next we take up the five elements of Niyama. But, before doing so, two differences between Yama and Niyama should be noted. First, in the five parts of Yama, there is an absolute requirement for some external object in order to apply the principle, but in Niyama the principles do not depend on any external object. There may or may not be something external – either way, Niyama can be observed. That is why Yama is sometimes defined as abstinences and Niyama as observances. Second, Yama operates only on the physical and mental planes of existence, but Niyama extends to all of the three spheres of human existence – physical, mental, and spiritual.

The first item of Niyama is *shaoca*. Shaoca may be defined as purity or cleanliness. That purity or cleanliness can be divided into two spheres – external and internal. And both the external and the internal spheres can again be broken into two categories – physical and mental.

Table 3: Four Types of Cleanliness

	External	Internal
Physical	Body, clothes, and environment	Food, drink, drugs, and so on
Mental	Motor and sensory organs	Thoughts

The external physical category relates to cleanliness of body, clothes, and environment. The external mental category signifies control over one's motor and sensory organs so that they do not engage themselves with degrading objects. Internal physical shaoca implies a control over what one consumes, to avoid taking into one's body those items that are harmful either physically or mentally. Internal mental shaoca means to keep the mind clear of improper thoughts or passions.

Physical cleanliness is a laborious job; but mental cleanliness entails an even greater amount of work, because the mind tends to become dirty much faster than the body. The method of cleaning the mind is entirely different from the way one cleans the body. To clean away physical dirt, one must come into contact with that dirt for some time. To counteract mental dirt, one must not come in contact with that dirt. Instead, one must always apply an opposite ideation to any selfish thought. The universal antidote to all mental dirt is selfless service coupled with the effort to view the world with a cosmic outlook. In this way alone can one become established in mental shaoca.

The next item of Niyama is *santosa*. The import of santosa is to maintain a state of mental ease, in a word, contentment. Human desire is limitless. If you ask a millionaire whether s/he is happy with the money, s/he will reply: "What money - I'm just managing to make ends meet." But when money becomes the all-consuming passion of life, then the mind becomes crudified, and even one's health gets neglected. So the sadhana of santosa lies in being contented with the money earned by normal labor. Here, it should be noted that establishment in santosa depends very much upon the careful observance of aparigraha.

One thing more must be said about Santosa. In no way does Santosa imply that anyone should silently tolerate exploitation. If you work hard and receive a fair wage, then you should be content; but if your employer fails to pay you the appropriate salary, then you are completely justified in standing up for your rights. In any event, the main point is not to waste precious physical and mental energy under the sway of excessive greed.

The third aspect of Niyama is called *tapah*. Tapah means to practice penance to reach the goal. In following shaoca, particularly internal-mental Shaoca, one must render selfless service to get a good result; but in that case it is not necessary to undergo any physical discomfort. However, tapah does call for some amount of suffering with the idea in mind to alleviate the sorrows and miseries of others. Like shaoca, this service should be entirely selfless, that is, it should not be guided by any type of commercial mentality. In other words, while practicing service as a part of the sadhana of shaoca or tapah, you must not be thinking about what you will receive in return for that service. If this selfless service is done properly, then soon you will develop a sweet feeling of love for God, Whom you are getting the opportunity to serve in the form of your less fortunate sisters and brothers.

In respect to tapah, knowledge and reasoning play a vital role. Before serving others as a part of tapah, you must first verify that their condition is indeed less fortunate than yours. It will not be very beneficial to carry coals to Newcastle. When you undergo suffering just to help some people who are better off than yourself, then the people you are serving tend to become more miserly and exploitative, and you (being somewhat conscious of what is happening) become somewhat depressed and a bit hostile toward those people. While it is true that one might often win over a miser by generosity, and a liar by honesty, this is not the real purpose of tapah.

Next comes *svadhyaya*. Svadhyaya may be defined as the acquirement of a clear understanding of any spiritual subject. This understanding can come through reading or hearing, but the main thing is that one must grasp the underlying significance of the subject. Throughout history those with vested interest have either suppressed spiritual scriptures or distorted the meaning of those scriptures. So one must be

very careful not to be misguided by others, nor to be satisfied with a superficial understanding.

Last, but definitely not the least important, is *iishvara pranidhana*. Iishvara means the controller of the universe, God; and pranidhana means to understand clearly, or to adopt as a shelter. Iishvara pranidhana means to station oneself in the cosmic idea, to accept Iishvara, God, as the only ideal of life, and to move with accelerated speed towards that Supreme Desideratum. Iishvara pranidhana is entirely a mental effort. One must withdraw one's mind from the external world, and then direct the mind one-pointedly towards God. In order to make the mind one-pointed on God, one generally takes the help of a *mantra*, a specially empowered word or words, having the capacity to expand the mind. Some persons try to achieve concentration by chanting the mantra aloud, others by muttering the mantra over their breath, and still others by repeating the mantra only mentally. Though more difficult, the pure psychic approach is, nevertheless, the most efficacious.

Iishvara pranidhana can be practiced alone or collectively. Both are valuable; but, as collective meditation is generally more difficult to arrange, the importance of collective meditation must be stressed. The combined mental effort works to give rise to a greater and faster progress for all present. Moreover, the indomitable mental force created by collective meditation will help tremendously in solving any and all problems, big or small, individual or social. So everyone should try their best to always be regular in attendance at the weekly collective meditation in their community.

Question and Answer

QUESTION Can you say something more about the way in which society can help the individual to be established in Aparigraha?

ANSWER It is an undeniable part of the so-called social contract that society is duty bound to give relief to the individual when in need. Because of this duty, it stands to reason that society must also have some right to control the individual's expenditure when s/he is not in need. Not to consult anybody when spending money, but to ask help from everyone when in debt is not only irrational but also immoral. So society should set limits upon the amount of wealth that an individual can accumulate; and also every individual should feel obliged to take the permission of society, through any responsible and right-thinking authority on the local level, before making any unusual, additional expenditure of a large nature.

QUESTION Why can't human beings legislate moral laws?

ANSWER Moral law is always more stringent than human law. How can we compel people to take on sufferings to serve others less fortunate than they, or to practice brahmacharya, or to perform iishvara pranidhana? Furthermore, in many respects, the practical application of morality cannot be generalized for all – it varies with respect to time, place, and person. No society can make a different set of laws for each and every individual and go on revising everyone's individual laws from day to day. That much can only be done by the conscience of each and every individual. Thus, there will always be a gap between human law and moral law, although it is both reasonable and desirable that we should continuously strive to minimize that gap.

Class 5: The Wheel of Creation

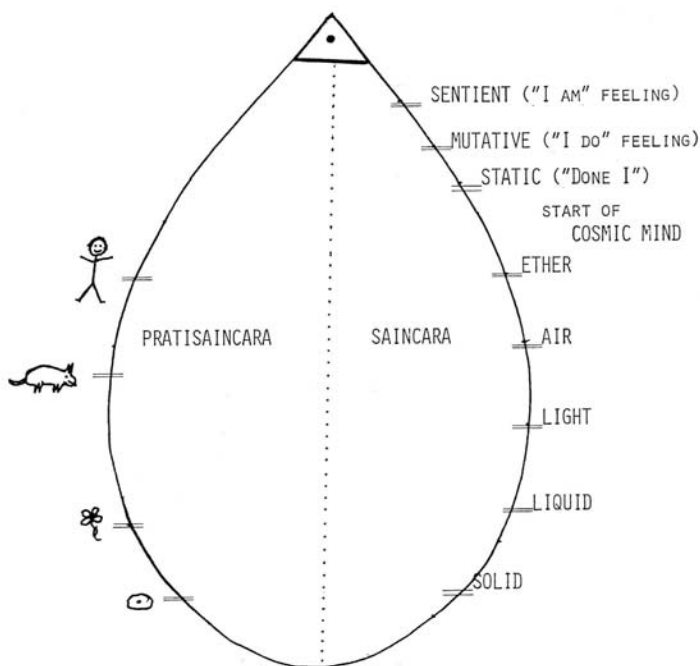
Sooner or later in this life everyone asks her- or himself, “Who am I”, “Where did I come from”, and “Where am I going to”. In this lecture it is these questions that will be answered.

First let us consider the yogic conception of God, or Brahma. It is said, *Shiva Shakti Atmakam Brahma* – Brahma is the composite of *Shiva*, Consciousness, and *Shakti*, the qualifying principle of Consciousness. Consciousness (in Samskrta *Shiva* or *Purusa*) may be explained as the ultimate witness, the primary controller, and the rudimental material cause. Everything must come from something; something can not come from nothing. Paper comes from a tree; milk can be traced back to grass. So also this universe did not arise from a void, but rather out of the Consciousness that already existed and that people often refer to as the formless God.

To materialize anything, both a material cause and an efficient cause are required. Paper is manufactured from trees with the help of some machinery; grass is converted into milk in the stomach of a cow. So also to create this universe, an efficient cause is required. In Samskrta, that efficient cause is known as *Shakti* or *Prakrti*. In English the closest synonym would be Nature. *Prakrti* is the qualifying principle of Consciousness. It ensures that each and every thing of this universe has qualities. Fire burns; oil is black.

Consciousness and its qualifying principle cannot be separated. They exist like the two sides of the same piece of paper. Actually Consciousness, as the supreme witness and controller, also functions as the primary efficient cause. But Consciousness gets its work done through *Prakrti*, which may be understood as the subordinate efficient cause. *Purusa* is like the manager in a factory, and *Prakrti* is the laborer operating according to fixed rules and under supervision of the manager. But it should not be forgotten that actually *Purusa* and *Prakrti* are only two in theory – in practice they are inseparable.

Figure 3: Brahmachakra (The Wheel of Creation)



With respect to *Prakrti*, it should be further understood that *Prakrti* is actually a trio of forces – sentient, mutative, and static. When this trio of forces comes together in a stable triangular matrix – that is, when

the sentient force flows into the mutative force, the mutative force flows into the static force, the static force flows once again into the mutative force, and the mutative force flows again into the sentient force – this special condition inheres within itself the possibility of expression. That expression commences when some consciousness bursts forth from the triangle under the creative influence of the sentient force.

In the first instance, when that Cosmic Consciousness comes under the influence of the sentient force, the transformation that takes place is both subjective and theoretical. The portion of cosmic mind possessing pure self-awareness (*I am*) evolves. As the sentient force wanes and the mutative force starts to influence the expressed consciousness, already modified by the sentient force, a portion of that “I am” feeling becomes crudified and gets converted into *I do* feeling. Still the transformation is subjective and theoretical. It is only when the static force starts to dominate, and a portion of that *I do* feeling becomes objectified, becomes *done I*, that a vibrational change occurs. This finite universe comes into being with the addition of the third and final component of cosmic mind. Thereafter, all of the metamorphosis that takes place in this universe occurs within the ambit of the cosmic mind.

Just as the witness-ship of the pure untransformed consciousness – also known as *atma* (soul) – substantiates the existence of the cosmic mind, so also it is the witness-ship of the cosmic mind that substantiates this universe. To take an analogy, consider what happens each night when you are dreaming. What are those dreams? They are only your own mental images. A part of your mind, the objective mind under the influence of the static force, becomes the images that arise in your dreams. Your subjective mind, that portion of the mind dominated by the mutative and the sentient forces, witnesses the dream. In the morning when you wake up, all of the mental images of your dreams, which seemed so real to each other and to yourself, disappear, because your subjective mind has withdrawn its witness-ship from that dream world. Similarly, if the cosmic mind should stop witnessing this universe, it might cease to exist. And should the Supreme Soul (*Paramatman*) stop witnessing the cosmic mind, it too would probably disappear. However, there is nothing to fear on this count, because Prakrti works according to fixed laws. Those laws ensure the continued survival of this universe.

Going on with the story of creation, the static force continues to exert its pressure on the objective portion of the cosmic mind. In consequence, the five fundamental elements (or factors) – ether, air, light, liquid, and solid – evolve out of each other in successive order. Ether carries the quality of sound, air the additional quality of touch; light may be seen, liquid tasted, and solid smelled. Solid factor is the crudest factor simply because the intermolecular and interatomic space cannot be compressed further. As everyone knows now, the splitting of the atom leads only to a tremendous explosion that causes a regression into the more subtle factors. Thus, after having exerted the static force to its limit, Prakrti starts to reverse itself, proceeding from crude to subtle rather than from subtle to crude.

The first portion of creation, the evolution of cosmic mind and the five fundamental elements, is called *saincara*. The succeeding march from crudity to subtlety, from the amoeba back to Godhead, is known as *pratisaincara*. The combination of *saincara* and *pratisaincara* is known as *brahmacakra* (the cycle of Brahma).

In the process of *saincara*, the galaxies emerge under the control of cosmic mind, but there are no individual minds, no unit living beings. Everything that we see on that side of the wheel of creation is called (somewhat inaccurately) *inanimate* matter. But, with the start of *pratisaincara*, the inner portion of some inanimate matter gets powdered down to become unit mind. And thus begins the long history of human ancestry, from the single cell to homo sapiens.

The process of evolution flows roughly from the unicellular entity to multicellular beings, from primitive amoeba to the plant world, from plants to the animal kingdom, from animals to humanity, and from human existence to divine life. Of course, there are countless branches on our family tree, in the genealogy of our universal family. And so it happens that some plants can be more highly evolved than some animals. But roughly, the evolutionary ladder ascends as described. It spirals upward by virtue of the three stimuli of physical clash, psychic clash, and attraction of the great.

Pratisaincara is an evolution of mind. The physical body, composed of matter that we see with our eyes, is not really the unit being. We are not this body. Our “I” feeling is something purely mental. Looking around ourselves, it is plain to see that saincara and pratisaincara coexist within roughly the same space. Perhaps you are sitting on a chair, and definitely you dwell within a body. So it should be clearly understood that pratisaincara is not at all a mere withdrawal of saincara, but rather more like a change of course. Think of a river – where does it come from? If we trace the river back to its apparent source, we might find a mountain spring. But that spring is supplied by the fall of rain or snow, and that rain or snow had first risen into the clouds as a consequence of the sun’s influence upon the ocean. So the actual source of the river is the ocean. And the ultimate goal of the river is to wind its course down the mountain, over hill and through plain, finally to merge once more in the ocean.

Similarly, our source is the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness. Knowingly or unknowingly, our very composition is nothing but consciousness. Sometimes we find it difficult to remember where we came from. Sometimes we also find it difficult to see where we are going to. This is only natural. A river born in the mountains would also find it difficult to remember that it was once the ocean – that indeed it is still the ocean. Furthermore, that river would find difficulty to see in advance where its long and winding course is bound to lead. But human beings, with their more developed intellect, can understand these things. And when we do understand, then our blissful duty is to accelerate the speed of our progress back home.

Who am I? Brahma!

Where did I come from? Brahma!

Where am I going to? Brahma!

I was never born and I can never die.

Pure, formless, eternal, infinite Consciousness am I.

Question and Answer

QUESTION You say everything has a Cause – what then is the cause of God?

ANSWER We have posited Brahma (God) to be the original or first Cause. According to the logic of our argument, every effect must have a cause. So your question is valid only if we also perceive God to be an effect, rather than the original Cause. Here we have not defined God in that way. And so, logically, there need not be a Cause for God. That is to say, we have said that every effect must have a cause, not that everything that exists must have a cause. But, even assuming that God also has a God, is it not a fact that we as the created beings of God can not possibly have the intellectual scope to know God’s God? Even after becoming God, we might not know such a thing, assuming that God’s God exists, which seems doubtful. In any event, logic has its limits, and here we engage in what is known as the fallacy of infinite regress.

QUESTION You have explained how the universe came into being but not why – I'd like to ask why.

ANSWER Are you aware of why you do everything you do? So, also, even God might not be able to answer why God created the universe. This question again borders on the logical fallacy of infinite regress. Ultimately the only answer one can give to the question "Why" is "Because". However, this answer cannot satisfy everyone, especially as human beings have a natural longing to know every aspect of their creation. So those who love God often reply simply that God was lonely. Having the capacity to create, having the capacity to love, God chose to express that potential for God's own self-actualization and amusement. After all, how can anyone complain of any injustice in this universe? In the final analysis, God is only playing with God's own Self – there is no second party to be mistreated.

If I enjoy a game of football, my muscles might be sore afterwards, and they could complain against me. But, afterwards – as a result of the exercise – my muscles will feel stronger; and, even if they do not, still they are my muscles and I have the right to exercise them as I like (as long as I don't infringe upon the wellbeing and liberty of others). In the same way, God loves everyone and everything of this universe as God's very own Self. Throughout all of the pleasures and pains of life, God is simply getting some exercise.

Class 6: Life, Death, and Samskara

Deep within everyone is the awareness that there is a greater entity witnessing our every action. Occasionally, we might try to hide from that Being (as in the story of Adam and Eve); occasionally, we might try to delude ourselves into thinking that God did not notice our crimes. But if we contemplate the matter deeply, we feel certain that nothing has been or can be concealed. Not long ago in India, there was one guru, a spiritual master, who established this point in a unique way. That guru gave each of his disciples a living chicken and told the disciples that they should each of them go to a private place where nobody could see them and there kill the chicken by wringing its neck. After a few hours, all of the disciples but one had somehow managed to fulfill the guru's instructions and return to the ashram. Days went by, and still the outstanding disciple did not return. Finally, after about a week, the last disciple came back with the living chicken still in his hands. That disciple explained, "I went everywhere looking for a place where nobody could see me; but every time I seemed to be alone, still I could feel God watching me."

Many people declare themselves as atheists. They say that they don't believe in God. But in fact everyone, even the self-proclaimed atheist, feels deep within that indeed there really is a God. This is because without God's witness-ship, nothing can substantiate our own existence. This was discussed in the last class.

In the last class, I explained that our true identity is Brahma and that, like Brahma, we are ultimately infinite and eternal. We were never born, and we can never die. Each of us has this awareness deep within. But you know that even having this realization does not satisfy people, because what people really fear is not death, but suffering. As I explained in the very first class, everyone wants happiness, and nobody wants unhappiness. Furthermore, I explained that nobody is satisfied with just a little happiness; rather, everyone wants infinite and eternal happiness. With all this in mind, it is little wonder that simple people have been so ready to believe in a mythological place called *heaven* and so afraid of the equally mythological place called *hell*.

Here the question arises – and it is a very practical question – what then is life as we know it? And what is the death that takes our loved ones away from us? That is our topic tonight.

Regarding life, it is first important to realize that everything in this manifest universe emits vibrations – everything is vibrational. Your body is vibrational, and so also is your mind. Life exists when there is a vibrational parallelism between a particular physical body and a unit mind.

And what is death? Death occurs when that psycho-physical parallelism is lost. That loss of parallelism may come about either by some form of shock to either the body or the mind or as a consequence of the gradual deterioration of either the body or the mind. Actually, what is described here may best be called only *physical death*; and that physical death is not really permanent, not really death at all. One simply breathes out in one body and breathes in again in another body. There is also a *mental death* that eventually takes place when, through correct spiritual practice, one is able to merge her or his mind in Brahma, when one's unit mind becomes united with Cosmic Mind and one's unit soul becomes one with the Cosmic Soul. This death is indeed final, but there is nothing unattractive about it. That is why some other names for mental death are *liberation* and *salvation*.

In any event, before one can achieve that final death, that final liberation, one might yet pass through many more cycles of life and death. And it is a certainty that, as a human being, one has already passed through numerous life cycles to attain this elevated status. Ultimately, to be accurate, we live and die only

once, and each time we incarnate we pass through only a small segment of our long lifespan. Each of our lives is properly speaking only a *partial life* or *life segment*.

Still, the question arises as to what actually occurs at the time of death. The answer is that, with the dissociation of the mind from the body, the body naturally breaks down and is recycled. But the mind enters into a long and deep, dreamless sleep and remains floating within the Cosmic Mind until such time as Nature (Prakrti) can link it up with a suitable body to carry on with the expression of its life.

Here, two things must be stressed. First, there are no such things as ghosts. When the mind detaches itself from the body, it no longer has any motor or sensory organs through which it can relate to this mundane world. Moreover, the mind is now asleep. Thus there is no question of spirits coming back to haunt the living. The second important point is that the sexual relationship between a man and a woman produces only the physical embryo, the physical body, not the mind. Thus, our worldly parents are actually the progenitors of the physical body which we inhabit; but, as our existence is primarily psychic, they cannot be considered as our ultimate parents. Our real Father, our real Mother, is none other than Brahma. We are all children of God. Regardless of race, creed, or color, we are all of us members of the same, one family.

Finally, it may be queried on what basis Nature links up a particular mind with a particular body, and here we will have to briefly discuss the subject of *samskara*. Already we have mentioned that everything is vibrational, and here it may be added that everything is uniquely vibrational. No two entities of this universe are exactly alike. It is said, “Diversity is the law of Nature; equality will never be.” No two leaves on a tree are exactly the same, nor are any two loaves of bread or two pieces of chalk. Even if there be no obvious external differences, there will still be some internal differences – some variation in the molecular and atomic structure. And that refers to only the physical differences. Psychic variation is even greater than the physical variation. What really distinguishes the living beings from one another is their psychic make-up, their *samskaras*.

Undoubtedly you have heard the saying that one must reap what one sows. And surely you are also acquainted with the scientific law of action and reaction – that each action is accompanied by an equal and opposite reaction. But here I must point out that this law is not completely correct. While it is true that action begets a reaction, that reaction can never be exactly equal and opposite due to the inevitable changes in time, space, and form. A simple example will suffice to elucidate this point. Suppose you deposit ₦1,000 (1,000 naira²) in the bank and leave it there for one year. Next year, when you go to withdraw that money, you will not take out exactly ₦1,000. Because your money accrued some interest, perhaps you will withdraw ₦1,050. On the other hand, perhaps the country has been severely afflicted by inflation. In that eventuality you may be withdrawing ₦1,050, but its real value might be only ₦900 according to the present buying power of the naira. So every action begets a reaction that is similar in nature; but that reaction is never exactly equal and opposite because of the passage of time, the transformation of space, or the metamorphosis of form.

In this long lifespan of ours – stretching back millions of years – we perform many actions for which we must undergo some reaction. Typically, not all of those reactions can be undergone in the same lifetime (or life segment) as that in which the original action occurred. Those stored-up reactions, those reactions waiting to be expressed, are known as *samskaras*³, and it is primarily these *samskaras* that differentiate

² The naira was and currently still is Nigeria’s monetary unit.

³ Note that the correct name for an accrued reaction is *samskara*, not *karma*. The Samskrta word *karma* means action, not reaction.

one living being from another. It is on the basis of the samskaras attached to a bodiless mind that Nature selects an appropriate body for that being's next life segment. The body must serve as a vehicle for the exhaustion of those samskaras.

Samskaras can be broken down into three types: inborn, imposed, and acquired. At the time of birth, you carry over many samskaras from past lives. Those are known as inborn samskaras. Due to the community in which you live – your family, your friends, your society – many samskaras get imposed upon you. These are known as imposed samskaras. And, as a consequence of your own original actions in your current life segment, new samskaras are created. These are known as acquired samskaras.

In the final analysis, to attain salvation you must exhaust all of your inborn, imposed, and acquired samskaras. At the same time, you must also guard against acquiring any new samskaras. So how is this possible? First of all, you can burn off all of your existing samskaras in the fire of your sadhana, your spiritual practices – especially through Iishvara Pranidhana and Tapah. And, second, you can prevent the acquisition of new samskaras by being well-established in all of the principles of Yama-Niyama, especially Brahmacharya. While performing any action, you will have to remember that Brahma is the one being served, Brahma is the service, Brahma is the one serving, and indeed Brahma is the purpose of the service. In this way, by renouncing every trace of the ego of doership, you do not acquire new samskaras, and the elimination of each old samskara takes you one step closer to the cherished goal of life.

Question and Answer

QUESTION Is there some way to know when we are doing an original action and when we are simply undergoing a reaction?

ANSWER Yes. You know many times we do things that we later regret. Many of those actions are not carefully thought out; rather, they are done without any conscious expression of our own willpower. Afterwards we think how foolish we were to have done that, and often we wonder how in fact we could make such a blunder. These situations indicate the expression of samskaras, because our actions were impelled by a force that overrode our own willpower and intent. On the other hand, the actions that we do consciously and intentionally are original actions.

QUESTION After the mental death, when we unite with God – with the Cosmic Mind – do we then have to pass through the whole Cosmic Cycle, the Wheel of Creation, once again?

ANSWER Even should the consciousness that makes up your unit being go through the Wheel of Creation another time, it would not really be you who is taking that journey. That new being would have no particular link with you. Like a slate that has been wiped clean or a clay statue that has been compressed into a fresh block of clay, the new forms created would surely be quite different. I may also add here that there is one possibility at the time of mental death that I have not mentioned. Instead of entering into the triangle of forces at the top of the Cosmic Wheel (see Figure 3 on page 14), you can deflect off the vertex of that triangle and unite yourself with the Brahma that has no inherent potential of creation, being outside the fixed triangular matrix. That vertex has a special name – *Taraka Brahma* – but this subject will be discussed more fully in the next class.

Class 7: Tantra

Tantra is the universal science for living a more healthy life in all respects. Of course, human beings have been trying to lead a better life since time immemorial; but, practically speaking, tantra was first organized systematically about 7000 years ago by the giant personality, Shiva. Great people often become figures of legend and myth, and so traces of Shiva, the bona fide father of human civilization, can be found in virtually every culture, both Eastern and Western. But Shiva was not a mythological god; He was a human god, a perfected being such as this world has rarely seen. Shiva not only systematized the already existing folk knowledge about physical, psychic, and health practices, but also He expanded this knowledge in all directions. Shiva taught music and dance, medicine and meditation. He instituted the system of marriage; and, indeed, He set the example as the first married man. And in every respect Shiva always advised the people to be practical – to live in the present, to be here now. While it is necessary to maintain high ideals in life, we must also keep a practical adjustment with the world around us. So Shiva warned the people to be wary of philosophers who would create much dogma and intellectual extravaganza, with the only effect of poisoning the mind.

In every action and word Shiva encouraged unity among people. Even in the time of Shiva there was racial diversity – indeed, the first war for Aryan supremacy was taking place on the Indian subcontinent where Shiva mostly lived. Aryans from Southern Russia had been migrating to India for over a thousand years; and everywhere they went, they sought to establish the dominance of their Vedic culture. In India this battle between the white-skinned Aryans and the indigenous brown-skinned Austrico-Dravidians and black-skinned Negroids is amply reflected in the Indian mythology, which portrays a running battle between the white-skinned devas (gods) and the brown-skinned asuras (demons). It is interesting to note that, even in the mythology, whenever the asuras were in difficulty, they generally sought refuge at the feet of Lord Shiva.

As mentioned, Shiva always encouraged unity. He wanted people to disregard racial and religious differences and, instead, come together as one family, all children of God. To further this end, He pursued a course of marriage diplomacy. Thus Shiva had three wives – Parvati, who was of Aryan origin; Kali, who was Austrico-Dravidian; and Ganga, who was of the Mongoloid race.

Of course, marriage was much more than diplomacy for Shiva. He sought to protect women, who were at great physical disadvantage in those days. And He also wanted to preserve their social prestige, which was starting to slip as a consequence of the transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal social system. In this respect, it is significant to note that all of the scriptures of tantra are preserved in the form of the questions addressed by Parvati to Shiva (known as *Nigama*) and Shiva's replies (*Agama*).

As said earlier, the influence of Shiva has been felt throughout the world. The same is the case with the science of tantra that Shiva taught. In Class 3: Yogic Ethics (Part 1), I explained something about symbols. It may be noted here that the six-pointed star associated with the State of Israel and the Jewish people, and which today is commonly known as the Star of David or Solomon's Seal, was actually adopted by Shiva some four thousand years before the time of King David. In tantra, this six-pointed star is known as *Bhaeravi Cakra*. Today, if one visits Nepal, you will find that same six-pointed star engraved on almost every brick and every house. This is due to the influence of Shiva, not Judaism. Another very common symbol in India, Nepal, Tibet and, indeed, in virtually every culture of the world is the swastika, signifying victory in the spiritual sense. No doubt the swastika was used to wrong purpose in Nazi Germany, but that cannot be blamed on Shiva or the science of tantra. Indeed, as will be seen presently,

Shiva and the early teachers of tantra took whatever precautions they could to ensure that only worthy people would receive the inner instructions of tantra and derive the powers gained therefrom.

One may also easily notice the influence of tantra in the Eastern tradition by simply resorting to the study of philology. Shiva traveled widely. He served humanity both south and north of the Himalayas. In China and Tibet, the word *tantra* underwent many changes over time. *Tantra* became *tanta*, *tanta* became *taota*, *taota* became *taoa*, and *taoa* became *tao* and *taoism*. When the Samskrta word for meditation was pronounced in China, *dhyān* became *chan*. In Korea, *chan* became *chen*. And in Japan, *chen* became *zen*.

So now that we have a brief idea of the history of tantra, let us examine the practical side of tantra as a spiritual science. But first, let me give some definitions.

There are three similar sounding words: *tantra*, *mantra*, and *yantra*. In the Samskrta language, the suffix *tra* signifies the concept of liberation. *Tan* is the acoustic root of darkness or crudity, so *tantra* means that which liberates one from darkness. *Man* denotes mind. As you already know, *mantra* is a word or incantation that liberates the mind. The prefix *yan* is derived from the word *yama* (see the lectures on Yogic Ethics). *Yama* means to control. The word *yantra* thus means that which controls in order to liberate. It may refer to any machine; but in the spiritual science, each element of Yama and Niyama is a yantra; the whole of Yama and the whole of Niyama are larger Yantras; a mantra is also a yantra; and the symbol of spiritual ideology originated by Shiva (see Figure 2 on page 7) is also a yantra.

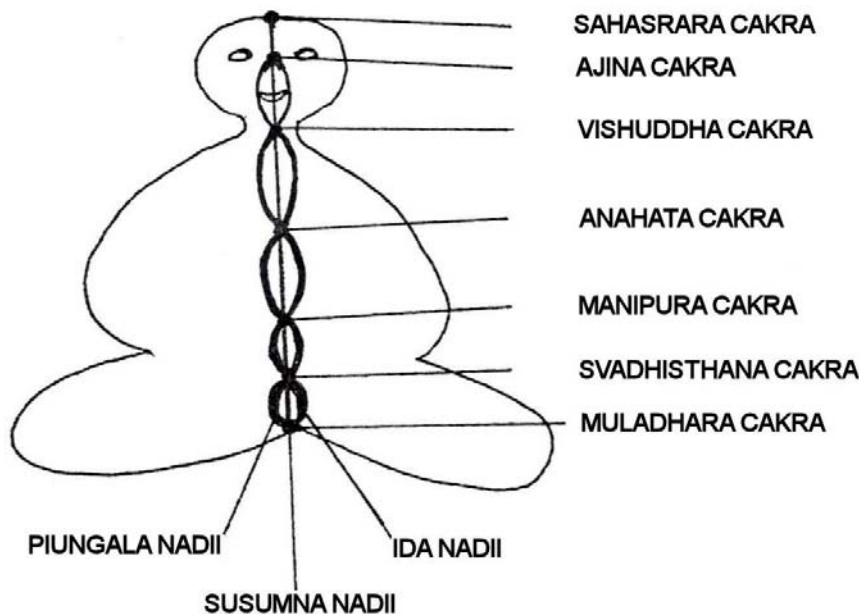
When we consider each and every thing as a machine, then we should remember that no machine is good or bad in itself (though some machines may by their nature and by virtue of existing conditions appear to have more potential in one direction or the other). Ultimately, any machine can be used in a good way or a bad way. A knife in the hands of a doctor can save a life; whereas, in the hands of a murderer, it can take a life. Poison in a very small dose can prove to be medicinal; whereas, in larger quantities, it can be lethal. The same thing can be said about tantra. Used in the proper way, tantra can liberate the individual and lead society to greater and greater heights of science and civilization. But misused, it can also degrade the individual and tarnish society. Those who practice tantra for their psycho-spiritual elevation are said to be following the path of *vidya tantra*, whereas those who practice tantra for selfish gain and power follow the path of *avidya tantra*. *Vidya* means spiritual knowledge, wisdom, or light. *Avidya* means ignorance or darkness.

Recognizing that tantra was a necessary but a dangerous science for human beings, the early teachers of tantra disguised their teachings in a coded language, a *twilight* language, so that the unworthy might not misuse the practices. Here I may say that the earliest teachings were all oral, because there was no script before some six thousand years ago. When the teachings of tantra were being passed down orally, the masters could select their disciples and teach them directly with little fear of misutilization. But, with the advent of script, it also became desirable to preserve many teachings in writing so that they would not be lost or distorted. Under those conditions, arising more than one thousand years after the death of Shiva, this twilight language came in vogue. Of course, due to the coded language, the uninitiated often got a wrong impression as to the nature of tantra, but that could not be avoided.

One of the most popular misconceptions about tantra is that tantra is much concerned with sex – that tantra is sexual yoga. But here it should be understood that there are four forms of sex – physical, psychophysical, psychospiritual and spiritual. When one has sexual intercourse with another person, that is physical sex; and when one thinks to make sex with another person, that is psychophysical sex. When one thinks to unite oneself with God, that is psychospiritual sex; and when one does achieve union with God – when one does attain the state of *yoga* – that is spiritual sex. In tantra, this spiritual sex has been

portrayed artistically as the union of Shakti with Shiva, Radha with Krsna, and Sita with Rama. But in the science of tantra, this union actually signifies the awakening of the psychospiritual force known as *kundalini*, which normally rests latent in the lowest *cakra*, or energy centre, at the base of the spinal column, and the subsequent elevation of that kundalini to the highest *cakra* at the top of the head. Figure 4 shows the names and approximate position of the main *cakras*.

Figure 4 Nadiis and Cakras



The kundalini passes up through a subtle psychospiritual nerve channel known as the *susumna nadii*, located in the centre of the spinal column. The *susumna nadii* is surrounded by two other *nadiis* (nerve channels) – the *ida*, which starts on the left, and the *piungala*, which starts on the right. The *ida* and the *piungala* weave their way up the spinal column. At each point where they crisscross, there is a psychospiritual energy centre known as a *cakra*. Each of these *cakras* has some specific functions, but this subject may be dealt with more fully in an advanced course (and in a bit more detail in Class 8: Mind – What It Is and How It Works and Class 9: Yoga Discipline – 16 Points). Here, suffice it to say that the lowest *cakra*, the *muladhara cakra*, is located at the base of the spinal column, two fingers width above the anus. Six fingers width above the anus is the *svadhisthana cakra*. The *manipura cakra* is located parallel to the navel. The *anahata cakra* is in the centre of the chest, just in between the two nipples. The *vishuddha cakra* is in the center of the throat, at the tip of the Adam’s apple. The *ajina cakra* is located just above the nose and in between the eyebrows. At the *ajina cakra*, the *ida* and *piungala nadiis* meet but do not cross. The *ida nadii* ends at the root of the left nostril, and the *piungala nadii* ends at the root of the right nostril. The topmost *cakra* is known as the *sahasrara cakra*. It is located ten fingers width above the eyes, just at the soft spot on top of the skull, known as the anterior fontanel in infants.

Here I may mention that, what I have given are just the Samskrta names in the Indian tantric tradition. But other names for these *cakras* do exist. For example, in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, the *muladhara cakra* is sometimes called *manipadma*. Perhaps you have heard the Buddhist mantra, “Om manipadme hum.” *Om* represents the *sahasrara cakra* and *manipadme* refers to the *muladhara cakra* in the ablative case ending (signifying that the *muladhara cakra* is the starting point). *Hum* is the acoustic root for fighting – it is similar to the sound that a bull makes while pawing the ground just before charging. So

what does this mantra mean? It means: “I will raise my kundalini from the muladhara cakra to the sahasrara cakra by my intense mental effort, by spiritual fight.” This mantra is purely tantric in tradition, although today it may be that many Buddhist monks cannot explain its significance.

Any discussion of tantra would not be complete if one omits some reference to the spiritual guide, or *guru*. The prefix *gu* signifies darkness, and *ru* means remover. One who removes the darkness of ignorance is guru. The goal of tantra is to realize God. And so, when God is our goal, who is it that can take us there? Can another human being teach us about God? Perhaps a human being can teach some philosophy about God or some practical means of realizing God, but not more than that. In the final analysis, only God can know God; and therefore only God can teach us about God – only God can take us to God-realization. Thus, only the one infinite Supreme Being can qualify to be the true guru; but that Supreme Being requires a human medium through which to communicate with us. So guru is God in human form.

In tantra, it is not permitted for one to take any human being as guru – as the spiritual master. One must always perceive the divine nature of one’s guru. Obviously, it would be dangerous for people to accept as guru an unqualified person. Therefore, it is both permitted and encouraged that the prospective disciple test the guru once before surrendering totally to the absolute authority of the master. In reply to a question in the last class (Class 6: Life, Death, and Samskara), I said that I would say more about *Taraka Brahma* tonight. Let me then point out here that only Taraka Brahma, only that exalted being residing at the vertex of the triangle of forces, can qualify as the guide that takes you to your final destination. The real significance of guru is nothing less than Taraka Brahma.

Finally, let me conclude our topic tonight with a few words about initiation. Tantric initiation always comes from the guru. Although you may be taught by an *acarya* (the meaning of which is one who teaches by example), still that acarya only represents the guru. Before being instructed, every disciple must take some high-minded oaths to ensure that s/he will not misuse the powers gained from meditation. The oaths are similar to those that one generally takes at the time of learning a martial art; but because the power of the mind is much greater than any physical power, these oaths are a bit broader in nature. These oaths must be adhered to strictly.

When you receive initiation into the tantric cult, you receive three things. First is *diipani shakti* – clarification of your relationship to God and the proper way to meditate on God. Second, you receive *mantra ghat* – the special sound vibration of your mantra, a sound that will expand your mind even if you are unaware of the meaning of the word. And, finally, you are given *mantra caetanya* – the meaning of your mantra. That meaning provides you with an ideation that links you with the Supreme. With the help of these three priceless jewels – diipani shakti, mantra ghat, and mantra caetanya – you will certainly be able to make rapid progress towards the goal. You will feel bliss each and every time you meditate sincerely.

Question and Answer

QUESTION Can my mantra be translated into the local language?

ANSWER Your mantra must be translated into the local language if you are to benefit from mantra caetanya (knowing the meaning of your mantra and ideating on it). But mantra ghat (repetition of the special sound of your mantra) is possible only when you use the correct sound vibration, and thus you must always remember your actual mantra. Although both mantra ghat and mantra caetanya are of great importance, in many lessons of meditation mantra ghat takes precedence over mantra caetanya.

QUESTION Are yoga and tantra offshoots of the Hindu religion?

ANSWER When tantra, and thus yoga, preceded Hinduism by thousands of years, how then can they be offshoots of that religion?

QUESTION Is tantra an offshoot of yoga?

ANSWER No, tantra is the original spiritual science. Yoga is just a compilation of some tantric practices – a compilation that came some five thousand years after the origin of tantra. If anything, yoga is an offshoot of tantra and not vice versa.

QUESTION You have said that something doesn't come from nothing, and I agree. What then is the real price of initiation?

ANSWER It is sometimes said that opposites eventually meet. This concept is expressed in the Chinese symbol of Yin and Yang, an abstract representation of spiritual sex.

Figure 5: Yin-Yang Symbol



So, on one hand it is prohibited to charge any material price for Tantric initiation – it is as free as sunlight, air, and water. On the other hand, the more you progress on the spiritual path, the greater are your obligations to serve others. So, in another sense, initiation calls for a total dedication to the welfare of yourself and others. And you make this dedication in return for the instruction given to you by guru. In one sense, the instruction is free of charge. In another sense, it costs everything. The price of initiation is all and nothing, but not anything in between those two extremes.

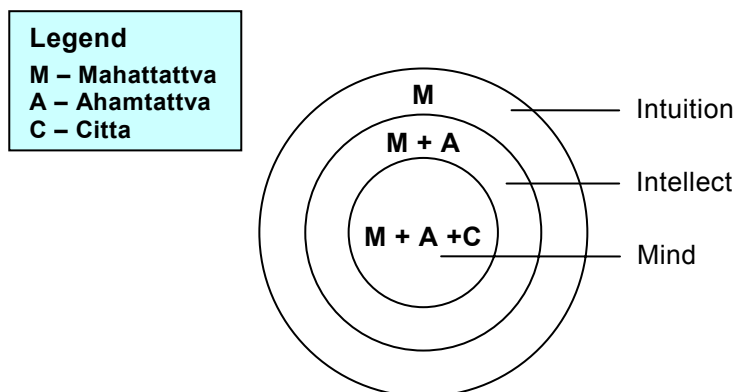
Class 8: Mind – What It Is and How It Works

Our subject tonight is the mind. Already much has been said on this subject, but much more may be said tonight, and still more will be added in future classes. Before proceeding, let me say that the subject is vast, and this is only an introductory lecture. We cannot and we will not even try to be detailed or exhaustive in our analysis. Indeed, tonight we will be discussing only the unit mind of a human being. It is good, however, to remember that there is also a cosmic mind and many forms of collective minds relating to various groups of individuals. Both the cosmic mind and the collective minds have characteristics that are distinct from those of the individual mind. For example, this world is external to the individual mind. Even your own physical body is external to your individual mind. When we refer to the collective body of, say, the Nigerian people, then *body* becomes a more amorphous concept than if we were discussing the body of a single Nigerian citizen. And, when we talk about cosmic mind, then *body* has no meaning at all, because nothing manifest is external to the cosmic mind. Everything of this manifest universe is contained within the cosmic mind. But tonight our topic is the individual mind and, specifically, the individual human mind.

In Class 5: The Wheel of Creation, it was explained that cosmic mind is the composite of three elements – mahattattva, ahamtattva and citta. Mahattattva is the *I am* feeling, ahamtattva the *I do* feeling, and citta the *done I*. Mahattattva and ahamtattva are the subjective mind, and citta is the objective mind. Without all of these three elements, mind cannot be said to exist. As citta is the delimiting factor of unit mind, ultimately the presence of citta implies the presence of mind; and the absence of citta implies the absence (or transcendence) of mind.

The unit mind is just a reflection of the cosmic mind. In the flow of evolution, when unit mind first comes into being, it is primarily citta, with ahamtattva and mahattattva lying latent therein. As the flow of pratisaincara (see Figure 3 on page 14) goes on accelerating, the increasing dominance of the mutative force over the static force leads to an expansion of ahamtattva, and the increasing dominance of the sentient force over the mutative force causes an expansion of the mahattattva. Thus, in some more developed animals and plants, there is an excess of ahamtattva over the boundaries of the citta and, in the case of human beings, there is even an excess of mahattattva over the ahamtattva (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Mind, Intellect, and Intuition



Again, in the case of human beings, the mental make-up is an exact reflection of the cosmic mind. As with the cosmic mind, the citta is the objective portion of mind, and the mahattattva and ahamtattva are the subjective portion of mind. As with the cosmic mind, there is a portion of ahamtattva that exceeds the

boundaries of the citta, and there is a portion of the mahattattva that exceeds the boundaries of the ahamtattva. Just as in the case of the cosmic mind, the name given to the combination of citta, ahamtattva and mahattattva is mind; but, in the case of the unit mind, there are special names given to the surplus ahamtattva and the portion of pure mahattattva. The surplus ahamtattva is called *intellect*, and the pure mahattattva is called *intuition*. And, just as a side note with reference to Class 7: Tantra, the lowest five major cakras (muladhara, svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, and vishuddha) control respectively the five rudimental factors – solid, liquid, luminous, aerial, and ethereal. The controlling point of the mind is at the sixth major cakra, the ajina cakra. The seventh major cakra, the sahasrara, is the seat of the soul.

Mind is composed of three factors or elements; and, as has been mentioned in Class 2: The Purification of Mind, this tripartite mind is also structured in five layers known as kosas. The first kosa is known as kamamaya kosa, and it is the so-called *crude* mind, controlling the motor and sensory organs as well as the various autonomic functions of the body. The manomaya kosa is known as *subtle* mind. Therein one experiences the sensations of pleasure and pain, and one performs the functions of thinking and recollection. The three remaining kosas are collectively known as the *astral* or *causal* mind. In the third kosa, the atimanas kosa, all of one's samskaras are stored. In the fourth kosa, the vijinanamaya kosa, one attains the qualities of discrimination and detachment. In the fifth kosa, hiranmaya kosa, one experiences direct contact with the soul. Actually speaking, there is only a theoretical difference between the astral portion of the unit mind and the astral portion of the cosmic mind. Thus, when people talk about astral travel, what they are really referring to is the exploration of the higher realms of their own mind.

It may also be mentioned here that the Western psychological terminology of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious mind is both inaccurate and inappropriate. The first portion of mind, the crude mind, is largely subconscious. The second portion of mind, the subtle mind, is predominantly conscious. The third portion of the mind, the astral mind, is potentially conscious. Thus, if we are to use the Western terminology, we would first have to juggle it a bit and then transform it a bit, finally labeling the crude mind as subconscious, the subtle mind as conscious, and the causal mind as superconscious. But, even with these alterations, the Western terminology is not desirable, because it concentrates on a relatively insignificant feature of these three portions of the mind. Thus, it is best to talk about the crude, subtle, and causal mind (or the crude, subtle and astral mind).

At this stage, let us say a few words about how the mind expresses itself. As everyone knows already, the mind comes in contact with the external world through the five motor and sensory organs. The motor organs are the hands, feet, vocal cords, excretory organs, and genital organs. The sensory organs are the eyes, ears, nose, skin, and tongue. It should be mentioned here that there is a sixth sensory organ. In Samskrta, it is called *pranendriya*, and it is controlled at the fourth cakra, the anahata cakra. With the help of the pranendriya, one experiences the sensations of hot and cold, soft and hard, harsh and sweet.

Mind also expresses itself through various mental propensities, known in Samskrta as *vrttis*. Vrttis are such tendencies as fear, shame, hatred, hope, passion, etc. Human beings, being more evolved than other creatures, possess more vrttis than the animals and plants. In general, human beings have approximately 50 vrttis, these vrttis being controlled at different cakras. The muladhara controls 4, the svadhisthana 6, the manipura 10, the anahata 12, the vishuddha 16, and the ajina 2. It is said that these vrttis may be expressed both externally and internally in the ten different directions (N, E, S, W, NE, SE, SW, NW, above, and below). Thus there are a total of 1,000 mental expressions (50 x 2 x 10), and all of these psychic expressions are controlled at the topmost cakra, the sahasrara cakra, which derives its name from the thousand-petaled lotus where all of these proclivities are controlled.

It should also be mentioned that the functioning of the mind is intimately connected with one's respiration. Breathing regulates all of the vital energies within the living being. Actually, all of the vital energy is controlled from the anahata cakra, the so-called heart cakra. Thus, as everyone knows instinctively, or perhaps better to say intuitively, there is a critical relationship between mind and heart. In yoga, whenever one greets another person, one folds one's hands and touches the point in between the eyebrows and then the point in the center of the chest. In Samskrta one says, *namaskar*, the meaning of which is: "I pay salutations to the divinity within you with all the charms of my mind and the sweetness of my heart."

Perhaps you already know the relationship between respiration and longevity, that the slower one breathes the longer one lives. But it should also be understood that respiration has a powerful effect upon the operation of the mind. Knowledge is the subjectivization of a particular object. Actually, we cannot really have direct knowledge of any external object. When studying any subject matter with our mind, that which we perceive is only the reflection of the object in our own citta. You do not really see me – you see your own mental image of me. That is why, if you suffer from some type of eye disease, I might appear a bit yellow or blue or green to you. You do not really see me – you see your own mental image of me. Thus, your knowledge of me is only a type of shadow knowledge. And, as I am ultimately nothing but a manifestation of consciousness, a shadow of Brahma, you are really only seeing a shadow of a shadow. But here we digress a bit. Our point is that breathing affects the mental process of cognition.

For knowing anything external, there are three stages of cognition. First is sensation, second is perception, and third is cognition. Sensation takes place when a particular external vibration comes in contact with the gateways of our sensory organs and is transmitted to the brain, from which the sensation is relayed as an image on the citta. Perception occurs when the ahamtattva takes note of the cittaic image. And cognition occurs only when the mahattattva identifies with that psychic object – when the subjective mind fully identifies with that portion of the objective mind. Sometimes, your best friend might pass right before you, but you don't notice her or him simply because your subjective mind is fully engaged in another direction. Sensation takes place, but not perception or cognition.

Now, sensation can take place at any time, but perception occurs only when one is breathing in or breathing out. And cognition happens only during the pause period when the breath is held either out or in. If you want to test this, then the next time you take a cold shower, or receive an inoculation, start breathing out as you first enter the shower or as the needle is being injected. You'll notice what is happening, but you won't feel the shock of first contact with the cold water or the insertion of the needle. Another way to test this is to try eating while jogging. Naturally, the speed of your breathing increases, and as there is little pause period, you will not be able to enjoy the taste of anything. Or, finally, you can notice what happens when you are deeply studying any subject. To increase your capacity for cognition, your breathing automatically slows down, and the pause period increases substantially. In very deep meditation, you may discover that your breathing has almost stopped altogether.

In Class 6: Life, Death, and Samskara, we discussed the influence of samskara on the functioning of the mind. Here, we need only note that the influence of samskara can inhibit or override one's rational capacity. To avoid this problem, it is best to exhaust your samskaras before they get their full expression, to burn off the *seed* of the samskaras. This can be accomplished by intensive meditation. And that brings us to our last subject tonight – the need for yoga.

Here, two very important psychological laws should be well understood. The first is that mind requires an object in order to exist. If anyone imagines that s/he will empty her or his mind, it is a delusion. You might achieve a temporary suspension, or rather suppression of mental activity, but eventually there will

be a violent reaction. Thus it happens that from morning to night people run here and there looking for different ways to occupy their minds. And now comes the second important psychological principle – as you think, so you become. If your mind is always occupied with crude thoughts or with the pursuit of crude objectives, then your mind also becomes crude. But if your mind is always engaged in the thought of God and in selfless service, then your mind becomes more and more subtle.

In the flow of pratisaincara, degraded human beings can revert back to animals in their next life, but elevated human beings can become one with God in this life itself. Thus, everyone must learn to always engage their mind in lofty thoughts. If you are to hear anything at all, it should be only the glory of God. If you are to remember anything, it should be only God. If you are to contemplate anything, it should be only God. Only by this type of constant ideation on God can your mind become uplifted, and only after uplifting your mind can you realize God. Tantra yoga is the only science that teaches the practical means whereby you can maintain such high ideals while adjusting with the practical exigencies of the material world.

Question and Answer

QUESTION Is there any difference between the mind of a woman and the mind of a man?

ANSWER Naturally, as there are some physical differences, there must be some physico-psychic and psycho-physical differences as well. But all of the significant mental differences are confined to the crude mind, the kamamaya kosa. There is no practical difference with respect to the remaining four kosas.

Class 9: Yoga Discipline – 16 Points

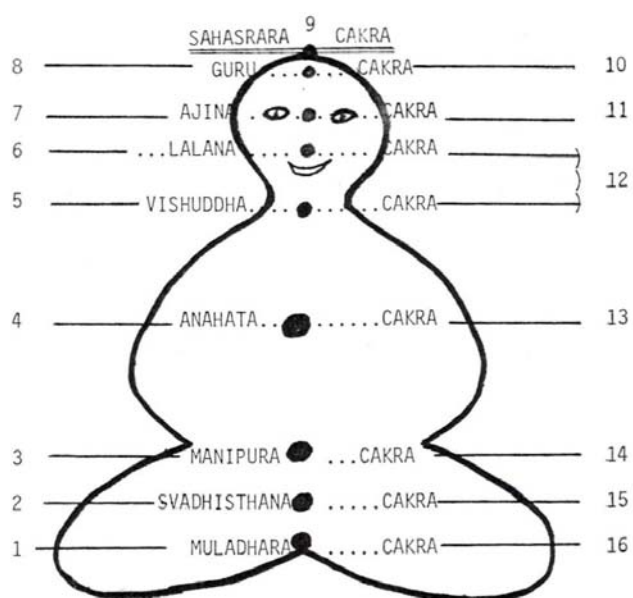
Our discussion of the theory of yoga would not be complete if we neglected to study the all-round discipline of yoga. Of course much has already been said on this subject with respect to the yogic code of ethics, and astanga yoga. Indeed, in every one of our classes, some aspects of yoga discipline have been stressed. But here we wish to examine in a more precise and systematic way the physical, psychic, and spiritual practices of yoga as they relate to the extro-internal, internal, and intro-external aspects of individual life. However, before starting, let me say a word or two about *theory*.

The overall theme of our classes is the theory of yoga, but thus far we have not addressed the question of what is theory. Actually, theory is a supposition or hypothesis offered as an analysis, prediction, or explanation of a particular phenomenon. There are two types of theories in this world. There are theories that precede observation, that precede practice; and there are theories that are derived from practice and observation. The first set of theories are of little value – generally we find them being offered by philosophers, priests, professional theoreticians, political personalities, and hypocrites of all types. Practical people always reject this first form of theory, preferring instead a theory based on a more solid foundation.

First and foremost, the yoga practitioner is and must be practical. Therefore, all yogic theory is derived from practice. Throughout history, yogis observed the world around and within them, noticed how it works, formulated techniques for better health on the basis of those observations, and then tested those techniques. Only if those techniques proved to be genuinely salutary were they added to the set of spiritual practices accumulated over the ages in the body of wisdom known as yoga.

Tonight we will be discussing the entire system of yoga discipline in terms of 16 Points. The first eight of these points are extro-internal in nature, that is to say, they take the help of the external world and external conditions in order to elevate the individual mind. The ninth point is the pivot – it is at the same time extro-internal, purely internal, and intro-external. The remaining seven points are intro-external in nature, that is to say, they strengthen the individual and society by the expression of an elevated mind.

Figure 7 Cakras and the 16 Points



In terms of Figure 7, the first eight points strengthen and purify the specified cakras. The ninth point establishes one in the glorious effulgence of divinity. The last seven points express that divinity through the medium of the purified cakras. But, without further ado, let us take the points one by one.

1. **Use of Water after Urination:** After urination, pour a little water over the genital organ to stimulate excretion of any urine remaining in the bladder. This helps to prevent formation of kidney stones. It also helps to prevent stimulation of the lower cakras, particularly the muladhara and the svadhisthana. You should get habituated in this practice. Therefore, always carry a small container of water to assist in this regard.
2. **Foreskin:** Always keep the genital area clean to avoid various diseases. In males, bacteria can easily accumulate under the foreskin of the penis. Thus, this foreskin should always be pulled back. If that is not possible, a minor operation should be had to enlarge the circumference of the foreskin so that it stays back. In this way, a greater cleanliness is maintained. By virtue of this cleanliness, there is less likelihood of unwanted stimulation of the genital organ, which also has an irritating effect upon the svadhisthana cakra. (Note that in respect to this second point females are only expected to maintain ordinary cleanliness. There is no need or desirability for any form of female circumcision.)
3. **Joint Hair:** Do not shave or pluck the hair of the armpits and genital area. This hair helps to maintain a balance of body heat. These hairs should be cleaned daily, and some oil should also be applied to help keep the area cool. This preservation of body heat assists the manipura cakra to maintain a balance in the vital energies of the body.
4. **Underwear:** Wear appropriate underwear to protect the sexual organs and to prevent unnecessary stimulation of these organs. Men should wear a special variety of underpants, called a langota (to what sportsmen wear), and women should wear panties and brassiere. By control over the sexual drive, one is able to activate the higher expressions of love that originate at the anahata cakra.
5. **Pervasive Cleanliness:** Perform a half-bath (hands, feet, genital area, and face) regularly before meditation, meals, and sleep. You will derive a feeling of freshness and additional energy to facilitate a more effective and enjoyable performance of these activities. This pervasive cleanliness will help you to control all of the five fundamental factors within the body. Thus it renders invaluable support to the vishuddha cakra, which directly controls the most subtle material factor, ether, and indirectly controls all the other material factors (air, light, liquid, and solid).
6. **Bath:** At least once a day, take a full bath. In a very hot climate, bathe twice a day. When bathing, use water to cool the lower cakras from manipura down first. Thereafter, pour water over the rest of the body. After bathing and before drying the body, face the sun or any other bright light to absorb the health-giving rays reflected through the prisms formed by the drops of water on your body. While facing the light source, a particular mantra is to be uttered with appropriate hand motions. The hand motions express the spirit of the mantra and, at the same time, ensure that the rays of light are absorbed evenly throughout the upper torso of the body. The spirit of the mantra is to pay respects to all of our ancestors and the great sages of the past, without whom we would not be living under the present advantageous conditions. The mantra serves also to elevate our mind by reminding us that Brahma is everything – the act of offering, the object offered, the receiver of the object, and the one who is offering. The mantra ends by declaring that only Brahma is the goal of our life, and that goal will be attained after our work is done. When you take a full bath in this manner, you acquire all of the benefits of the half-bath plus some additional physico-psychic energy controlled at the *lalana* cakra, which is just opposite the tonsils.

7. **Food:** Eat appropriate food. The food you eat is not just food for your body, but also food for your mind. There are three categories of food: sentient (in Samskṛta, *sattvika*), mutative (*rajasika*), and static (*tamasika*). Sentient food is good for both the body and the mind. Mutative food tends to be a bit good for the body and a bit bad for the mind. All in all, mutative food is somewhat neutral. And static food may or may not be good for the body but is definitely bad for the mind. Always remember that the quality of the food may also vary with the time of day, the climate, your own personal state of health, and the quantity of food consumed. Meat, fish, eggs, onions, garlic, and mushrooms are all classified as static, as also are all intoxicants. These items should be strictly avoided. It may be added that, in a very hot climate, meat is not only bad for the mind but also bad for the body. Here we are only talking about the physical health reasons for not eating meat – the moral grounds for abstention from eating meat are wider than that and have already been covered in Class 3: Yogic Ethics (Part 1). As the mind is controlled at ajina cakra, a proper diet serves to strengthen this cakra.
8. **Fasting:** When in good health, observe a complete fast on the appropriate fasting days. If any machine is made to work continuously, it will break down very fast. So also our body needs a rest from eating from time to time. The best days of fasting are determined by the moon's effect upon the liquid factor of the body. By abstaining from food on those special days, you give a rest to your body. Also, on fasting days, the liquid factor of the body does not get the opportunity to rise up and push the gaseous factors into contact with your brain – an event that tends to disturb mental equilibrium. On fasting days, as your schedule is freed in respect to meals and your mind is elevated from the mundane concern of food, you can accelerate your spiritual progress by using the extra time in contemplation of God. Through regular and regulated fasting, you develop the *guru* cakra, the point from which contemplation of God begins in higher meditation.
9. **Sadhana:** As you already know, the word *sadhana* means spiritual endeavor. Contained within this point are all of the elements of astaṅga yoga that we have discussed. By establishment in yama-niyama (the yogic code of ethics) and by correct performance of sadhana, especially the various meditation practices, you eventually achieve the state of *yoga*, union with God. The kundalini gets raised from the lowest cakra, the muladhara, to the highest cakra, the sahasrara. So it is through this ninth point, sadhana, that the potential contained within the sahasrara cakra is activated.
10. **Non-Compromising Strictness and Faith Regarding the Sanctity of Is't'a:** *Is't'a* is your chosen ideal, the guru. As mentioned in Class 7: Tantra, the guru is God in human form. To think of the guru as a mere human being is tantamount to limiting the extent to which the guru can guide you. Thus, you must always maintain uncompromising strictness and faith regarding the sanctity of your is't'a. As this is the first of the intro-external points, it should be mentioned that this point is established from within (at guru cakra). It may or may not find expression in the outer world.
11. **Non-Compromising Strictness and Faith Regarding the Sanctity of Adarsha:** *Adarsha* is your ideology. The inspiration that flows into the psychic plane from the soul is called ideology. Ideology expresses all of principles by which you live. Ideology is understood at ajina cakra, and how you live in this world is first determined by your ideology. As a spiritualist, you must live for your ideology, fight for your ideology, die for your ideology, and ultimately be one with your ideology. If you fulfill this target, salvation is a certainty.
12. **Non-Compromising Strictness and Faith Regarding the Sanctity of Conduct Rules:** Your conduct rules provide the physical and mental purity required for doing sadhana and for doing anything great in this world. Thus, you must be very strict in your commitment to conduct rules. Crude people know that by following a stringent discipline and strict moral principles they can never satisfy their mean

and selfish desires. That is why they will always malign your is't'a, your adarsha, and your conduct rules. But you must not be affected by them; rather, you must always adhere to and uphold your code of conduct. This is the correct expression of lalana and vishuddha cakras in the external sphere.

13. **Non-Compromising Strictness and Faith Regarding the Sanctity of the Supreme Direction:** The Supreme Direction is the embodiment of divine love. So that the spiritual aspirant may attain the desideratum of life rather than become degraded, s/he is instructed to perform meditation twice a day invariably and to be very strict in adherence to yama-niyama. And so that everyone might have the opportunity to realize God, all spiritual aspirants are reminded that it is their duty to bring everyone to the spiritual path and to set an example of righteousness for all others. A moment's contemplation reveals the immeasurable love behind the Supreme Direction. As such, adherence to this thirteenth point is the perfect intro-external expression of the anahata cakra, the heart center.
14. **Dharma Cakra:** The weekly collective meditation is known as *Dharma Cakra*. By regular attendance at Dharma Cakra, your personal spiritual progress is accelerated, and you assist in the formation of an indomitable mental force that helps in solving the problems of this world. Spiritualists realize that they are not and can never be alone in this world. We are all of us linked together as one family. It is our duty to solve all problems, big or small, in a collective way. No one should be neglected or despised. No problem should be dismissed as an individual affair. Thus, the perfect expression of the powerful energy controlled at manipura cakra is attained by regular attendance at Dharma Cakra.
15. **Oaths:** The oaths taken at the time of initiation as well as any other tantric oaths you may take or have taken are to be remembered daily and followed strictly. To accomplish anything great in this world, you must have firm determination. An ordinary person's creativity is limited to the sexual act, but the spiritualist achieves a higher degree of creativity by expressing the potential inherent at svadhithana cakra through the medium of her or his oaths.
16. **C.S.D.K. (Conduct Rules in Detail, Seminar, Duty, Kiirtan):** At muladhara cakra, four important vrttis (mental propensities) are controlled. They are *kama* (desire for worldly wealth), *artha* (desire for psychic wealth), *dharma* (psycho-spiritual longing), and *moks'a* (spiritual longing – desire for liberation or salvation). For spiritual aspirants, uplifting conduct rules are the greatest worldly wealth. Thus, the first part of the sixteenth point is to follow all of the conduct rules in detail and to create sympathizers by your exemplary conduct. The greatest psychic wealth of a spiritual aspirant is the spiritual and social philosophy of yoga. The second aspect of the sixteenth point is, therefore, to enhance your knowledge of philosophy by attendance at seminars, and also to enlighten others by conducting seminars on what you have already learned. Dharma is expressed through performance of duty. Duty actually signifies that which God is dictating you to do through the medium of your own conscience. And, finally, the longing for salvation (moks'a) is expressed through *kiirtan*. Kiirtan involves the chanting of God's name, and there are many ways in which it may be performed. However, the fundamental thing about kiirtan is that, while doing it, you allow yourself to do nothing else but speak of God, hear of God, and think of God.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this class, all of the spiritual practices explained tonight have been tried and tested. They have all been proved time and again to be beneficial for both the individual and society. But you are not being asked to just take my word for it, or the word of the yogic sages of the past. No, such bookish knowledge has got no value in this life. What I am suggesting to all of you is that you also test these practices to discover and experience the beneficial effects of a yogic lifestyle. Thus far I have set before you a wide variety of information and practical suggestions. You understand how they were derived, and what they can do for you. But, unless you apply these teachings in your day-to-day life,

they are of no more value to you than a restaurant menu or a cookbook to a starving man. So now the table is set, and the food is ready to be served. Won't you please come and join me in this feast?

Question and Answer

QUESTION Well the feast sounds very good, but why can't we eat onions?

ANSWER I've already explained that onions may or may not be good for the body, but they have a bad effect upon the mind. In fact, they stimulate the lower cakras and increase aggressiveness. That's just the way it is. Don't ask me why – ultimately I won't be able to answer that question. But one thing I can say is that you can test my assertion. You know, nowadays whenever a scientist discovers some new law, s/he backs up the findings with well-documented laboratory experiments. In that way, everyone in the scientific community can go to their laboratory and repeat the same experiments. If the first scientist's findings are correct, then the experiments of the other scientists should all turn out the same way. Yoga is also a science, and the laboratory is your own body and mind. If you want to study for yourself the effect of onions, just do what the ancient yogiis did. Purify your body and mind by fasting for several days and then eat some onions. In that way, you can see the effect that onions have upon your body and your mind.

QUESTION What if we eat several bad things together or one bad thing and one good thing?

ANSWER In either case, the effect will not be good. If you drink your poison straight, obviously the effect will be bad. But, if you mix some poison with an apple, still you will suffer (as did Snow White in the popular fairy tale).

QUESTION After taking up yoga, I have lost so much weight that my friends have started to worry about me. I feel better than ever before, but how can I reassure them.

ANSWER Someone else once asked me the same question. I told him to tell his friends that he had discarded 10Kg of excess baggage that he had been unnecessarily carrying around everywhere with him. Afterwards, that man came back to me and told me that all of his friends also wanted to practice yoga so that they too could get rid of their "excess baggage".

QUESTION What is the best way to do kiirtan?

ANSWER You should go on singing the mantra, *Baba Nam Kevalam*, in whatever melody you like. The meaning of "Baba Nam Kevalam" is "Only the name of God" – God's name is everything to me.

If you have not yet been instructed in meditation by an *acarya*, a teacher of meditation, then you can also perform meditation by simply repeating mentally this same mantra, *Baba Nam Kevalam*. Indeed, I've met many people who had been meditating with the mantra, *Baba Nam Kevalam*, to such good effect that, when I offered to initiate them, they were reluctant to get further instruction out of fear that their mantra might change.

There are some additional rules regarding kiirtan, but they can be learned at a later time, along with the dance that is associated with kiirtan, *lalita marmika*.

Epilogue

QUESTION For days now, I've been hearing from my friend about the benefits of yoga, and thus far I've heard only good things. But you know everything has some advantages and some disadvantages. First of all, I'd like to ask you what are the disadvantages of yoga?

ANSWER In answer to this question I could only think of one reply. At first I wanted to say that there really are no disadvantages; but, on deeper reflection, I had to admit that there is one tiny drawback to yoga. You see, once you start practicing yoga, you really cannot stop. Why not? Well, the inevitable result of a scientific and systematic spiritual approach to life is that you gradually come closer and closer to God. And the effect of that growing sense of proximity to God is to fill your mind with such a subtle, sublimely sweet experience of bliss that no form of ordinary pleasure can compare with it. You become addicted to that divine nectar, almost the same way as a drunkard craves for alcohol. So, if for some reason you should leave your practice of yoga, you would certainly feel a great loss. You would no longer enjoy such a close company with God as before. Inevitably, you must eventually return to yoga. This is the one and the only real disadvantage.

Once, a woman, a devout Christian, came to me to enquire about the difference between prayer and meditation. I explained to her that in prayer you are always speaking to God, praising God, asking God for favors. But in meditation, you merely try to fix your mind on God and then remain silent. In prayer you are talking to God, and in meditation you are listening to God. While talking to God, you can only repeat what both you and God already know. While listening to God, you can learn everything.

Reading this book, perhaps you discovered a few things about yoga and how it can help you in your personal life. But, also it is possible that, in the process of simplification, I might have unintentionally distorted the theory of yoga in some respects. It is also possible that there are some errors contained herein due to lapses in my own understanding. For any and all of these possible mistakes, let me apologize to the good reader; and let me remind everyone that there is a source of knowledge that is absolute and without flaw. Moreover, there is a way to approach that perfect source of knowledge, that fountain of divine effulgence. Those who have not yet taken up the practice of yoga but who want to learn directly from God how to be one with God, please apply for initiation without further delay.