



# Kindle Life

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Summary based on Study Group Discussions

## **1. Freedom and License**

People have grown from a primitive and barbarous state to be a civilized and intelligent society. The comforts and amenities provided are almost heavenly and man has been indulging in them without the least restraint. Uncontrolled and excessive indulgence in sensual enjoyments causes dissipation of one's personality and leads to sorrow and misery.

Freedom is essentially built on intelligent self-restraint and discipline. Scriptural texts provide an exhaustive science of better living and complete technique of self-development.

## **2. Art of right contact**

The general complaint is that, the world is full of evil and imperfections, disturbances and despairs, and one often wonders how peace and tranquility could be found in their midst. Religious textbooks prescribe certain laws of living which define for us the modes of contact with the world of objects around us, so that we may have a more harmonious existence.

When we understand the "Art of establishing right contact" with the world, as prescribed by the scriptures, we can chasten and edify our subjective personality. The evils of the world, therefore are not great problems and impediments, but man's lack of dexterity in facing the challenges confronting him, is the real problem.

## **3. Man's Heritage**

Independence is the very essence of manhood. However the sense objects of the world present to us a false glitter of joy. To resist this call of flesh, the all-consuming onslaught of our senses, is the privilege and glory of man. Man being essentially divine by nature, but while facing the challenges of life, we don't know the right direction in which to turn.

The scriptures, like a true compass, always indicate the right direction. The secret of success lies in a) Using the faculty of discrimination and judgment (Intellect) and not to get disturbed by the rising tides of emotions. and b) Dedicating one's life to a higher ideal.

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## **4. The Joy of Living**

Our firm belief today is that the joys we experience through our senses lie in the objects of the world. If the joy is inherent in the sense-objects, then each object should provide the same quantum of joy to all those who come in contact with it. Obviously, this is far from truth. For instance, a cigarette fills one with joy and satisfaction, while it drives another mad with annoyance.

On a careful analysis we find that man's happiness is entirely a subjective phenomenon, for there seems to be a distinct and clear relationship between the state of his mind and the joy or sorrow that is experienced by him. When the mind is agitated, sorrow is experienced and when it is tranquil, there is joy. Happiness, therefore, is measured by the tranquility of one's mind.

## **5. The Dual Path**

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There are two distinct and separate paths in life, namely, the path of the pleasant (preyas) and the path of the good (sreyas). Man is confronted with the choice of taking to one of these paths at every single moment of his life.

The path of the pleasant which caters to man's self-gratification provides immediate pleasures, but ultimately, brings disappointment and sorrow.

The path of the good is detested in the beginning but, later on it leads to greater happiness and a sense of fulfillment.

## **6. Harmony of Existence**

Life is defined as a series of continuous experiences. Analysing the experiences masters found that every experience constitute three factors – Experiencer (Subject), Experienced (object) and Process of experiencing.

On further analysis they found that Experiencer is composed of four different personalities – the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

Each one of the four entities is differently constituted and has its own values and demands. Religious texts provide guidelines to bring all these four personalities into integration for a healthier and intelligent living.

## **7. Personality Rehabilitation**

Our experiences are attributed to the difference in the texture and quality of the mind and intellect.

Mind is the seat of all emotions and feelings. Intellect is the discriminating faculty, the discerning, judging faculty.

Religion holds a mirror up to man's real nature within and also provides him with the 'ways and means for chastening his emotions' and 'edifying his thoughts', thereby enabling him to live a more dynamic and cheerful life.

## **8. Mind and Man**

The mind is defined as a 'flow of thoughts' just as a river is a flow of water. The banks of the river guide and direct its flow and when the banks are not firm, the water runs amok. So too, when the intellect of man is not firm and determined, the mind functions as it wants, and man is tossed hither and thither by the vicissitudes of his environment and circumstances.

The 'secret of success' behind all 'Men of achievement' lies in the faculty of applying their intellect in all their activities without being misled by any surging emotions or feelings.

## **9. Path of Perfection**

The quality and texture of mind and intellect in us depend upon our inherent and innate tendencies or inclinations, which are called 'vasanas'.

We receive stimuli from the external world through our 5 senses, process them through our mind and intellect and respond through our 5 action organs. Our response to the world depends on our 'vasanas'.

By purifying and reforming the 'vasanas', the mind and intellect get properly tuned up and perfected and one is well armed to face any challenge in the world.

## **10. The Mechanism of Action**

In the mechanism of human action, the propelling force behind our desires, thoughts and actions originates from our innate inclinations and tendencies, called by the term 'vasanas'. 'Vasanas' mean fragrance. Each individual has vasanas, distinct and peculiar to him and they define his individuality.

The heterogeneous pattern of human beings is explained by the variety and differences in the texture of vasanas composing them. When man gets rid of his vasanas, he transcends mental agitation and attains a divine status. Man has this capacity to choose and exercise self-effort in choosing right action and can thus get rid of his vasanas.

## 11. The Law of Karma

Our actions -> leaves imprints in our personality as vasanas -> These vasanas gives rises to desires and actions. This action leading to vasanas and vasanas leading to desires and actions constitutes the karmic cycle. All our actions produces results following law of karma or cause and effect. Law of Karma is responsible for all our present situations, determined based on by our past actions.

Law of Karma does not mean we don't have a choice. We may not be able to change our present situations, but we have the ability to choose to respond to the situations.

'What' one meets in life is destiny and 'How' one meets it, is self-effort. Through our self-efforts we can modify the future.

## 12. The Play of Mind

'Master the mind and you master the world'. The most fundamental of these eternal values are the three disciplines, namely Brahmacharya (Self-control); Ahimsa (Non-injury) and Satyam (Truthfulness), which are prescribed for regulation of our physical, mental and intellectual personalities respectively.

## 13. Fundamentals of Living

Three disciplines advised for reshaping our personality – Brahmacharya (self-control), Ahimsa (Non-injury), and Satyam (Truthfulness).

Brahmacharya means living in self-control with respect to all our sense enjoyments and does not mean their denial.

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Second discipline Ahimsa means 'non-injury'. Ahimsa is a mental attitude to our relationship with others in life. Physically a surgeon may appear cruel, but his heart means well.

Third disciple Satyam, a value of life on the intellectual plane. Satyam enjoins that one should live honestly with one's own intellectual convictions. Each of us has ideals, but only few live up to them.

## 14. Harmony and Poise

Intelligent way of living is 'To live in harmony' with the situations in life and steadily work on to meet them with discretion and constant application.

The life of harmony can be lived by rising above our limited egocentric view of things and happenings, and expanding our mind to accommodate a constant awareness of the totality of the world, the entirety of mankind and the vastness and wholeness of the universal problems.

## 15. Science and Religion

Scientists continue to discover the secret powers of nature for blessing society. Whereas the religious masters try to understand what is the truth that binds all the laws of nature or in other words they are trying to understand and discover, The lawgiver, the controller and regulator of all laws.

## 16. What is Religion

True religion is a blend of philosophy and ritualism. Mere ritualism, bereft of philosophy is only superstition, while bare philosophy without ritualistic practices is tantamount to madness. Both the aspects must go hand in hand. Philosophy reinforces the external practices of ritual and

gives them a purpose and a goal for realization. Ritualism does not mean mere physical performance of ceremonies but also embraces all modes of practical religion, applicable to mental and intellectual levels of our personality.

## **17. Vitals of a Nation**

When the members of community/country live together with an integrated programme and strive with diligence and devotion for the achievement of a common goal, one sees the formation and glorious achievements of a nation.

A faithful adherence to religious precepts and doctrines develops a proper sense of integrity amongst individuals who go to institute a healthy community. The coordinated and inspired efforts of such human beings alone can build up a nation.

## **18. What is Culture?**

When a set of people live for a long period of time in a particular geographical area, respecting certain philosophical values is called their culture. The quality of such culture depends upon the type of values followed. The difference in culture lies in the values and virtues of life entertained by the people.

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## **19. What makes a Man?**

Human beings have the maximum capacity for emotion and their feelings can embrace the entire universe. Also, the faculty of intellectual discrimination in man knows no bounds; not only can he discriminate extrovertly in the realm of the gross world, but can also delve into the subjective layers of his personality until he reaches the recesses of the spiritual core in himself.

The rare few that develop a universal love and constantly engage themselves in activity under the guidance of their superior intellect are called Man and they alone can claim the prestige, dignity and glory of man.

## **20. Essence in Man.**

The core of the human personality is the Consciousness, which is the 'Life-centre' around which all the activities of the body, mind and intellect revolve. It remains ever changeless and immovable like an axle in the wheel, but causes all changes and movements to occur. When man succeeds in identifying with this changeless, immovable conscious principle within him, he is no longer victimized by the changing phenomena of perceptions, emotions and thoughts, but becomes the Supreme Lord of them all. The intellectual pursuits, emotional attachments and physical cravings of such a man naturally withers and falls away like petals of a flower when the fruit emerges.

## **21. The Path of Divinity**

A scientific analysis of the psychological being in man reveals three thought-conditions under which the human mind functions. They are called in Vedanta, as the Sattva -pure and the noble; Rajas – the passionate and agitated, and the Tamas, the dull and the inactive state. These three types of thoughts form the material with which the human mind and intellect are composed.

Religion helps us to chasten our desires and thoughts, so as to ultimately end them and man becomes God.

## **22. The state of Divinity**

Divinity is the very nature and essence of man; but it lies covered under the encrustation of thoughts. A change in thoughts can be effected by three methods, namely, by reducing the quantity of thoughts, by improving the quality of thoughts and by giving a different direction to the thoughts.

When the mind is purified and when such a mind is absorbed in meditation, the last traces of thoughts die away, leaving the meditator in a state of Absolute Bliss.

## 23. Fundamentals of Vedanta

### Pancha Kosha Viveka

*Pancha* means five *Kosha* (Sheath) means covering. We are currently attached to body/mind. We identify ourselves with these coverings. To remove our false notions, we need to understand Pancha Koshas. These koshas are pointers to the true-self Atman.

Like Pancha Koshas there are Drk Drsya Viveka, Tattva Viveka, Pancha Maha bhuta Viveka. All these are to reach Brahman. Pancha Kosha Viveka belongs to Gross body/Subtle/Casual body. The Purpose is to know the Atman.

The Five Koshas are:

1. Annamaya Kosha (Food sheath)
2. Pranamaya Kosha (Vital Air sheath)
3. Manomaya Kosha (Mind/Intellect Sheath)
4. Vijnanamaya Kosha (Knowledge Sheath)
5. Anandamaya Kosha (Bliss Sheath)

#### **Annamaya Kosha (Food Sheath)**

Annamaya Kosha (Food sheath) is the physical sheath veiling the Self. Our physical body is born out of food, sustained by food and goes back to food. Our body is constantly changing and is impermanent. Our body is made of the five elements (space, air, water, fire, earth) as everything else in the Universe. When we buy the sword, it comes in a covering. Body is like packaging. Body is external package. Body is not the real person. Thoughts like "I am hungry", "I am hurt" are associated with Food sheath. These are at the body level. When a person gets attached to/associates with materialist worldly things, relationships (my son, wife, cattle, house etc) are associating themselves with food sheath. The true self, is not the body or the food sheath.

#### **Pranamaya Kosha (Vital Air Sheath)**

Pancha – pranas, correspond to the five physiological systems described by the biologists, represent the Vital Air Sheath. These activities which support the body take place as a result of the air that we breathe in. Five pranas are

1. Prana – The Faculty of Perception. Controls the fivefold stimulus received from the outer world of objects through the five sense-organs.
2. Apana – The Faculty of Excretion. All things thrown out of, or rejected by the body, such as seeds, sputum, perspiration, urine, faces etc... are expressions of Apana
3. Samana – The Faculty of Digestion. Digests the food received in the stomach.
4. Vyana – The Faculty of Circulation. The power by which the digested food is properly conveyed to the various limbs of the body by the blood stream.
5. Udana – The Faculty of Thinking. The capacity in an individual to raise his thoughts from their present level so as to conceive a possibility of, or appreciate a new principle or idea – the capacity of self-education.

#### **Manomaya Kosha**

*Manomaya Kosha* is composed of *manas* or mind. The mind (manas) along with the five sensory organs is said to constitute the Manomaya kosa. The manomaya kosa, or "mind-sheath" is said more truly to approximate to personhood than annamaya kosa and pranamaya kosha. It is the cause of diversity, of me and mine. Man's bondage is caused by the mind, and liberation, too, is caused by that alone. Person identifies himself with the Manomaya Kosha and regards himself as the thinker and thinks 'I am angry, I am lustful, I am greedy.' The Manomaya Kosha is entirely distinct from the real Self of man.

#### **Vijnanamaya Kosha**

Vijnanamaya is composed of vijnana, or intellect, the faculty which discriminates, determines or wills. This knowledge sheath, which seems to be followed by a reflection of the power of the cit, is a

modification of prakrti. He identifies himself with the Vijnanamaya Kosha and regards himself as the cogniser and thinks 'I am intelligent, I know everything, I am the enjoyer.'

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### **Anandamaya Kosha**

Anandamaya Kosa (or) Bliss sheath is the “innermost” of the five sheaths consisting of Vasanas. This sheath is made of ignorance in which we exist during our deep-sleep state of consciousness. It is considered blissful irrespective of our differences; we all experience the same undisturbed peace and bliss due to the cessation of agitation experienced by them in waking state or dream state. In deep sleep there is no friend/enemy, success/failure one experiences joy. One is with God in deep sleep that comes by covering. Only in deep meditation we bring oneness with knowledge. One, who identifies himself with the Anandamaya Kosha, feels 'I am happy.'

Gross body is associated of Annamaya Kosha; Subtle body(*Sukshma sarira*) is associated of Prana, Manomaya & Vijnanamaya Kohsas and Casual (*Karana sarira*) body is associated with Annadamaya Kosha.

Atman is enveloped by these five sheaths. The true self – Atman- is none of these.

### **What is Atman?**

On an analysis of the human being, the Rsis discovered that the five layers of personality are mere matter and that matter by itself is inert and insentient. Though constituted of matter, the individual is sentient and conscious of the world around him. It follows, therefore that there is in him something other than matter, which lends to it the sentiency or consciousness. This sentient or conscious principle is Atman or God. It is like magnetism in a magnet, which is something other than the iron piece that it is.

The Atman is that which gives the capacity to the sense organs to perceive, the mind to feel and the intellect to think. Hence it is often referred to in the sastras as the perceiver, feeler and thinker on the physical, mental and intellectual planes respectively. It is likened to electricity, which manifests differently through different equipment.

Hence, the **Atman is indicated as something other than the gross, subtle and causal bodies, beyond the five sheaths of matter, a witness to the waking, dream and deep sleep states of consciousness and the perceiver in the sense organs, feeler in the mind and the thinker in the intellect.**

Total field of objects perceived + Total emotions felt + Total thoughts entertained = The world experienced by an individual (OET)

Perceiver + Feeler + Thinker = The Ego (Or) Individuality (PFT)

Body + Mind + Intellect = The equipment of the individual (BMI)

The gross body contains the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. It is the medium through which the individual contacts the outer world of objects and experiences his joys or sorrows.

The subtle body is made up of the mental and intellectual sheaths, which respectively contain emotions and feelings of the mind and ideas and ideals of the intellect. All these are mere thoughts. The subtle body, is therefore, constituted of thoughts just as gold ornaments are made up of gold or mud pots of mud.

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However, there are functional differences in these thoughts, which have given them four distinct status known as: Manas, Buddhi, Ahankara and Citta

These four put together constitute our inner equipment, *Antahkarana*, in contrast to the outer equipment, *Dasa-Indriyas* ie ten organs of the body. The four are only functional names for the same basic substance, namely thoughts.

### ***Manas***

In an experience, the first impact of stimuli through the organs of perception causes disturbance in the thought and there is restlessness and indecision. This condition of doubt or indecision of the thought is called the mind – *sankala vikalpatmakam Manah*

### ***Buddhi***

After the first impact, the disturbance dies down and there is quietude of decision and determination. This condition of decision of thought is called the intellect – *Niscayatmaika Buddhih*.

### ***Ahankara***

A doubt and a decision will be related to each other only if they belong to a single individual. When both of them reside in a person, he is aware that the doubt and the decision are 'His'. The constant concept of 'I-ness' in his feelings of 'doubt' and 'I decide' is also a thought and its functional name is ego – *Ahankarta Ahankarah*.

### ***Citta***

The fourth aspect of the subtle body is the Citta. Citta is the thought-forms of the nature of memory.

### ***Cidakasa***

Cidakasa is the unconditioned consciousness, which is all-pervading.

- Vedas are the source texts for Hindu Religion. Vedas means Body of Knowledge. Vedas are four in number - Rig, Yajus, Sama and Atharvana.
  - Each Vedas are divided into two broad categories - Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda
  - Karma Kanda - deals with rituals and sacrifices that are meant for fulfilling desires (artha and kama), gaining mental integration and self-purification.
  - Jnana Kanda - deals with Self-Knowledge or Knowledge of Reality, known as Vedanta.
  - Vedanta means end portion of Vedas.
  - Vedanta deals with Self-Knowledge. Knowledge of one's True Nature.
  - Vedanta reveals the Nature of Self, through mahavaakyas or great declarations. There are 4 declarations
    - Prajnanam Brahma (Consciousness is Brahman)
    - Tat Tvam Asi (That Thou Art)
    - Ayam Atma Brahma (This Self is Brahman)
    - Aham Brahma Asmi (I am Brahman)
  - The meanings of these mahavaakyas are unfolded systematically by a Guru to the disciple.
  - Rishis made a thorough study and scientific analysis of the structure of a human being and discovered the Nature of True Self (Atman or God)
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## 24. Life is yours - Kindle It

- True religion never dies; Hinduism is not dead. Just like a tree sheds leaves, and new leaves grow, same way true religion within the scriptures lives on.
- Religion does not live within edifices of temples & other places of worship, scriptures, but Religion is 'science of living'.
- If the religion is looked up as a dictatorial declaration of a scheme of living, with no reference to our day-to-day existence, and cannot solve our problems; man banished such religion and moves on to new culture.
- For Religions of east, religion is Way of life and not a 'view of life'.

## 25. Vedanta – Life and Art of Living

- Hinduism is not an airtight declaration of a single prophet or master, but is a 'Growing Tradition'. It is a conclusion of generations of investigators.
  - The application of the religion could change from time to time, but fundamentals remain the same.
  - The better the understanding of the worldly objects the better the relationship with it.
  - Veda's declare world is unreal, the Truth (*Brahman*) is the only Reality).
  - Vedanta provides us a healthier re-interpretation of the world.
  - Religion is the complete science of perfect living, whereby society can learn to live peacefully and fully.
  - Neither science nor religion can stand on its own. Both want to bring happiness to society and serve man in living his daily life.
  - Life, is defined as a 'Continuous series of experiences' and each experience becomes a 'Unit of life'.
  - The experience is experienced when he receives and responds to a stimulus from the external world.
  - An experience therefore is constituted of three entities
    - The Experiencer (Subject),
    - The Experienced (Object),
    - The Experiencing (the relationship between the Subject and Object).
  - The field of enquiry of the Rishis, was the 'Experiencer'.
  - Rishis tried to develop the inner personality of man and make him independent of the environment and happenings in the world. Goal was to raise the 'Standard of life' in man.
  - Rishis found that experiences emanate from different levels of our personality
    - Physical
    - Psychological
    - Intellectual and
    - Spiritual personalities.
  - The practical proposition of religion is a theory that propounds how we can train the 'four' in us and make a joy ride through the avenues of our appointed life.
  - Man is ready to sacrifice the grosser, in preference to the subtler in him.
  - Through the practice of Religion, our personalities can be tuned to raise the 'Standard of Life'
  - Life, as series of experiences, is mainly enjoyed by 'head and heart'.
    - Head represents the rational and intellectual faculty and
    - Heart represents the faculty of instinct.
  - Varying proportions of these in each man differentiate the individuals. On the basis of these entire humanity can be divided as:
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1. Those in whom 'Heart' predominates over the 'Head'.
  2. Those in whom 'Head' predominates over the 'Heart'.
  3. Those in whom 'Head' and 'Heart' have almost equal assertions.
  4. Those in whom neither the 'Head' nor the 'Heart' has developed adequately.
- In order to serve these four different types, the rishis prescribed four Yoga traditions. Word Yoga has several different meanings. One of the meanings of yoga is joining of the ego to the Supreme Self. Even the methods that promote one's progress towards the realization of the Supreme Self are called yoga.
    1. Bhakti or Devotion - For the predominantly emotional who is capable of intense love for the Lord.
    2. Jnana or knowledge - For the predominantly intellectual who looks for intellectual satisfaction in anything.
    3. Karma or selfless-work - For the balanced intellectual-emotional who is a man of heart, but his intellect exercise due control over the heart.
    4. Hatha or mystic way - Who by temperament does not easily fall into any of the three categories above
  - Though there are four different yogas, there are only two steps. First step is preparing the mind, Second step is gaining Self-Knowledge.
  - Preparing the mind is done by Karma Yoga. Gaining knowledge takes place by Jnana Yoga. Bhakti yoga and Raja yoga are integral parts of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga
  - Bhakti can serve almost all. (All religions of world prescribe this method).
  - Any practitioners in any one of the paths in the spiritual scheme will mastery their mind.
  - Mastery over the mind ends in a greater and intense integration of one's personality. The more one gets integrated in the mind, the more dynamic becomes one's intellect. A purified mind and intellect gains a greater efficiency.

## 26. The Goal of Perfection Achieved

- Our true nature is Existence-Consciousness-Limitlessness (Sat-Chit-Ananda).
- The world and our egocentric ideas of our separate existence are only superimposition upon the Truth. They are all false. Plurality is a delusion.
- We are ignorant of our true nature. How did this delusion rise up? This is a natural question for one who inquires about reality.
- Vedanta introduces the term Maya in order to explain our ignorance.
- Maya is defined as an inexplicable power of the Brahman, which is as inseparable as heat from fire. Maya means 'That which is not'.
- Maya is manifested in the world as three distinct eternal qualities. Sattva (Unactivity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inactivity). All the three qualities are ever in a state of admixture. Their proportions vary from individual to individual and in the same individual it differs from time to time.
- When the Brahman reflects through Sattva it is the god principle - Creator (Brahma), Sustainer (Vishnu), Destroyer (Shiva)
- When the Brahman reflects through Rajas and Tamas, the reflection is dimmer. This is the egocentric-Jiva (individual mortal)
- The Tamas quality acts in us in two distinct ways. It produces mental agitation (Viksepa) and the veiling of Truth (Avarana). These two powers are dependent on each other.
- Viksepa creates the Avarana and the Avarana creates the Viksepa.

- The veiling power of the Tamas in us plays three distinct negativity's such as 1) Don't know, 2) Can't understand, 3) Not experienced.
- These three negative concepts are removed by the three main Vedantic practices
  - Listening (Sravanam)
  - Reflection (Mananam)
  - Meditation (Nididhyasanam)
- First of three main tragedies, born of the veiling power is - we don't know the God-principle behind the ever changing flux in the phenomenal world. This is the grossest state of Avarana (Veiling). This is removed by "listening" from the great masters and through the great scriptures
- Second stage, when we have removed the first negativity, then the subtler one arises - "I can't understand". Truth is understood by intellectual analysis and reasoning. This is mananam.
- In third stage, one has intellectually understood the changeless Truth behind life, but feels it is "not experienced". This is removed by the process of Vedantic meditation - Nididhyasanam
- Vedanta practice of Sravanam, Mananam, Nididhyasanam is a process.
- When the Veiling is removed, mental agitations are stilled. The more the agitations are pacified, the easier the veiling gets rolled off. In course of time, in proportion to the intensity of Abhyasa (practice), Tamas and Rajas within us are reduced and Sattva is gained, which helps us to gain Self-Knowledge.
- Thus ignorance in us veils our True nature.
- Spiritual sadhana is to remove this Avarana and Viksepa, so we can realize our true nature.

## 27. Japa Yoga

**Meaning of Japa** The letter Ja stands for that which puts an end to the cycle of birth and death and the letter pa stands for that which removes or destroys all impurities and obstructions. By destroying the varieties of obstructions to knowledge, japa paves the way for liberation. Therefore, japa is an indirect means for liberation.

**Why to practice Japa?** Ignorance (Avidya) veils our true nature. Like how the clouds cover the sun, our thoughts born out of ignorance (Avarana- veiling and Viksepa-agitation) cover our true nature. Although, clouds appear to cover the sun, clouds cannot cover the Sun. Clouds are seen because of sunlight. Because of sunlight we see the clouds. So clouds cannot cover the Sun. Clouds cannot make the Sun absent. In the same way, our thoughts cannot cover the Self, as the thoughts themselves are illumined by the Self.

Our mental agitation born out of ignorance, and prevent us to know our true Self. Japa is a sadhana to master our mind, in turn to prepare the mind for Self-knowledge to take place. Mastering our mind – Japa is a sadhana is to

- Increase the quality of thoughts
- Change the direction of thoughts
- Reduce the quantity of thoughts

Increase predictability of thoughts - At any given time, one has only one thought. What is the next thought is anyone's guess. Our thoughts are unpredictable. Our thoughts flow one thought to another sometimes without have any connection between them.

In Japa, a mantra is repeated deliberately. Since a mantra is also like a thought and repeated, we know what thought is going to come. So there is predictability of next thought. In Japa, there is deliberation, predictability.

Exercising choice is very important in japa. If we choose to mentally chant a mantra for a length of time, then we can see what happens in our mind because we know exactly what is to come next. If something else pops up, we know this is not what is expected and we bring back the chosen thought. In the process we learn how to dismiss unwanted thoughts and retain the one we have chosen. This is one important result of Japa. This gives mental discipline and makes us to understand our own thinking process.

In Japa, we are using a mantra to mentally chant. These mantras are name of the Lord that represents wholeness and also invokes the attitude of surrender. Through the repetition of the mantra and invoking the attitude of surrender, we slowly gain attachment to the Lord and that which is permanent. Through this process we discover our true nature that is happiness and that is permanent.

For example, the mantra “Om Namah Shivaya” means “Unto the Lord I surrender”. There are many such puranic mantras

- Om Namo Narayanaya
- Om Namah Sivaya
- Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

Few Mantras from Vedanta

- Tat Tvamasi
- Aham Brahmasmi
- Ayam Atma Brahma

The seeker who wants to be established in the knowledge of Self has to follow certain disciplines, practicing them regularly, till the mind is prepared to gain Self-knowledge.

1. **Setting up an altar and quiet place** - In Japa, we are trying to withdraw the mind from the world of outer objects and tune it to the mantra. It is necessary that the mind's attention is not distracted and its energies not dissipated by interacting with the world of objects and beings. Our mind is the one entity which is totally neglected. For practice of Japa, assign a room or corner in your home and setup an altar with picture of your ista devata. Having a separate place in the home for spiritual practices provides us the right atmosphere to be free from the distractions.
2. **Asana** - Having setup the altar and created the necessary atmosphere of solitude, we have to sit on a proper seat 'asana' for Japa. The atmosphere surrounding the seat of Japa, should be such that it inspires the mind.
3. **Posture** - On the seat of Japa, one should sit with the legs forming a firm base, the upper body erect and upright without any tension anywhere. The posture should be such that one can sit comfortably for a while until the Japa practice is done.
4. **Invoking the Lord** - After sitting comfortably see the beautiful form of the Lord. Invoke the Lord in your heart. Mentally pray and offer prostrations to the Lord, seeking His blessings for the strength to check the wanderings of the mind.
5. **Salutations to the teacher** - After invoking the Lord, invoke the Guru, prostrate mentally to your Guru, and worship him with humility and love. It is taught in Viveka chudamani, that when the mind is tuned to the Guru's mind by doing service to the Guru and listening to whatever is being taught by him; the Truth indicated by the words of the teacher will be understood.

6. **Invoking the seeker of Truth** - After invoking the blessings of Guru, sit with an attitude of being a seeker of Truth. Generally, we identify ourselves with various roles that we are involved - a householder, an officer, a friend and so on. If we sit with all the other roles, then we will be meditation on these activities and not on the nature of the Truth. Hence it is essential that when we sit for Japa, we must sit with the attitude, "I am only a seeker of the Truth". We instruct the mind "I am having a meeting with my own Self. Now I am a seeker of Truth"
7. **Repetition of the Mantra** - After prostrations to the Lord, and the Guru, mantra Japa is undertaken. This involves repeating the name of the Lord. Mantra is repeated with love and complete devotion. It is the nature of the mind to go away from the mantra to other thoughts or distractions. When you notice the mind has wandered away from the mantra, bring the mind back to repeating the mantra
8. **Use of Japa maala** - It is not easy for beginners to know when the mind gets distracted and goes away to other thoughts. So a Japa maala is used. Japa maala contains 108 beads. Every time the mantra is repeated, one bead is moved. The physical movement of bead and mantra repetition goes together. When the mind gets distracted, the physical movement of the bead also stops and the sadhaka will be alerted. Sadhaka then can remember to repeat the mantra and continue.

## 28. Gayatri Mantra

### Meaning of OM

- *Gayatri Mantra* is considered as one of the oldest available divine hymns.
- It is observed that by the repetition of this Mantra with the right understanding of its sacred meaning, the ordinary negative tendencies in a human mind can be erased.
- This *Mantra* is never chanted for the purpose of material gains, physical or otherwise.
- All *Mantras* have preceding deity and seer
  - *Gayatri Mantra* is dedicated to the Lord Savitr, an accepted representation of Lord Sun. Though there are some scholars who protest against this. The Sun gives all illumination to the world and any prayer for light should certainly be addressed to "the source of all light" in the material world — the Sun. In *Geeta* the Lord says, "The light that pervades, The Sun and the Moon are all my Light". Thus Savitr, the Lord of Gayatri, is nothing other than, the light of Consciousness, the Infinite, and the Absolute.
  - The seer of *Gayatri mantra* is Saint Visvamitra.

### Name Significance of the Mantra

- *Gayatri Mantra* is otherwise called as *Savitri* Mantra. In the ancient Vedic literature this Mantra was indicated familiarly as *Savitri* and this term has been given to *Gayatri* because it is dedicated to the deity called *Savitri*.
- This *Mantra* is written out in *Gayatri-metre* (of Sanskrit grammar) and, therefore, by tradition, this mantra has come to be known as *Gayatri*. The *Gayatri metre* is generally constituted of three lines of eight syllables each.

### Word Meaning:

- *OM*, Pranava
  - Of all the Mantras the most powerful and the significant one is the single-syllable incantation called the Pranava - 'OM'.
  - OM represents the Self, which is the Supreme non dual Reality. The Self is known in four states, namely, the waking-state, the dream-state, the deep sleep-state and the fourth

state, called the 'Turiya'. All these states are represented in the three sounds of OM. (i.e. A, U and M) and the silence that follows and surrounds the syllable.

- The entire history of the syllable is in the revelations of the Vedas and in the declarations of the Upanisads, and this history in the hands of the later philosophers developed into what came to be known as the Sphota—vada or philosophy of the word.
  - This Sphota has its symbol in the word OM. Thus, in the 'Maitrayana Upanishad', it has been said that there is one Brahman without words and a second, a word-Brahman, we are told that the word is the syllable OM. The sound of OM is also called Pranava, meaning that it is something that pervades life, or runs through Prana or breath.
  - Mandakya Upanishad first treats 'OM' in three states of waking, dream and sleep, but then passes on to the fourth (Turiya), The state of Perfect Bliss when the individual self recognizes its identity with the Supreme.
  - The syllable 'OM' symbolizes both the spheres: (a) the phenomenal, visible sphere of the 'Jagat', wherein the manifestations of time and space appear and perish, and (b) the transcendental, timeless sphere of the imperishable being, which is beyond yet one within.
- *Bhur-Bhurvar Svah*
    - These are (i) *Bhur Loka*, the physical earth, which is associated with the gross body; (ii) *Bhuvar Loka*, the world next to the physical and closely connected with it but constituted of finer matter, which is associated with the subtle body; and (iii) *Svarga Loka*, the heavenly world, which is associated with the casual body.
    - *Bhur-Bhuvar-Svar* denoting the 'three worlds; are called *Vyahrtis*
    - *Loka* – is generally translated as 'world' but in its etymological meaning it signifies the 'field of experience'. The Field of experiences in this context is related to how the mind/thoughts associate within the gross, subtle and causal bodies.
    - Of the entire possible fourteen *Lokas*, as traced by Rishis, the limited egocentric comes to play in three worlds of reincarnation and repeated deaths.
    - On chanting the *Vyahrtis*, the meditator can visualize the 'three worlds' as arising from, existing in and disappearing into OM.
  - *OM Tat-Savitur Varenyam*  
*Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi*  
*Dhiyo Nah Pracodayat*
    - The first line above is only seven syllables, and for the *Gayatri-metre* 8 syllable requirement is explained as (a) Nyam made up of two (b) adding the Pranava, OM.
    - *Savitur*- Sun or Savitr - Savitr, the Lord of Gayatri, is nothing other than, the light of Consciousness, the Infinite, the Absolute
  - The mantra means: "*We meditate upon the auspicious godly light of the Lord Sun; may that heavenly light illumine our thought-flow in our intellect*"
  - In our inner life the sun represents the light giver, the illuminator of all experiences, the *Atman*.
  - This Pure Consciousness in us, around which the matter envelopments function with mathematical precision, (just as the planets revolve around the Sun at their appointed speed and each along its appointed path) is being invoked to shine more and more in our intellect.
  - We appeal to this inner 'Sun-of-life' to illumine the intellect. The infinite light of wisdom, the Supreme Self is never contaminated in its eternal effulgence. It is ever the same.
  - Rephrased, the meaning is "*May my intellect be steady without agitation; may it be clean without the dirt of passions, may the light of Consciousness come to shine forth a brilliant beam of its radiance through my intellect*". Thus, *May my perception of the world be clearer, my discrimination subtler, and my judgments correct and quick, my comprehension of situations and beings be precise and wise.*

## When to Recite / mediate upon on Gayatri Mantra

- In Manusmriti, it reads “In the early dawn by doing this Japa standing, one ends all sins committed during the night, and by doing the Japa in the evening by sitting, one ends one’s sins committed during the day”. – Sin is referred as mental agitations.
- Chanting this mantra was added to the daily worship *Sandhya Vandan*, (*‘Sandhya’* means the blending point of day and night) which used to be a only a purification act.
- The morning prayers are done most profitably between 4.30 A.M and 5 A.M. which is called the *Brahma-Mahurta*; and in the evening between 6 P.M. and 7 P.M. according to Manusmriti
- As part of the *SandhyaVandan* ritual, water is held in hand and offered (*Aryham*) after each recital. As this water in the folded palm is offered, the devotee says: “This Sun is Brahman” (*Asavadityo Brahma*) and performs Atma-Pradaksina; turning round himself by his right. This signifies a suggestion that the devotee is ‘going round’ in reverence and devotion round the Lord Sun — the Brahman which is the Self in himself.
- This mantra can be chanted / repeated by anyone (including ladies) anytime, except at night. That is a rule.

## False Notions of Gayatri Mantra

- Over time *Saktas* gave the idea that *Gayatri* is the infinite goddess and made her a feminine deity.
- Attributed as Mother of Vedas and few believe chanting Gayatri mantra they have chanted Vedas

## Popular Beliefs

- For anyone frightened in the dark *Gayatri Mantra* chanting is immediately advised to get over the nervousness of its fright. This belief proves that the very name of the Mantra is fully justified. The term *Gayatri* itself means (from Manusmriti) “That Mantra which protects him who chants it”.
- Other believe by chanting this mantra 16 times, the bad omens are removed.

## Gayatri Diksha / Upanayanam

- A Hindu boy is initiated into the *Gayatri Mantra* very early in his life. This is done under the family social ritual called the Upanayanam ceremony. The word Upanayanam means ‘Bringing nearer’ — bringing near a preceptor who initiates the boy by giving him the sacred *Gayatri Mantra*.
- In the Vedic literature we find mention of the *Gayatri Diksha* - the term *Diksha* means a discipline which one must undergo in order that one may become fit for taking part in any Vedic ritual.

## Questions & Clarifications:

### Q: What is the ‘recommended’ or ‘proper way’ to chant OM?

A: While the chanting in a particular way does possess many advantages, as Vedantic students, our focus is on the meaning / symbolism of chanting OM. When Chanting OM, visualize the 3 states (Waking, Dream, and deep sleep state) OM represents. The silence that follows symbolizes the ‘Turyia’ – the fourth state. The reason we chant longer (and 3 times too) is to enable our mind/thoughts to focus on these states and symbolism.

The same applies to chanting any other mantra. The metric rhythm in mantras is to enable us to chant these mantras with ease and keep the mind alert.

### Q: Why does it say that Gayatri Mantra can be chanted at any time, but not at Night – and it is a rule?

A: When the reason cannot be easily understood, it is prescribed as a Rule. During night mind is more Tamasic in nature. During night mind is agitated and is not calm. As *Gayatri Mantra* is chanted for the self-realization, night time is not appropriate. Like rivers flow into oceans without effort, our mind is also tuned during the ‘*Sandhya*’ periods of the day. Thus these times are prescribed for the chanting *Gayatri Mantra*.

**Q: What does it mean “field of experience” with respect to Loka or Worlds?**

A: In the context of the Gayatri Mantra’s first line – Bhur-Bhuvar-Svah, which represent the 3 lokas –

- (1) Bhur – the physical earth, which is associated with the gross body
- (2) Bhuvar, the world next to the physical and closely connected with it but constituted of finer matter, which associated with the subtle body
- (3) Svarga, the heavenly world which is associated with the Casual body.

While chanting this line one brings attention to these concepts, there by visualizing, “I” am not these. The “field of experience” here refers to how the mind identifies itself within these.

(Refer to Panchakosha Viveka, from Ch 23 'Fundamentals of Vedanta', regarding Gross, Subtle & Casual bodies)

## **29. At War with Mind**

One of the common challenges a devotee performing Japa (for purifying of mind) or Meditation (contemplation for self-realization) is a wandering mind. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of the strategies of the mind and full control of ourselves by which we can hold the mind back to the point of concentration becomes absolutely essential, if we are to win ultimately in this subjective war (the Mahabharata with in us...the Pandavas and the Kauravas....the good against the evil...) against our own lower self.

Following are some methods to bring back a wandering mind to focus on Japa or Meditation.

Be aware of wandering mind when it happens and forcefully bring back the mind to Japa or Meditation.

1. Use a clean environment to avoid distractions related to environment (Cleanliness is next to Godliness).
2. By singing the Lord's glories with eyes open and focusing on the symbol of the Lord (Sincerity of purpose is the secret of the success in spiritual seeking).
3. Start by changing the direction of the uncontrolled mind from limitless filed of materialistic path to spiritualistic path. Take the help of a Guru and meditate upon the Lord. It is a journey; continue to increase the love and devotion for the Lord to ultimately win over the mind.
4. Persuade the mind to realize the glories of meditation (like a loving mother intelligently controls her child in its mischief).
5. Plead the mind to come back by repeating to you the blissful experiences of great masters, their experiences, which they had acquired through the process of meditation.
6. Persuade the mind to come back from wandering thoughts by promising a "free ride" into those thoughts after the meditation.
7. If one is still having difficulty in bringing mind back to meditation, fasting is a good method to persuade the body and mind to behave properly.
8. If mind still is agitated and wanders, identify with intellect and observe the mind in perfect detachment in the spirit of sympathetic criticism.

Additionally,

- In preparing ourselves for meditation, we should acquire the ability to look within ourselves.

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- Practice introspection at the end of each day.
  - Develop a devotional attitude.
  - A disease is not cured by a single pill, need to take in smaller portions over a period of time. Similarly, we need to make slow but steady renunciation of the false and develop the true.
  - Mind cannot be in controlled just for a few minutes a day, but we need to watch the mind as we go about our daily routine all day.

### 30. Secret of Action: Talk-1

- Action is inevitable. Action is a must, no one can avoid action. We stop action only upon being dead.
  - All living things act. Action by plants and animals are more scripted, but only human beings have the ability to choose their actions.
  - Man's actions are based on their Likes and dislikes (Raaga & Devesha).
  - Most of man's actions are based on satisfying their ego.
  - A common notion today is higher the standard of living, one has to do lesser work. (i.e more materialistic wealth one can avoid work).
  - Rishis defined the life as 'Continuous series of experiences'. An experience is constituted of three entities - The Experiencer (Subject), The Experienced (Object), The Experiencing (the relationship between the Subject and Object).
  - The field of enquiry of the Rishis, was the 'Experiencer'. Rishis tried to develop the inner personality of man and make him independent of the environment and happenings in the world. Goal was to raise the 'Standard of life' in man.
  - Rishis found that experiences emanate from different levels of our personality - Physical, Emotional, Intellectual personalities. Through the practice of Religion, our personalities can be tuned to raise the 'Standard of Life'.
  - Great Rsis, based on the quality of work, categorized people into 3 categories.
    - (1) **Laborer**: One who is merely working to satisfy Ego.
    - (2) **Worker**: While satisfying the Ego, one who is also striving to help the society.
    - (3) **Men of Achievement**. One who acts not to satisfy Ego, or for society, but to with a sense 'Right thing to be done'.
      - These are seekers of fulfilment.
      - These are rare and lift the entire society to a higher standard of life, higher dignity of morality and a great virtue of life.
  - A person who is riddled with discontentment cannot act beautifully in the world. One needs to learn to be content with what they have.
  - A successful person in any field does not waste time enjoying the materialistic pleasure of the world (such as movies, clubs etc).
  - Prosperity, culture and progress are only possible if one is a 'human' at mind and intellect level. (In reference to Plant, Animal & Human people for earlier chapters).
  - We are always complaining that we are out of time, and lack time to do anything. In reality we are living most of time enjoying in sensuous pleasures.
  - Intellectually we have become so potbellied, that any amount of time doesn't seem to be enough. This brings disgruntlement and discontentment at heart.
  - The secret of success is devotion and hard work, whether it is at social activities or for spiritual sadana.
  - Men of Achievement, in any professions, always concentrate on the profession.
  - To obtain maximum happiness and to become *men of achievement* we need an inspiring ideal goal.
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## Secret of Action: Talk –II

- Everyone has the same 24 hrs per day, yet men of achievement achieve more compared to rest, because they act in the world outside with an intention or motive that lends enchantment to the very work.
- The external stimulus is captured thru our sense organs (Eyes/Vision, Nose/Smell, Ears/Hearing, Skin/Touch, & Tongue/Taste). It is processed by our mind; judged by our intellect and we act using our organs of actions. The 'Judgment' of the mind is based on vasanas, the impressions of past experiences.
- Each individual acts differently to a given same situation differently, because the intellect (which is formed based on vasanas) differs.
- The efficiency of our work depends on the state of our mind and not on the duration of the time we work.
- The quality of action is improved by noble ideals (ideals that inspire one positively). (Ex: Spirit of freedom, spirit of reverence to country, spirit of sacrifice for society are a few noble ideals).
- The greater the ideal, the brighter is the action and the product.
- When an individual works in the outside world with an ideal goal or vision of life to inspire, they discover new dynamism in their activities. They there by raise the standard of action within themselves.

## Secret of Action Talk – III (Joy - The Reward of Achievement)

- When individuals bump into unfavorable situations (don't see success at what they are pursuing) they generally tend to blame the situation (such as this tool is not working, the current economic situation is bad, world is heading to a disaster). When analyzed, it is not because of the world, but because of our own false and wrong responses to the challenges from the world.
- "World" Success and failures are our own successes and failures, not of the world outside.
- We need to learn how to meet our challenges and respond. The responses depend on the ideals one has.
- Ideals are developed when we have proper goals set in life
- As we discover a goal and surrender ourselves to that goal in life, we discover a new unknown column of energy within ourselves.
- On discover of this new energy, and if we lose track of the goal, it either stagnates or dissipates into unnecessary channels and thus become unproductive.
- The leakage/dissipation of energy happens thru 3 channels.
  1. Memories of the past – (Ex - Our past failure could prevent us to act)
  2. Anxieties of the future – (Ex – We get worried about what if I don't succeed)
  3. Excitement in the present. – (Ex- We get over-anxious about the current situation)
- Today machines have displaced human producing. We all just build our part to make the whole and in the process may lose the joy of creating.
- If we change our thinking attitude, and produce the best quality in any work we preform, the joy of having done the right thing can be felt.
- The action can be good only when the actor, the individual, has got a great purpose or goal.
- The real enjoyment is in the activity where your head and heart can come in.



## You, Me and God

- God is not a person or individual who sits above the clouds and judges men, dispenses favors or punishments. He is the sole cause.
- That which is beyond the point at which the intellect is stalled is GOD.
- God is conceived as the Life Principle in everyone.
- GOD cannot be described. As per Bhagavad Gita, “Weapons cleave it not; fire burns it not; water wets it not; wind dries it not; cannot be cut, nor burnt nor wetted nor dried. It is not material; it is not matter.”
- The Idols in temples are to remind the devotees of the ideal, the Supreme. The human mind can conceive the formless supreme God though the idol worship. Idol is not God, but represents God.
- A pure mind is one which is calm, free from agitations. Agitations are caused by our likes and dislikes.
- In Bhagavad Gita, second chapter, Sloka 63, the 8 steps of downfall are described.
  - (1) Man starts to think of an object.
  - (2) Thinking leads to attachment of the object.
  - (3) Attachment leads to desire to possess the object.
  - (4) Unfulfilled desires lead to anger.
  - (5) Anger causes total delusion.
  - (6) The delusion state leads to loss of Memory.
  - (7) Non-availability of memory leads to destruction of discrimination.
  - (8) Finally, the man perishes.
- There are three great entrances to hell – Lust, Anger and Greed.
- Our shastras has laid down a clear procedure – the three fold practice – *Shravana*(attentive listening) *Manana* (contemplating on the ideas) and *Nididhyasana* (meditating upon those).
- Wealth is not a taboo for the seeker, but the constant craving for wealth is.
- “*Best day to start is today! A better day will not come*”.