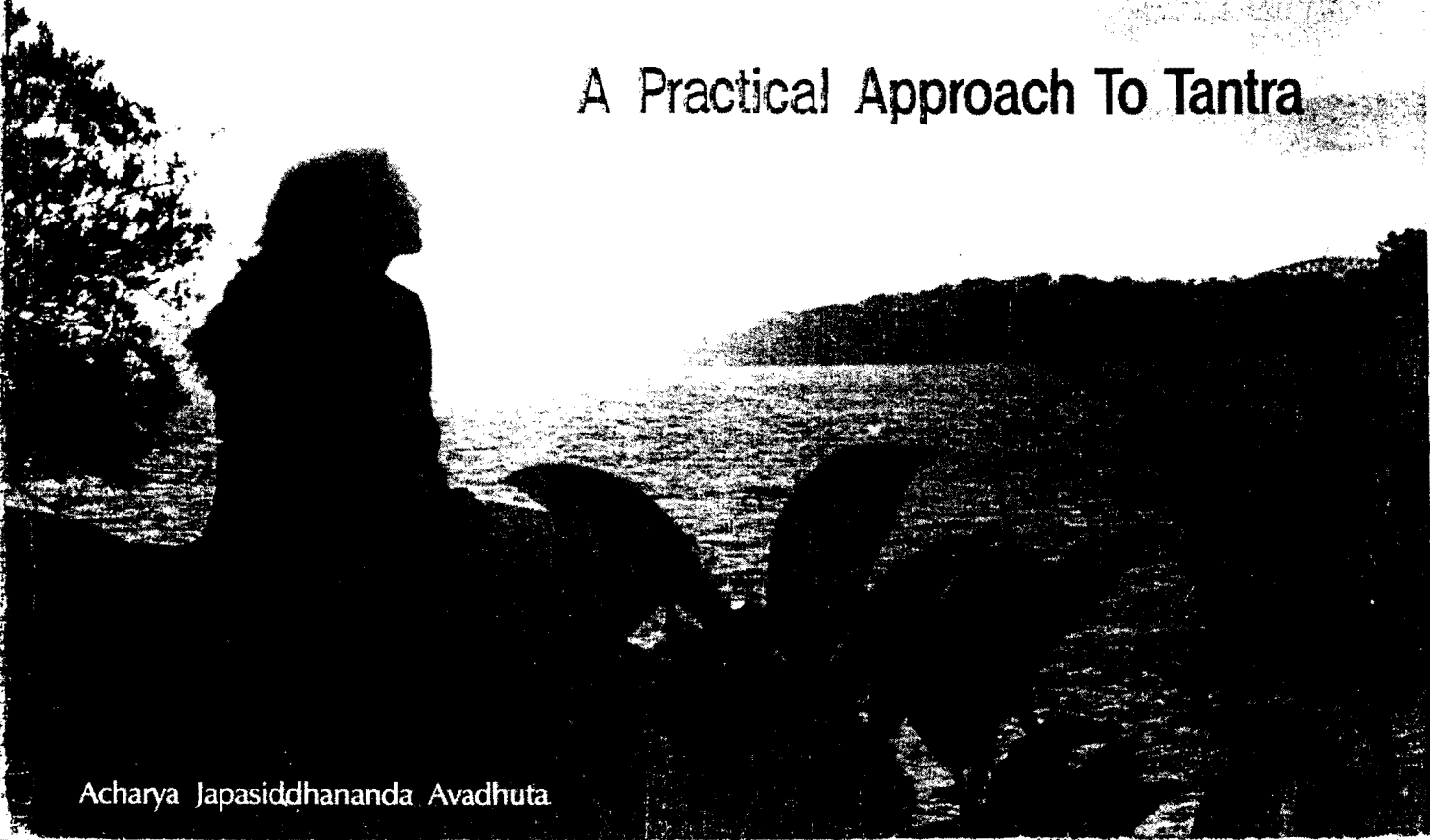


# **Liberating The Mad Monkey**

**A Practical Approach To Tantra**

Liberating the Mad Monkey    Ac Japasiddhananda

Acharya Japasiddhananda Avadhuta



# **Liberating The Mad Monkey**

**A Practical Approach To Tantra**

**Ac. Japasiddhananda Avt.**

*Cover photo: Kapil Am*

*Published by Ananda Marga Publications, Australia*

*1st Edition*

*Copyright 1982 by Ananda Marga Publications*

*All rights reserved*

*Printed in Australia*

*ISBN 0-9593190-9-X*

*Proceeds of this book are not the property of any individual but will be used in  
the further dissemination of the wisdom of Tantra.*

*For further reading, numerous printed works of  
Shrii Shrii Anandamurti are available from  
Ananda Marga Publications.*

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>The Cosmic Dance</i>                                  | 1  |
| <i>Tantra: A Timeless Science</i>                        | 3  |
| <i>Meditation: Directing the Stream of Consciousness</i> | 11 |
| <i>Asanas: Yogic Innercises</i>                          | 15 |
| <i>Yogic Ethics: Maintaining a Dynamic Balance</i>       | 24 |
| <i>Food for Consciousness</i>                            | 38 |
| <i>Taming the Mad Monkey</i>                             | 46 |
| <i>Mind to Matter — Matter to Mind</i>                   | 53 |
| <i>The Unfolding Mind</i>                                | 66 |
| <i>Karma: Your Best Friend or Worst Enemy</i>            | 73 |
| <i>Stepping Stones</i>                                   | 79 |
| <i>Behind the Theory ... The Guru</i>                    | 85 |
| <i>Yours, Mine and Ours</i>                              | 90 |
| <i>Glossary</i>  | 98 |



# The Cosmic Dance

## INTRODUCTION

If a symbol could amply express the spirit of Tantra it would surely be 'Nataraja', the image of Shiva dancing the Cosmic dance.

Aldous Huxley chose Nataraja as the symbol through which the characters of his novel 'Island' confront the meaning of life.

*"Dancing in all the worlds at once. And first of all in the world of matter. Look at the great round halo, fringed with the symbols of fire, within which the god is dancing. It stands for nature, for the world of mass and energy. Within it Shiva-Nataraja dances the dance of endless becoming and passing away. It's his liila, his Cosmic play. Playing for the sake of playing, like a child. But this child is the order of things. His toys are galaxies, his playground is infinite space, and between finger and finger every interval is a thousand million light years . . .*

*". . . at play among the stars and in the atoms. But also at play within every living thing, every sentient creature, every child and man and woman."*

Tantra represents the endeavour to penetrate the mystic link between the finite and the Infinite, the individual and the Cosmos. Whilst to some, whatever is spiritual may seem to exclude that which is earthly, both are harmoniously reconciled in Tantra. Spiritual enlightenment and the individual's fulfilment of a meaningful existence are both seen as complementary needs. Every aspect of life becomes an integral part of Tantra, whether it be food and health or philosophy and meditation. When channelised with proper awareness, all becomes part of the flow towards human perfection and spiritual liberation.

Even though some aspects of Tantra may come naturally and

spontaneously, the vastness of its scope and the intricacies of its practices make it a formidable science to master. Certainly its depths cannot be adequately fathomed by a book, as even the most accomplished writers on the subject have acknowledged. Tantra is a science to be learnt and practised with the assistance and guidance of a spiritual preceptor who is both master practitioner and loving guide. This book is based on the teachings of such a personality, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. It is by no means an in-depth study, but rather an introduction.

At the risk of over-simplifying some of the more complex concepts, an effort has been made to present them in an easy to understand form, in the hope that they will be understood by a person coming across them for the first time. For similar reasons, the use of Sanskrit has been kept to a minimum. Sanskrit terms have only been used where there is no clear English equivalent. The introduction of each new Sanskrit term is accompanied by an explanation within the context of its use. A glossary of

these terms is also included for easy reference.

The inspiration for this book came from meditation teachers who felt the need for a handbook summarising the essential fundamentals of Tantra. The twelve chapters are based upon a course format of twelve workshops which is being used extensively in several countries.

I would like to express my gratitude by acknowledging the contributions and assistance given by: Acharya Nalinaks'a Brc, Mark Dimelow, Stephen Gunther, Nicholas Hardy, Ah Tee Chia, Tim Anderson, Peter Jackson and Dr Jitendra Singh.

and to my Guru,  
for His encouraging smile.

**Acharya Japasiddhananda Avadhuta**  
**2-2-1982**

# Tantra : A Timeless Science

Tantra literally means "that which liberates from darkness". Its spiritual practices, centred around meditation, endeavour to lift the shroud of egocentricity and narrow-mindedness which envelops and stultifies the boundless potential of the human mind.

The overwhelming characteristics of Tantra are its profoundly positive view of the universe and its sweeping embrace of the phenomenal world as an expression of infinite and essential Consciousness.

With a view of all existence springing from the same infinite Consciousness, Tantra's underlying principle is that each individual, by penetrating the core of his/her own unit consciousness, can experience the unity of all things and transcend the turbulent flux of sensory perception and its divisive perspective of the relative world. The ultimate objective in Tantra is union

with unqualified and limitless Consciousness — a state beyond the inhibiting ego and its segmentation of reality.

## Consciousness Liberation

We live in a world of fantastic change — a world that leaps ahead in its understanding and knowledge of the mundane. Post-industrial society is touted as the age of information. Scientific advancement, especially computerisation and new means of communication, is placing huge amounts of information at our fingertips.

But while our minds are boggled by a new golden age of science and companies scramble in a furious race to dominate rapidly expanding markets, global society languishes from a lack of spiritual understanding of human nature. In amongst frenzied activity, inner harmony and understanding is crushed beneath



the weight of overburdened nervous systems.

As the global society becomes increasingly urbanised, stress and tension grow exponentially. People find themselves assailed on all levels, emotionally, physically and socially. Urban life, the focal point of post-industrial society, presents new and complex dilemmas.

Wedded together are a host of psychological and environmental pressures which have resulted in a disintegration of personality to a greater degree perhaps than any time in human history. The melting pot of stress has brought a realisation of the need for a means of achieving inner cohesion. In psychology, researchers and practitioners have begun to verify the efficacy of mind expanding techniques of meditation in reintegrating the personality. Yet, as we will see in the following chapters, Tantric meditation and its attendant practices are much more than a process of resolving stress factors, and are intended to elevate the individual to a state of liberated consciousness.

### Why Meditate?

Much of modern psychotherapy is based on the notion that, throughout life, each person is conditioned by environmental and sociological factors including parents, friends, relatives, workmates and schoolmates, all of whom impose different attitudes on the individual, moulding his/her personality. This conditioning, through variously described mental processes, creates tensions within the human psyche which in turn may result in different neuroses and psychoses.

*One must remember, theories are not the liberators of human beings. The liberator is that high competence which helps to keep open and unbarred every small or large vista of sentient existence — that vigorous capability which fuses the hard reality of existence with the ultimate reach of the visionary world.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Many therapies are based on the principle that, by locating and recognising the source of a particular mental tension, it may be understood and coped with; or that, by re-experiencing the situation in which a particular tension was formed, the root of the tension may be expressed and thereby eliminated.

The type and extent of conditioning recognised depends on the school of thought. For example many schools believe the individual to be a 'blank slate' at the time of birth, upon which all likes, dislikes and beliefs are formed. Others trace conditioning and the creation of tension back to the womb and prenatal experiences.

The concept of conditioning and its psychological impact is important to Tantra as well, and helps in understanding meditation. But while Tantra's view of conditioning is in many ways similar to that of modern psychology, its understanding of the extent and the binding influence of conditioning is significantly different.

Tantra expands the parameters of conditioning to encompass the entire individuality of a person. All sensory impressions and thoughts, initiated or experienced by the individual, combine to make up his/her ego identity.

Thus, in a pure unconditional state, the mind completely sheds the restricting ego and replaces it with the identity of universal Consciousness. Individuality gives way to a feeling of oneness with all things.

This stripping away of conditioning from the mind is expedited

by meditation. By identifying the mind with essential Consciousness, beyond the ego's preconceived vision, the ego is whittled away, revealing an identity more meaningful and a view of the world which is fresh, clear and unprejudiced.

### **An Unresolved Question**

Leaving aside the complexities of conditioning, spiritual awareness achieved from meditation may be viewed much more simply.

During deep reflection we sometimes wonder what we are. Our mind asks the fundamental question of what consciousness is. The contemplative feeling that we possess 'consciousness' is an unresolved mystery to us. Like the physicist who ponders the basis of matter, the uncluttered mind ponders the basis of human awareness.

However, rarely does the thought occur to us as we are normally too busy running our lives and are plunged into the endless task of satisfying physical and emotional needs, both ours and others. Gradually we are numbed to the idea of consciousness, which we simply take for granted.

Meditation comes as a relief, a time in which we can once again make contact with our own consciousness. It is a time we can penetrate the superficiality of our everyday thought processes and go deep within our minds — so that when we return to our everyday existence it has new meaning and significance.

The mind in meditation is no longer objectified or engrossed with the phenomenal world but is concentrated on consciousness,

which introduces another perspective for us to consider.

### **Beyond Everyday Awareness**

To most, the reality which is perceived with the help of the five senses is ultimate, or at least treated as such. Like the person who lives in one particular locality all his/her life and believes it to be the only place in the world, we believe our limited perception of things to be complete.

Science has shown how severely circumscribed our senses are. Only a very small section of the huge spectrum of light-waves which permeate our everyday existence are perceived by our eyes and similarly only a fraction of vibrating sound-waves are picked up by our ears. In all, we observe only a small part of the reality which science attests to knowing.

Even more surprising is when we analyse what we can perceive we find, on a sub-atomic level, it does not exist in the terms we view it. What we see as solid matter, on a subatomic level, is numerous particles moving at great speeds in huge areas of empty space. Adding to this dilemma is the fact that physicists now explain that they cannot determine if these so-called 'particles' have any real 'substance' at all. So what we once believed to be tangible and definable, on other measurable levels is unrecognisable and makes nonsense of our understanding and perception.

The innumerable wavelengths measured by science with sensitive instruments, did not exist for people of a century or so ago.

Science is now discovering these waves and has learnt to utilise this new knowledge.

It remains open to speculation as to what science may stumble upon in the future, but Tantra has for millenia recognised the myriad waveforms which exist throughout the universe and has described the process of creation in terms of wavelengths.

Science thus far has only described matter and physical energy in terms of wavelengths. Tantra explains the mind and psychic energy as waveforms as well. What we perceive with our senses and science records with the aid of instruments, according to Tantra is only one level of relative reality, the crudest level. Above physical reality are various mental levels which cannot be explored with the use of physical instruments or the senses but must be understood with the use of a more subtle instrument, the mind.

Meditation is a means of retuning the mind, of directing it from a purely sensory appreciation of the world. We can then appreciate the subtler realms of existence and recognise the deeper beauty of the world in which we live.

### **No One Reason**

Because meditation is so deeply rooted in a search for the essence of human life, there is no one simple explanation of what it is and no one reason why people begin its practice. Whatever reason, true meditation is not limited by initial motivation.

As the horizons of the mind expand through meditation, con-



*Spirituality is not a utopian ideal  
but a practical philosophy which  
can be practised and realised in  
everyday life. Spirituality stands  
for evolution and elevation, not for  
superstition and pessimism.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

sciousness is uncovered and initial reasons are dissolved by the evolving expansion of the sense of spiritual self. Ultimately we find that what we thought were personal reasons for meditation were really reflections of our spiritual nature's desire to express itself.

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Meditation is a spiritual practice which has evolved over thousands of years, its earliest known roots being the practices of Tantra, first introduced in India some 7000 years ago by Sadashiva, a great yogi who lived in and around the Himalayan mountains.

Even in this ancient time Tantra was an all-round science of life, covering many aspects of personal and social development. The philosophy was not limited to subjective meditation but extended into the fields of literature, art, dance and medicine — it was a “ holistic” approach to life.

Over the course of years many different branches and offshoots of Tantra developed. These gradually formed more specialised disciplines known as the different types of yoga.

Yoga' means 'union' and refers to the union of the individual with the Cosmic Consciousness. The various yogas seek to attain Cosmic union through emphasis of a particular aspect of Tantra, often to the exclusion of other equally important aspects. The most well-known forms are listed below.

**Jinana Yoga**, literally the “Yoga of Knowledge”, which emphasises study and a philosophical approach to increasing intellectual awareness, to the point where realisation of the Absolute is attained.

**Karma Yoga**, or the “Yoga of Action”, is the art of performing service-oriented actions whilst the mind surrenders the sense of doership, vanity and expectation to the Cosmic Consciousness, which is seen as residing in everything and everyone.

**Bhakti Yoga**, the “Yoga of Devotion”, seeks to cultivate the pure attracting force of love for the Cosmic Consciousness. It brings the aspirant in close proximity to the Beloved so that realisation comes.

**Hatha Yoga** is the approach involving various disciplines for the body, including yoga postures, breathing exercises and purificatory techniques. This control and regulation of bodily functions helps one gain control of the mind, in order to reach one’s goal.

**Raja Yoga**, also known as ‘Astaunga Yoga’, is the name given to the “Eight Limbs of Yoga”: ethics, yoga postures, control of vital force through the breath, concentration, meditation and absorption in the Goal. Although all aspects of Raja Yoga have been practised by yogis for thousands of years, since the time of Shiva, they were systematically codified as the “Yoga Aphorisms” by Patanjali about 2500 years ago.

The division of Tantra into different, specialised areas led to its

decline as an effective and complete way of life. Different schools, by concentrating on particular areas, neglected the overall wisdom of Tantra.

### **What is Meditation?**

Many people mistakenly believe that meditation is an instant product: just sit down and the process works magically, lulling the meditator into a thoughtless world of bliss, stillness and shining lights. When these experiences do not come in the first weeks of meditation, new practitioners suppose they’re doing something wrong or that their technique is defective. Consequently they discontinue the practice because of simple misunderstanding.

So what is to be expected in the first weeks of meditation? ‘The mind is like a mad monkey stung by a scorpion’, said the great yogi Ramakrishna, and everyone who starts meditation and tries concentrating knows this to be true. Especially in the beginning, the mind is uncontrollable and unruly. As you sit down many thoughts arise – you drift off thinking of something else; sounds and noise from without sidetrack your internal concentration, your body won’t stay still and you finally get up thinking that nothing has happened.

But it has! By constant practice your capacity to hold your mind steady is building. Much as the body of an athlete in training acquires great physical strength and stamina, so too the struggling meditator develops mental strength and the capacity to concentrate. It is only after a time that the stage comes when

we can truly fix our mind on the object of meditation and hold it there — then true meditation is performed.

.Another puzzling experience for some is that the mind appears even more unsteady after commencing meditation. More thoughts than usual arise in the mind and this is taken to mean that the process is not being done correctly. Just the opposite is true. The function of meditation is to internally work on the mind by clearing out all the distortions and impressions our past actions have registered upon our subconscious mind. It's like cleaning

house: in the middle of the process the house may look even messier than when we started, but by persevering and not quitting mid-stream we get it clean. So, as we continue to meditate, the mind becomes clearer and clearer.

Meditation is the effort to control and develop the mind to realise one's true nature. It is the means by which we can realise our full potential on all levels of existence: physical, mental and spiritual.

*Spirituality provides humanity with that subtle and tremendous power with which no other power can be compared. Therefore, with spirituality as the base, a rational philosophy should be evolved to deal with the physical, psychological and socio-philosophical problems of the day.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

# Meditation : Directing the Stream of Consciousness

Meditation is often viewed as sitting quietly, contemplating thoughts or analysing personal problems. Others believe it to be a practice of forcing the mind not to think, or to think of nothing, hence giving peace associated with escape from daily problems. But none of these images truly fits the yogic concept of meditation.

In yogic terminology, meditation is called 'dhyana', which literally means 'flowing of the mind'. It is a state of pure concentration in which the mind flows unobstructedly towards Cosmic Consciousness. At first the meditator may only be able to concentrate for a few seconds at a time, but with each effort his or her ability to direct mental energy increases.

When meditation becomes so profound that all feelings of individuality are consumed by the one thought of Cosmic Consciousness, the aspirant achieves total mental absorption, known as

'samadhi'. In this state the transcendental ecstasy of union with Cosmic Consciousness is felt.

Yogis refer to this Cosmic bliss as 'anandam'. Here the mind is liberated from all bondage and is merged in the blissful realisation of universal consciousness.

The meditational practices of Tantra systematically help to control and direct mental energy.

To direct the mind during meditation, we need a point to concentrate on. The mind wants to go towards that which is enjoyable, hence by the use of a "mantra", or special sound vibration, the mind is directed towards that which is most enjoyable – the bliss of Cosmic Consciousness. Mantra literally means "that which liberates the mind"; it is a word upon which the mind is concentrated during meditation. Mantras are in a language called San-



skrit — an ancient language known for its subtlety and exactness in expression. It was developed many thousands of years ago by yogis while in deep intuitional states.

There are various types of mantras, such as the mantras for collective chants and ceremonies, as well as those for meditation. The most effective mantra for meditation is the "Ista Mantra" (Ista means "goal"). It is a personal mantra through which the aspirant identifies him/her own self with the Goal in meditation, the Cosmic Consciousness.

### Qualities of the Ista Mantra

**1. Pulsative:—** The mantra is comprised of two syllables which can be coordinated with breathing — one syllable is used on breathing in and the other on breathing out. In this way, natural breathing keeps the mantra fixed in the mind and in turn the mantra makes breathing regulated and rhythmic.

Deep, regular breathing produces calm and collectedness, conducive to meditation, while breathing which is short, quick and/or irregular we associate with excited or agitated states of mind.

**2. Concentrational:—** Merging the mind in pure Consciousness is often misunderstood to mean making the mind void or empty. However the mind cannot function without entertaining some object or thought.

The mantra provides a focal point by which one can penetrate beyond the endless stream of thoughts and images which constantly pass through the mind.

**3. Ideational:—** Every word is a symbol. Upon being spoken, it creates a mental picture. For example, if a person mentions the word "flower", our minds conjure up images of flowers. This mental association is called psycho-physical parallelism, as the vibration of a particular physical form invokes a similar vibration in the mind.

"As you think so you become", a simple platitude, in this case has real application. People who constantly associate themselves with limited objects find that expansive thoughts and magnanimous ideas do not come easily. Their outlook is generally narrow and self-centred. On the other hand, those who constantly consider the welfare of others and endeavour to fathom profound ideas are more inclined to broad-mindedness and expansive thoughts. Even greater are the vistas of those who reflect on the Infinite and Its expression in all things. Such mental association is called psycho-spiritual parallelism.

To help achieve greater psycho-spiritual parallelism, the underlying meaning of all Ista Mantras is always the Infinite.

**4. Vibrational:—** The sound vibration of the mantra is itself adapted to suit the individual's mental vibration. Normally a person likes those things which have a vibration closely parallel to his or her own. People of different nations prefer different music, colours, and so on, according to their own mental vibration. Just as one type of music may be soothing to one person but meaningless to another, so too are individuals more suited to particular mantras.

The method of using the mantra is also important, for if the

mantra is used without properly preparing the mind, much of its efficacy is lost. The mind firstly must be freed from the normal tensions, attachments and distractions of everyday life, and then detached from the senses themselves. Only after fulfilling these prerequisites can it have its full effect. Important preparatory processes are taught together with the Ista Mantra.

### **Mantra and Kundalini**

Besides the above-mentioned effects, the Ista Mantra has a further important function, namely awakening the "sleeping divinity" or latent spiritual energy of human beings. This spiritual energy, known as the "kundalini", is related to the opening of different psychic energy centres of the body called "cakras" (explained further in Chapter 8). The aroused kundalini passes through the different cakras, resulting in the control of their corresponding psychic and physical functions. Through the control of these psycho-physical tendencies, one can fully control and develop the mind, allowing it to expand to a state of complete realisation — a complete expression of pure Consciousness.

### **Initiation**

Initiation is one of the most important events in the life of a spiritual aspirant. It is the time the personal technique of meditation is given and, more importantly, it is when the latent spiritual potential is first awakened.

In Tantra it is said that, when the disciple is ready, the Master appears. When a person develops an intense desire for spiritual

awareness, it is no coincidence that a teacher appears to provide guidance and direction.

Traditionally, meditation was taught directly by the master or Guru, however, for practical reasons, Ananda Marga meditation is taught by persons appointed by the Guru as his representatives. Although the Guru is not physically present, it is his spiritual power, embodied in the mantra, that brings spiritual awakening.

Initiation is the beginning, Having been provided with the tools and maps necessary for his or her journey, the aspirant must now tread the path, relying on personal strength and determination.

*Real education is that which leads  
to liberation.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

### **Regular Practice**

Meditation, to be effective, means regular practice. So, once initiated, the spiritual aspirant is advised to meditate twice daily, beginning with 15 - 30 minutes at a time. The best times to meditate are around sunrise and sunset, before breakfast and dinner and when the natural vibrations are conducive to spiritual practices.

Morning meditation begins the day in the right frame of mind, with the ideation of the Infinite; evening meditation helps clear the mind of the day's mundane activities, refocussing it on the

Infinite. Maintaining correct ideation brings a new perspective, clearing negative emotional stress and anxiety and creating inner calm and contentment.

### **Practical benefits**

Although meditation can only be fully appreciated by direct personal experience, the efforts of modern science to understand higher states of consciousness brought about by meditation are yielding useful results. By investigating the physiological changes that take place during meditational practices, practical applications of meditation are being found.

For example, regular practice has been shown to lower the blood pressure of patients with borderline hyper-tension by activating the stimulation of an integrated hypothalamic response known as

"the relaxation response". This decreased activity of the sympathetic nervous system during the practice of meditation may also carry over into non-meditational periods of the day.

Other effects include: the increase of oxygen delivery, which reduces the production and accumulation of lactic acid in the muscles, thereby reducing muscle fatigue; the significant reduction of the heart rate — electro-cardiogram recordings have shown a mean decrease of 8 beats per minute; increased skin resistance, together with increased auditory perceptual ability and perceptual motor performance; striking changes in the EEG (Electroencephalograph) recordings — it has been shown that the Alpha rhythm increases in amplitude, slows down in frequency and extends to anterior channels of the brain — this has a profound effect in the positive treatment of certain diseases.

*The persons who can dedicate their all to the thought of the Great and the inspiration of the Supreme are verily the greatest heroes. Such heroes indeed are the virtuous and they alone are capable of taking human history from darkness to light.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

# Asanas : Yogic Innersizes

Yogic postures, which are popularly known as yoga, were developed over several thousands of years of experimentation. Their long and insightful development has provided them with remarkably diverse therapeutic qualities, for which they are now widely practised.

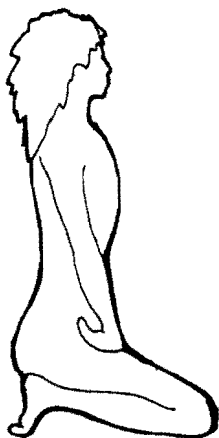
The postures' physiological benefits include relaxing and toning the nervous system, detoxifying the skeletal joints, maintaining flexibility, especially that of the spine, stimulating circulation and improving respiration.

However their impressive physical benefits tend to overshadow their vital contribution to emotional well-being, for which they were primarily designed.

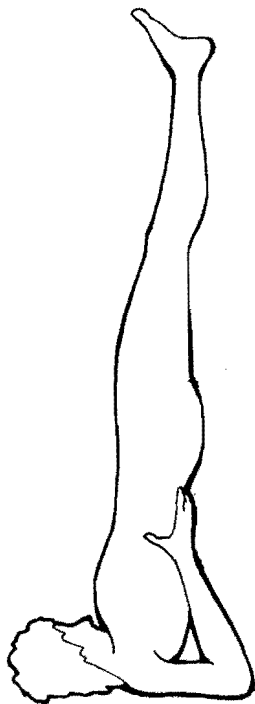
Yoga postures, called 'asanas' in Sanskrit, come from a branch of yoga known as Hatha Yoga. This was originated as a means

of controlling the mind through purifying and disciplining the physical body. Yogis recognised an inter-relatedness of mind and body and maintained that if the mind was to be made more subtle, so too must the body. Asanas were developed to produce the necessary harmony.

In this harmonising of mind and body, the central feature of asanas is their subtle effect on the glandular system of the body. The glands of the endocrine system are like emotional sub-stations and have profound and dramatic effects on a person's emotional state. Each of the major glands, such as the thyroid, thymus, pituitary, pineal and gonads, secretes hormones directly into the blood-stream, which in turn produce mental and behavioural changes. When hormonal secretions are either too high or too low then mental and/or physical aberrations are likely to occur. Many of the physical aberrations caused by malfunctioning endocrine glands are well known to medicine. However only



Viirasana



Sarvaungasana

recently are the psychic problems being explored and recognised.

For example, a condition which is becoming particularly well documented in medical and psychological journals is hypoglycemia, a dysfunction of the pancreas. Hypoglycemia causes blood sugar imbalances which are connected to many behavioural problems including manic depression, hyperactivity and other tensions leading to anti-social behaviour.

A vicious circle develops when behavioural patterns are entrenched over years, habituating the glands to imbalanced secretions which then reinforce and aggravate the mental condition. For example, stressful situations cause the adrenal glands to release adrenaline, but over-secretion of adrenaline stimulates the limbic system, the section of the brain associated with behavioural functions, which may then produce responses such as anger or rage.

Emotional stability created and maintained by asanas is fundamental to meditation. Emotional imbalances disrupt the mind, making effective meditation difficult if not impossible. The goal of yogic practices is to create the most conducive environment, both internally and externally, for meditation. Asanas attune the body to meditation, just as a guitar is tuned before a performance.

The practical effects of asanas on the glands have been well expressed by Dr Steven Brena in his book 'Yoga and Medicine'. Describing the shoulderstand posture (sarvaungasana) he writes:

*"The visceral muscles, metamerically corresponding to the lower*

*back and abdominal muscles, are constituents of all the organs contained in the abdomen. Their contraction and relaxation, therefore, revitalise in an excellent way the functioning of the stomach, the intestines, the liver, the pancreas, the spleen, the kidneys, the bladder and of the uterus in women, eliminating digestive, metabolic, urinary and uterine deficiencies and ailments ... and finally, the contraction of the fore muscles of the neck combined with the pressure of the chin on the chest, leads to a redistribution of the blood in the upper part of the trunk, with important results. For, while the arterial circulation to the brain remains normal through the vertebral arteries, the arterial thrust in the carotids and the venous deflux of the jugulars are slowed down. Consequently, the thyroid, the thymus and the parathyroids receive an increase in blood flow, which stimulates and improves their function."*

The right combination of asanas stimulates and corrects a lethargic, underactive gland or, alternatively, regulates an overactive gland.

The harmony produced by proper hormonal secretions is supported and aided by the asanas' other benefits, which combine to produce a perfectly balanced state of mental and physical health.

Below is a reiteration of some of the direct physiological benefits, but this time in relation to their value to the meditator.

**Respiration:** Good respiration is of utmost importance to the meditator. Breathing is linked to mental calmness and is vital

for taking in energy from the air. Each posture incorporates into its movements deep breathing. By bending and twisting, areas in the lung which are not normally exposed are put to use. The resulting rejuvenation of the lung cells increases the intake of oxygen and energy into the body. Exercises affecting the torso also develop chest and diaphragmic muscles which facilitate better breathing.

**Nervous system:** Asanas are not fatiguing, but work to relax the nervous system and increase and help the flow of subtle body energies. Yoga exercises work on the important area of the spine. The spine is connected with the central nervous system, and asanas keep the vertebrae properly adjusted and tonify the nerve fibre. Strengthening the nervous system helps us overcome mental weakness and obstacles, which are actually due to nervous debility -- nerves that cannot tolerate forceful sensory input.

**Blood circulation.** Many postures send blood, which has a rejuvenating effect, to areas normally deprived of a strong blood flow. For instance shoulder stand allows more blood flow to the brain. It also drives blood from the thyroid area so that when one alternates shoulder stand with fish pose the blood pours back during the latter. This stimulates and aids the functioning of the thyroid gland. Asanas stretch the limbs and joints in ways not usually achieved in day to day activities. They also remove deposits and toxins from the joints, keeping the yogi free from arthritis and rheumatism throughout life.

**Vital organs:** Yogic postures have a therapeutic effect on the vital organs: heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, stomach, spleen and

intestines, by massaging them and strengthening their functional apparatus. The pressure put on the organ generates a reaction which balances its activity. The weak organ becomes stronger, the sluggish organ more vital, the overactive organ properly controlled and well-regulated.

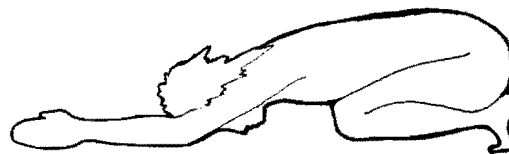
Which asanas should one practise?

There are actually more than 50,000 different asanas one could choose from but one need only practise a regular set of the more important ones for improving and maintaining good health. At the same time, when selecting the appropriate asanas many factors need to be taken into consideration: one's physical health, dominant mental tendencies, flexibility or rigidity of the body, age, diet and amount of time at one's disposal each day. For this reason asanas should be prescribed by personal consultation with an Acarya — a trained teacher.

There are however a few basic asanas which can be performed safely by everyone. Diirgha Pranama, Yogamudra, Bhujangasana (the first three illustrated below), and any of the meditation postures, may be practised by anyone until they are prescribed a personal set of asanas.

**Ardhakurmakasana** (half tortoise posture) or **Diirgha Pranama** (long bowing posture): Kneel down and, holding the palms together, extend the arms forward, keeping them close to the ears. Then bend forward in a posture of bowing down, touching the floor with the tip of the nose and the forehead.

The buttocks must continue to touch the heels. While bending down, breathe out and stay in a state of complete exhalation for eight seconds. Then rise up, breathing in. Practise eight times.



**Ardhakurmakasana or Diirgha Pranama**

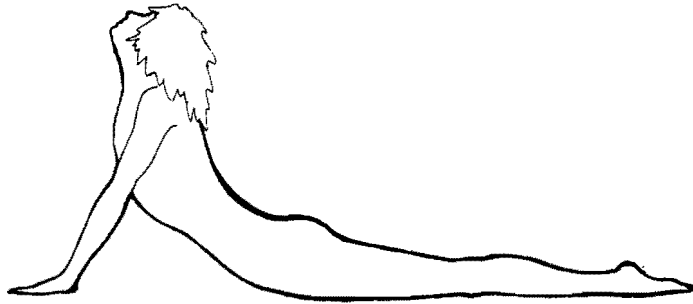
**Yogasana or Yogamudra** (Yoga posture): Sit in Bhojasana (simple cross-legged position). Pass both hands backward and grip the left wrist with the right hand. Then bring the forehead and nose into contact with the floor, breathing out during the process. Maintain this state for eight seconds and then rise up, breathing in. Practise eight times.



**Yogasana or Yogamudra**

**Bhujangasana** (snake posture): Lie down on your chest.

Supporting the weight on the palms, raise the chest, directing your head backwards. Look at the ceiling. Breathe in while rising and after having risen, hold your breath for eight seconds. Come down to original position while breathing out. Practise eight times.



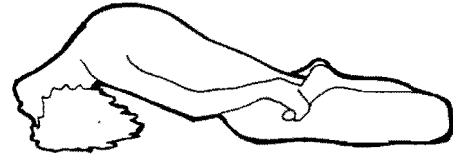
**Bhujangasana**

**Sarvaangasana** (all-limbs posture): (a) Lie down on your back. Gradually raise the entire body and keep it straight, resting its weight on your shoulders. The chin must be in contact with the chest. Support both sides of your trunk with your hands. The toes must remain together, the eyes must be directed at the toes.

(b) Lie down in Padmasana. Gradually raise the body and rest its weight on your shoulders. Support both sides with the hands. This asana is also known as Urdhwapadmasana (inverted lotus posture).

Practise three times, up to five minutes each time.

**Matsyamudra** (fish gesture): Lie down in Padmasana. Rest the crown of the head on the floor and grasp both the big toes with the hands. Practise three times. Maximum time for practice is two and a half minutes.



**Matsyamudra**

**Matsyasana** (fish posture): Lie down in Padmasana. Grasp each shoulder with the opposite hand from behind. The head will rest on both forearms. Practise three times, each time for half a minute.

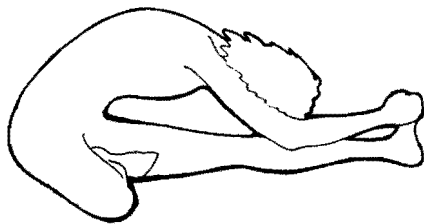


**Matsyasana**

**Janushirasana** (head to knee posture): Press the Muladhara with the right heel. Extend the left leg forward. While exhaling, touch the left knee with the forehead. Then, interlocking all the fingers firmly, press the left sole with the hands. There should



be complete expiration when the forehead touches the knee. Maintain this position for eight seconds. Separate the hands and sit erect, while breathing in. Then press the Muladhara with the left heel and repeat the above process exactly. One round comprises practising once with the left and once with the right leg. Practise four rounds.



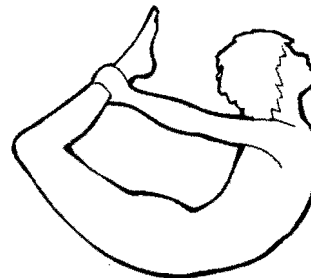
**Janushirasana**

**Matsyendrasana** (Matsyendra's posture) — generally for males: (i) Press the Muladhara with the right heel. Cross the left foot over the right thigh and keep it to the right of the thigh. Grasp the left big toe with the right hand, keeping the right arm along the left side of the left knee. Reach backwards from the left side with the left hand and touch the navel. Turn the neck to the left as far as possible.

(ii) Then press the Muladhara with the left heel and reverse the process. One round comprises completing the process on both sides.

Practise four rounds, each round lasting for half a minute.

**Naokasana** (boat posture) or **Dhanurasana** (bow posture): Lie in a prone position. Flex the legs to bring the lower legs close to the thighs. Directing the hands over the back, grasp the ankles. Raise the entire body, supporting the weight on the navel. Extend the neck and chest as far back as possible. Look toward the front. Breathe in while raising the body and maintain yourself in that state for eight seconds. Resume the original posture while breathing out. Practise the asana eight times in this manner. The body assumes the shape of a bow during this asana.



**Naokasana or Dhanurasana**

*Dynamic Paschim.*  
**Utkata Pascimottanasana** (difficult back-upwards position):

Lie in a supine position and extend the arms backwards, keeping them close to the ears. Rise while exhaling and insert the face between the knees. Make sure that the legs remain straight. Grasp both the big toes with the hands. Remain in this state for eight seconds. Now resume the original posture while inhaling. Practise eight times in this way.

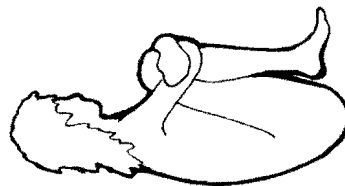
**Bhastrikasana** (bellows posture): Lie on your back and while breathing out, bend the right leg and bring the thigh into contact with the chest. Grasp the leg firmly with both hands. Maintain this position for eight seconds, holding the breath. Resume original position while breathing in. Practise similarly with the left leg, and then with both legs together. One round comprises this process with the right leg, the left leg, and both legs together. Practise eight such rounds, ie.  $8 \times 3 = 24$  positions.



**Bhastrikasana**

**Viirasana** (Viira posture): Kneel down and sit on the heels. Bend the toes downwards. Rest the backs of the hands on the thighs, the fingers pointing towards the groin. Direct the vision at the tip of the nose. The Acarya will give directions as to the duration of this asana.

**Padmasana** (lotus posture): Place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. Clench the jaws and press the tongue against the roof of the mouth. You can maintain this posture as long as you like.



**Utkata Pascimottanasana**



**Padmasana**

## GUIDELINES FOR ASANAS

To get the most from the asanas and to guard against any adverse reactions, certain basic principles and guidelines need to be followed:

- (1) Before practising asanas, take a 'half-bath' or a full bath.

A 'half-bath' is taken as follows: after passing urine, pour cold water over the urinary organ, then urinate again to expel any excess urine remaining in the urinary tract; wash hands, then splash cold water into the eyes 12 times; wash behind the neck and ears; cleanse the nose with water; wash the arms from the elbows down and the legs from the knees down. This practice cleanses the body, cools and relaxes it, and revitalises it into awareness for spiritual practices such as asanas and meditation. In 'half-bath' the use of soap is not required.

- (2) Asanas should not be practised in an open place as this may result in a chill. The room in which one practises should have an open window so that fresh air can enter, but not to the point of having a draft.

- (3) There should not be any smoke in the room, including incense. Fresh air is needed for the breathing processes associated with asanas.

- (4) Men should wear a 'lungota' — special tight fitting underwear, and there should be no other clothing on the body. Women should wear firm underwear and a bra.

- (5) Practise asanas on a clean blanket or a mat.

- (6) Most asanas require that the left nostril, or both nostrils, be open for flow of breath. The left nostril is associated with the 'Ida nadi', an energy flow without which most asanas should not be practised. Hence only the following asanas can be practised if the left nostril is blocked: Padmasana (lotus posture); Siddhasana (Siddha posture); Ardhasiddhasana (Half Siddha posture); Bhojanasana (Cross-legged sitting posture); Viirasana (Viira posture); Diirgha Pranama (Long-bowing posture); Yogasana (Yoga posture); and Bhujaungasana (Snake posture).

- (7) Follow a yogic vegetarian diet (see Chapter 5 on food and diet). Those not practising the yogic diet may practise the asanas mentioned in No. 6 above.

- (8) Asanas should be practised on an empty stomach. They should not be practised for at least three hours after a meal.

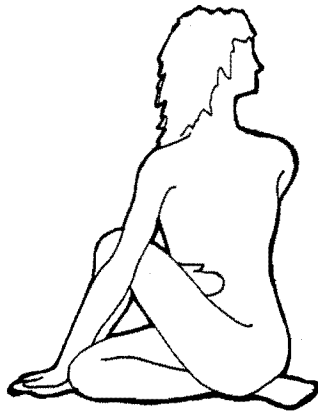
- (9) After practising asanas you should massage the skin (not the muscles) of the body over as much of the body as possible.

- (10) After the massage is completed, remain in Shavasana (corpse posture) for at least two minutes.

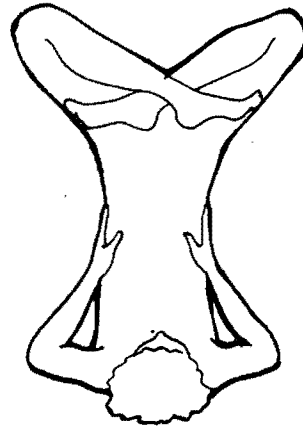
- (11) Oil should not be massaged into your body, although it may be rubbed lightly over the skin.

- (12) After Shavasana do not touch water for at least ten minutes.
- (13) After practising asanas it is beneficial to walk in a solitary place for some time, preferably in the fresh air.
- (14) Pranayama, a breathing technique used in advanced meditation, should not be practised immediately after asanas.
- (15) Other exercises, running or sports should not be practised just after asanas.
- (16) During menstruation, pregnancy and within one month of delivery, women should not practise asanas. However the asanas for meditation:— Padmasana; Siddhasana; Bhojanasana; may be done under all conditions.

These asanas and related practices are from the book Carya-Carya, part 3, by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.



**Matsyendrasana**



**Urdhvapadmasana**

# Yogic Ethics ~ Maintaining a Dynamic Balance

In the changing, dynamic movement of life, new situations and circumstances arise in which decisions must be made as to the most appropriate course of action. However, in making these decisions, a constant dilemma confronts us — what is appropriate for each individual under different circumstances. Issues are complicated as not only do different people in different cultures at different points in history have different ideas as to right and wrong but individuals in similar circumstances act on the basis of different sets of values. Yogic ethics, as we will see, help to overcome these dilemmas and provide a viable structure for mental harmony and the expansion of consciousness.

To make any decisions as to right and wrong requires the application of certain objectives or values. The values we apply may be egocentric or altruistic, they may be of our own making or adopted, but regardless of their source or apparent nature we cannot avoid their conscious and unconscious effect on the

way we conduct our lives.

Indeed if we analyse our actions we realise how far personal and social values constantly influence them. We normally overlook the role our values play because they are assumed in our everyday lifestyle and culture. Values affect the way we relate to relatives, friends and neighbours; they determine the way we relate to our physical environment and they even influence what we eat and drink.

So omnipresent are values that those attempting to abandon them find themselves adopting new values to reject their old ones. The person who tries to escape the dilemma of right and wrong by refusing to take any action at all finds no solace, as non action too is a form of action and, consequently, morality. Even those who place their own pleasures and interests at the pinnacle of what is right and good, while appearing to many as totally unprin-

ciplined, are operating in a value system, albeit perverse.

However, rationally we know that these diverse and often diametrically opposed value systems cannot all be valid, as even on a superficial evaluation of social relationships there are rights and wrongs which by nature are applicable to all people.

### Interaction

As a community we know that what affects one person affects the next and that people cannot live as islands unto themselves. In the last decades, in the West, a general awareness has grown as to the holistic nature of life and the universe — that all things, right down to the minutest atomic particle, interact with each other in an amazingly complex fashion. Physicists tell us that if a single atomic particle changes course the chain reaction created changes the possibilities of all other things. On a larger and more significant scale, at least to us as social beings, each human changes the potential fate of other humans and we are responsible to one another for our actions.

On a less apparent, personal level, the way we conduct our lives automatically affects our own growth. Negative and positive aspects exist in each of us and what we do determines which of these aspects will predominate and how we will evolve. For the spiritual aspirant, the direction he or she takes is, in a sense, even more crucial, as spiritual practice is based on mental harmony. Meditation, the key to spiritual practice, needs a strong base to be effective. Mental equilibrium is a precondition to meditation, for without mental equipoise the mind will be hopelessly disrupted and concentration and meditation will be

an impossibility.

Because of a duty to themselves and others, human beings are thrust into the difficult position of having to use the intellect with which they were born, and to truly discriminate between right and wrong.

The inescapability of moral judgement makes the establishment of a benevolent and viable value system a must. But, despite its inescapability, morality is an increasingly unpopular concept. Although we know that the way we conduct our lives affects our welfare and that of others, we have become concerned with the validity of our judgements.

The subjective nature of morality makes us wonder if our principles are well formed and just. Right and wrong often seem arbitrary and relative to those making judgements — what is one person's food is another person's poison.

Of concern also is the way personal psychic complexes influence our judgements and values. Judgements about ourselves and others can be distorted by personality.

Compounding the dangers of faulty subjectivity is the pseudo-morality found in most cultures and social groupings. Pseudo-morality comes in the form of absolute dictates of good and evil, which are indiscriminately rigid and tend to reflect the exploitative interests of a dominant class of people.

Recognising moral choice as an imperative of human life, yoga strives to overcome these pitfalls by providing an approach to

ethics which blends universal and relative principles together.

### **Maintaining a Balance**

The significance of morality according to Tantra Yoga lies in the need to maintain a balance between inherently opposed and conflicting characteristics of the human mind. Tantra points to two fundamental aspects of the human mind. On the one hand there is our deep seated egocentricity — our identification with our physical and mental self, including the primitive or instinctual aspects of the mind. On the other hand there is the powerful reflection of Consciousness on the more highly evolved and subtle aspect of the mind, which manifests as a thirst for spiritual contentment — a thirst which cannot be satisfied by the physical and mental spheres of enjoyment.

The juxtaposition of these two characteristics makes morality an imperative, firstly because human beings mistakenly try to satisfy their limitless spiritual longings by limited physical and intellectual means, and secondly because we feel out of harmony with our own nature when we do things that are opposed to the natural flow or evolution of Consciousness.

Morality mediates between our potentially contrary mental tendencies, neither neglecting one aspect for the other but rather regulating conduct so as to guarantee mental and social harmony and, in turn, providing a conducive environment for personal and social evolution.

Negatively stated, morality is intended to prevent the cruder and egocentric aspects of the human mind dominating the subtler,

more magnanimous aspects. Used properly, the instinctual mind supports existence and the evolution of consciousness. For example, the physical body requires instincts such as sleep and hunger to be satisfied. But if satiating the instincts becomes a focal point of activity then degeneration of the mind results. Constant association of the mind with instincts hinders the development of the mind's subtler realms.

Similarly the ego, from the earliest stages of development to the point of spiritual attraction, supports human evolution. Controlled properly, the ego motivates us to greater aspirations but if allowed to run riot, say in the pursuit of power over others, the ego accentuates feelings of separation which militate against spiritual growth.

Positively stated, morality is intended to provide a personal and social environment facilitating the maximum growth of each individual.

Thus moral actions are those which support mental harmony and expansion, while immoral actions are those which cause tension, narrow mindedness and contraction. Socially, morality includes those actions which promote social harmony and co-operation, while immorality precipitates exploitation and distrust which destroys the social fabric and prevents human progress.

### **Mental Equilibrium**

Unlike concepts of ethical relativism, which hold moral values to be purely arbitrary and culturally bound, according to Tantra morality in its true sense is based on the capacity to maintain

mental equilibrium and to expand consciousness. These concepts are universally applicable but, at the same time, relative in their application.

The relative application becomes apparent when we consider that every person is at a different stage of development. What may be uplifting to one person may not be to another, what may be harmonious to one person may be degrading to someone else. Similarly, at one time in history, an action may be acceptable while, at another time, it may not.

Relative application avoids ethical absolutism, which applies an absolute set of principles to all people and circumstances without exception. Such absolute rules precipitate hypocrisy, bigotry and inhumanity.

In applying ethical values it is incumbent on each person to remember that he or she is using the limited tool of intellectual analysis to do so. The intellectual process is restricted firstly by the information that is available to it — no-one has perfect factual knowledge — and secondly, ego is inextricably bound up in the intellect — the ego always relates things to its own experience and colours the judgements we make accordingly.

But despite the limitations of the intellect, human beings must use it. To abandon it leads to much greater disaster than the occasional mistaken decisions we may make.

To make a totally unbiased and knowledgeable decision a person must wait until he or she attains what is known in yoga as 'viveka' or perfect discrimination. 'Viveka' is an attribute of a much





higher state of mind than we are used to. A person who has this viveka is above intellectuality regarding what is moral and immoral. Such a person intuitively 'knows' the most relevant and benevolent course of action to be taken.

Thus far we have considered morality in a very abstract form. To provide a practical guide to conduct, yoga defines ten principles which are called Yama and Niyama. These are described in such a way that they can be applied to everyday situations and can adjust to all relativities of time, place and person. They are not absolute principles but give a benchmark from which to guide actions and thoughts.

Yama, which literally means 'control', has five parts which relate to one's dealings with society and the objective world. Yama highlights obligations to others and also expresses the idea that each living entity is part of the same Infinite Consciousness — that all entities are part of the same family. To injure another is essentially to injure oneself.

Niyama, meaning self-regulation, also has five parts and relates to the maintenance of personal mental balance and harmony.

For the spiritual aspirant, Yama and Niyama are the foundations of meditation.

---

## YAMA

### 1. Ahimsa

Ahimsa means to guide one's conduct and thought carefully in the absence of any intention to cause harm to others.

Whilst Ahimsa is the effort to consciously avoid harming any life form, it is impossible to live without causing some harm. Simply to survive we must eat and to eat we must kill other organisms. Ahimsa acknowledges the needs of preserving life and defines duty as doing the least amount of harm possible.

For example, a person who understands animals to be more evolved life forms than plants, and therefore to have greater perceptions of pain and suffering, will consume vegetables, fruit and grains rather than flesh. Similarly that person will tend not to wear clothes made from animals' skins and furs.

Yet in saying this we must also recognise that the vegetarian diet and the avoidance of animal products are not possible in all circumstances. Ahimsa represents an ideal which requires application in different situations. An Eskimo, whose only source of food and clothing is animals, cannot be said to be violating the principle of Ahimsa by thus making provision for his or her essentials of life.

Tantra Yoga views all life in terms of its evolutionary position. The more evolved a species is, the greater is its mental development and therefore its capacity to evolve further. Evolution of mind and the corresponding expansion of consciousness are, according to Tantra, the essential purpose of existence. Thus Ahimsa opposes the slowing down or termination of any organism's life expression. Wherever possible the taking of any form of animal or plant life should be avoided. However, if life must be taken, for example for food, then the least evolved form of life should be preferred.

The same evolutionary argument answers the rationalists' question as to why human life should be preserved at the expense of animal life or, for that matter, plant life.

Violation of Ahimsa may be seen as both passive and active. To actively contravene Ahimsa is to unjustifiably harm another organism; to passively contravene Ahimsa is to not prevent harm where it is possible to do so. If a person has the ability to defend an innocent victim from a violent attacker but fails to do so, either out of fear, apathy or mistaken convictions of pacifism, then Ahimsa is violated. By not acting to prevent harm, one is morally responsible for that harm, as every individual has a responsibility for the welfare of every other individual.

This duty extends to all human beings and to all life forms.

Ahimsa is clearly not to be confused with narrow and irrational concepts of absolute non-violence. Irrational concepts only bring the whole idea of morality into disrepute and suggest

that principled conduct applies less in some cases than in others. In fact Ahimsa, as a dynamic principle, applies equally in all situations but requires different applications. The principle is not compromised by the circumstances but rather demands different expression in the circumstances.

Simple dogmas about the use of force only serve to destroy peoples' sense of discrimination, which is in reality vitally necessary for the application of principled conduct and Ahimsa.

Human history shows that individuals and communities who have accepted aggression and oppressive domination are humiliated, degraded, brutalised, tormented and deprived. Experience also shows that oppressors do not relinquish their domination easily or as a result of reasoned debate. To overcome aggression and exploitation, be it economic, political, military or criminal, people have had to resort to force in the name of their own human survival. Such a struggle cannot be condemned in the name of Ahimsa or any other realistic moral principle.

However, whatever form a personal or collective struggle takes against aggression and exploitation, the means employed should be those that cause minimum harm to all concerned, including the aggressors. This is Ahimsa.

In any discussion of non-violence there is a tendency to overlook two major areas, namely institutionalised violence and mental violence. Institutionalised violence is that violence carried out by social institutions, for example the violence of prison warders against inmates or the violence of police against minority groups. This also extends to the institutions of scientific research where

violence is unnecessarily inflicted on animals. Many "peace loving" people ignore these situations or try to rationalise their existence. But in following Ahimsa it is important to be aware of this disguised violence.

Ahimsa, avoiding a narrow interpretation of "violence" and harming, extends its values to include mental violence. Much of the violence committed in modern industrial society is of this type. Here also the aim should be to prevent the harmful application of any force, or the minimising of any such harm.

The principle of Ahimsa does require a sense of human discrimination, in the sense of determining action that will involve the least possible harm or use of force. In this discrimination lies a responsibility for principled conduct that cannot be delegated or avoided.

## 2. Satya

Satya means the benevolent use of words and action of mind.

Erroneous translations of this principle as 'speaking the absolute truth' or 'stating the facts' are inaccurate and fail to capture its true spirit. Satya directs one to think and speak honestly and straight-forwardly, but in a way tempered by consideration of the welfare of others.

Situations arise in which it is far better to tell a 'white lie' because factual information may cause harm. For example, a woman

seeks refuge in your house as she claims to be escaping a murderer. A few minutes later a wild looking man appears with a knife in his hand and asks if you have seen the woman. In this situation, unthinkingly stating the facts could result in murder. Apart from any other action that might be taken, the far better approach is to mislead the man.

Or suppose your mother is standing on a chair washing the windows when a telegram arrives informing her of the death of her father. If she asks you what the telegram says, what reply would you give? In her position and whilst she is under physical strain, stating the fact could result in harm due to the shock. It is better to avoid the issue or invent a story, so as to be able to break the news in a gradual way when she is more relaxed.

To deliberately distort the truth for selfish reasons, however, is contrary to the principle of Satya. Where there is no conflict between Ahimsa and stating the fact — that is, where stating the fact will not result in a violation of Ahimsa — then strict honesty should always be practised.

## 3. Asteya

Asteya means not to take property that rightfully belongs to others.

This principle of non-stealing includes actions which deprive others of their dues. Not paying one's fare of the bus, or the

underpaying of employees by an employer, both amount to stealing. The principle further extends to mentally planning theft, even if the theft is not actually committed. Where fear of discovery and punishment may have prevented a person stealing, the mind is affected as if the theft had actually been performed.

Asteya is based on respect for the equal rights of others. Greed, the motivation behind most stealing, denies this respect and develops selfishness, which is an obstruction to spiritual progress.

#### 4. Brahmacharya

To remain attached to Brahma, the Cosmic Consciousness, is Brahmacharya.

*"The meaning of practising Brahmacharya Sadhana is to treat the objects with which you come into contact, as different expressions of Brahma and not as the crude forms. By means of such conception, even though the mind wanders from one object to another, it does not get detached from Brahma because of the Cosmic feeling taken for each and every object."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

The degree to which people appreciate life depends on their level of awareness. The less generally aware people are, the narrower are their perspectives on life and their understanding

of things around them. Narrow-mindedness leads to an intolerance of new ideas, inability to communicate freely with others and self-centredness. In advanced forms, these turn to anti-social behaviour.

*Whenever considering doing good works, do not hesitate — do them immediately. Whenever contemplating doing bad works, linger and delay, so that the thought of performing them will wither away from the mind.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Qualitative appreciation of life increases as one's awareness expands. Cultivating the fine arts or probing into the various sciences may add new dimensions to life, opening horizons which one never knew existed. Expanding awareness increases one's appreciation of things on all levels. Finally spiritual awareness is attained as one realises that every living form and even non-living forms are composed of a singular causal energy and are permeated by a singular, Cosmic Consciousness. Maintaining this deep feeling of spiritual awareness even whilst actively engaged in external actions is the essence of Brahmacharya.

Spiritual awareness affects the totality of a person's attitudes and motivation by forming a Cosmic relationship between the individual and the universe. When a person adheres to Brahmacharya, the other aspects of Yama sadhana become natural, spontaneous modes of behaviour, but until then they help to establish it.

Brahmacarya has at times been misinterpreted as meaning to practise celibacy or even as the preservation of semen. Such misinterpretations are usually founded by a religious elite which seeks religious superiority by putting spiritual attainment outside the scope of family persons. Whilst it is true that one has to exercise a balanced control in all walks of life including conjugal relationships, spiritual awareness is equally attainable by married persons and celibates alike.

## 5. Aparigraha

Aparigraha is both an ecological and a psychological principle. It means to not indulge in comforts and amenities which are superfluous to the maintenance of a reasonable standard of life.

According to the wealth, resources and progressive nature of a society, that which is considered a minimum standard of living will vary. Fifty years ago in Australia a bicycle may have been a necessity, whereas today an automobile is accepted as a minimum. In India, however, where even basic necessities such as food and shelter are in shortage, the bicycle is only now becoming common. Variations in the needs of individuals must also be taken into consideration. For example where a bicycle is reasonable for the greater proportion of people, an automobile may be a necessity for a doctor.

The collective responsibility of society is to ensure that: firstly, every individual has the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care; and secondly, everyone has access to amenities such as educational, sporting, cultural and



Kapil Arn

recreational and transport and communication facilities. In the fulfilment of this second commitment, society must take its future generations into account, especially in areas such as energy, mineral and natural resource — soil, forests, air and water — conservation.

The successful application of Aparigraha depends upon action by both the collective and the individuals of society. Cosmic ownership, the concept on which Aparigraha is based, is the best benchmark here. The earth is our common home; no-one owns it but all have the right to share in the utilisation of its wealth.

From the point of view of mental equilibrium and spiritual

progress, Aparigraha is a basic necessity. If we cling to objects that we don't really need, we develop materialistic values and set our priorities accordingly. It becomes harder to free our minds from thinking about the external world during meditation, and Spiritual progress is retarded. A proper balance must be maintained. For example, being deprived of food leads to physical and mental weakness and creates strong physical and mental craving. Eating excessively leads to indigestion and disease, as well as to mental dullness and attachment to taste. Eating properly, however, furnishes both body and mind with strength and health, and the satisfied mind can then be employed in higher pursuits such as meditation.

The essence of Aparigraha is simply to meet one's needs yet avoid excesses.

---

## NIYAMA

### 1. Shaoca

Shaoca means to maintain purity and cleanliness of mind, body and environment.

Beside the obvious health reasons for maintaining proper physical cleanliness, personal hygiene has a subtle effect on the mind.

When wearing soiled clothing, living in a dirty house or walking along a littered street full of exhaust fumes, we feel ill at ease and mentally dull or agitated. A shower, change of clothes, a clean house and a walk along the beach or in a park can change all this and promote a feeling of purity and clarity of mind.

From this explanation it is clear that Shaoca is primarily a principle concerning one's mental outlook, and therefore the other side to Shaoca is directly maintaining mental purity.

Impure thoughts and negative mental tendencies militate against elevating spiritual sentiments and taint the mind with impressions which adversely influence one's behaviour.

*"The intelligent would not, therefore, allow their mental purity to get stained even for a moment. One must always be cautious against the tempest of passion. You must not yield to such storms. One more difference between external and internal cleanliness is that for removing external dirt one also has to come in contact with such dirt for some time ... but in the mental sphere the cleansing process does not require your coming in contact with any crude object."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

This begs a practical question that, if a negative tendency or desire does arise, what should one do? Going along with a detrimental desire in the hope of gradually working through it or exhausting it seldom succeeds. More often it becomes an addition, weakening will-power and making it extremely difficult to control the tendency in the future.

Suppression, the opposite extreme, never succeeds as the unexpressed desire builds to the point where one is driven to express it either by violently rebelling against self-imposed restraints, or by expressing it in a secretive way — a common cause of psychological complexes and unbalanced behaviour.

The yogic approach to control consists of tackling the problem at all levels. It removes the causes, redirects tendencies in a positive way and establishes the mind in a higher, more content and stable state.

A discussion of the multi-lateral approach of yoga to mental complexes is beyond the scope of this section, but different approaches are referred to throughout the book. Briefly, yoga's approach recognises that the roots of mental problems are found on all levels of human existence: physical, mental and spiritual, and only when all three levels are tended to can lasting mental health be attained.

## 2. Santosa

Santosa means to maintain a state of mental ease.

Mental ease or contentment is not possible as long as the mind is allowed to move unrestrained towards material objects. Lack of control over the objectward propensities of the mind keeps it in a state of instability and restlessness. The superficial layers of the mind are continually rippled by desires, the efforts to gratify them, and the pain or discomfort of the absence or ending of such enjoyment. Constant extroversal activity of the mind obscures the tranquility of the deeper inner peace that lies within the innermost Self. This has often been illustrated by comparing the Self to the reflection of the moon on the sea. Only if the sea is perfectly calm can the beauty of the moon be seen and appreciated.

While it is our nature to seek happiness, it is necessary to understand what happiness is, otherwise our efforts to find it may result in unhappiness instead. Happiness is usually viewed in terms of enjoying a desirable object or experience and so to have more happiness, people try to possess more or experience more. However, deeper observation shows that real happiness is a state of mental peace. This peace is natural to the mind, so whenever it is disturbed by desires or tensions, it wants to be relieved of them in order to return to a state of peace. Therefore equilibrium must be maintained in all aspects of life to achieve mental peace and happiness. A lack of basic necessities activates instinctual action, disturbing mental peace, while searching for lasting happiness by creating and fulfilling desires for finite objects is to remain in a state of constant agitation.

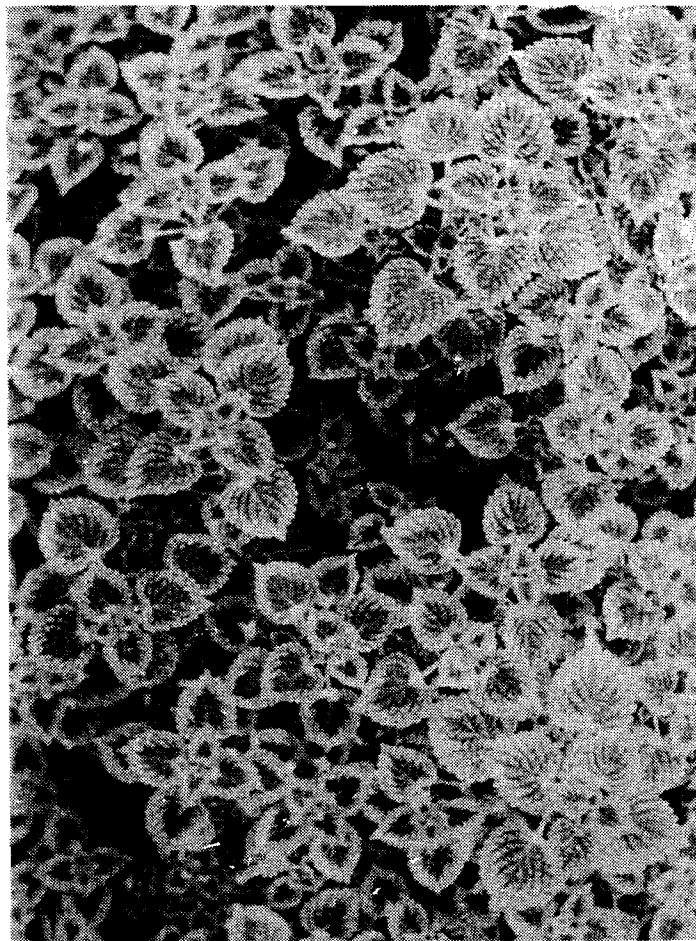
So, according to Santosa, we should meet our needs but not engage in the pursuit of superfluous objects. This means not allowing ourselves to be exploited by pressures of advertising or cultural expectations such as fashion trends.

Learning to keep the mind in a state of peace or happiness, regardless of the external conditions, is the sadhana of Santosa. Meditation is obviously benefitted by Santosa, and vice-versa.

### 3. Tapah

Tapah means to alleviate the suffering of others by personal sacrifice.

If our entire energy is spent in our own personal pursuits, the



K. Am



mind becomes egocentric. A Hassidic saint nicely summarised the situation: "One who would go to heaven alone will never get there."

It is said a true measure of spiritual progress is how much one loves all living beings and creation. A person who feels, or strives to feel, the oneness of all existence, must be motivated to help those who are suffering. Genuine interest in the welfare of others and taking upon oneself the burden of alleviating their suffering is the quickest and most efficacious means of mental expansion.

*"One who looks upon the served only as an expression of the Cosmos, and looks after their comforts selflessly, develops a devotion or love for the Supreme Bliss in a short time."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

In the practice of Tapah one must adopt an appropriate form of service in accordance with the type of suffering. Primary consideration should be given to the weaker, poorer, less educated, less capable and downtrodden. For example, giving gifts to those not in need, such as to one's employer, may be a gesture of friendliness, but it doesn't fulfil the purpose of Tapah.

#### 4. Svadhyaya

Svadhyaya means the clear understanding of any spiritual subject.

It is necessary to study spiritual philosophy as part of spiritual practices in order to keep intellectual awareness in step with the growth of intuition achieved through meditation.

The object is to penetrate the meaning of a subject whether a discourse, book or ancient scripture. Open mindedness is a prerequisite to any learning process, but this should be coupled together with the power of logical reasoning so as to avoid the traps of dogmatism. One should not blindly accept the words of others, however illumined they may seem, without personally penetrating deep into their meaning.

*"Even if a child says something logical, it should be accepted; and even if the lotus-born Brahma (the mythological creator of the Universe) says something illogical it should be rejected like a straw."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

#### 5. Iishvara Pranidhana

Iishvara means the controller of the Universe; Pranidhana means to understand clearly, or to adopt something as a shelter.

Iishvara Pranidhana thus means the acceptance of Cosmic Consciousness as the ideal or goal of life. This last and most important principle is entirely internal, entirely a mental effort. The mind is detached from its worldly preoccupations while meditating on Iishvara, the Cosmic Consciousness. The process of meditation has been dealt with adequately in chapters 1, 3 & 10.

*"The indomitable mental force aroused as a result of collective Iishvara Pranidhana will help you in solving any problem, small or big, on this earth."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Before leaving this principle we should stress the advantages of collective meditation. In collective meditation the mental energies of those involved combine, causing a type of synergy where the

total energy available to each meditator is greater than if meditating alone. Thus every opportunity to meditate collectively should be eagerly pursued.

Yama and Niyama compliment other spiritual practices, facilitating greater and more rapid progress. This accelerating progress culminates in the absorption of the mind in the limitless, eternal ecstasy of blissful Consciousness.



# Food for Consciousness

The effects of food on the body are fairly well understood. Current scientific theories hold that the physical molecules of the food are utilised by the body to supply energy and the substances necessary for the building, repairing and regulating of the various tissues. Improper diet is well known to have a negative effect on these processes.

The effects of food on the mind are, however, just beginning to be recognised by medical science. Research indicates that schizophrenia, manic-depression and other mental disorders can be alleviated by dietic and vitamin therapy. Refined foods and excessive amounts of sugar are being isolated as major contributors to hyperactivity and learning difficulties in children. Juvenile institutions in the USA are using dietary changes to achieve positive behavioural responses in their residents. Generally people who shift their tastes away from processed foods to natural foods comment on improved mental well-being and

a more positive view of themselves and the world around them. Although these experiences are considered surprising and difficult to explain, Eastern philosophies have long had a simple explanation for them, which parallels some of the most far-reaching theorising in Western science.

We have learned from Einstein's Theory of Relativity that the entire manifested Universe is composed of vibrational energy. Matter can be understood as energy that is moving (or vibrating) slowly. Solids vibrate at the lowest frequencies, liquids and gases a little faster, and sound, light, thoughts and certain other energies vibrate at even higher frequencies. The higher frequencies can inter-penetrate the lower frequencies. Light passes through water, sound travels through air, and in a similar way, the food we eat is permeated with its own subtle vibrations and those it has picked up from the people who have handled it. These subtle vibrations affect the the mind of the person

eating the food. Food that is grown, prepared and eaten with love can uplift the mind as well as nourish the body.

Over the last few thousand years, yogic teachers have based their eating habits on this knowledge. Certain foods affect consciousness in a positive way, sharpening and clearing the mind. These foods are called sentient (Sattvik, in Sanskrit) and are the basis of the Yogic diet. Foods which stimulate the body and mind are termed mutative (or Rajasik) and are eaten in moderation or not at all by those performing spiritual practices. Foods that are not beneficial to the mind, and may or may not be good for the body, are called static (or Tamasik) and are not part of the Yogic diet.

The classification of foods may vary according to changes in the climate, age, health and activities of an individual (for example, in illness, one may be recommended to take mutative or even static food as medication). However, below is a fairly standardised categorisation of common foods.

It is clear that what we eat has a definite effect on our minds and bodies, particularly in relationship to spiritual practices. It is not surprising then that the reverse is also true: that the spiritual practices we do (along with our daily activities) also affect how food is absorbed into our bodies and how effectively it is used. The practice of asanas particularly is helpful to the digestive system and the general health of all the organs. A clean and

#### SENTIENT FOODS:

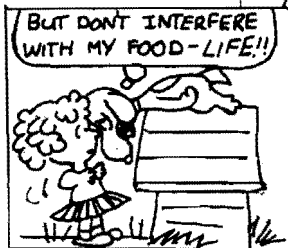
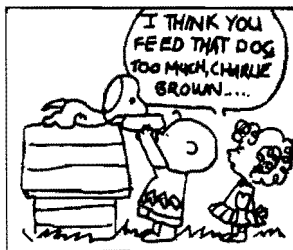
*fruits and nuts*  
*most vegetables*  
*most beans, nuts and grains*  
*milk and milk products*  
*moderate amounts of herbs and spices*

#### MUTATIVE FOODS:

*caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, cola, cocoa)*  
*many medicines*  
*excessive herbs and spices*

#### STATIC FOODS:

*meat and poultry*  
*eggs*  
*fish and shell-fish*  
*onions, chives, spring onions*  
*garlic*  
*mushrooms and fungi*  
*alcohol*  
*tobacco and non-medicinal drugs*  
*fermented, stale or spoiled food.*



healthy inner body allows food to be utilised most effectively.

How we eat is also of importance – some suggestions:

1. While taking food, remember that food too is a manifestation of Cosmic Consciousness and that it is being utilised to maintain the body, which is a necessity for spiritual progress.
2. Eat only when calm and relaxed. The physical body is influenced by the emotions and digestion is generally hampered by tension, anger and other negative states of mind. Both "half-bath" (described in the chapter on asanas) and a few moments of meditation before eating, facilitate physical and emotional relaxation. Sitting, rather than standing, also helps one to relax and thus ensure better digestion.
3. Eat proper meals (eg. breakfast, lunch and dinner) and avoid snacks between them. The digestive system, unlike the heart, needs time to rest. Eating between proper meals can lead to such problems as being overweight, constipated and lacking in energy.
4. Dine in company, rather than alone, whenever the opportunity arises. Sharing a meal with others helps one become more sociable, and avoid greediness and over-eating.
5. Chew food thoroughly. This reduces the size of food particles and mixes them with saliva, which greatly facilitates enzyme action in the digestive process.

6. Eat a substantial amount of fresh, raw foods, and avoid overcooked and overprocessed foods.
7. Drink plenty of water between meals, but not during meals. An adequate supply of water helps: ensure prompt elimination of wastes; regulate body temperature; and aid digestion.

### **FASTING**

Fasting is a natural cleansing procedure which is employed by many spiritual disciplines and cultures as a purification technique. It enables the digestive system to cleanse itself of toxins which have built up over a period of time. Regular fasting is an effective means of preventing build up of toxins and other uneliminated wastes, thereby reducing the possibility of intestinal-related diseases. We recommend fasting between two and four times a month, depending on one's disposition and need. The best days for it are four days prior to the new and full moons as well as the new and full moon days themselves. Fasting on these particular days helps to counter the disturbing influence of the moon's attraction, which has been shown to peak on the new and full moon days.

Whilst fasting is generally quite safe, common sense can help prevent discomfort, making fasting a light, enjoyable experience. Here are some suggestions:

1. Do not fast longer than one day without the guidance of an experienced person. Begin the fast at sunrise and break it at sunrise the next day.

2. Anyone who is badly constipated or suffers any sickness should not fast without water. They may fast with 'lemon water', or fruit or vegetable juices.
3. Avoid over-eating before a fast.
4. Waterless or dry fast should be broken firstly by drinking water with lemon juice and a pinch of salt, preferably followed later by a breakfast of fruit and yoghurt.

### **VEGETARIANISM**

Any discussion on the Yogic view of food and health would not be complete if it did not cover vegetarianism. Here we look at some of the most common questions:

**Is the human body more naturally adapted to meat-eating than to vegetarianism?**

No. Human physiology, bodily functions and digestive system are completely different from those of carnivorous animals but closely resemble many characteristics of herb and fruit eaters.

Carnivorous animals have very short intestinal tracts, only three times the length of their bodies, so that rapidly decaying meat can pass out quickly; to digest tough animal muscles and bones their stomachs have large amounts of hydrochloric acid; they have only small salivary glands in the mouth, and their saliva is acidic, containing no ptyalin enzyme which is necessary for pre-digesting grains; they have sharply pointed front teeth to tear

flesh, no molar teeth, and have claws.

In distinct contrast, human beings, like fruit eaters such as the anthropoid ape, have an intestinal tract 12 times the body length, which is ideally suited to the slow digestion of vegetables and fruits, which are noted for their slow decay. Their stomachs, like those of fruit eaters and herb eaters, contain less than one tenth the amount of hydrochloric acid that carnivores' stomachs have. Apart from this, humans have well developed salivary glands, alkaline saliva and much ptyalin to pre-digest grains; they also have flat back molar teeth to grind food and lack the pointed front teeth and claws of carnivores.

Clearly the human anatomy and digestive system show that we have evolved for millions of years, living on fruits, nuts, grains and vegetables. In fact scientists have concluded that our early ancestors were vegetarians who ate meat only in periods of extreme crisis. It was only during the last Ice Age, when their normal diet of fruits, nuts and vegetables was unavailable, that the early humans took to eating animal flesh in order to survive. For many, meat eating continued after the Ice Age, either by necessity (like the Eskimos), through habit, through conditioning or through lack or proper knowledge. However, throughout history there have been many individuals and entire groups of people who have realised the importance of a pure diet for health, mental clarity, or spiritual reasons and who have thereby remained vegetarians.

#### **Are there dangers in eating meat?**

World health statistics consistently show that the nations which

consume the most meat have the highest incidence of diseases such as cancer and heart disease. Populations living largely on meat generally have a short lifespan, such as the Eskimos, whose average is 27½ years, and the Kirgese, a nomadic East Russian tribe that lived predominantly on meat and whose average rarely passed 40. In contrast, field investigations by anthropologists of non-meat cultures have documented the radiant health, stamina and longevity enjoyed by people such as the Abhaskians of Central Russia, the Hunzas of Pakistan and the Otami Tribe of Mexico. It is not uncommon for such tribes to have healthy and active individuals of 110 years or more.

Whilst meat-eating may not be the sole reason for such statistics, there are numerous reasons to believe that meat-eating is harmful.

#### **Cancer**

Cancer of the bowel is prevalent in areas like North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, while it is extremely rare in basically vegetarian countries such as India. In the United States bowel cancer is the second most common form of cancer (lung cancer is first). Also in the US, a recent study of 50,000 vegetarians revealed an astonishingly low rate of cancer and a significantly longer life expectancy — results that shook the world of cancer research.

One reason for this may be that many nitrites, nitrates and other preservatives, added to meat to mask its discolouration, have been shown to be carcinogenic. Another reason comes from scientists who have studied the intestinal bacteria of meat-eaters and compared this to vegetarians. They found that bacteria in the

meat-eaters' intestines react with the digestive juices to produce chemicals which have been found to cause cancer.

### **Chemical Diet**

Poisonous chemicals used as fertilisers and pesticides are retained in the bodies of animals that eat the plants and grasses, because the animals are unable to break down the chemicals. When someone eats meat, chemicals concentrated from that animals lifetime are ingested. For example, meat contains 13 times as much DDT as vegetables, fruits and grasses. Animals raised for meat are also treated with cancer causing chemicals to increase their growth, fatten them, improve their colour, and so on.

### **Heart Disease**

"A vegetarian diet can prevent 90—97% of heart diseases (thromboembolic disease and coronary occlusions)." Reports like this from the Journal of the American Medical Association reflect the well-documented correlation between meat eating and heart disease. In countries of high meat consumption, one person out of every two dies of heart or related blood vessel diseases, whereas these diseases are practically unheard of in societies where meat consumption is low.

The fats of animal flesh are not broken down well in the human body and accumulate inside the blood vessels. Increased accumulation over the years reduces the opening inside the vessels, so the heart has to pump harder and harder, resulting in high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes. Vegetarian diets high in roughage and fibre have been found to lower the levels of fats



such as cholesterol.

### Putrefaction and poor elimination

As soon as an animal is killed, proteins in its body coagulate, self-destructive enzymes are released and ptomains are formed which cause rapid decomposition and putrefaction. Meat passes very slowly through the human digestive system, causing chronic constipation, while the disease causing products of decaying meat are in constant contact with the digestive organs.

Researchers have shown conclusively that a healthy elimination pattern requires the bulk and fibre available from a vegetarian diet. It has been shown that natural fibre may be a significant deterrent of appendicitis, diverticulitis, cancer of the colon, heart disease and obesity.

### Kidney disease, Gout and Arthritis

Among the most prominent wastes that meat contains are urea and uric acid (nitrogen compounds). An analysis of the urine of meat eaters and vegetarians found that the kidneys of meat-eaters have to do three times the amount of work to eliminate poisonous nitrogen compounds in meat, than do the kidneys of vegetarians.

When kidneys can no longer handle the excessively heavy load of a meat-eating diet, the unexcreted uric acid is deposited throughout the body. When deposits form in the joints, the painful conditions of gout, arthritis and rheumatism result; when the uric acid collects in the nerves, neuritis and sciatica

result.

### Is it right to kill animals?

*"As far as possible articles of food are to be selected from amongst the sets of items where development of consciousness is comparatively little, ie. if vegetables are available, animals should not be slaughtered. Secondly, under any circumstances before killing any animals having developed or under-developed consciousness, it is to be considered whether it is possible to live in a healthy body without taking such lives."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

In order to live fully in accordance with the principle of not causing harm, a vegetarian diet is appropriate. Although every living being must consume other forms of life to survive, it is recognised that animals are more highly evolved forms of life and as such would suffer much greater pain if slaughtered for food than would fruits, grains, vegetables, and so on.

George Bernard Shaw put it succinctly when he said: "animals are my friends ... and I don't eat my friends."

It is not yogis alone who advocate and practise vegetarianism. Historically the list of vegetarians is impressive, including such names as: Socrates, Pythagoras, Leonardo Da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Issac Newton, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Einstein and George Bernard Shaw.

### Will I get enough nutrition without eating meat?

Not only can a vegetarian diet provide all necessary body nutrients, it usually provides much more nutritional energy than a meat diet. Although nutrition may appear to be a complex science, its basic rules are simple. There are five groups of essential nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, fats and oils, minerals and vitamins. A vegetarian diet based on a reasonable cross-section of vegetables, fruit, nuts, grains, beans and milk products would more than amply meet the needs of anyone, athletes and physical labourers included. For further reference, 'Cooking for Consciousness', available from Ananda Marga publications, deals with the subject sufficiently. 'From Soil to Psyche' by David A. Phillips, goes into nutrition in great depth, whilst remaining easily readable.

### The politics of hunger

Meat is one of the most uneconomical and inefficient foods we can eat: the cost of one pound of meat protein is ten times higher than equally nutritional plant protein. Only 10% of the protein and calories we feed our livestock is recovered in meat: that is, 90% goes 'down the drain'.

Vast areas of land are used to raise livestock for food. These acres of land could be utilised far more productively if planted with grains, beans and other legumes for direct human consumption.

- \* If the USA conserved its grain supply and gave it to malnourished people, instead of to cattle, it could feed nearly all the chronically underfed people of the world.
- \* If Americans ate half as much meat, they could release enough food to feed the entire 'developing world'.
- \* A Harvard nutritionist, Jean Mayer, estimates that reducing meat production by just 10% in the USA would release enough grain to feed 60 million people.
- \* The shocking and tragic truth is that 80—90% of all grain grown in America is used to feed meat animals.
- \* Twenty years ago the average American ate 50 pounds of meat annually; present estimates put the figure at 129 pounds of beef alone. Because of America's 'fixation on meat', most eat at least twice the daily recommended protein allowance. Learning the real facts behind the 'food shortage' is fundamental to an understanding of how we can properly utilise the world's resources.

Clearly the decision whether to eat meat or not is a personal one, but looking at the arguments against it, it becomes rather difficult to justify.

# Taming the Mad Monkey

*The village magistrate's neighbour asked him a question on a point of law.*

*'My cow was gored by your bull. Do I get any compensation?'*

*'Certainly not. How can a human be held responsible for what an animal does?'*

*'Just a moment', said the neighbour. 'I am afraid I got the question back to front. Actually it was my bull that gored your cow.'*

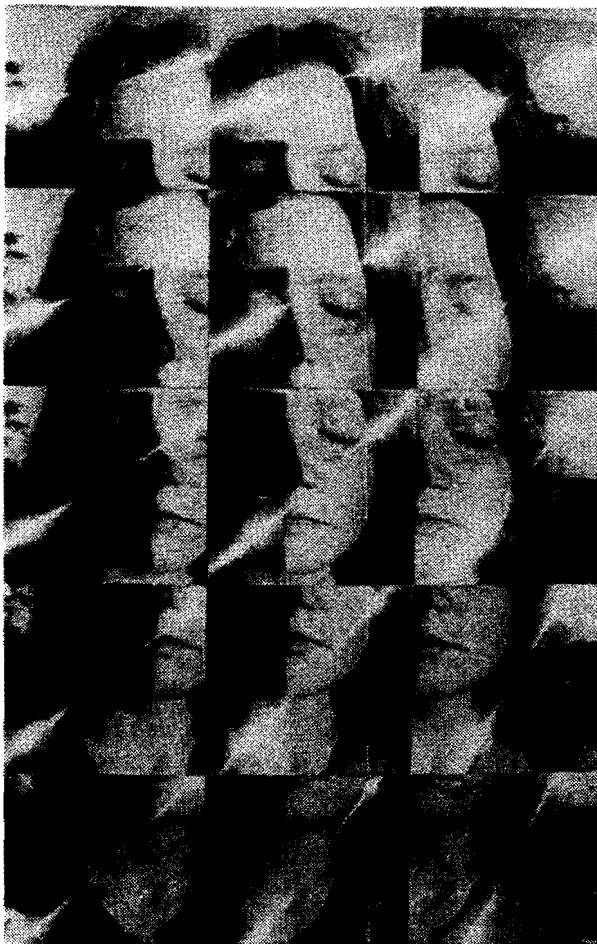
*'Ah', said the magistrate, 'this is more involved. I shall have to look up the book of precedents, for there may be other factors involved which are relevant and which could alter the case.'*

Self-interest is like a cloud which obscures a person's objectivity. Caring only for oneself, an egocentric person is unable to see

things as they really are, and makes correspondingly biased decisions. This problem is not just a personal one, but is the root cause of all injustices and conflicts that people face.

Whether it be on a grand scale such as a multi-national corporation concentrating humanity's common wealth into the hands of a few, or on an individual level such as domestic violence over a wife's refusal to succumb to a drunken husband's demands, the factor of self-centredness is always there.

Further, we see that these extreme examples are part of a widespread, deeply rooted way of thinking, which is the accepted norm is so much of our society. In virtually every walk of life from education, culture and sport to interpersonal relationships, employment and politics, people are always thinking in terms of 'What can I gain? How will I benefit' and 'How much do I get?' Very rarely does anyone have truly responsible and altruistic



sentiments such as 'How can I help? What can I do? How much can I give?'

All the actions we perform pass firstly through the judgemental faculty of our mind. If the subtler, intuitive nature of the mind is not developed, the person is very subjective and narrow-minded in their thoughts, words and actions. Such people unthinkingly identify their likes as being best, their words as being truth and their actions as being correct. Whilst this tendency may be natural, there is also a natural corrective tendency.

For example, in an argument a man gets so emotionally upset that he abuses his friend by calling him a stupid idiot. In the heat of the argument he really believes his friend to be a stupid idiot, and that's why he says so. However the next day he has cooled down and is walking along the beach when his conscience says to him, 'You were wrong in abusing your friend last night'.

Everyone has this sense of conscience or objectivity, but do we really give it a chance to be heard? The uncontrolled mind races from thought to thought, chases desire after desire, or experiences complexes and emotions which keep it fully occupied. The inner intuitive conscience is like a songbird singing beautifully outside your window — you won't hear it if you're inside your room with the window closed and the radio blaring. To appreciate it you have to listen attentively.

Developing an objective awareness is, however, only the first step; one also needs the strength to act upon it. It is not uncommon to find people who have developed a certain amount of intellectual objectivity and understand certain things, yet, when

it comes to putting that knowledge into practice, they procrastinate. It is always possible to rationalise and find excuses for not doing something, but nothing is achieved by it.

The essence of spirituality is to transform oneself, not just to know, and this involves change. To become spiritually elevated or liberated one must be prepared to change pervasively. One cannot remain without change and attain realisation at the same time.

Sometimes the process of change may be painful, for the spiritual path is not always an easy one to follow. In fact, many of the world's greatest spiritualists underwent tremendous hardships and suffering in the course of their spiritual struggle. What is obvious from their example is that the attitude must be developed to keep moving towards the goal despite any difficulties.

*"Difficulties can never be greater  
than your capacity to solve them."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

In order to have an idea of the types of problems one may face, the spiritual path has been explained in terms of four phases: the initial external difficulties, the adjustment for internal development, the signs of progress, and finally Self-realisation and liberation.

#### **(i) External Difficulties**

In this first stage the aspirant needs to harmoniously adjust his

or her habits and lifestyle to accommodate the new yogic practices. Obstacles such as one's own attachment to certain comforts and excesses have to be replaced by an openness for experimentation.

Sitting cross-legged on the floor during meditation may result in sore knees, ankles or back, until one is habituated. However with consistent practice every day, and aided by asanas, the muscles loosen up and the joints become more flexible.

Rising early in the morning for meditation and asanas also requires consistency and determination. This becomes easier as the beneficial effects far outweigh the effects of the sleep lost.

Adopting a vegetarian diet may also seem a big step for some persons to take. Missing the heavy 'full' feeling of meat, being frightened of 'lack of protein', or adapting the sense of taste to new foods -- all require a balanced, sensible approach and, of course, patience.

With time the body adjusts to these new habits. What may have seemed difficult is soon appreciated as a more natural and healthy way of life.

Simultaneously, it is not unusual for the aspirant to face some opposition from others who do not understand the changes taking place. The opposition may be subtle, like a friend representing a refusal to drink at the bar, or it may be openly expressed, perhaps by a parent concerned that you may die of malnutrition. A rational and considerate communication of the reasons for such changes should help those who are ill at ease to understand and even support your efforts. In some cases

more patience may be necessary, especially where the person is deeply entrenched in their ways due to the conditioning imposed by society.

Attending a regular class or collective meditation provides an opportunity to learn and share from others undergoing similar experiences. Their support is very beneficial in facing the negativity and opposition that may have arisen.

*"Even a golden vessel needs polishing occasionally. Unmaintained, it gathers dust and dirt and loses its lustre. Similarly, even a good person, a spiritual aspirant, needs proper maintenance for, in a world of constant change, care must be taken that the change be always towards the better or higher. Keeping good company is essential for this positive development. While bad company strengthens the bondage of the soul, good company is conducive to liberation and salvation."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

## (ii) Internal adjustment

After becoming established in the basic practices and overcoming the initial obstacles, one may be expecting the spiritual experiences of meditation to surface rapidly, and often they do. However it is also common that, while meditation becomes a peaceful and inspiring experience, the mind can't penetrate deeply enough to reach the deepest spiritual realms. Internal distractions may manifest at the time of meditation, motivation

may wane, or doubts and confusion may arise.

As it becomes apparent that the ultimate goal of realisation is not so readily attainable, it is necessary that the aspirant develop a strong sense of devotion and determination, free from attachment.

High spiritual attainment is a rare achievement because of the demanding and long-term nature of the spiritual path. Today, people are habituated to the quick achievements made possible by modern technology: a "meal" is prepared in minutes by opening a tin can and heating it in a microwave oven; you can fly to the other side of the world in hours, or see what is happening there as it happens via satellite telecommunication. However there is no pill to take or button to press that will give "instant realisation". It is not surprising that the yogic ideal of egoless action, free from self-interest, is difficult to adopt.

A great amount of effort, knowledge and self-discipline is required to achieve a university degree, and this is only the base which enables one to practise a profession competently. So too with the yogic science. Techniques and practices for building the power of concentration, purifying the levels of the mind (kosas) and harmoniously gaining control of the psychic energy centres (cakras) all take time to perfect.

## (iii) Signs of Progress

At some point in time, the aspirant gains a reasonable degree of competence in the practices, having largely overcome the external and internal difficulties. In some cases this may result

in the manifestation of certain psychic or occult powers which are normally latent but which awaken as a result of the development of the kosas and cakras.

These powers are perfectly natural, not supernatural, and exist in potential form in everyone. Hence they are not to be feared should they manifest.

It should be noted, however, that all great yogic masters have warned of the temptation of using these powers. Even where the intention is to use these powers for beneficial purposes, there are subtle dangers associated with them. For example, one may use these powers with the intention of healing an illness, but in fact what may be happening is that the symptoms of the illness are being suppressed, and will again emerge in a different way or at a later date. In some cases the mental *samskara* (potential reaction) causing the illness may be unknowingly transferred to the person using the powers.

Perhaps the greatest danger is that the vanity associated with their use may distract the aspirant from the true spiritual goal and eventually lead to degradation and misuse of powers. The following story makes the point well.

A novice had been meditating in a cave for five years on the instructions of his Guru. However his desire for occult powers had led him to neglecting his meditation and instead concentrating on development of the powers. When at last his Guru came to take him away from the cave back to the ashram, the novice was eager to show the Guru the fruits of his efforts. The chance came as they approached a river they had to cross. As his

Guru walked towards the ferry, the novice used his occult powers to walk across the water, and waited with pride at the other side. The Guru paid the fare of fifty paise (about five cents), crossed on the ferry, then joined the novice who was waiting eagerly for praise to be heaped upon his exhibition. The Guru, however, commented, saying: "Your five years of meditation have the equal value of fifty paise."

Occult powers are not harmful in themselves, but can only be used in a safe, beneficial way by someone who has completely surpassed the possibility of downfall and is fully adept in the spiritual sciences — that is, a liberated or fully realised person.

#### (iv) Liberation and Self-realisation

When the aspirant finally attains the state of non-dual union with the Cosmic Consciousness, it is known as Self-realisation: the full experience of the Cosmic Self. If the person remains permanently in that state after death, it is then called liberation. However a Self-realised being may renounce liberation in order to serve humanity, in which case, after death, he or she again takes a human body, through the process of reincarnation.

### SELF ANALYSIS

*"The approach to spirituality should be psychological and rational and should appeal to the deepest psychic sentiments of humanity. Through rational analysis everyone should appreciate his or her relationship with God and*

*recognise the most benevolent kindness of the most beloved Entity. Spirituality should lead all to that one Cosmic Truth, from Whom all have derived their soul and Who is the ultimate destiny of each individual."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

As a goldsmith removes impurities to get pure gold, so a spiritualist must remove his or her narrow qualities to reach the state of pure consciousness. In social life too a person can relate to others in a harmonious way only if he or she has an objective outlook free from the domination of the narrow self-interests of the ego.

One way of developing an objective outlook is through self-analysis: at the end of the day, one reflects honestly and sincerely on one's actions with the view of identifying any faults and shortcomings. By doing this regularly, one eventually becomes aware of negative tendencies before they are expressed, and can then take appropriate steps to overcome them.

Practising self-analysis in a systematic way, for example with the aid of a chart (see below), can also be a very effective means of developing will-power.

Beneficial applications of a chart:

1. Reminds one of essential points which are normally overlooked or forgotten.
2. Helps one to become regular in yoga practices.
3. Encourages continual improvement as opposed to the





false sense of satisfaction which the ego often brings even after a minimal effort.

4. Helps to keep everything in perspective so that the spiritual goal of life is never forgotten.

Points 1 to 6 of the following chart contain the basic yogic practices. Point 7 is an example of personal points to which you could easily add. Each night before bed, or before breakfast, tick the points you feel you have accomplished that day, put a 'T' for trying, where you have sincerely tried but didn't fully accomplish it, and cross where you feel you failed.

## DAILY SELF ANALYSIS CHART

Day: 1 2 3 4 etc

1. Half bath before meditation
2. Meditation: morning  
evening
3. Asanas
4. Sentient Food
5. Weekly class or group meditation
6. Yogic ethics: Non-harming *James + Arjuna*  
Benevolent truthfulness  
Non-stealing  
Seeing the One in all  
No over-indulgence  
Mental & physical cleanliness  
Mental ease  
Sacrifice for others  
Spiritual study  
Spiritual Goal
7. Personal Points eg.
  - \* Developing an attitude of helpfulness rather than criticism
  - \* Not losing temper with the children
  - \* Cleanliness around the house
  - \* Trying to inspire happiness in others
  - \* Being more hospitable & sharing

and so on.

# Mind to Matter, Matter to Mind

The universe is an endless source of mystery and wonderment. Since the dawning of human history people have pondered questions such as 'What is the origin of matter? What is the purpose of life? Is there a Supreme Intelligence guiding the universe?' To varying degrees mythology, folklore, religion and science have provided answers.

Yet most consider such questions have little to do with the practical business of everyday living and the answers in any event to be beyond mind's grasp.

But in Tantra, where the individual's life is viewed as part of a universal flow of consciousness, these essential questions are central issues of practical living and a rational philosophical analysis of them crucial to individual progress. According to Tantra, without attempting first to understand the terrain on which we are travelling and the forces we may confront, it is

impossible to steer a true course. Not to grapple with these questions is to meander aimlessly and possibly wander into personal grief.

## **Models of Consciousness**

The value of Tantra's cosmology and philosophy lies in its ability to provide a holistic viewpoint from which to analyse personal experience, which then forms a foundation for rational discrimination. While Tantra is first and foremost a path of meditation and Self-realisation, intellectual understanding is its starting point and the basis of ongoing decision making.

In our brief look at Tantra's cosmology in the following pages we must remember that we are considering the charting of spiritual realisations. As such the images presented should be seen only as correlations to reality. We should not mistake

them for the real thing. Just as physicists use models of atoms to explain material relationships, yogis use models of consciousness to help us understand macrocosmic and microcosmic relationships.

Only as our consciousness expands and we have direct intuitive experience can we truly know the nature of the created universe and obtain a complete picture of reality. Until then we keep validating our theoretical understanding by relating it to our experience, as is the case with any science.

## **BRAHMACAKRA**

For all states of being, Tantra recognises one substantive cause, namely Brahma or Absolute Consciousness. But in discussing the origins of existence, Tantra describes a singular reality or pure state of being from which all states spring. This original state is unmanifest and is called Nirguna Brahma, meaning unqualified Consciousness. However while remaining unmanifest, Nirguna Brahma always has the potential for expression. This dormant capacity is called Prakrti.

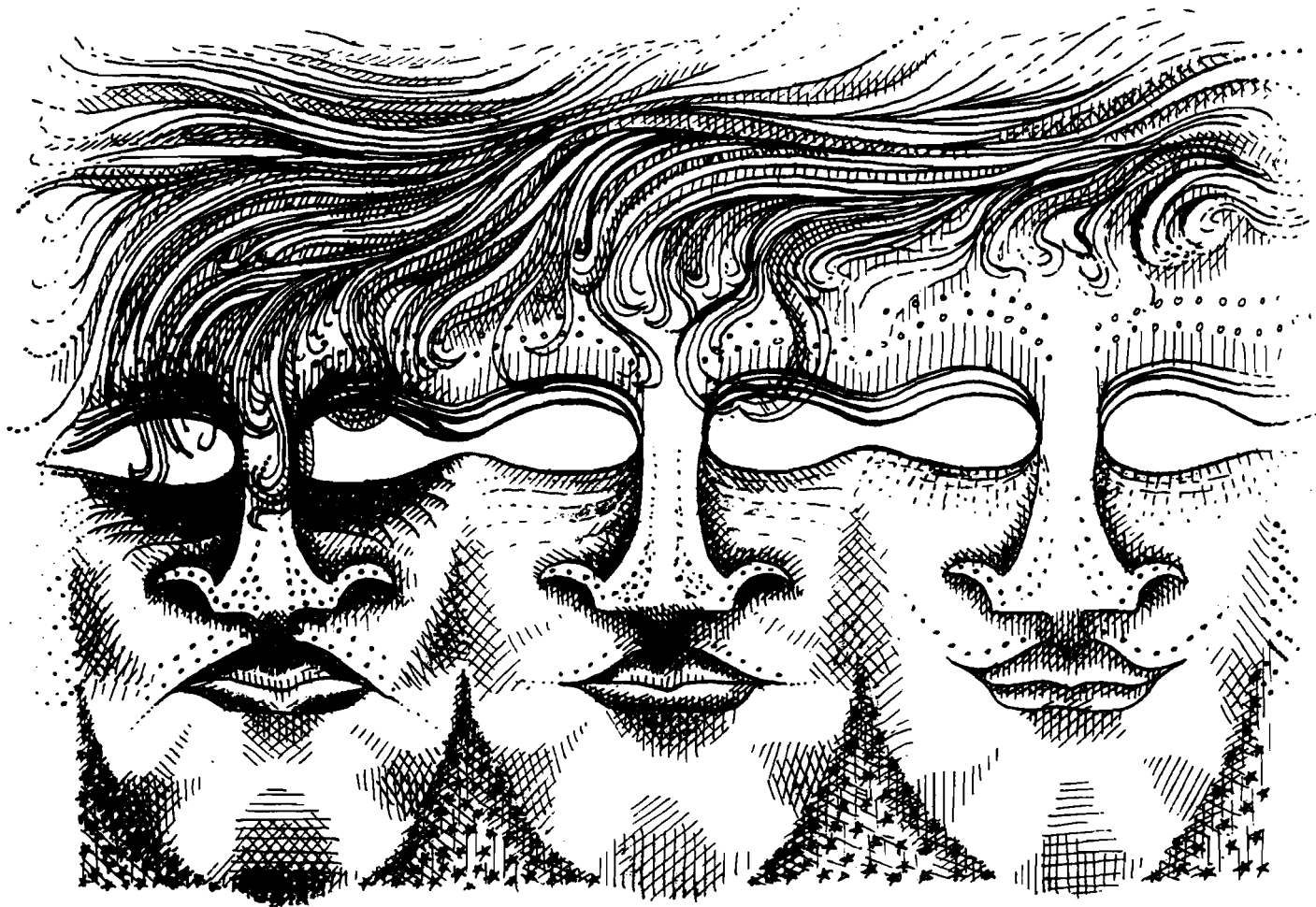
Prakrti is not a separate entity within Brahma but is one side of Brahma's two-sided nature; the other side being consciousness itself, which is called Purusa.

At a point, which can be neither defined in space nor time, Prakrti begins to affect Purusa, giving Purusa the capacity to express itself. A complete explanation of how such a capacity arises is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is sufficient to say

that, while flowing dynamically through Purusa, Prakrti's movement is disrupted by the belligerency of its own innate and diverse qualities. These qualities are described as a triumvirate of forces which are paradoxically in constant competition with one another. They are called the 'gunas' or qualities and are defined as follows:

1. **The Sentient Principle or Sattvaguna**
  - (a) creates a feeling of existence, a feeling of 'I am';
  - (b) creates a feeling of great relief or happiness, like that found when released from bondage;
  - (c) creates a desire for freedom;
  - (d) is a force of illumination, vitality and mental expansion.
2. **The Mutative Force or Rajoguna**
  - (a) creates a sense of doership, a feeling of 'I do' or ego;
  - (b) creates the desire for action and self-expression,
  - (c) is a force for change, movement and transformation.
3. **The Static Principle or Tamoguna**
  - (a) creates a feeling of having formed a thing, a feeling of 'I have done',
  - (b) creates a feeling of confinement, restriction, bondage and inhibition,
  - (c) is a force of stagnation, crudification, ignorance and decay.

In the dormant state of Prakrti the three gunas are in balance — one is not dominating the other two. However, as they move about forming different configurations at different points, they become unbalanced and Purusa is disrupted. The lost equilibrium



of the gunas results in a bursting forth of energy and the creation of a wavelength which is the first manifestation of Brahma or consciousness.

### **Binding Process**

The first subtle expression of consciousness is dominated by the sentient principle of Prakrti. Because the sentient principle creates the sensation of existence, Purusa for the first time has awareness of its own existence, which is known as Mahatattva or pure 'I' feeling.

Next the mutative force takes hold and attains dominance over part of the Mahatattva created by the sentient principle, giving consciousness an added quality. No longer is it simply aware of its existence but it has the ability to act. This new ability is called Ahamtattva or 'I do' feeling. It is also referred to as the Cosmic Ego because Brahma now has the desire to express itself.

Consciousness is now sufficiently transformed for the static principle to influence it and increase its bondage. The static principle begins to dominate part of the Ahamtattva, giving it the quality of objectifying what is imagined by the Cosmic Ego. Consciousness is no longer in a purely subjective state as it has the sensation of having created something — the 'I have done' feeling, which is called Cittatattva or Cosmic Mind Stuff. Citta is like the big blank page on which the drama of creation is written.

Together Mahatattva, Ahamtattva and Cittatattva constitute

the Cosmic Mind. Consciousness expressed as mind is called Saguna Brahma, meaning qualified consciousness. The stage is now set for the manifest universe.

It should be remembered that Prakrti, in binding Purusa, does not influence all of Nirguna Brahma — only a part is transformed into Saguna Brahma. This may be more easily grasped if we imagine Purusa or consciousness to be an infinite ocean of water, Prakrti to be controlling the ocean's temperature, and the gunas the various degrees of temperature. To begin with, the ocean is uniform in temperature; then part of it is made colder and the molecules condense (sentient principle operating, Mahatattva formed). Then part of the already chilled water is made even colder and the molecules move closer together (mutative principle operating, Ahamtattva formed within Mahatattva). Finally, part of the very cold water becomes ice and takes on a different and distinct form (static principle operating, Citta formed within Ahamtattva).

This analogy is apt, as the binding of consciousness by Prakrti is a form of condensation.

### **Fundamental Factors**

With the further influence of the static principle, Cosmic Citta takes on different physical forms, some of which we are able to observe with the aid of the five senses. At first the influence of the static principle on Citta is slight, creating an extremely subtle factor which can only be perceived by the mind as a primordial sound vibration.

This subtlest of all factors is known as akashatattva or the etherial factor. The primordial sound vibration it carries is actually a generic essence of itself. The mental perception of this sound is roughly analogous to our sense perception of an object. For example, when we touch something we do not directly experience the object but only the electrical charge our nerves communicate to our brain; so too the sound vibration is only a representation of the fundamental factor.

The generic essence of a factor is called a tanmatra, in this case the tanmatra of sound.

The subtle sound tanmatra should not be confused with the crude sound waves we are used to hearing, which are the result of air molecules beating against our ear-drums. Neither the human senses nor scientific instruments can measure this primordial sound wave; only the subtle mind can be attuned to it.

Ether or space is the first fundamental factor created within Citta or Cosmic Mind Stuff. According to science, space is a total vacuum and the concept of ether a mistaken hypothesis. But Tantra says that space has both substance and wave form, a notion supported by Einstein's theory of curved space, and is the primeval factor from which the rest of creation takes shape.

Further consolidation of ether by the static principle results in the formation of the next fundamental factor known as vayu-tattva or the aerial or gaseous factor.

As with the etheric factor, the aerial factor generates its own unique tanmatra, the tanmatra of touch, as well as retaining

the ether's tanmatra of sound. And, like ether's sound, the aerial factor's touch is a generic essence of which the sense of touch is only a crude reflection.

### Devolution of Consciousness

As will become apparent as we describe the remaining three fundamental factors and their respective tanmatras, the five human senses are our predetermined modes of experiencing the generic essences of the five fundamental factors. The senses are gateways to the primitive part of our mind which was the first part to form over the millions of years of evolution. As such they are fairly crude instruments and an indirect means of receiving tanmtric data. The most efficient way is directly through the subtle mind but, because we are already mentally focussed through the senses, we cannot do so.

The next factor to be formed is tejasattva or luminous factor, which has the tanmatra of sight. Then comes the liquid factor or apatattva, with the tanmatra of taste.

Finally the solid factor or ksitatattva, which has the tanmatra of smell, is formed. Philosophically the solid factor is the culminating point of crudification, as it is the final point in the devolution of consciousness.

A point to remember is that each factor has evolved from its forerunner and consequently inherits the tanmatra of the previous factor. Thus the luminous factor possesses the tanmatras of sound, touch and sight, while the solid factor possesses all

five tanmatras.

Also, in conceptualising the five fundamental factors, we should not confuse sense perception with the objective factors. For example, gases are generally not unadulterated examples of the aerial factor but are permeated with particles of solid factor, giving them a distinctive odour.

The formation of the five fundamental factors closely parallels science's conception of creation. According to modern science, in the universe vast, extremely thin clouds of hydrogen gas (aerial factor) swirl through space. The scattered atoms gradually draw together and, as they do so, pick up speed which increases their energy. The gas cloud begins to heat up and glow (luminous factor). Under the tremendous heat and pressure at the gas cloud's centre, the nuclei of hydrogen atoms are fused together, giving off greater heat and light and helium is formed, followed by heavier atoms, such as carbon, nitrogen and oxygen.

The core of the massive cloud becomes so intensely hot and the atoms move so closely together that a sphere forms. The mass, now a star, generates such enormous energy that parts of it burst into a flame of nuclear fusion or liquid 'plasma' (liquid factor). The tremendous nuclear explosion throws the liquid plasma from the surface of the star into space where it begins to cool and condense further. The cooling plasma begins orbiting the star. After millions of years the plasma finally becomes solid matter.

The condensation of consciousness from its pure state to solid matter is called saincara, or the extroversial phase of creation.

In this phase, the infinitely subtle becomes crude finite matter, all due to Prakrti's influence.

The waning of Prakrti's influence is the reverse phase of creation, called *prati-saincara* — it is the introversial phase or the phase in which the crude matter, in all its diversity, becomes subtle again and merges with pure consciousness.

### Transformation of Matter

Paradoxically, the waning of Prakrti's influence is due to the continued application of its own force. At the point of creation, when solid matter forms, Prakrti's static force continues to exert pressure, leading to three possible transformations of matter.

Firstly, solid matter may lose its structural solidarity and instantaneously break up into the separate fundamental factors of which it consists. Instantaneous disassociation of the factors may occur in dying celestial bodies, eg. red giant stars, resulting in astronomical explosions called supernovas. The explosion of a supernova creates such enormous force that the fundamental factors contained in the celestial body are spontaneously released from the bondage of the static force into their subtler forms of energy such as light — an exploding star may be ten billion times brighter than the sun and may even outshine a galaxy for a time.

Secondly, disintegration may occur gradually due to natural wear and tear. This natural breakdown occurs in all structures, from stars to basic elements susceptible to erosion. Thanks to

physical science, we now know all matter to be bottled up energy and that energy is always escaping from matter, causing it to deteriorate and disintegrate.

The third possibility, which may arise under Prakrti's influence, is the creation of mind within matter, and the formation of life.

For this potential to manifest, certain criteria must be met.

First, a stable structure must exist, containing all five fundamental factors in requisite proportions. The structure must also be in a conducive environment so it can replace elements which gradually breakdown within it.

If the physical structure is stable, then the natural energies of the five fundamental factors create a nucleus which is the first sign of potential life. The natural energies of the fundamental factors are called 'prana' and when they combine to form a common nucleus they are called 'pranah' (plural of 'prana') or the vital force. This vital force in living entities has been recognised in Eastern philosophies for millenia and is just now making its way into Western thought through alternative healing methods.

Yet, formation of a nucleus of the fundamental factors' vital forces is not enough for life — mind must also exist to control and direct these blind forces.

Like the vital forces, mind too is a product of the countervailing forces within the fundamental factors, which result from the increase in Prakrti's static force. These forces, some centripetal,



some centrifugal, conflict with one another and produce a dramatic metamorphosis of energy. What was physical energy takes a qualitative leap into the dimension of mind.

### **Consciousness Transforms**

We have seen that Cosmic Mind is a reflection or condensation of Cosmic Consciousness and that matter in turn is a condensation of Cosmic Mind. Like modern physics' observation of the interchangeability of physical energy and matter, Tantra points to an interchangeability of matter and mind — all expressions of consciousness are energy and entirely malleable — including mind.

Therefore, inherent in matter is mind and its development is a natural process of evolution. At the beginning of this process, when the countervailing forces initially 'powder down' or subtly the physical factors into mind, the first mental expression is extremely primitive. Because matter is a crude substance, the first type of mind to manifest is very undeveloped.

This primitive mind is called ectoplasm or 'mind stuff' — it is the basic ingredient of 'citta'. But this citta is not the citta of the Cosmic Mind — it is only a minute part of it, as the evolutionary phase is not a simple reversal of the 'saincara' process.

At the stage of solid matter, Cosmic Citta is completely fragmented and exists only in microscopic portions, having gone through all the transformations of the creation of the five factors. This fragmentation is accentuated in the powdering down process as only part of the organism becomes ectoplasm. Thus the first

expression of mind is not only primitive in nature but limited in dimension — it is microcosmic or unit mind.

Because of its basic beginnings, the characteristic of citta is to attend to the physical needs of the organism and to control the flow of the organism's vital energies.

Yet no matter how limited this initial unit mind may be, it is a giant step in the liberation of consciousness. From this very primitive life evolves more developed life forms, along with their complex physical structures and greater potentialities.

How does this occur?

There are basically three forces at work in the evolutionary process:

1. Physical clash,
2. Psychic clash,
3. Spiritual attraction.

1. **Physical clash** results from the struggle with matter, which all lifeforms engage in to survive and procreate. It manifests in the fight against the hostile physical elements, in the battle to maintain the physical body by providing it with food and shelter, in satisfying the urge to procreate and so on. All these struggles generate mental activity and pressure within the instinctive mind, leading to further mental development which causes both the enlargement of citta and the transformation of citta into aham.

2. **Psychic clash** results from direct contact of mind with other



A. T. Chia

minds and ideas and the development of emotions.

While physical clash works on the development of the citta, psychic clash develops and enlarges the aham portion of the mind.

As we know from the devolutionary process, the characteristic of aham is not instinctive but egoistic — it leads to reasoned action. The development of aham means the organism can pursue a course of action other than that dictated by instinct.

The capacity to do this depends on just how much aham there is in relation to citta. Initially only a small part of citta is converted into aham and, because the mind is still predominantly made up of citta, instinctive action dominates. Through psychic clash, aham gradually increases and the instincts lessen in their influence. When aham is greater than citta, the surplus portion is called intellect and reason dominates instinct.

Along with mental development comes physical development, providing the more complex mind an appropriate vehicle through which to express itself. A central nervous system, brain and glandular system form.

Psychic clash expands aham, new ideas stir the intellect, and events and other organisms stimulate the emotions. The enlargement of aham also precipitates further transformation of the mind into mahat, at which point spiritual attraction becomes a mentally progressive force.

**3. Spiritual attraction** results from the mind longing for

cosmic awareness. In the later stages of evolution, when mahat begins to manifest in the mind, a growing yearning awakens in the unit being to return to its original state of consciousness.

The yearning may be a conscious or unconscious one but a deep burning desire for happiness beyond transitory enjoyment is the result. The unit entity can no longer be satisfied with satiating the physical senses or entertaining the intellect. It must strive for ultimate happiness — happiness which is not limited in experience but is infinite.

The excess of mahat over aham and citta is defined as intuition. Once mahat dominates, the transformation of mind into pure consciousness is only one step away. The strong spiritual attraction of consciousness makes this step possible.

Thus the evolutionary process described by science, according to Tantra, is nothing but the gradual expression of mind and the liberation of consciousness.

In consonance with expanding minds, higher and higher forms of life develop to act as their physical receptacles. First created are the most basic unicellular organisms possessing crude ectoplasmic minds. Unicellular life develops into multicellular life and plants and animals evolve. At the top of the scale, where mahat begins to predominate, is humanity.

Having enlarged mahat, the human mind reflects consciousness more clearly than less developed minds. Further reflection of consciousness gives human beings the capacity to say 'I know I exist'. In this statement, the feeling that 'I exist' is a function

of mahat and the feeling of 'knowing' of existence is the reflection of consciousness on mahat.

### **Microcosm and Macrocosm**

Human mind has all three parts of Cosmic Mind, however, due to the fractionalisation of consciousness during the devolutionary phase of creation, we know philosophically that the capabilities of Macrocosmic and microcosmic minds must be very different. Some of the notable differences are as follows.

Firstly, when we imagine something, unit aham acts on unit citta and citta changes into what we wish to picture in our mind. Like a piece of mental plasticene, citta takes the shape of what aham desires. Having created the image, aham then enjoys it internally. But for other people, the image we have created does not exist. For example, to our mind our dreams are real but to others they do not exist. The changes in our citta are localised to our personal experience.

However, on the Cosmic level, when Cosmic Ahamtattva operates on Cosmic Citta and Cosmic Mind imagines a scene, it is reality for all. Because the universe is a projection of Cosmic Citta and we exist in Cosmic Mind, Cosmic Imagination is universal and has material substance.

Secondly, for Cosmic Mind creation is internal, while for us it is external. The Cosmic Mind experiences the universe as its own mental projection. We, on the other hand, perceive it as external, although in doing so we internalise it with the help of citta.



*K. Arn*

Unlike unit imagination, where our thoughts are entirely internal, we enjoy the phenomenal world by receiving external sensory data (tanmatras) in the form of sound, light, touch, taste and smell through the sensory organs which act as gateways to the brain and our citta. The brain is the physical receptacle of the mind and when sensory data reaches the brain via the nervous system, the information is translated into a psychic vibration, the shape of which is assumed by citta. Unit aham is then able to perceive the object. When a physical action is performed in the external world the process is reversed. Aham directs citta to take the shape of the desired action, which is then translated into a sympathetic vibration in the brain, which in turn puts it into action through the efferent nerves which drive the motor organs.

To act in and experience the world the human being is dependent on the brain, nervous system and sensory and motor organs, all of which exist to convert mental waves into physical waves and vice-versa. The Cosmic Mind needs no such apparatus as everything occurs within it.

Thirdly, the Cosmic Mind is multilateral and unipurposeful, while unit mind is unilateral and multipurposeful.

Because of the limitations of microcosmic mind, unit citta can take the shape of only one object at a time, which means the unit being is capable of dealing with only one piece of data at a time. More than one input dissipates mental energy, destroying concentration and perception of the data.

Macrocosmic Mind can cope with any amount of data. Cosmic

Citta is unlimited in the forms it can take and loses none of its clarity in doing so.

Cosmic Mind in directing its mental energy is singular in purpose. Its only goal is to liberate itself from the bondage of Prakrti by liberating all unit minds. Microcosmic minds are not so directed and are distracted by numerous desires which scatter mental energy.

At the point of human life, these distractions become very significant as evolution is no longer under the directorship of Cosmic Ahamtattva and the misuse of mental energy may lead to degeneration. In animal and plant life, lower desires must be satisfied for evolutionary purposes — organisms must eat, procreate, etc. However, when human beings arrive on the scene, due to their longing for the Infinite and their new-found willpower, there is a danger their desire for transcendent happiness will be misdirected toward excessive indulgence in lower instinctual drives. Misdirection not only wastes mental energy but ultimately degrades the mind, as constant association of citta with the sensory and motor organs reinforces citta and strengthens it over aham and mahat, resulting in the suppression of intellect and intuition — a unit devolution of consciousness.

If humans want to bridge the gap between mind and consciousness they must willfully focus mental energy on uplifting ideas and activities. Meditation presents the most effective means of constructively redirecting mental energy toward the supremely subtle. It acts to speed up the evolutionary process so that we may be free of the bondages of Prakrti in the shortest possible time and enjoy the transcendent happiness which is our birth-

right.

Once the gap between human existence and Cosmic existence is breached by the conversion of all parts of the mind into consciousness, the cycle of creation is complete. The one has become many and the many have become one. This cycle of creation in Tantra is called Brahmacakra or the cycle of consciousness. It is a never-ending process — as new areas of consciousness are crudified into different material forms, other areas are subtilified and liberated from the binding forces of the three gunas. Thus there is no time at which creation will cease. The desire of consciousness to express itself and then to liberate itself is never-ending.



*K. Am*

# The Unfolding Mind

The terms 'levels of mind' and 'altered states of consciousness' are often loosely and imprecisely used to refer to experiences that are somehow out of the ordinary. However, the looseness of usage results not so much from a peculiar feature of these experiences but simply from the inability of Western concepts and frameworks to encompass them.

Because such experiences are not common or ordinary, they are generally not considered as important or as valuable as experiences which are more straight forward and mundane. In the modern world many people even deny that spiritual experience exists at all. It is therefore vitally important to the future of spirituality that non-ordinary states of consciousness and higher levels of mind be understandable within the framework of a sound and logical theory. Tantra provides such a theory. Its concept of kosas (layers of the mind) and chakras (psychic energy centres) offers a unique explanation of the mechanism

through which human consciousness expresses itself in both ordinary and non-ordinary ways.

## Kosas

From the beginning, Tantra makes a fundamental distinction between consciousness and mind. Consciousness is basic and does not change. On the other hand, mind is extremely variable, acting as the medium through which consciousness is able to come in contact with the varied manifestations of the real world. Even though we may speak of higher states of consciousness, consciousness itself does not in fact change and is never higher or lower. What does change is the particular mental machinery through which consciousness functions.

Tantra distinguishes five main types of mental machinery or

modes of mind, calling them the five Kosas: the sheaths or layers of the mind. For example, the most basic Kosa is called Kamamaya, and is concerned with the operation of the senses and the fulfilment of the fundamental drives related to food, security, reproduction and sleep. The next Kosa, termed Manomaya, is what we normally call the intellect or ego, and is involved in learning, thinking, remembering and so on.

When a person is totally immersed in sensory pleasure it is a common observation that his or her intellectual and rational faculties are greatly reduced. Similarly, when one's intellect or ego is developed, it is possible to control sensual inclinations so as to fulfil higher desires.

In the first instance, the person's consciousness is operating predominantly through the Kamamaya Kosa, while in the second case it is functioning through the Manomaya Kosa. In these two situations consciousness itself has not changed, only the mode of mind with which it is mainly associated.

Perhaps more interesting are the so-called 'higher Kosas': the three layers of mind beyond the intellect. That Tantra should distinguish and detail no less than three distinct Kosas beyond the intellect, in itself, shows the poverty of a Western approach which has failed to find boundaries or clear outlines at the higher levels. The problem is mainly that Western psychologists have tried to understand the higher Kosas purely with the intellect — which is only just above 'animal consciousness' (Kamamaya) on the Tantric scale. To understand 'Divine Consciousness' or 'Cosmic Consciousness' one must be Divine or 'Cosmically aware' oneself.

To comprehend the full extent and features of the higher levels of mind, we need the insight of real spiritual experience gained through meditation.

Many people reading books on Yoga or Tantra for the first time are often confused by the contrapositions of dualities like seeing and Seeing, knowing and Knowing, sleep and wakefulness. The former refer to consciousness functioning through, and thus limited by, the narrow scope of the lower Kosas, specifically the Kamamaya and Manomaya. The latter then refer to consciousness as it is reflected through any one or more of the three higher Kosas — the Atimanasa, Vijinanamaya and the Hiranamaya.

There are some very interesting philosophical implications of distinguishing knowing from Knowing. Tantra calls the methods for improving our knowledge (information from the lower Kosas) crude or physical science, while those techniques for improving our Knowledge (information from higher Kosas) are called spiritual science. Persons investigating Tantra or other similar Eastern systems are often astounded at the huge vistas of both knowledge and Knowledge (the two are intimately related) that are opened up.

In such a brief account as this it is not possible to do justice to the detailed descriptions that Tantra provides of the three higher Kosas, however some of the most important characteristics are listed below:

Atimanasa Kosa is the storehouse of the reactions in potential form which have been impressed in the mind by past actions



(see Chapter 9). Dreams, which are a reflection or expression of these reactions, are experienced in the Manomaya Kosa but have their origin in the Atimanasa. Intuitive knowledge and creativity, extra-sensory perception and clairvoyance are attributes of this Kosa.

Vijñanamaya Kosa is the Kosa of true objectivity, where the subjectivity of the ego, its attachments and conditioning, are practically non-existent. One sees things as they really are, and is able to distinguish between what leads to lasting Bliss and what leads to transitory pleasure. Being well beyond instinctive and intellectual desires, this Kosa is dominated by intense spiritual attraction towards the Infinite Consciousness.

Hiranamaya Kosa, the “golden” Kosa, glows with spiritual light and wisdom. It is the most subtle and refined layer of mind, so pure that it is experienced only through deep meditation. The state of Cosmic Consciousness can be reached only from this Kosa.

### **Idealism vs Materialism**

The concept of Kosas has also enabled Tantric theorists to resolve the old dualistic problem of materialism versus idealism. Idealists say that only the mind, or what the mind thinks of, is real. the external world being either an illusion or just imagination. The materialists take the opposite view and maintain that the material world is all that is real and that mind or consciousness (neither traditional idealism nor materialism really distinguish the two) is merely a reflection of the external reality, or is ultimately constructed from, and therefore dependent on,

matter.

Tantra resolves the dilemma by saying that, yes, the external world is real and is there whether I happen to think of it or not, but what I see as being the world depends on my level of mind: that is, which Kosa my consciousness is functioning through.

The Kosas can be thought of as a set of five filters that only register or permit the passage of a certain range of vibrations from the Cosmos.

Thus if our consciousness functions predominantly through the lower Kosas, the range of vibrations of which we are aware is by necessity restricted to the material and the intellectual part of the vibrational spectrum. If, on the other hand, our consciousness is solely associated with, say, the Hiranamaya Kosa, then all we are aware of are the most refined and Blissful vibrations that exist.

The Hiranamaya Kosa is specifically attuned to the top (spiritual) end of the vibrational spectrum, and does not even register material or intellectual impulses. Thus a spiritually evolved person can, while totally conscious, be oblivious to what we call the real world — the world of phenomena. This is because even though s/he is observing the world which has buildings, plants, people and so on, all that s/he is conscious of is the spiritual vibration pervading and permeating them all. All that the realised being is aware of is the fundamental underlying unity of all creation.



A. T. Chia

## Kundalini & Chakras

Consciousness is expressed through the mind, and the mind in turn expresses itself through its vehicle: the physical body. How the mind and body are connected has long been a subject of debate and speculation. An integral part of the Tantric theory of mind and consciousness is an explanation of the workings of the human psyche in association with the body, through the mechanism of the psychic nervous system or system of chakras (psychic nerve centres). Within the psychic nervous system is the psycho-spiritual energy of the individual known as kundalini.

In order to grasp the significance of the kundalini and chakras it is necessary to have some understanding of the phenomenon of prana — the vital energy or life force that flows throughout the body and constitutes a medium between the physical and mental planes. Just as a body has a physical nervous system consisting of neuron pathways through which information and stimuli are passed back and forth between different parts of the body, so there is an approximately parallel system of 'nadiis' (lit: 'rivers') or pranic channels through which vital energy flows throughout the body, and a series of psychic glands or nerve centres (chakras), which form a bridge between the layers of the mind and the body.

A possible means of detecting prana in the body is Kirlian photography — a technique developed in the USSR in the 1950's. When photographed by this method, people's bodies are shown to have an aura of coloured light surrounding them. This aura

varies in its shade and intensity not only from person to person, but on the same individual in different moods.

Ancient Chinese medical science also recognises the existence of prana and bases its system of acupuncture on the principle that the flow of prana (or 'chi' in Chinese) in the body is directly related to the condition of one's health, and that this flow can be stimulated or inhibited through the application of massage, or needle insertion at particular points. This method is being used all over the world today to cure a variety of bodily ills, with remarkable effect. It is interesting to note that the acupuncture points from Chinese tradition show up consistently in Kirlian photography.

Amongst the complex system of nadiis are three major channels which run up the spine: one directly upward and two weaving back and forth, forming points at which the chakras or psychic nerve plexuses are situated (see diagram). At the bottom of the central nadii, at the base of the spine, the kundalini resides in its dormant state.

Due to misunderstanding, Kundalini Yoga has been looked upon as a deeply mysterious phenomenon. However, once properly approached, kundalini can be seen in its true perspective: as simply another aspect of human existence. Kundalini is simply the expression of human spiritual potentiality within the psychic being of the individual.

The kundalini's psychic form in its dormant state is said to be like a coiled serpent, thus the name kula-kundalini (meaning coiled serpentine force'). At initiation the kundalini is 'struck'

by the spiritual power of the Guru. Instantly it is awakened. The unleashing of the energy of the kundalini may affect the newly initiated person in many ways. S/he may become overwhelmed by feelings of extreme bliss, or alternatively unhappiness (depending on the individual's unexpressed mental tendencies — 'samskaras'). On the other hand, the person may not notice anything till much later, after long periods of meditation. In any event, it is due to the awakening of the kundalini that initiation is said to be the spiritual rebirth of the truth seeker.

As explained in Chapter 3, initiation involves receiving a word or group of words with a particular sound vibration, known as 'mantra', from a qualified teacher. The mental repetition of this sound further facilitates the spiritual expression of the kundalini, keeping it awake. If the mantra is not used properly, then the kundalini will return to its dormant state. Each repetition of the mantra has the effect of striking against the kundalini. This, along with the spiritual idea associated with the mantra, helps to maintain the aspirant in a spiritually awakened state.

Our patterns of thought, inexplicable as they may seem, do not result from random processes, rather they are influenced by our basic feelings, emotions and desires (collectively known as 'vrttis' meaning 'mental tendencies'). These mental tendencies are common to all human beings — we all feel fear, hunger, love, shame, and so on, at different times. The vrttis are 50 in number and are controlled by the six lower chakras. If permitted, the vrttis will take the mind in many different directions, scattering one's mental energy. But through meditation, control is gained over the chakras, thereby controlling the vrttis, enabling us to free our minds from their influence.

*Is He moving? No, no, He is not. He lies motionless like the stump of the tree. Is He far away? No, no, He is not. He is very close. He is the life of my life. He is within you, within me. He is within and without all and at all places. When a spiritual aspirant gets adequately acquainted with His Blissful Entity, we say that he is established in God. At that stage both inside and outside attain unity. Mind then remains aloof from the attraction of trifles and real acquaintance is made with the Supreme Being. While the body remains in the mortal world, the soul is merged in the Supreme Soul.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

The use of mantra in meditation is based on the principle that sound can directly affect one's state of mind in a subtle and powerful way. This can be appreciated through recall of the emotions evoked by powerful music, and is because the vrttis of the mind each have a particular sound associated with them — a particular sound that creates a resonance in that part of the mind. There being 50 vrttis there are 50 associated sounds which can be perceived in a state of deep meditation. The yogis of ancient times developed the Sanskrit language from these very sounds. Each of the 50 syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet is a phonetic expression of one of the vrttis. The language itself is intimately connected to the most deep seated feelings within a human being.

The mantra used in meditation is made up of these root sounds and given additional power by the Guru. It is chosen on the basis of certain vibrations within the meditator.

In a similar way an individual's predominant chakra is prescribed for use in meditation. The lower 3 chakras are never given as they are controlled by the static and mutative forces, and may precipitate undesirable effects if the mind is fixed upon them.

The first five chakras correspond to the first five layers of the mind as described earlier in this chapter. As the kundalini moves up the spine the chakras are 'opened' and their associated layer of mind revealed. Gradually each level of mind is conquered and controlled by the adept yogi.

Tantra is a science where all the practices given are designed to help us go deeper into ourselves, thus releasing our spiritual potential. By incorporating these practices into our personal lives we are attempting to reach that state of spiritual awareness that is all-blissful and essential to our very existence. This effort is known as 'sadhana' — the effort to attain completeness.

*That which makes the mind soft and strenuous, so that it may keep itself in a balanced state even in the condition of pain; that which perpetually creates a pleasant feeling within, is called love. Devotion is identical with love. The moment devotion is aroused, the love of God comes.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

# Karma : Your Best Friend or Worst Enemy

We are all familiar with the idea that any action or motion brings a reaction. Whether it be a harsh comment to another person, a stone falling into a pond or a volcano erupting from the earth, every motion always has a definite reaction or opposing effect.

Tantra develops this idea and proposes that not only do actions have external reactions, but the conscious performer of the action undergoes the reaction. Every expression of love, sorrow, happiness, envy, pain or other human feeling is seen as either a) the source of a similar future experience or b) the result of a previous one.

However, action in Tantra is not simply external behaviour as in Western Behaviourism, but is primarily a mental phenomenon. Whether or not actual behaviour or physical action occurs, if there is a thought of action then there is Karma — action has

been performed. Karma is the movement of the mind, which may or may not be expressed externally. The source of this Karma or action, the psychic 'doer' who also experiences the results of actions, is called the ego.

When it is said that to each action there is an equal and opposite reaction, it is not meant that we tend to find ourselves doing the same things in precisely the same situations time and time again. Rather, because human action is defined in purely psychic terms, so also is the reaction. One has to undergo mental affliction of pleasure of the same intensity as was inflicted or enjoyed in the original action. But the external conditions under which the action and reaction are felt need not be similar at all.

## **Samskara**

Once an action is performed it leaves an impression on the mind

which 'matures' into a desire or mental tendency called a Samskara. It is common to hear people speak loosely of Karma as meaning the reactions of past actions they have undergone or have yet to experience, but in precise terms they are not referring to the original action but to its impression on the mind -- the Samskara, which is awaiting suitable circumstances for its reaction or fulfilment.

Nearly all of what we normally call desires or wishes, as well as the nature of our character, our interests and inclinations, our pet hates and our loves, are expressions of Samskaras. That is, they are impressions left on our mind from previous experience or action.

Tantra classifies Samskaras into three main types:

1) Acquired: Those reactions to self-motivated and egotistic actions, eg. reactions to becoming angry, eating an ice-cream, watching TV, playing tennis, and so on.

2) Imposed: Our culture, education and environment mould us all in quite definite ways. Our Samskaras are created by our own actions and thoughts, but the way we act and think, the attitudes behind our ideas and actions are greatly influenced by the society in which we live, and we each carry Samskaras imposed on us by our society. For example, our sexual identity, our likes and dislikes of foods, moral preferences and general attitudes fall into this category. Racism, sexism and so on are also largely imposed Samskaras, and Tantra places great emphasis on the purification of society to prevent as far as possible the instilling of such negative and destructive traits into people's

characters.

3) Inherited: Those personality traits, mental tendencies and unfulfilled desires which are with us from birth and which account for the individuality of human character from very early infancy. These inherited Samskaras have been carried over from previous lives.

### **Mental Composure**

From a practical standpoint the theory of Karma and Samskara is one of the most important aspects of Tantra. As a system of spiritual practice Tantra is based on the proposition that humans wish to attain contentment -- a state of balance and composure often called Santosa. Santosa is a condition in which the desires of the ego do not impel the conscious mind after external objects with limited and transitory satisfaction value. Without Santosa the spiritual bliss of consciousness cannot radiate throughout the mind, and Self-realisation is impossible.

However, every action leads to a loss of mental composure and the imposition of a mental reaction. Composure can only be attained when all the impressions or distortions of the mind -- Samskaras -- have been nullified or exhausted. Therefore in Tantra the practical problem is to attain composure and Bliss in the face of continual mental turbulence created by action and Samskaras.

In normal circumstances humans are motivated towards pleasure -- the fulfilment of pleasant desires or samskaras. Pleasure not only allows the healthy development of the individual by expressing desires, but it also ends with a feeling of contentment or

composure. Thus, although we tend to think we want pleasure for pleasure's sake, Tantra maintains that many feelings of happiness are really only the reactions of earlier actions and represent the mind's attempt to re-attain its original, undisturbed state.

The reason why pleasure is fleeting and impermanent is because it depends on the pre-existence of a suitable Samskara in the mind, and once that Samskara is exhausted, the feeling of pleasure derived from any situation or experience also ends. For example, we may want an ice-cream and in eating one we feel happy. However, having had an ice-cream and being satisfied we are unlikely to feel the same pleasure when we have a second or third one. In fact another ice-cream may be painful. Our desire or Samskara was exhausted by eating the first ice-cream and eating further sweets is now out of harmony with our wishes.

Not only is pleasure transitory but so is the composure we feel after it. Once a Samskara has been fulfilled another immediately occupies our mind — and not all Samskaras are pleasurable, just as many are painful. Our minds are never at rest — desires and wishes continually impel us and pleasure and pain (the reactions of 'good' and 'bad' actions) are the oscillating polarities of human life. Lasting composure is indeed a rare achievement under ordinary circumstances. Tantra considers all Samskaras to be chains, whether they are of lead (pain) or gold (pleasure) matters little; they are chains to transitoriness and barriers to lasting composure and Bliss all the same.

Bliss is completely different from pleasure. It has a supramental source and is totally independent of the senses, action and Sam-

skaras. Each person experiences pleasure and pain according to his or her own Samskaras, but Bliss is the same for everyone. Bliss represents the inundation of the mind with spiritual vibrations, and because it is independent of Samskaras we can experience it continually and never grow tired, in the way we grow tired or bored of ice-cream. Bliss is not a form of pleasure, it is a supreme and endless result of the mind attaining composure gained from directing the mind back onto its source rather than out into the sensory world.

### Breaking the Chains of Actions and Reactions

As long as Samskaras direct our actions and as long as we continue to create new Samskaras through further actions, we cannot develop the composure required for lasting Bliss and fulfilment. Tantra therefore has two practical tasks in helping the aspirant achieve Bliss:

- 1) To exhaust Samskaras or cleanse the mind of all its distortions and impressions, and
- 2) To prevent new impressions from being formed.

Regarding mental cleansing or purification, Tantrikas (Tantric Yogiis) found that reactions to actions are usually stored or kept in potential form and are only released under certain conditions. The mind contains innumerable seeds of potential reactions, but it is only when they mature or become expressed as Samskaras (desires or inclinations) that they directly influence the mind and are able to be exhausted.

Under most circumstances Samskaras are only able to mature when the mind is completely detached from its sensory and





intellectual functions, and for most people this only occurs at death, though it does happen to a limited degree during sleep. Thus it is at death that many stored or potential reactions become expressed as Samskaras that then determine the type of body one occupies in one's next life. In fact it is the existence of Samskaras alone that causes rebirth. In their absence the mind merges into its original source and the person is said to have achieved liberation. Another 'natural' time when Samskaras mature is during long fainting spells, comas or chronic illnesses.

Tantra controls and develops one's ability to detach the mind from the senses and thought by meditation. Those practising meditation invariably experience an increased tempo and intensity in their lives, because they are ripening more Samskaras and they are experiencing reactions at a greatly accelerated rate.

It is a human tendency to follow pleasurable Samskaras and to avoid painful ones, and we can usually tell such negative Samskaras from what we dislike and avoid. To follow pleasurable Samskaras is said to be in harmony with one's character, but it is against one's nature (contrary to one's likes and loves) to follow painful ones. Tantra emphasises the role of Tapah, or service as penance, as a way of exhausting these positive and negative Samskaras.

Tapah is not forcing oneself to do unpleasant things or act contrary to one's character for some masochistic end, rather it is the undergoing of suffering in the service of others. Through meditation a great desire to show love or to aid others is developed. Tapah is the conscious practice of expressing this spirit-

ual urge even when it runs counter to one's character or Samskaras.

It may be easy to be kind to someone in one's living room, but it is not Tapah. Tapah is being just as kind and offering practical assistance even when it is difficult and troublesome. Tapah is the pure expression of spiritually developed magnanimity and at the same time is a definite aid to mental purification.

### Importance of the Guru

A final means of exhausting Samskaras is through the grace of a realised being, usually one's Guru. A Tantric Guru not only guides and instructs his or her disciples but also ensures their spiritual progress by using his or her powers to mature their Samskaras. The Guru places the disciple in situations where his or her Samskaras are quickly exhausted and this is one of the most important reasons behind the close Guru-disciple relationship in Tantra.

It is natural for Samskaras to be exhausted in the normal course of life and in fact the process begins in the mother's womb as even the foetus is able to experience pleasure and pain. However Tantrikas are not interested in ordinary life, but in transcendence, and so wish to accelerate their evolution and the exhaustion of their Samskaras.

To summarise, Tantra accelerates this reaction process in three ways: spiritual meditation (Ishvara pranidhana), Social service (Tapah), and the disciple's sincerity in following the Guru's benevolent guidance.

However these practices would be incomplete if new Samskaras were not prevented from forming. As it is the ego or sense of 'doership' of action which bears Samskaras and which undergoes the pleasures and pains of reactions, to prevent Samskaras forming one must deal with this aspect of the mind.

### Desirelessness and Actionlessness

The practice of preventing the formation of reactions is given the overall name of Madhuvidya, but involves several distinguishable parts. To act and live in the world and yet not accumulate Samskaras requires that one:

- 1) Relinquish all desire for the results of one's actions, or perform an action correctly but not concern oneself with whether one receives the benefits or not. This is the specific direction of Krishna to Arjuna in the 'Bhagavad Gita', where it is argued that man never has control of the results of his actions, and that control of action itself is all that we can hope for. This doctrine is often called desirelessness.
- 2) Feel the doer of the action, the source and performer of the action is not one's limited ego, but the Supreme Consciousness Itself.
- 3) Be completely detached from the very motions and movements of the body and senses in performing an action. To feel that not only the desire for action itself comes from Consciousness, but the very body that acts is Consciousness as well.

These last two points together are often called 'acting without

doing' or 'actionlessness'. Many have interpreted this doctrine as sanctioning inactivity and indolence, but in fact nothing could be further from the truth. To achieve Supreme Consciousness, concerted, long-term effort is required (meditation and service) but it should be effort from which the limited sense of ego is absent and in which the greater 'I' or consciousness of the individual is in control.

4) Feel that every experience or object of the senses or mind is an expression of the Supreme Consciousness — the Cosmic Entity. Samskaras can be imposed simply by association, and if anyone treats experiences as being purely of material objects and things, then one's mind is left with a materialistic impression or Samskara. Lasting Bliss can only be attained when both the subjective and objective frames of mind are viewed as expressing the Supreme and one feels an absolute and fundamental unity underlying both one's own existence and the existence of the external world. The practice to develop this ideation or thought of oneness is called 'Brahmacarya' — to see the Cosmic Entity

wherever one looks and in everything one does.

### Conscious Evolution

To be human is to think and to act — life without action is stagnant and diseased. Yet once we act we are caught on a treadmill of further actions and reactions as the universal laws operate within the realms of our minds. It is a fundamental tenet of Tantra that the completion of human evolution must be a consciously directed process — that we can fulfil our potential only by breaking out of the ignorance of animals and exerting the conscious control characteristic of true humans.

Liberation from Samskaras and mental distortions, and the attainment of Bliss and composure can therefore never happen in a mechanical, natural-passive way. Each person has to consciously learn the ways of controlling and developing his or her own mind and without spiritual instruction and spiritual effort humans can never hope to fully realise their inherent potential.

# Stepping Stones

Tantra is essentially a path of practicality. It recognises a gap between the aspirant's desired goal and his or her present state of mind, and provides various means to bridge this gap.

In this tradition, Ananda Marga's practices are a dynamic and contemporary synthesis of Tantra and Yoga practices, designed for people of varying capabilities.

Ananda Marga's Tantra Yoga is divided into five systems of sadhana, to be taught according to each person's understanding and determination. The various systems of meditation are taught by Acaryas (trained teachers) acting as the representatives of Ananda Marga's spiritual preceptor, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.

The five systems are Prambhika Yoga, Sadharana Yoga, Sahaja Yoga, Vishesa Yoga and Kapalika meditation. As the last two are reserved for those already adept in Sahaja Yoga, we will

only look at the first three.

The Acharya will initiate into Sahaja Yoga those who express their sincere enthusiasm and who have sufficient time to maintain the essential disciplines, including asanas and sentient diet. To those persons for whom the practice of Sahaja Yoga is inconvenient or inappropriate, an Acharya may impart training in Sadharana Yoga. As asanas are excluded from Sadharana Yoga, there is also no restriction of diet.

To those for whom Sadharana Yoga is inconvenient or inappropriate, an Acharya shall impart training in Prambhika Yoga, for which practice of asanas and restriction on diet are also not prescribed.

Those who wish to practise asanas, or need them for mental or

physical reasons, may be given training in asanas by an Acharya, even along with Prarambika Yoga.

Whoever practises asanas should, however, endeavour to follow the conditions previously explained under 'Asanas', including sentient diet.

'Sadhakas', or practitioners, of Prarambika and Sadharana Yoga may be eligible for Sahaja Yoga if their situation and conditions change appropriately.

### THE SADHANA

Many traditional forms and practices of meditation which today exist under numerous names could generally be classified into two types:

1. "Tantric", dealing principally with mantras, cakras, mandalic visualisations and kundalini.
2. "Yogic", emphasising one or all aspects of asanas, mind purification and control, philosophy, devotion, ethics.

For example, many types of "Tantric" meditation using mantra simply require the repetition of the mantra, but without conceptualisation or ideation on its meaning. On the other hand, some "Yogic" practices of meditation instruct the sadhaka to free the mind from its propensities and merge it in Cosmic Consciousness, but without the practical means with which to do so.

However, as in the original Tantra, Ananda Marga recognises the delicate, inseparable relationship between all aspects of human nature, and so the sadhana techniques taught contain within them both the "Tantric" and the "Yogic" qualities. Hence these practices are in a broad sense all called Tantra Yoga, even though the more specific systems have their own designation under this broader nomenclature.

### SAHAJA YOGA

Sahaja Yoga is the collective name of six different "lessons" which together make up a complete meditation system. Prarambika Yoga and Sadharana Yoga are easier, less demanding and less powerful than Sahaja Yoga, but are based on the same fundamentals.

Practitioners of Sahaja, Prarambika and Sadharana Yogas still need to incorporate Bhakti (devotion) and Karma Yoga (selfless action) into their spiritual approach.

Below are explanations of the six lessons of Sahaja Yoga.

#### FIRST LESSON – IISHVARA PRANIDHANA

First lesson is essentially the practice of Iishvara Pranidhana, as mentioned under Yama and Niyama. This basic meditation has five aspects:

- a) **Physical posture:** Different postures of the body facilitate different actions. For example, lying down is the best position for sleeping, whereas sitting down is the best position for



eating. So too the best posture for meditation is the full-lotus or 'padmasana'. However if that is too difficult, one can use either: the half-lotus or 'ardha-padmasana'; the perfect posture or 'siddhasana'; or even 'bhojanasana', the normal cross-legged posture.

Advantages of these postures, particularly the full-lotus, are that they help control the sensory organs and hence the senses, freeing the mind from its normal external activity of sensual perception. Closed eyes control sight; pressing the tongue against the palate or roof of the mouth controls taste; and interlocking the fingers helps control the sense of touch. Sense of smell however cannot be so simply controlled, so it is recommended to sit where there is fresh air free of smoke and odours. Similarly, sense of hearing cannot be easily controlled, so a quiet place and time is recommended. In full-lotus the motor organs are more fully controlled by the relaxed but firm nature of the posture, and a sense of balance, symmetry and erectness are achieved. This erectness of the spinal column greatly enhances concentration, as well as uniformity and rhythm of breathing.

Hence the full-lotus, 'padmasana', is the most suitable posture for enabling the mind to go beyond its normal physical awareness.

b) **Bhuta Shuddhi:** This process is one of withdrawing the mind from its occupation with the external world, freeing it from its day-to-day complexes, fears, desires, tensions, etc. The particular technique of ideation taught brings the mind to a deeply relaxed state.

**Asana Shuddhi:** This process is one of totally withdrawing

the mind from its conditioned identification with the body. The mind's sense of being is gradually withdrawn from each part of the body and concentrated in a point known as the 'Ista Cakra', the controlling point of the mind.

d) **Citta Shuddhi:** Hereafter the 'citta' portion of the mind is totally suspended, and the mind's identity is purely that of a singular point of consciousness existing within the Cosmic Consciousness. 'Citta' can be thought of as the screen of the mind upon which all our images are visualised.

e) **Dhyana:** The final stage, which is real meditation, is to merge or unify the mind with Cosmic Consciousness. Here the essential practice is the use of one's Ista Mantra, which, as pointed out earlier on, enables the aspirant to conceptualise that flowing merger.

Then, through the continued use of one's mantra in the prescribed way, the identification with Cosmic Consciousness becomes so complete that actual union can eventually take place. This blissful state of non-duality is known as Samadhi.

## SECOND LESSON – MADHIVIDYA

The second lesson of Sahaja Yoga is called 'Madhuvidya', meaning 'honey knowledge'. It is the constant awareness that everything is a manifestation of the Supreme. This, of course, begins with the subjective realisation that one's own self is in reality one with the Supreme. The awareness attained in meditation of the true Self can be maintained while performing the duties of daily life. Through the use of Ista Mantra and its association with

the breathing process, an aspirant becomes trained to hear the mantra as the sound of his/her breath, so that each breath brings awareness of that infinite state.

To become aware that the same Consciousness existing within is also permeating the entire Universe — existing within each and every person, animal, plant and object, animate or inanimate — another mantra, called Guru Mantra, is taught. This mantra is used before performing actions, or in any dealing with the external world.

By the proper use of Ista and Guru Mantras in everyday life, one becomes established in Cosmic ideation. This is essential for spiritual progress, so that the ego can no longer dominate, and hence not create samskaras through one's actions. This may take years of conscious effort, but only then can one live in the world in a totally purposeful, liberated manner.

### THIRD LESSON — TATTVA DHARANA

The meaning of this lesson is concentration upon the fundamental characteristics of the cakras. Each cakra is different, performing different functions for the mind and the body, and each has its own vibrational characteristics. Concentration techniques are used, involving visualisation of the shape and colour of the cakras and repetition of certain mantras which are formed from the sonar nature of the cakras. These techniques help strengthen one's power of concentration, control the activities of the cakras and assist in regulating energy flows in the body, which are known as nadiis.

*The life of a person becomes mechanical if one remains overwhelmed with the sentiment that one must do such acts, one must perform such service, one must rise in this manner and sit in this manner and get up in this manner, and so on. Happiness disappears there ... In the absence of love, service rendered and penance undergone for show are only fruitless. All ritualistic devotion, sham penance, counting of beads, etc., are meant only for public show. True love and the Supreme Goal are lost sight of. The Supreme cannot be attained through any show actions, because in ritualistic thoughts, the sweetness of happiness is lacking. Divine Bliss is easily available only to those who base their spiritual practice on love.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*



There are three principle nadiis: Piungala, Ida and Susumna. Dominance of the Piungala facilitates the physical activities of the body, while dominance of the Ida facilitates all mental activities. Tattva Dharana brings about the dominance of the Susumna, which facilitates spiritual awareness and the elevation of the purely spiritual energy, the kundalinii.

#### FOURTH LESSON – PRANAYAMA

Pranayama means to control the breathing in order to control the pranah, hence controlling the mind. The relationship between the vital airs or 'pranah' and the mind is inseparable. Unsteadiness of respiration is the unsteadiness of mind, and vice versa. When respiration is being controlled by the scientific process of Prana-yama, the mind is also controlled, hence the mental power and concentration during sadhana are greatly enhanced. Proper utilisation of Pranayama also involves the use of Ista Mantra and cakras, various techniques of Pranayama have different potencies, so they should be learnt from the Acharya.

#### FIFTH LESSON – CAKRA SHODANA

Cakras are also the controlling points of mind, mental activities and the body. Through a special way of using mantras, the cakras are vibrated in such a way as to bring purification of mind and body.

#### SIXTH LESSON – DHYANA

This is a more direct form of meditation which channelises every mental propensity towards the spiritual goal. It is especially effective when the deep personal relationship between the disciple and the Guru has blossomed into a relationship of Cosmic Love. Love is the greatest mental force – when it is awakened, meditation is no longer an effort, it becomes a natural attraction to the Supreme, and just as the magnetic force of a magnet pulls up the iron filing, so too does the aspirant attain his or her cherished Goal.

# Behind the Theory ... the Guru

*"You are never alone or helpless. The force that guides the stars guides you too."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

A little boy went to bed and before sleeping he called to his mother, "Ma, wake me up when I'm hungry". And his mother answered, "do not worry my child, your hunger will wake you up".

At a certain stage in the evolution of every human being a thirst for spiritual fulfillment is awakened. This thirst, beyond transitory pleasures, is the thirst to know "who am I? where am I going? what is my true purpose on this earth?" It is at this stage of attraction towards the Cosmic Consciousness that help comes directly, in a practical way, by means of a Guru.

'Guru' literally means 'one who liberates from darkness'. The

Guru is at one with Supreme Consciousness and acts as a channel of Consciousness. In this sense the real Guru is Consciousness within, and not the human personality or form. Being a pure channel, the Guru's actions are expressions of the deep desire of Consciousness to liberate Itself in all forms — ie. to elevate and liberate all others.

*"Brahma (Supreme Consciousness) alone is the Guru. He alone directs individuals to the path of emancipation through the media of different receptacles or bodies."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

The Guru is able to guide a spiritual aspirant on a path which will lead most directly to the ultimate goal. The spiritual journey is a long and arduous one; at every stage there are obstacles which would waylay even the most determined aspirant; so the Guru's guidance is of the utmost importance.

With time, as an aspirant progresses, he or she experiences more and more the hidden, helping hand of the Guru, who is like a loving parent — always there in time of need.

To avoid confusion in regard to terminology, it needs to be understood that the word "Guru" is often used rather freely for a wide variety of persons including teachers, intellectuals and yogis. However in Tantra it is reserved only for one who is fully established in the highest realm of Consciousness and is thereby capable of bringing others to that realm as well. To help identify and understand a true Guru, ancient Tantric scriptures, such as the Tantrasara, describe the essential qualities of the Guru as follows.

1. **TRANQUILITY & PURITY OF MIND:** In the Guru's presence one feels a penetrating tranquility and purity of mind.
2. **MODESTY & HUMILITY:** The liberated Consciousness of the Guru is free from mental complexes and vanity.
3. **SOBERLY DRESSED:** with clean and simple clothing.
4. **MAINTAINING RIGHT CONDUCT & LIVELIHOOD:** The Guru will always set an example for the disciples by maintaining right conduct in all walks of life.
5. **LEADING A FAMILY LIFE:** In order to be able to set an example for family people, the Guru is not a renunciate, and maintains family, as well as spiritual, responsibilities.
6. **ESTABLISHED IN MEDITATION:** To teach meditation the Guru must be master of all the practices of meditation and mantra, and must be well established in all levels and stages of meditation, as well as able to relate these and associated practices to others.



Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

7. *POSSESSING CONTROL OVER THE FUNCTIONS OF THE MIND:* The Guru has a full and conscious control over all the layers of the mind and thus has knowledge of the past, present and future. The Guru knows the disciples better than they know themselves.
8. *POSSESSING CONTROL OF THE KUNDALINI:* Not only does the Guru have control over kundalini (spiritual energy), but is capable of awakening the kundalini of others.
9. *LOVES & GOVERNS THE DISCIPLE:* The Guru will not simply teach then leave the disciple, nor maintain a Guru-disciple relationship without shouldering responsibility for the disciple's progress. A true Guru not only teaches but out of love will also govern the disciple, encouraging and correcting as per necessity.

A question that often arises is whether or not one needs a Guru in order to attain spiritual liberation. Let us begin to approach this question by looking at it from a historical perspective. History shows us that there have been persons who have attained enlightenment both with the help of a Guru and without. However in the comparatively rare cases where it was achieved without a Guru, we see that those individuals were of an extraordinary standard to begin with.

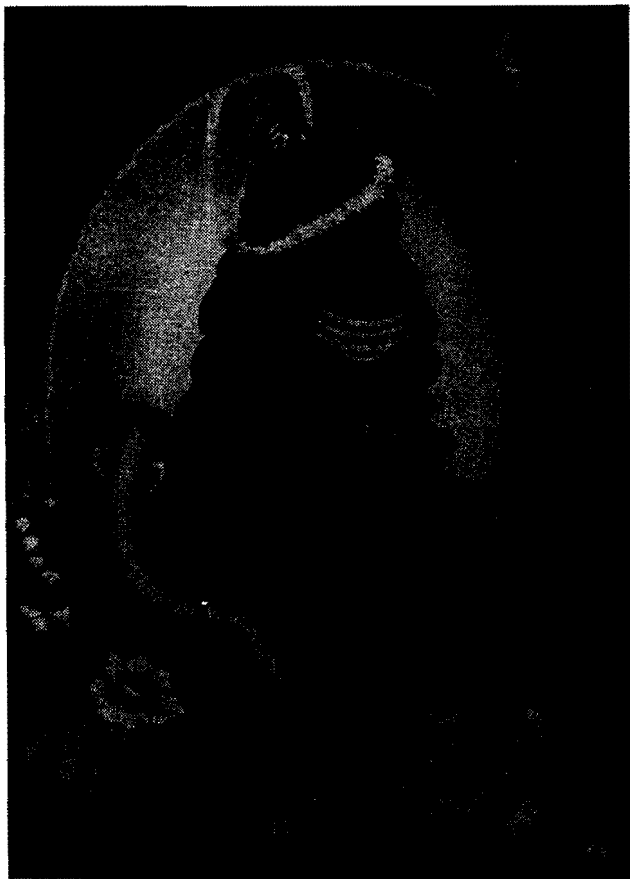
We can look firstly at Lord Shiva, Krishna, Buddha and Christ, none of whom had a Guru. From what is known of Shiva and Krishna, who lived 7000 and 3500 years ago respectively, both were virtually enlightened from childhood. Most yogic practices and teachings arise from their teachings.

2600 years ago Buddha achieved enlightenment through his own determination but only after years of painstaking effort and self-mortification. After strengthening his body and mind with greatly needed nutrition, he sat to meditate under a tree, taking the determination to either attain realisation or die in the endeavour. That very night he experienced 'Nirvana', the state of non-duality, after which he became a Guru. He spent the rest of his life helping those who had been unsuccessfully seeking, and as a Guru paved the way for many to reach their enlightenment.

Much of the life of Jesus Christ is still surrounded in mystery, as virtually nothing is known for certain of his whereabouts from the age of twelve to the age of thirty, when he appeared to manifest himself as a Guru. In the three short but intense years before his crucifixion he gave enough to enable many sincere and devoted seekers to find their way to God.

Although there are others who have had great insights, prophetic abilities and spiritual experiences, there are very few that attained the highest state of Consciousness unassisted. On the other hand there are countless great saints and spiritualists who have attained realisation with varying degrees of assistance from a Guru. The examples of Ramakrishna and Milarepa illustrate the need of a Guru very well.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a great yogi who lived during the latter part of the nineteenth century in India. From childhood he was so devoted to the worship of Kali, the mythological Divine Mother, that he often had visions and mystical experiences. However these were always of a limited, dualistic nature, and so he tried different forms of worship in order to go beyond, to the



Shiva

formless state of Consciousness, but to no avail. However his tremendous zeal for realisation finally found its fruition when a Tantric Guru named Totapuri initiated him in meditation. During the initiation itself Ramakrishna became absorbed in the state of Cosmic Consciousness which, despite his tremendous sincerity, devotion and dedication, had eluded him up till then. The right knowledge and spiritual power of the Guru made all the difference.

The life of Milarepa, the Tibetan yogi who lived about 800 years ago, brings out the way in which the Guru's methods are adjusted to the needs of the disciple. Marpa, his Guru, had him undergo tremendous suffering by building, demolishing and then rebuilding a house, a number of times, with his bare hands in the icy climate of Tibet. It reached a point where it seemed too much for Milarepa to take, as all he wanted was to learn meditation, so he left Marpa in search of another Guru. However in his search he came across another disciple of Marpa who persuaded him to return. This time Marpa was compassionate to him and explained how much pain he personally felt to see Milarepa suffer, but how it had to be done in order to accelerate or cleanse the samskaras (potential reactions) which Milarepa had accumulated by the grave misdeeds he performed in his youth. Marpa then initiated him into meditation and some time later Milarepa attained realisation.

The most important thing for a yogic aspirant is to reach the Goal — whether that is achieved with a Guru or without is not the essential consideration. What needs to be given priority is practicality, and the most practical way is with the assistance of a Guru.

The Guru in the physical form is constantly reminding the spiritual aspirant, with every word and every action, of the Infinite Guru: the Supreme Consciousness. Alone humans cannot ordinarily perceive that Consciousness which is all-pervading: existing in sunshine and rain, in the tiniest ant and the largest elephant. A human being is normally restricted by mind and by the senses — neither of which can perceive the Infinite. Only with the help of one who is beyond the limitations and bondages of normal life can the aspirant be led directly to the ultimate Goal.

*"All the sages, saints and prophets who have researched in the realm of spirituality agree that "the kingdom of God is within you: seek thou there". You do not have to go anywhere outside to achieve salvation. The human body is the microcosm and its Creator is within it. Find someone who knows the secret way to enter this treasure house and who can lead you to the Palace of the Lord. Call him Guru, Master, teacher, friend, or by whatever name you like."*

*The young man again interrupted: "This is preaching Gurudom. Where is the necessity for an intelligent man to resort to any Guru?"*

*The Great Master smiled and said: "You are no doubt an intelligent man, but have you learned anything by yourself? Why did you go to Europe to study law? In actual fact man, from the time of birth, does not learn anything by himself. Somebody has to teach him even how to walk, to talk, to eat, to dress or to play. From his very childhood onward he does nothing but adopt teachers. You may call the teacher father, mother, sister, brother, friend or class-fellow. On entering the schools you had a Guru for English, Mathematics, History, Geography and so on ... For every subject you had to choose a different teacher ... and so how do you presume to learn the most difficult subjects, the science of the Soul and God, without a teacher?"*

*Lal Kapur*

Still, having a Guru is not enough in itself — the aspirant must also be sincere and dedicated. Suppose you plant a bad seed in fertile ground — it will not grow. Nor will a good seed grow in barren ground. But a good seed in fertile ground will grow, and so the necessity for success is not just to get a true Guru, nor just to be a sincere aspirant — both are complimentary.

# Yours, Mine and Ours

*"Building anything on humanistic lines requires a foundation of real love for humanity. A truly benevolent society will never come into being under the leadership of those who are solely concerned with profit and loss. Where love is paramount, the question of personal loss and gain does not arise. The basic ingredient for building a healthy society is simply love."*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

The human condition is characterised by two principle relationships — the relationship between the individual and his or her own self, and the relationship between the individual and the rest of society. It is of primary importance that the interdependence of the two is clearly recognised. On the one hand,

happy individuals make a happy society, and on the other, society must be sure to carry out its obligation of fostering the contentment and fulfillment of its individual members. A social system should thus be framed where there is a balance between individual and collective interests.

To put it another way, we are talking about subjectivity and objectivity. The individual is the subject and society the object. How the individual gets along with his or her self is the 'subjective approach', and how that relates to society concerns 'objective adjustment'. This book would hardly be complete without at least some discussion of this fundamental relationship.

Let's look firstly at the importance of inner development. Understanding oneself and appreciating the depths of the human mind and spirit satisfies an inherent spiritual inclination. This innate





spiritual longing can be seen as the most fundamental human motivating force — behind every thought and action lies the desire to achieve lasting happiness and peace. It is a spiritual longing because the happiness and peace we are talking about is one of a permanent nature: infinite and unending.

As progress is made in coming to terms with one's inner self, a great feeling of oneness with humanity develops. Such a universalistic attitude prompts accompanying feelings such as compassion, altruism and responsibility.

But there are dangers if one spends all one's energies on this inner development: on the subjective approach. Too much self-centredness will hinder the development of a cosmic outlook. Hence, if the spiritual effort becomes too egocentric, it will eventually undermine the very purpose for which it is being done.

Another danger of over-emphasis on the subjective approach is that it will mean the withdrawal of 'good' people (a relative term) from social activity. This can be seen as silent endorsement for corruption, exploitation and other socially harmful activities because there is no-one to challenge society's negative elements. It is incumbent on every individual to keep a watchful eye on the welfare of the community.

Now let's look at our 'objective adjustment', or just how we adjust our subjectivity to the world we live in.

As the goal of spiritual practice and self-development is the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness, we must begin to look

upon everything, animate and inanimate, as a manifestation of that one Consciousness. Gradually a love will develop for this unity of creation that will demand expression — if the expression of this love is denied, frustration will follow.

We must also consider social responsibility, a point touched on earlier. Our actions and very characters are moulded by our social environment, eg. acquaintances, education, work, media, arts, entertainment, etc., hence the more positive and spiritually aware these are, the better for society as a whole. If negative, materialistic people operate in these positions, it will have a detrimental effect on society, but those who have a positive, spiritual outlook, can greatly enliven and inspire their community.

But there are two main dangers in giving excessive attention to the objective world.

Firstly, attempts to create a 'perfect' society will prove futile without the simultaneous development of the inner, spiritual nature. Sweden might be considered, by some, as a model and an example of a highly developed welfare state, but there co-exists an extremely high level of alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide.

Secondly, there is the danger of acquiring an inflated ego. One begins to feel that "I alone am doing this", or "without my superior abilities this project would not be nearly so successful". Such vanity of action can lead to a hunger for power, corruption and the selfish manipulation of others.

So Karma Yoga, the yoga of action, is essential. A human being must act in order to survive, and one must be careful to ensure

that one's action is benevolent and constructive.

Perhaps some concrete examples of Karma Yoga would be useful — they will help illustrate the link between the 'subjective approach' and the 'objective adjustment' that we have been talking about.

1. Try looking upon your family, friends and acquaintances as manifestations of the Supreme, the one Cosmic Consciousness. It is a great opportunity to serve the Supreme by serving them.
2. Look upon all human beings as members of your own Cosmic Family. They are all manifestations of Cosmic Consciousness, so we should take every opportunity to serve them.
3. Try to look upon the whole created world as a manifest-

ation of the Supreme. Animals, plants, air, soil, water — none should be abused, but instead assisted in fulfilling natural functions.

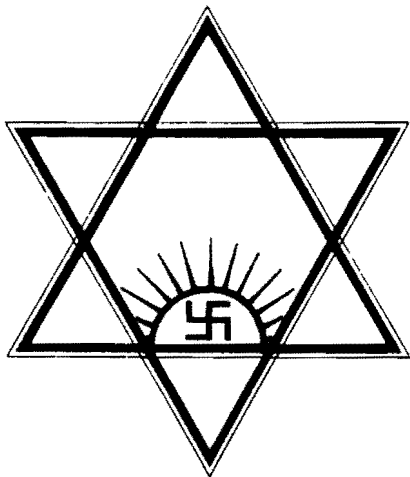
4. Tantra has divided service into four types:
  - a) Physical service — helping someone with physical labour, including caring for the sick.
  - b) Protective service — when someone is being physically threatened or in danger we should go to their aid.
  - c) Economic service — to help someone financially or with goods. It may involve sharing with them the knowledge of how they can look after themselves.
  - d) Intellectual service — teaching others the way of self-development and self-realisation — inspiring others to follow the spiritual path.

But we should always bear in mind that all service should be carefully assessed to ensure that it is the best action in the situation.



For example, giving money to someone who already has plenty would be a dis-service, it would only encourage greed. It would, of course, also be a gross dis-service to give a man dying of hunger a spiritual sermon. So we must always take a very practical attitude towards service and social action in general. It must always fit the time, place and the person.

Maintaining a careful balance between the subjective approach and the objective adjustment is the key to success on the spiritual path. This is the idea behind the spiritual symbol or logo of Ananda Marga, called the 'pratik'. The pratik embodies the essence of Tantric ideology, and symbolises the energies working in spiritual practice. The triangle with the vertice pointed down-



wards represents the subjective approach towards life: the meditation by which we realise our true nature and the one-ness of the Universe. The other triangle facing upwards represents the objective adjustment we must maintain with the world around us. The rising sun represents progress in life, and the Swastika, a very ancient symbol, represents spiritual victory or success. So the meaning of the pratik is that, with a proper balance between the inner and the outer expression of life, there will be progress and finally spiritual success. It implies that progress is only possible when one maintains a balance between working to fulfil one's social responsibilities and the time devoted to spiritual practices.

## WOMEN AND LIBERATION

That this section is even necessary in an introduction to spiritual philosophy and practice says a great deal in itself. In our society it is not a foregone conclusion that women are the spiritual and social equals of men. Religions of the world have been, and still are, major perpetrators of the myth of women's spiritual and social inferiority.

Women have been represented, for example, as the cause of original sin, and therefore as inherently sinful, even evil. They have been barred from positions of religious authority and responsibility, even from spiritual realisation, by virtue of their being female. All manner of social atrocities have been committed against women, either at the direct instigation of religious bodies

and scriptures or because these have done nothing to prevent such occurrences. Witch-hunting, foot-binding and genital mutilation may be regarded as extreme examples, as things of the past, or as pertaining to cultures more primitive than our own; but even today in the so-called civilised nations of the West, for example, women continue to be physically and mentally disadvantaged or damaged by prevailing religious doctrine on marriage, birth-control, abortion and other issues which vitally affect womens' everyday lives.

The philosophy of Tantra unequivocally states that women and men, as human beings, have equal capacity to attain the ultimate goal of existence — spiritual liberation. The practical side of Tantra provides the means whereby this goal can be achieved through individual effort. From this effort comes the insight, strength and initiative to recognise and hence to work for the removal of social factors which bar people from full and equal opportunities to develop their potential as human beings.

Women have not always suffered the same degree of exploitation and oppression found in the world today. In the distant past societies existed which were matriarchal in structure. Women were respected as leaders in the social sphere and provided spiritual guidance by their example and teaching. The qualities of womanhood were held to be essential for the healthy progress of the society and for the spiritual realisation of the inner Self.

However, over the centuries, a plethora of religious doctrines and dogmas sprang up out of human ignorance and greed for personal power and material gain. All over the world womens' position in society became degraded, to the extent that now, except in a

few isolated cultures, women are regarded as inferior or secondary beings.

The disease of modern society is symptomatised and worsened by the low status of women, their impoverishment and oppression in all spheres. How then can Tantra contribute to its cure?

The spiritual practice of Tantra, specifically meditation, supported by yoga postures and other methods of strengthening and refining the energies of body and mind, constitutes a subjective approach to progress, and brings about the most powerful and pervasive changes on the personal level. Through this subjective approach the mind is focussed on its source and brought to a point of total identity with the innermost Self. This is an ever-expanding, freeing process, which brings about change on the very deepest levels. Without any specific focus on limitations, inadequacies or imbalance of personality, these fall away as Self-knowledge and universal love grow. An over-aggressive person may become more sensitive, for example, or an excessively shy, retiring person, more self-confident and assertive. Positive attributes are strengthened and negative traits lose their hold on the mind, as the true Self is experienced, not as an ever-shifting collection of fragmented and fragile parts, but as a wholeness of being: an unchanging, blissful reality; a limitless source of love and peace.

All progress in both inner and outer spheres of life comes about through struggle and effort. The strength and momentum derived from effort to overcome obstacles and limitations to progress brings about further forward movement. Meditation practice based on this principle reflects the dynamism of life itself, and is

a powerful tool for developing the independence of mind, initiative, self-respect and self-reliance women need to face and overcome the socially imposed limitations that have held them back for so long.

As subjective changes occur in women, inter-relationships change and develop. Dominance-dependency relationships between women and men (or women and other women, to a lesser degree) diminish as sense of Self, and love for that Self, strengthen, while suspicion, competitiveness and superficiality, which often arise in relationships between women, are replaced by developing trust and unity.

The overall effect of these changes is of course that the quality of human relationships in general is improved, both because of the change in women themselves and because this in turn serves as a spur for change in men, which might otherwise have been much longer in coming.

The processes of inner change are obviously inter-related with changes in all outer spheres of life. On a personal level, care of the physical organism through yoga postures, diet, etc, provides a suitable ground for inner growth. Self-awareness, exercises, assertiveness training and other consciousness-raising and self-developmental pursuits all serve as important objective methods

of unblocking mental pathways to the purely subjective development previously described. In the same way, in the social spheres of life, an objective adjustment is needed by which women become aware of, and make an effort to change, their social environment — the field of growth for women in collectivity.

Therefore no area of social concern or activity is closed to women in the Tantric struggle to become what they truly are. Tantra encourages women to express their potential in every sphere — in individual life, family life and in the life of the community as a whole — and to work with and for women in particular.

As consciousness of higher values and the subtler realities of inner being have become more pronounced through the evolution of the human race, a radical shift towards full appreciation and expression of the female aspect of being is occurring. All around the world women are moving to discover themselves, to claim unrestricted access to the fullest development of their potential, and to fight their oppression and exploitation on all levels. Tantric philosophy and practice equips women and men with the courage and commitment to expand this movement, to face and overcome all imbalances and limitations in themselves and help build a society where true progress can occur, not at the expense of the majority, but for the benefit of all.

*It is action that makes a person great. Be great by your sadhana, by your service and by your sacrifice.*

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

## SONG TO BEGIN COLLECTIVE MEDITATION

---

**SAM'GACCHADVAM' SAM'VADADHVAM'**

Let us move together, let us sing together

**SAM'VOMANA'M'SI JA'NATAM**

Let us come to know our minds together

**DEVA'BHA'GAM' YATHA' PURVE**

Let us share like sages of the past

**SAM'JANA'NA' UPA'SATE**

That all people together may enjoy the Universe

**SAMA'NII VA A'KUTI**

Unite our intention

**SAMA'NA' HRDAYA' NIVAHA**

Let our hearts be inseparable

**SAMA'NAM ASTU VOMANO**

Our mind as one mind

**YATHA' VAHA SUSAHA'SATI**

As we, to truly know one another, become one.

## SONG TO END COLLECTIVE MEDITATION

---

**NITYAM' SHUDAM' NIRA'BHA'SAM**

Eternal, pure, indescribable

**NIRA'KA'RAM' NIRANJANAM**

Shapeless, without blemish

**NITYABODHAM' CIDA'NANDAM'**

Omniscient, all blissful

**GURUR BRAHMA NAMA'MYAHAM**

To Guru Brahma I pay my salutations.

# Glossary

|                       |  |                     |   |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| <i>Acarya/Acharya</i> | <i>lit. "one who teaches by example", a teacher of spiritual practices; the title given to a teacher of Ananda Marga meditation.</i>             | <i>Ananda Marga</i> | <i>Path of Bliss (ananda = bliss; marga = path); the spiritual practices and ideology of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti; the organisation formed by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.</i> |
| <i>Aham</i>           | <i>"I do" or doership; the part of mind which initiates action.</i>  | <i>Anandamurti</i>  | <i>lit. "personification of bliss"; name of the founder of Ananda Marga, also known as Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar.</i>  |
| <i>Ahamtattva</i>     | <i>the part of Cosmic Mind which gives Supreme Consciousness the power to act or express itself (see Aham).</i>                                  | <i>Aparigraha</i>   | <i>non-excessive living; to only use what is necessary to maintain life; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i>   |
| <i>Ahimsa</i>         | <i>causing the least harm possible; one of the ten principles of Yama &amp; Niyama (yogic ethics).</i>   | <i>Apatattva</i>    | <i>liquid factor (apa = liquid; tattva = factor); the fourth material factor.</i>   |
| <i>Akashatattva</i>   | <i>etheric factor (akasha = ether; tattva = factor); the first material factor to be created; space or the 'vacuum' in which galaxies exist.</i> | <i>Asana</i>        | <i>lit. "pose held comfortably"; a physical posture or "innercise" of yoga.</i>   |
| <i>Ananda(m)</i>      | <i>Cosmic bliss; transcendental happiness experienced when the individual mind merges in Cosmic being.</i>                                       | <i>Asteya</i>       | <i>non-stealing; also to not deprive others of what is their due; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i>  |
|                       |  | <i>Bhakti</i>       | <i>spiritual devotion; love for the Supreme.</i>  |
|                       |  | <i>Bhuta</i>        | <i>lit. "created object".</i>   |

|                           |   |                       |   |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Brahma</i>             | <i>Supreme Consciousness.</i>   | <i>Ista Cakra</i>     | <i>favourite ideational point (cakra); the point of concentration on the body given to an individual in certain techniques of meditation.</i> |
| <i>Brahmacarya</i>        | <i>to see the Supreme in everything; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i>   |                       |   |
| <i>Cakra/Chakra</i>       | <i>psychic centre (lit. "wheel"); a point in the body at which a correlation between psychic and physical energy exists; a major nerve ganglion or plexus.</i>                  | <i>Ista Mantra</i>    | <i>favourite sound vibration (mantra); the personal mantra given for certain techniques of meditation.</i>                                    |
| <i>Citta</i>              | <i>mindstuff or ectoplasm; the part of the mind which takes the shape of sensory data or physical actions.</i>  | <i>Jinana</i>         | <i>spiritual knowledge.</i>   |
| <i>Dharana</i>            | <i>concentration; the stage of mind control before meditation.</i>  | <i>Karma</i>          | <i>action, to act.</i>  |
| <i>Dhyana</i>             | <i>meditation (lit. "flowing of the mind"); a pure state of absorption in the Supreme.</i>  | <i>Kosa</i>           | <i>lit. "sheath"; layer of the mind.</i>  |
| <i>Guna</i>               | <i>binding force; a force of Cosmic energy; that force which qualifies or transmutes Consciousness.</i>   | <i>Ks'ititattva</i>   | <i>solid factor (ks'iti = solid matter; tattva = factor); the final material factor to be formed.</i>   |
| <i>Guru</i>               | <i>a spiritual master; a person with the capacity to guide others to spiritual liberation.</i>  | <i>Kula-kundalini</i> | <i>lit. "coiled serpentine force"; psycho-spiritual force lying at the base of the spine (until awoken).</i>                                  |
| <i>Guru Mantra</i>        | <i>a special mantra (see 'Mantra') used before performing actions to dissociate the ego from the action.</i>  | <i>Kundalini</i>      | <i>see above.</i>   |
| <i>Ida</i>                | <i>the psychic channel in the body which is spiritually charged.</i>  | <i>Liila</i>          | <i>Cosmic game or play; the concept that creation is the personal game of Supreme Consciousness.</i>  |
| <i>Ishvara Pranidhana</i> | <i>lit. "to take shelter in the Supreme" (Ishvara = the Supreme Controller; pranidhana = to take shelter); meditation practices; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i> | <i>Madhuvidya</i>     | <i>lit. "honey knowledge" (madhu = sweet or honey; vidya = knowledge); regarding the world as an expression of blissful Consciousness.</i>    |
|                           |   | <i>Mahat</i>          | <i>pure "I" feeling; the part of the mind which is aware of existence.</i>  |
|                           |   | <i>Mahatattava</i>    | <i>the part of the Cosmic Mind which gives Consciousness an awareness of existence; subtlest part of the Cosmic Mind.</i>                     |
|                           |   | <i>Mandala</i>        | <i>a round symbol representing the Cosmos.</i>  |
|                           |   | <i>Mantra</i>         | <i>a sound vibration used to focus on in</i>  |



|                       |   |                         |   |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
|                       | <i>meditation (lit. "that which liberates the mind").</i>   | <i>Rajasik Rajoguna</i> | <i>of Rajoguna.</i>   |
| <i>Nadii</i>          | <i>a channel of psychic energy in the body.</i>   |                         | <i>the mutative principle; the universal principle that creates action; one of the three aspects (of gunas) or Prakrti.</i>                               |
| <i>Nataraja</i>       | <i>lit. "King of the dance"; the dancing form of Shiva (see 'Shiva'); one of the names of Sadashiva.</i>  | <i>Sadhaka Sadhana</i>  | <i>a spiritual aspirant.</i>  |
| <i>Nirguna</i>        | <i>lit. "without qualities"; the state of Brahma (Supreme Consciousness) which is beyond all expression.</i>  | <i>Saguna</i>           | <i>spiritual practices, the effort to make oneself complete.</i>  |
| <i>Niyama</i>         | <i>observances; one of the two sections, comprising five principles, of yogic ethics.</i>   | <i>Saincara</i>         | <i>with qualities; the state of Brahma which is expressed of in which Prakrti is active.</i>  |
| <i>Piungala</i>       | <i>a psychic channel in the body which is mundanely charged.</i>  | <i>Samadhi</i>          | <i>the devolutionary phase of creation; the process of crudification or condensation of Consciousness.</i>  |
| <i>Prakrti</i>        | <i>the Operative Principle of Brahma (Supreme Consciousness); the Cosmic Force or Energy; that which binds Purusa (Consciousness) into different states of being.</i> | <i>Samskara</i>         | <i>a state of spiritual absorption; experiencing transcendental ecstasy; union with Supreme Consciousness.</i>  |
| <i>Prana(h)</i>       | <i>the vital force(s); the essential energies of the five fundamental factors.</i>  | <i>Santosa</i>          | <i>reaction in potential; a stored reaction to previously performed actions; conditioning.</i>  |
| <i>Pranayama</i>      | <i>control of the vital forces; techniques of breath control designed to control the subtle energy flows of body and mind.</i>  | <i>Sattvaguna</i>       | <i>mental contentment; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i>   |
| <i>Pratik</i>         | <i>a special Tantric symbol demonstrating the harmonising of objective and subjective energies.</i>   | <i>Sattvik Satya(m)</i> | <i>the sentient principle; the universal force which produces a feeling of existence; one of the three principles of Prakrti; the creative principle.</i> |
| <i>Prati-saincara</i> | <i>the evolutionary phase of the process of creation; the liberation of Consciousness from the bondage of Prakrti.</i>  | <i>Shaoca</i>           | <i>of Sattvaguna.</i>   |
| <i>Purusa</i>         | <i>substantive Consciousness; the aspect of Brahma which is Consciousness itself.</i>   |                         | <i>benevolent truthfulness, one of the ten principles of yogic ethics; (absolute and unchanging; that which is immutable).</i>                            |
|                       |   |                         | <i>mental purity and physical cleanliness; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.</i>   |

|          |  |             |   |
|----------|--|-------------|---|
| Shiva    | Consciousness; Purusa; also an historical figure and a mythological character: historically Shiva was the founder of Tantra, living about 7000 years ago; the word is also used to mean 'welfare'. | Tapah       | service through selfless sacrifice; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.                                    |
| Susumna  | a psychic channel running through the spine, up which the kundalini travels to pass through the various cakras.  | Tattva      | factor.   |
| Svadyaya | understanding spiritual subjects or spiritual study; one of the ten principles of yogic ethics.  | Tejastattva | luminous factor (tejas = luminous; tattva = factor); third of the five fundamental factors to be created.         |
| Tamasik  | of Tamoguna.   | Vayutattva  | aerial (or gaseous) factor (vayu = aerial; tattva = factor); second of the five fundamental factors to be formed. |
| Tamoguna | the static principle; the universal force which causes the condensing of Consciousness and prevents movement or progress; one of the three gunas of Prakrti.                                       | Viveka      | perfect discrimination; discrimination between the real and the ephemeral.  |
| Tanmatra | a generic essence or inferential vibration which emanates from material factors.   | Vrtti       | an innate mental or emotional tendency; inherent predeliction which influences the mind.                          |
|          |  | Yama        | lit. "control"; abstinences; one of the two sections, comprising five principles, of yogic ethics.                |
|          |  | Yoga        | lit. "union"; merging individual consciousness in Supreme Consciousness.  |