

**IX Yoga Darsana,
Transpersonal Union**

Verses Six and Seven

Sankalpa—the cause of all disasters of mankind—along with projections, should be uprooted, and incipient memories restrained in the *atma*. What is seen has not the perceived reality, because what is seen is the seer itself. Who is thus united in the seer, he is the best among yoga knowers.

11/20/7

Deb started us off with a review of *sankalpa* from Nitya's commentary back in the Asatya Darsana, verse 5. Although a little long, quoting it will throw some light on this verse, and also demonstrate the unity of Narayana Guru's overall approach:

Sankalpa is somewhat equivalent to the drawing of a blueprint in consciousness which will lead to the actualization of an event, the attainment of a state, the acquisition of a desired object, or to the establishment of a new relationship with oneself or with another person at some time in the future. These do have an element of will implied in them. That is why *sankalpa* is usually translated as will.

Sankalpa carries with it a probability factor, and it is most likely that the desire to actualize it may bring it about. But it is also possible for desires to arise in consciousness which by their intrinsic nature are highly improbable. The ignorance of the individual, coupled with a rational myopia caused by infatuation, may easily convince him that what is willed is

not at all improbable. In spite of this improbability, a person may try hard to actualize a desire and will fail to achieve it. In this aspect, the desiring imagination of the person is called *vikalpa*. Both probability and improbability are promoted with the desire to actualize, whereas the person sees nothing but probability due to his infatuated imagination. The infatuation is directly related to one of the many incipient memories, which we have referred to earlier as *vasana*. Thus, both *sankalpa* and *vikalpa* are born of *vasana*. (177-8)

Unfortunately, most of us are motivated by personal gains, and are so veiled by our personal ignorance that we draw thick ego boundaries and separate ourselves from the rest of the world phenomena. As a result of this darkness, the “other” can assume a fancied image which makes the individual hanker after it and thus become subject to infatuation. This brings about false hope after false hope, like that of a thirsty man going from one mirage to another. Such an unfortunate person runs after shadows, which results in mounting frustration. The “other” can also assume a demonic form, engendering in the person an element of fear. The fear grows from moment to moment until it becomes a paranoia that can assume gigantic proportions. (179)

Narayana Guru is uncharacteristically unequivocal in claiming that *sankalpa* is the cause of all the disasters of mankind. How can he say that? If he was unlimited in how much he could put in a verse, he might also have said that it is the cause of all the good things mankind accomplishes also. But for now we are stressing restraint and centering, as opposed to good works. The Vedantic notion is that when you restrain yourself, the impulse which remains is in tune with the Absolute. Following Absolute impulses is the essence of spirituality. The distinction is of course subtle and open to

blundering whenever the ego cloaks its desires in the guise of spirituality. Let's draw on one more paragraph from Asatya 5:

Although the world is generally treated as unreal in Vedantic literature, again and again there come exhortations from the great masters to do good to the world and to maintain the harmony of world order. Both in the Bhakti Darsana and Nirvana Darsana, the Guru tells us of the necessity to relate to the world in a meaningful way. Great masters like Krishna, Christ, Buddha and the Prophet have all desired peace on earth and fellowship between human beings. These good works are also sankalpas, but they are qualified as satya sankalpa, desirable imagination that can be true in all probability. (179)

Anita once again cut to the chase. The verse can sound like you aren't supposed to do anything, just stay home and meditate. If everything that comes up emerges from vasana, and we aren't supposed to follow our vasanas, what options are left to us? She gave the example of sitting at home and surveying her surroundings. The weather has been awful, and she found herself becoming depressed. So instead of meditating she went next door to talk with her neighbor, and the interaction with another sympathetic human made her feel much better. After all, she said, aren't we supposed to be gauging our way forward based on joy?

That's right. Joy or bliss is the measuring rod we use. This is not a sin-filled religion where you have to suppress what you feel. It's not a bitter medicine of crushed sensibilities to honor a capricious or vengeful god. Parallel with an external god whose dictates we are striving to follow, there are meditation practices we are supposed to follow to achieve the result of happiness. So we may suppress ourselves for yoga just as we suppress ourselves for Allah. Our sankalpas line up behind what we think we *should* be

doing, whether or not that's the best thing for us. That's why Narayana Guru says that we are to restrain our vasanas in the atma. Atma is Self. It is not outside. Anita did the right thing, even though she was dubious about it because of not fully understanding the Guru's teaching.

Atma guides us with joy, and we share its bounty by going out and interacting with friends. Most of us already spend too much time weeping in a quiet corner. We need to carry our hearts out to meet other hearts. Anita's sankalpas were telling her to sit inside and meditate when a friend was just outside. Sure, this is merely a mini-misfortune, but from it we can extrapolate bigger problems. Luckily, she also allowed herself to be guided by an inner conviction that led her to a happy outcome. We restrain our conditionings precisely so we can hear this "still small voice." (1Kgs.19,12) It's a tricky business, because "doing yoga" or "going to church" or "praying to God" can be freeing if done in the right spirit, or deadening if done out of a sense of sankalpa-born duty. Our ego tends to clasp onto the sankalpa orientation and believe that's the path, which keeps it from seeing the true path that the atma or the ananda or the Absolute is trying to reveal. This is why we need to listen instead of rushing off half cocked. We are too easily fooled.

What is it about humans that we are so attracted to joyless mechanical acts, and wary of "dancing beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free"? Why do we imagine the former bring liberation and the latter are to be avoided at all costs? It must be a hangover from the medieval times when monks lived in stark cells and wore hair shirts. Did all that self-abnegation produce enlightenment, or just the Inquisition and the Albigensian Crusade?

Deb cautioned that we can delude ourselves by catering to the ego's simplistic desires and thinking of that as bliss. It feels good when we please our egos. But we want to go deeper than that, to discover the universal norms of bliss that transcend our personal

prejudices. That's why the Gurukula uses the idea of value in place of bliss. It's harder to be misled by values than by pleasure. Values give lasting bliss, while ego indulgences are transient.

Deb also admitted to being fooled herself, on occasion. When she was a new student of Nitya's he asked her to read out Dante's Divine Comedy to him. After a few pages she threw it across the room in a fury and shouted that it was the stupidest book ever and she wouldn't touch it. (Nitya was particularly fond of Debby in part because she wasn't reverential, towards him or anyone else.) Thirty years later she was reintroduced to it in a poetry class, saw that there was something else of great value below the surface, and fell in love with it. Somehow in the interim her norms had expanded to include ideas from a wider range of sources.

The feeling I had when preparing for the class was, what keeps us from getting up from our meditation as a different person than the one who sat down? We could be a new person when we get up in the morning. So why do we always reactivate our bad habits and ridiculous attitudes, instead of starting fresh with the wisdom we read and ponder so much? Those habitual conditionings are exactly what sankalpas are based upon. We want to make certain things happen, and what we want to have happen is what we expect and what we are comfortable and familiar with. We limit our possibilities by channeling our psyches with our will. We are too timid to dare to be great. Sure, those habits also give continuity to our life, and continuity gives meaning. But if we want to improve the meaning of our life we may have to reorient the direction in which our continuity is aimed. We want to rise above the petty buffeting we are constantly receiving, to stand on our own ground as a pillar of strength.

Luckily, Anita and Deb both overcame their disastrous sankalpas, one sooner, one later. Once you see the principle, you can look for similar blind spots in your own psyche, and strive to

avoid the disasters before they happen. Practical examples like this are always helpful.

We finished up with two more examples, from Brenda and Eugene. Brenda's father has just died, after a long illness. She struggled hard to have a relationship with him. He always tried to make her upset, so she stood firm and kept her cool. She knew it was partly due to his illness. His death is part of a sea change in her life. She and Charles are quitting their home, which has been very important to her, and heading off to Mexico, with the intention of starting fresh on their return. So the pets are gone, furniture sold or in storage, the house an empty shell. Mother is near death and father gone. Brenda is in a whirlwind of change, but she regularly finds her center where the blasts are less ferocious. Because of her good attitude, she is learning a lot about letting go, as well as how even the best of things can hold you back. In terms of this verse, her sankalpas beg her to cling to home and the mothering role she does so well for the whole world, but another voice is calling her in a new direction and she is heeding it. The possibilities have thus become much wider for where she will go from here.

This stands out starkly from a woman I visited the day before. She was a lot like Brenda, being a mother to everyone and throwing herself wholeheartedly into the role. But there was no doubt and no backup. Six months ago her husband abruptly left, and she utterly fell apart. Everywhere she looks there is only darkness. Her life is ruined, and she doesn't have the strength to begin to reconstruct anything. So both women have had their lives stripped suddenly of all the familiar trappings. One is taking it like a yogi, and the other like a hapless victim. One has turned to the Self, the atma, and one simply longs to rekindle her favorite vasanas. Such choices are the most important moments for us to steer the course of our lives. A healthy philosophy prepares us to make the most of them.

Less drastic but more of a typical example many of us face all the time, is Eugene's dilemma. He has a friend who wants to manipulate him into being like her. She wants him to work more and contemplate less. He feels fine in the path he has chosen, which definitely seems like his svadharma, but whenever his friend nags him it hurts his feelings and upsets him. He wonders how to respond, and if he should just give up on her. The relation to the verse is that it sounds like the Guru's advice is that maybe he's being selfish and egotistical without realizing it, and that the outside world is always giving us input we should heed, so maybe he should take her advice. It is very easy to fall into a trap of doubt like this. We definitely do need to be available to criticism and take it seriously, but we also have to be skeptical and deflect unhelpful advice, which the world is filled with to the brim. Again, a healthy philosophy is our best ground here. Eugene is bugged partly because he has a good philosophy, and he has already decided that his friend is importuning, but it still bothers him.

First off, the world does not give us unerringly positive messages. We ourselves have to be the judge of that. Just because the 'other' is the Absolute doesn't mean it isn't filled with charlatans and propagandists and all kinds of manipulators. Narayana Guru's point here is that what we see "out there" is who we are "in here." All that stuff out there is us, but it's the 'us' that needs pruning and tending. Opening ourselves up to nothing but outside influences is a recipe for insanity. But seeing it all in proper context is a recipe for wisdom. In this case, a yogi would wonder why is the woman so driven to try to change someone who is already making great strides in his chosen career? A conclusion might be that she resents his freedom, and like so many Puritan Americans wants him to spend all his time working. "Idle hands are the devil's playground!" The really upsetting thing here is that she is a good friend, but caught in a vicious cycle of neurosis that continually projects her anxieties onto him. She imagines that him

changing will solve her own problems, but of course that's absurd, so absurd she'd even deny it if he mentioned it. So there is a feeling of helplessness on Eugene's part.

Back in the Sixties, we hung out on the streets a lot. It was a much more social time. And most of us were working, then as now. Nonetheless, there were angry conservatives who would drive around in cars and yell at us, "Get a job!" and then speed away. So the Calvinist hallucination is still alive and well: work like hell or go to hell! Needless to say, the Gurus ever advise us to stop and think, and give ourselves enough time to know ourselves. Maybe someday we will even be able to help our friends to relax and enjoy life, too.

Such conflicts as this one always call to mind a profound letter from Nitya to Debbie back in September of 1971. It's in *Love and Blessings*, on a page that should be dog-eared in everyone's copy. The last paragraph reads:

You should not be saddened about anyone unless your sadness has a positive or negative impact on him to jolt him out of the impasse and set him right. I may observe a fast, or cry, scream, slap myself and roll on the floor like a mad dog if only I see the ghost of a chance to pull the other to the right track. If that is not possible, I prefer to walk away with a prayer in my heart.

Eugene is young, so he's still at a deferential stage of life, and older people often feel like venting their frustrations on them. It's like the parent who wants to vicariously be a champion through his or her offspring and pushes them to go out for sports or whatever. Unfortunately, age does not automatically confer wisdom. So here Eugene has to walk a razor's edge between firmness and friendship. He is already more mature than some of his older associates, but has to respect their feelings all the same. Finding a

balance in such conflict really does bring wisdom, and that's exactly how the outside world best fits in to our spiritual birthing process.

Part II

Sorry to write even a little more, but I just came across a wonderful paragraph by Nitya that bears on our studies, and I wanted to share it with you. This is from his Gita commentary, page 241, in answer to a question on how we know that we spiritually progress:

Situations presenting themselves to us, without any initiative on our part, and as a result of our most natural and correct behavior, should be taken as the will of God. That very feeling will give us a sense of our togetherness with God. Even though a situation looks difficult and beyond us, this trust in the Highest will give us new hope and courage, and unsought aid coming from all directions will enhance our trust in God's grace. When this trust and consequential fulfillment increases day by day, we know we are on the right track and we progress. In such a case no one will have any doubt in their mind of what is happening.

And just for the hell of it: I just added the 42nd person to the class notes list, all of it extended by word of mouth. I even hear from a few of you occasionally! The list now goes, in addition to all corners of the US, to several parts of India, plus Sweden, England, Portugal, Germany, Poland (when Adam's there), and Mexico. Very cool!

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3/7/18

Yoga Darsana verses 6 & 7

Sankalpa – the cause of all disasters of mankind – along with projections, should be uprooted and incipient memories be restrained in the *atma*. What is seen has not the perceived reality, because what is seen is the seer itself. Who is thus united in the seer is best among yoga-knowers.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

*Uprooting those incipient memory factors of willing,
The source of all human disasters, who
Together with their various willed objects
Restrains in the form of Self (saying),
What is seen has no existence as such,
Thus what is seen is the Seer's self
he among knowers of Yoga
Is the most superior.*

The snow has melted and the jet plane has returned us to Portland, so we are ready to get back to the joys of Darsanamala, made even more joyful by the addition of Prabu, who has managed to take up residence in our city once again.

Our study remains at the peak of what we can accomplish in terms of effort; shortly hereafter we steadily merge into the quiescence of nirvana, our depth mostly determined by the preparation we have made up to now. In other words, we've gotten about all we can out of willing and goal orientation. It might be better to say we can now see how much we can get from it, because there's still plenty to accomplish, but soon we will turn to examining what letting go has to offer.

Sankalpa or willing is said by Narayana Guru to be the cause of all human disasters and should be rooted out. This goes against most of our secular training, which is aimed at refining and directing the will as the prime mover of our life. In yoga there is a greater reliance on surrendering our willfulness to an inner guiding principle, because we are sure it is far more intelligent than we can ever be. Our own limitations are plainly visible to our contemplative eye, and we have seen how the natural order possesses a vast intelligence that is supremely harmonious as well as immaculately just. Based on this realization we are willing to restrain our will in its favor. The class had a number of good examples of how well this works in practical matters; it is far from being a detached abstraction of armchair philosophy.

Deb put the oppressive aspects of will in a somewhat different light. Instead of being alive and open to the moment we are projecting our wants and fears and seeing them as the world around us. In a way these are recourses to the future (will) and the past (fear), and the verse is inviting us to Be Here Now — to not be obscured and thereby obscuring the world with our projections. Can we lucidly be in the world of the present, without cladding it with our preconceived notions? Doing so is a very intimate and personal reorientation.

I agreed, and because our mind is so easily caught by distractions, it is best to practice letting go of our monitoring consciousness in solitary meditation, or even better in a small, trusting group like the class itself. We have to intentionally set aside all the thoughts that come up to sit in neutral silence, where the will is not operative. This is vastly more difficult than it sounds like it should be, as all conscientious meditators well know.

Deb cautioned that when you are able to let go, the first thing likely to rise up is the greatest motivator, fear, followed by the panoply of its correlates: anger, anxiety, cravings and so on.

First off, let's reprise the little Nitya says about will in his commentary:

Personal ego is an aggregate of memories called *vasana*, and it is always active to produce volitional imagery. This is called *sankalpa*. *Sankalpa* is the root cause of all human miseries. An effective step in withholding from being influenced by the *vasanas* is returning again and again to the true nature of the Self. This withdrawal is called *pratyahara*. When once the Self is seen through an act of *samyam*, the Self can be seen in all and as all. When there is nothing extraneous to attract or distract, consciousness becomes steady and *samadhi* is achieved. Thereafter one does not experience the duality of the subject and the object. Such a state is praised as *yoga*. (417)

Remember: just because *sankalpa* is the root cause of all human miseries DOES NOT mean that all it does is cause misery. It is capable of plenty of good, when used rightly. It causes misery when it is used wrongly, and poor results are normally the first clue we have that we have willed wrongly.

This reminds me that Patanjali's eight-limbed Yoga is threaded through the commentary, so I've put the list in Part II in case you've forgotten. The quote above covers the last part, touching briefly on limbs 5-8.

Patanjali's vows and restraints, the first two steps, are so central to what we're up to here that they need no mention. Nitya does register his complaint that the third step, *asana*, is taken superficially as meaning body postures such as hatha yoga. At the time of his writing, there were so many dazed and confused seekers browbeating him with their enthusiasms. It was like they were recruiting him for their favorite indulgence of the week, and not paying much attention to his own wisdom that towered over theirs. He was usually polite but must have chafed inwardly at our

unwitting arrogance. Every once in a while he would register a mild protest that usually went right over the heads of those it was most intended for. Here's his take on asana:

Most people stumble at the threshold of objectivization and will find it almost impossible to fill the chasm between the subject and the object. A number of techniques are adopted by aspiring yogis such as introjecting more and more consciousness into the muscular and neural activity as one sits in various postures. This of course helps people to get rid of physical rigidities and gives more lucid motion to moribund psychophysical energies. It does not, however, bring the desired union of the individuated self with the universal Self.

In his survey of the eight limbs in *Living the Science of Harmonious Union*, Nitya epitomizes asana quite nicely:

If you, as an aspirant yogi, have the intention of undertaking a thoroughgoing self-discipline, you are recommended to choose one interest rather than pursuing many interests. When full attention is given to that chosen interest, body, mind, and ego are all interlinked in one line. That means you have placed yourself in a set that involves both the physiological and psychological. To indicate this the word *asana*, "steady position or posture," is given. That does not necessarily mean sitting with a certain physical posture. When a cat is preparing to pounce upon a rat, it puts itself into a posture that is more an attitude than a special contortion of its body. Similarly, posture here is to be understood as posing yourself in the most congenial manner to be able to give full attention. (234-5)

In any case, it is easy to see how misdirected will is serving us very badly. The modern version of willing popularized by

psychopaths like Ayn Rand and once again a powerful political force is utterly devoid of morality and unabashedly empowers the ego to promulgate whatever it can get away with in self-serving behaviors. It's ultimately suicidal, but is likely to take a lot of its surroundings with it. Nowadays we are staring down the barrel of the disasters of mankind that unbridled political will has wrought. Vedanta is one of the restoratives that should be much more widely known than it is. Sadly, in the West it's pigeonholed as "too cerebral," as if thinking wasn't crucial to the restoration of sanity.

Verse 7 contains a million-dollar sentence: "What is seen has not the perceived reality, because what is seen is the seer itself." I asked the class to share how often and to what degree they recall this most basic tenet of Vedanta. Our masterful minds are so clever to present their concocted world view so convincingly that we are completely absorbed by the vision and forget it is a wholly inner experience. It looks *so much* like reality! As Nitya puts it:

Visual images introjected and reciprocally projected are such a total experience that there is no room left for consciousness to stand aside and have a detached view of the vision.

So we are easily caught in many self-delusions, what Nitya here calls sensory illusions and hallucinations. He even details these to an extent:

There are hallucinations relating to the wakeful, the dream, and deep sleep. To put it another way, we can say that the wakeful is composed of perceptual cues molded into empirical facts by the clothing of sensory stimuli with conceptual garments; that in the dream state prior memories are variously fabricated to provide for a psychodrama in which one and the same subject transforms into all and sundry, and becomes every form and

meaning of what is experienced as a dream; and that the third aspect of deep sleep is the effacement of all traces of memories.

A yogi knows that the subject and object in view are simply poles within the unitive gestalt of appearance. Most of us frequently forget, but with practice we don't get sucked in too far before we slap our forehead and say to our self, "Ouch, snagged again!" And then we let go and step back. Happily there were several good examples of success in this shared by the participants.

Deb talked about the first time our older daughter was away at Christmas, a holiday she normally loved more than any other. On top of that, her mother had just died a few weeks before. She was very depressed, missing her mom and her dear girl, and she remembers looking at the beautiful Christmas tree with its decorations and projecting all her misery on it, thinking, "I *hate* my Christmas tree!" It was obvious her feelings were due to her grief and the tree was only incidental, yet it felt so real! That tree was an affront to her person. It's only a small step to realize that everything we encounter is colored in the same way. This is precisely why being clearheaded and cheerful is about the best contribution anyone can make to their world. Not Pollyanna cheerfulness—making light of real problems—but deep, grounded cheerfulness, which invites the best from all quarters.

Jan told us that just the other day she had had an urge to do one of her usual indulgences. Because of her yoga studies she was thinking about the concept of letting it go and decided to give it a try. As soon as she held back, the urge went away, leaving her with a sense of empowerment and freedom to do something different. She could see that the urge was not really her, it was just a habit. She concluded "when you see that your urges are not you, it sets you free."

Karen works as a massage therapist in an old house that she has made her sacred space. She has worked there forever, and has

grown to feel it is her psychic bubble, one that is a world apart from the bustling street activity outside. A couple of weeks back, just after she finished some maintenance, cleaning and repainting, she came to work to find it had been broken into, the door damaged and things destroyed. She was shocked at first, but then she knew she had to do what we've been learning in class. She framed her shock as an ego reaction: "How could this happen to me? My spiritual place has been violated." Looking at this as beside the point allowed her to calm down and regain her normal peace. Then she cleaned up, had her son repair the broken door, which was easy enough, and filed her police report. Looking the place over she realized that none of her treasured icons had been tampered with, and the place was quickly restored to being her sacred space. She was sure her yogic intent had spared her a lot of unnecessary grief.

Deb told her, "You had a sense that the rooms were you but in a sense they weren't you. The self doesn't get harmed." Karen agreed and added that people who suffer natural disasters sometimes lose everything, and her experience was nothing close to that. Karen's groundedness is reminiscent of a famous part of the Gita's second chapter:

23) Weapons do not cut This, fire does not burn This, and water does not wet This; wind does not dry This.

24) Indeed it is uncleavable; It is non-inflammable; It is unwettable and non-dryable also—everlasting, all-pervading, stable, immobile; It is eternal.

25) It is undefined, unthinkable is It, as non-subject to change is It spoken of: therefore, knowing It as such, there is no reason for you to feel sorry for It.

Moni reported seeing a TV news spot about mindfulness meditation. Tech companies are now using it, but they also showed a police department (of course in the San Francisco Bay area) using it to develop empathy. Speaking of misplaced sankalpa, American cops are free and even encouraged to kill at will, so this is a very important step in the right direction. As Moni put it, in meditation you slow down and see the other as part of you, so you are less likely to cause unnecessary harm.

Susan shared an inspiring excerpt from Nitya's "Atmo Original 1-8," which I'll include in Part II for your delectation.

Even Paul weighed in: "we borrow the universal as we see it and turn it into a vehicle to promote our vasanas." Paul is now well aware of the danger of vasanas projecting on to the present. He retold his venerable police interaction story, where he lost his cool and nearly wound up in jail. In the light of this verse, we could see that his upset was due to his son being in trouble—our children are almost always our most pressing attachments, or vasanas if you will. The cops lost their cool because they had been harassed by angry citizens many times in the past, so the minute Paul said something provocative, all their tender spots were reinjured, and they mounted a defensive roar. This reminds us we not only have to manage and be aware of our own vasanas, we can anticipate those of others and try to work around them.

We shouldn't expect we can sweep away our illusions: they are inevitable aspects of being limited creatures. What the Guru is suggesting is that we take our limitations into account, which will save us from at least some of the disasters we are prone to commit. Many religious and spiritual systems treat maya (or sin, etc.) as a dread disease that we must be cured of or remain failures. If we simply accepted maya's existence and took it into account, all the harmonious qualities we esteem would rush in to fill the void. The norm is to struggle valiantly, often in a name of God, to overcome this feature that cannot be overcome, which leads to despair, self-

hate, incompetence and the like. We should learn to accept what Nitya affirms here: “Although the critical staff of rationality is present to guide the reason of the individual, the amount of hypnotic spell that is exercised on the mind cannot be fully determined.” I love his conclusion: “The reality of empirical experience is of an absolutely relativistic order. Everything is both real and unreal.”

I think he means empirical reality is both absolute and relative, but I love that it is worded as absolutely relative. That means it cannot be restored to an absolute state, it will always be relative no matter what we do. Adjusting to this is learning to live with expertise, and ceasing to beat our heads against the wall. It isn't even that hard, except our egos hate to admit they don't have everything under control. We can exercise due diligence, but we are never going to live up to the imaginary norms of a prideful ego. We'd do better to accept that we will always have a few flaws. Giving up an impossible task is a great relief, I assure you.

Nitya puts this rather subtly and traditionally, but the idea is the same:

On the whole we can say that consciousness remains uninfluenced by memories for a while, and then at times becomes monitored by memory into various elaborations. Yogic insight means to get behind these altering states and to not be deluded by the surface disturbances.

What we're really perceiving is not the reality of the world but our own private version of it. The key here is that whenever we can see that the subject and object are integral parts of the same oneness being projected in our minds, we can cease battling to align them just so. They are already aligned! We fight with inadequate information to present a persona that is perfect, imagining this will protect us from insults. Again, this is the ego at work. We don't

need to do it. That's not what the ego is for, so restrain it and get it back to what it should be doing. That may well include turning the damn thing off entirely for a period, just like restarting your computer when it has developed a glitch. Nitya says:

Even after receiving the secret instruction *tat tvam asi*, "That thou art," from one's teacher, one may not become a yogi unless this consciousness of the union of the subject and object is continuously realized by perpetuating the retentive idea "That thou art." This is not possible unless one empties oneself of one's ego.

Scotty caught the most important implication: everyone is doing their spiritual thing to become a better person, trying to get somewhere else, instead of realizing they are already there. He was further amused by Nitya likening pranayama as practiced by many as "torturing the lungs," a typical dismissal of his of superficial engagement. Scotty chuckled that Nitya went on to extol pranayama after having seeming to diss it:

Our breathing is a part of the universal pulsation. All living beings are rhythmically pulsating and maintaining their life. Sacrificing one's *prana* into *apana* and *apana* into *prana*, or uniting the upgoing breath and the downgoing breath in the heart, is only suggestive of the spirit merging into matter and matter becoming surcharged with spirit, or the visible changing into the ideational and ideas transforming into visibles.

Jan brought us to the closing meditation by extolling neutrality: "when there's nothing extraneous, nothing throwing you off, you are more at peace with it all." I added the kicker that should invite us to take the plunge: keeping still is far more powerful than running after things, trying to force them into your

anticipated pattern. There's no good reason to leave out the more effective side of the equation.

We kept still for a few moments, and then went our separate ways.

Part II

Once again Swami Vidyayanda's commentary is actually comprehensible and helpful; a valuable explication. Don't miss it:

The act of the will is the source of all suffering. Every willful act arises in accordance with the incipient memory factors corresponding to it. The act of willing arises in accordance with some deep-seated incipient memory factor, having there lain rooted for a long time. Therefore, the *yogi* or the man of meditation who is interested in avoiding suffering, should find out by minute introspection those deep-seated incipient memory factors and abolish them so as to become established in the unity of Yoga.

Yoga is not any form of self-torture. It is the union of the seer and the seen that is here referred to as Yoga. All that is visible is, in reality, unreal and what really exists is only the basis for such visible entities in the self as has already been indicated in the second and third chapters. Therefore, having first brought into union the visible with the seer, that is to say, seeing everything in the form of the seeing subject alone, he should remain in the form of that witness. It is a man who understands Yoga in this manner who is to be considered a superior kind of Yoga-knower.

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For review, the eight limbs of Patanjali's Yoga:

II.28: By the practice of the limbs of Yoga, the impurities are destroyed, and knowledge arises, which leads to discrimination between the Self and the non-Self.

II.29: Self-restraints, observances, posture, regulation of vital forces, withdrawal from distraction, holding the focus of the mind, contemplation, and absorption are the eight limbs of Yoga. (Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhaya or samadhi)

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From the evening gathering of the famous Atmo class that became That Alone, here's Nitya discussing verse 3:

When I see a beautiful morning sunrise and I call you and show it to you, it is not a projection where you get stuck in your ego. The beauty of the sunrise that I see and appreciate and you see and appreciate are both our personal projections, but there is another element which is not in me, not in you. It has occasioned the perception of the beauty of the sunrise, and thus there is an interaction between what is personally within you and yet outside as a universal factor. When you have this participation within the projection, transactional life becomes meaningful and harmonious.

When you get back into your own ego-oriented projection, participation is lost. When you lose your participation, instead of transaction you get into hallucinatory behavior. In Sanskrit it is called *pratibhasa*, hysteric hallucination. This shrinking into hysteric hallucination is what is preventing you from participating. In participation, every person becomes a beautiful entity. There is no need for one's work to be copied by another. Each one has his or her

svadharma to fulfill. There is also a collective sharing. When you do your thing, you also participate in everyone's common interest. Then your transaction takes you all the way to the horizon where it touches transcendence.